Food Networks, Place, and Identity: Semiosis in the Menus of Selected Restaurants in Baguio City

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, I argue that rather than merely a physical or geographic location, "place" is that locus of encounter which enables new or alternative representations. Place and, being "in place," allow individuals and communities to claim a presence in history, as opposed to absence in it, in the effort to countervail the de-historicizing, hegemonic imperatives of globalization. I examine the politics that engender a "sense of place" by drawing from semiotics or sign theory to reconceptualize both the notions of politics and place themselves. I analyze how the menus of three selected Baguio restaurants show a fecund and volatile terrain of encounter between the global and the local, where various strategies are deployed in the continuing and oppositional local projects of place-making and identity constructions. Striking similarities characterize the manner in which these restaurants present themselves through their menus, which all offer narratives of self-representation. With these narratives and their "semiosis" (sign-production and -circulation) about local history, culture, and cuisines, these restaurants are able to root themselves in the sphere of the local even as they are compelled to participate in the discourse of the global.

Keywords: tourism, glocalization, place, agency, pop culture, local history, spatial turn, semiosis, menus

Tourism has grown into what is arguably the world's largest industry, which retails different experiences, locales, and cultures as its primary "product" for consumption. Food as a commodity has been acknowledged as a potent driving force of tourism. In the Philippines, for example, food tours designed, quite literally, to give the tourist a taste of the local culture and history have become increasingly popular. The ubiquity of "listicles" [1] that enumerate and

describe top dining options in various locales testifies to the "role of gastronomy and culinary traditions to sustain, and at times, even to initiate tourism" (Parasecoli 2008, 128).

Avenues for the exercise of agency in the local sphere are made possible by glocalization processes, which open up opportunities for "local motion," or "place-bound tactics," including the reclamation of place in global space (Wilson and Dissinayake 2000, 5). Like all other tourist destinations, Baguio City is imbricated in the architectonic of capitalism as the "cultural dominant," and not just as the hegemonic political economy, of the contemporary world. Such situatedness forces Baguio as a locale to confront a gamut of challenges from external forces.

This essay seeks to demonstrate the manner of local engagements with global forces by examining "artifacts" of local popular culture, here defined as "any form of cultural phenomenon, material item, practice, social relation, and even idea that is conceived, produced, distributed, and consumed within a market-driven economy" (Parasecoli 2008, 4). In *Bite Me: Food and Popular Culture*, Fabio Parasecoli asserts:

> We can interpret pop culture as an all-embracing signifying network that includes elements such as values, practices, ideas, and objects whose meaning is defined by their reciprocal influence within the network as a whole and by the negotiations taking place among its users. (2008, 10)

Through a semiotic reading of the menus of selected Baguio restaurants, this essay explores how Baguio is represented as place for locals and tourists, and with the discourse of tourism in view, charts the possibilities for the exercise of agency in a "politics of place." The menus of three selected restaurants along Baguio's Session road, as nodal entry points, show a fecund and volatile terrain of encounter between the global and the local, where various strategies are deployed and refunctioned in the continuing and oppositional local projects of place-making and identity constructions.

Semiotic and Space/Place Studies

Semiotics has long been acknowledged as a productive and generative tool in the study of popular culture. According to Roland Barthes, a semiotic approach

> ….aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of

> ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification. (1967, 9)

For him, the pursuit of signs directs attention to the process by which, as individual markers, objects or artifacts, and the functional units of texts, construct, inflect, and negotiate meaning/s, all contingent on the semiological system, myth, code, or ideologies that condition them. The text, he adds, is a "methodological field.… experienced only in an activity of production" (Barthes 1967, 157). When the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure foresaw and foretold a general science of signs for our times, to which he gave the name Semiology (eventually modernized as semiotics), its applicability to the examination of a variety of texts became conceivable, as signs and sign-systems were consequently understood to be not limited to those of the linguistic or verbal kind. All and many forms of cultural production, spanning an entire range from fashion to food, could—as they now do—constitute the object of semiotic study.

