

Anthony Bourdain's Cosmopolitan Table

Mapping the ethni(C)ity through street food and television

Shelby E. Ward

Abstract:

Examining food-television personality Anthony Bourdain and his CNN show *Parts Unknown*, I look at the intersectional mapping practices of food, television, and the city as they articulate on the screen to provide a map of the ethni(C)ity, as Bourdain performs the role of cosmopolitan moving within and consuming cities of the imagined Other. This on-screen performance highlights the complicated positions of the cosmopolitan, who can oscillate between hospitality and hostility, as framed by Jacques Derrida (2001, Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000). This paper follows three cities that question the cosmopolitan's ability to subvert narratives and visual practices that essentialize and reify the city of the Other. In Singapore, the screen as map considers the pleasure of viewing the city from above, as Michel de Certeau critiques. In Bogotá, Colombia, the city as map questions the proposed split between signifiers as 'traditional' and 'modern;' urban and rural, that is made strange by the tracing food between, in and out of the city. In Hue, Vietnam, Bourdain as map, looks at the body of the cosmopolitan as a translation machine in the assumed and produced hospitality of the outsider or guest-as-host. Each different map and city indicate different ways in which the city of the Othered is re-presented through Bourdain's show. Ultimately, I argue that exactly because the city, the screen, and the cosmopolitan work through mediations (Lefebvre 1996) that at times they offer a critique to question relations with each Other, and then at times they only reconfirm essentialized desires to consume spaces of the Other. Both self-reflexivity and reification are possible simultaneously through Bourdain's narrative.

Keywords: Bourdain, ethni(C)ity, food studies, de Certeau, the cosmopolitan

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I love Tokyo. If I had to eat only in one city for the rest of my life, Tokyo would be it. Most chefs I know would agree with me. For those with restless, curious minds, fascinated by layer upon layer of things, flavors, tastes and customs, which we will never fully be able to understand, Tokyo is deliciously unknowable. I'm sure I could spend the rest of my life there, learn the language, and still die happily ignorant. It's that densely packed, impenetrable layer cake of the strange, wonderful and awful that thrills. It's mesmerizing. Intimidating. Disorienting. Upsetting. Poignant. And yes, beautiful. Like many of our hows, our Tokyo episode is really not about Tokyo, though it takes place there. It tells two, very different stories... (Bourdain 2013).

The Tokyo described above is the city seen through the late chef and television personality, Anthony Bourdain's point of view, in what was his most recent travel/ food show CNN's *Parts Unknown*. This was *his* story of Tokyo. This episode, like most others in the series, can be located and situated within his own questions, curiosities, and interests. This Tokyo episode included, among other things, the connection between sushi and martial arts with former New York chef, Naomichi Yasuda; the "fetishistic desire" of the Japanese porn industry, including, "[p]opular comic books, (manga), toys, films, advertisements and entertainments are loaded with images of bondage (shibari), hyper-sexualized schoolgirls, rape, homoeroticism, violation by demons and tentacles—and more (all generally referred to as 'hentai');" and the over-

worked, salary man of the Tokyo business district, including “Karoshi,” or death by overwork (Brigden 2013). It would seem (perhaps, other than the focus of Yasuda) that these elements of the show would only marginally be associated with food. The only apparent feature that they might have in common is that they are in the same geography of food: that is, the city of Tokyo. I would also suggest that in the sequence of Bourdain’s television shows the focus is less and less on food, from *A Cook’s Tour*, *No Reservations*, *The Layover*, and then finally *Parts Unknown*. However, the attention to martial arts, the sex-industry, and the current work environment of Tokyo are all facets and networks that link and intersect within discussions of the serving of, preparing of, and rituals of food. This reveals how food is always political and social, as it operates within and between political and social bodies. As Michel de Certeau posits in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, that “each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact” (1984, xi), so as we consider Bourdain’s work as a locus of plurality, we can also consider the modes of practices, including those surrounding food as their own locusts of plurality. There are two important points that I use to frame this discussion of Bourdain and his food/travel series. That is, first, these details are limited and situated within his particular narrative, both as host and producer of the show. Second, this locatable narrative uses practices of everyday life, including the eating and preparing food, to introduce social, cultural, and political lives of the Other. The question is: what happens when the practices of everyday life (“talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.”) are made public, and made commodifiable?

