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Of *kimchi* and coffee: globalisation, transnationalism and familiarity in culinary consumption

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This paper discusses the culinary consumption choices of South Korean international students in Auckland, New Zealand as a route to re-considering the transnational production of familiarity. In particular, this study questions the extent to which culinary consumption by transnational migrants is always an intentional declaration of 'group loyalties' or about the re-production of local or national identities. Drawing on research with students this paper illustrates that while some aspects of the familiarity enacted in culinary consumption appear to be 'local', in the sense that they are encoded as 'Korean', other aspects appear to represent forms of 'global' familiarity. Hence, it is argued that culinary consumption in transnational worlds can also more subtly represent an effort to recreate familiarity through reference to characteristics of everyday life before migration that may include what appear to be both global and local products. Such familiarity is then not necessarily about group loyalties or identities but rather an example of the importance of practical know how and familiar sensations in feelings of belonging and attachment.

Key words: consumption, food, Korea, Auckland, transnationalism, familiarity.

Introduction

> Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life … Food thus entwines intimately with much that makes a culture unique, binding taste and satiety to group loyalties. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures. (Gabaccia 1998: 8)

In this quote Donna Gabbacia highlights the central role that food plays in everyday life and the creation and maintenance of group identities and affiliation. As an example, we might note, following David Bell and Gill Valentine (1997: 2), that 'an American in Paris, eating at McDonald's, is someone (whether self-consciously or not) who is connecting with "home"'. Conversely, the same practice in that same individual's home city or town may appear to be just an engagement in normal everyday routines. Yet, in both situations the individual is enacting 'familiarity' through food consumption. They are engaging with the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch of something that they 'know'.

In this paper I focus on the particular culinary consumption choices made by South Korean international students during their

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sojourn in Auckland, New Zealand as a way to consider more generally the constitution of familiarity. In particular, I employ findings from research with students to illustrate the ways that both globalising and transnationalising processes are involved in the everyday enactment of familiarity. I argue that culinary consumption in sojourn represents an effort to recreate familiarity through reference to characteristics of everyday life before migration that may include objects and practices that are connected to globalising processes as well as those that purport to be more transnational. Such familiarity is, then, not necessarily about 'group loyalties' (Gabaccia 1998) or connecting with home (Bell and Valentine 1997) but can also be an example of the importance of practical know how, familiar sensations and sociality in feelings of belonging and attachment in everyday lives. Moreover, such a perspective also illustrates the importance of viewing globalisation and transnationalism not simply in opposition to each other but as descriptions of processes that can come together in useful ways to contribute to our understanding of the reworking of relationships between geographical scales.

Globalisation, transnationalism and familiar foodways

The practices and experiences discussed in this paper sit at the intersection of two related academic discourses: globalisation and transnationalism. These discourses offer important insights into the emerging food cultures that are the subject of this paper. At the same time, however, both terms conjure up images of processes that are quite different in terms of scale, scope and the assumptions they make about the role of the nation-state (Smith 2000). Indeed, in many ways the academic literatures on globalisation and transnationalism are quite opposed to each other: for many transnationalists at least their focus is an effort to move away from the excessive abstraction in discourses about globalisation (Conradson and Latham 2005). Despite this dis-connect, globalisation and transnationalism deal with subject matter that while not identical is thoroughly inter-related. When it comes to considering the emerging foodways of the contemporary era this is certainly the case and it is my intention to outline here the relevant arguments made about food in these two literatures and to highlight the potential connections between them in the constitution of familiar foodways.

