The Indian Restaurant and the (In-)visibility of Ethnicity in London, Ontario

by

Paul Hong

Department of Anthropology

Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
January 1999

Abstract

This thesis explores the role of the ethnic restaurant, specifically Indian restaurants, as a space where identities, ethnicities and stereotypes of newcomers to and residents of London, Ontario, converge and sit at a table together. This thesis also looks more specifically at how these ethnic restaurants, particularly Indian restaurants, objectify, (re)produce and/or employ selected images and stereotypes of their own identity or ethnicity. Related to this is the question of how dependent the success or failure of self-ethnicity images is on the degree to which the restaurant is, first, what patrons expect it to be (notions of authenticity, exotic-ness) and, second, what the owners expect they themselves should be like and what they believe the (non-ethnic) patrons want. This may reveal how immigrants or ethnic minorities view and make sense of their position within the larger society (London, Ontario) in the context of or through running a restaurant. In other words, how those images of themselves are (or are not) employed -- in regards to the various expectations of themselves and/or by others -- may say something about how this immigrant or ethnic group sees itself and is seen by others through various representations such as popular stereotypes.

Keywords: Food, Restaurants, Ethnicity, Identity, Auto-exoticization, London (Ontario)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Regna Darnell for her guidance, support and enthusiasm throughout the entire process. Not only was it a pleasure working with her but I am also grateful for the experience. This thesis would not have been possible without her.

My appreciation and thanks to Anne Brydon, Chet Creider, Bryce Traister and Lisa Philips Valentine for their time and work (and also letting me pass). I would be remiss if I did not thank both Kim Clark and Ken Little for their respective roles in developing the initial ideas for this thesis.

Special thanks to all those at the Indian restaurants who generously shared their time, thoughts and insights with me. They provided me with valuable information, friendship and, of course, good food.

Thanks to Callie Cesarini and Jeannie Taylor-Shaw for their help and for answering all my questions.

For their invaluable support I would like to thank my colleagues and friends Toby Cockcroft, Susan Hagopian, Jodi Harper, Dufferin Murray, Frank Ridsdale, and Cynthia Thoroski. To them I owe my appreciation and probably some money.

And my thanks also to my friends Jim Munroe, Lesley Carruthers, Kaelin McCowan, John Kennedy, and Marlo Edwards.

Finally, my mother, father and brother for their patience, trust and support...

and Paola Poletto.

Table of Contents

Preface

I would like to begin by talking briefly about experimentation with the genre of ethnographic writing. One recent example is an ethnography entitled *Shelter Blues* (1997) by Robert Desjarlais. *Shelter Blues* is an unconventional ethnography that looks at the people who use a street shelter in Boston, Massachusetts. Using conversations and observations he weaves a series of separate but interdependent sections that paint a portrait of the lives of some of the residents and visitors as well as the shelter itself. Desjarlais is careful to take into consideration the complex cultural, economic and political forces at play in the lives of the individuals.

Desjarlais formulates his own set of questions as applied to the subject of the shelter and its residents and users as the basis of his inquiry. The questions are developed in the spirit of Deleuze who believes "the historically contingent realities" of "power, knowledge and subjectness" boil down to three fundamental questions, "each of which manifests itself differently in particular historical formulations: What can a person do, what powers can she claim, and what resistances might she counter? What can she know or sense or articulate? What can she be, or how can she produce herself as a subject?" (Desjarlais 1997: 26).

In considering the ethnic (Indian) restaurant, following Desjarlais but using my own project, I ask the questions: What can the people who run ethnic restaurants do, often as ethnic minority immigrants and members of the London community? What are the relations of power within the city of which the restaurant and the owners are part of? What are the stereotypes and images that are employed between the people working in

the restaurant and those who frequent them? More specifically, what about the seeming self-stereotyping by the restaurant owners? On what forms of agency can those immigrants rely on?

In my attempt at addressing these questions I have touched on a number of topics. Some of them resulted in extending the scope of my project further than I had anticipated. The extension into other topics and issues came into being as a result of not only research but also through the exchanges between people at the restaurants and me and also through colleagues (fellow students and professors) at the University.

This thesis is organized into a series of sections intended to explore several issues about ethnicity and ethnic restaurants within London, Ontario. The thesis looks at a range of macro to micro levels of issues regarding ethnicity, identity, and the consumption of food. The sections are a running text meant to emphasize the ties and links between the various subjects and ideas that are addressed in each one. The flow or the organization of the sections does not always follow in a linear fashion, just as events and real phenomena do not occur in a linear or even logical manner. Thus, the "logic" of the flow of sections is an attempt to approach at different angles and perspectives what is going on in the restaurants and with restaurant owners. This is to take into account the often multiple perspectives and multi-dimensional aspects of "the everyday." The ideas, issues and problems encountered do not follow in a linear, uni-dimensional fashion. Instead, they occur within the text simultaneously (physically over many spaces and places) and often repeatedly (temporally). How they are interpreted and understood functions in the same way.

Initially I tried to restrict myself to the main issues but found through library research and fieldwork a mutual arising of other ideas and topics that began to broaden and at the same time make less definite just what was happening in the restaurants. As a result, I have tried get at those core issues by angling in through a number of different positions and viewing points. As Darnell (personal communication: 1998) suggested, it is a "triangulation of the subject." That is, triangulation of sorts takes into account the issues both in and around the subject to "create" or reveal the (positive space) foreground through the exploration and mapping out of the (negative space) background.

The thesis was conceived with the intention that it would be primarily based on fieldwork. However, through the process of writing the place of fieldwork within the thesis has changed. While I have conducted fieldwork mostly through on-site observations and interviews with the people involved in each of the Indian restaurants in London, this fieldwork does not figure as prominently as one might expect in a thesis supported by fieldwork. This was not my intention. Yet there was no significant event or happening that altered the course. The contents of the sections are reflective of the issues I encountered in the field. Despite my intentions, very often the nature of the conversations between the informants and me extended beyond the questions and issues that I had brought and into a more free form, stream-of-consciousness narrative. Bouncing from one point to the next, the informants and I often arrived at unexpected and interesting ideas and issues, many that I had not anticipated.

The thesis topic came together for me in a couple of different ways. Eating retains a significant role and importance in my life, be it eating too much, enjoying cooking or thinking about going out to eat. Growing up, eating was intertwined with an

acute consciousness about identity, ethnicity and fitting in (or sticking out). Eating outside the home was fraught with a number of considerations that my father had to account for. His heightened (and maybe exaggerated at times) sense of our difference perhaps limited the range of options that he thought were viable. Certain restaurants or eating establishments were not our place, too unfamiliar, etc.; most were assumptions based on the perceived sense of our difference by him and what he thought others thought. But at the same time, we regularly ate at Chinese and Japanese restaurants as well as fast food establishments. Even at home I did not have many friends over, whether to eat or hang out, as I visited at other friends' houses. Again we did not eat the same food, the smells, ingredients and even how we ate were all too different and all this was confirmed during those times I did go visit other households. I felt that a home became a place where those things that belonged within it had to remain there: I tried to eliminate traces of smells and odours after a meal if I was going out. I developed a sense that our ways of eating (what, how, when) did not compare with those of my friends. Only in relation or in comparison did this occur, so at home or amongst other Koreans it was never a problem. Some years ago, I began to eat out at restaurants more and developed an interest in the restaurant-related businesses such as restaurant reviews. I was also motivated by my desire to taste different cuisines, to ingest other places and other people.

During the process of putting the thesis together I found myself in various positions. Sometimes I was situated as a fellow visible minority, other times as some sort of authority, on one occasion as a potential religious convert, and on others as a mere nuisance. At times, the power or authority invested in me by others (especially at

the outset) made me uncomfortable in the realization that that was how they viewed me. These sorts of situations revealed the boundaries as well as spaces in which I found myself. These occasions led me to question the limits of my actions and sometimes question what possible options I had. In other ways, my interest and willingness (maybe desire) in exploring the geography of the gastronomic world (or at least my interest in trying different foods) worked as a telling act or gesture of my interest and willingness to learn about and accept different cultures and people and about them. And it is this that I also recognize this in my zeal for seeking out different foods through ethnic restaurants. This simple but powerful habit or custom underpins my interest in this topic and forms a major basis of the thesis.

My fieldwork involved interviews with informants (usually one) as well as observations made during repeated visits. Currently, there are five Indian restaurants in London, Ontario, and they formed the sites for my fieldwork:

1) Curry's (118 Wellington Road)

2) The Curry Garden (374 Richmond Street)

3) The Curry Pot (120 Dundas Street)

4) The Jewel of India (390 Richmond Street)

5) Lal Qila (460 Egerton Street)

While I did visit and attempt some initial talks at all the restaurants, extensive fieldwork was not conducted at all five locations. Those not involved either expressed or I perceived a limited interest in the matter.

The other site of fieldwork was the city itself. Two years were spent in the city as a graduate student and as a resident. London itself surprised me. It was a multi-ethnic in its demographic profile and restaurant scene but this ethnicity was apparently largely invisible. I wanted to explore this perception of the city in relation to its reality.

London

A common stereotype of London, Ontario is that the city is predominantly middle class and white Anglo-Saxon. Reinforcing this stereotype is a university that has garnered a similar reputation. That is, as much as all schools or at least universities have some sort of reputation or image, such a stereotype seems to be the basic currency of comparison, of perceiving or knowing other institutions, as well as of self-definition. The university rankings that *MacLeans* Magazine carries out every year is one way these images and reputations are established and/or revised. The *MacLeans* review is fairly sober and authoritative in tone (although its findings are widely contested). Coverage focuses mostly on academic standards, so that school reputations are constructed along these lines. Guidebooks such as *The Real Guide to Canadian Universities* provide a less formal, more broadly based overview of Canadian universities aimed mostly at incoming undergraduates. Keeping with this demographic market and its assumed interests, the books provides information that *MacLeans* likely would not carry. Thus, *The Real Guide to Canadian Universities* provides brief snippets of information, Universities get characterized by a few major traits, based on student surveys on topics such as the best places to hang out, sexual environment, and other "insider" information. In the 1994 edition (edited by Sara Borins) the University of Western Ontario is described "in a phrase: Western offers the perfect combination for undergraduates: academic prestige, great parties and a solid extracurricular program" (McCarten: 254). Here are some other examples:

> Conformity and image making are the order of the day, as peer pressure and self-esteem assault one's desire to

> challenge the status quo. (1994: 248)
>
> Two years ago, Western's [then] president, George Pederson, was quoted as saying, "When I look around this institution and I see what some of our students wear, what they drink, what they drive, I have to tell you there are some who could certainly afford to be paying more."[...] Pederson's statement reflects a perspective of the institution that dominates the minds of most casual observers: Western students are an elite group of Canadians. (1994: 248)

The school sounds like a yacht club. While there is an overwhelming aura of class (with its elitist distinctions and concerns) there is little here that gives an indication of any sort of diversity within the school. Although by the absence of comment, the profile does imply that there may be no diversity. Just at this point, the review asks, "Is it possible to go to Western if you're not blonde, beautiful and rich? Absolutely. Due in large part to its academic reputation, Western has always had a healthy and equitable proportion of racially and ethnically diverse students, staff and faculty" (1994: 249). It was assumed prior to this statement that reference to white students was implicit, although there was never any explicit mention of race or ethnicity. The reader is led to assume that "in large part" the ethnic mix in the school population exists for largely academic reasons and not necessarily (or so it seems) because of the unquestioned and taken-for-granted white students' concerns: partying, prestige, wealth.

On a related note, there is much mentioned about the "Zoo," otherwise known as the Saugeen-Maitland student residence building. There is much written on the frequent partying, promiscuity, alcohol-fueled hormones and the new-found freedom of first year students. A lot of students come from the southwestern Ontario region. Many come from Toronto. When compared to the write-up York University (and to a lesser degree the University of Toronto) received, there is a significant difference in how the

reputations of these schools are promulgated. Unlike Western, York University and University of Toronto are said to have a diverse student body, one that reflects the population of the city. In regard to the (heterosexual) sexual environment, York is described as being "cold." One of the reasons suggested for this is the large and diverse ethnic population. Students of different ethnic backgrounds have different values or ideas (about sex, partying, drinking), stemming from varied religious backgrounds, for example. It is also implied that a more diverse student body may mean that members of those groups tend to be endogamous. The assumption seems to be that at Western those who are partying are the rich white kids, while the other/ethnic sector makes up the academic aspect of the school culture. When compared to the write-up that York has, where its diversity is in the foreground, York's image of being a non-party school is explained by its commuter students and that very thing it claims as an advantage - its diversity. Some students at the University of Western Ontario are mostly characterized by highlighting status, prestige, and certain leisurely activities while other students are described mostly in terms of their restrictions, often stemming from their own ethnicity. Ethnicity, then, is a liability for partying in the University of Western Ontario style but not if one is interested in academics. This image tends to bolster common stereotypes about Western. The university, from the point of the view of the guidebook, seems to create and maintain stereotypes not only of others but of itself as well. The guidebook is put together from data collected from its students, as opposed to its administrators. Obviously this is intended to assemble more realistic, current and supposedly more relevant types of information to incoming students for whom the guidebooks are ultimately aimed at. However, there are obviously alternative accounts of any school

that would differ from their descriptions. But as we are talking about images, each description seems to reflect the already existing images, all of which reflect the dominant view of the school.

This mode of analysis of popular stereotypes could also be applied to cities, provinces, and so forth. For London, it seems that the previously mentioned image prevails over others. However, as it will be argued, this image is neither a complete reflection of the current ambiance of the city nor representative of the views of everyone in the city. But what is at issue here is not necessarily the accuracy of the image of the city, or the quality of the image, but rather the discrepancy between the real and the imagined. The guidebook assumes that there is a "real" London, that there is a "London" that can be agreed upon. The inadequacy of a single or static conceptualization of the continuous changes and shifts that characterize this and other large cities in Ontario is erased and replaced by the uni-dimensionality of the stereotype. There is some suggestion here that the predominant image of London is an example of a more complex relationship between image and reality.

> While London retains its reputation as a fairly white Anglo Saxon community, current statistics paint a very different picture. (1994: 132)

There is, indeed, more to London than its image would suggest. According to the *Financial Post Canadian Markets 1997/98* guide, the June 1, 1997 population estimate brings London to 331,400 residents. Approximately 85-90% of London residents report English as the language spoken in their home. The remaining 10-15% can be broken up into 26 other language and multiple-language groups. According to Statistics Canada

figures from 1991, the total immigrant population of London was approximately 70,655. This number is almost double that one might expect from the numbers that were generated from self-reporting of home languages. Assuming both sets of figures are accurate, the seeming discrepancy can probably be attributed to the fact that immigrants can be from English-speaking countries as well as from non-English speaking nations. Perhaps some non-English speaking immigrant households have decided to declare that English is spoken at home because, for example, the children speak it. If one was to assume a trend of steady influx of immigrants, then one could estimate that immigrants now make up almost a third of the population. Furthermore, according to Statistics Canada, there were a greater percentage of immigrants in London (19%) than the Canadian average (16%) as well as in other cities such as Halifax, Ottawa, and Winnipeg (17%). However, London's figures are lower than Windsor, Kitchener and Hamilton.

The numbers here give an indication of the changes that have occurred and are occurring. The types of immigrants, particularly where immigrants are coming from, have been and continue to be the main reason for those changes. In London there has been a significant shift in immigration pattern. This shift is not characterized so much by the number of immigrants as by the origin or home countries of those newcomers. This change impacts on the reputation of the city as well as its present diversity, which does not fit that image.

Before getting into the changes in immigration patterns in London, it may be helpful to review a brief history of the city. This will provide a general idea of the city's past and form a direct link to its present. It will also aid in illuminating some of the genealogical strands of the current image of the city.

In 1826 John Graves Simcoe set about the task of designating the capital of the province of Upper Canada. His choice was the fork of the Thames River, which he would eventually christen "New London" to mark the capital of a "New Britain" (Tausky 1993: 9). At about this time, southwestern Upper Canada was no longer exclusively "Indian." Traders were going back and forth from Detroit, the Niagara region and York. Yet the area was mostly "unsurveyed and largely undiscovered backwoods" (ibid.). But Simcoe chose that site as the proposed capital, over places like Detroit and Niagara, because it was far enough from the United States and at the same time close enough. The river provided a transportation link to Detroit and other British controlled locations as well as quality soil for farming (ibid.: 10). Despite Simcoe's wishes, York went on to be chosen as the capital of the province. Nevertheless, London enjoyed a fairly rapid growth and prosperity. In 1831, the village boasted a population of 274 which grew into 1,716 just ten years later. At this point it was designated as a town. In 1855, with the population at about 12,000, London officially became a city (ibid.).

Settlers of British background dominated southwestern Ontario. London was no different. Many of the influential names and personalities of its early history were either of British, Irish or (to a lesser degree) Scottish ancestry. Many were British Loyalists. The history of a strong British Loyalist tradition in Upper Canada , the future industrial heartland of Canada, has led to the general development of a "British Ontario Establishment" (Armstrong 1981). The strong presence of Loyalists in the region has ensured strong British political connections. Loyalists held important offices and control of land and economic influence, all primary factors in the growth and maintenance of the elite. Educational and religious connections rooted in the family were what Armstrong

designates as secondary factors in that ascension to power. Armstrong stresses the connection to England, a pipeline to the seat of the Empire of which Canada was a part. Driedger (1987: 8) claims that the British Ontario establishment was the "most powerful Canadian establishment, increasingly centred in Toronto...extending its influence nationally, far beyond the southern Ontario region." Furthermore, Driedger points out that while Canadians of British descent are not the majority group in size in Canada, they do still constitute the largest single ethnic group as well as being economically and politically the most powerful (ibid.). Generally speaking, this is still a valid statement. But in light of the changes in immigration patterns, the last two decades have demonstrated a significant demographic shift in composition of the population. The majority of immigrants to Canada usually settle in southwestern Ontario, Montreal or Vancouver, for the same reasons that have made these the most prosperous regions in Canada. The British population in Canada was 60.6% of the total in 1871 but a hundred years later it has declined to 44.6%:

> [This] did not lead to the concomitant decrease in their control of the economy and of the political system. Neither did it change the European cultural milieu and values, or the status of Canada as a "white" society, since most immigrants were from Europe. Despite a shared ethos, these Other Europeans did not come to enjoy equal status with the charter groups, particularly the British.
> (Dahlie and Fernando 1981: 2)

London seems to be recapitulating this process. Its history, with the establishment of a power base made up of those of British descent still relatively high in number, coexists with continuing changes which have changed the face of London to some degree. But to what effect is not certain.[1] This is a question to be addressed from a variety of perspectives throughout this thesis.

"Visible Minority" and "Invisible Minority"

Being a visible minority is obviously a relative description. The first word of the term refers to physiognomic or visual differences. A common standard for differentiating ethnic or racial minorities is skin colour. But other factors can include linguistic or religious differences , among other less visible symbols of identity. The term visible minority is usually a catch-all for Blacks, Asians, and First Nations people. In other words, visible minorities are those who do not fit into the category of the majority.

According to the statistics used in *Listening '94: Community Service, Issues and Trends* prior to the 1980s, approximately 80% of all immigrants came from Britain, parts of Western Europe and the United States and "only 10% of newcomers were 'visible' minorities" (1994: 133). There are two things of note here: First, it seems what makes a visible minority is that it is defined by what it is not or by what is not specified (this seems fairly all encompassing but there are the grey areas in applying this definition). Second, there is an absence of a complementary designation (which I will address later on). Those people of British and Western European descent who settled London may have been immigrants, but they were not necessarily minorities in the city. As well, in the present context, they are usually not labeled or identified as immigrants especially by themselves. How long is someone considered an "immigrant?" The notion of "immigrant" status seems to be tied to "visibility." Currently, those individuals or groups that are identified as immigrants are those that are visibly different from the

establishment which, in this context, is primarily British (and Western European). It is not so much a matter of length of time spent in the country or society that defines the transition between immigrant (an identifying label) to being just a resident (with the lack of such labels). Being labeled as an immigrant, aside from marking one as different, assumes that one has not "yet" assimilated properly (Moodley 1981: 14). The assumption is that assimilation is desirable and inevitable. Visibility, however, constitutes an ongoing barrier to assimilation. More often than not, those we refer to as immigrants are those not of the charter group.[2] Such status is tied to social hierarchy and marginality.

However there has been a noticeable shift since 1981:

> The increased "visibility" of our immigrants is largely due to the changes in "country of origin." [...] These days, nearly 80% of our newcomers are arriving from countries in Central and South America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.
> (United Way of London and Middlesex 1994: 133)

This shift in the origin of recent immigrants has not gone unnoticed. The same report states that in London "negative attitudes about 'immigration' tend to be related to the changes in the cultures and countries of origin, rather than a firm grasp of the public policy implications" (ibid.: 133). Furthermore statistics showed that in 1992-93, 36% of immigrants were refugees, compared to only 15% found in most other communities in southwestern Ontario (ibid.: 134]. With increased "visibility" there is a tangible, more apparent, indicator of change. The fairly drastic turnaround in the "face" of immigrants and the high number of refugee claimants are bound to produce some sort of corresponding rise in anxiety and/or tension in the majority community. The more "visible" a group is, the more likely it will receive some form of unwelcome attention,

such as scapegoating. The intensity of this reaction is also dependent on the overall economic climate, locally and nationally. For the most part the economy in London has been depressed during this decade.

Yet the image and reputation of London still prevails. This may be as a result of the gradual nature of the change that London is going through, but if the face of immigration has changed since 1980, it has been in process for almost two decades. The visible minority, immigrants, have been rendered invisible as a result. They do not constitute in any major fashion the reputation and image of the city. They do not have the same access to political power or social prestige. This marginalization persists in spite of evidence which suggest that London is becoming increasingly diverse.

In terms of total immigration patterns, nearly half of the newcomers to Canada settle in Ontario. London is one of the major areas of settlement, along with Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor and Kitchener. However, the ethnic flavour or character that exists does not yet seem to be a central and/or important aspect in the image of London, as it is for other southwestern Ontario centres of immigration.

Class

The other part of the image is that London is made up mostly of middle to upper class households. The average household income, according to the 1997-98 figures from *Canadian Markets* (1997-8: 344), in London was just over $50,000. This is 14% above the national average. Compared to other cities with a similar population, like Hamilton

and Halifax, London stands well above them. As mentioned previously, this statistical profile tends to extend from the city as a whole into an image of the university and its student population.

These "facts" about London, become the most prominent aspect of the image of the city. Arguably, these characteristics are the equivalents of the normative features of a description of the city given by a resident (for whom the image accurately reflects his/her reality). In London, it seems that the predominant image reflects the majority views of the middle to upper class and their interests. It is also a matter of these citizens having the power to shape and maintain the image they favour. For example, local media outlets, such as the newspaper, radio and television stations, make decisions everyday on what is reportable and what is not. If middle to upper class "whites" constitute and reinforce the predominant image of London, then what the image does not include is not only various people of different ethnic backgrounds or nationalities but also those not of the mid to upper classes. The exclusion of some "white" people in the constitution of the image of London on the basis of class or status disrupts the common assumption that equates whiteness with social privilege (Hartigan 1997: 43). So it is one thing to talk about ethnicity or immigrants in London, but there is also another dimension of difference which is delineated along lines of class. While both of these modes of "collective organization" are important, they are not entirely reducible to one another (Van den Berghe 1981 in Driedger 1987: 245). However, along these lines, class can subsume ethnic differences in terms of importance in marking difference or Otherness or the other way around.[3] In other words, the city is not only divided by ethnic categories but also by class. It would seem this is a stronger factor because, while

those that are not included in the image of London may or may not be visible minorities or other European groups, what they usually do share are certain common characteristics of "class status" such as income, education level, and so forth. Visible minorities as immigrants are a fairly recent phenomenon. Not all poor people are visible minorities or immigrants and not all visible minorities or immigrants are poor. For example, the prosperous Masonville area has a relatively high percentage of non-official language speakers, which may be accountable by the fact that many university students live there as well as a fair percentage of immigrants or newcomers in the area. As well, we should bear in mind that the strength of ethnic sentiments can fluctuate depending on the economic and political climate. Thus it is important to remember the fluid "circumstantial and situational" aspects of ethnicity (Moodley 1981: 9; Van den Berghe 1981 in Driedger 1987: 246).

