

Dreams of Pakistani Grill and Vada Pao in Manhattan: Re-inscribing the Immigrant in  
Metropolitan Discussions of Taste.<sup>1</sup>

[Draft paper for discussion at Agrarian Studies – Yale University – 11/05/10]

Krishnendu Ray  
Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health  
New York University  
[Krishnendu.ray@nyu.edu](mailto:Krishnendu.ray@nyu.edu)

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper has improved radically under critical attention from Sierra Burnett, Grace Choi, Michaela DeSoucey, Stacie Orell, Priscilla Parkhurst-Ferguson, Parvathi Raman, Jackie Rohel, Emily Yates-Doerr and Sharon Zukin. Of course none can be held accountable for the continuing limitations of my language, logic and imagination.

## **Abstract**

Recent theoretical discussions of taste are overwhelmingly shaped by concerns about distinction and omnivorousness on the part of the consumer, which surprisingly dismisses any volition or aspiration on the part of the immigrant producer of food outside of economic necessity. This paper inserts the habits, memories, work and dreams of immigrant entrepreneurs into the discussion of taste. It focuses on the “ethnic” restaurateur because s/he is the hinge between taste and toil—two streams of theoretical accounts that could be put in productive conversation with each other. It is based on interviews with thirty immigrant restaurateurs, and is buttressed by descriptive quantitative data derived from US historical censuses, mainstream and diasporic newspaper coverage of restaurants, guidebooks (current and historical), telephone directories, restaurant reviews in print and on the internet, menus, recipes and practices of cooking. This work pays attention to the peculiar intimacy between the Anglo and the ethnic that has always shaped public cultures of eating in the United States. In the process, the author points to the limits and advantages of disciplinarity in the current research on food cultures of American cities.

Short framing comments:

(1) I am at the mid-point of a book length project that I am calling Taste, Toil and Ethnicity. It is based equally on archival work, and semi-structured interviews with immigrant restaurateurs. I am probably about a year away from the first draft of the manuscript.

(2) Since my Ph.D. in Sociology in 2001, I have mostly taught, written and worked outside the academy. After a decade of teaching at the Culinary Institute of American at Hyde Park, New York, I was the Associate Dean of Liberal Arts. I have over the last five years taught at New York University, which partly explains where I am coming from and where I am headed in terms of forms of knowledge and modes of explication.

(3) I am clearing ground here to find a place for my own work and that not only necessitates excessive attention to other people's work (that I hope to reduce in the future) but also forces me back into a discipline that I was hoping to avoid. I am here to listen to you with hopes of learning how you do it.

Dreams of Pakistani Grill and Vada Pao in Manhattan: Re-inscribing the Immigrant in  
Metropolitan Discussions of Taste

*Setting the Table*

*Bread & Butter* sits at the dense intersection of a cross-street and an avenue at the lower end of Manhattan. It is barely visible from across the wide avenue, caught in a whirl of honking buses spewing fumes, parked cars, and a small truck on a delivery run with graffiti covering its thin white skin. On the sidewalk a ginkgo sapling struggles to reach into the sunlight from under the shadow of a three-story walk-up. A crush of pedestrians weave their way to and from the subway station, stepping among untreated epileptics dozing-off mid-pavement, and mistreated schizophrenics reduced to panhandling. Robust Nigerian peddlers and slender Bangladeshi vendors sell fruits and vegetables, knock-off handbags, pirated DVDs, cheap jewelry and knick-knacks. Much of this is a good thing for Muhammad Rasool. It brings the customers stumbling across the threshold of *Bread & Butter*.<sup>2</sup>

Fig. 1: A Cluster of Indian Restaurants in the Murray Hill Neighborhood of Manhattan



In the long, narrow space, the steam table is on the left, behind a glass sneeze-guard, with its row of twenty cooked items ready to be ladled onto styrofoam plates. The wall on the right is covered by mirrors. Squeezed between the mirrored wall and the steam table are eight two-tops (small tables) with sixteen chairs, and a narrow path leads to the back of the restaurant. Through

---

<sup>2</sup> The names of the restaurant and the restaurateur have been changed. Where I have taken material only from the public domain – such as Baluchi’s menus – identifiers have not been eliminated. Where my material is based on interviews identities have been changed.

numerous interrupted discussions I ask him how he went about getting the place, how much money he paid, and to describe the characteristics of his customers and his workers.

- Muhammad Rasool (MR): You see I am losing my lease at the other place on 34th Street. So I need a place until my children finish school.
- I sold some family property in Pakistan to pay down the \$20,000. I put in \$10,000 may be \$15,000 to renovate the place. My rent is \$8,000 a month.
- I sell on average \$6 per customer. I have about 100 customers a day. Twenty for breakfast, sixty for lunch, twenty for dinner.<sup>3</sup>
- I work here six days a week from morning to night.
- I have two workers. One Mexican. One Pakistani.

Asked to explain the shape and design of his storefront restaurant Rasool notes, “It is narrow. This building is 150 years old. I changed everything. From before it is 100 percent changed. The carpenter was a friend, I told him. Break it down, break it down, until you get to the wall. You know how much more space I got?! Four feet this way and two feet that way!” Here is Rasool literally making elbow room in this already built city.

- Interviewer (I)<sup>4</sup>: You don’t have any pictures up?
- MR: Yes, I don’t have pictures because I have no room for pictures. The biggest mistake I made was to put the mirror on the wall. Instead of the mirror I should have put pictures. Now where can I put pictures?
- I: Why did you put the mirror?
- MR: Biggest mistake I made during the construction [laughs and shakes his head].

---

<sup>3</sup> Bread & Butter belongs to the lower end of the universe of Indian restaurants in Manhattan. Since we do not have access to check averages from most restaurants we can approximate it by the average price of a entrée, which we can calculate for all the 158 restaurants that have prices listed on their menus (out of a total of 202 Indian restaurants in Manhattan), and that is \$11.16. There are twelve Indian restaurants in Manhattan with entrées under \$6.00, which is Bread & Butter’s threshold. The most expensive Indian restaurants in Manhattan, such as Tabla and Ada, have entrées at a little over \$20.00 (as an average of all their entrées), although some entrées in such establishments go beyond \$30.

<sup>4</sup> All the interviews were conducted by Jackie Rohel, Sierra Burnett or me, sometimes in combination, sometimes individually.

- I: Does it cost too much to take it down?
- MR: It doesn't ... But you see the spirit to do becomes less, and less. A young guy by tomorrow he will change it. I used to do that before ... but not anymore. That is why I want to retire [laughs].
- I: Do you want your children to enter this business?
- MR: No. They are like you going to school. I don't want them here washing dishes ... No I don't want them here.
- I: If you were to put a picture there what would it be?
- MR: There is one scenery I see in my embassy, the Pakistan Consulate, it was a picture of Mohenjodaro, I would put that one if I could get that one, it is 10,000 years old ... general scenery, which attracts everybody.
- I: So, how did you get into the restaurant business?
- MR: You see I did odd jobs. Worked in a gas station for a couple of months. I had been driving a Yellow Cab for six to seven months. That is when I ate at a restaurant on 42nd Street. It was very crowded and the people were rude. That is where I got the idea that I should have a restaurant. I drove taxi for nine more months, saved some money. I drove taxi at night to pay my workers.
- I: How would you characterize your restaurant?
- MR: Fast-food restaurant. Indian, Pakistani spicy food. I also carry less spicy Spanish-American food.
- I: Spanish-American?
- MR: Yes, because you see we have rice and we have beans, and chicken of course everyone eats. It is the same food without spices. Spanish food.

We find Rasool reorienting himself to his specific Latino public at that street corner, as fewer and fewer South Asian taxi drivers (almost 80 percent of New York City's 48,000 licensed Yellow Cab drivers are of Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Indian origin) stop by his place.

- I: Do you cook at home?
- MR: No
- I: Where did you learn how to cook?
- MR: It is easy. I know it.
- I: Did you train for it?
- MR: No
- I: You just know it?
- MR: Yes ... It does not take a genius.
- I: Who cooks at home?
- MR: My wife
- I: Did your wife give you the recipes?
- MR: No
- I: Do you consult cookbooks?
- MR: No
- I: Did you watch your wife cook?
- MR: No, but she gave me confidence. She didn't tell me how to cook, but she gave me confidence. If you don't know how to cook then your partners take advantage of you. Once I called my wife on the phone and asked her how to make *aloo-gobi* and she told me how to do it. Then I did it. I ask her, how do I cook this, how do I cook that? She tells me. I do it. It does not take a genius you know.<sup>5</sup>
- MR: You see this Mexican guy who works for me? He learned just by watching me. Now he is my best cook.

---

<sup>5</sup> This is almost *verbatim* the same conversation that one of my doctoral students, Grace Choi, had with a Bangladeshi restaurant owner in London.

- MR: It is business. It is only business. It is not real. People come in, they take a look at it and think it must take all these people to make complicated things. But it is simple. It is business. It is just business.

Rasool's insistence that what we have here is mere commerce and not culture is echoed in diasporic newspapers' sparse coverage of commercial cookery in the features, although the classifieds are plastered with advertisements for restaurants and cooks. The two major expatriate Indian weekly newspapers—*India Abroad* and *India Tribune* (which I have studied from 2001 to October 2010)—have carried about two dozen stories each year (in fifty-two weekly issues) on the culture of cooking, which typically conclude with a page of recipes written by women for women. The focus of the food articles is to collate a pan-Indian cuisine in the diaspora, introducing the readers to dishes from “elsewhere” in India—a theme Arjun Appadurai noted in his seminal article on cookbooks in the Indian national space (1988), which appears to have been extended to the diaspora today. Both newspapers have a cautious, middle-brow approach to food contained mostly within “discourses” of domesticity, and reflect the tastes of anglophone, achieving, middle-class Indian men in the US. That approach sits well with Rasool's valorization of his wife's home cooking (and his resistance to its commodification), the presumed realm of culture. Here we see the faint trace of Partha Chatterjee's felicitous divide of modern post-colonial nationalism into culture inside the home and commerce outside it, in public (1993).

Yet, there is something more here. Something about language (that I cannot press on without Punjabi – the interviews were conducted in Hindi and English), something about doing, about the social embarrassment of cooking and middle-class Lahorean masculinity. I hope to spend a lot more time with Muhammad Rasool over the next six months in trying to get at that. Yet, beyond my own linguistic limits, what is intriguing is how people like Mohammad Rasool have not figured in the academic discussion on taste.