This paper thus examines food-television personality Anthony Bourdain as he performs the role of the cosmopolitan moving within and consuming cities of the imagined Other. The city of the imagined Other is what I refer to as the “ethni(C)ity”. Specifically, within Bourdain’s representation of the city as the cosmopolitan tourist, I

look at his interactions and the production of himself as image-on-the-screen and narrator for his CNN show, *Parts Unknown*. His particular narrative highlights the complicated positions of host and guest, within the lines of hospitality and hostility, as introduced by Jacques Derrida. Derrida observes the “cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality”: the cosmopolitan is not only an assumption of the invitation but of the hospitality that is to follow (Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000, 69-71). This line between hospitality and hostility becomes increasingly problematic, I argue, as the invitation and hospitality of the cosmopolitan is simultaneously articulated in the same figure. In other words, Bourdain works as both host and guest in the production and narrative of the show. In order to most appropriately address the different positions of cosmopolitanism, this investigation, into Bourdain’s portrayal of urban life and Otherness, will require an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, with interests in political theory, urban geography, cultural geography, cultural studies and food studies, I examine not only the discursive split of the host and guest on screen of the cosmopolitan, but also maintain that Bourdain’s specific narrative allows for a self-reflexive and accountable view of the city and Other, while simultaneously allowing for their consumption.

The screen mediates a multiplicity of subject positions, including multiple articulations of Anthony Bourdain himself. I separate these subject positions into two primary positions: Tony-as-image and Bourdain-as-narrator. We can loosely consider Tony-as-image as circulating around the guest position, as he is the image invited into spaces of hospitality: not only in spaces and cities on the show, but also in our domestic lives, as well. Bourdain-as-narrator circulates around the host position, as he works as the considerate mediator speaking, introducing, and situating the image into our homes. The first subject position is the image displayed on the screen, and the second is his author/ial role within the production of the show.

The TV narrator is often presented as a disembodied voice, always in excess of the spatiality and temporality of what is shown on the screen. Here, I look at the production of *Parts Unknown*, indicating Tony-as-image working as an aesthetic subject capable of, or at least revealing, the “micropolitics of managing urban life-worlds” (Shapiro 2010, 8). Traditional political philosophy has historically been interested in state-level thinking, but specifically discussing the ability to “grasp the politics of urban space, Michael Shapiro states that “the arts often render thinkable aspect of politics that have been ignored,” (ibid., 4). This would suggest, firstly, that Tony-as-image has potential for interrogating particular spatial imaginaries: here, the geography of the city. Through proximity and particular modes of visual representation, the viewer can situate, locate, and question this access. However, the proximity necessary to question, is also the proximity necessary for essentialization. Secondly, Tony-as-image can be considered as an aesthetic subject, that is, a subject(s) that is “invented less to reveal their psychic or attitudinal orientation than to reveal the forces at work in the spaces within which they move and to display the multiplicity of subject positions historically created within those spaces” (ibid., 7). And thirdly, all of this is possible through the practice of everyday life, that is, the making and eating of food.

Jacqui Kong notes that “food adventuring” television shows are a relatively recent development, merging travel programs and cooking shows (2011, term coined by Heldke 2003). Kong observes that these “food adventuring television programs thus do not only involve the crossing of physical, geographical boundaries, but the more intimate, personal boundaries built in and around the preparation of food, as well as the consumption of food and its symbolic value intrinsic to particular groups, societies, cultures, and ethnicities” (ibid., 45). Additionally, Kong makes the argument that these shows utilize “difference” as a tool to expose and present the “Other,” and that most

existing theories see travel narratives of the Western “Self” as colonizing/ consuming the Other for the benefit of the Self. Referencing Bourdain’s earlier show, *No Reservations*, Kong posits that he actively acknowledges the Other “as human beings situated within complex contexts and histories” (ibid., 47). Interrogating two episodes, Vietnam’s Central Highlands and Laos, Kong maintains that it is Bourdain’s “self-reflexivity” of his own position and privilege that allows him to present the difference of the Other in way that does not essentialize, but acknowledges the potential agency and co-performativity of the Other-self in front of the cameras. The following discussion confirms Kong’s argument, but also considers the potential limitations in the very *form* that allows this self-reflexive narrative to emerge: the screen itself.

This second possibility is tied closely to the economic production of the show, and the need for the Other in this economic production. For example, Lisa M. Heldke argues that

[t]he authenticity of this Other (indeed, the very project of authenticating) is established against a standard constructed outside the Other’s own culture, in the West, and for Western purposes. Not surprisingly then, given the consumerist proclivities of much of first-world Western cultures, the Other’s authenticity turns out to be a commodity—a spirituality weekend, a meal, a jar of exotic seasonings, a piece of jewelry or an object for the coffee table. (2003, 44)

The same could arguably be said for the commodification of the Other’s authenticity in the city of the Other in shows like *Parts Unknown*. But just as Bourdain’s visual narrative on the show indicates two different positions, both host and guest, both commodification and self-reflexivity are simultaneously possible. Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska further note that “[e]ven the simplest cinematic narrative offers the spectator the fantasy of ‘being in two places at the same time’, or inhabiting the body and point of view of someone else. The escape from the restrictive limitations of the body and place is gratified through a range of symbolic conventions” (1994, 212).