While the average household income of the area is high, there is considerable range from the bottom to the top. Masonville, as a recognizable and bound neighbourhood, has an average household income of $130,000 as well as having the highest percentage of residents with a university degree. This compares to some of the neighbourhoods that generally fall east of Adelaide Street (E.O.A.) and south of York that range from $37,000 - $42,000. In the same areas that are haphazardly included in the designation of E.O.A. some significant features of these neighbourhoods include lower household income and less formal education. These communities are geographically at the periphery of the city.[4] Neighbourhoods with below average household incomes mostly lie east of Adelaide. The statistics also show that a sizable number of residents in these areas report little formal education beyond high school.

According to *Listening 94* a significant number have not completed high school. The overall London average for educational attainment is split, about a third not having completed high school while more than 40% of residents have some form of post secondary education. Furthermore, these areas also have some of the higher incidences of immigrants, newcomers and those that claim as their mother tongue a non-official language. These areas also have some of the lower housing prices in London.

There is, then, some correlation of class to ethnicity, resulting from where and what neighbourhood one lives in. Visible minorities, for the most part, are displaced from the "centre." That is, most immigrants tend to settle at the outer edges of the city, in areas that undergo extensive change and residential turn-over, as opposed to established neighbourhoods which are mainly full of significantly pricier single-family houses. Geographical placement defines neighbourhoods. But it is not limited to those who are immigrants or considered ethnic. It also follows along class lines. It seems to be a common situation that one tends to move "up" into the better areas as one moves "up" in terms of affluence. In London, there is a comparable geographical conceptualization. The less affluent neighbourhoods, which are also more ethnic in character, are symbolically placed east of Adelaide (E.O.A.) – a demarcated zone whose boundaries may or may not be agreed upon. The existence of E.O.A. is an important element of the common image of London, defining the "Other" of the majority view of itself. This is an example of a known designation that is emblematic of the dyadic relationship between have and have-nots, majority and minority, us and them, and these define issues of class and ethnicity in the city.

Difference

"Difference is that which threatens order and control" (Gilman 1985:21).

Those neighbourhoods represented by the label E.O.A. make a great deal of difference to those for whom the boundary is most tangible or "real." Even the city's two major educational institutions share a similar polarity. University of Western Ontario connotes certain things about those who attend the school and equally those who do not. Fanshawe College lies further east from the university and connotes a different set of images. Typically, colleges are hierarchically placed beneath universities for a variety of reasons. Most pertinent here are the implications of class and ethnicity and what sort of education each institution offers or promises and to whom these images typically are addressed. Colleges tend to offer programs that are 'practical' and to attract those students who are interested in entering the job market upon completion. This is opposed to the traditional image of universities and the goals and ideas they represent.

At the scale of the whole city the physical and geographical boundary of Adelaide Street is also informed by social, economic, political and cultural concerns.

Gilman writes, "[t]he mental projection of difference is but the projection of the tension between control and its loss present within each individual in every group. That tension produces an anxiety that is given shape as the Other" (1985:21). The threat of loss of control, in terms of the designation of E.O.A., probably existed prior to a more "visible" immigration but was further bolstered by the general patterns of settlement of

newcomers in areas with lower housing prices. That these are also in areas that are E.O.A., most likely stems from differences in perceptions of class and ethnicity. This is especially pertinent if one assumes that a great many long time residents in London came from Western Europe with a stronger sense of class identity (as opposed to the traditional notion that class does not exist or is at least less prevalent or important in North America). Then waves of immigration, especially strong in the 1960's, mostly Europeans (Canada Statistics 1991), followed one after another to the present day. Where the face of immigrants has changed, there is a broad range of palpable anxiety over immigrants.[5] These anxieties are felt by everyone, regardless of where they live. However, within this context, no matter where an individual stands it is relative to who is viewing it and so these anxieties are relative and positional. Overall, these new incursions by newcomers and immigrants have changed the face of London visibly. In recent years there have been more Arabic-speaking peoples, East Africans, and Eastern Europeans as well as a recent growth in the Vietnamese population (United Way of London and Middlesex 1994: 132-3).

With these changes, past and ongoing, the image of London as mostly Western European and of the middle and upper classes is being (passively) challenged. With such changes, there are bound to be areas of tension. Faced with these potentially threatening situations the community responds variably. For example, earlier immigrants are often critical of more recent immigration/immigrants now (i.e. a past generation immigrant may believe that new immigrants don't work, are on welfare, unlike herself who had to work) may respond in a number of different ways. Some of these ways have been mentioned already, if briefly, and I will address some others later.

But eventually they all seem to tap back into the dominant image of the city and its persistence despite statistical evidence of its factual inadequacy.

What I want to get across in the above sections is the sense of micro-macro variability -- the relative positioning of dyadic relationships such as self-other, rich-poor, and so forth. That is, these relationships exist or occur in a range contexts from interpersonal to communities and even larger ones such as the city. Each higher level subsumes or comprises the level beneath it, according to the contrastive context defining the level. Thus ethnicity is only important or exists when it is being threatened -- when it is made Other. Or more specifically, a sense of group identity (i.e., national identity) is activated when another group is threatening the group. Take that threat away and it breaks down again into local or more individual levels of dyadic self-other relationships (Tambiah 1994).

Apart from figures and statistics, the pervasive character of London is easy to see just by walking around the city. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the qualitative experience sometimes depends on where you walk or where you are in London. The ethnic character of London, or of any other city, is inextricably tied to various patterns and contingencies. For example, immigrants may move in with their sponsors or into already established neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are said to have different characteristics and discernible "natural" boundaries (United Way of London and Middlesex 1994). I suggest these contrasts are the basis of certain class/ethnicity-informed ideas of difference such as the generalized boundary line east of Adelaide.

The boundary of "E.O.A." suggests a large group of neighbourhoods, a substantial geographical area which is (in some way) significant enough for it to be

differentiated from the rest of London. On a cursory level, one needs only to look to see the difference. When I first moved here, an older resident who has lived in London for several years "warned" me as we drove along Dundas Street past Adelaide Street toward Highbury Road, that this was not a good area. And it certainly looked different from the London I had known up to that point, which was mostly around Richmond Street up to the university. A similar experience occurred when my brother came to visit. His image of London was literally moving (from Highway 401) up Richmond and Wellington Streets northwards to the university. We took the Dundas bus to the flea market. As he put it, it felt like we had gone into another city. All this is probably exaggerated because we were not familiar with the city. Yet, when I began to discover more of Toronto, that is, more than just the usual spots that I frequented, it was with a very different sense of discovery. It made me want to find out more about the city that I had lived most my life in and thought I knew. What I am trying to work through (or get beyond) is the idea that what is going on in London is somehow more mysterious, stupefying or even sometimes nefarious, than Toronto. Past that initial reaction, especially for residents of London, I think, for the most part, there is very little going on here that is different from Toronto. But because London is smaller everything seems more pronounced and manifestly visible. Yet, there is a great difference between my experiences of these two cities. Foremost, I believe, is the strongly persuasive image of London as opposed to the reality of the city.

Clifford (1997) brings up an interesting and relevant idea in *Routes*, in the chapter entitled "Travelling Cultures" that I had never considered but realized in retrospect that I

had experienced. Clifford suggests that ideas of "being there" and "getting there" – the process of getting to and leaving the research or fieldwork site – are often neglected as parts of the process of knowing or coming to know in anthropology, particularly such that the "field," and by extension the subject of research, is bounded and separated from exterior forces:

> The means of transport is largely erased – the boat, the land rover, the mission airplane. These technologies suggest systematic prior and ongoing contacts and commerce with exterior places and forces which are not part of the field/object. The discourse of ethnography ("being there") is separated from that of travel ("getting there"). [23]

Initially, the idea of getting there was somewhat puzzling to me. Then I remembered the first time I took the bus to Toronto from London.[6] Prior to that bus ride I had been taking either the train or getting a ride. But regardless it was fairly early on during the first year. The bus leaves the station along York Street and turns down Richmond Street and onto Horton Roads. It then proceeds eastward, via Hamilton Road, to Highbury Road at which point it turns southward to highway 401. But if we were back up a little, I recall being very interested in seeing where the bus was going because all other times upon leaving (or entering) the city with an automobile, it was through Wellington Road and I had fully presumed the bus would be the same. So when it turned onto Horton, I was curious. I remember feeling a little excited as the bus made its way through. It was a different London, one that I had not seen until then. There were "ethnic" stores such as Portuguese markets, *churrascos* like the ones I was familiar with in Toronto such as Imperio - Dos Frangos and so forth. What was most notable was not only that it was different from Richmond and Oxford Streets but how different it was in comparison. It added another dimension to my mental map of London.

The downtown section of the city is an important part of the city in this representation. In both of the above anecdotes, "downtown" has not been explicitly mentioned but has assumed a more background position in movements across the city. For one thing, it is a main intersection, a junction point, from which public transportation routes meet, cross, and emerge. On the other hand, from my experience, there are not a whole of lot of things to do there, although there are lots of 'things' there. While there are a number of businesses, ranging from record stores to restaurants, banks, and some governmental offices, it seems to be a place where not too many people reside. At its busiest, people downtown are usually waiting for buses, crossing streets, going to and leaving restaurants, clubs and so forth: all moving or on their way to someplace else. It seems as though the only ones who are not constantly on the move or seem not be in any hurry to go somewhere are the kids that hang out along the sidewalks and corners. These people are also the ones most likely to be found there around the clock, as opposed to office crowd that are found mostly during the days only. This particular dynamic also relates to issues of class-based differences. Apart from the relationship of the street kids and the office workers, another example is the difference between the kids that seem to be hanging about downtown in relation to which kids are not there and what sort of kids hang around north of Richmond and Dundas Streets, along Richmond Row. It seems like most of the young people who attend the university are found along Richmond Row. The same statement can be made about those that are typically found downtown. From my own experience there seems to be very little intermingling, and those cases where there are seem to be mostly transitory. However, it does seem to be me that the kids downtown tend to be younger, perhaps high school aged. But this does

not fully account for the pattern of why those kids hang around downtown and not further northward where it seems businesses are more directed at and cater for students. It could be suggested that Richmond Row caters specifically to a specific image of well-heeled students while those businesses in downtown are sometimes like the sifted sediment that has settled in that area: video game arcades, porn shops, head shops, McDonalds, dollar stores, and so on. Then again, there are also the more upscale restaurants, the market (which is currently in the process of being dismantled), in and around the area. Nevertheless, compare the core with shops found in Richmond Row and certain ideas, aspects and suppositions of class are unmistakable.

Finally, I would suggest downtown is also an area of transition. As mentioned previously, it is an open air junction for buses, perhaps the closest thing to a bus station. In the last year, I had a couple of different options in taking the bus to and from school. One was to get to Richmond Street to get on the number six buses. The other was to take the Dundas bus. Whether it was going to school or going home, the Richmond and Dundas intersection was one of the busier stops. It was, as I came to notice, also a place and moment of transition. From school, the Dundas bus would be full of students from the university. Almost invariably, by the time it reached the downtown intersection most of those students from the first phase of the occupation would get off or be off by then. Then the second phase would begin, mostly consolidated by the time it reached Wellington. The occupants of the bus at the second phase were noticeably different from the first. Most notable was that they were not all students. The people on the bus looked more like people from E.O.A.. What do E.O.A. people look like? It seems to come down to a greater mix of faces, voices and clothing: Native Americans, East

Indians, Latin American and other white folks who "look" much more "different," even "poorer."

Downtown is supposed to be the core or centre of the city. From mostly observation, and informal talk with residents, it seems London is going through a minor version of what has occurred in larger American cities: people and businesses are leaving the core and moving into outlying suburbs and other areas. It seems the downtown core is not important. That is, it may be the core of the city, but it is not necessarily the only centre. Activity downtown is largely confined within the average workday and during the weekend, as there are a number of bars, clubs and theatres. The empty storefronts, the turn-over of businesses leaving and arriving, and most recently the dismantling of the Covent Market, suggests a less than thriving economic climate. Yet most downtown cores are not much different.

Downtown London is a sort of liminal space, a place intersected by movement outward into all directions. The citywide public transportation network links the city together through this central area of transition. The Dundas bus traverses the loop that passes and links one neighbourhood into another. From the university, it carries its students downtown and then takes on residents who live out east, east of Adelaide, and carries forth into the eastern most areas of the city. This route shows by inference, through its passengers and their movements on and off, the overlapping boundaries and differences between the various neighbourhoods.

As I was being transported in and out of London, my field site in general, I realize now that what I noticed were boundaries, differences and an opening for a glimpse of more complex and shifting image of London and its residents.

These figures, anecdotes, etc., all seem to follow one another without a great number of surprises, such that each feature is related to the others in a manner that "makes sense." Then the designation, "east of Adelaide," seems to be, in a general sense, valid beyond mere observational or anecdotal information or knowledge. What purpose does this designation serve? Obviously it serves as a boundary line, but for whom is another question. From my own experiences, these terms have only come up in conversation with people who live west of that boundary. But most of my experiences lie within that side.

On one hand, I do not want to exoticize London in the sense that it is something peculiar or vastly different from other places. That is reproduce what Clifford -- quoting Appadurai -- has called "metonymic freezing" (1997: 24). This process is one "in which one part or aspect of peoples' lives come to epitomize them as a whole...." Although originally it refers to non-Western people, at a more local level it is applicable to the diversity of London. In this case, London does not equal the white British establishment or anything else. It is precisely this -- the discrepancy and tension between the image of London and the city itself -- that I would like to examine and challenge not that the prevalent image of London is wrong or right but how this image has come about, and its meanings then and now, especially in terms of the role of immigration and non-charter and visibly ethnic people. Furthermore, we must also consider the limitations and varying relevance of the stereotypic image to everyone in the city.

London as a city, too, needs to be "opened." This means, among many other things, reconceptualizing London within a "regional/national/global nexus" (Clifford 1997: 24). A good example of this is the university. Its student body is comprised of people from within the province, the rest of the country or other places around the world. Apart from the students themselves, the university is an institution that is more or less affiliated with a larger international network/community of schools. The university provides a perspective on the city that allows one to look at "hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as rooted, native ones" (ibid.).

Another example that is pertinent here is London in relation to other cities and towns. Toronto is an obvious point of reference (only in part because I am more familiar with it). Toronto is a larger city with a relatively wider range of people of different backgrounds and ethnicity and it is close to London. But it is not the only possible contrast. There are smaller, outlying areas such as St. Thomas, Grand Bend, Kitchener-Waterloo and other smaller cities and towns in southwestern Ontario. Due to its proximity, Detroit is also a throughway into the U.S. and vice versa. All of these locations are connected by or at least close to highway 401, "the main street of Ontario." The highway is the main link forming a major transportation corridor from Windsor (and the U.S.) to Ottawa (while not directly on the 401 it is connected to it) and on to Quebec and Eastern Canada.

All these relationships, nodes of a network or a web, in which people, ideas, things are part of what Clifford calls the "dynamics of dwelling/travelling" (ibid.). Clifford (25) asks:

> How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how is a culture also a site of travel for

> others? How are spaces traversed from outside? To what extent is one group's core another's periphery?

These questions and issues are intended to provide new ways of looking at a site as part of a larger, intermingled network of forces and influences. A recent example highlights these concerns. I was not driving but I was lazily issuing orders to the driver who patiently drove us about downtown Toronto. We were looking for a place to eat, and then I had an idea. Some time ago, I had taken a long and completely unfamiliar bus trip through a part of Toronto with which I was not familiar with. At one point, I recalled seeing an intersection rife with East Indian businesses, mostly jewelry, food and clothing stores, as well as a number of restaurants. "Let's go there," I said to the driver. I didn't know exactly where but I made a guess and we drove cross town to find there was nothing where I had guessed. "It's somewhere here," I said. Finally we found it, much further up north than I had imagined. We arbitrarily chose a restaurant (we each chose one and then I cajoled and begged and the driver, worn out, acquiesced). After an extremely good and affordable meal, we noticed that a lot of people were coming in just to buy *samosas*. So on our way out, we decided to buy some. They were quite cheap and looked fairly common looking. Then on the floor I noticed a shipping tag/sticker with a London address that was familiar. Then it occurred to me. After confirming my hunch with the man at the counter, I realized that this was the supplier that the Indian grocery store in London got their *samosas* from. This was the very place, while I was there, where I used to buy *samosas*. I had asked the folks at the store if they made their *samosas* but was told that they got them delivered to them from Toronto. It was a surprising coincidence that we happened to stumble on to a good example of translocal connections and linkages. In this case, I had stumbled backwards (inadvertently) along

the linkage between the two places. In addition to the link between cities, it is also the link between similar ethnic groups with binding business interests. I did not inquire further as to the possibility that they might be kin linkages as well. Also, as a customer/consumer, I had been at both ends of the urban chain compelled by my interest in East Indian food. For my research, this removal of exotic distance is useful in maintaining an even keel about "the field." More specifically, I am trying not to duplicate the process of reifying, exoticizing and objectifying London that I would argue is happening with various aspects of East Indian culture (specifically its cuisine). But at the same time, these processes are not one-directional but can go both ways. Exoticization is not only up-down but also self-enacted amongst other possibilities. So, in some ways, it is not just core/periphery, white/non-white but a relationship that is more complicated but only crudely represented by such dichotomies.

For me London is at a smaller and more simplified scale than Toronto. I am not suggesting that it is less complex but in some ways it seems less complicated. Also, I'm writing about a place to which I have no great attachment. My intention is write the beginnings of an analysis of London rather than a negative or personally-coloured critique.

Places to Meet

Visible minorities can be located indirectly. For example, through various types of businesses that are owned and frequented by members of a group, one can get an idea

who is there and perhaps even how many and for how long a group has been there. Presumably, there needs to be a sizable base of members of a group to warrant serving those particular needs. Apart from religious buildings or places of worship, I am specifically thinking of grocery stores. At last count, there were two Indian grocery stores, four Asian (two Chinese, one Korean, one Vietnamese), and a number of Italian, Portuguese, and Latin American establishments. These businesses provide specialized food items and ingredients that may not be available in regular stores. In addition, they also provide newspapers, magazines, music and often videos or films. These locations also serve as places were members of a group interact and network with one another, exchange information, gossip, make available and locate services, and so forth. They become in some small way community centres.

It is not surprising to find that such businesses often centre on food. Food retains a central place in the lives of many newcomers as an enduring and important aspect of immigrant life and as a marker of identity in a new place. Another type of business that appears often in the early stages of an ethnic community, are restaurants. These restaurants may be primarily intended for other ethnic group members. This depends on what city or area the restaurant is located. If we take London, the Latin American grocery stores along Dundas past Adelaide serve dual purposes. They provide groceries, magazines, newspapers as well as home-made food items such as *tamales* (what sorts of dishes that are available or are for sale, presuming they are for other members, may be determined by the amount of labour, time and ingredients that is required for its preparation).

Another example is the Caribbean restaurant on Hamilton Road just past Maitland Avenue. While there was another Caribbean restaurant just a year ago, this remains (as far as I can tell) the only one of its kind (apart from Curry's which has a small offering of West Indies food, mostly being different types of *roti*). While there is no Caribbean grocery store per se, there are other grocers that, together, provide all or most of the required ingredients (i.e. East Indian, Asian, and regular grocery stores). This restaurant, small and inconspicuous as it is, is often a place for people of Caribbean backgrounds not only to get some food but also to talk and pick up Jamaican and local Caribbean orientated newspapers. However, whether it is through time or depending on the context of where the restaurant is located, in what city or country, or whether there is an already established population of a particular group, not all restaurants perform the same functions as those in the example do. The strongest factor is the size of the community. A newly opened Chinese restaurant in Toronto is not the same as a Croatian restaurant in London (one seems to have closed recently, just next door to the East-West African Restaurant on Dundas Street).

Not all "ethnic restaurants" are a place for locals to hang out. An ethnic restaurant may not even cater specifically to members of the group. This is the case for some of the Indian restaurants in London. From the conversations I had with those in the restaurants, this seems to reflect the general lack of enthusiasm that the Indian communities in London have about going out to eat. For reasons of cost, convenience, taste or quality, I got the sense that Indians did not do a lot of dining out at Indian restaurants. I saw just as many or more Indian people picking up food for takeout at the restaurants rather than actually eating it on the premises. More generally, restaurants

tend to be just a place to eat some native food for convenience. As a result, ethnic restaurants tend to be popular with university students of the same ethnicity. Other types of locales or sites tend to function as a place to hang out. As the Indian community has grown sufficiently in numbers, establishing enough funds, through outside sources and/or contacts, the places of worship (Hindu and Islamic) has become the prime locus for community and networking.

Gatekeeping

What I want to stress is that there are a greater number of ethnic minorities in London than is usually perceived or expected. Perhaps the popular images of the city are in part a form of self-objectification. That is, they attempt to create an image of "whiteness" but of a particular kind – one that is largely mediated by class distinctions or hierarchy. In this case, it is not so much "exoticization" but a process that is perhaps moving in the other direction, to move to make things follow the status quo or perhaps more accurately, driven by a sort of nostalgia for the ways things were. For example, a tea room which opened last fall seems to be targeting mostly the English. There seems to be a place for that sort of establishment or at least a market niche for it. Since those of English ethnicity are not a minority in London, it is obvious that one does not have to be of a minority group to open English restaurants or other businesses. Instead it seems that the English also feel somewhat under-represented, at least symbolically. They too require businesses catering to ethnic preferences in food, entertainment and sociality.

There is a direct correlation of those "days gone by" and the actual past. That is, perhaps two or three decades ago the city was very different from the way it was. It had a direct link right back to its origin as a British Loyalist-dominated centre of a New Britain. Yet one cannot assume that the actual past was so idyllic. Present day changes may induce some longing for an imaginary past or a nostalgic invention of a past driven by dissatisfaction with the present.

How credible is the idea of the "gatekeeping" function of the establishment? Assuming the establishment's interests are reflected in the prevailing images of the city, the establishment can rebel or resist impending changes, no matter how irrational it may seem to those who are engaged in carving out alternative spaces. But gatekeeping may be an overstatement or too strong a description. It may simply be a description for another form of positional and relative (re)action to certain social, political, economic changes (or that may be the definition of gatekeeping). Is there an overt sense of bolstering or having to strengthen the dominant image? Perhaps there are individual instances of such. For example, there was a news piece in the *London Free Press* about the last census report of London where a large number of Londoners claim British ancestry (along with this article was a picture of a newly opened tea room and the owner). Also from a cursory examination of the *London Yellow Pages* from 1978-1985, restaurants that had something to do with English cuisine or English-ness seemed to be more noticeable as the 1980's progressed. This is a fairly limited basis for making assumptions or generalizations, but prior to early 1980's there was a definite lack of presence in relation to the later years (at least on the basis of the Yellow Pages).

In, sum, then the "changing face of London" seems to be on one hand the shifting nature of immigration with its more visible minorities and at the same time an image and reputation making this shift invisible, or at least attempting to slow it down so it can be controlled or adjusted to. The move out of the downtown area and/or the emphasis on development of the suburban sprawl at the northern side is another aspect to the "changing face" of the city. Downtown, areas east of Adelaide along Dundas and Horton are absorbing the more heterogeneous elements and, importantly, are the locations for people and businesses run by and for the lower economic strata.

Tastemakers

> [G]lobally extensive networks and flows of foods, people, and culinary knowledge are being locally articulated -- here in a fashioning of London [England] as cosmopolitan metropolis. (Cook and Crang 1996: 132)

This passage may not be entirely relevant to London, Ontario, but it does seem as though London is attempting this in some proportion -- developing its image through the diversity of food and food knowledge as forms of cultural capital. And by extension (although possibly less importantly) there is acknowledgement of various diverse populations of people in the city as well.