## *Moving to the Desk*

Since occupations and birthplace have been identified beginning with the 1850 Census of the United States of America, data shows a strong correlation between food service occupations and new immigrant groups. Although occupations cannot be directly compared across Census (because the classifications often change), we can see that the foreign-born numerically dominate certain occupations, such as domestic servants, hotel and restaurant employees, hotel-keepers, saloon-keepers and bartenders, traders and dealers in groceries, bakers and butchers. In contrast, members of the so-called white-collar occupations, such as the clergy, lawyers, school teachers and government officials, have mostly been native-born. For example, in New York City in 1850, 70 percent of hotel and restaurant employees and 80 percent of hotel-keepers were foreign-born, mostly of Irish and German heritage. (This is in a context where foreign-born constituted about a third of the labor force). Fifty years later, according to the 1900 Census, 63 percent of hotel and restaurant employees were foreign-born (Irish and German predominate) and 65 percent of hotel-keepers were foreign-born (mostly German). Restaurant-keepers, a newly significant occupation by 1900, were 67 percent foreign-born at a time when foreign-born were about 50 percent of the population. Even by the 1950 Census, after immigration had subsided, 64 percent of restaurant cooks were foreign-born (Italians now at the top, followed by Greeks, Chinese and Germans). According to the 2000 Census, that trend continues, with 75 percent of restaurant cooks (and 64 percent of restaurant workers) in New York City foreign-born, but the dominant countries and regions of origin are now Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean Basin, South America, China and the old USSR (Ruggles *et al.* 2004).<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> To give a broader context to the foreign-born data, one must consider that in June 2010, New York City bars and restaurants employed 204,400 workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics) in more than 20,000 eating establishments (nyc.gov – restaurant inspection site) and by some estimates accounted for over \$12 billion in revenues per annum. For a look at labor conditions see <http://www.rocny.org/>. On the other hand, to see how the restaurant industry fits into the shape and character of post-industrial cities, especially New York City, one must look at the work of Sharon Zukin (1995, 2010), where she makes a number of arguments:

Although the journalistic material is replete with stories of immigrant restaurateurs there is surprisingly little academic work that theoretically engages with taste in the metropolis from the point of view of the immigrant entrepreneur. Of course there is much on ethnic entrepreneurship. There are five common parts to the theory of ethnic entrepreneurship. First, low capital cost makes it relatively easier for ethnic entrepreneurs to enter into the business of feeding others. Cultural capital—knowledge about unfamiliar foods—gives them a competitive edge over better-capitalized mainstream entrepreneurs in the niche market. Social capital—kin or fictive kin networks of loyalty that allow the lending of money on a rotating basis without collateral—enables ethnic entrepreneurs to raise the necessary cash for a small eatery without the assets a bank loan would require. Self-exploitation—long hours of work and unpaid labor of kin and fictive kin—permits these enterprises to compete with better-capitalized businesses, and turns sweat and loyalty into capital. Large corporations often can't respond quickly to fickle changes in fashion but small enterprises can adapt with speed and thrive, hence there is much greater room for small enterprises selling food and other fashionable things. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, both migration and entrepreneurship exhibit serial patterns. That is, people who know each other have typically migrated from the same regions, and work in and own similar enterprises built with money and expertise borrowed from co-ethnics. They effectively develop an informal, intra-ethnic consulting and banking system. Paucity of assets to collateralize bank loans and unfamiliarity with language and norms of a consumer society deepens this dependence on co-ethnic money, information and cultural expertise (Heisler 2008; Zhou 2004; Foner *et al.* 2000; Granovetter 1995; Portes 1995; Rogers and Vertovec 1995; Sassen 1995; Bailey and Waldinger 1991; Westwood and Bhachu 1988; Light and Bonacich 1988; Waldinger 1986, 1990, 1992; Bailey 1985, 1987; Landa 1981; Light 1972).<sup>7</sup>

---

about the importance of the symbolic economy from restaurants, museums, to finance; how the spatial organization of consumption shapes cities; and how authentic urban spaces are produced.

<sup>7</sup> Here I am ignoring the nuanced distinctions between Ivan Light's ethnic entrepreneur model, Alejandro Portes' ethnic enclave model—and his typology of “modes of incorporation” and segmented assimilation

This, of course, is a broad prototype of an explanation, and a structural one, that needs to be fleshed out with the real activity of real agents. The structural model cannot explain, for instance, why and how the first Bangladeshi or Pakistani entered into the Indian restaurant business in New York City. That demands biographies. More importantly to the point here much of the ethnicity and entrepreneurship literature attends to economics and politics, as if immigrants are creatures only of political economy who never think about taste, beauty, and how such things might intersect with their practical-moral universe.

The propensity to ignore immigrant bodies in the disciplinary discussion of taste may be a product of the tendency to see taste as marginal to the real lives of marginal peoples. In this conception, poor, hard-working people can teach us about poverty and suffering, hierarchy and symbolic violence, but never about taste. As a consequence, taste loses its contested and dynamic character, and, I would argue, even its fundamentally sociological nature.

In American Sociology – the exemplary discipline where cities, communities and aesthetics of food have figured most prominently -- taste has been studied most extensively over the last decade in the sub-field of “cultures of consumption,” which builds on Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1984).<sup>8</sup> The latest iteration of such disciplinary attention in North America is Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann’s *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (2010). Their work is representative of at least two major trends in sociology, one is a singular focus on consumption, and another is the drift towards a definition of discourse as what gets printed in popular magazines. I will argue that both those trends are counterproductive to a fuller understanding of taste in the metropolis.

---

model—and Roger Waldinger’s ethnic niche model. There is also some work on why and how some groups are better at converting cultural and social capital into financial capital, while others cannot do the same (Small 2009); and on conflicts between groups with differential entrepreneurial outcomes, such as African-Americans and Koreans (Light 1972; Park 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Other recent directions of research have focused on organization theory (Rao *et al.* 2003, 2005), small-group interaction, workplace dynamics and aesthetics of work (Fine 1992, 1995, 1996), field theory (Ferguson 1998, 2004) and nutrition-related science-and-technological studies (Schleifer 2010). There also have been congruent developments in the sociological work of Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and Molotch (2003) addressing material culture.

Johnston and Baumann argue that in spite of broadening palates, the gastronomic discussion that has emerged in bicoastal American cities (specifically in their representative newspapers and food magazines) is burdened with the quest for class distinctions. This, they contend, is happening despite the decline of old-fashioned snobbery and the dethroning of French and Continental cuisines.<sup>9</sup> Their book confirms Tony Bennett *et al.*'s (2009) detailed empirical work on the United Kingdom in arguing that taste hierarchies exist, culture irrevocably marks class, and omnivorousness is a rarefied (but not rare) phenomenon where the rich and the better educated devour even working class subcultures, while the working classes (especially men) do not consume highbrow genres such as avant-garde art, classical music, art cinema or exotic cuisines in restaurants. They corroborate Warde and Marten's more specific food-related findings based on a study of three British cities (2000) that eating out "continues to operate as a field of distinction, marking boundaries of status through the display of taste ... The professional and managerial classes are thronging to ethnic cuisine restaurants, while poor, working class, older, provincial people are not. Familiarity with ethnic cuisine is a mark of refinement" (2000: 226).<sup>10</sup>

While Johnston and Baumann (2007, 2010) see fit to exclude immigrant food producers from their analysis because they claim that they cannot hear them in the gastronomic "discourse," Warde and Martens (2000) provide two different reasons for the exclusion of immigrant restaurateurs in their reconstruction of social differentiation and pleasure in London, Bristol and Preston. First, they argue that they want to focus on consumption and its meaning for the consumer. Second, in putative distinction to their consumer-oriented study, they hold that much has already been written about the labor process (2000: 5).

---

<sup>9</sup> Their theoretical argument of omnivorousness is based on van Eijck 2001; Peterson 1997; Peterson and Kern 1996; Peterson and Simkus 1992; Zavisca 2005; DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; Fisher and Preece 2003; Lopez Sintas and Garcia Álvarez 2004; and Vander Stichele and Laermans 2006.

<sup>10</sup> They also show that "Frequent eating out on commercial premises is associated positively with having high household income, being highly educated, being younger and being single, and negatively with being a housewife" (2000: 226).

To reduce immigrant concerns exclusively to the labor process is to create a peculiarly constricted notion of immigrant selves as only laboring, and to be blind to the role of immigrants in the culture of consumption and the aesthetics of work through their naming of restaurants, designing menus and reproducing foods, flavors and ambience in the metropolis (in contrast for the British case see Buettner 2008; Highmore 2009).<sup>11</sup> At a certain point in time it might have been useful to study consumption exclusively but I think we have swung too far in the other direction and the stark divide between production and consumption is no longer as productive. Warde's and Johnston and Baumann's (2007, 2010) focus on consumption, and its consequent elision of producers and their transactions with consumers and critics, is in the final analysis linked to narrowing and specializing—which is an important disciplinary imperative that produces work of detail and density—but it also engenders blind spots, sometimes at the very site where interrogation would have been fruitful. This is where depth could be better illuminated with some breadth and lateral knowledge.

Furthermore, as Sharon Zukin has shown, “culture is more and more the business of cities” and “[t]he growth of cultural consumption (of art, food, fashion, music, tourism) and the industries that cater to it, fuels the city's symbolic economy, its visible ability to produce both symbols and space” (1995: 2). She also underlines a telling transformation in the symbolic economy where “Large numbers of new immigrants and ethnic minorities have put pressure on public institutions, from schools to political parties, to deal with their individual demands. Such high culture institutions as art museums and symphony orchestras have been driven to expand and diversify their offerings to appeal to a broader public. These pressures, broadly speaking, are both ethnic and aesthetic. By creating policies and ideologies of “multiculturalism,” they have forced public institutions to change” (1995: 2). Not only have public institutions and dominant

---

<sup>11</sup> Even a fleeting perusal of any American newspaper over the last 100 years will show that journalistic literature has been much better at reflecting the transactions between immigrants and natives in the making of urban American culinary cultures.

“discourses” come under pressure, as Zukin notes, but the whole gastronomic field has had to make room for strangers (see Ray 2007). One obvious illustration of this is the way in which restaurants, either owned by cosmopolitan immigrants such as Eric Ripert or less-credentialed protagonists such as Mohammad Rasool, have over the last forty years come to dominate the process of urban culinary value production. Almost every restaurant consecrated by the print media – New York Times, Zagat Surveys, or Michelin -- since the gastronomic revolution in the United States (circa 1971) are stand-alone restaurants (or very small chains) that distinguish themselves from big-money-yet-low-cultural-capital-establishments such as McDonald’s and KFC.

In this work I engage exclusively with Indian restaurateurs in my sample because I want to address the importance of tacit knowledge and hope to show the uses of the displaced body (in this instance, including *my* body) as a tool of inquiry. The restaurants I have analyzed here are products of investments ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000.<sup>12</sup> In terms of worth and income, my respondents are in the lower 40 percent of the US population. So capital and profit work here at the Braudelian level of competitive markets, where no one is rich, and if someone is lucky they make a living a notch below or a notch above the median household income (Braudel 1992). Yet, these are players of some consequence—granted, not dominance—in the emerging gastronomic world of star chefs, print-media critics, commentators and a handful of bloggers. The story here though propelled by people who come from elsewhere, is grounded in frictional social encounters on specific street corners that should restrain us from over-emphasizing flows and scapes that have come to dictate our recent conceptualizations.