As Maasik and Solomon elaborate on the politics of semiosis:

> It was Barthes….who established the political dimensions of semiotic analysis. Often, the subject of a semiotic analysis…. doesn't look political at all….In our society politics has become something of a dirty word, and to politicize something seems somehow to contaminate it.
>
> But Barthes's point—and the point of semiotics in general—is that all social behavior is political in the sense that it reflects some subjective or group interest. Such interests are encoded in the ideologies that express the values and opinions of those who hold them. Politics, then, is just another name for the clash of ideologies that takes place in any complex society where the interests of all those who belong to it constantly compete with one another. (2012, 10-11)

There is no single prescribed entry point into texts in semiotic studies. Any cultural artifact can be regarded as a congeries of signs operating within a semiological field, and, as such, may serve as the object of critical investigations into the processes of signification involved to reveal the collusion and/or clash of the ideologies at play in the "text" and its contexts.

Developments relating to the spatial turn in critical discourse have brought about a broader and more dynamic concept of "place," which expands the idea of geographic locale and transcends the notion of stasis and "boundedness." In *An Introduction to Political Geography: Space, Place and Politics* (2004), Michael Jones et al. note that "[landscapes] are not just assemblages of natural and manufactured

objects….[but] full of soul, cultural and political meaning" (Jones 2004, 116). By extension, "artifacts" of the various elements found in the physical landscape may contain subtle and sedimentary limnings of associated psychic, socio- economic, and cultural landscapes.

Tim Cresswell writes:

> Place is the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an *a priori* label of identity. Place provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice. Place, in this sense, becomes an event rather than a secure ontological thing rooted in notions of the authentic. Place is an event marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence. (2004, 39)

New definitions of "place" in contemporary cultural geographical studies develop the idea of a "terrain" as discursive ground, evidenced in the discourse of glocalization, for example, where place-making and identity constructions conjure continuous negotiations between being and becoming, stability and flux, "roots and routes." The field is thereby made fallow for a theorization of agency in global-national-local encounters where "the constructedness of space may be struggled over and claimed, rather than being 'just there' or 'given'" (Johnson et al. 2004, 110). These engagements, more than a reductive recourse to the dead-end stasis of romanticisms in the impossible search for an essentialist grounding, constitute a politics engendering a "sense of place."

Place and, being "in place," allow individuals and communities to claim historicity (i.e. a "grounding"/presence in history, as opposed to absence in it and, therefore, ahistoricity) and to countervail de-historicizing, hegemonic imperatives of globalization or other externally-imposed and ordering/dominant discourses. Rather than merely a physical or geographic location, "place" is that locus of encounter which makes possible the production of new or alternative representations—a politics of place. This politics involves contestations and rearticulations of meanings which have accrued and solidified around a given place in the course of its history (Jones et al. 2004, 113).

"Local Motion" and Politics of Place in Session Road's Alternative Food Network

The ubiquity of shopping malls in the Philippines and in the postmodern world signifies the relentless march and global expansion of the neo-colonial capitalist project. The mall as "cultural artefact of globalization" illustrates for many Cultural Studies

scholars the power that the global now exercises over the local. But in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (2000 [1996]), Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissinayake contend that the "march of the global" need not be regarded as a monologic discourse of absolute western supremacy. The essays included in this volume expound on the processes that reconfigure the relationships between the local and the global to reveal alternative possibilities for critically construing global-local encounters. Here, rather than binaries engaged in a "Manichean struggle" where the local, perceived as the weaker term, is eventually sublated in the more dominant/potent discourse of the global, Wilson and Dissinayake note that "[we] need not posit the global/local in some endlessly binary master/slave opposition in which the 'merely' local is undone, insignificant or displaced by a 'binary machine' logic sustaining the dominant discourses of social science or political economy" (6). In this connection, and with pertinence to the dynamic between malls and restaurants that I examine below, Rodrigo Salcedo, in the essay "When the Global meets the Local at the Mall," points out that:

> When malls in other countries are examined, it becomes clear that they are the outcome of "glocalization" processes that combine the post-Fordist logic of mass production and consumption with local, political, social, and cultural influences that introduce significant variation. (2003, 1084-85)

The megamall ShoeMart (SM) in Baguio's central business district began operations in 2003, to the clear detriment of home-grown establishments situated along the city's main thoroughfare. Session Road's business enterprises struggled to keep up with the stiff competition posed by the mall. By 2011, the only remaining "old Baguio" establishments were five restaurants (Star Cafe (since 1940); Sunshine Lunch (1950s); Luisa's Cafe (1970s); Mandarin Restaurant (1975); Sizzling Plate (1970s)), a bookstore (CID bookstore, ca. 1945); and a hardware store (Northlander, ca.1960s). The bookstore and the hardware store continue to do business to date but, of the restaurants, only Sizzling Plate and Luisa's Cafe survived, with the other three terminating operations in 2013 and 2014.