Obviously you need people to bring, and/or produce the food. But they are not absolutely necessary otherwise; indeed their 'value' or relevance in terms of fashioning the image or reputation of the city lies mostly within the capacity to produce ethnic food. However, in large part due to those globally extensive networks and flows mentioned

previously, there are many restaurants that serve ethnic-influenced cuisines without people of those ethnic groups preparing them. But in these cases, the cuisine is usually referred to as being influenced by those national or cultural cuisines as opposed to actually claiming that they are authentic. There used to be an upscale restaurant in Toronto that boasted a pan-Asian menu drawing from various southeast Asian cuisines prepared by the two owner/chefs who were both non-Asian but had travelled and worked in Asia. In London, a relative newcomer to the restaurant scene is the Blue Ginger that also features some Asian-bent dishes. These kinds of "fusion cooking" make no claims to an authentic ethnic cuisine.

Currently there are five Indian restaurants in London. While the number does not compare to other nationality restaurants like Italian, Greek or Chinese, Indian cuisine is not the least represented cuisine either. There are, at last count, at least three Vietnamese restaurants, three (east) African restaurants, three Japanese restaurants (one owned and operated by Koreans), two Korean restaurants, and one Caribbean-Jamaican-West Indian restaurant (although for one brief moment there were two as one had just opened while the other folded). *The London Free Press Restaurant Guide* does not always provide a complete and comprehensive list of restaurants. The telephone directory probably provides a complete listing but that involves searching for business names amongst personal ones. *The Yellow Pages* also do not provide a thorough listing as they are ads and have to be paid for. When cross-referenced with the "white pages" there were many listings not found in *The Yellow Pages* from the years 1978 to 1985. Focusing primarily on Indian restaurants, the same search also showed that Chinese and Italian were the most numerous examples of ethnic restaurants. Mexican (Under the

Volcano), Dutch, Bavarian and Hungarian (Budapest Dining Room) restaurants seemed to predate 1978. Until 1985 with the arrival of the Jewel of India, there seemed to be only one Indian restaurant: Pot Pourri - Restaurant and Tavern. Then from 1979 to 1984 Pot Pourri billed itself as a "Curry House and Tavern." Other ethnic cuisines available during that period included Japanese (1981), Middle Eastern (1982), and Korean (1982). The Middle Eastern establishments seemed to disappear after a few years (1984) and as far as I could tell, during my first year in London I could not find a Middle Eastern restaurant and was told that the only one had just closed recently. There were a number of familiar names in *The Yellow Pages* even from 1978 but just as many unfamiliar ones. This is not surprising. But for the most part there seems to be some sort of continuity in the kinds of restaurants that are available in London give or take a year or two. Since the arrival of the first Korean restaurant there has always been at least one, although not always the same one. This seems to reflect the pattern for most of the other restaurants as well. While I did not count the actual number of restaurants listed in *The Yellow Pages* each year, the number of pages that the restaurant section took remained fairly constant. That is, there were no sudden dips or surges. However, today's listings do exceed those from those years that I looked at.

There is more than just the diversity and number of restaurants as an indicator of maintaining a certain "big city" status. Another important consideration is the kind of restaurant. That is, not just any restaurant will do. Certain kinds of restaurants, just like certain kinds of anything else one can consider, carry more prestige or status than other kinds. Often in large urban centres ethnic or upscale restaurants carry more weight than, for example, a local tavern (although in certain contexts or situations neighbourhood

bars and taverns may be just as important to the image of a neighbourhood, city, etc.). If London aspires to be a city that features all the amenities but without the various problems of a major city, then one way this manifests itself is in the number of restaurants that appear (and disappear or are replaced) every year. Related to this are the various forms of media around food and restaurants and the role they play in shaping and influencing the restaurant-going public. For example, the restaurant reviews in the local daily seems to carry a lot of clout for readers and restaurant goers.

The Vietnamese restaurant on Dundas across from the Kellogg plant is an example, from what I can tell, of how important the review in the London newspaper is. During my first year, while exploring Dundas Street on my bike, I came across the restaurant. Eventually, I returned to try the restaurant. Other than a few tables with Vietnamese customers, the restaurant was pretty bare. I assumed that it was, at that time, primarily a place for Vietnamese residents to eat, hang out, because it also served as a karaoke bar at nights. Approximately two years, and a generally favourable review from the London daily later, they are sporting a new sign and, whenever I have been there, excellent business. And there is a marked increase in non-Vietnamese customers.

The restaurant reviewer from the London paper recently reviewed both the Jewel of India and the Curry Garden. The former was a follow-up while the latter was one of their first reviews. Folks from both restaurants were generally content with the reviews albeit not wildly happy. The review for the Curry Garden was fairly positive, but I share the owner's feelings that it was not entirely enthusiastic either. The folks at the Jewel thought that the follow-up review was a notch below their previous one, which was much more enthusiastic. While I do not think either of reviews hurt the restaurants,

informants from both establishments also felt that it could have helped them a lot more had the respective reviews been more positive. Also both restaurants usually deal mostly with a regular group of customers, and the potential customers beyond this group are the ones that an enthusiastic review can help draw in.

The role of the food media then plays a significant role in determining what is important (and what is not) by what the reviewer decides to focus on. These decisions are likely to be informed by the wider range of food media that encompasses the local one as a part. The end result is those restaurants and establishments that are overlooked are not as important because they have little to offer in what is trendy at the time. That is, they hold no value in the form of cultural capital. If, at any given time, certain restaurants are more 'valuable' than others, then it makes sense that the opinion-forming media take notice and pay attention to them. As such this kind of selective exposure illuminates specific aspects of the city that those "tastemakers" want to reveal or emphasize. And in another sense, they highlight those places that the city needs to confirm its image of itself.

Regardless of the changing times or tastes or fashions what tends to be overlooked, in my estimation, is restaurants that tend to reflect a lower economic class of customers. For example, many of the restaurants that are "east of Adelaide" are largely ignored regardless of how popular they might be in the neighbourhood. The Portuguese barbecue restaurant on Hamilton Road is from my experience very popular, offering an alternative to Kentucky Fried Chicken or Swiss Chalet (with an assortment of barbecued items such as chicken and ribs all available for takeout). Yet I have never seen any mention of it in any guides or listings. This is true of many of the numerous restaurants

and taverns or bars that dot the city landscape. What these places have in common are that they are not located in the 'right' part of the city and nor do they offer the right possibilities: food, atmosphere, status, prestige. Positive valuations of certain restaurants or businesses renders other businesses less visible. It would seem to the benefit of certain ethnic minority groups that the "tastemakers" deem their food good or valuable or trendy, i.e., Vietnamese.

However another part of the dining out possibilities that the city has to offer that are regularly ignored are the theme restaurant chains. The city seems to be pushing and building up its northern boundaries further with enormous shopping complexes dominated by the wide expanse of the parking lot. The move north seems to be occurring at the expense of downtown London. I do not know if this is a case of moving out of the core into more suburban spaces but at Richmond and Masonville it certainly looks like it.

There are at least two East Side Mario's, two Jack Astors, and a number of other similar types of establishments seemingly located in the southern and northern edges of the city where the landscape is predominantly made up of giant shopping complexes. The clientele does not seem to reflect any particular group over another. While these restaurants, the food equivalents of Blockbuster Video stores, are not the kinds usually associated with the restaurant scene, or fine dining for that matter, they still are very 'visible.' Part of the appeal of Jack Astors and its ilk has to be the variety it offers and the value for the money. Thus, while it is hierarchically a notch above McDonald's or Subway it is a notch below 'real' restaurants. It attracts a wider range of customers who know what to expect and can even sample "safe" versions of ethnic dishes.

I suggest that ethnic restaurants or more upscale establishments must compete against the big theme restaurant chains. Those in the media, the "tastemakers," make up a large portion of those that are reflected in or create the popular image of London. They are trying to establish London as a city with a dining scene. This dining scene is particular in what it includes and what it excludes and also particular as to the tastes that are reflected. In other words, it seems to be a case of one class or strata of residents competing with others to create an image of London: popularly, white, fairly well to do, urbane, somewhat cosmopolitan. The small sports bars, Portuguese joints, and other kinds of restaurants found in the eastern edges of London are not a part of any popular image of London. So there is a scalar or telescoping scale of competing interests both socially/culturally and geographically/physically. In the broad social and geographical centre of the city, there seem to be some at least a couple of group interests side by side. One is those reflected in the popular image of London with its interest in finer or more cosmopolitan forms of dining. Fairly distinct class interests surface here. Another is the equally represented, equally visible group (that cuts across many social boundaries, categories, etc.) that frequents the all-in-one restaurants often located within the all-in-one malls. Then these 'groups' can be set up next to those that are more in the periphery of the popular imagination of London (the less visible).

Unexpected Visitors

One night, I dropped in to order some food at the Jewel of India. The restaurant was empty and the main person I spoke to was working there along with a couple of others in the kitchen. As I waited for the order, we sat down at a table and made some small talk about business, or the lack of it. Then two guys entered the restaurant. What struck me immediately was that these two did not look like the kind of customers that I had seen at the restaurant up to that moment. I could not articulate or really make sense of the sudden feeling of unease.

The two guys, both white male in their thirties, stood by the entrance and when approached by the server and asked if they were a party of two, they asked for menus. Then they asked if the restaurant served soup. The server continued to answer their questions and was in his serving mode: polite, slightly deferring. Finally they sat down. But, as they were talking quietly between themselves and perusing the menu, the server returned with two glasses of water and set them down. It was at this point, as they traded questions and replies, that I noticed that the server was acting almost too polite, too accommodating and almost hovering around them. As the exchange wore on the two guys were being somewhat evasive. There was a discernible tension in the air, or at least so I thought. The tension for me was the uneasy exchange between the two guys with their gruff manner and the continually polished act that the server was performing. It seemed like at any moment something could erupt. But I still could not completely account for the tension I was feeling. So what was going on?

Eventually, after a lot of waffling about and the back and forth exchange between the server and the two, they abruptly got up. They tossed the menus they had been holding for the whole time onto the table and with some vague unpleasant departing words left. The server stood and watched them leave.

The server returned to the table where I was seated and before I could say anything, another employee emerged out of the kitchen and approached us. The server got up and the two met and talked in the middle of the restaurant. When the server returned, the other fellow returning to the back, I inquired about the little scene and was told that sort of thing happens occasionally. They come in, order something, eat some of it, and then they refuse to pay the bill citing some sort of dissatisfaction with the meal or dish.

Later, after I had picked up my order, I understood that the polite but ultimately hesitant service that the informant was performing was in full recognition of situation that he was in. The tension that I was feeling was the tension between the mutual understanding of the two fellows and the server of what was going on. But the initial sense of surprise when they first walked in to the restaurant had to do with the fact that they did not look like the *type* of people that usually frequented the place. What "type," meant was that they did not look middle class and they also did not look middle of London.

The Jewel of India acted as a forum for an encounter that highlighted my assumption of the nature of the clientele at the Indian restaurants in London, Ontario. Writing about "white trash" in Detroit, Hartigan states that white trash "designates ruptures of conventions that maintain whiteness as an unmarked, normative identity"

(1997: 46). The 'different' kind of white customers I witnessed that night disrupted my ideas about whiteness as a single, monolithic category. Often the designation of white is an unquestioned and unproblematized category to which ethnic or cultural differences are recognized and elaborated upon. The appearance of the two men in the restaurant was an immediate example of the normative condition that I had assumed in thinking (generally) about non-whites. In relation to the usual type of customers that I was used to, this experience made visible "classed forms of identity and difference" (Hartigan 1997: 52).

City Reputations

Cities are often vying for status or distinction amongst other urban centres. One way this happens is that an image and/or reputation is built upon the culinary diversity available. The number and range of foods available is often one foundation that reputation and urban pride are built upon: "Restaurants have become incubators of innovation in urban culture. They feed the symbolic economy – socially, materially, and spiritually" (Zukin 1995 quoted in Bell and Valentine 1997: 140).

The "Festival of Taste" is an example of this dynamic. What is explicitly celebrated is the number and diversity of the restaurants and other food businesses available in the city. Implicitly, it is celebrating the existence of ethnic groups in London but only those that are represented by a restaurant. How profoundly the festival celebrates any sort of ethnic diversity, can be considered as being fairly limited.

Regarding how deep the inter-ethnic contact is, these types of events trade mostly in the limited currency of ethnic restaurant food as being representative of those peoples. There may be individuals with a deeper appreciation or knowledge about an ethnic cuisine but the festival itself does not have to work at that level. Less critically, the festival obviously is a setting for interested people to introduce themselves to various different foods and by extension people of different backgrounds. Despite the inherent limitations of these sorts of interactions, this is nonetheless a potentially powerful learning encounter. Those initial steps in bridging the spaces that may exist between individuals or groups can be closed in symbolically potent ways by eating. Not only is it easier but it is more immediate and more efficient than, say, attempting to learn another language. And, obviously, it is potentially a lot tastier.

Another implication of this sort of event is that there is a restaurant-going audience, a demand. This pre-supposes an urban restaurant 'scene.' A restaurant scene necessarily means a diversity of restaurants. Part of the acclaim that big urban centres have is linked to the number and diversity of restaurants that would constitute such a scene. A whole industry is built around this, which includes magazines, television shows, gastro-tours, cooking schools, restaurant guides and rankings of restaurants and chefs. North American cities like New York and San Francisco are acknowledged as being major centres of such complexes of culinary industries including restaurants. Toronto, for example, as it is voiced by many major magazines, newspapers and other forms of media, prides itself precisely on this. Notably, a few years ago, *Now* (weekly newspaper/magazine) which features restaurant reviews that hold a lot of sway, favorably compared the number, diversity, and quality of restaurants in Toronto to New

York and other major American cities. At least in local eyes, this considerably enhanced the stature of the city.

Cosmopolitanism

Eating different and unfamiliar foods can be regarded as an adventure of sorts or as a part of asserting a certain taste or distinction:

> Just as in the Seventies it was considered avant-garde to talk openly about sex and in the Eighties it was actually thought interesting to brag about mortgages and obscure decorative finishes, in the Nineties the emphasis is on pushing back gastronomic limits. (quoted in Bell and Valentine 1997: 43)

Another aspect to consider in the act of eating different foods may be to become more cosmopolitan in one's tastes and eating habits. Hannerz describes cosmopolitanism as an "orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other" (1991: 239). But more than just a willingness it is also considered an "ability to make one's way into other cultures...a readiness... a skill" (ibid.). As such it can be practiced and improved upon. Yet the first step is the willingness to enter a possibly strange or unknown situation. The degree to which one invests oneself in this can be the measure of how "cosmopolitan" one is or willing to be. To engage the Other at any significant level means to be confronted with different ideas and values, in addition to food. Thus, Hannerz describes cosmopolitanism as a "mode of managing meaning" (238). Those that are ready to engage the Other, to whatever level they want to do so, have a number of options. As van den Berghe has mentioned, there is no easier way to do so than by eating, especially in an ethnically diverse urban setting (1984: 393-4). This is also a means of

accumulating cultural capital. These various factors, alone or together, could compel someone to go out and look for something different to eat, different in that it does not represent cooking at home, the family, the larger community, or represent one's ethnic background. As mentioned already, aspects of eating are mostly formed in or around the home, within the family dynamic, just as the family and the home is created around the meal (Bell and Valentine 1997: 60-8). From this, various individual responses and negotiations of how, what and why people eat can develop.

Generally speaking, consumption practices are not fixed and constant in meaning. They can be employed instrumentally and strategically to convey a particular message. Very often they are saying something about self-identity and how and where the individual fits into larger social groups. These consumption practices are necessarily flexible and open.

Specifically, eating practices are tied to ideas about oneself and others. The popularity of ethnic food, food brought to local venues by the international flow and movement of people, has opened up numerous choices in eating especially in urban centres. The existence of another culture, an "Other," not only results in negotiations between the native population with new or recent arrivals but also results in some form of greater self-reflexivity for all participants. There is an abundance of opportunities to explore, expand and redefine values, ideas. There are certain consequences for the city or other places (and the people who live there) because of ideas about identity and status. These sets of relationships can be traced outward from a city or region to the nation and to the global scene. The various interconnections go up and down the scale.

London to London

The global connections and flows of products, people and ideas can also be traced to London, Ontario, and to, at least, some of the Indian restaurants there.

The most often cited reason for choosing to locate their restaurant in London had to do with the reputation and image of the city. The prevailing image of London, with its history as a Loyalist settled centre, was strong enough to persuade potential Indian restaurant owners to locate here. The colonial history of India and Britain and the migration elsewhere from that point suggest that London was a viable place to open an Indian restaurant. It was assumed there was a sizable mid- to upper-class population of British people. It seems that within that group, contact and/or the acquisition of a taste for Indian food was formed because there were some who were actually in India during the colonial period and/or others just from countries in Great Britain (familiar with Indian food because of that). On a few occasions I have been in one restaurant where at least two different parties of customers who had lived in India chatted with the servers and owners talking about the "old country," reminiscing about places and such. These former residents of India who visit the restaurant highlight the historical and spatial connections that extend from the sub-continent to Britain and to Canada.

Deciding to open an Indian restaurant based on the popular assumptions about London that some people have creates some potentially ironic situations. Again, the accuracy of the image is not necessarily the issue here. Prospective restaurant owners and city residents basing their decisions to open in London on that image actually serve

to create an alternate picture: a version that presents a more diverse population of people, perspectives and responses to living there. Prospective Indian restaurateurs choose to come to London feeling that there will be a base of customers who are familiar with the cuisine, perhaps resembling its namesake in England (amongst other reasons) and end up undercutting that very image of homogeneity or its rationale simply by settling in the city.

If this is one of a number of images of London that exist and if some are more resonant -- that is, more widespread, mentioned, heard -- than others, one could ask can there be any one London that exists? Or is London a site of contestation between many competing interests and identities within the city?

According to a recent poll cited in *The London Free Press* the majority of city residents considered themselves to be of British background. This number was higher than for any other city in southwestern Ontario. This can be compared to Toronto where projected numbers suggest that by the Millennium, the city's population will be over 50% ethnic minorities. But the competing interests in the city are not entirely defined across lines of ethnicity or nationality but also along lines of class, in Toronto as in London.

Like a number of the restaurants, the owners and employees have some connection to England, whether they have some family there or whether it was one of their intervening steps between India (or Africa) and Canada. One owner in particular was strongly influenced by the Indian restaurant 'scene' in London, England. Because of their ties to the other London, his family incorporated a specific style of cooking which is not commonly found here. Their incorporation of the *balti* style of cooking

distinguishes them from the other restaurant menus in town. *Balti* (which refers to a wok-like cooking utensil) hails from northern Pakistan and is apparently a fairly recent addition to the ethnic food scene in England and specifically based in the West Midlands (Bell and Valentine 1997: 159). As far as I can tell, the Curry Pot is the only Indian restaurant that serves this type of cuisine in London or Toronto. Styles or trends in restaurant cuisine are not passed along directly from the home nation. Here, a form of Pakistani cuisine follows the dominant current to England and is then dispersed to other areas through networks of travel, and migration. Within England, Bell and Valentine note that the West Midlands is set up as the British home of *balti* cuisine and competes with other regions, like London, where their *balti* is dismissed as inauthentic imitation (ibid.). The many forms and variations of any 'original' cuisine outside its place of origin are usually spread over many locales. In this case, it moved from London, England to a restaurant in London, Ontario. Within the multi-locale articulation of the original, such restaurants may embody or carry inter-regional rivalries with issues of identity at stake (ibid.). Such as what is going on between Manchester and London, where a strong Indian restaurant scene exists, resulting in a competitive drive for more authentic food. That is, more regional fare is sought after. London Ontario, does not have a corresponding scene. As a result, while the menu at the Curry Pot is unique in that respect, local or regional identities are not at stake. What is at stake seems to come down to the business competition between the five Indian restaurants, in a specific local context.

Inventing a National Cuisine

Generic national cuisines are often more ideological than they are accurate representations. This means that they serve more ideological purposes of nation building or affirming a sense of national pride. While the previous discussion has been from the point of view of an outsider toward the cuisine of a nation, there is also another side to this: that is, how people of a single nation, a nation that is diverse and heterogeneous, are constructing a national cuisine by bringing together different regional cooking styles. This is done primarily for the purpose of showing one another their efforts, offering themselves up for show as well. Appadurai (1988) discusses in his paper "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India" the efforts principally made by the new middle class in constructing a national cuisine. These attempts are "essentially a postindustrial, postcolonial process" in imagining the far corners and borders of a heterogeneous and diverse nation as well as taking into consideration its colonial legacy (1988: 5). Cookbooks offer recipes from different regions, "ethnic cameos" of other ethnic groups of a highly divided (through caste, religion, region, and language) India (1988: 15-6). Often the whole of a regional cuisine will be represented by or reduced to a single dish. Those mostly responsible for mobilizing this force are a middle class that is familiar and in tune with more Westernized tastes and mores. It is this class that is "constructing a middle-class ideology and consumption style for India, which cuts across older ethnic, regional, and caste boundaries" (1988: 6). It can be suggested then that this ideology has some of the basic assumptions that surround consumer behaviour in the West, namely that it is possible to assemble and consume a pan-Indian, national identity. The cookbooks and recipes are found in mostly English language women's magazines.

These magazines are the main vehicles for communicating ideas to their mostly female readership. And as women are traditionally responsible for and at the centre of the domestic sphere of the home, they play a prominent role in communicating these ideas to other members of the family. This then potentially extends outward, outside the family, into other homes, the workplace, and so forth. The values, ideas and conventions of the emergent class provide the basis for these and other processes to occur and thereby perpetuate these practices and ideas. These "culinary conceptions of the Other" (between regions) presented in the cookbooks provide a way of familiarizing, bringing together the enormous variety and diversity that exists. Otherwise the linguistic, religious and cultural differences in India made it difficult to consume all at once.

The cuisines represented in the five Indian restaurants in London, Ontario, are predominantly north Indian. There are a selection of dishes drawn from southern Indian cuisines such as *vindaloos* and different types of bread. But for the most part a region may be reduced and represented by a single dish. With these limitations in mind the menus are more or less pan-Indian. However it is not a result of a conscious effort made to represent different foods from the various regions of India, at least, not in the restaurants here in London. Rather most Indian restaurants in North America tend to have similar menus with specific items that are standard in all locations. There are more specialized, that is, more regional cuisine restaurants such as generalized south Indian restaurants and vegetarian restaurants which tend to reflect the cuisine of one specific region (such as the Gujurat region). However, none of the restaurants in London are specific to any region or style of cooking.

The absence and multiple representations of any one region's cuisine over another in the typical Indian restaurant menu may create for the restaurant customer an inaccurate sense of a singular and monolithic cuisine of India. Further, the typical menu may include dishes that may have emerged out of the colonial period. An example, is the *mulligatawny* soup, a modern invention. This is not the conscious, politically-motivated invention of a national cuisine that Appadurai writes about. Instead, drawn from the hodge-podge menu, it is (potentially) another sort of invention all together.

Region

Since WWII immigrant and/or ethnic cuisine has experienced a greater level of overall acceptance and incorporation into the popular diet (Gabaccia 1998; Levenstein 1988). One of the most widespread was Italian. Now many immigrant cuisines are familiar and commonplace. Chinese and Italian food (in its various forms), the two most dominant ethnic restaurant cuisines in Canada circa 1980 (Zelinksy 1985), are ubiquitous to the point where one can find them almost anyplace. Many dishes have become a part of everyday meals (and open to specific re-interpretations). Specific terms surrounding the different cuisine have become a part of most people's general vocabulary, ranging from the name of a particular dish to a foreign ingredient name. As a result, not only have certain dishes have become familiarized but the new cuisines have also introduced new ingredients and potentially new ways of preparation.