In addition to the possibility of the viewer feeling this reflexive or essentialized split, Bourdain's own cinematic narrative offers a range of geographies to investigate these different reflexive splits of the cosmopolitan: host/ guest; commodified/ self-reflexive; embodied/ disembodied. However, such an investigation would appear to benefit from a geography which also works through refracted mediations.

Henri Lefebvre states that “[t]he city is a *mediation* among mediations” (1996, 101). There is a palimpsest of mediations, as the city mediates between, what Lefebvre describes as, the near order and the far order (ibid., 101). Or, perhaps, also described in Bourdain’s words “*densely packed, impenetrable layer cake of*” various dialectical positions and affects (2013). Both food and television, in addition to the city, are always mediating between these two orders, between the act of consumption, preparation, and ritual as relational between individuals and groups. But these relations are made available through larger the institutions of networks and historical power relations. Additionally, the act of consuming food in a particular geographical assemblage (here, the city) as a produced image on a screen, is itself a very particular articulation between near and far order. It is a meditating instance between bodies eating food, and those consuming the show as part of a larger text: a “text in a context so vast and unarguable as much except by reflection” (Lefebvre 1996, 101). Consuming the city might either confirm this text or open it up for spaces of critique.

This paper follows three different, but intersecting, mapping practices that allow the Other to emerge on screen in the geography of the city: the screen as map, the city as map, and the cosmopolitan (Bourdain himself) as map. To be clear, each one of these mapping practices (the screen, the city, and the cosmopolitan) are all present simultaneously in each one of the episodes examined. I highlight each one separately in order to indicate the various points of mediation. That is, we can see how the screen mediates the relationship between the cosmopolitan and the city, how the city mediates

the relationship between the cosmopolitan and the screen, and how the cosmopolitan mediates the relationship between the city and the screen. We also see how each of these mediations intersect and cross over between nodes and within the additional narratives, images, and bodies. Anthony Bourdain is a productive image and worldview mediating between hospitality and possible hostility, capable of assuming and accepting both invitation and access to cross borders. Indeed, he is a fully realized cosmopolitan, noted for “extensive patterns of mobility, a stance of openness to others, a willingness to take risks and an ability to reflect upon and judge aesthetically between different natures, places and societies, both now and in the past” (Urry 1995, 145).

In order to investigate the dual potential of Bourdain's on-screen cosmopolitanism, and also the different politics involved in the simultaneous commodification and self-reflexivity, we can look at what each different map and city reveals. First, in Singapore, the *screen as map* considers the pleasure of viewing the city from above, as discussed by de Certeau. Bourdain subverts this potentially all-encompassing and essentializing view through the use of multiple kinds of camera angles and views, but his voice as narrator remains an omni-present feature. Second, in Bogotá, Colombia, *the city as map* questions the proposed split between signifiers as “traditional” and “modern;” urban and rural. While acknowledging that a focus on the city has the potential to reify this particular geographical space, the focus on food as it moves between, in and out of the city, blurs these signifiers. And then finally in Hue (Way) Vietnam, *Bourdain as map*, looks at the body of the cosmopolitan as a translation machine in the assumed and produced hospitality of the outsider or guest-as-host.

The Screen as Map: Singapore

Framing Bourdain's production of Singapore as a map means acknowledging the visual mediation of both the city and the screen. Looking at Australian narrative fiction and film, Peta Mitchell and Jane Stadler state that they are interested in the ways

in which film, literature, and theater are at once mediated and remediated. Cultural narratives not only mediate and represent space, place, and location, but they are themselves mediated representational spaces. Furthermore, films, novels, and plays also open themselves up to further remediation in the form of cross-media adaptation, or, as we will argue, spatial analysis in the form of *geovisualization* (2011, 55, emphasis mine).

A similar sentiment is echoed by Shapiro who looks at film because of the way the form "cross cutting, sequence hosts, montage, depth of focus, and facial close-ups (among other things) — is ideally suited to an urban-oriented mode of apprehending the political" (2010, 11). The form of the screen, through the multiple visions and temporal positions available, has the potential to work against state level or macro political mappings. Through mediations, the geovisualization in Bourdain's *Parts Unknown* provides a very specific and produced geo-narrative of the ethni(C)ity. This section will indicate the ways in which Bourdain's own geovisualization of the city evades colonizing totality, while at the same time reproducing an omnipresent host through the onscreen host.