Globalisation

Globalisation in its broadest sense describes the increasing interconnectivity and interdependence of the world in political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental terms (Beck 2000). In this sense globalisation is thoroughly historicist in its framing (Low and Barnett 2000). In the most extreme accounts (Castells 1996; Ohmae 1990) it is given to describe a fundamental shift in the economic, political and cultural structures of the world that has led to the reducing significance of nation-states and the increasing centrality of new spaces of global interaction. Such accounts have attracted due critique (Hirst and Thompson 1999) but, crucially, more measured accounts still recognise that something is occurring that is having important consequences for spatial relations (Dicken 2004; Jackson 2004). What is important if we are to take these discussions seriously is that we recognise that '[g]lobalisation is not a single all-embracing movement' but rather 'a making of space(s), an active reconfiguration and

meeting-up through practices and relations of a multitude of trajectories' (Massey 2005: 83). It is therefore inappropriate to speak of a fully globalized world (Held 2004) or to imagine that there is a neat nesting of local, national and global scales (Massey 1999; Washbourne 2005). Instead, it is imperative to recognise constantly emerging and often temporary constellations of social relations that cut across and intersect these and other geographic scales. A focus on globalisation, then, is not a causal explanation for increasing lines of connections in itself (Yeung 2002) but rather a concern for understanding '*changes in the relationships between geographical scales*' (Dicken 2004: 9, emphasis in original).

The movement of food and foodways across geographic scales represents one of the more common aspects of globalisation research. In many respects this is not surprising given that food, in either its production or consumption, illustrates the thoroughly inter-connected character of the contemporary era (Le Heron and Hayward 2003). Such research includes studies of the global production and distribution of food (Fine 2004); the creation of symbolic meaning around food (Probyn 1998); and the consumption of food in different locales (Bell and Valentine 1997; Cook and Crang 1996; Freidberg 2003; Kearns and Barnett 2000). The latter is of particular interest to this paper but it has also been the area where discourse about globalisation has most symbolically, if not substantially, circulated. Indeed, much debate has surrounded the role of major American corporations like McDonald's, Coca-Cola and, more recently, Starbucks, in globalising processes and their influence on local food cultures and practices. Such debates have been split for the most part between those who argue that the limitless reach of these brands leads to a flattening of difference across the globe (Ritzer 1996) and accounts that suggest that processes of localisation of 'global' food brands is not so smooth (Jackson 2004) and that there is always 'an intense, continuous, comprehensive interplay between the indigenous and the imported' (Hannerz 1996: 5). The experience of McDonald's in South Korea is one particularly relevant example.

McDonald's has had a rather problematic experience in South Korea (Bak 1997). Not only was South Korea a relative latecomer amongst its East-Asian neighbours to enter the McDonald's system (the first store opened in 1988) but the company's growth has been much lower than expected. In large part this reflected both the difficult position the company inhabited in South Korea and the different sorts of eating practices the South Korean public engaged in (Bak 1997). In the first instance, McDonald's found itself trapped between declaring itself an American company—and gaining the resulting authenticity as a burger chain—and highlighting the fact that it was 50 per cent owned by Koreans to avoid anti-Americanism. At the same time, McDonald's also had to deal with the different expectations of South Korean customers who, in contrast to their principles of restaurant design, used the restaurant as a recreational space. In particular, it was found that many young Koreans did not treat McDonald's as a complete meal and tended to spend very little money but lots of time in the restaurant, utilising the clean and comfortable environment to meet and chat with friends. McDonald's, then, suffered doubly for its popularity. It was perceived as a symbol of American intrusion in South Korean culture and yet even with those parts of the population it succeeded most restaurants failed to make substantial profits. This experience, then, is particularly evocative of the importance of viewing globalising processes as one factor in the

making of new spaces and the changing relationships between geographic scales. McDonald's could not simply enter the Korean market and win over customers with its existing approach—rather it had to be willing to negotiate its way through discourses about the national and the global as well as accept the fact that consumers in Korea had a significant role in constituting the spaces of individual restaurants. In the longer term McDonald's has become a familiar part of the South Korean urban landscape so much so that its restaurants are considered important landmarks in cities like Seoul. Yet, as Sangmee Bak (1997) notes, while it may be hard to convince young South Korean children that McDonald's is not part of their 'indigenous food culture', the particular process of indigenisation in this case has meant that the ways that McDonald's is familiar in South Korea were never predetermined and reflect the fact that the outcomes of globalising processes are always spatially variable.