This extensive process of familiarization and possible incorporation into the popular taste entails a wide range of changes and modifications. Briefly, the changes in cuisine from actual content to preparation will differ -- for example -- between a recently arrived immigrant in Canada to a native of the country of the same background. For example, an immigrant may be faced with the problem of acquiring proper ingredients or having ingredients that were seasonal, now available all year in supermarkets. Apart from problems regarding ingredients and such, potential differences between the two cultures may open up or limit the options available in the preparation of food items. Specific tools and technologies may not be readily available or they may open up new methods of preparation. As a result this may entail some modifications in how and when some dishes will be prepared. In brief, immigrant and ethnic foodways are open to a wide variety of contingencies and circumstances that may or may not produce some changes. Kalcik refers to this as the process of "acculturation and hybridization" (1984: 39). The changes can be in the preparation, the actual product and also in the social meanings related to some food items (i.e., how foodways relate to ideas about identity and identification that I will delve into in more detail later).

The openness of the immigrant foodways to the host culture is not necessarily a one way process. The host culture is also affected, albeit to varying degrees. The popularity of Italian-based dishes like spaghetti is one example in which immigrant cultures have made an impression on the host palate. In some ways, this process is similar to that by which Western products are being distributed and consumed all over the world. And as foreign dishes are often adapted to local concerns and desires, the consumption of those products is also adapted to and consumed in a specific manner that

is meaningful locally. But there are differences between the two examples. The most obvious is the difference in the power structures that inform those exchanges. As well, the impact and influence of these initial exchanges are not entirely predictable. They are also 'out there' and no longer easily controlled or manipulated. As well, one of the features of a global culture is the number of various (alternative) routes and networks that are available. The various routes and networks are available in that they are more readily accessible to more people (the Internet, i.e., World Wide Web is a good example of a network that is for the most part irrespective of boundaries and widely available... to those with computers... phone lines... electricity...).

Through time many ethnic and exotic food items have become "naturalized," shared with outsiders more perhaps than language, gestures, clothing, and so forth (Zelinsky 1985: 52-3). Eating is obviously easier than learning a language and is less complicated than taking on another group's clothing or costume. Often those foods are far removed from their origins and may have undergone a series of changes along the way. Van den Berghe (1984) points out two examples of "deethnicised" food items, the pizza and the hot dog. Both, he argues, have been "transformed out of culinary recognition in North America" and also redistributed worldwide in their modified form (394). As such, the hot dog in its "secondary European diaspora" has acquired an American ethnic label and is consumed as such, existing side by side with its German progenitor (Van den Berghe 1984: 394). The pizza has undergone a similar transformation. The hot dog, as the saying goes, is as American as apple pie (for example, the association of hot dogs and, America's national pastime, baseball). Although pizzas are to be found everywhere and

are consumed by anyone, they do not seem to have undergone a complete transformation, if only because there seems to be a continuous linkage, especially in advertising and marketing, between it and something that connotes Italian-ness. This would suggest that there is still something profitable to maintain that linkage (however fantastical it is, such that there are Italians who rarely eat or have eaten a pizza, be it Americanized or otherwise) whereas for the hot dog it seems that it is not necessary. For whatever reasons, the pizza then is still conceptually linked to something that is conceived as Italian. This is in spite of pizzas topped with *tandoori* chicken, "JA-styled thinnest-crust-ever roti pizza with avocado, sweet-pepper confetti and parmesan" (in effect, a Jamaican/Caribbean pizza) or the "Chinese pizza" mentioned in Allison James' (1996) article on contemporary British food cultures. Depending on your outlook, these particular manifestations of pizza-ness may sound tempting or horrendous. Perhaps in response to this, and evidence that pizza is still considered Italian, there has been resurgence of interest in this issue. In *The Toronto Star* (March 11, 1998) an article with the headline "Mamma Mia! Italy lays down pizza law" reports:

> Tired of pineapple toppings and other half-baked alternatives, the birthplace of pizza is putting its foot down.
>
> Egged on by perfectionists in Naples, whose chefs have been in the business for more than two centuries, Italy's National Standards Body (UNI) is laying down strict rules for "genuine pizza" as it is prepared in the southern port city.
>
> If all goes as planned, the traditional poor man's dish now enjoyed by countless millions worldwide every day will join the ranks of Brunello wine and Parmigiano cheese as a certified quality product.

There are several issues and ideas here. Part of the reasoning behind such a move has to do with popularity, the fact that pizza is "enjoyed by countless millions worldwide." There is the suggestion that its popularity and its resultant widespread proliferation has tarnished the reputation of the original (or at least the local) pizza. What is in contention here is the issue of authenticity. As a pizza chef and a supporter for this motion remarks, "'All sorts of things pass for a pizza these days.... From now on, customers will be able to tell whether they are eating the real thing or not" (ibid.). The odd and exotic pizzas mentioned previously do not fit into most accepted ideas of what pizza looks like, even if some of us consider a "Hawaiian pizza" with pineapples acceptable. The degree to which pizza has been naturalized is exemplified by the fact that it is even available to be transformed into something else in order for it to be exotic or unusual. If van den Berghe claims that pizza has become "deethnicized," then these innovations can be regarded as an effort to 're-ethnicize' the pizza. The attempts of the UNI to legally establish a "genuine" pizza is in some part an attempt to reestablish or reinforce the link of pizza to Italy, a common practice of tying whole cultures with a particular cuisine. But as is clearly stated in the article, it is not just a matter of tying pizza to a nation. It is even more specific. The UNI wishes to "extend a law that says only products from a certain region can lay claim to their name, in this case to the name Neapolitan pizza" (*Toronto Star* March 11, 1998). The general concept of the 'Italian' pizza is specified into a local or regional product and identity. Common assumptions of conceptually imagining a certain dish in relation to a nation are challenged. At a more general level, the way we conceive certain dishes representing a nation or a whole culture often glosses over the multi-regional cooking styles of a nation or a "whole culture." From the point

of view of a consumer or commercial producer of ethnic food, attention to regional differences and distinctions suggests a more sophisticated and authentic knowledge beyond simplistic associations of food items to its country (spaghetti to Italy). Authenticity is found in the regional diversity of cuisines around the world (James 1996: 87). In the same manner, the authentic Neapolitan pizza is not necessarily just Italian, but more specifically identified with Naples and neither Venice nor Sicily. The level of specificity in determining distinctions among global-national-regional cuisines reveals or displays how authentic that knowledge is.

There seems to be a great effort undertaken here to link the pizza to a specific region and thereby claim it as the only genuine product. As the excerpt from the article states, if successful, the pizza would join the *Brunello* wine and the *Parmigiano* cheese as certified and controlled products made in a specific region. Only those products produced under a specific set of conditions and procedures would be allowed to carry those names. This is not unique. In France, *Champagne*, while popularly used to refer to various kinds of sweet bubbly wines, can only be applied to those made in a specific region (e.g., German and Italian versions are referred to merely as sparkling wines). *Champagne* is only one example of *appellations d'origine* as a regulating factor of the wine regions in France (Moran 1993). *Appellations*, like the one proposed for the pizza, set up a set of standards or criteria for production and as a result act like a trademark. According to the article, the ingredients and how those ingredients are used will largely determine what a genuine pizza is. Some of the ingredients are regionally based, such as the "rich, porcelain-white mozzarella made of buffalo milk, also common to the Naples area" (*Toronto Star* March 11, 1998). This intermingling of the ingredient, from the

actual land of the region, to the product, reinforces the association between region and product: "essential qualities of a product are associated with some essence of place, an essence rooted in the soil and climate but also in traditions of production" (Cook and Crang 1996: 146). For the producers, *appellations* ensures that they will always have all the benefits of an exclusive trademark. For the consumer, theoretically, they ensure a standard of quality which is often linked with "artisanal principles of 'craftsmanship'" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 17) as well as with knowing that one is consuming an authentic product. The remarks made by the pizza chef (do we consider the folks at work at the local Pizza Hut or Pizza Pizza to be "pizza chefs"?) in the article (quoted above) sum up the advantages of establishing a trademark on a product.

Such moves to consolidate the importance of a regional position within a larger context reveal various issues related to the intermingling of regional or smaller-scale responses to current globalizing processes. However, the concept of the region needs to be addressed more in depth. What is it about the region that would make it the social and physical ground or space for these sorts of things to occur? Like other geographical places/spaces e.g., the city or the nation, they encompass certain patterns and forces that affect or shape them in particular ways. Smith (1993 quoted in Bell and Valentine 1997: 17) states, "the regional scale is closely bound up with the larger rhythms of the national and global economy, and regional identity is constructed disproportionately around the kinds of work performed there." The region is usually associated with what it is produced there. An example closer to home is the Niagara region wine. As Bell and Valentine note winemaking regions are often popular tourist destinations.

The regional level is tied to the national and global economy or scale. The attempts at legislating the pizza as a specific and distinct certified product can be regarded as means of protecting the regional production or activity, as well as effort to maintain and reaffirm local or regional identities in the face of national or international forces. The force of homogenization is potentially able to erase all those local or smaller scale identities. In other words it is an example of conceiving a "mosaic of traditional regional cultures being mobilized against the spectre of invasion and homogenization" (Cook and Crang 1996: 146). This particular "spectre" is generally the ethical concern regarding the international marketing of goods that spreads a "single regime of products and values around the world" that may obliterate cultural diversity to be replaced by a standardized (mostly resembling a Western) culture (Classen and Howes 1996: 179). For example, fearing that the influx of Western products was heralding a new sort of colonial domination, some Hindu fundamentalists attempted to organize a boycott against Coca-Cola and Pepsi, the most visible symbols of the purported "multinational invasion" (ibid.). This situation differs slightly in that the "spectre" is not entirely that the foreign products are threatening the integrity of Italian products. Rather, their property has been exported and as a result altered – and in the point of view of pizza aficionados – altered beyond recognition. Viewed as a product of the region and reflecting the character of its habitants, it needed to be rescued from undergoing any more of its various tofu-like mutations: a *tabula rasa* of food stretched, tossed and garnished accommodating almost every taste, whim or desire. And, as the examples of some of the more unusual pizzas demonstrate, this particularly Italian (Neapolitan) product was assuming various ethnic or cultural markers as well. As such, the identities

of the inhabitants of the region were also in outsiders' hands undermining the purported authenticity of not only their product but also their identity. Only through popularization of the pizza can the only authentic pizza makers reclaim it as a product of their region. Gutierrez (1984) describes a similar experience of a "radicalised" Cajun community angered by the dilution of their cuisine when it was marketed outside Louisiana. Like the Cajun community, the association of Neapolitan pizza makers is mobilized through the perceived affront made to them. As a result, in another context, potentially they are mobilizing themselves against the rest of Italy as well. Thus this action can be viewed from at least a couple of different standpoints: the people of a region responding to the forces of globalization or potentially creating some sort of intra-regional competition in a country that is already rife with that.

The transnational character of pizza has instigated a movement to re-authenticate it and thereby re-authenticate the regional identity that is a part of the pizza. An intriguing possibility that may arise is, within that re-authentication of regional identities in the global context, local food traditions may become revitalized or at least receive more attention. James (1996: 84) suggests that the homogenizing of food (fast food in particular) has not brought about a comparable and parallel set of homogenized identities. As an example she cites a study done in Istanbul where the introduction of Western fast food chains has spurred on "local culinary complexity through the revival of traditional Turkish snack foods which offer similar contemporary, 'grazing' experience at half the price" (ibid.). To speculate even further, local traditions may borrow or be inspired by the new or different forms. The pizza story neither addresses nor rules out the possibility that perhaps many people in the Neapolitan region might

enjoy non-traditional pizza. Despite how the pizza has various claims to the identity of the region and its people, it may simply be a matter of developing a taste for pineapples on their pizza. At the same time, while some European nations such as Russia may have developed a taste for American fast food (or at least a niche for it) – Bell and Valentine describe how hamburgers had acquired a "chic" appeal for some French people, be it a reaction to the *haute* nature of the *haute* cuisine or otherwise – it seems that Italy would be a harder nut to crack. However, those little cracks probably exist, very likely as a result of the popularity of fast food with young people.

> The burger in France, as elsewhere, is, moreover, the favoured food of the young... fourth-fifths of paying customers in a survey in 1989 were under 34 years of age; even as fast food percolates down the social strata, it remains a predominantly youthful taste.
> (Bell and Valentine 1997: 172)

The American fast food outlets are recognized distinctly as representing an 'American-ness' that is not to be found there. Similarly, during my visit to South Korea in 1986, I counted two American fast food outlets in Suwon, a city with a population of about a million people and approximately 30 minutes from Seoul, the capital. Meanwhile, Seoul had almost every conceivable fast food outlet from the United States, many of which I did not even recognize because they do not exist in Canada (or at least in Southern Ontario). Upon my last visit, a few years ago, the total rose to three, and last year it went up again but only by two. While they are nowhere near as numerous as it is in Seoul, what struck me about all the fast food outlets was that the customers were predominantly juniour high school aged (and seemingly mostly girls, as I found out one afternoon while ordering a Wendy's lunch special). Apart from being observable, it is generally agreed upon that only young people go to Western fast food outlets to eat or

more accurately, to snack (as it is often distinguished by the fact that one cannot have hamburgers as a proper meal).

From its origin as a "traditional poor man's dish" to its current ubiquitous status, where an individual can not tell whether they are eating the "real thing" or not, it is being recovered by its region of birth. "Pizza chefs" and "Association for the Real Neapolitan Pizza" are means of binding the pizza to the region through tradition and history. James (1996: 80) asks how images of tradition are used to "prop up, relocate or dissuade allegiances to particular local identities against the backdrop of increasingly global, potentially homogenizing, cultural processes?" In this case, tradition is used to support and reaffirm those "particular local identities" in light of what the pizza has undergone and where it has gone. Now it is being re-rooted back into the ground, where the land is intertwined with the identity of those in that region. The attempt to take pizza back to its authentic roots is an endeavour to reaffirm local identities. At the same time, the pizza or any other food item does not simply come out of places. They also "make places as symbolic constructs, being deployed in the discursive construction of various imaginative geographies" (Cook and Crang 1996: 140). Food, the place and the people of that place are mutually interdependent and create and maintain a sense of meaning and identity. Pizza is a form of intellectual as well as material property that needs to be reclaimed. An important thing at stake in this reclamation project is authenticity, not just of the food item but also the people of the region. In this sense, it was a type of property that local people felt was being indiscriminately bandied about. In another sense, it is also the commodification of a region. By creating an *appellations d'origine*

they are accepting this change and ensuring some sort of commercial future for themselves.

The article states as a final point, "Pizza became a national symbol in the 1890s after Italy finally become [sic] unified after years of unrest." It suggests that the pizza was an internal symbol of its newfound nationhood. Within Italy there still exists today a strong sense of regionalism that in some ways is just as strong as nationalist sentiments. This is so especially within the country itself. There are a number of different configurations that map out the competition and differences between regions within the country. The most obvious one is the North-South division (in its extreme, a political party proposed that a small group of regions in the north secede from the rest of the nation, that is 'the south'). But even within any large defining category (like the south), there exist a number of ideas and stereotypes about one another between neighbouring regions. This is similar to how nationalist ethnic consciousness is strongest or most concretely mobilized when under threat by another (national or larger) force.

In the restaurant business, regional identification and consumer knowledge about regional differences seem to be predicated on how long a particular cuisine has been around. What outsiders conceive as a national cuisine is usually upon closer consideration extremely regional in nature. Often a national cuisine does not exist as such that would match the ideas outsiders might have about it. While a Canadian cuisine might be hard to imagine, a more regional Canadian cuisine is easily conceivable, such as Quebecois or Acadian foods. Chinese and Italian cuisines are heavily divided into

regional styles, for example. So while we consider pizza or spaghetti with tomato sauce as being quintessentially Italian, they are both dishes most commonly found in the South. These examples are the most common and popular examples of ethnic cuisine available in North America. As such, over time, there has been a process of breaking down the over-generalized or over-simplified generic offerings such as "Chinese" and "Italian" food. Whether it is a matter of greater freedom to cook more familiar or homey foods or whether it is a move to distinguish themselves from others of their ilk, restaurants 'specialize' in specific regional styles. As such, in larger cities with a significant number of any particular ethnic or nationality restaurants, it is more likely that there will be more region-identified restaurants.

Here in London, Ontario, the five Indian restaurants are only identified as "Indian" (although if one were to ask the restaurant staff they would be more specific). However, on an interesting note, in the Indian neighbourhood in east Toronto, a number of restaurants do not indicate (by way of signage) any indication of region-specific specialization. That is not to say that some of the restaurants do not provide more specific cuisines. It is just not so obvious to me. I have a few suggestions. The first is that in an area that is frequented by Indians it may not be necessary to identify restaurants so explicitly (patrons may know the differences). Secondly, the majority of businesses may be owned and frequented by natives of a certain area. Yet in the heart of a downtown neighbourhood known as the Annex, on a stretch of Bloor Street between Spadina and Bathurst Avenues, there are three Indian restaurants. The latest addition (no more than two years old) is distinctly signed as offering South Indian food. At least one restaurant review makes note of this fact, at least in passing, characterizing it as being

fairly rare or hard to find. The two previous examples show how depending on the location and context and to whom the restaurant is generally aimed (clientele), regional specialization takes on differing roles. In the latter, the specialization seems to translate as evidence of a sophisticated urban dining scene, great for a clientele who knows and values those regional differences that exist in a "national" cuisine. The first example seems more straightforward, in that its existence is more functional (not that the South Indian restaurant on Bloor Street is not filling a function, but that it is offering a place for other ethnic natives). Still, even at the level at which the restaurant is mostly for other ethnic natives, other Indians can satisfy their curiousity or taste for foods from other regions.

"Do you smell Kraft Dinner?"

I specifically single out one sensory aspect over others because of the nature of smell and because of its relationship to food preparation and consumption. Tyler (1996) states that the essence of aroma is its transgressive nature (617). Generally, smell is one way difference is marked when dealing with other foods. Preceding actual taste, the aroma and smells of the food sets the table, so to speak, to whet the appetite or suppress it altogether.

The smell of something can be carried away from its source much like the sound of something. But in dealing with food, smell is of far more consequence than the sounds of it (if any). So the smells of your lunch as you prepare it can lazily waft out of

the relatively private confines of your kitchen or apartment. It can be on your breath, your clothes even well after consumption. The construction of most suitable foods at proper times is partly informed by these concerns. Before a date or a conversation with someone in close quarters one would probably be careful about eating certain foods such as garlic, onions or even curry. Of course, this is relative to where one might live and its norms, values and the constructed experiences every individual accumulates.

Ours is a society that is generally acutely conscious or aware of smells and odours -- that is, the right or proper way to smell. It figures "into the construction of relations of power...on both popular and institutional levels" (Classen, Howes and Synnott 1996:161). The "relations of power" are expressed in how others compare to the centre of power which "governs from a position of olfactory neutrality" (ibid.) much like unmarked ethnicity. As such those people considered to be on the periphery of the centre are marked as being odourous or having some sort of smell. It is not only people of other ethnic, religious, social backgrounds that populate this periphery but also those of the 'wrong' gender. Typically, issues of smell and women are inextricably tied together in stereotypic forms. Women are (or there is a pressure to be) "fragrant," ethnic people exude "foreign" or "undesirable" odours, and the poor or homeless just smell bad.

Classified as being smelly or odourous can be used to mark someone or a whole group of people to generate stereotypes and other forms of typification. Nazis sometimes referred to Jews as garlic eaters (Classen, Howes and Synnott 1996). Smell is employed as a form of social classification. Much of Indian cuisine employs a number of different and highly aromatic spices and ingredients. The different or foreign qualities of these smells are for many its primary distinguishing features. For instance,

in grade school an Indian boy used to be teased about how he smelled; the smell of Indian food permeated corridors of apartment buildings. In many stereotypes and racist jokes about East Indians, there seems to be (at least to my experience) a fairly common theme that runs through them. In the case of Indians, it seems to come in the form of associating them with "shit" in some form or another and stigmatizing Indian-ness with smell, usually in a negative manner: "I just don't like Pakis. They stink. Pakis really reek. You can tell one in the street a mile away" (ibid.). The association of people of the Indian sub-continent with shit is encountered in a number of racist jokes dealing with East Indians. I suggest that this association is made on a number of different levels. These "levels" are general clusters of ideas and information that inform certain stereotypes.

The first, I think, has to do with popular conceptions of India and what it means to be Indian. Often the images in the media depict India typically as a poor and overpopulated Third World nation, the people living in conditions unimaginable by most industrialized, Western nations. These notions, most often centering on questions regarding hygiene and health and such, are compounded or enforced by popular images and stories. For example, Hindu practices of bathing in the Ganges, where we are shown in films the same place where the cremated ashes are scattered, the same waters where animals such as cows and oxen frolic, are indelible and powerful images.[7] Again, the predominant negative image of the people of India deals with these issues and its difference and alien-ness. While none of these images deals directly with food or its preparation, by association, other activities are implicated in the general assumptions and ideas. Another example, related more closely to food is the image of rural folks

collecting (handling) and then drying cow dung to be used as fuel to -- amongst other things -- cook their food. This particular example brings conceptualizations of food and waste together overtly.

Another aspect of this imagery pertains to skin colour. This is fairly straightforward. The last factor, which I would like to consider, brings us back to smell and visual appearance. The curry dish probably is most associated with Indian cuisine -- although the curry is "a category of colonial origin" (Appadurai 1988:18, Narayan 1995) -- and for those unfamiliar with it, it probably looks as strange as it smells. What is foreign does not have to be bad but within a racist perspective/discourse, if one is an immigrant, an unknown, or the Other, then it is more likely to take on a negative connotation (and of course you don't smell but "they" do). Thus a foreign, potentially exotic or tantalizing, sight and smell is interpreted as foul, inedible, excrement, shit. Difference, in this case, is acknowledged and heightened to exaggerate the boundaries between groups. As well, it serves to reinforce ideas about the group -- we define ourselves by what we are not.

Recently, on the CBC show "Comics," Brendan Peters, an East Indian stand-up comedian, did a short televised comedy bit that plays on these stereotypes and often racist sentiments:

> He and a group of friends, all Indian, are joking around while waiting for the bus inside a bus shelter in what is obviously a cold day. After a moment, a Caucasian fellow comes inside. Inside the bus shelter it grows quiet. The Indian fellows sigh, some make faces as if in pain and couple of them hold their noses, wincing and waving their hands in front of them. Peters says to his friends, oblivious to the white guy, "Do you smell Kraft Dinner?" There are nods. Shaking his head he adds almost disgustedly, in a lower tone, "Can't they wash before they leave their house?"

A simple but effective reversal touches on many of the issues and ideas that exist in this specific kind of group interaction and how assumptions about food plays a central part in those relations. An underlying assumption at work in the comedy bit and in real life is the notion that different people or groups have distinct and innate smells. That is, what you eat is literally being sweated out through your pores. To accept this notion as true, then, ethnocentric and relative claims that certain groups, religious orders, ethnicities smell good or bad can be made and utilized. For example, a cousin who visited Toronto, his first trip outside of Korea, some years ago commented to me that he could barely stand the subway ride because it smelled like a monkey house to him.

Improper aromas or smells are to be contained, neutralized, controlled. Those who cannot are blamed for their inattentiveness or their inability to do so. Their shortcomings are often deemed offensive by others as we move along the scale from olfactorily neutral to appropriately or pleasantly odourous. Smell can be one manifestation of difference and difference can be negotiated in different ways. Here smell and its associated stereotypical imagery regarding Indians are used as ways to separate and differentiate between self and Other. Difference is strangeness and treated as such.

Consumption and Self Identity

But at this juncture, our analysis can go in another direction.