Initially, perhaps in an attempt to recover their status as major players in the local and national economy, certain home-grown businesses chose to open outlets at SM. Quite a few of them, however, eventually closed their SM branches, and opted instead to retain the original branches, or relocated elsewhere in the city. Growing disenchantment in Baguio over what SM has come to represent for the city partly explains these branch closures or abortive revivals.

Among these are the local restaurants Tea House and Volante, which streamlined their business operations to their Session Road outlets as business remained brisk for them. In the case of the latter, new branches have been established in two other regular tourist destinations in Baguio City—John Hay and Wright Park.

Figure 1. Hill Station Tapas Bar and Restaurant (top, left), Jack's Restaurant (top, right); and O'Mai Khan Restaurant (bottom) on Session Road.

Casa Vallejo, dating back to the American colonial period in Baguio's history and one the last surviving heritage structures from that era, houses Hill Station Tapas Bar and Restaurant. Jack's Restaurant, owned by a local Cordillera businessman, had its beginnings in the nearby municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet. And O'Mai Khan Restaurant, originally located along Otek street, beside the city hall and Rizal Park to the west of Baguio's famous Burnham Park, is now relocated to its permanent site on Session Road extension. These restaurants have become prominent fixtures in Baguio's culinary landscape. Initial examination reveals perceptible similarities among them, providing the basis for their selection as objects for the analysis. First, they are all located along the city's main and most famous thoroughfare; second, all these restaurants have, in recent years, become favorite alternative dining destinations for both locals and tourists on the culinary trail and who are chary of the usual SM establishments; and third, their popularity has allowed

them to resist the pull of the mall, with no need for them to open and maintain SM branches.

More, even striking, similarities characterize the manner in which these restaurants present themselves to the dining public through their menus, which all deploy narratives in their self-representation. With these narratives, these restaurants are able to root themselves in the sphere of the local even as they are compelled to participate in the discourse of the global.

Figure 2. Hill Station Restaurant Menu.

The Hill Station menu summons official history in its emplacement of the restaurant in the "glocal." As the text in Figure 2 recounts:

> Drawn to the pleasant climes of the mountain regions in tropical Asia, Europeans came in the colonial periods of the 18th and 19th centuries [and] established hill stations (Boxed item 1: left page, center left).
>
> From India to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam, little towns were carved out of the mountainside as places of rest and recreation. Baguio was one of the last hill stations established in Asia during the American colonial period in the Philippines (Boxed item 2: left page, bottom right).
>
> When the American government in 1909 was building up Baguio City, the hired workers stayed in Casa Vallejo, then known

> as "Dormitory No. 4." It had sawali partitions inside and wood and galvanized iron on the outside (Boxed item 3: left page, top right).
>
> In 1928, Casa Vallejo was leased to Salvador Vallejo, a Spaniard who came with the Spanish Army at the turn of the century married here [and] never left. He renovated the building and opened Vallejo Hotel. Our small function room, perfect for meetings, is named after its founder (Boxed item 4: right page, top right).
>
> Hill Station's grand function room, with its own pocket garden, is named after his daughter, Justina Vallejo Garcia, who ran the hotel for close to 50 years (Boxed item 5: right page, bottom left).
>
> Hill station offers you robust dishes that blend the spicy flavors of Asia's mountain towns with the tastes of Old World Europe and New World America, Here in our creations, these three worlds fuse harmoniously. (Boxed item 6: right page, bottom right)