---

<sup>12</sup> In a comparable study done by Zukin and her students (1995) she underlined a particular limitation for immigrant entrepreneurs: “Another constraint on immigrant entrepreneurs is the cost of opening a full-service restaurant in Manhattan. Investment in a lease, equipment, advertising, and décor can rise as high as \$250,000 to \$1 million, which prevents many immigrant entrepreneurs from moving beyond the immigrant sector into the mainstream of the industry” (1995: 182). Those are the numbers needed in 2010 for a mainstream, full-service restaurant in Manhattan, or in Muhammad Rasool’s words, for a beautiful, American place. Of course, at the upper reaches of restaurants such as Tabla and Vermillion, investments add up to tens of millions of dollars.

This project is about a different scale of entanglement between entrepreneurial capital and cultural symbols in the spatial transformation of a city than the one referenced by Sharon Zukin in the story of the Sony takeover of the AT&T building, the transformation of Rockefeller Center, and the upscaling of Bryant Park, all of which owe more to the collaborative monumentalism of corporations, the patrician class and municipal governments in mutual pursuit of majestic museums, parks and architectural complexes (1995: 7). Instead, my work draws attention to instances of entrepreneurship at the molecular level—the street—and the daily encounters in shops between immigrants and natives that produce much of the everyday sensorial cultures of cities such as New York, notwithstanding the modernist ambitions of its planners for ordered rectilinearity. Immigrants have repeatedly poured into this city and made it work in ways that defy high-modernist ambitions about how it should work. By living, working and playing in the city they change its shape.<sup>13</sup>

We also have the problem of constituting “discourse” too narrowly. The word “discourse” has become so distended by overuse in the academy that it is difficult to get a purchase on what is meant by it, beyond talk and power. I am tempted to abandon it. Instead, as a stop-gap measure I will limit my appropriation here to the way Johnston and Baumann use it, that is as the way signs about food and taste are used in print and the electronic media to make statements and produce a framework of intelligibility about them. In other words, “discourse” is understood as authorized representations. To indicate this specific use of “discourse,” (which is much narrower than Foucault’s) I will keep it within quotation marks throughout the paper.

Attention to practices in specific places (instead of “discourses” in a fleetingly thin world) allows

---

<sup>13</sup> To get a fuller understanding of the relationship between people, places, things and signs, what I address here has to be related eventually to high-finance, real estate, city governments and national and international capitalism, but I leave that task to others so that I can focus on the practical, worm’s-eye view of the world, at the level of textural granularity where active subjects are visible on city streets. (For views at higher levels of abstraction see Davis 1990; Zukin 1991, 1995, 2010; Willis 1995; Appadurai 1996; Castells 1996; Sassen 2001, 2006; Zardini 2005; Harvey 2006).

a better grasp of the world I am trying to describe. In that I want to pay attention to the gap between representations and practices that Michel de Certeau drew our attention to (1998).

The exclusion of immigrant restaurateurs combined with the restricted focus on gastronomic “discourse” may allow us to bind our project narrowly and hence render it doable, but in evacuating the very center of urban culinary production I think we would have failed to capture its most dynamic dimensions. I seek to correct that here by approaching the transactions in taste from the other end. I pay attention to particular stories of immigrant restaurateurs and make them run up against the silences in the established gastronomic and sociological narratives. “Discourses” and stories are related ways of organizing varieties of social experiences with more or less authorization, yet there is no way to completely sever one from the other. Power over storylines is always partial. Exclusive attention to “discourse” winds the circuitry of meaning too tightly and appear to drive authors inexorably towards textuality, away from the materiality of cities where culinary cultures, foodie aspirations and immigrant livelihoods intersect on co-produced street corners that smell different from the dry pages of magazines, books and web sites. The story is different if we are open to the sensual stimuli of big-city streets peopled by natives and immigrants, built with their sweat and toil, quarrels and collaborations. These olfactory, aural and textural microcosms of immigrants and natives, living, fighting, dreaming and interacting in this city of dreadful delight, must be at the center of our research on urban food cultures. Much depends on everyday practical relations in the shops, in cabs, in the curry-houses and subways, and scholars must pay attention to that density of social interactions so as not to let our lived world—of person, body, place and thing—dissolve into “discourse.”

Mirko Zardini, the curator of an exhibition organized by the Canadian Centre of Architecture held in Montréal (from October 25, 2005 to September 10, 2006) titled *Sense of the City*, has usefully reminded us that at this moment, “Critical thinking in this context is no longer driven by language, semiotics, text, and signs, but by the rediscovery of phenomenology,



experience, the body, perceptions, and the senses” (Zardini 2005: 23). David Howes, a leading protagonist in the sensorial revolution, explains:

The emergence of sensory studies, as this dynamic new area of inquiry could be called, has come at the end of a long series of turns in the human sciences. For instance ... there was the linguistic turn of the 1960s and 70s inspired by Saussurian linguistics (and Wittgenstein’s notion of language games) that gave us the idea of culture as ‘structured like a language’ or ‘text’ and of knowledge as a function of ‘discourse.’<sup>14</sup> This was followed by the pictorial turn of the 1980s, which emphasized the role of visual imagery in human communication—particularly in our ‘civilization of the image’—and gave rise to the ever-expanding field of visual culture studies. The 1990s witnessed two new developments: the corporeal turn, which introduced the notion of ‘embodiment’ as a paradigm for cultural analysis, and the material turn, which directed attention to the physical infrastructure of the social world, giving birth to material culture studies ... The sensorial revolution in the human sciences encompasses and builds on the insights of each of these approaches, but also seeks to correct for their excesses—offsetting the verbocentrism of the linguistic turn, the visualism of the pictorial turn, the materialism of the material turn, for the latter shift occludes the multisensoriality of objects and architectures even as it stresses their physicality—by emphasizing the dynamic, relational (intersensory, multimedia) nature of our everyday engagement with the world ... In place of ‘reading’ or ‘visualizing’ the city (or analyzing it as the ‘materialization’ of a given set of

---

<sup>14</sup> In a subsequent essay Howes notes that “The genealogy of this revolution would not be complete, however, without noting various openings towards the senses in the work of certain leading figures of twentieth-century thought, both social and philosophical. These precursors of the full-bodied, multisensory approach to the study of the human condition (which can be called ‘sensory studies’ for short) include the historians Lucien Febvre and Norbert Elias, the philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Luce Irigaray, the anthropologist Claude Lévi Strauss, and the sociologist Georg Simmel” (2005: 332).

social values), this essay delves into the significance of ‘sensing’ the city through multiple sensory modalities (Howes 2005: 322–23).

In this construction, the “senses become the sentinels or theoreticians of society and space. This sensualization of theory, which resists the traditional identification of theorizing with ‘gazing upon’ (in Greek, *theorein*) some object, opens up many avenues for sensing the city in bold and potentially liberating new ways” (Howes 2005: 326). I quote Howes at some length here partly because he provides us with handy mileposts for our theoretical journey. Furthermore, he hints at the use of the multi-sensorial register of our bodies—especially, smell, sound, touch and taste, in addition to the usual eyes and the mind—to produce a sensual theory of a body at work in a new locale, in the process transforming the basic infrastructure of a city in a lived rather than a planned way.

#### *Immigrant Restaurateurs and the Politics of Inhabitation*

I make an argument for a new sensory urbanism that pays attention to issues of habit and inhabitation in a new locale by drawing on the work of Ghassan Hage (1997). Hage critiques the obsessive cultural acquisitiveness of gastronomic cosmopolitans who cannot see beyond the feeding function of ethnic feeders, thereby producing a “multiculturalism without migrants,” which is linked to the international circulation of gastronomic conceptions rather than the circulation of migrants (1997: 118–19). For gastronomic cosmopolitans, ethnicity is “an object of experience rather than an experiential subject” (1997: 136). To cosmo-multiculturalism, Hage counterposes the multiculturalism of inhabitation—of real migrants—in complex, sometimes conflictual relationship, but always in negotiation with white folks and not-so-white others. That is a place where ethnicity is not detached from ethnic producers. His point is “to valorize a multiculturalism grounded in the reality of migrant home-building and intercultural interaction” (1997: 146). That is precisely what I seek in the immigrant restaurateurs’ designs on the world, and in doing so I will sharpen Hage’s insights about interrogating those sites where “both the eater and the feeder experience themselves as subjects” (1997: 146).

That kind of work on inhabitation also allows us to get away from the excessively pinched attitude of theoretical over-cautiousness towards ethnic food that belies the history of its appropriation by the counterculture to critique and re-invigorate the mainstream, which Warren Belasco describes in *Appetite for Change* (2006).<sup>15</sup> The study of food – especially when we abandon the abstraction called “food” and go after specific dishes, which is what people eat and cook -- and immigrant bodies is capable of generating epistemic implosions, where “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity,” can come alive and burn our fingers (Foucault 1980: 82). Cooking opens up the possibilities of what de Certeau has characterized as an economy of the gift, an aesthetics of tricks, and an ethics of tenacity that upgrades ordinary practices to the status of a theoretical object (1998: xxiii).

Theorists sometimes speak as if nothing exists between domination and resistance. As Scott (1985, 1992) and De Certeau (1988) have shown, the vast intermediate landscape of making do, of living, of making ends meet, of insinuating one’s intentions between the expectations of others, of poaching, of mimicking, of mocking, of explaining to white folks, of dismissing them, of interpreting the rest of the world to them, of plain fabrication of one’s self as the ponderous native informant, of producing hidden transcripts, of the gorgeous pleasures of subversion and subterfuge available to immigrant restaurateurs peddling in food as much as in notions of it, goes unnoticed. Binary conceptions of domination and resistance ignore the peculiar intimacy between the Anglo and the ethnic that has always shaped American cities and public cultures of eating;

---

<sup>15</sup> Others, such as Ashis Nandy (2003) and bell hooks (1992), have provided critiques of eating the other. Yet, both Nandy’s and hooks’ critiques, although targeting the colonizing white view, provide no room for ethnic subjects to talk back. Neither of them asks any of the ethnics (or relevant others under discussion) what they think of all this. That is partly a function of academic discipline. It seems one can say a lot in Philosophy and in Cultural Studies without asking anyone else what they think about the matter under full speculative elaboration. Thus Nandy and hooks appear as perverse inversions of Gustav Flaubert’s classic Orientalist appropriation of Kuchuk Hanem, the Egyptian courtesan exemplified by Edward Said as someone who was never allowed to speak for herself, never “represented her emotions, presence, or history.” Instead Flaubert “spoke for and represented her” (Said 1979: 6).

theorizing that kind of intimacy without occluding historical and persistent inequalities could be the source of new insight in our work.

Ethnicity is a classification system that allows practical activity and produces knowledge and domination. Domination is one of the things to pay attention to when discussing ethnicity. But there are other dimensions of ethnicity that demand our theoretical consideration. The ethnic entrepreneur in the heart of the Western metropolis conceives and offers the flavor of her peoples' experience by designing a small semi-public space and a menu, by hiring and managing the skilled hands that can reproduce her recipes. Such choreography is undertaken in the shadow of white anglophone demand (and a lot more than that as I hint above and show below), which nonetheless never overwhelms it.