I am talking about how difference in food (smell, look, origin, etc.) can be potentially used as a strategy for some people (young people for example) to engage difference in a positive or affirmative manner. I suggest that this engagement is enacted in a manner that consumes those differences to 'enhance' their own position or image or identity. The symbolic manipulation of foodways by a group or an individual -- be it conscious or unconscious -- can be regarded as a statement about identity, membership, status and the social boundaries that foodways symbolically entail. I would also like to emphasize the role of desire. Obviously these acts may make it sound like there are careful orchestrations and plans going on, and as a result are overdetermined in that manner. It is important to keep in mind that desire is obviously a key factor.

Theories about globalization tend to fall in to one of two theoretical perspectives: cultural heterogenization and cultural homogenization (effectively a Westernization/Americanization) or to exist in the tension between the two. Further refinements to these ideas have stressed the complementary and dialectical relationships between the two ideas and further emphasized processes such as hybridization and creolization. For example, uniform products that are distributed or are to be found internationally do not necessarily convey in the end the same meanings evenly and uniformly. At the local level, those products tend to be recontextualized and reworked so that they may take on very different meanings: "global sameness is reworked by local

difference..." (Bell and Valentine 1997: 190). By stressing the agency of consumers (against the seemingly overwhelming force of consumer culture) and the ability to select and adapt products to their own desires, knowledge and interests, the meanings of these products become culturally significant at the local level (Classen and Howes 1996: 178). For example, the ubiquitous McDonald's in Moscow or Paris connotes some very different meanings from those in Toronto (Smart 1994; Bell and Valentine 1997: 172).

A feature of globalization or a global culture suggests that the world is getting 'smaller' (for some of us). Globalization is driven by sophisticated interconnected telecommunication networks, the media, increasing availability and magnitude of international travel and tourism, corporate expansionism, and so forth. As well, people are conscious that the world is getting 'smaller.' "It is our knowledge that the world getting smaller which is crucial, and the uses we make of that knowledge" which potentially increase our understanding of and place in that world (Bell and Valentine 1997: 1991). As consumers, then, we may have "the world on a plate" (Cook and Crang 1996). And just as "global sameness is reworked by local difference," local differences out there can be made global, consumable. One of the most common ways of thinking about these processes of globalization is through food. However, before going further on the subject of food, I would like to look at the general power of consumer activities and commodities to articulate place -- physical and social -- (and by implication movement) and identity: as Friedman puts it, "[to] explore consumption as an aspect of broader cultural strategies of self-definition and self-maintenance" (1991: 312).

Featherstone (1991) writes about the current state of the ascendancy of lifestyle, the stylization of life, and the free flowing ability to recreate the self in the current consumer culture. First, Featherstone introduces the concept of "consumer culture," particularly the "cultural dimension of the economy, the symbolization and use of material goods as 'communicators' not just utilities" (1991: 84). Then, using Baudrillard and others, he attempts to establish that this consumer culture is largely "depthless" and that "all values have become transvalued and art has triumphed over reality" (ibid.: 85). That is, he calls it a postmodern culture -- the mass production of commodities has resulted in the de-emphasis on or even obliteration of the original use-values of goods has "resulted in the commodity becoming a sign in the Saussurean sense, with its meaning arbitrarily determined by its position in a self-referential system of signifiers" (ibid.: 85). The commodity is no longer held to its original use-value but open to a range of signifiers that can rename and recast upon goods new or unexpected meanings. Important in this role is advertising and various forms of mass media, particularly television. This process, described as the "aestheticization of reality," highlights and clears the way for the ascendancy of (life)style.

Individuals potentially have a way of expanding and remodeling their lives largely through consumption practices.

> Rather than unreflexively adopting a lifestyle, through tradition or habit, the new heroes of consumer culture make lifestyle, a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily dispositions they design together into a lifestyle. The modern individual within consumer culture is made conscious that he speaks not only with his clothes, but with his home, furnishings, decoration, car and other activities which are read and classified in terms of the presence and

absence of taste. (Featherstone 1991: 86)

Thus these articulations of style and identity are a way of distinguishing oneself from others, one social group from another. Friedman regards it as "a negotiation between self-definition and the array of possibilities offered by the capitalist market" (1991: 314). Furthermore, lifestyle is not only constructed through what one can have and experience but also by what the individual chooses not to have or purchase or experience. As such self-definition is in relation to the world of goods as a non-consumer (ibid.). By not participating, or even being generally suspicious or hostile to consumer practices, one equally derives a sense of identity. Under the assumption that these sorts of beliefs and behaviour are not shared by the majority (in its extreme form), then the sense of identity tends to be rooted not necessarily in the individual but also in other like minded individuals as well. Thus, alternative methods of consumption, like bartering, necessitate more interpersonal relations and a reliance on reciprocal exchanges. One has to become a part of the network that entails giving and taking services or time. These activities are the opposite of negative-reciprocal exchanges, at least ideally. These and other practices, ranging from decreasing buying and/or employing other resources or avenues of acquiring goods, are attempts at minimizing active participation in a consumer culture as well as practicing alternative methods to that. But, as mentioned already, these very actions themselves constitute a sense of identity, one that may be aligned more towards a group level but nonetheless situating the self apart from others by ideology and practice. Yet that identity is still predicated upon the existence of and purported break from the other group. While one cannot be completely apart from the dominant culture (and its attendant consumer practices and

beliefs), there is bound to be some amount of work and stress involved in maintaining those boundaries, that are important in identifying self and others. There is also a need to negotiate instances when those boundaries are crossed or shown to be much more porous than expected.

If we regard goods as "constituents of selfhood, of social identity" we can then regard the construction of an identity as a part of the practice of consumption (Friedman 1991: 327).[8] This is a highly individualized process in that the goods are defined by the self or by others motivated by personally meaningful understandings. This assumes that each individual undertakes a conscious, reflexive set of actions which may range from ascertaining the range of choices to the actual act of consuming. Furthermore, as consumer choice is tied to the process of creating a self, there is an assumption that there is a continuous "narrative of self" (which therefore needs to be continuously managed) that informs choices (Warde 1994: 882). It might be supposed that consumption is a fairly stressful activity. While there may be stress involved in trying to determine what one might want and how to acquire it, it can also be a pleasurable activity.

Featherstone's account of the "aesthicization of reality" paints an individual free to choose from a wide range of goods to put together in some way a sense of self. What needs to be added is that while Featherstone is referring mainly to the young and affluent, "consumer culture publicity suggests that we all have room for self-improvement and self-expression whatever our age or class origins" (1984:86). From a fiscal point of view or a bottom-line-profit perspective, this makes sense (why limit the 'market' in any way?). Featherstone points out how greater variety of products available and increasing market fragmentation tend to diminish uniformities, allowing for more

diversity for a greater number of people. Nonetheless, these choices are obviously not available to everyone, nor does everyone feel them in the same manner. Also the consumer alone does not wholly inform these individual decisions. Consumption is mediated and informed by various other mechanisms and processes. The most immediate one is advertising. For Featherstone, this plays a large part in how consumption can function as an active part of identity formation. More recent advertising tends to communicate more "diffuse, ambiguous lifestyle imagery" which Featherstone suggests "encourages a variety of readings of messages" (87). Dominant themes in these messages are ones that first affirm the consumer as a unique individual and then encourage the expression of that unique self by purchasing the product that is being peddled (the majority of commercial advertising tends to do this). More generally, much of advertising consists of advocating a lifestyle and by association the product that is being pushed.

Warde suggests some models of consumption as identity formation assume a far too individualistic model of the consumer and provides a number of other "processes and institutions" that help in informing consumer choices and allaying any anxiety that may result from consumption (1994: 892). I would like to borrow some of these ideas but in a slightly different way. Here I use them as an 'antidote' to the possible tendency to over-emphasize the tone of the process as well as the seemingly uniform way these ideas are being applied. Again I would like to emphasize that I am not suggesting that all consumption practices directly pertain to identity formation. Rather, they may be mobilized as a way of forming identities. As I develop this point further, I am moving from general consumption activities to something specific, that is, eating.

There are many forms of commercial of communication that advise or direct consumer choices. There are magazines for nearly every interest or consumer activity. Some exist as reflections of rising and falling trends and no more than that (magazines devoted to "Beanie Babies"). Other forms include simply other people. The social network oh which the individual is a part provides various forms of feedback, advice, and information on various matters.

Warde (1994) critiques a number of social theorists' ideas about the relationship between consumption and identity formation. In particular, Warde takes on Bauman's idea, which is basically that individuals are responsible for their actions, that is, for their ability to (re)create their selves. The individual is responsible for his or her actions. As a result, consumption is fraught with risk about inadvertently making the wrong choices; hence it provokes anxiety. Advertising provides the reassurance that consumers are making the right choices. According to Bauman this is what allays the anxiety involved in consumption and creating a self. Warde has some misgivings about consumption as being inherently anxiety-provoking, for the obvious reason that consumption can be pleasurable. He contends that advertising itself can be a source of anxiety (but that can be considered another tactic of creating and then offering alternative products to allay that initial anxiety. Advertising even if it creates anxiety does not stop at that. It is usually the first step in turning the consumer towards another product). Warde has several other arguments that tend to deflate the thesis. However, they do not necessarily discredit it altogether. What he terms "compensatory mechanisms" provide other ways of allaying that anxiety beyond just advertising. Warde contends that for those whom consumption is most anxiety-ridden will be precisely those who are well versed and well

prepared to be able to make the right choices. Hence, while it may be an extensive process, the fear of anxiety will provoke the most extensive preparation to avoid that. For others, this would not be an issue. As a result, Warde wants to make a distinction between choice and selection. Those for whom consumption is most meaningful and fraught with potential anxiety are the least likely to make a mistake. They avoid the problem of anxiety by their preparation and "investment of knowledge" which in turn means that their range of options that the market has available is constrained (1994: 896). Other people, who do not care, are not faced with risk situations. As such, for Warde, consumption is not all that risky to them.

While these practices are highly individualized, I am not advocating a total system where consumption is invariably a matter of self-identity. I am suggesting that it can be employed as such, as a manner of personal choice. But Warde brings about an important point about the matter of choice. One of Warde's principal criticisms about theories of consumption and identity formation is that the latter may perpetuate a "politico-ideological sense of the consumption process which imputes freedom to an activity that is not in any important sense free" (1994: 897). If, as he argues, consumption is not all that risky, then those for whom consumption matters most are not really making a choice. Rather they are choosing from a restricted range of options. Similarly, Appadurai writes that the producer and the forces that make up production are the real seat of agency and not so much the consumer:

> Global advertising is the key technology for the worldwide dissemination of a plethora of creative, and culturally well-chosen, ideas of consumer agency. These images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is consistently helped to believe

> that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser. (1991: 307)

The point I would like to make out of this is that even if it is a matter of choosing from a limited number of given or acceptable options it can still be individually meaningful. The consumer can invest meaning into it whether it is self-defined or other-defined.

Eating the Other

At some point in the past, eating out may have mostly meant an opportunity to not have to cook, as a way of saving time or an option for tired parents. Eating out means a lot more than just avoiding the work of preparing food. Most of us are aware of other benefits or pleasures. But it can also engender the opposite reaction: spending money on a seemingly superfluous activity, eating foods in an unfamiliar and uncontrolled environment. Eating out has become more than that. As the link between the food eaten outside the home not necessarily being the food you *have* to eat outside the home increased in strength, the possibility of eating things that you might not get at home increased also. In addition to this, the growth of ethnic restaurants (many of which just existed as a place to serve other like people with familiar native foods) puts another choice under the category of other different foods to eat outside the home.

The food business plays a significant role in the economic life of many immigrants in the west. There is an appetite or a market for ethnic restaurants. Certain groups may be primarily associated with the cuisine. To the extent that a particular cuisine or food has been generally established (and accepted by the host or dominant

culture) those new immigrants have the option to open up a restaurant. The core of many ethnic and/or immigrant enclaves or neighbourhoods is built up around food-related businesses (i.e., an ethnic grocery or a restaurant). Economic opportunities for immigrants may vary depending on the situation they come into and what sort of resources they bring.

Personally, both my parents were university-trained (teaching and accounting) and had worked in their respective fields before moving to Canada. But for a number of reasons, like the barrier in language, it was easier and less complicated to do something else. As well, there is often some urgency in trying to establish a new life. Besides they had not planned on leaving Korea, and as a result their training did not reflect the preparation that is required to do that. The immediate and available option was working at small businesses such as small corner stores. All that was required of them to get them on their way to eventually owning their own business was to raise capital. This obviously introduces and incorporates the new member into the already established social network thereby perpetuating the community.

In this way the work that many immigrants do in their new country may have little or nothing to do with what they did or aspired to do in their native country. This has a couple of implications in the context of a restaurant. First, it is not unreasonable to expect that not all those that own and operate restaurants wanted to do so and/or had any sort of training for it. The brothers at Curry Garden have a background of working at restaurants in Canada as well as in India. But they were not the first in their family to start in the food industry. Their uncle originally settled and worked in a restaurant in England. It was there they first moved to from Calcutta. The migratory routes the

family members undertook is the reverse flow of colonial routes. Another implication is that if they did not have any formal training or experience in the restaurant business, then how do they decide what to offer in their restaurants? One would assume they would start by cooking home foods and offering them to the public. But in a context where there may be many other similar restaurants, there are probably built-up expectations of what one needs to offer. This opens up to notions of perceived authenticity and creolization of foods as they adapt to new contexts, which in itself may be a function of the dynamic of how ethnic groups deal with that same challenge. But there is a difference between home and business or public spaces. This is where the performance aspect comes in and how it relates to the idea of an 'audience.' That is, public or private performance may be for in-group or out-group members. In particular the important distinction here is the site of performance: the home or the restaurant.

The popularity of the "nationality restaurant," as Kalcik calls it, has been well documented and is fairly obvious to casual observation. Zelinsky (1985) maps out the emergence and settlement of four dominant ethnic cuisine restaurants in the United States and (to a lesser degree) Canada. While restaurants may exist in a greater range of sophistication or styles in larger cities and their immediate environs, establishments that serve some sort of ethnic food can be found almost anywhere. They exist, amongst other things, as a public space where tasting other foods is acceptable. In this case, the function of an ethnic restaurant has expanded beyond catering only to other in-group members. And so many implications emerge regarding the relationship between the producer and the consumer and the ideas and knowledges about various ethnic groups and identities that people have and employ.

At the consumption side of things there are a couple of general positions one could take on North Americans who eat ethnic foods. Generally speaking, the popularity of eating unfamiliar foods implies curiousity, acceptance and enthusiasm on the part of consumers. The pleasurable sociality involved in consumption also needs to be considered. As food is highly charged with ideas about personal and group identity, affiliation and difference, eating other people's foods can be a significant act. Generally speaking, in a multicultural context where there are more boundary lines that tend to separate people rather than bring them closer, eating other foods is a simple and direct act. It can be a relatively unproblematic way of reaching across or breaching the space between various people or groups. Unfamiliar or strange foods may, upon consuming them, become familiarized. There is some comfort in finding similarities between foodways as they make the strange more approachable or manageable. These "across-group" interactions are symbolized by the act of eating (Kalcik 1984). However, as there is a continuum as to how accepting any individual is to trying out new foods, the act of eating across cultural boundaries is in some ways limited. It is of course limited to certain times and budgets. As well, for most, those interactions are primarily mediated through the public arena of the restaurant. Furthermore, across group interactions are presumably more risky or at least unfamiliar, so one has to find a safe and acceptable way and place to eat. Then in some contexts these forms of eating may be more common (available as an option) in particular socio-economic strata as they are all economic transactions.

Part of the popularity and increased awareness of ethnic foods may be a direct result of the popularity and rise in tourism, particularly those tourists originating from western nations. An article from a recent issue of a food industry (i.e., restaurants, franchises, suppliers, etc.) trade magazine puts it this way: "Another worldwide trend has been created by the growing tourism industry. Isenberg [an editor at "The Food Channel"] calls it 'the growing global palette of flavours available worldwide.' Once travellers return home, explains Isenberg, they are more willing to experiment with foods and flavours encountered abroad" (Preuschat n.d.: 7). Despite the peculiar logic of this statement, it does serve to state what many already probably know and explain what has been happening for a long time already.

Translated to the home, as a form of "internal tourism" (van den Berghe 1984: 394), each nationality restaurant can be an encapsulation of the main elements of popular tourism: a regulated and hence safe location (for study as well), being served by ethnic locals. Furthermore, in whatever type of travel one undertakes (within a hierarchy that distinguishes travel from tourism especially the packaged tours, etc.), eating is usually a highly pleasurable or anxious part of being abroad. While travelling, eating the "other" can function as a way of taking in the otherness of a culture that may not be so easily negotiated by language (Curtis and Pajaczkowska 1994: 208). It may also be the ultimate expression of the willingness to engage in an act in which potentially "the self is changed by the experience of alterity in a dialectic of difference" (1994: 206). And back at home, one can continue to eat those foods at restaurants or locate them at the grocery store as a direct reminder of experiences and/or as a continuing expression of how those experiences -- during the encounter with the "other" while travelling -- informed and

continue to inform their sense of self. These practices and motivations essentially serve the "economy of the self" (ibid.). And this self is situated within the processes of globalization. Many have pointed out that consumer consciousness and reflexivity -- the knowledge that we know the world is getting 'smaller' and our place within that shrinking world -- are essential elements and "what drives globalisation" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 191). As a result the growing global interaction, the global economy, has "precipitated a deterritorialization of cuisine" amongst other elements often for consumption outside of its homeland (Smart 1994: 178). These deterritorialized components are appropriated and become what Curtis and Pajaczhowska (1994: 214) call "leisure commodities" which are often invested with specific sets of meanings that ultimately serve the consumer.

> Commodities have a powerful role in these imagined worlds: as bearers of many of the symbols of globalisation, they are routinely used to articulate both place and movement -- and, through those, identity and identification.
> (Bell and Valentine 1997: 191)

In other words, their 'things' are used by and for us. It may not even be the case that there are 'our' things (to be recognized as such) any more.[9] Nevertheless, for most of us living in North America and western Europe, our deeper awareness or consciousness and engagement with the rest of the world, whether as consumers or producers, constitutes (informs and is informed by) processes of globalization.

While we have looked at these interactions from the perspective of determining a relatively easy and accessible manner of engaging in Otherness, they are not limited to the confines of the restaurant. Other public arenas, fairs and festivals such as the Western Fair, and more interpersonal settings (in the latter, these types of acts may be

important to the process of forging that relationship. I am thinking of mixed marriages for example).

From a more pessimistic point of view, the majority of interactions set within the restaurant setting are superficial as well as fairly accessible and immediate. The structures in which ethnic restaurants are embedded arguably tend to keep interaction (along with the ideas and knowledges) at a shallow level, as they are ultimately commodity objects. The symbolic meanings of the actors within these interactions rely on individual knowledges and notions of food and the people and places associated with it. Ethnic foods or cuisines that are regarded as "loose expressions of cultural difference" are argued to be constructed commodities rooted within a consumer-commodity culture. These constructions by "corporate knowledge providers," and the "range of actors involved in the production, circulation and consumption of those meanings," such as the advertising industry, remake and serve up difference or ethnicity as commodified products. Many have argued that the consumption of ethnic difference is merely the exotic spice in the regular, all too familiar soup of everyday eating or life. Very often ethnic food is advertised and sold in this manner and not just by industry or corporate image-makers but also by the producers of those exotic foods. It can be argued that ultimately these differences are coded only as signs and any sort of engagement is at that level. As a result, it only serves the mainstream industries that helped construct them in the first place i.e. advertising difference; "cultural diversity sells" (Cook and Crang 1996: 144-5).

Cook and Crang suggest that within both scenarios, particularly the former, what needs to be stressed is that the flow of values and information is not directly imposed

upon consumers by the media or advertising but rather is mediated through a range of actors involved in all levels of production, circulation, and consumption (1996: 141). At every level, knowledges and ideas are made and remade. So they argue that there is not a direct one-way line between the producers and the consumers. Rather the various notions about food (as it relates to identity, nation, and so forth) can be created or erased at various junctures within the flow of information between the producers and consumers. The actors involved use the resources provided in their own manner while at the same time the providers may attempt to define or direct the type or use of information. It is here that the "geographical knowledges associated with foods will be forged through the interrelations -- and significant non-interrelations -- of actors throughout these circuits" (1996: 142). This perspective takes into consideration the various "circuits" where these sorts of information about food are created, passed along and challenged. It also takes into consideration that notions of identity and belonging associated with particular foodways are not fixed or, at times, even consistent. Furthermore, consumption practices are also flexible markers of self and identity, even if that means, at the least, reflecting changing desires, assumptions and so forth through time (James 1996: 78).

Curry as Colonial Category

For some, eating the foods of different people is a celebration of a "gastro-global eclecticism" (Smart 1994), crossing social-cultural boundaries and affirming otherness.

Others have argued that engaging in other people's foodways – eating the exotic other – is akin to "food colonialism" (Heldke 1993 quoted in Narayan 1995: 75). This refers to the attitude many in the west who 'eat ethnic' have developed mutually. Namely, this attitude is characterized by a shallow or superficial interest in the foodways of other people. And ultimately they "exploit the food of Others to enhance their own prestige and sophistication and 'eat ethnic' without any real interest in, or concern for, the cultural contexts" of the food eaten (ibid.).

Diamond (1995) relates a personal history of eating out at ethnic restaurants with her family while growing up in New York City and the (unexamined) pleasures that were associated with that, most noticeably gustatory but later on, in equal measure, status or prestige related. This is a common launching point in dissecting those unexamined assumptions and ideas around consuming others. Diamond is very critical of these processes and regards the practice of eating at ethnic restaurants, and especially the associated industry of restaurant reviews, to be an insidious form of "cultural imperialism" which facilitates the marginalization of immigrant groups in America. She is especially critical of the business of restaurant reviews and other types of food media that play a major role in the economic fortunes of restaurants. She regards these as practices that reproduce inequities between the majority and minority groups. Namely, she argues that these forms of engagement are shallow flirtations with stereotypes of the other.

The expectations (stereotypical representations) of the reviewer create a double bind for the restaurant and restaurateur which ensures that while difference is entertained they are in the end contained within the dominant discourse. Stephenson (quoted in Bell

and Valentine 1997: 203) writes, "the food media are an inherent part of consumer culture, and are most used by those wishing to articulate a certain lifestyle [since they] help to attach social meanings to certain products." This can play an important role in the quest to create a self through consumption, but it also affects the subjects or targets of the food media. For example, Diamond suggests that an ethnic restaurant proprietor may change the décor of the restaurant to suit the stereotypical or outdated notions and expectations of a reviewer and the larger society (or at least the readers of the reviewer) for economic reasons. I am not arguing that these sorts of critical assessments are inaccurate as they are probably true at certain times, at certain junctures and in specific situations. But, I would also suggest that these are not the only things that are going on. To stop the 'story' there -- while in some ways satisfying as a critical strike against the taken-for-granted comfort and authority of the dominant majority -- would be to stop the story halfway or even just as it got started.

Consequently, there has been some effort in recognizing and critiquing and then potentially providing strategies for an "anti-colonialist" approach to eating. If one of the main disputes about a "colonialist" approach is that it is a superficial exchange of commodified products stripped of cultural context and history, then the possible solution is to find out something about the history and the cultural context of the cuisine in question. In other words, perhaps more education, information and knowledge is required. Heldke (in Narayan 1995: 75) suggests direct involvement with the people that eat and prepare the food is needed as well.

As food is often used as a marker of identity and identity formation at an individual and at a group level, these constructions of knowledge are actually not so

clear cut. Those associations between food and a nation or a region or an ethnic group which may be considered natural, timeless and enduring, but may in fact disguise a history of intercultural contact and exchange of which the present is only but one moment in a long chain (Goody 1982; James 1996: 79; Cook and Crang 1996: 139). These are constructions in the sense that they include assumptions of the associations between people and places that often assume a set of conditions that may not be totally comprehensive. Furthermore, Cook and Crang state that instead of viewing various cultures bumping into each other and exchanging ideas and products, they suggest that there are no pure cultures to mix in the first place, "if purity means bounded exclusivity" (1996: 139).