Transnationalism

Like globalisation, transnationalism is a term that has attracted considerable academic attention and, as a result, carries a huge range of different meanings. Steven Vertovec (1999), for instance, identifies six different interpretations of transnationalism as: social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and (re)construction of place. In this sense transnationalism covers similar territory to globalisation and is also primarily concerned with shifting relationships between geographical scales. Equally, the more historicist accounts of transnationalism have similarly been criticised for reifying the apparently limitless movement that is possible in the contemporary era (Kivisto 2001). Where the focus on transnationalism departs from globalisation's trajectory is in its view of the nation-state not as a relic of a previous era or one actor in a new globalising arena but as part of the very processes of transnationalisation (Smith 2000). Indeed, the majority of work in the field of transnationalism has been concerned for the ways that new transnational and/or translocal spaces are constituted through the practices and experiences of actors like migrants (Ip and Friesen 2001), businesses (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003), political activists (Ong 2003) and, indeed, the nation-state (Basch, Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). In this way much work in the field of transnational studies, particularly of late, has been based not on overarching theoretical polemics but on grounded accounts of changing social and spatial relations.

Transnationalism also offers a useful lens for conceiving changing foodways in at least two important and inter-related ways: the (re)production of familiar food cultures for migrants abroad and the transnationalism embedded in spaces of commodity cultures. Firstly, a focus on transnationalism opens up a space for considering the ways in which food and the multitude of practices and experiences involved in its purchase, preparation and consumption play in the lives of transnational migrants. The consumption of familiar food and drink provides an intensely sensual way to recreate everyday life that occurs in an idealised national home (Brah 1996). Gassan Hage explains:

> Home food not only provides intimations of security in that it represents a culturally determined basic need for nutrition, it also provides a clear intimation of familiarity in that people know what to do with it, how to cook it, how to present it and how to eat it, thus promoting a multitude of homely practices. (1997: 109)

Put another way, food and drink provide one way to bridge the sensual gap between 'here' and 'there' (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003) through the very literal consumption of products that have been, or at least appear to have been, made or grown 'back home' (Cwiertka 2002; Duruz 2005; Hage 1997). Studies by Lisa Law (2001) and Simon Choo (2004) usefully illustrate this. In the first, Law (2001) has considered the importance of 'home cooking' in the daily lives of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong. Examining the weekly gathering of Filipino women in the central areas of Hong Kong, Law illustrates how food consumption is used as an act of remembrance that connects to lives left behind in the Philippines. During their weekly outings these women share stories of home, show photographs of loved ones and engage in the utterly sensual act of consuming food from the Philippines as a means of grounding their transnational lives in Hong Kong. In a similar effort, Choo (2004: 203) has considered the importance of food as a 'Proustian "remembrance of things past"' for Malaysian migrants in Australia. Choo (2004: 206) argues that food acts as a substitute for 'other forms of cultural articulation, such as geography, language and history', allowing for the everyday expression of Malaysian-ness. Like Law's research, and indeed much of the other transnational research on food consumption (Duruz 2005; Hage 1997; Pratt 2004), Choo's study not only illustrates the representational elements of food consumption (where it comes from and what meaning it carries), but also the very sensuality of such consumption: the fact that the very corporeal familiarity of certain food is part of the process of regrounding lives that have been uprooted in the process of migration (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003).

The second quite useful way of employing a transnational framework in the study of changing practices and experiences of food is to focus on commodity cultures. This is a much less common approach within the focus on transnationalism but it is one that highlights crucial elements of the production and distribution of food that are beyond the reach of analyses that focus solely on the experiences of consumption. In particular, it brings the economic into play with the cultural in ways that are not achieved either by a focus on migrant transnationalism or globalisation. The work of Phillip Crang, Clair Dwyer and Peter Jackson has been especially useful in this regard (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003; Dwyer 2004; Dwyer and Crang 2002). These authors take earlier calls to follow the 'thing' (Marcus 1995) as a key methodological step towards conceiving the interconnections that are enacted in the contemporary world not just in abstract terms but as lived moments of transnationality. Their research focuses on multiple examinations of transnational commodity flows (including food products) between Britain and South Asia and the roles played by a range of different actors in this movement. Such research highlights the manner that different actors—producers, wholesalers, buyers, retailers, cultural intermediaries and consumers—inhabit transnational spaces and the means by which transnational imaginaries are mobilised throughout the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of food commodities.