The evidence of immigrant designs on the city is there but often “inaudibly and always smothered in a stupor of objects” (Merleau-Ponty 1969: 66). Much of the city is made and re-made by people too busy to spend time contemplating what they do and have done.<sup>16</sup> In *Passengenwerk* Walter Benjamin writes, “The revealing presentations of the big city are the works of those who have traversed the city absently, as it were, lost in thought or worry.”<sup>17</sup> My work focuses on the otherwise preoccupied ethnic restaurateur because s/he is the hinge between taste and toil—two streams of theoretical accounts that could be put in productive conversation. I talk about two immigrant restaurateurs in some detail here and in the process I bracket other perspectives.

#### *What's in a Name?*

The process of designing a restaurant can begin with the mere act of naming it. What shall we call it? There is a reason why all four Indian restaurants found in the 1949 Manhattan Telephone Directory—the earliest documentary cluster of Indian restaurants—are named India

---

<sup>16</sup> Even those reduced to documentary illegibility are not silent. The advantage of ethnographic work and interviews is of course, the recovery of fragile orality that history cannot bear witness to. This is also an argument for the kind of interdisciplinarity that historical sociology provides.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Michael Taussig's “Tactility and Distraction” in Lock and Farquhar (2007: 260).

Bengal Garden, India Prince, India Rajah and India Restaurant.<sup>18</sup> At the dawn of post-colonial nationalism such names must have made sense both to their South Asian entrepreneurs and American customers, which is also why the categorization of India Rajah under “Hindu” in a 1939 *New York Times* classifieds did not have staying power. The owner wasn’t Hindu, the chef de cuisine was “Ali Jan of Benares” (Ashley 1939: 100), and “India” became a better referent, both for the customer and the entrepreneur. But it took a while for the public and the experts to develop the necessary distinctions between Indian, Hindu, Parsee, Turkish and Arab as evidenced by the confusion in an early restaurant guide for New York City titled *Dining in New York* by Rian James (1930).

The Rajah, located west of Broadway on 48<sup>th</sup> Street, classified as a “Turkish (Parsee)” restaurant in the 1930 edition of *Dining in New York*, is described thus: “a dingy little red sign swings high over the stoop of an erstwhile aristocratic brownstone front. Upstairs you will find The Rajah, about as big as a medium-sized clothes-press, and not nearly as sanitary; but you’re in Turkey now—and if you were terribly fussy, you wouldn’t have gone to Turkey in the first place. Besides, the food is worth the trip” (1930: 65-66). One of the clues that this is probably Indian food (from our perspective today) is James’ description of it:

The table d’hote starts with Tamarind—a lemon-colored drink made from vegetables—as an appetizer. A watery, albeit true-to-type, native soup follows. Then, the real business of the Turkish dinner sets in. Choose lamb, chicken, or beef curry—oh, such a fiery curry sauce! A heaping plate of rice with an ample portion of cabbage is placed beside your curry. The trick is to pour your curried meat into the little well of the rice, mix thoroughly, and then enjoy ... You’ll enjoy your dinner, speculating about the other queer-looking diners, and learn,

---

<sup>18</sup> Although the Ceylon India Inn, established in 1913, is often considered the “first Indian restaurant” in New York City, if not in the United States, it does not figure in this specific listing (see Hart 1964: 1012). Nevertheless, that exclusion does not change the argument because “India” figures in this name too.

astonishingly enough, that all sheiks don't wear goatees, ride white horses and brandish swords (1930: 66–7).

In ranging widely, James conflates the Arab world with Turkey and India in a classic case of early twentieth-century orientalism. Some of the comestibles—such as the drink called Tamarind—appear in contradictory guise in different sources. Robert W. Dana, author of *Where to Eat in New York* (1948), writes about it as “pomegranate nectar,” which “is a sweet beverage boiled from the tamarind roots that grow on Indian riverbanks” (1948: 100). Despite confusing two different fruits with very different taste profiles—tamarind and pomegranate—and displacing the fruit with the root of the tamarind, adding the local color of ‘growing on Indian riverbanks’ is a desperate attempt at verisimilitude.<sup>19</sup>

Yet that parenthetical “Parsee” in the classification of The Rajah was too specific to be ignored. When I first ran into the reference, I wondered what a Parsee (a Zoroastrian exile from Persia to India) was doing in Manhattan with a Turkish restaurant, which had an Indian name (The Rajah), and advertised itself as “Hindu”? Later, I gathered from a number of other sources that The Rajah was once owned by Rustom Wadia, a Parsee from Bombay, who came to the US in 1923 to study engineering at Union College in Schenectady, New York (*India Abroad* 1992). He ate his first American meal in an Indian restaurant in Manhattan around the transportation hub in midtown, eventually becoming its co-owner in 1926, taking it over fully in 1944.

(Interestingly, a number of restaurants that appear for the first time in guidebooks and can be classified as new cuisines for Americans, such as Indian, Thai, Korean and Japanese, all first cluster midtown, while that is not the case with Chinese, Italian and Kosher restaurants, which cluster on the Lower East Side). So the name—The Rajah, the provenance of the food and the sign under which it was served, all had to be slowly sorted out over decades of transactions between immigrant proprietors, their own classificatory systems engaging with real and imagined

---

<sup>19</sup> Lawton Mackall identifies it more plausibly as “pomegranate cocktail (spiced juice, no alcohol)” (1948: 206).

customers, and with those of American newspaper critics, commentators and advertisers, and guidebook writers before the people and the food could be put in their mutually comprehensible category. What appear at first glance to be mere errors of classification are also traces of a process of transaction in type.

By 1959, “India” can still be found in some of the restaurant names, such as Bombay India, Ceylon India Inn, Pakistan India, etc. By the end of the 1960s, more specific places and non-place names were added to the repertoire, such as Punjab, Karachi, Koh-i-Noor, and Natraj, although clear national identifiers had to be positioned in small print underneath the names, such as “unique Pakistani, Indian cuisine” under Rajmahal or “Authentic Indian Curries” under Punjab. By 1979, newer restaurants such as Raga, Mumtaz, Nirvana, Shaheen and Tandoor no longer need “India” in their names (and the category was probably becoming overcrowded). By 1989, Dawat had to both explain itself and pull itself into gastronomic “discourse” by claiming that “*Dawat* Means Invitation to a Feast” and that they served “The ‘Haute’ Cuisine of India ... under the culinary supervision of Madhur Jaffrey, who has been called, ‘the finest authority on Indian cooking in America’ by Craig Claiborne.” They managed to say all that in their tiny advertisement in the NYNEX Yellow Pages (1988–89: 1,481).

- I: How did you come to name your restaurant Bread & Butter?
- Muhammad Rasool (MR): You see, I used to call it Taj Mahal but my business was not working. Day after day I dragged my tired body home on that [commuter] train.
- MR: One day I fell asleep. The train jolted to a halt. I woke up and looked around ... which is when it came to me.
- MR: No one, not one person in this compartment knows what Taj Mahal is, but each one of them knows about bread and butter, so to make my business run I had to change the name to Bread & Butter!

*From Naming to Cooking*

Walking down two steps from the sidewalk I find myself in a dark, low-ceilinged room. My eyes land on the gourd-shaped IKEA lamps over each table. They are drawn to a large calligraphic backdrop on the far wall that is a cross between a fluid Arabic verse from the Quran and the famous terracotta horse figurines from Bankura, which pay homage to Vishnu. Begum Hasina welcomes me as if she already knows me. Dacca is in the East Village in Manhattan on 6<sup>th</sup> Street—New York City’s own little stretch of Brick Lane—a block it shares with a dozen other Indian restaurants run by branching Bangladeshi expatriates descended from Sylheti *lascars* who, by jumping ship, have given us a network of curry houses stretching from Amsterdam, through London, to New York. Dacca is the project of three Bangladeshis linked by marriage—Hasina, the spirit occupying the place, her husband and her brother-in-law Dulun.<sup>20</sup> They opened the restaurant because, in their words, they wanted to bring Bengali home cooking to Americans.<sup>21</sup> So they have put *khichuri* (a rice and lentil mess that is the very apotheosis of domestic cookery) and *maacher jhaal* (fish in mustard sauce) on their menu. This has drawn some critical attention from reviewers on the web and food critics in the print media. On MenuPages.com, among a dozen ecstatic evaluations a typical one stated, “Best on the block ... [Dulun] and his family are warm and welcoming and ensure a great meal.” Peter Meehan noted in *The New York Times*, “I swore off the restaurants on the block, and anything on Sixth between Cooper Union and the F.D.R Drive. [Dacca] ... brought me back. Dacca is proof that interesting, authentic Indian cooking is not relegated to the outer reaches of the city.”

Dacca provides a variation on a theme. With an average entrée at \$13.02, Dacca sits among the middle third of all Indian restaurants in Manhattan. Of the 202 Manhattan restaurants that characterize themselves as Indian, there are 177 separate properties with distinct menus

---

<sup>20</sup> The names of the restaurant and the restaurateurs have been changed.

<sup>21</sup> I have drawn on a paper of one of my doctoral students, Sierra Burnett’s “Selling Ethnicity. Ethnic Restaurants and the Marketing of Ethnicity,” that she wrote in the Fall of 2007.



(while the rest are alternate properties of chains with the same menu, such as Baluchi's).<sup>22</sup> More than 80 percent of Indian restaurants in New York City can be characterized as the standard curry-house, of which Baluchi's is a good example.

Curry houses typically list appetizers such as *samosas*, soups such as *mulligatawny*, tomato and lentil, and various kinds of kebabs. They include *tandoori* breads, *biryanis* and *pulao*. Main courses include chicken, lamb and fish in pre-made base sauces with a last-minute twist such as *vindaloo* (add vinegar), *tikka masala* (add tomato paste and butter), *dopiaza* (add fried onions), and *makhni* (add butter). The vegetarian options are *chana masala*, *aloo gobi*, *saag paneer*, *mutter paneer*, *malai kofta* and *baingan bharta*; sides include mango chutney, tomato chutney, *raita* and pickles; and desserts such as *rasmalai*, *gulab jamun*, *kheer*, mango ice cream and *kulfi*. The names of these dishes are beginning to be standardized as a kind of global curry-house Hindustani, but they often carry traces of Bengali locution, such as *khichuri* (contra the Hindustani *khichdi*), *bendi mosala* (contra *vhindi masala*) and *luchi niramish* (contra *puri-bhaji*).<sup>23</sup> The reason why East Bengali accents abound in nominally Hindustani-looking menus is because currently about one-half of Indian restaurateurs in New York City are Bangladeshis.