At the outset, a genealogy is established, allowing the restaurant to enact an initial stake and claim on place, both in local (Baguio) as well as global (world) history [Boxed Items 1 to 3] through a myth of origins that gains authority on the basis of time lapsed and colonial history. With the addition of the text presented in the fourth boxed item and the reference to a specific personality [Boxed item 4], greater particularity to the genealogy, as well as a further claim to authenticity, is accomplished. The intricacy of the global/local positioning is also further illustrated by this figure of a "local-foreigner," Salvador Vallejo, "a Spaniard who came at the turn of the century.…married here and never left." Boxed items 5 and 6 continue this narrative of evolution to the present day to make a claim upon place, and emplacement, on the authority of provenance, in a narrative of continuity between past and present, global and local. Here, the positionality established by the text corroborates the idea that

> "…the local need not embody a regressive politics of global delinkage, bounded particularity, and ontological pastness, where locality becomes some backward-gazing fetish of purity to disguise how global, hybrid, compromised, and unprotected everyday identity is. Globalization, paradoxically, has led to a strengthening of local ties, allegiances, and identity politics within different nation-state formations….(Wilson and Dissinayake 2000, 5)

Images culled from Baguio's past are interspersed throughout the *text*, which evoke memories of what Baguio writer Linda Grace Cariño refers to as the "gentler days," that idyllic and ideal past when life seemed simpler and less complicated than what residents face in the present. Black and white, and sepia-toned, photographs accompany the boxed texts and contribute to the nostalgia for lost innocence that is outwardly projected, with the deleterious effects of colonization downplayed in the interest of conjuring a decidedly romantic past, a prime commodity in the tourism industry. Hill Station is troped as that imaginary world of leisure, rest, and rejuvenation embedded in a comforting image of Baguio's "gentler days." With this selective manipulation of "certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way," as Edward Said once put it, "memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful" (2000, 179).

With the ethos of the restaurant's name in mind, the menu, upon close examination, echoes the leisurely rhythms evoked in summoning the nostalgia for an ideal and idyllic past. The classic hill stations recipes, on one hand, reveal complicity with the discourse of consumerist tourism around the exotic as feature and fetish and, on the other hand, invite critical regard as a site of resistance against such cultural reductionism. Here, description of the dishes foreground the careful choice of ingredients and meticulous preparation procedures (e.g. overnight marination of ingredients, slow cooking, special blend of exotic spices), articulating "a coherent and structured heritage that often plays an important role in the definition of the identity" (Parasecoli 2008, 135), and enacting resistance to the global in the temporal sphere.

Globalization has been characterized as coupled with a mania for speed, evidenced by the proliferation of fast food culture and consumption. In food studies, this culture of speed finds opposition in the rise and spread of the Slow Food movement. The Slow Food movement manifesto reads:

> We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the insidious virus: Fast life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat fast foods…May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency. Our defense should begin at the table with Slow Food. Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of fast food. (Bonili et al. 1987,1; quoted in Parasecoli 2008, 138)

The local/regional wrests time from the global and sets the pace, if not disrupts, or at the very least, interrupts, its rhythms.