Familiar foodways

The empirical case that I discuss in this paper is concerned with both the globalisation and transnationalisation of foodways. In particular,

the findings illustrate the ways in which foods that are perceived to be 'global' and those that are perceived to be 'transnational' are involved in the constitution of familiarity for South Korean international students in Auckland. Familiarity in this paper is used in a thoroughly corporeal way to refer to sights, sounds, tastes, smells and touches that are known and as such stimulate feelings of comfort and belonging amongst those who experience them (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003; Choo 2004; Cwiertka 2002; Law 2001). Familiarity, however, cannot simply be the sum of all the independent parts that make up foods. Rather, what also makes the consumption of foods familiar is the ways in which forms of sociality are involved in the constitution of emerging food cultures. Alan Latham (2006) has provided significant insight to this through his reflection on forms of urban living that emerged in the Auckland suburb of Ponsonby in the mid-1990s. In particular, his work highlights the ways that material and social characteristics are involved in individuals' inhabitation of everyday life worlds. Indeed, although Latham is concerned with quite different sorts of urban experience from that which concerns me here, there is a more general point made in his work that highlights the value of 'think[ing] about the ways that culture is enacted' (Latham 2006: 92). In particular, he highlights 'how certain select materials and ideas from elsewhere are used to reconfigure in various ways how particular local materials, particular local relationships, particular kinds of local spaces, can be understood' (Latham 2006: 107). Here, then, we might recognise that familiarity is material and corporeal, but it is also social—it is about the engagement in practices with friends, family or associates that are known that makes them all the more significant parts of the life worlds we inhabit. Moreover, to speak about familiarity, particularly in the context of 'global' operations like McDonald's or Starbucks, is not to argue that the experiences are the same in any location—it is not to argue that we are witnessing the emergence of a 'global' familiar. Rather, it is to suggest that similar sorts of materials and practices can be utilised in the production of familiarity that while not the same in all locale certainly carry an essence of familiarity for those involved, a familiarity that in many cases make such engagements both pleasurable and fulfilling.

We can usefully identify this making of familiarity both corporeally and socially in the examples already used. For Sangmee Bak (1997), for example, it is the fact that the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and touches of McDonald's are familiar parts of the everyday lives of young Korean children that is likely to convince them that this is an indigenous food experience. At the same time, however, it is the sharing of these food experiences with family and friends that also contributes to their familiarity. Likewise, in a much more explicit way, Law's (2001) account of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong points to the ways that those same senses connect these women to home by stimulating feelings of comfort and belonging in their transnational lives. She is also quite explicit about the sociality involved in this connection home—it is not simply the sensual experiences of food but rather the shared experience of coming together that makes these events significant parts of these women's lives. To stretch these examples one step further into the realm that I wish to focus we might recognise that South Korean children living transnational lives, who have grown up with both indigenised global foods and ostensibly more traditional Korean foods, might find both these experiences and the associated social practices

crucial in the constitution of familiarity. This paper does in fact illustrate that this is the case for many South Korean international students in their transnational lives in Auckland, New Zealand.

The culinary consumption choices of South Korean international students

This research is drawn from a broader project investigating the everyday practices and experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland (see Collins 2004, 2006a, 2006b). The project was conducted between June 2004 and February 2006 and included: a survey of 120 South Korean international students; discourse analysis of print-media accounts of international education; participant observation throughout the period of research; semi-structured interviews with fifteen key informants and twenty-nine students in Auckland; further interviews in South Korea with fourteen returnee students and one key informant; a diary-writing and mapping exercise with fourteen students; and research on the personal homepages of seven students. The discussion here is drawn primarily from interviews and observation with some reference to written diaries. Based upon initial results from questions in the survey, I have focused on three facets of students' consumption practices: eating out, eating at home and having coffee with friends. These three practices do not encompass all of the students' culinary consumption choices. Indeed, it is likely that for many students such practices only constitute one part of their daily eating and drinking routines. However, these particular sites are focused upon because they appeared to carry the greatest efficacy for participants. It was these places that students felt they could most easily engage in the sort of familiarity that is my central concern here.