In the context of rampant hybridity it is not surprising then that Muhammad Rasool from Lahore puts *vindaloo* from Goa on his menu in Manhattan. No one orders the *vindaloo* at Bread & Butter. It is too expensive at \$7.95. It may also be a bit too much for the crowd it caters to, but it is right there in smudged ink at number 23 on the menu. "A piquant ... curry from the famed Beach City of Goa, meat marinated in a unique spicy "masala" w/cumin seeds & potatoes." The language is formulaic, magical, ritual-like in its ubiquity here and in all low-cost Indian

---

<sup>22</sup> This data is from *MenuPages.com* gathered on 07/31/2009. In my judgment, *MenuPages* provides a more comprehensive listing than do *Zagat*, the *Yellow Pages*, *Yelp*, etc. On 11/29/2009 there were 202 self-identified Indian restaurants in Manhattan and Brooklyn, 85 in Queens, and a handful in the Bronx and Staten Island, bringing the total to about 300 in NYC.

<sup>23</sup> The subtle linguistic displacements here would be unavailable to a body unfamiliar with the ring of an East Bengali accent in West Bengali ears. The researcher's body embedded in details of tacit social practice is bristling with tools of inquiry unaccounted for in the typically single-minded pursuit of pure reason, and visibility.

restaurants, and points to something sad and touching, obvious and insistent, as revealed by the momentary confusion of a young man. Sebastian D'Souza is an American-born Bangladeshi who, along with a group of six intricately linked male family members, manages Sonar Bangla, one of the downtown Indian restaurants, a stone's throw from Ground Zero. When asked whether some of the dishes there have echoes of home, he surprisingly picks the *vindaloo*. He says, "Yes of course, we have it often at home ... my mother cooks it. Like most Bengalis we love our *vindaloo*." His father hastens to explain, "We are Catholic Bangladeshis, and *vindaloo* is Portuguese. So we have it often."

Sometimes there are further problems of turning into language what is obvious to the practiced body. Take for instance, a savory, lentil-stuffed, fried-dough appetizer called *kachori*.

Fig. 2: The Mystery of Kachori

**Kachori (or Ka-chori)** is listed in the following ways in 16 restaurants in Manhattan out of a total of 188 menus analyzed:

- = "too different to put into words, but recommended" at Amin
- = "too difficult to put into words, but recommended" at Bombay Grill, Baluchi's, India Place, Indigo, Indian Bistro, Sitar
- = Kachori Chaat "ask an Indian friend" at Chennai
- = "assorted fritters" at Curry in a Hurry
- = "deep fried lentil pastry w/mash potatoes, chic peas, & 3 sauces" at Kinara's Prix Fixe menu
- = "two chickpea & green pea balls, hot & sweet" at Madras Mahal under "appetizer from Gujarat"
- = "savory, lentils and potatoes filled pastry pocket topped with yogurt and tamarind chutney" at Nirvana
- = "dumplings filled with fresh lentils, seasoned with Gujarati spices and dry fruits. A specialty of Gujarat" at the relatively upscale Salaam Bombay
- = "crisp lentil dumpling stuffed with spiced chickpeas, crispies & drizzled with yogurt, mint & tamarind sauce" at Yuva as an appetizer
- = named but not described at Curry & Curry and Madina

It is intriguing how the *kachori* got on the menu and came to be named through a series of borrowings. What are the specific problems of translation that motivate the restaurateur to give up

(and then try to seduce us with his cheekiness)?<sup>24</sup> This difficulty in translating into English what is obvious to South Asians is the inverse of the problem of “curry” in Hannah Glasse’s time. A new-fangled dish appeared in the eighteenth-century English cookbook *The Art of Cookery* (1747), titled “To make a curry the India way.”<sup>25</sup> Language sometimes falls much shorter than the broader sensorial range we experience with our bodies—does it smell right, have the right crunch of puff pastry, does it have the brittle heat of dried red chilies?

Furthermore, the varieties of spellings for *kachori/katchori/kochuri/ka-chori* in today’s Indian restaurant menus in Manhattan echo the unsettled appropriation of *curree/curry/currey* in eighteenth-century English cookbooks and *pasta/paste* in twentieth-century American equivalents. Words and dishes settle into certain known things with prescribed dimensions (the prescription and names becoming more stringent with print) slowly among a community of producers, consumers and critics.

Of course, many of the steps in the process of transmission and translation are no longer remembered and cannot be traced back. These are forgotten stories: the way that *vindaloo* got on the menu at Bread & Butter (Rasool told me that he does not recall, “Perhaps taken from another menu?”); how *vindaloo* relates to Sebastian D’Souza’s mom’s cooking in Queens; how Floyd Cardoz’s “South Indian Mushroom Soup” with tamarind at the high-status and high-priced Tabla may or may not be a riff on it while simultaneously fleeing from it; why Madhur Jaffrey’s menu at Dawat (which she now disavows) puts its duck “*vindaloo*” within quotation marks.

#### *Critics Constituting a Cuisine and Their Expertise*

Until 1961 an authoritative native informant is always invoked in discussions of Indian food by *The New York Times*. On March 12, 1939, we see one of the earliest discussions of curry

---

<sup>24</sup> On April 3, 1965, Jean Hewitt provided the first and perhaps the only recipe for a “Spiced Gefilte Fish Kachori” translated as “Curried Gefilte Fish Cutlets,” provided by the chef at The Ceylon India Inn (Hewitt 1965: 20).

<sup>25</sup> Glasse (1747: 52); Davidson (1999: 236). Both these points became apparent to me only after reading the manuscript by an unnamed author titled “To Make a Curry the India Way” for the journal *Food & Foodways* in the summer of 2010. Here I must acknowledge that for which I cannot provide a reference.

in the context of gourmandise in an article by Charlotte Hughes.<sup>26</sup> It goes into a long and sophisticated discussion of the thing. “Curry is a very ancient dish, antedating Hollandaise sauce and apple pie by centuries.” It asserts that “Curry has come to be a lot more popular in New York in the last few years, with curry restaurants springing up here and there and with hotels putting curry dishes on their menus.”<sup>27</sup> She goes on to elaborate that “Curry powder is a blend of fifteen or twenty spices” that needs proper blending as explained by “Darmadasa, of the East India Curry Shop.” In 1946 Jane Nickerson, another *New York Times* reporter, depended on the proprietor of the same shop to explain curry, getting an answer colored by the typical exaggeration and bravado that a native informant displays towards what he construes to be a naïve American—“fifteen to twenty spices.” In 1948, an anonymous American reporter depended on C. B. Deva, an “import-export trader,” a transplanted native of Lahore and the proprietor of India Prince, to unpack the mystery of curry. Later, in 1955, Nickerson found Dharamjit Singh, a “crimson-turbaned Sikh.”<sup>28</sup>

Craig Claiborne, often consecrated as the first American restaurant critic, also depended initially on the exotic housewife as his tour guide. In his February 25, 1960 piece on Indian food Claiborne relied on Manorama Phillips.<sup>29</sup> “Miss Phillips is a diminutive, dark-haired young woman with a mercurial smile who has lived in the United States for nearly four years,” he describes. “When she arrived from India, the pangs of homesickness were severe and she literally dreamed of the dishes of her native land.” Professionally, Miss Phillips worked for the Government of India Trade Center and roomed with an American woman. Her three-room apartment was furnished with Indian accessories. “When she entertains, which is frequently, it is

---

<sup>26</sup> Charlotte Hughes, “For Gourmets and Others: Curry comes to the Table” *The New York Times*, March 12, 1939, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Neither “Hindu” nor “Indian” restaurants are listed in any of the following guidebooks: Appleton (1900); Rand, McNally & Co. (1901); Lewis, Scribner & Co. (1903); Moreno (1903); Merchants Association of New York (1906); Rand, McNally & Co. (1909); R. L. Polk & Co. (1920–21); Chappell (1925). So is the supposed ubiquity of Indian restaurants and curry a 1930s phenomenon?

<sup>28</sup> Jane Nickerson, “Food: A Touch of India in New York,” in *The New York Times*, September 19, 1955, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Craig Claiborne, “Native of New Delhi Prepares Indian Dishes Here,” in *The New York Times*, February 25, 1960, p. 22.

either for tea, when she serves a spiced tea punch, or for a curry dinner. Her guests are seated on pillows covered with brilliant fabrics. In keeping with tradition, flatware is never used at the table.” The article is accompanied by a six-by-six-inch photograph of Miss Phillips in her apartment, clad in a sari, and framed by exquisite Indian handcrafted textiles.

It points to the ratio of configuration between immigrant bodies, urban demand and cosmopolitan gastronomic dialogue that goes into the construction of a “discourse,” barely hammered into place by numerous performers with real and borrowed authority. The story of the curry, the *kachori* and the *vindaloo* connects “discourse” to practice, and to the problem of transplanting durable dispositions. Yet, the immigrant dreams not only of a better analogue for the *kachori* and the curry; his fantasies are more substantial.

- I: If you could change this place ... to make it your dream place, what would you do?
- Muhammad Rasool (MR): I will take this mirror out and put the picture there such as the scenery of Mohenjodaro. I will put a small stand there with three containers of soup. I will sell cheap soup, self-service soup, pita bread and put a grill there [at the window to the sidewalk]: serve *shawarma*, chicken *shawarma*, lamb *shawarma*.
- MR: I will put the clay oven—the *tandoor*—there. I will get a young guy with a cap [toque] on his head. We will just have meats in the *tandoor* and salads. I will call it Pakistani Grill!
- MR: If I was permitted in Islam to sell liquor, maybe as an exception, I would open a big restaurant ... still an Indian Pakistani place but beautiful like an American place.

Rasool would rebuild this corner of the city—pushing the glass-front out, putting the grill on the sidewalk, pursuing his customers with dreams of soup and shawarma. He could turn this into a Middle Eastern place, at some distance from South Asia.

Rasool came to the US with the burden of feeding his body and happened to eventually use it to feed his customers and his household as well. He came with his morals, motivations and aesthetic standards, all practically developed in his previous social context. He arrived with his

tongue, taste and hands tied to the Lahorian lower-middle-class milieu when he immigrated in 1988 at the age of 37. He learned to deploy his body, especially his hands and his tongue (both for talk and taste), in the midst of a dispositional crisis under the scrutiny of others. He brought memories of things he had eaten but never cooked, morals entwined with a division of labor at home and at work, and an insistent distinction between commerce and culture. He has crafted his place in this world that is not of his own making, and in the process has supplied what was demanded through his labors, turning his culture into commerce, which he resists and yet profits from. Rasool had to develop a sense of his new city, and yoke his senses to the making of a living in that city.

The ongoing sociological discussion—of taste, ethnic entrepreneurship, changing gastronomic categories, field theory, shared meaning in restaurant work and professional identity—can only partially account for Rasool.<sup>30</sup> Not in the sense that no sociology can ever fully explain an individual and his trajectory, but in the sense that scholars have failed to look at his menu, ask for his recipes, or even just seek his opinion in explaining transformations of taste in the city.<sup>31</sup> Rasool and many like him have peopled our cities for centuries. (Here I want to include myself on both sides of the equation). They have cooked for us, developed recipes in an implicit dialogue between their bodies and ours, crystallized that dialogue in thousands and thousands of menus strewn in archives, on the internet, and many more erased without a trace, but with rare exceptions have we ever taken this practical knowledge as a point of departure for an analysis of the world of taste.