For example, as mentioned above, the pizza which is considered quintessentially Italian was originally mostly found in the southern regions of the country. Likewise the tomato, another perceived cornerstone of Italian cuisine, was introduced only within the last few hundred years. It is native to the New World and had been domesticated and spread among the Americas before the arrival of Europeans. And most of us are familiar with the relatively recent origin of pasta in Italy. In Japanese cuisine, tempura, a fixture in most Japanese restaurants was derived from a similar food item introduced by early Portuguese traders and even the word is a Japanese derivation of the original Portuguese. These specific items, often considered natural and taken for granted, that are associated with the foodways of a certain group of people often have the historical routes/roots which may entail a history of colonialism and imperialism disguised or erased. Cook and Crang (1996: 138) regard these situations as processes of displacement that evokes:

> a sense of geographical world where cultural lives and economic processes are characterized not only by the points

> in space where they take and make place, but also by the movements to, from and between those points....In terms of food consumption the figure of displacement might be used to suggest an understanding whereby: processes of food consumption are cast as local, in the sense of contextual; but where those contexts are recognized as being opened up by and constituted through connections in to any number of networks, which extend beyond delimiting boundaries of particular places....

These links and networks that extend outside a place or a moment serve to challenge the notion of a timeless view of culture. They also serve to de-emphasize conceptions of societies as isolated and bounded and at the same time emphasize the "need for a reflexive concept of culture" that takes into account both the spatial and temporal (James 1996: 79).

An obvious and pertinent example of this process is the curry. This example touches on both sides of the debate about what is at stake when eating the other. Curry can be an alluring entrée into further explorations of Indian cuisine and culture. Or, for some, it may be a dead end of sorts.

For many, curry comes to mind when they think of Indian food. Indian cuisine is often invested with images of the Raj and so forth, although as Darnell (personal communication: 1998) points out, the image of Indian cuisine is different in Commonwealth nations as opposed to, say, the US. But within the idea of Indian cuisine, curry usually dominates as the main image. Appadurai refers to curry as the mythic master trope of Indian cuisine. As the most prevalent symbol of Indian cuisine (and even Indian-ness), curry is available in powder or paste form in many grocery stores and is sometimes categorized and sold as a specific type of spice like thyme or cumin. But the curry that many of us are familiar with is actually a fabrication that

emerged out of the relations between colonial India and Britain. Narayan (1995) discusses the curry as a colonial invention in that no such category exists in Indian cuisine. Instead what are conceived of as curries are a base mixture of ground spices which is used in a variety of dishes. Narayan argues that curry came about through the "logic of colonial commerce imposing a term that signified a particular type of dish onto a specific mixture of spices, that then became a fixed and familiar product" (1995: 65). This was necessary in the export and naturalization of curry into British cuisine, which in effect was the incorporation of the other into the self.

> They were incorporating not Indian food, but their own 'invention' of curry powder; a pattern not too different from the way in which India itself was ingested into Empire -- for India as a contemporary political entity was fabricated through British rule, which replaced the masala of the Moghul empire and assorted princely states with the unitary signifier 'India,' much as British curry powder replaced local masalas. (ibid.)

Narayan points out that the India that was being consumed was the "'tasty' India of spices and muslins, silks and shawls" (ibid.: 66). This sort of specific construction of India, the mysterious and exotic, rendered unthreatening and acceptable, was necessary to provoke and sustain the imperial enterprise. But Narayan also points out that another image of India was also necessary for the same reasons. This imaginary India was populated by "ignorant natives, indolent and incompetent rulers, of vile practices and ungrateful mutinies, of snake and scorpions, of the heat and the dust and the hard-to-convert heathens -- an India that vividly signified the need for the civilizing mission of British rule" (ibid.). In Mani's (1992) re-reading of the colonial accounts by the British on the practice of *sati* (ritual widow burning), we can see the horror and pity expressed by those male British witnesses of one of those "vile practices." Of course, the image

and products of the alluring India were more popular and, simply, more alluring in Britain than amongst many of those who actually had to be on the sub-continent. In the face of being set squarely into a different culture without the benefits of being able to pick and choose what one can see or experience (like those in seat of the empire) values, habits and foods of the home were held onto even more doggedly. As Narayan (ibid.) puts it, those residents in Britain could easier incorporate things Indian because they did not have to worry about having to distinguish themselves from their colonial subjects. Furthermore, she points out that those in India had to keep themselves apart, not just because they did not want to get too close to the complex and complicated realities of another people but also because keeping their distance was required in maintaining their belief in their "civilizing" mission. As such, the contrasting images of India were deployed in the efforts to justify and sustain their enterprise. These images also came into play brushing up against various negotiations of creating and maintain identities.

The invention and exportation of curry and its successful incorporation into Britain and subsequent spread into the United Kingdom was facilitated in part by the appeal that it held in its image. The allure of the mysterious and exotic was part of that image, but again it was a construction specifically managed for that reason. Potentially, eating curry was consuming India, or more accurately the alluring image of India, and it was expected to impart some of those perceived qualities into the consumer or self. As well, during and after the colonial period, the passage or flow of people, things and ideas were not one-way. The success of curry has something to do with meanings associated within it, the acquired tastes by Britons and the subsequent movement of Indians into Britain. In another context, van Otterloo (1987?) looks at the (gastronomical)

"xenomania" that had apparently gripped many in the Netherlands. Specifically, she examines how the foods of Indonesian, Greek, and Italian immigrants have become a significant feature in the eating habits of the Dutch. There are obvious parallels here between the colonial relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands and that of Britain and India. According to van Otterloo, the relationship between the Dutch and Indonesians did not necessarily pave the way for the immediate popularity and acceptance of Indonesian food, let alone other ethnic foods. One reason she posits is the very basic and frugal nature of Dutch cuisine, even after the post-war period, that she claims possessed "little culinary imagination" and was viewed more as a "necessity than as a pleasure" (128). The increase in immigration from all over Europe and improving economic conditions, created an atmosphere that was more willing to mutually experiment with each others' foods. Leading the way were the middle class, the younger generations, from both the established and outsider groups, and a growing "taste conscious elite."

> Since 1945, there has been an unmistakable increase in the prestige given by the Dutch to the culinary customs of immigrants. This "xenomania" is an obvious part of a higher appreciation of meals and snacks, and implies a widening of the social use of food.... The copying of ethnic cooking styles provided the Dutch with the opportunity of building up an individual identity which...allows differentiation from other Dutch people. (ibid.: 138-9)

Here, van Otterloo describes interactions between the 'host' and the 'guests' which have in many ways mutually benefited each group. The Dutch have also employed meanings (self or other allocated) in ethnic foods for the manipulation of their self-identities especially in the light that not all ethnic communities enjoy the popularity of those groups mentioned before. Certain ethnic groups do not enjoy the same level of

popularity and success. This is true of most other contexts whether in England or Canada. Part of this may be in due to the intensity and endurance of the contact with that group and the "character" of the image of the country of origin (ibid.: 139). In England, Caribbean cuisines do not enjoy the same popularity as Indian (ibid.). But what also has to be considered is the nature of acceptance and widespread nature of Indian food (or curry, at least) in Britain (or at least in England and Scotland).

Following the colonial period, where amongst other things curry was imported to England, the post-colonial period saw the migration of Indians to England. However, more contemporary Indian immigrants came from various former British colonies where Indians had been moved to build railroads and such and because of post-colonial upheavals have since left (Narayan 1995: 72). Many were already British passport holders and naturally set off for England (ibid.).

The popularity of Indian restaurants, cookbooks and television shows (like books and shows written and/or presented by Madhur Jaffrey) are all indicative of the acceptance and naturalization of curry into British tastes. In 1993 it was reported that within the fast food sector in Britain "Indian take aways" outnumbered, the "British of British institutions," the fish and chip shops (James 1996: 81). At a more casual, anecdotal level, a friend of mine who spent two years in London, England, doing graduate work developed a taste for Indian food (and also, English pubs, in which one could also find curry dishes outside actual Indian-owned shops or restaurants). The most striking thing for her was the sheer number of Indian food places, especially in comparison to Toronto or anywhere else she had visited.

Yet Narayan points out that while curry was incorporated into British cuisine and identity fairly easily, that desire to 'consume' what was different or exotic did not necessarily extend to taking in people of Indian origin:

> [Their] arrival into English society resulted in a national dyspepsia, whose most pronounced symptoms were Enoch Powell and the National Front, and the development of the pastime of 'Paki-bashing,' a sport now as English as cricket. (1995: 73)

This is not entirely surprising considering that the acceptance of one certainly does not entail that the other will follow. In some respects this scenario is an example of the limitations of across-group eating as a way of expressing some sort of goodwill (although these acts are more symbolic of willingness or openness as a first step). Yet considering its history (its invention, its meanings and uses) it would seem the acceptance of curry and the refusal of the people is not contradictory or confusing. If "curry" is a colonial fabrication intended for the ideological and gustatory consumption of India, then while it may have roots in Indian cuisine, it is far removed from it by the time it reached England's shore. On one hand, the incorporation of curry means that it is open to manipulation and change to fit particular tastes. So "authentic" curries can include corned beef and the use of Worcestershire sauce (Bell and Valentine 1997: 175). In this way curry, at best, may signify something vaguely Indian, but it can reach the point where the origins and the history can be forgotten or just fade away. In the end, this is what makes it possible for curry having more to do with Britain than with India itself (but many of the people I spoke to simply refer to the variety of dishes generically as curries as well. It would seem to me that it had more to do with the convenience of using a known term than anything else).

Furthermore, the passage above from Narayan relating the difference between the acceptance of the appropriated cuisine, and some examples of the unwillingness in welcoming former members of the empire, embodies the range of attitudes that the former colonizers have towards the colonized cuisine (1995: 73). There are obviously many responses and points of views that the British may hold regarding curry or Indian cuisine. But the colonial adoption and invention of curry and the subsequent development that has resulted in specifically British adaptations and appropriation of curry (like the corned beef curry found in a British neighbourhood pub) have resulted (for those in question) in the erasure of its origin and colonial roots. With this conceptual severing of curry from India (or something Indian) the former colonizers can use the colonized cuisine without Indian people. One does not need ethnic people necessarily to have ethnic food. And in some cases, while material or symbolic materials from other cultures may be welcome and/or utilized, the people themselves may not be greeted with the same amount of enthusiasm. This is true in cases where, as Narayan suggests, after the arrival and settlement of Third World immigrants, the complaints they might voice about problematic attitudes and policies are often regarded as a nuisance, perceived as symptoms of their ingratitude to a country that they should feel indebted to for having been granted entry (1995: 72).

There is little doubt as to the popularity and number of places to eat Indian food that is a part of the general and "undeniable internationalization of English taste buds" (James 1996: 81). For consumers, Indian food or specifically curry may embody the exotic otherness which can be consumed and incorporated into the self. For others, there may be a strong separation between Indian cuisine and curry. In this context, curry

seems to have a very specific place and meaning. An anecdote told to me by a colleague provides an example of what I mean:

> When my mum was still living in Scotland, she had a friend who was in charge of organizing the annual office Christmas party for her company. One particular year, the party was to be held at a local Italian restaurant. This seemed an uncontroversial choice, until one of the other employees expressed a desire for said Christmas party to involve something more traditional, that is to say, more Scottish. When pressed for an alternate location, the woman suggested they go for curry.

This story illustrates the nature and extent of the incorporation of curry into common British experiences and identity. While this story is an example of appropriation, it is also something else. Here curry is obviously linked to British identity and culture. It is considered authentic Scottish fare.

A similar situation can be found in thinking about pasta in Italy. From the perspective that pasta is a relatively recent arrival from someplace else, its linkage and conceptual ties to the nation and its people, would seem inauthentic. Yet in both cases what is clear is that regardless of the history or routes/roots of any particular food item(s), they are most meaningful in their present usage. It makes no sense to tell Italian people that pasta, because it was imported from China, is not an authentic Italian product or that it is not Italian. The important point is as Friedman (1995: 74) points out:

> [T]he fact pasta became Italian, and that its Chinese origin became irrelevant is the essential culture-producing process in this case. Whether origins are maintained or obliterated is a question of the practice of identity.

But in this case there is no overt history of colonialism involved. It is not only a matter of time. Origin does not become automatically irrelevant after a lengthy passage of time. Considering that since its introduction in to Italy, pasta is still considered to be a

product that typifies or symbolizes Italian-ness after a few hundred years. The fact that a particular food comes from a different place is not as important as the fact that food can make places, in a certain sense (Cook and Crang 1996: 140). Ultimately, the meanings associated with pasta do not come from the story of its origin.

Similarly, the origins of curry may not have been forgotten but to some extent, for some, they are largely irrelevant. This particular case seems to lend itself well to Friedman's point. As a modified product borne out of its local (to the family level as is all cooking in its basic forms) origins, it had already moved further away from its original forms as it physically drew away from India and towards Britain. As the above anecdote exemplifies, the knowledge of its origin is no longer an issue. At this point the curry consumers may be referring to or have in mind may be very different from anything that exists in India.[10] Then in the light of the (messy) histories and biographies of foods, James in her discussion about identities and British food cultures, asks whether, "in the context of an increasingly (global) international food production-consumption system and seemingly 'creolized' world, food still acts as a marker of (local) cultural identity" (1996: 78). The incorporation and naturalization of curry to British tastes and a British sense of identity seems to answer this question in the affirmative. The answer seems to be contingent on the usage and the meanings surrounding (in this case) the "flexible symbolic vehicles" that food can act as.

We come back to the problem of "eating the other." There is, on one hand, the perspective that across-group eating is basically a positive and simple act of attempting to engage the other symbolically. The alternative perspective raises the question of how

to confront the problems with the seeming lack of consumers' knowledges about certain food items in order to challenge the perceived exploitation of the other. If part of the problem is the lack of depth in knowledge or understanding about the foodways of other cultures, then a possible solution might be to find out about the other that we are consuming, to recontextualize those commodities.

Information or knowledge about the history of food or its charting through various places internationally does open up those issues that are often hidden or forgotten through its creation and role as a commodity item within the global market. But Cook and Crang point out that simply more knowledge about the geographies in question could only parallel and support the "cultural and economic valorizations made though constructions of 'authenticity'" which in turn could easily lead into the already existent "elitist consumer and producer cultures" (1996: 145). The example they use is the *appellations* of wine, and I would add the example of the pizza, along with other exotic or authentic products sold at specialty grocery stores. Another example is the widespread proliferation of coffee shops and coffee. Aside from the kinds of coffee that are now available, i.e., cappuccino and variations on it, there is a greater awareness through more visible capitalization of knowledge about the geographical and often the production origins of the coffee itself. This results in the rise in price of coffee, the greater number of types of coffee from all parts of world and the brands produced under ethical guidelines.

Similarly, while Narayan (1995) sympathizes with concerns about ideas of "food colonialism," she also has some questions and doubts about this particular way of avoiding a colonialist stance. For example, attempting to include members of a

particular ethnic group may pose a problem such that any member of the group may have no more knowledge about their foodways than any of us may have of our own. The assumption that those members of an different ethnic group know the ins and outs of their own group more than we do ours implies an essentialized notion of "us" and "them." In a small way, we tend to forget and/or deny the same qualities we would apply to ourselves but not to others. It essentializes the perceived difference. Another example Narayan offers is that, while eating ethnic foods often adds to a consumer's prestige or status or worldliness, knowing even more (superficial) information about that food may just add another element to that emblem (77). This example highlights the consumption and creation of the self through more specialized knowledge, currency in the economy of the self.

One version of the path that curry can take is an example where the "biographies" (Cook and Crang 1996) of production and distribution were disguised or forgotten (or necessitated by that act) in its transformation and appropriation into British cuisine. In more general terms, the globalization of food both obscures and reveals those networks and conditions under which food and the meanings of food items are produced all over the world. Another version, reflecting individual responses and perspectives, can be that curry, while an invention, is an introduction into further explorations into Indian cuisine (although this is no guarantee that this will not reproduce ideas of "food colonialism" or other unethical forms of eating). But the fact that there are other versions corroborate Cook and Crang's contention that "thickening" those "biographies" -- "the histories and geographies of connection in which commodity production and consumption are implicated" -- may not be enough and that it

> runs the danger of evacuating the realm of consumption altogether. At its worst, this may mean ignoring realms of usage altogether, or at least viewing them as totally determined by systems of provision, as consumers are guided by those who give them various knowledges. More mildly it focuses critical intervention on providing other voices and stories for consumers to hear, and pays less attention to these processes of listening. (1996: 146-7)

In other words, curry in Britain or any other context is not determined by nor does it have a specific determining effect on consumer practices and ideas. It is equally important to examine those ideas and "various knowledges" that are provided along with the products. A clear example is to examine what is being said, sold, or suggested in advertising. Different versions of curry are possible because it comes down to what is made of it through the multiple sites and range of interactions between the "system of provision" and the consumers.

Yet "thickening" those connections and links does not wholly negate what it does and can do. It is certainly the right direction in providing a better level of awareness. Narayan puts it this way:

> Where prejudiced attitudes as well as large social structures as *de facto* occupational and residential segregation still conspire to restrict the contracts many of us have with members of other ethnic groups, as friends, as neighbours, as fellow students and workers, and as fellow citizens, the recognition that these separations diminish the collective possibilities of all our lives is imperative. In such situations, gustatory relish for the food of the 'Others' may help contribute to an appreciation of their presence in the national community, despite ignorance about the cultural contexts of their foods -- these pleasures of the palate providing more powerful bonds than knowledge. We risk privileging the mind too much if we ignore the ways in which a more carnal relish may sometimes make for stronger appreciation than intellectual 'understanding.' (1995: 80)

The emphasis here on "gustatory" or visceral pleasure is based on the relative ease and perhaps more immediate sense of incorporation (as opposed, to say, reading about a cuisine), in spite of the problems and limitations outlined above.

Still Cook and Crang find another alternative in dealing with contemporary forms of consumption. Their alternative is to "rough up commodity surfaces" that appear seamless by, for example, methods of juxtaposition and montage of the history or biography of the product (1996: 147). Inherent in this project is the acknowledgement of consumer cultures, objects and subjects as social/cultural constructions (Bell and Valentine 1997: 199). The story of curry is rife with openings to play up as it moves through "consumer geographies" (ibid.). As a fabrication based in part on colonial interests, the curry has come to mean many things. And the curry that is currently conceived as a typical British dish found in a pub or already prepared and ready to be popped into the microwave can easily be juxtaposed with its complex history. Even the word "curry" has been used to describe not only Indian or British versions but also Thai, Vietnamese, and West-Indian curries, each with their own story that may be similar to or parallel with the Indian-British one. While the commodity surfaces have been pulled back to reveal the "real" story it goes further in that it opens up and sets itself next to other 'moments' in the story or other places. By juxtaposing different moments, it is not so much about whether one is more accurate than another, or whether one is even more authentic than the next. It may allow the production of another space between such disparate positions. On one side you are presented with the colonial history of India and on the other the curry that is enjoyed in London, both in England and in Ontario. With all the points in between and within those positions, a third space may open up.

At this point what is important is not so much to emphasize "thickening surfaces" but to examine their "productivities, what they are used for" (Cook and Crang 1996: 148). As mentioned previously, when dealing with pasta and its history, it is not enough to know that because it simply does not do much more than that. The point is that how pasta with its biography is used presently and the meanings it carries -- the "spatial settings and social itineraries that established through their usage" (ibid.). This brings us back to Featherstone and the ideas of consumption as a way of constructing a lifestyle and identity through the self and other allocated meanings of commodities. How the product is being perceived and used is critical in the formation of the self through contemporary consumption. Thus, through particular food consumption practices mobilized in varying social contexts and at different times, statements about ones' identity (contradictory, multiple, simultaneous, etc.) can be expressed to oneself and others (James 1996: 80). Coming back to curry, the anecdote about curry as authentic Scottish fare highlights how important it is to see how it is being used and what that means. In this case, curry is British, and the desire for genuine Scottish food may be a way to reaffirm or maintain that identity in the face of eating ethnic food. Or it may also be an act of nostalgic affirmation of national or regional identities within the increasing global proliferation of other foodways (see James 1996). This shifts the focus away from problematic questions of authenticity or accuracy (as it has been shown is not enough and/or entails other problems) (ibid.).

This also applies to the image of London, Ontario. What is at issue is not so much if that prevailing image of London (white, wealthy, etc.) is accurate but rather who creates, maintains, challenges and uses that image. For the restaurateurs, the image was

used in determining their decision to locate in London rather than, say, Hamilton or Kitchener. For those residents that the images does justice to or represents, the image is used to deploy certain ideas of distinction and sense of self in relation to, for example, ethnic restaurants or the ethnic 'flavour' of the city. The measure of the cosmopolitanism or sophistication of the city may rest among many other factor –the 'ethnic flavour' of the city, especially as it is reflected in the restaurants available.

Choosing to Eat

The drive toward more and better eventually has to look into the Other. The Other is different and maybe even exotic. The search for new or more, the drive to incorporate and be novel and distinctive (through competition), and to commodify eventually extends outward into new regions. The ability to go boldly into other less familiar arenas, or at least incorporate or co-opt those images, is facilitated by profit motives and increasing demand for novelty and/or to be able to be distinct from the competition. More generally, difference emerges in the service of capital (Grossberg 1995 quoted in Cook and Crang 1996: 134). The familiar or the nearby has been exhausted. The Other provides a new resource to incorporate, borrow from, and commodify. Often advertising and marketing target the different to appeal to the exotic or unfamiliar. However, the taste for exotica can only be taken so far. Ultimately, it must remain appealing and non-threatening (Classen and Howes 1996: 186). To accomplish this tends to require a fairly simplistic depiction (stereotypical images), often out of context, and open to subjective

interpretation. In this way, the exotic is managed and to some extent normalized. Difference can be engaged to the extent that it takes into account the interests of the consumers and producers. As such displays of difference tend to be superficial or at least decontextualized. Thus, on a more critical note, the management and use of images of difference can be viewed as being a process that at once encourages diversity but also contains it in some way (Bhabha quoted in Diamond 1995). In this case, difference is what is economically produced, circulated and consumed. But that difference is inevitably superficial (much as anything that undergoes the process of co-option and commodification for the market).

Difference, then, maybe be sought after or engaged as a way to articulate and display those desires for an endlessly recreated self-image. Specifically, food consumption choices are equally embedded in a world of social and symbolic concerns. The range of choices involved in food consumption are largely formulated and controlled in the early stages of life. An important aspect of 'growing up' is the ability to choose what and even whether to eat. However, not everyone gets to eat much less have choices. Generally speaking, in western capitalist culture unequal access to food makes food a "vehicle of power" (Counihan 1992: 55). As mentioned earlier, the parents are the main forces in determining what the child does or does not eat. As well parenting is "intrinsically about knowing, managing, controlling and caring about children's bodily activities" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 34). Parents then wield power over children's bodies, exercising that power often through food and eating (for example, the ability to reward or punish with food). Of course, there are all sorts of resistance to this, ranging from simply refusing to eat something on the plate to eating outside the parameters of

the home or parents. In a study examining how young American college students think about and engage in rules of eating and how this tends to perpetuate social hierarchies, Counihan found that the "only power which students more consistently subvert through their eating habits is, not surprisingly, that of their parents" (1992: 60). At some point, one is able to determine what and when one wishes to eat. This ability then can be asserted as a form of rebellion from former values and power structures, as a way of forging a new independent identity.