Bourdain's *Parts Unknown* shifts the gaze easily between expansive aerial shots to point of view on the street. The desire to see the city, not just from the ground, but to in an all embracing way, is not dissimilar to de Certeau's description of looking down at New York from the World Trade center (1984). Describing the view of looking down on the city from above as "the tallest letters in the world compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production," de Certeau asks, "[t]o what erotics of knowledge does the ecstasy of reading such a cosmos belong? Having taken a voluptuous pleasure in it, I wonder what is the source of this pleasure of 'seeing the

whole,' of looking down on, totalizing the most immoderate of human texts" (1984, 91-92). There is a particular pleasure in looking from above, but this view also indicates particular privileges to knowledge and power. For example, reflecting on Certeau's observations, Rohan Kalyan states that "[v]isual knowledge was tied to power, to be sure, but both knowledge and power were mediated by something else: by desire, carnal and impure" (2017, 3).

Geovisually, this is the same view and lens used by the cartographer. Maps as a production of the visual are also "the product of privileged and formalized knowledges and they also produce knowledge about the world. And, in this sense, maps are the products of power and they produce power" (Kitchin and Dodge 2007, 332). Both the map and city within their "immense texturology spread out before one's eyes anything more than a representation, an optical artifact?" (de Certeau 2013, 92-93). The cartographic eye is the view from nowhere, as critiqued by Donna Haraway (1988), and as de Certeau describes, "[t]his fiction already made the medieval spectator into a celestial eye. It created gods. Have things changed since the technical procedures have organized an 'all-seeing power'? The totalizing eye imagined by the painters of earlier times lives on in our achievements" (2013, 92). Or perhaps, these achievements were only made possible by exactly the totalizing eye of the Renaissance painters and imperial cartographers. As this seems to work for the planner urbanist, city planner, or cartographer, so it also works for the producers of *Parts Unknown* and the geovisual narrative of Anthony Bourdain.

We need bodies on the ground to complicate the view from nowhere. The screen allows for the articulation of the function of both: looking down on the city, and eating the city from below. The Emmy-award winning cinematographers of *Parts Unknown*, utilize and oscillate between both. In the opening of the Singapore episode (Osterholm

2017), the shots from above the city are supplemented by images of bodies on the streets:

Nothing. Then a woman's voice sings elating, piercing the blackness. The camera fades from black onto a woman's face shaded in blue. Mouth open, her voice and her blue face dissolve into the white lights of the city. The camera floats through skyscrapers. The lights on buildings move, and shift to seemingly motionless boats on the river, splitting the city. The buildings sing blue and gold, with a steady pulse, a drum in the background. A woman watches the city go by in the back of a car, yellow-orange lights blur behind her, she is shaded by the car, and yet the city still leaks through the windshield onto her face. The camera shifts and distorts, until a man emerges with glasses as he walks past the screen, not looking at us. Bourdain-as-Narrator speaks, "What are our expectations?" A man walks towards the camera, down a seemingly empty street with motorbikes and balconies in yellow light lining the way. "Which of the things we desire are within reach?" We now see people are behind the man, as the screen has already moved away, back to the woman in the car, whose face is now lit with red. She moves her head, as if she is going to turn toward the camera, toward us, but her face shadows before we see her eyes. Bourdain-as-Narrator, "If not now, when?" The woman's face is gone, but we see her outline in red and yellow lights from the streets that she continues to pass. We look up into the face of the man from the street. Everything is dark except his face. His collar is white, and his glasses, (is he looking at us?) reflect two blue lights. He is fading. Bourdain-as-Narrator, "And will there be some left for me?" Nothing. The blue-black face emerges, her head is looking out to the left of the screen, and her hand resting on a microphone, her long nails gleam. She slowly moves her head back, with her mouth still half-opened, until only her blue-black hand over the microphone is left on the screen. Before the abrupt cut to the opening credits, and the spell is broken. (described from Osterholm 2017, 00:00-1:04)

The voices of Bourdain and the woman are both lights on buildings, breaking into the gold and blue that splits the river, the drum beat that pulses beneath, and shadows that illuminate and darken. The city is the backdrop for the bodies that emerge to take the place of buildings. Yellow-blue buildings for yellow-blue bodies. There *is* a disembodied aesthetic to this opening; it is ghost-like. In addition to the images looking down on the river and the skyscrapers, there is an authorial presence: a geonarrative. It is Bourdain's voice, our host, which produces a presence more pervasive than just the geovisual of the city alone. It is his voice that inscribes, marks, and plans the city in

front of us, including the bodies below – the individuals that are already moving out of the frame away from us. The production of this minute-long sequence plays with gaze, narrative, and desire. The screen, through narratives and images, also invites the reader to question their own desires. The shot includes eyes that almost look at the camera, toward us, so that we become a part of the view from nowhere. The viewer can view, without being viewed themselves. This is what we might call the ideal consumption of the city. But this also brings this desire to the forefront. As the viewer was *almost* seen. These almost-eyes haunt the geovisual consumption of the city.