When Rasool was asked, “Do you look at online reviews of your restaurant?” he provided a desultory response. It was clear that Rasool was unable or unwilling to play in the

---

<sup>30</sup> Johnston and Baumann 2007; Rao *et al.* 2003, 2005; Warde and Martens 2000; Warde *et al.* 1999; Warde 1997, 2009; Ferguson 1998, 2004; Ferguson and Zukin 1995; Fine 1996; Waldinger 1986, 2001; Aldridge and Waldinger 1990; Bailey 1987; Berger and Piore 1980.

<sup>31</sup> Fine (1995, 1996), Ferguson (2004) and Rao *et al.* (2005) do pay attention to the details of menus, media and recipes. But their concerns do not include immigrants and the processes of transplanting bodies. Sharon Zukin (2010), on the other hand, does consider immigrants, but not the processes of cooking, skill and embodiment.

gastronomic world of Manhattan, which is very different from the position of another entrepreneur I now want to bring into the picture. She also brings a very different approach to the embodied materiality of cooking and entrepreneurship. She still carries much of the palatal sense of her pre-immigration being and is also adept at translating her practices to perform in the gastronomic field of Manhattan. And she seemingly has the dual advantages of a little more money than Rasool and a lot more cultural capital.

*Vada Pao: Mumbai Street Food in New York City as imagined by a Bengali*

Vada Pao is indistinguishable from any small West Village eatery. It is narrower than Bread & Butter, sitting tightly between other restaurants. The sidewalk is narrow too, but less crowded, with hardly a delinquent in sight. The foot traffic is younger, calmer, whiter, and characterized by touristy wanderings rather than the grim purpose and raw ambition of immigrants on the move. When we entered Vada Pao in the early afternoon, the sidewalk was devoid of traffic and the place appeared to be slowly stirring from a tropical siesta. The only thing missing was a slowly whirring ceiling fan muddling the heat amongst the creeping bougainvillea.

Chitrita Mukherjee is the entrepreneur behind Vada Pao.<sup>32</sup> She is 34 years old, a comfortably anglophone Indian immigrant, born in Kolkata (Calcutta), but dreaming up a place like Mumbai (Bombay) in New York City. When we asked her, “What would be your ethnic self-identification?” she seamlessly suggested the more cosmopolitan phrase “South Asian,” rather than the narrower “Indian.” Rasool’s imagination is tied to the nation and the taxi driver’s occupation in the big city. Mukherjee’s connection was to the world, the region in it, and her professional training as a designer. Her handiwork has garnered substantial critical attention in the world of gastronomic “discourse” as “a sleek sandwich shop that specializes in upmarket spins on Bombay-style street food, with a focus on *pao*—meat and vegetable sammies served like sliders on *ghee*-griddled buns.”<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Once again, names and identities have been changed.

<sup>33</sup> <http://newyork.timeout.com/articles/restaurants-bars/38681/35-best-new-cheap-eats>

Fig 3: A Portion of Vada Pao's Menu

- **Pao Sliders or Kathi Roll:** Choose any filling below:
  - **Pao \$3**                      **Kathi Roll \$5**                      {Add Egg \$1}
  - **Vada**
  - Potato, chickpea flour, coconut garlic chutney
  - **Bhaji**
  - Mix vegetables, kutchumber salad, lemon juice
  - **Spinach Lentil Tikki**
  - Tomato mustard chutney, chickpeas, chilli mayonnaise
  - **Tandoori Achari Paneer**
  - Pickle marinade, mint yogurt, roasted peppers, mano chutney
  - **Unda Omlette**
  - Eggs, onion, green chillies, chilli garlic ketchup
  - **Chapli Kebab**
  - Ginger, chilli garlic ketchup, tomatoes, lettuce
  - **Chicken Tikka**
  - Tandoori chicken, mint chutney, roasted onions
  - **Shami Kebab**
  - Minced lamb, lentil, kutchumber salad, mint yogurt
  - **Tandoori Pulled Goat Leg**
  - Kutchumber salad, cilantro, lemon juice, Mexican sour cream
  - **Parsi Beef Keema**
  - Mince beef, coriander cumin masala, tomato

I: What is the concept here?

Chitrita Mukherjee (CM): *Vada pao* has a very strong, authentic, regional identity as Mumbai street food. Plus we wanted to streamline our operations. We went with our interpretation of the *pao* as a slider.

I: What brought you to this?

CM: I came to the US to do my Master's in architecture and urban design at Columbia University. I was attracted by The Parson School's program in lighting. I got my Master's in Lighting Design.

I: How did you get to food?

CM: I was fascinated by the food scene here [in the US]. We loved all the choices available to us. We thought Indian food had this market gap where you could find very expensive, good Indian



food, or two-day old curries. We wanted fresh Indian food, which would be portable, sold at a value price, to students and young professionals. To people like us.

I: Let us talk a little more about the concept of Vada Pao. How did you get to it? Why?

CM: I had my baby shower at my friend's restaurant and I was talking to her that I needed a change. She said she wanted to do something outside of her current venture. We started discussing concepts and hoped to learn from our mistakes and missteps.

I: You are Bengali, why not a Kolkata (Calcutta) concept?

CM: I don't think the repertoire of Kolkata street food is large enough to provide us with a range. You have *kathi* roll (which we have), *jhaal muri*, *puchka*. The Bombay repertoire both works better and is underserved. For instance a Delhi concept would also work with *parathas* and kebabs. But no one does *vada pao*—only two or three places do it in Queens but they don't do it right. Plus a slider works as a good translation of *pao*.

I: Is the Delhi concept crowded?

CM: Yes ... in a sense that is generic Indian restaurant food now.

I: I was surprised by the name Vada Pao, because it is so local and specific. Weren't you afraid that it might not make any sense to your audience?

CM: Yes, I worry about it. My fallback position [laughs] is that I can always go back to lighting design if the concept fails.

I: How many customers do you have in a typical weekday and on the weekend? If you were to guess their demographics what would it be?

CM: We have about 100 customers on a typical weekday. And about 150 customers on an average weekend day. My weekday and late-night customers are about 30 percent visibly Indian and 70 percent non-Indian, probably young professionals and students. On weekends I have more Indian families coming from New Jersey and Philadelphia for the stuffed *parathas* and now *vada pao*. My check average is between \$8–\$9.

I: What were your thoughts in designing this place?

CM: Lower-end version of high-end cuisine. A lot of our design was influenced by trying to do it in the cheap and yet make a statement. Since the concept is Mumbai street food we wanted to put up a large image of the VT train station [in Mumbai]. Earlier, this wall had a plain finish, now it is a textured finish, a slightly unfinished look, a little like a *dhaba*. For the tables I wanted to get a distressed look as in a *dhaba*—Indian street food eatery—where tables have a lot of graffiti. But instead of graffiti we wanted iconic Mumbaiker images such as of the cricketer Sachin Tendulkar.

I: Are the cooks Indian?

CM: I have two Indians (one Gujarati, one Mumbaiker), one Mexican and one Nepali in the kitchen. The cook is Indian, Goanese, who has cooked at The Taj in Bombay, then he worked on a ship (that is how he came here), and he has worked in a couple of restaurants here in the US.

I: Did the cook bring his recipes or did you teach him all the recipes?

CM: Well, a little of both. He knew how to make chicken *tikka*, *achari* chicken and *bhaji*. We asked him to follow our recipes, and the spice mix is our own.

I: Did you consider hiring a chef who did not have an Indian background?

CM: We didn't know where to source the chef from. We were asking our friends in the Indian restaurant business and putting ads in Indian newspapers. That is where we were getting our chefs. That is how we got Mohan.

I: You said you cook at home. How did you learn to cook?

CM: I come from a joint family with thirteen to fourteen people. Sunday would be a day when everyone cooked something. It was very competitive. I had an uncle who had studied for a hotel management degree but did not pursue a career in it. Yet, every time we would make a dish he would ask us to break it down, analyze it. That is something I took for granted. I thought if this is going to be my vision then I should put together the menu and the recipes.

I: How would you characterize your relationship to the media?

CM: For the first time we have a PR rep. We were covered very early on by *New York Magazine*. It seems Florence Fabricant came and ate here and wrote about us. I did not even know that she had eaten here until I saw the write-up.

I: Do you read online reviews?

CM: Yes, all the time. We have a *Google* alert every time someone posts something on *Yelp* or *MenuPages*; we get a notification. I read it.

I: Has customer feedback influenced your concept?

CM: No, I wouldn't say that it has. But it has influenced our service. Most of the feedback is that the food is good but the wait is too long or the service is bad. I make use of customer feedback to inform the cooks and servers.

#### *Transactions in Taste*

Rasool and Mukherjee have designed their restaurants in Manhattan within the constraints of their material, symbolic and bodily resources (of skill and imagination). One started with a \$35,000 investment, a Bachelor's degree (from Pakistan), and the limits of his Punjabi-Pakistani masculine habitus. He didn't know how to cook. Now he doesn't want to cook. That is women's work, may be even servants' labor. His food, his location in the city, his labor force, the limits of his skills and imagination, have set his restaurant adrift from even any generic notion of Indian food. On the other hand, he is more flexible, less invested culturally in his construction of the place, and thus willing to play to the audience that he gets, almost all of which is local foot traffic. I walk past his restaurant almost every day, morning and evening. I have rarely seen a visibly South Asian customer in there. Rasool characterizes his customer base as "5 percent Indian and 95 percent local." What he is selling more than anything else are gyros, french fries, chicken curry and rice for lunch and dinner; eggs, toast and coffee for breakfast. Less than six months after our interview the Urdu sign is gone, replaced by two large announcements for "\$5.00 lunch or dinner." Since he does not cook, his menu and recipes are drifting more and more towards the habitus of his "Mexican" cook and their joint understanding of American tastes,

specified by his audience of sidewalk vendors and commuters. With less capital and less embodied skill, Rasool's transactions with his customers have to concede a lot more ground than Mukherjee's, but he can fulfill their needs for nourishment. She, on the other hand, responds to her customers' demands for better service but not for different food. She is more successful at translating the *pao* as a slider, which is a product of her greater familiarity with Anglophone-American popular culture.