Bourdieu suggests in *Distinction* (1984) that practices such as eating "betray people's origins or *habitus*" (paraphrased in Bell and Valentine 1997: 42). In other words there are class distinctions in what they eat, their methods, manners and their attitudes towards the body (ibid.). In another way, an individual today can challenge, go against or beyond one's *habitus*. This ability to recreate or challenge those class distinctions pertains directly to Featherstone's arguments. As such, not only can one eat outside class boundaries, but also those demarcated along lines of ethnicity, nationality or even religion. Such hypothetical moves are transgressive, suggestive and even confrontational. This is especially so in relation to Counihan's suggestion that the eating habits, assumptions, and rules the white middle class students she worked with adhered to mostly upheld a "cultural reality based on stratification by class, race, and sex" (1992: 60). Normative eating habits and beliefs can (of any particular group) function to maintain and/or reinforce personal and group identities. They can serve as forces that work to demarcate and differentiate as well as marking similar and/or sympathetic affiliations.

The Curry Pot, I think, is a fairly good site for these sorts of interactions especially as they relate to young people. The Curry Pot is a relatively cheap and accessible place to get Indian food. One of the more popular food items for young people that I have noticed, is the *samosas*. Usually eaten on their own as snacks or as a meal, they are more expensive than the ones you can purchase at an Indian grocery stores but comparable to other Indian restaurants. What makes *samosas* at the Curry Pot distinctive (which may account for their popularity) is that they are atypical. They are larger, the filling is different not only in ingredients but also in how the ingredients are cut, and the shell or the pastry is also unlike the typical *samosa* pastry. Overall, it tends to be slightly lighter in taste although it is a lot larger than the average samosa. It is so popular that they produce and distribute their *samosas* to Sebastians (which sells them with a price increase). Compared to other Indian restaurants in London, the Curry Pot is the cheapest and its informal, distinctly un-restaurant like atmosphere makes it not only more accessible but also more inviting for neophytes. For young people it can also be a way of expressing some sort of challenge to the dominant culture. In a similar manner, vegetarianism can be thought of as a "challenge to the dominant 'food ideology' of western culture" (Beardsworth and Keil 1992: 284).[11] For example, included in this "challenge" are various socio-political concerns such as environment or health. Furthermore, "[it] may involve a quest for improved health and physical wellbeing, or represent a spiritual or political stance, or indeed a feminist statement against patriarchal dominance" (Beardsworth and Keil 1992: 284). Eating different foods, especially in the context of living in London, and what that may entail symbolically (the image of London is that it is predominantly "white" -- the dominant culture and hence the dominant "food

ideology") are potential alternatives to individuals who want to express themselves in a different or distinctive manner.

However, a cautionary note needs to be made here. James (1996: 80) points out that while food can be used as a marker of identity (by its consumption, avoidance, etc.), these practices can also serve to fragment the idea (the taken-for-granted assumption that usually emerges from talking about one side) of a unitary local culture. The act of food consumption enacts a number of identities within a given culture. A number of examples provided by James illustrate this point. For example, rites of passage usually involve certain foods or drinks to mark the new social identity. The study of American college students by Counihan (1992) demonstrate the importance of students' notions of gender (and gender roles) in shaping eating beliefs and practices.

Taste, what we decide to eat or not eat, may serve as "markers of ethnicity in plural societies" (Gillespie 1995 quoted in Bell and Valentine 1997: 43). More generally, taste can involve practices that determine difference or affiliation. Most immigrants or newly arrived individuals or groups face a dilemma over the difference in foodways in North America. Children of those first generation immigrants often feel it more intensely as they are exposed to native and non-native foodways more outside their homes. In this context, choosing what to eat or not to eat is a way of "exhibiting some control over their bodies and of articulating their hybrid identities" (ibid.). There are instances of young second-generation immigrants favouring 'Western food' over their own native food because amongst other things it is viewed as exhibiting more cultural capital or they are regarded as having lower status. Certainly the opposite of this may be just as common as well (sticking to the native food habits as a way of maintaining

difference and celebrating one's own identity). At the same time, the situation faced by some young people who choose not to eat the foods of their parents is not limited to immigrants or newcomers to North America. For example, a long time resident of London may feel the same way about her own traditional foodways. There can be an appeal to rejecting one's own traditional food habits especially if it is popularly viewed as being 'bland' or 'boring,' as English cuisine is often characterized. This is compounded with the conception of other people's foods as being different, and possibly more exotic (and this image is often fueled by the various related food business). But equally, any person could possibly conceive of his or her own foodways as being bland or at least boring. Regardless, eating different foods can start as a transgressive rejection of one's own foods and even one's sense of identity as it relates to the 'hows,' 'whats' and 'whys' of eating. As it regards to the latter it may develop as a mark of distinction or difference. In this way, an individual eats as they wish to be perceived. In effect, children may want to adopt more "adult" foods, immigrants to a new culture may wish to adopt the host culture foodways instead of their own and, because of the impact that immigrant or ethnic foods have made upon their host cultures, it is now possible to say members of the host culture may wish to adopt or at least partake in some of the foreign foods. Changes in food habits may symbolize the change in status or at least the desire to change. It also symbolizes the manipulation of identities and meanings that are linked with those food habits. It is the symbolic manipulation of another foodway to make statements about one's own identity and how one fits or does not fit into the context of the larger community or culture (Kalcik 1984: 54).

Initial forays into different places, different experiences, often require some sort of introduction or knowledge to make that initial leap. Again, what Warde (1994: 892-3) refers to, as "compensatory mechanisms" are useful here. He describes them as "processes and institutions which allay any anxiety arising from personal consumption." While this thesis is not entirely within the context that Warde uses the ideas of "compensatory mechanisms," many of his ideas are nonetheless useful. Warde includes such things as -- aside from advertising -- other commercial forms of communication that "aid, direct and advise" upon consumer choice like magazines, television shows, and so forth as forms of "compensatory mechanisms." Warde also lists social contacts such as family members, friends, colleagues, and peers, all playing a role in helping the consumer to choose, avoid or use properly. In London, these roles are played by the restaurant reviews in the local newspaper, the annual restaurant guide put out by the newspaper and the tourist board, the "Taste" newspaper, television shows and commercials like the "All in Good Taste" bits, and even other (more accessible and known) restaurants that feature an array of foods such as Sebastians which carries a range of ethnic food items. Another example is the "Festival of Taste" that is held every summer in the city. Similar to the Caravan Festival that is held in Toronto, this festival is more explicitly about food, whereas with the Caravan also displays the material aspects of a culture such as costume, dance, music and food. These sorts of festivals welcome and provide a safe forum for people to come across different people and reach across social boundaries symbolized, particularly powerfully, by eating the foods of other people. Kalcik (1984: 51) notes that events that celebrate cultural plurality often include a selection of ethnic foods that are considered representative of that particular

ethnicity. The London festival may not explicitly be about celebrating the cultural diversity of the city but it is about the diversity in the restaurants found there. These examples often function as "taste-makers" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 172).

Auto-Exoticization

I have looked at some of the problems that many commentators have noted to emerge out of eating ethnic foods in restaurants in North America and Western Europe. Another set of challenges emerges out of these sorts of interactions and highlights the nature of the relationships between, to use van Otterloo's terms, hosts and guests. The context in which these problems can arise in are in ethnic restaurants, in this case Indian restaurants, and the relationship between consumer and restaurateur. In many ethnic restaurants, the workers and employees often use, produce and/or reproduce selected images and stereotypes of their own identity or ethnicity. On the surface, what Savigliano (1994: 144) calls "auto-exoticization" is carried out with their own economic self interests in mind. However, images need not be restricted to those of one's own ethnicity, as in some cases, the ethnicity of a restaurant may not coincide with the ethnic background of the actual restaurateurs or it may encompass multiple ethnicities. The restaurant on York Street west of Richmond Street advertises and serves both Vietnamese and Thai food. However, the owners are Vietnamese and the Thai menu is fairly limited. Thai food and Thai restaurants have had a surge in popularity in recent years (although it has diminished somewhat, while Vietnamese establishments have

grown) (see Van Esterik 1992 for a discussion on the emergence of Thai cuisine as an international and national cuisine). The restaurant seems to be trying to take advantage of the status of Thai cuisine (over Vietnamese) as a way of selling itself to potential customers who may not know much about Vietnamese.

The restaurant business, as it has been argued throughout, is not just a consumption of food but a consumption of meanings. A further elaboration or creation of meanings is in the consciously or unconsciously reproduced use of stereotypes about the ethnic or cultural character of the restaurant owner(s) and how they are deployed in relation to their expectations about themselves and the public. Some, in a pessimistic vein, may argue that they are reproducing stereotypes about themselves produced by various social agents which creates an atmosphere that makes it impossible not to fit or fulfill certain stereotypes or expectations:

> The demand for authenticity necessitates that the ethnic group essentialize and spectacularize themselves in order to attract customers. 'Ethnic' proprietors tend to decorate their restaurant and act as is expected of them; it is necessary to cater to the 'dominant' group's wants (and those of the reviewer) for monetary reasons. This exoticization functions as a prostitution of one's culture, an exploitative bodily performance, plainly in exchange for money.(Diamond 1995)

In her point of view, authenticity is, in this case, an "elite discourse" (Crain 1996: 136) (which I would not necessarily argue against) that imposes 'downwards' and creates overwhelming expectations and demands. But this position is overwhelmingly negative and just as it is critical of the dominant group, it seems to ignore the possibility of any agency for those ethnic proprietors. If an Indian restaurant in London looks like McDonalds, plays no Indian music, has no paintings or pictures, or any other sort of

material symbols of India in it, then will it suffer economically in comparison to other restaurants who do employ such imagery?

The Curry Pot has little in décor or atmosphere, other than the occasional Indian music playing, and few pictures and photographs that would suggest an Indian-ness or any sort of exotic atmosphere. But its business is fairly young and non-Indian (and I have dealt with this issue in more detail above). When asked why they maintained such an un-Indian atmosphere, the reply was that the restaurant wanted to remain informal and accessible. The main person I spoke to emphasized this point in a number of different ways. Obviously, it was one way of distinguishing themselves from the competition, as well as appealing to a wider base of customers (such as students).

But its relative lack of decoration that alludes to anything Indian can also be viewed from another perspective. This informant also stressed many times his other interests and goals and on a couple of occasions explained to me his other ambitions outside the restaurant and in fact how he regarded the restaurant as the first step or a base to build upon. Suffice it to say his ambitions were to work in and for the community or city. My questions, which revolved around the restaurant and the business, probably seemed quite limiting to him, or rather perhaps suggested that I had a rather limited view of him and his interests. He regarded the restaurant largely from a pragmatic business perspective. One of the first things he said to me on our meeting was that he was foremost a "businessman." His attempts at positioning himself, at first, was a bit confusing as I was not sure what he was trying to get at. It seems to me that he was trying to put across to me that the restaurant was not everything in his life and his assertion that he was a businessman was to dispel any notion that they were *only*

immigrant restaurant owners. In a study of how German Turks in the business of selling *doner kebaps* (similar to a *shawarma* or roasted meat in a pita-like flat bread accompanied by salad and sauce) and their struggle in positioning themselves in Germany, Caglar (1995) describes one restaurant that has abandoned the previous strategy of playing up its Turkish ethnicity. When asked for the reasons behind this drastic change the owner answers:

> Before, there was a place called "Topkapi" here. A place with our [Turkish] atmosphere. But I thought, in the midst of Europe, on Ku'damm I want to realize something close to McDonald's. *I want to show that Turks are also capable of setting up good business and running it.* The problem is to change the atmosphere, to offer a Turkish specialty without our atmosphere, to present it in a modern way. (222-3) (my italics)

I would suggest that what the Turkish owner wanted to accomplish is in some ways similar to what the informant at the Curry Pot wanted. First, the above passage speaks about the limiting aspect inherent within the concepts of the exotic and ethnic when he states that he wants to present Turkish food "in a modern way." That is, without the use of ethnic and/or exotic decorations, the "atmosphere" he mentions is not modern. Secondly, in evoking McDonald's as a model to aspire to, he was obviously viewing it as a successful, thriving business. At times, in the western context, I think the images of many ethnic restaurants are not regarded as equal to 'highbrow' or fancy restaurants or "culturally elevated" (Narayan 1995: 77) cuisines like French or even Japanese. The nature of immigrant businesses, limited resources and therefore limited options to locate businesses, problems with language, prejudices and stereotypes, the usually cheaper prices and so forth may all contribute to that image.[12] For example, consider the

following critique about the low prices that consumers often come across (or enjoy) in ethnic restaurants:

> Restaurant owners and workers from these countries often come to the US to escape repressive, exploitative conditions in their own country -- conditions often created or exacerbated by US government policies and corporate policies. They open restaurants where all members of the family work long hours, seven days a week. Yet we who eat in these restaurants often remain deliberately ignorant of these conditions... We happily pay the low bills -- and leave poor tips besides. That is, our cultural colonialist behaviour has material consequences as well.
> (Heldke 1993 quoted in Narayan 1995: 77)

I think these sorts of situations and others may reinforce and/or create the idea that immigrant business owners are second rate, or at least that they are overshadowed by those we may consider as more legitimate, more respected businesses and business people. As a result, we may view the people in restaurants within their roles -- mainly servile -- and not much more. Thus, aspiring to the level of McDonald's, the Turkish restaurant owner is referring not to the common lowly attitudes many of us have of McDonald's but to the fact that it is one of the most widespread and successful businesses in the world. In some sense, the ethnic and/or exotic associations of certain businesses, like restaurants, can be used to further itself but it can also become a burden in other respects. That is, while the restaurateur has an economic self-interest in what Savigliano (1994: 144) calls the (auto-)exoticization of his or her identity it may also entail certain consequences for that self-objectification. At least one of those consequences that she alludes to is that the ethnic and exotic associations may overwhelm more everyday problems of living or produce a distorted image of the people in question.

There is an Indian restaurant in Toronto (The Motimahal) in a predominantly Indian neighbourhood, popularly referred to by a number of us who are familiar with it (all non-Indian) as "McMotimahal" for obvious reasons: it is the closest thing we know of to an Indian version of the American fast food corporation or icon. However, its customers are predominantly Indian and maybe our estimation of the restaurant is not far off from how it is perceived by others: maybe it is the fast food chain (Motimahal has three locations) of Indian cuisine.

All the restaurants in London except the Curry Pot make some effort to decorate their restaurants with pictures, paintings, and other objects that are Indian or reflect something that is Indian. Another feature of ethnic restaurants is often the music being played in the background. All the Indian restaurants also play Indian music and invariably they play classical (north) Indian music (although on one occasion Indian pop music was being played at the Curry Pot). When asked about the seemingly ubiquitous classical music the owners at the Curry Garden said to me that he thought, "different or new doesn't work." He suggested that patrons want what they know and often stick with the familiar and old and tried. This applied to more than just the music, also to decoration and even menu selections. The three main restaurants I spoke to were not new to the restaurant business. Either they themselves or other members of the family had some prior connection to the business. So one assumes that they are aware of what works and seem to be taking a fairly conservative approach to how they market their food. It also reflects their view of the customers in London and the resultant interaction with them. That is, any changes would probably arise out of mutual interaction -- knowing more about their customers and what they expect and know.

Part of anticipating and reacting to what patrons want means occasionally re-evaluating the menu. One feature common in all the Indian restaurants is the absence of pork. The Jewel of India is run by Muslim folks and while the other places are not, the Curry Garden for example, decided to get rid of their pork dishes to make the menu as accessible as possible (which may be pertinent because of the growing Muslim population in London, i.e. East Africans). Just recently, the same informant told me that he was thinking of taking fish curry off the menu because it never gets ordered (although other seafood such as shrimp has been and still is popular). But fish, in various forms, is quite often eaten at home. In other words, fish in Indian cuisine is certainly authentic, especially so with the folks at the Jewel of India who are Muslims. While this particular example does not say much about auto-exoticization, it does reflect how the expectations of the restaurant did not match what the Indian restaurant going public have wanted, so far, and the resultant move has been to amend the menu and quite possibly their ideas about what customers want. Furthermore, this example also highlights the apparent division of home and restaurant or private and public.

Emerging out of many talks and conversations was the general sense, sometimes concrete, other times more suggestive, that there was a clear separation between the two. A separation of what they eat and how they eat. While this may not be entirely surprising to most, it does seem worthwhile to note because many may assume that, especially if unfamiliar, the foods eaten at any restaurant is what is eaten at home. Knowing little about a certain cuisine and eating it at a restaurant makes up the basis for any sort of extrapolation (or lack of) limited to those experiences. This may highlight the assumed gaps of understanding or the social distance between people. The

unfamiliar or strange usually gets played up rather than down. In other words, differences may be exaggerated and focused upon over similarities or even the possibility of similarities. Of course, there are those who may do the opposite, tending to see or look for similarities over differences.

There is a critical difference between the performances of identities in the public and the private spheres. This break exists because of the problems and challenges that face many immigrants in establishing a new life in a new place. The challenge is to negotiate between the different social and cultural contexts, the new and the old. There are obviously various responses to these challenges and in some cases the adjustments or changes may not be great. But there are circumstances that require considerable attention and negotiation between the home and the public and/or the in and out group.

The line between private/home and public/restaurant identities is not entirely a matter of one being more real or more authentic than the other. While this may be true, as immigrants in another culture, a multicultural context, the chances are that the private/home domain is just as open to influence and change than the public sphere. Or the private/home sphere may 'freeze' as a self-perpetuating snapshot of home culture right after it was transplanted to a new one. There are many examples of how first generation immigrant values are stuck in the time they left their home country while that home country, has continued on with its own changes. In any case, both the private and public are open to possibilities of certain situations or circumstances where there is some form of enactment of identities. This enactment may be addressed to other members of one's culture or ethnicity or to others outside that group (Kalcik 1985). The intent of each situation may be to show affinities or make gestures of belonging or symbolic

performances to emphasize the differences and distinctions between peoples. James (1996: 92) puts it this way, "[i]t is a complex interplay of meanings and intentions which individuals employ subjectively to make statements about who they are, and where and how their Selves are to be located in the world." That is, what allows someone to do so has to do with the ideas of different personas and the situated enactment of identities for different audiences, all aimed at saying something about oneself.

Arguably the ability for or control over how much an individual is able to define and characterize themselves and define and characterize others is largely determined by power. If, on the basis that the main reason why the informants chose to settle in London was because of its reputation and image, then that image or reputation likely elicits their own version of what they expect from the city (that is, their notion of the expectations of them as Indian restaurateurs). In addition to these sets of expectations, the restaurateurs also have some ideas about the expectations of their customers. The restaurant is responding, in terms of how they present themselves and the restaurant, to these expectations, as they perceive them. Thus, many of the people with whom I spoke are being characterized and/or defined in certain ways (and not all are known or visible) by customers, by other restaurants, and so forth. In this context, they may not be able to control how others think of them and they may respond by using generic stereotypes of their own ethnicity. But this is specific to a location and audience. In another context, such as the home, there is another sort of dynamic that is played out. The basis of performance is situational and dependent upon or sensitive to the audience. And despite the seemingly problematic process of ethnic people objectifying themselves, what are being addressed here are the self-interests, in whatever form, of the restaurant owners.

As such, as in the case of many immigrant experiences, or as a minority, some people need to play and rely on multiple and even inconsistent representations of themselves more than others (Desjarlais 1997: 217). It is relied on more by some because it comes down to a matter of negotiation between the numerous and sometimes contradictory messages and interpretations of those messages. In this respect, within everyday interaction with others, "rhetorical effectiveness" is probably more important than consistency (ibid.: 215), although consistency is important within any particular on-going situation. As well, those who are responsible for and whose interests are reflected in the most dominant images of London are the ones who value and use "strategies of consistency and sameness" (ibid.: 217) which tends to reinforce and maintain their interests over others.

Self-stereotyping even in a mild form, done consciously or not, is in many ways simply a matter of dealing with being a newcomer in a new place. It is to some extent a way of mapping out and negotiating new social and physical spaces. Ultimately, the answer to the question why a restaurateur would reproduce and perpetuate stereotypes and images about him/herself mostly comes down to the effort to maximize the chances of economic and business success. Another commentator views this situation as eventually leading to a compromise or at best a trade-off. To ensure some measure of commercial success, the restaurant has to modify its cuisine to accommodate the taste of outsiders, at the 'cost' of authenticity.

> ... it is easier to develop a taste for an exotic cuisine than to learn a language or understand a religion. Still, depth appreciation of a cuisine takes not only an educated palate, but a palate educated according to the taste criteria of the

> culture in question. Inevitably the ethnic restaurant loses authenticity to the extent that it endeavors to cater to the taste of outsiders. Conversely, it can only retain its authenticity to the extent that it draws an ethnic clientele to keep it honest. (van den Berghe 1984: 394)

Ideas of authenticity are highly subjective and individualized; as Cohen (1988) notes the greater the concern for authenticity, the stricter will be the criteria by which it is conceived (376). So, notions of authenticity are individualized (modern) social constructs (Handler 1986) dependent upon the kinds of knowledges that inform the criteria upon which that notion is based. Moving down the scale to those with a less strict criteria of authenticity, they may indulge in foods found in restaurants believing them to be the 'real thing.' But even producers of the cuisine at restaurants may re-invent traditional dishes in a manner that is authentic to them. As such, authenticity can be negotiated between the producer in their new home and the consumer. This new cuisine, perhaps far from its roots in the native country, may still be authentic in the eyes of both parties. Yet someone who is knowledgeable about that cuisine may contest its claim to be a real dish or dismiss that dish as being inauthentic. These ideas rest upon individual judgement and any sort of claims must be built upon subjective authority.

Authenticity as understood and used in the above passage is understood primarily as the absence of commoditization, or in other words, that which is not a sell-out (Cohen 1988: 374-5). The suggestion seems to be that if a restaurant does not cater to the taste of outsiders and remains authentic, it will suffer economically speaking. It has not broadened its market, although it may be argued that the native ethnic clientele may no longer go to the restaurant. At this point, what is an authentic restaurant other than a place for those highly attuned to these concerns to ingest the authenticity of others

mostly in order to renew their own? (Handler 1986). Ironically, in the end, the very search for authenticity, by well informed and knowledgeable consumers, will bring on the demise of the very thing those consumers are searching for. That is, by standards in the passage above, an authentic restaurant with a strong ethnic clientele will draw those consumers with their unending pursuit of the 'real,' thereby 'spoiling' the very authentic nature of the restaurant. And in this case it is to the relative benefit of the restaurant with its booming clientele and expanding business. At this point, how relevant is it for someone outside the restaurant to claim that it is no longer authentic? This point of view tends to ignore the everyday problems of an immigrant trying to establish a place in the community and earn a living.

The restaurants I have dealt with all seem to fit into this pattern. Their concerns are, obviously, not my concerns motivated by the thesis. Rather our talk often revolved around basic issues of trying to establish some sort of life, place.

In their effort to keep and maintain some sort of Indian-ness or exoticness, they are making use of the decorations that have ethnic associations. Yet the main restaurants that I looked at there is not a lot of that going on. The decoration and atmosphere are fairly modest. And in the talks, what came through generally was that while they were certainly aware of the importance of having these, they regarded them as necessary, as part of the reasons why customers come. "They come for more than the food," one informant said. He went on to add that it was also the atmosphere, decoration, relaxing music, and service. Any ideas of or about the perpetuation of common images or stereotypes of their ethnicity were perceived within that realm. Most also saw no harm in it, since they felt that it is part of what customers were paying for. Furthermore, the

expectations that may exist between the two parties may be brought to the table from individual or disparate positions, but once at the table they tend to be fluid and open to reevaluation and reinterpretation. As such, there is never a situation where someone comes into the restaurant and demands more "Indian-ness." Rather, parties seem to settle, refit their ideas to conform to the situation as they see it. For the most part, interest in Indian food was also perceived as an interest in India and themselves. Generally, there was a very positive outlook to the whole endeavour. Any complaints usually centered around the lack of business or the state of the economy and on one occasion the perceived lack of Londoners' willingness to dine out and spend money. Moreover, part of the positive outlook was the sense that their presence was a positive aspect of the city. This was especially true in one case, where the owners perceived themselves as occupying and playing a role in the character of the city's entertainment and dining scene.