This montage transitions from disembodied view to the mimetic street level and embodied, everyday practices of the city. On the screen, the city becomes strange, or estranged from the viewer as the gaze shifts from aerial views to those individuals on the street. What is seemingly absent in these operations is the presence of food. However, by association and the relational production of the show, absence of food is also a presence. Food often serves as host for many political, social, cultural, and economically-driven discussions and conversations, but at times the absence of food allows alternative articulations around the gastro-geographical to emerge. In this example, the city itself is the precursor to the meals, conversations, and experiences that the city will provide in the span of the episode. This opener works as an aperitif, whetting the appetite for the city that is to come. It is geovisual foreplay. But does it do enough to make us question those desires?

What this scene does do is indicate the simultaneous subversion of the all-encompassing, colonizing view of the city, while at the same time creating an omnipresent voice of Bourdain-the-narrator. However, this narrative voice in the show is often self-reflexive, posing not only questions to the viewers, as seen here, but also allowing for a reflective space to question his own motives, desires, or even reveal his own doubts and insecurities. While this authorial voice might produce an omnipresent

and disembodied presence, it does so to complicate Bourdain's own image in relation to Otherness and the city. It invites the viewer to consume the city, but in doing so, the viewer is also made aware of their own desires to consume. As such, the possibility to both confront and address the desire of the cosmopolitan becomes just as much a possibility as the consumption itself.

The City as Map: Bogotá

Denis Cosgrove has observed that “[c]artography acts not merely to record the various ways that the city is materially present, but as a creative intervention in urban space, shaping both the physical city and the urban life experienced and performed there” (2008, 170-171). I suggest that the screen, like the urban map, both creates and records the city. Although the city is not the only geographical assemblage explored by Bourdain, it may be the one that best “reflects” the mediating factors of and between the screen and his embodied gastro narrative. As noted before, since the city itself is already a space of mediations of mediations, it is also a space to investigate the multiple and various mapping practices of Bourdain's narrative.

In order to capture the city, we often need to isolate the city. The potential to once again create an essentialist view of the city presents itself, not dissimilar to the view from above. However, using food to trace the contours of the city, Bourdain also subverts these potentially static urban visions. Considering the historicity of the Spanish-American colonial city, Jay Kinsbruner states “what fundamentally distinguishes the urban settlement is that the economy is centered in nonagricultural activities” (2005, 2-3). In this description, what defines the city is its relation to food. The urban is the space where food is brought in, and the rural is the space where food is cultivated. This also reflects the development of many early cities, as cities had to consider how food was brought in, i.e. streets for bringing in livestock, and the center

as a place for markets. Contemporarily, we often think of cities like New York, Paris, or Hong Kong as being “foodie” havens, as the cultural scene is not only dictated by art and music, but by fine dining and gastro-pubs. Perhaps, then if we were going to find a network or trace of the city/ non-city, that both historically and contemporary defines the city, food would be it. The non-city as the space of cultivation, the city as the space of culture. But both in its travels and in its consumption, food remains liminal. Therefore, we might also ask how does food blur or sharpen the definition of the city? The interactions between food and cities reveal the increasing globalizing structures of capital and gastro-economies, but what does this additionally say about our desire to go to, move through, and consume the city?

In the city market, the transitory social relations of different geographies, both the rural and urban are indicated simultaneously. For one such example, we can look Bourdain’s interactions with chef, Tomas Rueda in one of the central markets in Bogotá, Colombia.

The camera zooms to Tony-as-image within a crowd as people move around him. His face pale. Bourdain-as-narrator states, “Did I mention that this city is over 8,000 feet up?” Its back to Tony-as-image following Tomas who is talking expressively with his one A butcher gets selects a hunk of meat from the bright red hanging slabs for a customer. Tony-as-image remarks, “This place is huge.” A woman grinds something into a juicer. “You want some juice?” Chef Tomas asks as he and Tony-as-image approach the counter, with yellow, red, orange, green and pink containers line the front. “Yes. What do you have?” “A large bowl of limes. One is already being juiced. “I love orange juice with carrots.” A plate of large skinned carrots. Music continuing all the while orange liquid is juiced and sifted into a clear, plastic cup. The gentlemen are served their beverages as they sit on stools surrounded by the greenery of herbs and produce. They both take a drink as Tony-as-image says, “It's probably the healthiest thing I've had in a while.” “Good for the high altitude.” “Yes.” “This is better?” People continue to shop around them, moving through the green and colored backdrop of the market. “I'm feeling better every hour.” “Yes?” “The first hour is killing me.” “But you have a better face.” “I didn't think I was going to make it out of the airport.” Tomas laughs. “Most of the mornings, early in the mornings, 5:00 to 6:00 in the morning, I

climb the mountain.” “Why?” “Fresh air.” “OK.” “You have to come with me.” “Hell no. Ain't happening.” (described from Freeman 2013, 12:31-14:14)

This scene in Bogotá indicates the fluid articulations between urbanity and rural, through the interactions of the market itself. As both a contemporary and historical site, the market is a space where the rural meets the urban. But because the market is an integral part of the social relations, consumptions, and productions of the city itself, the lines dividing the two cannot so easily be separated.