Rasool does not want his three grown children or his wife to work in his restaurants. He has enough resources to be able to keep them away, unlike, for instance, the twelve Latino vendors of tacos, tamales and *pupusas* in Red Hook, Brooklyn, studied by Sharon Zukin (2010).<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Rasool has the ability to pay rent of \$8,000 per month, and his legal status as well as his Bachelor's degree, which is productive of his competency in spoken English, did make some difference during the process of applying for various permits and paperwork. However, Zukin (2010) shows that despite the absence of these advantages, the more materially impoverished Red Hook vendors have been quite successful in latching onto the gastronomic "discourse" of the city.<sup>35</sup>

The Red Hook vendors have effectively used numerous intermediaries such as immigrant advocates and foodie bloggers to successfully legitimize their vending and accumulate substantial cultural capital as an authentic urban space. In contrast, Rasool fails to draw himself into that "discourse."<sup>36</sup> Yet, he does have some degree of cultural capital, some of it embodied in his

---

<sup>34</sup> What the vendors paid to regularize their carts wasn't that different from Muhammad Rasool's upfront costs (about \$35,000). According to Sean Basinski of The Street Vendor Project, there are about 12,000 vendors in NYC (in 2009) out of which, in all probability, about 5,000 are food vendors (no one knows exactly because more than half are illegal). Major vendor languages of Lower Manhattan in 2009 were Bengali (21%), English (20%), Mandarin or Cantonese (15%), Farsi (10%), Fulani (8%), Arabic (7%), Spanish (6%), French (2%), Tibetan (2%), Urdu (2%), Wolof (2%) and other (5%). All data from Center for Urban Pedagogy and The Street Vendor Project (2009).

<sup>35</sup> The Red Hook vendors also don't seem to create a dichotomy between culture and commerce, and in fact frame their commercial venture as a cultural one, and I think that is one of the reasons they are more successful in playing to the gastronomic audience.

<sup>36</sup> As Stacie Orell a student of mine and my copy-editor pointed out, part of their success may be attributed to the recent perception of Red Hook as being an up-and-coming trendy neighborhood whereas Rasool is in a neighborhood that doesn't have that sort of cultural cache. Maybe the vendors chose their location wisely,

tongue as language, and as taste, which he can remember. Furthermore, he is forced to fit his somatic experience of Pakistani food into the category of Indian food, which for reasons either of translation or global hierarchical valuation appears to work better in Manhattan. For instance, as a category in the Restaurant Guides published inside Manhattan telephone directories of the last five decades, “Pakistani” fails to take hold. A high of six Pakistani restaurants in 1969 falls to three the next decade, then two, one, and finally none at all in 2009. The relative paucity of national cultural capital available to a Pakistani practically dictates that Rasool has to concede to the demands of his audience. Yet, he resents being lumped within the category of “Indian” given the work of imagining contested national communities in South Asia.

Rasool’s cultural advantages are less than those of Mukherjee, who started with almost \$100,000, a Master’s degree from a premier American university, and the vocabulary of design that allowed her to connect the rough newness of the vernacular to the smooth texture of the cosmopolitan omnivore. Hence, only she can imagine the common street foods of India as containers of capital. Approached through a designer’s eyes, Mukherjee grasps their pop-cosmopolitan possibilities. But those are not her only advantages. She can cook, partly because as a South Asian woman of a particular cohort, she must. She could explain to us the art of making good stuffed *parathas* and the analogic taste of a *kathi* roll. Yet she also claims more than she can legitimately command when she minimizes her cook’s somatic memory of making chicken *tikka*, *achari* chicken and *bhaji*.

That is not the whole story either—of gender, generation and class. In Mukherjee’s words, her “hotel management uncle” delivered an unusual familiarity with cooking, which is an extraordinary accomplishment against the grain of *bhadrolok* (proper, middle-class people) masculinity (see Janeja 2010). This is partly where biography exceeds sociology. Cooking skills and the ability to access what she calls a “global Indian” imagination accentuated by an

---

but then again, vendors are by definition mobile, whereas a storefront is not. Did the vendors really draw themselves into the “discourse” or did the “discourse” find them by virtue of their locale? A fuller discussion has to engage with all these very good points.

accidental catering gig for the New York premier of *Slumdog Millionaire* (after which the call of the *vada pao* was more insistent), connects her to networks that are crucial to her self-conception as a successful entrepreneur. As a designer, she coped very well with fitting her bodily habits into a new, albeit tight, space in this large city, hinging her economics to aesthetics, habits to consciousness, and inhabitation in a locale to global gastronomic “discourse.”

By design I mean not only the physical infrastructure of the restaurant, but also the concept, the name and the menu, and the ways of reproducing it through investment, recruitment of labor, recipes and cooking. I use the word *design* because: (1) of its ability to convey an attempt to re-make the world within material and conceptual constraints; (2) of its functionality—you have to deliver a certain kind of food, repeatedly, at a price, at a place; and (3) it relates the body to space, economics to aesthetics, habits to consciousness, and inhabitation in a locale to global gastronomic “discourse.” I focus exclusively on the entrepreneur, moving the customer and the worker to the margins. S/he literally is the bridge between capital and culture, and I want to interrogate that intersection between the aesthetic and the economic, taste and toil, and how the practiced body holds the two together despite the academic separation of such concerns in far-flung disciplines of economics, economic sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, marketing, and design.

Yet as a particular economic enterprise Vada Pao failed to meet Mukherjee’s income expectations and she had to close down her business. Rasool’s restaurant survives today, more than a year after our interview, while Vada Pao was sold, replaced by another Bollywood concept. Rasool is more successful in relocalizing his practice precisely to that street corner between Papaya Dog and CVS, perhaps because he was never attuned to the global gastronomic “discourse” on Indian food. What I initially presumed to be Mukherjee’s advantage—attention to the global hierarchy of taste—turned out to be her precise disadvantage, making her unfit to occupy the street corner she had landed on.

This work provides a critique of the one-dimensional sociology of consumer tastes, arguing that it is productive to pay attention to immigrant restaurateurs who rarely figure in such discussions and urges scholars to do so by getting closer to the food and the doing. In the process, it draws attention to the blinders that come with disciplines, despite the advantages of framing, depth and density they afford us.

Of course, I have learned much from sociology, anthropology, and history. This study draws on the innovation wrought by the sociology of popular culture in taking new genres seriously, and the plea of social historians to incorporate new groups into historical scholarship. In the process of narrating the substantive stories, I engage with points of contact and sites of contestation between the infant field of Food Studies (mostly born outside the academy in the realm of journalism) and its godparents in cultural and social studies. Here, Food Studies may have the momentary advantage of being “journalistic,” which is usually a poisoned chalice in the academy. My current institutional location allows me to stitch immigrant corporeality both to the materiality of food and to the sociality of the body and attend to its sensorial range, in the process making elbow room for Food Studies in the narrow confines of already constituted disciplines, thereby replicating in a way Rasool’s and Mukherjee’s work in the city. We have to wait and see whose fate I inherit.

It is often the social friction of a body in motion that makes the naturalized body visible; thus the immigrant is the focus of this work not only because s/he has been absent from the discussion of taste but also because s/he reveals more clearly what cannot be seen in grounded native practices. This is the opposite of the classical anthropological operation of a transgressive ethnographer going to study the native. Instead, here it is the boundary-crossing immigrant revealing to the native the truth about his city, at a moment when exotic tastes demanded by a roving cosmopolitan appetite must be fed in a furious gesture of appeasement. Immigrant hands and imaginations, along with capital, both financial and cultural, must be put to work.

My trajectory is akin to Loïc Wacquant's terminus at the black boxer's body in an attempt to understand his milieu of young black men on the South Side of Chicago (in *Body & Soul*, 2004). He wanted an entrée into the black, masculine world that was closed to him as a white, transplanted, French student of Pierre Bourdieu. At the end, it was through his somatic reputation as a boxer that he became "brother Louis." In my case, I have tried to understand what was obscure and confusing to me. My body's place in a new world was revealed in the process of following the bodies of other immigrants, which has driven me, like Wacquant, "to thematize the necessity of a sociology not only *of* the body, in the sense of object, but also *from* the body, that is, deploying the body as tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge" (2004: viii).<sup>37</sup> My project seeks to pay homage to the work of Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, James Scott and Richard Sennett who urge us to insert the author's body into a body of doctrine, and to cultivate ways of knowing that allows for the intrusion of the everyday into theory and history.

---

<sup>37</sup> My attempt here mirrors one of the leading goals of theoretical sociology, which is to imbricate phenomena within a structure. On one hand, as Levi-Strauss put it long ago, ethnography is a means of producing knowledge in which "[t]he observer apprehends himself as his own instrument of observation" (1976: 35). On the other hand, the contribution of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology was precisely that our perceptions and conceptions of the world are shaped by our notions of our own body. Sociology over the last generation has sought to mediate between these points by way, for instance, the work of some of the most cited sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu's work on habitus, and Anthony Giddens' on structuration.



*References:*

- Aldridge, H. E. and Waldinger, R. 1990. Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship. *Annual Review of Sociology* 16: 111–35.
- Appadurai, A. 1988. How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1): 3–24.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appleton, D. and Co. 1900. *Appleton's Dictionary of New York and Its Vicinity*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- Ashley, D. 1939. *Where to Dine in Thirty-Nine. 200 Recipes by Famous Chefs*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Bailey, T. 1985. A Case Study of Immigrants in the Restaurant Industry. *Industrial Relations* 24: 205–21.
- Bailey, T. 1987. *Immigrant and Native Workers. Contrasts and Competition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bailey, T. and Waldinger, R. 1991. The Changing Ethnic/Racial Division of Labor. In M. Castells and J. H. Mollenkopf (eds) *Dual City: Restructuring New York*. New York: Russell Sage Publications, pp. 43–78.
- Belasco, W. 2006. *Appetite for Change. How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966-1988*. New York: Pantheon.
- Benjamin, W. 1982. *Passengenwerk*. Suhrkamp Verlag: Auflage.
- Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M., and Wright, D. 2009. *Culture, Class and Distinction*. New York: Routledge.
- Berger, S. and Piore, M. 1980. *Dualism and Discontinuity in Industrial Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Braudel, F. 1992. *Civilization and Capitalism. 15<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> Century, Volume 1: The Structure of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bray, Francesca. 1997. *Technology and Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Buettner, E. 2008. “Going for an Indian”: South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain. *The Journal of Modern History* 80: 865–901.
- Bugge, A. B. and Lavik, R. 2010. Eating Out. A Multifaceted Activity in Contemporary Norway. *Food, Culture & Society* 13(2): 215–40.
- Castells, M. 1996. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Center for Urban Pedagogy and The Street Vendor Project. 2009. *Vendor Power. A Guide to Street Vending in New York City*. New York: Center for Urban Pedagogy.
- Chappell, G. S. 1925. *The Restaurants of New York*. New York: Greenberg Publishers.
- Chatterjee, P. 1993. *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Claiborne, C. 1960. Native of New Delhi Prepares Indian Dishes Here. *The New York Times*, February 25, p. 22.
- Cole, M. 1788. *The Lady's Complete Guide*. London : printed for G. Kearsley.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Rochberg-Halton, E. 1981. *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dana, R. W. 1948. *Where to Eat in New York*. New York: Current Books, Inc, A. A. Wyn Publishers.
- Davidson, A. 1999. *The Oxford Companion to Food*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, M. 1990. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage.
- De Certeau, M., Girard, L. and Mayol, P. 1998. *The Practice of Everyday Life. Volume 2*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Elias, N. 1982. *The Civilizing Process*. London: Blackwell.
- DiMaggio, P. and Mukhtar, T. 2004. Arts Participation as Cultural Capital in the United States,