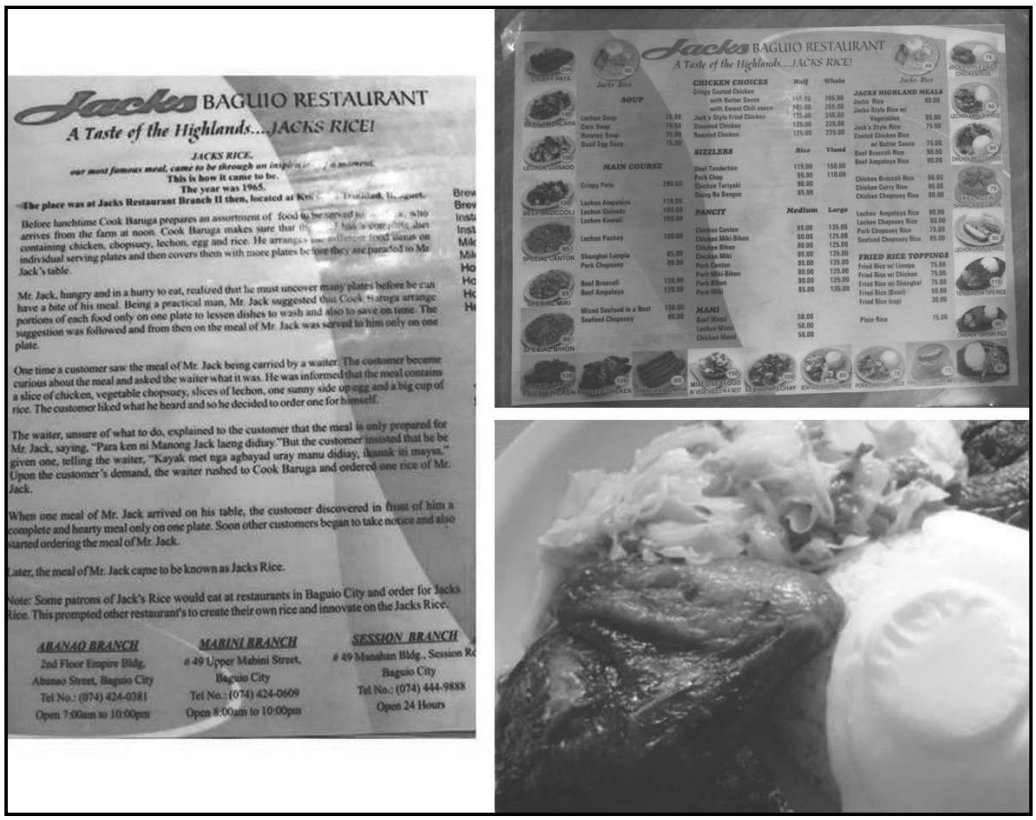

Figure 3. Jack's Restaurant Menu and Jack's Rice.

Jack's Restaurant is arguably the fastest-growing Cordillera-owned restaurant chain with branches in La Trinidad, Benguet, four branches in Baguio City, and an outlet in Dagupan City, Pangasinan. The "local" has expanded its terrain to include other locales. A biographical narrative of the restaurant owner outlines his humble origins and eventual success as an entrepreneur. In the course of the narration, the origins of the eponymous best-selling item on the menu, Jack's Rice, is revealed.

As the menu tells the story, with charm, in strains of recognizably local or Baguio English:

> Jack's Rice, our most famous meal, came to be through an inspiration of a moment.
>
> This is how it came to be.
> The year was 1965. The place was at Jack's Restaurant Branch 2, then located at Km. 6, La Trinidad, Benguet.
>
> Before lunchtime, Cook Baruga prepares an assortment to be served to Mr. Jack, who arrives from the farm at noon. Cook Baruga makes sure that the meal has a complete diet containing chicken, chopsuey, lechon, egg, and rice. He arranges the individual food

items on individual serving plates and then covers them with more plates before they are paraded to Mr. Jack's Table.

Mr. Jack, hungry and in a hurry to eat, realized that he must uncover many plates before he can have a bite of his meal. Being a practical man, Mr. Jack suggested that Cook Baruga arrange portions of each food only on one plate to lessen dishes to wash and also to serve on time. The suggestion was followed and from then on, the meal of Mr. Jack was served to him only on one plate.

One time, a customer saw the meal of Mr. Jack being carried by a waiter. The customer became curious about the meal and asked the waiter what it was. He was informed that the meal contains a slice of chicken, vegetable chop suey, slices of lechon, one sunny side up egg, and a big cup of rice. The customer liked what he heard and so decided to order one for himself.

The waiter, unsure of what to do, explained to the customer that the meal is only prepared for Mr. Jack, saying, "*Para kini Mr. Jack laeng didiay*." But the customer insisted that he be given one, telling the waiter, "*Kayak met nga agbayad uray manu didiay, ikanak iti maysa*."[3] Upon the customer's demand, the waiter rushed to Cook Baruga and ordered one rice of Mr. Jack.

When the meal arrived in Mr. Jack's table, the customer discovered in front of him a complete and hearty meal only on one plate. Soon, other customers began to take notice and also began ordering the meal of Mr. Jack.

Later on, the meal of Mr. Jack came to be known as Jack's Rice.

Like the Hill Station narrative, the claim to place here is made through a similar strategy of historicity and particularity in a narrative of origins and genealogy. But what is different in this case is the invocation of contemporarity (the world of the here and now), rather than nostalgia. The owner, Mr. Jack appears as a "practical man," whose actions express a realistic, no-nonsense, attitude.