In Bogotá, the city's geography is connected to the mountain landscape. The urban body is articulated in rural spaces, e.g. Tomas hikes the mountain as part of a morning ritual. Neither the city, nor the surrounding landscapes are necessarily separate in this scene: each is articulated in the other, as each exists as part of the lived experience of the other. This is only further inscribed by the oscillating images of flowers, greenery, and produce interspersed with signs of the 'modern' glass structures, vehicles, and capital. The city itself is only situated where it is as it is also a part of the landscape, as indicated by Bourdain's embodied reaction to the high altitude of the place. Bourdain's sickness, as he walks and moves through the city spaces of the market, laced with produce and flowers, also marks and embodies the topography of the region. The city becomes the space that bodies, capital, and landscapes are all mapped out. We could just as easily flip this mediation and see how the rural maps out the urban spaces and the urban bodies. The easiness of Tomas and the uneasiness of Tony in the altitude of the city additionally says much about the lifeworlds of each within the city, which we might describe as untranslatable differences (more on this in the next section). Often television makes the host appear at "home" or "not out of place" in the city of the Other, but in this example Tony-as-image is made strange and very much out of place. His own body is untranslatable, and his position as "guest" is

made explicit. As noted before, the authorial voice of Bourdain-as-narrator also helps to make this discomfort and out-of-placeness explicit.

Later in the episode, Tomas and Tony-as-image sit down again to have dinner at Tomas' restaurant. Discussing the up-in-coming restaurant scene in Colombia, Tomas explains:

It's a new stuff, it's a new business, it's a new world. There's two great bodies from Colombia food, the mixture of the culture, yes?, and follows it with this answer, "Black people, Indian people, white people. That mixture is beautiful. And the other one is all of this region of the mountains, all the valleys, all the rivers, all the sea, we are like a big farm, a beautiful farm to send all these products to the world. I believe more in a beautiful carrot than a great recipe, yes? (Freeman 2013, 21:43-22:22).

Tomas' idea of sending food all over the world should not just be taken as a passing fantasy of an individual. Diversification of food and access to various gastro-geographical contact zones are now realities of development and globalization. Jane Jacobs notes of the historical expansion of Tokyo in the late 1950's, that "Tokyo's expanding solvent markets for new and different imports opened up, in its own city region, practical possibilities for crop diversification," as "people in Shinohata found they could make good money for things never in demand from them before: table peaches, grapes, tomatoes, ornamental shrubs and trees for city gardens, and oak mushrooms, a delicacy commanding a very high price in the city...Diversification had a side effect on local diets" (1985, 49-50). In both Jacob's and Tomas's examples, as cities change, so does the food within the city change. The changed diets, tastes, and capital surrounding food in the city is, likewise, indicative of larger political orders. Food, like the city, is also a mediation between near and far orders.

Heldke chooses the term "cultural food colonialism" to describe her own awareness of her appetite for "ethnic foods." As she writes, "I could not deny that I was motivated by a deep desire to have contact with, and to somehow own an

experience of, an Exotic Other, as a way of making myself more interesting,” and how “cultural colonialism helped to support and normalize economic colonialism,” as she writes about being able to eat Mexican strawberries in January (2003, xvi). Perhaps, there is a connection between our increasing desires to consume diverse foods (if I might not say ‘diversity’ proper), to finding pleasure in watching Others eat. The city is not the only gastro-geographical assemblage where the desire to consume the Other is met, it is also a part of our globalized lives. But the city does help elucidate the mimetic articulations and mediations of the near order and far order which allow these desires to be satisfied. Food is a part of the social relations of the city. It is therefore an identifying marker of urbanity, but it is also, through the relations of production, capable of blurring any thread that would also attempt to define the city as a coherent, bounded entity. This includes the example of a carrot, which according to Tomas is as much a facet of cosmopolitanism, and has the subsequent right to cross borders, as the different ethnicized bodies that make up the city. Therefore, even in the very potential of essentializing the city, Bourdain’s narrative simultaneously subverts and blurs these particular cosmopolitan boundaries.