Focusing on the production of images and stereotypes takes the focus away from the issue of authenticity and/or accuracy of the ethnic image and the food produced and consumed. What these images are used for is fit into expectations that they think consumers will have of them. They fulfill them in very basic ways, but ultimately they all stress that it comes down to the food, the presentation and service. From the point of view of the restaurants, self-objectification was not a primary issue or even recognized as such. While there are examples of this process going on, mostly in and around expectations about decoration and atmosphere, they were mostly low-key. However what did emerge out of these investigations was the realization of the active roles the restaurants and the informants played in their own attempts at making sense of their

position in London. I would like to reproduce a passage written by Narayan, which mirrors a number of the same ideas that I am beginning to realize:

> Eating in these restaurants, I also register how 'ethnic restaurants' are an important form of economic enterprise open to immigrants to the West, and how westerners' taste for 'ethnic cuisines' contributes to the economic survival of immigrants, the desire for culinary novelty making a positive difference to profit margins. Many immigrants would describe the proliferation of interest in ethnic cuisines *positively*, as an aspect of formerly colonized outsiders infiltrating and transforming western life -- where, for instance, England would no longer be England without its Indian restaurants and grocery stores. While the proliferation of western interest in ethnic cuisines might run the danger of reinforcing the attitudes Heldke describes as 'food colonialism', the creation of such interest also involves the agency of shrewd ethnic immigrants helping to create, and cashing in on, the 'western' desire for culinary novelty. (1995: 76)

The emphasis here is the producers' (the immigrant restaurateur) ability to make use of the situation and conditions to his or her interests. This is certainly the case for the Curry Garden and the Jewel of India. The Curry Pot does the same but in a different way, I would argue. It plays less on the ethnic associations, which reflect in some ways the different paths or biographies of the owners and workers, and more on accessibility. Yet it is still Indian and offers an alternative space appealing to certain kinds of consumers.

Still aside from the dangers of "food colonialism" there are also other forms of consequences for the restaurateur. These were brought to my attention during the talks I had. They also reflected the desire to be a part of the community – as business people, as residents of the city that they have chosen over many other potential locations, and not just because of business reasons to live in with their families.

Pet Eating

Sometimes immigrants or newcomers coming into an area in general can be somewhat threatening. More so if it is a large and rapid influx. Strangers and their equally unfamiliar ways are often subject to speculation and even suspicion.

Kalcik (1984) tells one such story. In Kentucky an influx of Vietnamese refugees was followed by a rumour that people's cats and dogs were vanishing. In the Washington D.C. area Vietnamese cuisine was enjoying a great deal of popularity in an area with a large Vietnamese population as well as having numerous restaurants. Kalcik regards these two examples as "common processes involving food and groups of people" (37). The first example she sums up as "'strange people equals strange food'" and the second as "'not-so-strange food equals not-so-strange people or perhaps, 'strange people but they sure can cook'" (ibid.). These two processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Both may occur, one following the other (although one assumes that if both do occur it would usually happen as hesitation and then acceptance).

Stories and rumours about their foreign ways of life and by implication their values help place the strangers as the other and as well may provide a mirror for the dominant group to identify and reassert its own values and norms. Thus, "[m]igrants mark the outer limits of group experience, they provide a point of contrast which gives the norm some scope and dimension" (Sarup 1994: 103). These "incomers" may also provide another function. Their unfamiliar actions reveal the range of behaviours and norms that are available or valid within the dominant group.

> [T]he norm retains its validity only if it is regularly used as a basis for judgement. Each time a deviant act is punished, the authority of the norm is sharpened, the declaration is made where the boundaries of the group are located. This is the way in which it can be asserted how much diversity and variability can be contained within the system before it loses its distinct structure. In short deviants and agencies of control are boundary-maintaining mechanisms.
> (Sarup 1994: 103)

The pet eating stories, in this light, can be viewed as stories that highlight how distant the newcomer still is, even if it is a neighbour. As suggested before, these stories also highlight and reaffirm indigenous values and norms. This 'message' is told not so much for the newcomers as it is for the long standing members.

The question I am interested in is why this popular story (and its variants) is about (the fear, anxiety and disgust about) what the other eats. We may pride ourselves on our humane treatment of animals and pets. We believe it reveals a lot about our attitudes in general. The immigrants are not eating other people but domestic pets, animals that are taboo to eat: "Pets...are members of the family, thus not to be exploited as resources" (Abrahams 1984: 32). Animals we deem as pets are one of several categories of animals that Edmund Leach (1964) theorized in terms of categories of distance from the self. Abrahams elaborates further upon those categories along the parameter of "eat or to be eaten by" and by extension to what degree the animals we are able to consume and/or contend with us for resources (1984: 31). Pets are domesticated, often living inside the dwelling, and with little or no chance of contending with us for our resources. Being "members of the family" they are clearly outside of the domain of animals that are deemed available for eating. Other people, friends and family members live inside a dwelling, sleep with us, share food with it, take photos of it, care for it and

so forth. Thus, for some eating a family pet may even border on cannibalism, a major taboo. It would also seem to suggest that the very nature of their humanity is being questioned. It suggests that (how and what people are) eating strikes at the core of their sociality.

Taboos about what one eats and avoids are not necessarily based upon some intrinsic ideas about the foodstuffs in general (such that what we deem edible encompasses a small part of what is available). As Mary Douglas argues in *Purity and Danger* (1966) concepts of what is fit to eat are determined arbitrarily and by extension what is not deemed edible ("filth") is what lies outside that ordering and classification. These are the "inappropriate elements" that have are symbolically powerful when they appear outside normal situations and that power exists because it is isolated and "potentially capable of inducing contagion and chaos" (Abrahams 1984: 30-1). In this case the "anomaly" that stands apart from the accepted norms is the suspected pet eating. It becomes a powerful and effective symbol for roughly translating/articulating/expressing the concerns regarding the strangeness and possibly even potential dangers of the new arrivals.

Hearing and telling the stories are a way of literally invoking the stranger's culture. Whether they do or do not eat dogs and cats (or pets), the stories communicate (suggest) ideas about what 'they' accept or avoid, what is 'right' and 'wrong' and so forth. These stories assists people in formulating an idea of the Other's culture, one that is, in the end, foreign sounding and unusual. These myths, rumours and tales reflect an almost automatic wariness in relating to newcomers. As such, it is not so much that the practice itself is especially abhorrent and at issue as much as that what seems to be the main

communicative idea in the stories is saying something about the newcomers in contrast to the local or native population.

There are a plethora of urban legends, and in similar ilk, the ethnic jokes (stereotypes, conceptions of others or strangers): suspicious strangers answering ads for pets; stealing pets from homes; and also fears of eating domestic animals in restaurants (transgression of private, in public spaces, contamination/transgression of body purity by eating taboo animals) (see Brunvand 1984: 118-127). A variation of the story has North Americans leaving home and travelling to other places. Other locations include Hong Kong and Southeast Asia but also include Southern and Eastern Europe. In this case, the stories seem to be suggesting that people should be careful when they venture out into unfamiliar places and interact with unfamiliar people. Again the danger lies in what you might eat as eating is one of the primary "currencies of exchange of importance in culture" and between cultures (Abrahams 1984: 21).

Representatives of Somewhere Else

Eating at ethnic restaurants in the western context does not have to be a complex or complicated experience. For some they may not give it a single thought to what they are eating, and how and why they came about eating it. But it is this unawareness surrounding the act that constitutes to some extent "food colonialism." So for those consumers who enjoy eating ethnic foods and are concerned about eating ethically, then as Narayan suggests, they need to think about the "complex social and political

implications of who produces and who eats such 'ethnic foods'" and not so much original contexts of where those foods might have come from (1995: 79). As outlined earlier, these matters are obviously not so straightforward, although they often have been treated as such. They need to be problematized and questioned. In some cases they may represent a range of potentially harmful practices that reproduce social, political and economic inequities but they are also not completely that either.

Thinking about these sorts of issues takes on more importance when one considers Narayan's point about those people who own the restaurants and live in the same communities as the rest of us:

> members of ethnic immigrant communities, though they may wish to retain some aspects of their 'ethnic roots', may also wish to be seen as legitimate members of the cultural context they inhabit in the West, and not as a mere 'representative of a foreign culture *somewhere else*.' (ibid.)

Often eating at ethnic restaurants, especially if it is perceived as a form of tourism, one tends to think of the entire experience as representing a little bit of the foreign culture. The main person I spoke to at the Curry Pot may be perceived based upon appearances or uninformed assumptions in a manner that would not reflect the fact that he was born in Africa, has ambitions beyond the restaurant business, considers himself a member of the London community and eventually wants to serve that community in some way. In other words, it tends make blanket assumptions and generalizations that overlook and neglect the variety of experiences, perspectives and relationships even within that ethnic community.

During one conversation, without intending it, the fellow I was talking to briefly mentioned the issue of racism or situations where derogatory remarks came about during

his time in London working at the restaurant. When I tried to pursue it further it was downplayed and he stressed that overall he had very few problems of that nature. While racism or racist acts very rarely surfaced in our various talks, it was always handled in the same manner. Initially I found this somewhat disappointing, as I thought this would be interesting to talk about and think about, although I did understand why someone might not want to talk about it. Later I realized that this had more to do with the fact that, unlike myself, they lived in London. They were not merely visitors or encapsulated inside restaurants only to serve food. I believe this exemplifies Narayan's point that they would like to be treated as members of their community, local, provincial and national (a fellow at the Jewel of India while talking about his experience in Montreal offered his thoughts about Quebec and the issue of separation).

Similarly, in a number of cases during the conversations I had with various informants, it would occur to me that I was speaking to people of a visible ethnic minority as a member of one as well. On a couple of occasions we shared some stories or reflections on what it is to be in that position. Other times, I found that I was making more of this fact than they were or they were interested in. In these conversations, the "Other" meant "white" folks. Generally, "white" was an undifferentiated category that was the Other in relation to a meta-category that the Indian people I spoke to and I fitted into (as many ethnic minority groups share the same radio and television stations where allotments of time are given to each group so that my mother will sometimes turn on the radio and wait for the Korean broadcast listening to the South East Asian-Hindi broadcast that precedes it as it finishes up). But not being Indian I could have easily have been that "Other" under different circumstances. Conceptualizing these various

and complex relations in very basic and gross dyadic relationships (X-Y) was mostly done out of convenience or ease or perhaps reflects the basic ways in people generally tend to conceptualize the world to "structure perception in terms of binary difference" (Gilman 1985: 24). Be that as it may, if we are to take into consideration the range and variety of responses in cross-cultural relations, then the category of "white" has to be problematized. Within that category, there are obviously many different ethnic groups and socio-cultural groupings. Furthermore, there is a range of different economic classes that divide any group even if it is simply conceptualized as the 'have' and 'have-nots.' Quite often the relations between economic classes get subsumed or lost or re-routed and re-drawn along ethnic divides.

Also focusing the discussion solely between the "mainstream white" and "the ethnic other" tends to keep an "overwhelming centrality" to this configuration as the only possibility (Narayan 1995: 79). Within diverse western contexts the relations between or within differing minority ethnic groups are overlooked. In other words, looking at this from the majority and minority relationship most of the focus has been 'vertical' exchanges and not enough attention has been paid to the realities and possibilities of more 'horizontal' relationships. (Similarly, the category of "white" may include some who may see themselves in that category. There have also been conflicts between ethnic categories of "whites" such as Italians and African-Americans in New York City or Koreans and African-Americans before and during the Los Angeles riots a number of years back.)

One informant from an Indian restaurant explained to me the problematic relationship he has had with other members of the Indian community in London. Mainly

he found that it was usually difficult in dealing with them precisely because they were of the same ethnicity. Problems often came about because of certain expectations about their relationship as restaurant owners and customers that were at odds with each other. Focusing primarily on the relations between majority "white" and minority ethnic groups would not have taken into account the relationship between and within that minority ethnic group. It also would not consider the possibility of myself and my role as an ethnic minority in these investigations and the "complex and often politically charged relationships between members of various ethnic groups" (ibid.: 80).

These forms of contingencies are part of the global reality of a post-colonial history. In the west, a past, present and future rooted migrations and movement throughout the world have brought together a convergence of people from disparate corners of the world. As a result, this opens up various possibilities and permutations in now and in the future.

Envoi

Where did we end up? We ended up in a different place than I had originally planned. Along the way, different factors and problems arose necessitating a more reflexive and immediate response on my part. Fieldwork was more complicated and labour intensive than I had imagined and library research and theorizing proved more relevant than I expected. Conclusions and findings often stopped short of being fully conclusive. Instead I sometimes encountered what I thought of as dead ends as well as seeming

avenues that were really on-ramps to multi-lane highways. But these 'problems' were valuable in that situations where the expected did not occur were equally fruitful. So we end up with a project, by way of a broad range of related ideas and topics, that has hopefully revealed something about the relationship between Indian restaurants and the people involved with them and the city of London and its residents who are the restaurant patrons. This is a relationship constituted by representations, images and stereotypes. We end up with a situation characterized by ethnic, racial and class distinctions.

Having reached this point, I find myself musing about in what ways this would have been different had I examined Korean restaurants and Korean identity rather than Indian. Foremost, I would have been dealing with something closer, more personal, as the identity in question would have been my own. And this would have much attenuated and extended my evocation of the complex relationship between the topics and issues. Furthermore, this would have also problematized my position both as a researcher and as a member of the same ethnic group.

Finally, prior to starting the project, I looked at Stanley Barrett's *Paradise*, an ethnography of a small southwestern Ontario town. It dealt with the numerous changes that were occurring, primarily in the make-up of its population over the last couple of decades. This analysis affected my view of London. Often I had to be careful that I was not confusing or mixing up elements of the two. In retrospect, my receptivity to the negative (and often depressing) details about the relationship between long time residents and newcomers expressed in the ethnography was, at least, partially due to certain ideas and stereotypes that existed in my image of the city prior to beginning my

study. But my arrival in London was also not of the most auspicious kind (I arrived in London to find that the house I was to live in had been set on fire the night before). In the two years that followed, as a resident and student, I have had to sort through and in some cases directly deal with the flurry of fluctuating ideas and images. I ended up being more sympathetic to the London I discovered than to the stereotype or preconceived image with which I began.

Endnotes

[1] Of course just because an individual is of British descent, does not confer some sort of automatic status. I am suggesting overall throughout this section that British and white are not monolithic categories and nor do they entail the same access to power. Further, the production of an image in and of London (e.g. what the image really reflects, who is making it, who is not included in it). Then it seems that the question of class arises. We will return to many of these issues.

[2] Moodley (1981) uses a "Canadian social hierarchy" model that organizes and distinguishes the "four ethnic groups according to the options they face and the resources they command" in Canadian society: charter group ethnics, non-charter group European immigrants, Third World immigrants/visible minorities, and native people.

[3] There is some debate as to how ethnicity and/or race relate to class. For a sample of further discussions on this issue see: Moodley 1981; Dreidger 1981, 1989; Van den Berghe 1987. In my view, there is not reason to assume the dominant relation *a priori*. Moreover, class and ethnicity may shift in importance over time.

[4] Nonetheless some geographically peripheral areas are not socially or economically marginal. For example Byron which lies at the western edge of the city, has the fourth highest household income average -- $75,000 -- as well as a comparably high percentage of post secondary education. As well the area has one of the lowest percentages of immigrants and households who speak neither French or English

[5] *Listening '94* relates a story in which this anxiety specifically focuses around some of the concerns expressed over how and to whom government social welfare is given. A television news story regarding a Vietnamese girl who was found murdered mentioned that she was on welfare during the time she was in London. Apparently after the story was aired, the station as well as another governmental office received calls from people wanting to know why she was receiving welfare. This story seems to tap into the common concern that immigrants are taking away and/or taking advantage of opportunities from residents, especially during difficult economic times.

[6] In the quote from Clifford, the means of transport he uses as examples are fairly exotic, implying other more exotic places that require such means. Clifford, not entirely consistently, critiques the traditional idea of the field as a faraway place in the same essay.

[7] In Hutnyk's Rumors of Calcutta he examines the various tropes and discourses used by foreign travellers, writers, and filmmakers in their encounter with India and the city of Calcutta.

[8] Warde (1994: 891) says about consumption studies: "Almost all recent accounts of consumption exaggerate the part that establishing self identity plays in the activity....The idea that identity-value has entirely supplanted use-value and exchange-value as considerations in consumer decision making seems to me misjudged" (ibid.).

[9] It could be argued that "they" get paid and while this is important I would imagine the counter argument goes that while they do get paid, bigger and nastier corporations can take those same 'things' decontextualize and commodify and sell 'them,' again, back to us.

[10] Sweet and sour chicken balls, is a fairly common item in many Chinese restaurants especially in take-out places or restaurants in less urbane or cosmopolitan contexts. But this dish does not really exist outside of North American representations of Chinese cuisine. Yet for many, that dish may typify or represent Chinese cuisine just as much as the idea that the typical North American diets consists mostly of hamburgers, steaks and soda pop.

[11] Also other counter-culture or alternative social movements and the correspondent views and habits of eating and food production; For a brief overview see Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo 1992: 42-7.

[12] Although recently immigration from Hong Kong has brought over relatively wealthy migrants establishing their own predominantly Chinese, large scale business complexes.

References

Abraham, Roger
1984 "Equal Opportunity Eating: A Structural Excursus on Things of the Mouth", in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the U.S.: The Performance of a Group Identity*. Linda Brown and Kay Mussell, eds. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Appadurai, Arjun
1988 "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India", Society for Comparative Study of Society and History 30 (1) : 3-24.
1991 "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", in *Global Culture*. Mike Featherstone, ed. London: Sage Publishing.

Armstrong, Frederick, N.
1981 "Ethnicity and Formation of the Ontario Establishment", in *Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities*. Leo Driedger, ed. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman.

Arreola, Daniel D.
1983 "Mexican Restaurants in Tucson", Journal of Cultural Geography 3 (2): 108-114.

Barrett, Stanley
1994 *Paradise*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Barth, Frederik, ed.
1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitets Forlaget.

Beardsworth, Alan and Keil, Teresa
1992 "The Vegetarian Option: Varieties, conversions, motives and concerns", The Sociological Review 40 (2): 253-293.

Bell, David and Valentine, Gill
1997 *Consuming Geographies: We are where we eat*. London and New York: Routledge.

Brunvand, Jan Harold
1984 *The choking Doberman: and other "new" urban legends*. New York: Norton.

Caglar, Ayse S.
1995 "McDoner: Doner Kebap and the Social Positioning Struggle of German Turks", in *Marketing in a Multicultural World*. Janeen Arnold Costa and Gary J. Bamossy, eds. London: Sage Publications.

Clifford, James
1997 *Routes*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cohen, Erik
1988 "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism", Annals of Tourism Research 15 (3): 371-386.

Comaroff, John and Jean
1992 *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Cook, Ian and Crang, Philip
1996 "The World on a Plate", Journal of Material Culture 1 (July) : 131-154

Counihan, Carole M.
1992 "Food Rules in the United States: Individualism, Control, and Hierarchy", Anthropological Quarterly 65 (2): 55-66.

Crain, Mary M.
1996 "Negotiating Identities in Quito's Cultural Borderlands: Native women's performances for the Ecuadorean tourist market", in *Cross-Cultural Consumption*. David Howes, ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Curtis, Barry and Pajaczkowska, Claire
1994 "'Getting there': travel, time and narrative", in *Travellers' Tales: narratives of home and displacement*. George Robertson, Melinda Mash, et al., eds. London and New York: Routledge.

Dahlie, Jorgen and Fernando, Tissa, eds.
1981 *Ethnicity, power and politics in Canada*. Toronto: Methuen.

Darnell, Regna
1998 Personal communication.

Desjarlais, Robert
1997 *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Diamond, Rena
1995 "Become Spoiled Moroccan Royalty for an Evening: The Allure of Ethnic Eateries", Bad Subjects 19 (electronic journal at: http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/bs/).

Driedger, Leo
1987 *Ethnic Canada: identities and inequalities*. Leo Driedger, ed.. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman.
1989 *The ethnic factor: identity in diversity*. Toronto : McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Featherstone, Mike, ed.
1991 *Consumer Culture & Postmodernism.* London: Sage Publications.

Friedman, Jonathon
1991 "Being in the Local: Globalization and Localization", in *Global Culture.* Mike Featherstone, ed. London: Sage Publications.

Gabaccia, Donna
1998 *We are what we eat.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Gilman, Sander L.
1985 *Difference and Pathology.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Goody, Jack
1982 *Cooking, cuisine, and class : a study in comparative sociology.* New York : Cambridge University Press.

Gutierrez, C.P.
1984 "The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways: Cajuns and Crawfish in South Louisiana", in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of a Group Identity.* Linda Brown and Kay Mussell, eds. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Handler, Richard
1986 "Authenticity", Anthropology Today 2 (1): page numbers unknown.

Hannerz, Ulf
1991 "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture", in *Global Culture.* Mike Featherstone, ed.. London: Sage Publications.

Hartigan, Jr., John
1997 "Name Calling: Objectifying 'Poor Whites' and 'White Trash in Detroit'," in *White Trash: race and class in America.* Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz, eds. London and New York: Routledge.

Hutnyk, John
1997 *Rumour of Calcutta: tourism, charity, the poverty of representation.* London and New Jersey: Zed Books.

James, Allison
1996 "Cooking the Books: Global or Local Identities in Contemporary British Food Cultures?", in *Cross-Cultural Consumption.* David Howes, ed. London and New York: Routledge

Kalcik, Susan
1984 "Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity", in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the U.S.: The Performance of a Group Identity*. Linda Brown and Kay Mussell, eds. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Levenstein, Harvey A.
1988 *Revolution at the table: the transformation of the American diet*. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Mani, Lata
1992 "Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning", in *Cultural Studies*. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler, eds. London and New York: Routledge.

Mennell, Stephen, Murcott, Anne and van Otterloo, Anneke H.
1992 *Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture*. London: Sage Publications.

Moodley, K.
1981 "Canadian Ethnicity in Comparative Perspectives: Issues in the Literature", in *Ethnicity, power and politics in Canada*. Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando, eds. Toronto: Metheun.

Narayan, Uma
1995 "Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity and Indian Food", Social Identities 1 (2): 63-86.

Preuschat, Sybille
n.d. "Trend Watching: Hospitality for the Future", Patron 1(2): 5-7.

Sarup, Madan
1994 "Home and Identity", in *Travellers' Tales: narratives of home and displacement*. George Robertson, Melinda Mash, et al., eds. London and New York: Routledge.

Savigliano, Marta
1994 *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Smart, Barry
1994 "Digesting the Modern Diet: Gastro-Porn, Fast Food and Panic Eating", in *The Flaneur*. Keith Tester ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Tambiah, Stanley J.
1994 "The Politics of Ethnicity", in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*. Robert Borofsky, ed. U.S.A.: McGraw-Hill.

Tausky, Nancy Z.
1993 *Historical Sketches of London: from site to city.* Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Tyler, Stephen
1996 "The Essence of Aroma", American Anthropologist 98 (3): 617-619.

United Way of London and Middlesex
1994 *Listening '94: Community Service, Issues and Trends.*

van den Berghe, Pierre
1981 "Ethnicity and Class: Bases of Sociality", in *Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities.* Leo Driedger, ed. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman
1984 "Ethnic Cuisine: culture in nature", Ethnic and Racial Studies 7 (3) July 1984: 387-397.

Van Esterik, Penny
1992 "From Marco Polo to McDonald's: Thai Cuisine in Tradition", *Food and Foodways* 5 (2): 177-193.

van Otterloo, Anneke H.,
1987? Foreign Immigrants and the Dutch at Table, 1945-1985. Bridging or Widening the Gap?

Warde, Alan
1994 "Consumption, Identity-Formation and Uncertainty", Sociology 28 (4): 877-898.

Zelinsky, Wilbur
1985 "The Roving Palate: North America's Ethnic Restaurant Cuisines", Geoforum 16 (1): 51-72.