While the menu guarantees "a taste of the highlands" with a Jack's Rice meal, an examination of the meal's contents will reveal nothing patently Cordilleran about them. Indeed, the menu of "highlander" fare offers an array of Filipino (not particularly Cordilleran), Chinese, and international cuisines, acquainting the diner with the restaurant's dishes through photographs that border the menu's listings, similar to the point-and-pick presentation and selection strategies in fast food outlets. As the menu's narrative relates, in a mimicry of fast food culture that also critiques it, the customer (who may be as much in a hurry as Mr. Jack), discovers, upon ordering Jack's Rice, "a complete and hearty meal only on

one plate." Food can be served fast, but unlike fast food, Jack's is nutritionally fulsome and not detrimental to one's health.

One feature of a Jack's restaurant branch is quite telling; it suggests that local culture, rather than an object to be preserved for the purposes of touristic consumption can be subject and open to dynamic innovation. The present-day Cordillera entrepreneur has now domesticated the global arena of business marketing, critically appropriating the strategies at work in it. Figure 5 includes an image of Jack's playland in one branch, reminiscent of the McDonald's playlands found in many of the fast food chain's franchise outlets. Popular articles in various local and national dailies have quoted Mr. Jack's confirmation that his business expansion is guided primarily by the goal of "[providing an] alternative to McDonalds" for both Cordillera and non-Cordillera customers.

The restaurant's disregard for the impulse to "go native" with the fare offered in the restaurant's menu effects an "inclusionary move" wherein the local cleaves a place for itself in discourses of the global, and claims a measure of potency through this virtual declaration of sameness (ergo, equality) in positioning, in the larger sphere.

Here, the local emerges as a product of social relations in what might be called a network of locality. Well-known in the local business community, he runs business ventures that range from agriculture to auto repair. Ingredients for food prepared at the restaurants are sourced from both the farms owned and run by the owner, as well as local organic farms affiliated with an organization called Benguet Network of Development-Oriented POs. Inc. The restaurant's branch in the nearby municipality of La Trinidad also serves as an outlet for the produce of these local organic growers. Its established and participatory position in the locale imbues Jack's Restaurant with the aura of the local; and with the restaurant's namesake so firmly embedded in the community, staking a claim upon place through one's ethnicity is here deemed superfluous. Accordingly, for another example, the Filipino-Chinese-International cuisine that his restaurant offers receives almost automatic acceptance as "local" food. In a related critical point made by Parasecoli:

> We have to consider also other political connotations of the concept of "local" that are increasingly relevant in Western societies and that connect local with "just," "sustainable," "organic," and such. For certain categories of consumers, the fact that their consumption choices can have an impact on the social and political arrangements of their communities increases their sense of involvement in the production and distribution issues. Interestingly, freshness and taste are often not the highest priorities for these consumers. However, initiatives such as cooperatives of

> farmers and consumers, community-supported agriculture, and organic produce markets are adding new political meaning to the concept of local as opposed to national and international, in a framework that opposes "big business" to "human relations," "democracy" to "control," "participation" to "passivity." (2008, 139–140)

Like the foregoing cases, O' Mai Khan's menu narrative invokes a myth of origins in the self-representation of this popular restaurant, although certain features distinguish its narrative from those of the other two. The menu narrative ludically launches off on a homonymy that can elude "insiders"unfamiliar with the local referents:

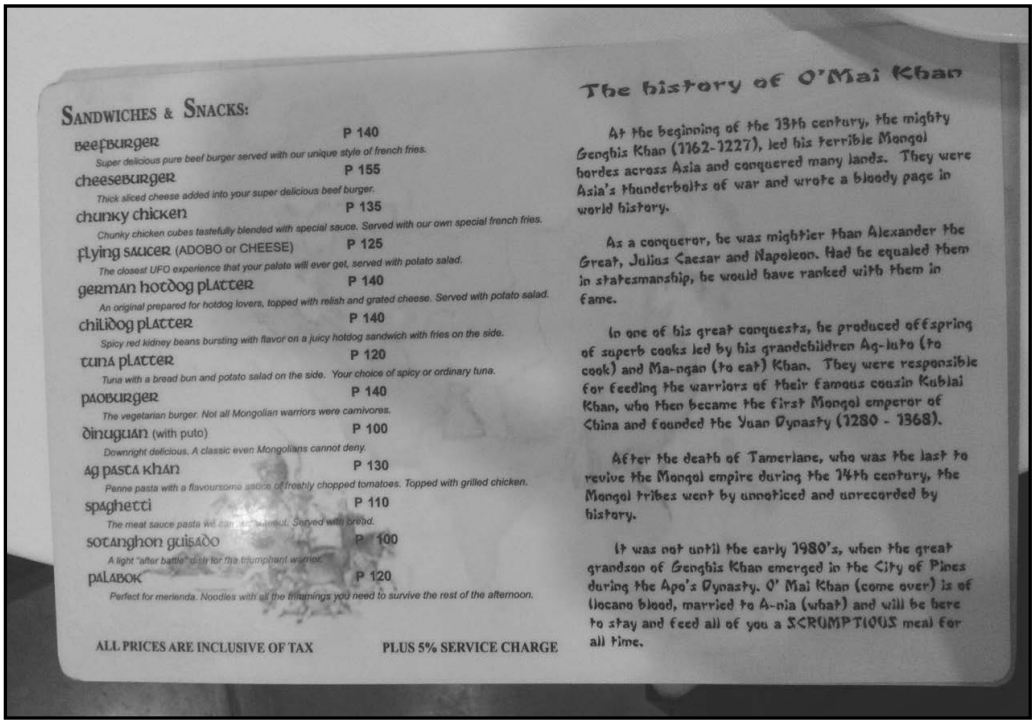

Figure 4. O' Mai Khan Menu and Mongolian Spread.

The History of O' Mai Khan

At the Beginning of the 13th century, the mighty Genghis Khan (1162-1227), led his terrible Mongol hordes across Asia and conquered many lands. They were Asia's thunderbolts of war and wrote a bloody page in world history.

As a conqueror, he was mightier than Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon. Had he equalled them in statesmanship he would have ranked with them in fame.

In one of his conquests, he produced offspring of superb cooks led by his children Ag-luto (to cook) and Ma-ngan (to eat) Khan. They were responsible for feeding the warriors of their famous

> cousin Kublai Khan, who then became the first Mongol emperor of China and founded the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1638).
>
> After the death of Tamerlane who was the last to revive the Mongol empire during the 14th century, the Mongol tribes went by unnoticed and unrecorded by history.
>
> It was not until the early 1980s that the great grandson of Genghis Khan emerged in the city of Pines during the Apo's Dynasty. O'Mai Khan (come over) is of Ilocano blood, married to A-nia (what) and will be here to stay and feed all of you a SCRUMPTIOUS meal for all time.

In this text, historical facts concerning the Mongol conqueror are deliberately interwoven with fabrications (his having fathered cooks with names that satirically sound "Mongolian" like Ag-luto and Ma-ngan). The key to the operative joke is a pun revealed in the last paragraph. Here, those familiar with Ilocano, a *lingua franca* in Baguio, come to realize that the restaurant's name is not a transparent allusion to the Mongolian conqueror, but a pun. "O' Mai khan" sounds like the Ilocano "*umay kan*," which means "come over," or "come on over." Rather than memorializing a famous figure, the narrative is actually inviting the knowing reader to partake of "a scrumptious meal," with the historical referents like the conqueror falling through the cracks and crevices of the interlingual play.

The joke on the reader is that save for the names assigned to the dishes listed, there is nothing truly "exotic" or even exceptionally "different" or "special" about the menu's template of flavors. The subversive power inherent in jokes is cleverly put to work here. Through a place-bound and language-based tactic of exclusion, the local is not made easily available to the foreigner or uninformed non-local. Without access to the joke, the "full" consumption of the local recipe/text is effectively barred, the pleasures of it (with the language play) incomplete. This text compels an acknowledgement of the local and, as an instance of exclusionary local motion, is able to circumvent total consumption of local fare by the voracious tourist/outsider.

The menu also offers the consumer an unlimited buffet option, affording him or her the option for full satiation of appetite. But even this accomplishes work within the playful discourse of the restaurant. Rather than a master who merely waits to be served, the consumer is compelled to work for his or her meal. The touristic gaze is reversed.