The Cosmopolitan (Bourdain) as Map: Hue

Although a myriad of topics and conversations, both radically personal and political, are introduced in *Parts Unknown*, Bourdain is always the revolving, ever-present focal point of the narrative, the structure, and the camera – and if we consider his role as producer, the production of an episode. Therefore, the other bodies that are presented on the screen are not only translated by a produced narrative, they are translated by their relation to Bourdain. Bourdain, then, if we are to talk about representations of the everyday, makes these representations and positions possible by his own association. Bourdain is a translation machine. We read and see the world through his worldview.

De Certeau states that “[i]n translation, analyses that an author would faintly believe universal are trace back to nothing more than the expression of local or — as it almost begins to seem— exotic experience...within the bounds imposed by another language and another culture, the art of translation smuggles in a thousand inventions which, before the author’s dazzled eyes, transform his book into a new creation” (2013, ix). In the act of translation, the text is made “new,” indicating not only the fluid, unstable differences of language, but for our purposes here, the instability and fallible notion of re-presentation in general (De Certeau is obviously not the first to make this observation on language nor on representation). The act of translation can make the common seem strange or exotic. Bourdain additionally, working as a translation machine, functions to translate the exotic into the common.

Although Jacques Derrida’s theory of hospitality has helped to frame the discussion of Bourdain as host and guest thus far, this section will more overtly turn to Bourdain’s position in the city as the guest-as-foreigner. As discussed thus far, Bourdain’s cosmopolitan narrative invites the desire for the ethni(C)ity. It also questions it. It locates the geographic contours of the city, as it also blurs them. This section will overtly look at the limitations of both the cosmopolitan and on-screen representations. In thinking about the guest-as-foreigner, Derrida posits in *Of Hospitality*, that “[a]mong the serious problems we are dealing with here is that of the foreigner who, inept at speaking the language, always risks being without defense before the law of the country that welcomes or exiles him” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000, 15). In terms of language, the dominant language for the Bourdain’s show is English (with subtitles or translators when necessary). However, Bourdain-as-foreigner does not have exactly the same language problem that Derrida identifies. Or, perhaps it is better stated that he is made to *appear* to have the same problem. Everything seems to be translatable by the time it reaches the screen. Derrida recalls the two Latin

derivations for foreigner, *hostis*, which could mean “welcomed as guest or as enemy. Hospitality, hostility, *hospitality*” (45). When do the images around the screen invoke hospitality or hostility within the cosmopolitan’s representation?

One instance of the lack of language comes in the absence of ordering food, as seen in the Vietnam episode:

Tony-as-Image rides his white bike down the street, “I’ve been all over Vietnam,” passing street vendors and tables, “a place I feel a special connection to.” Another street stall, a woman dishes food from a large silver pot, yellow fabric drapes between wooden beams, as a single industrial light emits yellow light. “My first love,” garlic sautés in black pan, “a place I remain besotted with, fascinated by.” The camera looks up to a woman in a red shirt string the pan. Tony-as-image then appears sitting down at one of the street vendors, the contrast of the lights are bright. He is sitting alone. Looking at the camera, Tony-as-Image states, “[s]o back in Vietnam, one of my favorite places on earth. And all of the things I need for happiness. Little plastic stool, check. Tiny little plastic table, check.” A woman comes into the screen. Tony-as-image briefly looks up, makes a brief motion as if he would say something to her, but then back to the camera, “Ooh.”... Images of motorbikes driving in the street, I’m back. Back in Vietnam.” Bourdain-as-Image looking down and smiling, “shit-eating grin for the duration.” Moving chopsticks around in the bowl, “a giddy, silly, foolish man beyond caring,” as Tony-as-image continues to eat, states, “and a cold local beer. My preferred brand, in every way. Ah. Clams with pork cracklings. How could that not be good? This is the way so many of the great meals of my life have been enjoyed. Sitting in the street, eating something out of a bowl that I’m not exactly sure what it is. Scooters going by. So delicious. I feel like an animal. Where have you been all my life? Fellow travelers, this is what you want. This is what you need. This is the path to true happiness and wisdom.” The camera pans out to another angle of Tony-as-image taking a long drink of beer, as music plays, he gets up leaves. (described from Selkow 2014, ~1:50-4:39)

Although we see Bourdain-as-image driving around the city before his dinner on the small, red, plastic table, there appears to be no destination, other than the experience of the city itself. This is further articulated by the fact that there is no transition between the bike ride and sitting down at one of the street vendors. The scene transitions with the help of the disembodied voice of Bourdain-as-narrator, the screen’s all-pervasive host. This seems appropriate, given that what we miss by the lack of transition of Tony-

as-image is the process of ordering. Thus, the host in the scene is unquestionably Bourdain, as the would-be host as the street-stall vendor is absent in the ritual interaction of ordering. Tony-as-image is already sitting down when the scene transitions, already assuming hospitality.