- 1982-2002: Signs of Decline? *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* 32: 169-94.
- Ferguson, P. 1998. A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19<sup>th</sup> Century France. *American Journal of Sociology* 104(3): 597–641.
- Ferguson, P. 2004. *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferguson, P. and Zukin, S. 1995. What’s Cooking? *Theory and Society* 24(2): 193–99.
- Fine, G. A. 1992. The Culture of Production: Aesthetic Choices and Constraints in Culinary Work. *The American Journal of Sociology* 97(5): 1,268–1,294.
- Fine, G. A. 1995. Wittgenstein’s Kitchen: Sharing Meaning in Restaurant Work. *Theory and Society* 24(2): 245–269.
- Fine, G. A. 1996. *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fisher, T. C. G. and Preece, S. B. 2003. “Evolution, Extinction, or Status Quo: Canadian Performing Arts Audiences in the 1990s.” *Poetics* 31: 69-86.
- Foner, N., Rumbaut, R. G., and Gold, S. J. 2000. *Immigration Research for a New Century. Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, trans Colin Gordon *et al.* New York: Pantheon.
- Glasse, H. 1747. *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*. London: the author.
- Granovetter, M. S. 1995. The Economic Sociology of Firms and Entrepreneurs. In A. Portes (ed) *Economic Sociology of Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage, pp. 128–65.
- Hage, G. 1997. At Home in the Entrails of the West: Multiculturalism, ‘Ethnic Food’ and Migrant Home-building. In H. Grace *et al.* (eds) *Home/World. Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney’s West*. Annandale, NSW: Pluto, pp. 99–153.
- Hart. H. H. 1964. *Hart’s Guide to New York City*. New York City: Hart Publishing Company.

- Harvey, D. 2006. *Spaces of Global Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Heisler, B. S. 2008. The Sociology of Immigration. In C. B. Bertell and J. F. Hollifield (eds) *Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines*. New York: Routledge, pp. 83–111.
- Hewitt, J. 1965. Gefilte Fish Finds Place on an International Menu. *The New York Times*, April 3, 1965, p. 20.
- Highmore, Ben. 2009. The Taj Mahal in the High Street. The Indian Restaurant as Diasporic Popular Culture. *Food, Culture & Society* 12(2): 173–90.
- hooks, b. 1992. Eating the Other. In *ibid. Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, pp. 21–39.
- Howes, D. 2005. Architecture of the Senses. In M. Zardini (ed) *Sense of the City. An Alternate Approach to Urbanism*. Montréal, Canada: Lars Müller Publishers, pp. 322–33.
- Hughes, C. For Gourmets and Others: Curry comes to the Table. *The New York Times*, March 12, 1939, p. 53
- India Abroad*. 1992. Restaurateur. XXIII (13): 44.
- India Abroad*. 2001–2009. Weekly Newspaper. New York: India Abroad.
- India Tribune*. 2001–2009. Weekly Newspaper. Chicago: India Tribune
- James, R. 1930. *Dining in New York*. New York: John Day Company.
- James, R. 1934. *Dining in New York*. New York: John Day Company.
- James, R. 1938. *Dining in New York*. New York: John Day Company.
- Janeja, M. 2010. *Transactions in Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Johnston, J. and Baumann, S. 2007. Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing. *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (1): 165–204.
- Johnston, J. and Baumann, S. 2010. *Foodies. Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*. New York: Routledge.
- Landa, J. 1981. A Theory of the Ethnically Homogenous Middleman Group: An Institutional Alternative to Contract Law. *Journal of Legal Studies* 10: 349–62.

- Lehmann, G. 2003. *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Totnes, Great Britain: Prospect Books.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1976. *Structural Anthropology, Volume 2*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lewis, Scribner & Co. 1903. *Where and How to Dine in New York*. New York: Lewis, Scribner & Co.
- Light, I. 1972. *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Light, I. and Bonacich, E. 1988. *Immigrant Entrepreneurs*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lock, M. and Farquhar, J. (eds) 2007. *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life (Body, Commodity, Text)*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Lopez Sintas, J. and Garcia Álvarez, E. 2004. "Omnivore versus Univore Consumption and Its Symbolic Properties: Evidence from Spaniards' Performing Arts Attendance." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* 32: 463-83.
- Mackall, L. 1948. *Knife and Fork in New York. Where to Eat. What to Order*. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co.
- Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory. 1906. New York.
- Manhattan Telephone Directory. Winter 1929–1930. New York.
- Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory. Spring–Summer 1939. New York.
- Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory. May 1949. New York.
- Manhattan Telephone Directory. Yellow Pages. 1959. New York.
- Manhattan Yellow Pages. New York City Area Code 212. 1969. New York.
- Manhattan Yellow Pages. New York City Area Code 212. 1978–1979. New York.
- Manhattan Yellow Pages. Manhattan Area Code 212. 1988–1989. New York: NYNEX.
- Manhattan Yellow Pages. Area Code 212/917. May 1998–April 1999. New York: Bell Atlantic.
- Manhattan Yellow Pages. Area Codes 212, 646, 917. October 2007. New York: Verizon.

- Merchants Association of New York, The. 1906. *Pocket Guide to New York*. New York: Merchants Association of New York.
- Meehan, P. 2004. Positively Sixth Street. *New York Times*, September 1.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. 1969. *The Prose of the World*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Molotch, H. 2003. *Where Stuff Comes From: How Toasters, Toilets, Cars, Computers and Many Other Things Come to Be as They Are*. New York: Routledge.
- Moreno, S. M. 1903. *Guia de Nueva York*. Nueva York: Union Square Hotel.
- Nandy, A. 2003. Ethnic Cuisine: the significant other. In Geeti Sen. (ed.). *India. A National Culture?* New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 246-251.
- Nickerson, J. 1946. News of Food. *The New York Times*, 7 September, 12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1955. Food: A Touch of India in New York. *The New York Times*, September 19, p. 20.
- Park, K. 1997. *The Korean American Dream. Immigrants and Small Business in New York City*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Peterson, R. A. 1997. The Rise and Fall of Highbrow Snobbery as a Status Marker. *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* 25: 75-92.
- Peterson, R. A. and Kern, R. M. 1996. Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore. *American Sociological Review* 61, 1: 900-907.
- Peterson, R. A. and Simkus, A. 1992. How Musical Taste Groups Mark Occupational Status Groups. Pp. 152-68 in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Lamont, M and Fournier, M. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Polk, R. L. & Co. 1920–1921. *Trow General Directory of New York City*. New York: R. L. Polk & Co.
- Portes, A. (ed) 1995. *The Economic Sociology of Immigration. Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Rand, McNally & Co. 1901. *Handy Guide to New York City*. New York: Rand, McNally & Co.

- Rand, McNally & Co. 1909. *Handy Guide to New York City*. New York: Rand, McNally & Co.
- Rao, H. Monin, P., Durand. R. 2003. Institutional Change in Tocque Ville: Nouvelle Cuisine as an Identity Movement in French Gastronomy. *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 795–843.
- Rao, H. Monin, P., Durand. R. 2005. Border Crossing: Bricolage and the Erosion of Categorical Boundaries in French Gastronomy. *The American Sociological Review* 70(9): 868–991.
- Ray, K. 2007. Ethnic Succession and the New American Restaurant Cuisine. In D. Beriss and D. Sutton (eds). *The Restaurants Book. Ethnographies of Where We Eat*. New York: Berg, pp. 97-114.
- Rogers, A. and Vertovec, S. (eds) 1995. *The Urban Context. Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis*. Oxford: Berg.
- Ruggles, S., J. T. Alexander, K. Genadek, R. Goeken, M. B. Schroeder, and M. Sobek. 2004. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series [IPUMS]: Version 3.0, Machine-readable Database*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center.
- Said, E. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sassen, S. 1995. Immigration and Local Labor Markets. In A. Portes (ed) *Economic Sociology of Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage, pp. 87–127.
- Sassen, S. 2001. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sassen, S. 2006. *Cities in a World Economy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, an imprint of Sage Publications.
- Schleifer, D. 2010. Reforming Food: How Trans-fats Entered and Exited the American Food System. Ph.D. Dissertation, NYU, Sociology, 2010. Paper presented at *Feast/Famine: A Food Studies Colloquia*, New York, October 15, 2010.
- Scott, J. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sennett, R. 1994. *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: Norton.
- Small, M. L. 2009. *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. 1988. Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, pp. 271–313.
- Taussig, M. 1992/2007. Tactility and Distraction. In M. Lock and J. Farquhar (eds). *Beyond the Body Proper. Reading The Anthropology of Material Life*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, pp. 259-265.
- Vander Stichele, A. and Laermans, R. 2006. Cultural Participation in Flanders: Testing the Cultural Omnivore Thesis with Population Data. *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* 34: 45-64.
- van Eijck, K. 2001. Social Differentiation in Musical Taste Patterns. *Social Forces* 79: 1163-84.
- Wacquant, L. 2004. *Body & Soul. Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Waldinger, R. 1986. *Through the Eye of the Needle: Immigrants and Enterprise in the New York Garment Industry*. New York: New York University Press.
- Waldinger, R. 1990. Immigrant Enterprise in the United States. In S. Zukin and P. DiMaggio (eds) *Structures of Capital: The Social Organization of the Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 395–424.



- Waldinger, R. 1992. Taking Care of the Guests: The Impact of Immigrants on Services – An Industry Case Study. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 16: 97–113.
- Waldinger, R. (ed) 2001. *Strangers at the Gates*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Warde, A. 1997. *Consumption, Food & Taste*. London: Sage.
- Warde, A. 2009. Imagining British Cuisine. *Food, Culture & Society* 12(2): 151–71.
- Warde, A, Martens, L., and Olsen, W. 1999. Consumption and the Problems of Variety: Cultural Omnivorousness, Social Distinction and Dining Out. *Sociology* 33(1): 105–27.
- Warde, A. and Martens, L. 2000. *Eating Out. Social Differentiation Consumption and Pleasure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Westwood, S. and Bhachu, P. (eds) 1988. *Enterprising Women. Ethnicity, Economy and Gender Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Willis, C. 1995. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Zardini, M. (ed) 2005. *Sense of the City. An Alternative Approach to Urbanism*. Montréal: Canadian Center for Architecture and Lars Müller Publishers.
- Zavisca, J. 2005. The Status of Cultural Omnivorousness: A Case Study of Reading in Russia. *Social Forces* 84, 2: 1233-55.
- Zhou, M. 2004. Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergences, Controversies, and Conceptual Advancements. *International Migration Review* 38: 1,040–74.
- Zukin, S. 1991. *Landscapes of Power*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zukin, S. 1995. *The Cultures of Cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Zukin, S. 2010. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York: Oxford University Press.