Again Parasecoli:

> The concepts of "tradition" and "authenticity" both play a crucial role in constructing what is "typical" and defining in local, regional, or even national identities. Since these qualities are supposed to catch the "essence" of a certain food or culinary custom, they develop into the core of the construction of all sorts of identification and exclusion processes. (2008, 133)

Conclusion

As an alternative food network, the three restaurants on Session Road considered here resist the homogenizing sweep of globalizing forces, represented in the city's landscape by the SM mall. Through place-bound tactics of re-installing/re-membering and "re-placement," these establishments are able to reposition the local to allow it to work within and through the discourse of the global on its own terms.

In the essay, "Invention, Memory, Place," Edward Said writes:

> [T]he art of memory for the modern world is both for historians as well as ordinary citizens and institutions very much something to be used, misused and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain." (Said 2000, 179)

The Hill Station narrative summons official history both to recall and play upon the old colonial narrative. It does this, however, not to reinstate romantic nostalgia—the reductive recourse to the illusion of a pristine past that leaves one pining for the irretrievable—but to recharge the narrative with a critical potency, given the context of the city's continuing degradation brought about by unchecked and ill-planned urbanization as embodied by SM and similar enterprises in neo-liberal or late capitalism. Past representations of Baguio as romantic enclave for rest and rejuvenation are redeployed for the purpose of encouraging resistance against rapid urbanization and intensifying urban decay.

Furthermore, in the case of Jack's Restaurant and Hill Station, the stable binary of foreigner and native is simultaneously disrupted and further complicated. The foreign is appropriated in the service of the "protection of the local," while the "local/native" is set free to engage, on its own terms, in the wider local and global political economy.

A fascinating example of "local motion," the narrative found in the menu of O' Mai Khan, capitalizes on linguistic play to escape

total interpellation by ordering or dominant discourses that lay claim to authority. The joke/pun at the crux of the narrative effectively circumvents co-optation of local knowledge by globalizing discourses and forces, constellating spaces of cultural and historical hybridity for the exercise of local agency and the possibility of narrating local history anew.

Baguio's marketability as a tourist destination hinges on the stability of stereotypical notions of nostalgia and the exotic, and various images of romance, leisure, escape, respite, and a life of simplicity thereby freed from the harrowing realities of the everyday. But against the touristic consumption of place, a semiosic reading of the menus of the selected Baguio restaurants discloses an instructive "re-visioning" of local history or experiences and the traces of a continuing endeavor to resist externally-generated representations of local identity and place. Representations emerge "from the inside" with the intent "to disarm and dislocate the naturalized dominance of the capitalist economy and make a space for new economic becomings" (J.K Gibson-Graham, qtd. in Parkins and Cage 2006, 82). As Arif Dirlik observes:

> From the perspective of global capitalism, the local is not a site of liberation but manipulation; stated differently, it is a site the inhabitants of which must be liberated from themselves (stripped of their identity) to be homogenized into the global culture of capital (their identities reconstructed accordingly). Ironically, even as it seeks to homogenize populations globally, consuming their cultures, global capitalism enhances awareness of the local, pointing it also as a site of resistance to capital. (1996, 35)

We see the workings of place here operating at the intersection of the social, cultural and economic, "some of which are local in character, some of which are global in reach" (Jones et al. 2004, 101). Despite the now commanding presence, in the city, of that quintessential "artefact of globalization," SM mall, successful emplacement ("re-place-ment") of competitive and home-grown enterprises in the Baguio cityscape testifies to "local motion," and empowers the local to resist, even circumvent, the subjugating impulses of the global. In a critical reading of the menus and business practices of these restaurants, we see that despite the magnitude and scope of influence exerted by globalizing forces, possibilities for the exercise of agentive action are not at all foreclosed, awaiting discovery and critical elaboration by concerned investigators.

NOTES

1. List articles, or articles for publication that are formatted as lists.

2. Space constraints here disallow a comprehensive description of the fortunes of "place" in spatial discourses. *Cresswell's Place: A Short Introduction* (2004) provides a detailed account of the evolution of the concept.

3. "I can pay for that no matter what it costs; give me one of those." (translation mine).

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