What is also not conveyed by the lack of interaction of the order is the issue of language. This seems to be only further articulated by the fact that Bourdain-as-image doesn't know exactly what he is eating – although Bourdain-as-narrator already seems to and can explain in detail, which further emphasizes the role of host in the post-production process. But the not-knowing seems to simulate the language barrier, again, an interaction of which is missing, and is here played out by the unfamiliar bowl of food. It is this untranslatable bowl of food which is presented as “true happiness and wisdom” for the traveler. But what should the traveler exactly take as true happiness and wisdom? To accept the position of ignorance and fulfillment from untranslatable food? Or, to accept the position of assumed hospitality without concern for translation, because your desires will be satisfied regardless? These questions approach the liminal space of such a global table, that the global table is a little red table and plastic chair, where we don't know what we're eating or how to say “thank you”, but that hospitality is already assumed, finding pleasure in the global city. Therefore, even as food, television, the screen, the city, and the cosmopolitan mediate and at times subvert instances of essentialization, there must also be times when these mediations cycle back confirm the very things they would otherwise subvert. That is, even though those very features of the show which help to subvert reified images, including a self-reflexive narrator and a subject matter that highlights the complex life and interactions of individuals (food), at times the show is limited by the production of the show itself.

Conclusion: Oscillating Limitations of a Global Table

Ananya Roy writes of Calcutta that a “world-class city” as an icon is better understood “as more than a fetish, as more than a commodity-on-display or a commodity-in-circulation,” (2003, 260). Instead, she conceptualizes the “world-class city as a phantasmagoria, the dream world of postcolonial development. Yet, this phantasmagoria is also a ‘dialectical image,’ containing within it the radical potential of disenchantment and critique” (2003, 260). The dialectical images presented on the screen of both the city and the cosmopolitan and also contain the possibility of both disenchantment and critique. The distance and proximity of a city are always oscillating. The screen also becomes a mediating point, a discursive map of near and far order. It is a mediation of mediation. As each one of these mediations: screen, city, Bourdain, already functions in oscillations and mediations, then so too do their possibilities for subversion or resistance in the consumption of the Other. Each both allows and limits hospitality. The city, the screen, and Bourdain are all locations/positions of hospitality and cosmopolitanism. It is the consumption of food both literally and through visual modes which help to define these relations of condition of guest and host. At times, these geographical relations allow us to question and critique our assumed relations with each Other. At other times, they reaffirm the cosmopolitan’s assumed right to the city.

Bourdain’s image on-screen confirms the cosmopolitan’s already-extended invitation “to come,” “to experience,” “to consume,” that it might also provide a space to critique such a position, by finding alternative positions around the liminal, global table. As the cosmopolitan already has this invitation, Bourdain’s renewal of his privileged position is also a re-tracing of this performance. As re-tracing reveals difference within repetition, the possibility emerges of different rituals, different patterns of *how to eat the city*. I suggest that such possibility emerges in the reflexive

split between Bourdain-as-Image and Bourdain-as-Narrative. These two split personalities of the cosmopolitan within the ethni(C)ity, are more productive if followed within diffracted articulations. As Karen Barad, suggests “diffraction is not only a lively affair, but one that troubles dichotomies, including some of the most sedimented and stabilized/stabilizing binaries, such as organic/ inorganic and animate/inanimate,” and in this case, I position guest/host, hospitality/ hostility (2014, 168). The diffraction of the narrator’s voice is sometimes needed to question, to situate, and pose doubt for both Bourdain’s own experience and those watching. Likewise, it is sometimes the proximity of his own image in the lifeworlds of others that indicate the vast complexity and untranslatability of the Other.

Finally, within all of these diffracted positions emerging in the city and the city-on-screen, I suggest that a new conceptualization of “the table,” the mediated space between the guest and host, is needed. The table has historically been the space where the social, cultural, and political rituals of hospitality, consumption, and hierarchies are performed. What might this space now look like in the ever contested space-time articulations between the city, the screen, the individual, and food? “Table”, additionally, invokes a Western-Euro-centric materiality of hospitality and dining, as opposed to a number of shared arrangements of food and bodies. However, the fluid, ever-changing, articulated space that is more analogous of the street vendor might hold a more accurate representation of the diffracted table that is a space of mediation and encounter, within a global-becoming-unbecoming world. The three cities investigated included different understandings, therefore, of “street food,” including, at times, when the city itself is consumed through street views and skylines. At the cosmopolitan’s table, both subversive and essentializing views of the city are always possible.

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