

Folk 267: Food and Culture

**FEBRUARY 8:
MCANDREWS' "POKE" &
ROTKOVITZ'S "OREO"**

To reiterate what was said last class

- ⦿ Because of losing two Thursdays we are skipping Rudy
 - Rudy will *not* be covered on either the midterm or the final exam
 - Next class we will do Bentley, and be back on schedule
- ⦿ However
 - For your papers – especially if you are an international student – you might find reading Rudy useful

McAndrews “Incorporating the Local Tourist”

- What do you think?

McAndrews “Incorporating the Local Tourist”

Context:

- Multi-ethnic Hawaii
 - South Pacific Islanders (“Natives”)
 - White
 - Asian (Japanese, Chinese, other South-East Asian)
- An emergent dish – “Poke”
 - Raw fish, seaweed, salt, oil

Poke

- ⦿ Not part of any one originating people's food repertoire
- ⦿ But presented as “typically Hawaiian”
 - Real and symbolic associations with the sea, etc.
- ⦿ Present and on offer for, but often passed over by, off-Island tourists
 - Issues of edibility, palatability, exoticism

Poke (cont.)

- ◎ Available in a variety of manifestations
 - Street vendors / fish markets
 - High-end restaurants

Big Island Poke Festival

- ◎ Part of “Aloha Days,” Hawaiian Folklife festival
- ◎ Competition / celebration of local dish
- ◎ Demonstrates polyvalent local attitudes
 - Amusement
 - Pride
 - Disgust
 - Shame?
- ◎ Hawaiian “Soul Food”

Festival (cont.)



- ⦿ Requires travel to the Big Island

Local Tourism

- ⦿ Participating in the otherness of one's own (or what is ostensibly one's own) place
- ⦿ Within the context of leisure, intentionality, play, etc. that tourism implies
- ⦿ Allows for the ambivalences towards certain practices to be addressed in a closed sphere

Play

- ⦿ Does subverting the expectations of the dish within the guise of play do a disservice to the tradition?
 - Example of the gelatin, dessert poke
 - On one hand, participating in the spirit of adventure the festival implies
 - On the other, avoiding the “necessary” ingredients and thus deracinating it

Language and Play

- ◎ The playful reframing of the dish – through name and presentation, and largely irrespective of content – brings the ambivalence towards the dish into sharp relief
 - Allows for social satire and commentary
 - Builds on esoteric knowledge
 - Reaffirms group identity within the context of the larger, off-Island “other”

Rudy's "Bananas," in one slide

- ⦿ This is about Mormon Missionaries, who go on extended stays in far-flung places
- ⦿ Different from "tourist" and the pure leisure activity that implies
- ⦿ However, experiencing of the other culture is part of the overall objective
- ⦿ Struggle to maintain foodways of home, participate in foodways of new setting
- ⦿ This struggle becomes an important part of the narrative of Mission upon their return
- ⦿ Similar to International students, which is why it's useful

Rotkovitz's "Kashering the Melting Pot"

- What do you think?

Rotkovitz's "Kashering the Melting Pot"

- Focuses on the home context
- The tension between assimilation and maintaining identity
- Lard, gelatin derived from animals, particularly pigs
- Expressly non-Kosher or Kashrut
 - (The Jewish laws of food proscription)

Why this is awesome

- Builds on that strange and rare interplay between the highly palatable and the highly inedible
- Asserts the issue of food as an identity marker of (a) sameness or (b) otherness

Go away now.

- For next class: Bentley