Eating out

For the participants in this research, patronage of Korean restaurants during their time in Auckland was an important part of their weekly, if not daily lives. Indeed, eating out commonly served as both a route to physical sustenance as well as an engagement with particular public lives through eating, drinking and socialising with friends, friends who were almost always other South Korean international students (a fact that reflects the real difficulties students face with the host population; see Collins 2006a). In Auckland's inner city, where the majority of students live and socialise (Collins 2004), there is a wide array of Korean restaurants available, many of which are almost indistinguishable in terms of appearance, menu and service (see Figure 1). Yet, there were only a small number of restaurants that were consistently identified as key points in the everyday lives of students during their time in Auckland—one such example is *San-Su-Gap-San* (see Figure 2).

San-Su-Gap-San (Figure 2) is positioned on downtown Auckland's main thoroughfare, Queen Street, directly opposite a large movie multiplex and right on the doorstep of what Auckland City Council would like to call the 'education precinct' (Stroombergen 2003). On the canopy outside there are large *hanmun*[1] characters—which translate as *San-Su-Gap-San*—and a small English sign saying 'restaurant and sake bar' that still refers to a previous incarnation. A quick look at the menu with photos in the window should correct any misconceptions that reference to the Japanese drink *sake* might have evoked. Projected from the entrance is Korean pop music. Inside, the

layout of *San-Su-Gap-San* is similar in many respects to *so-ju-bang*[2] in Seoul or other South Korean cities. It has an expansive dining area that is surrounded by large booths that can seat six to eight persons. The main bulk of the room is taken up by basic wooden tables and chairs that can be rearranged to suit different sizes of groups. Each table has a small button that rings an electronic bell that alerts the waiting staff. The sills above the tables have empty *soju*[3] bottles on them.

Restaurants like *San-Su-Gap-San* have very important embodied and sensual characteristics. While *San-Su-Gap-San* is not solely patronised by young Koreans, they are the predominant group here. Furthermore, the waiting staff and cooks are unsurprisingly also Korean, many of them international students, and their bodies are also crucial to the making of this space (cf. Crang 1994). Linguistically, the restaurant is awash with Korean language. The senses of smell, taste and touch are also well attended here by the food, the way that it is cooked and presented, and the utensils provided.[4] It is clear that it is these embodied and sensual aspects of the restaurant that play such a crucial role in producing it as a 'familiar place'.

During interviews, students often explained their preference for *San-Su-Gap-San* through reference to the atmosphere, arrangement and service. In other cases it was the mere popularity of this location amongst fellow South Korean international students that made it an important location. The latter was exemplified in statements that reflected the ways in which social relations based on ethno-national affiliations are enacted in

Figure 1 Korean restaurants on Queen Street, Auckland.

Figure 2 *San-Su-Gap-San* Korean restaurant on Queen Street, Auckland.

places like *San-Su-Gap-San*: 'When I [first] came here, … one of my friends took me there'; or: 'I think it is the most famous Korean restaurant [amongst] Korean student[s] because of [the] Korean atmosphere, reasonable price[s] and [the range of] foods'. In other cases students' comparison of *San-Su-Gap-San* with non-Korean restaurants was suggestive of the kinds of perceptible reasons why this location is important: 'We [can] easily eat … Korean food there'; '[The] atmosphere is very similar to [a] Korean pub and we can drink *soju* so many people want to go there'.

Another useful example of the ways in which familiar spaces are constituted through culinary consumption as well as the languages, objects and practices associated with this consumption was offered in a discussion of another restaurant and bar in Auckland, *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha*:

> Students Association President: That's [because *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha* is] the newest one isn't it. [It's] also because there's lots of *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha* in Korea and … there's only one *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha* in [Auckland], so to get that feeling of sitting outside and everything, that's the closest. Even though it's really cold outside [… we] go there because [we] want to feel that experience … Those kind of place[s are] really [similar] to shops [in Korea]. [We] really like them. Koreans really like them.

Curiously, the Korean–New Zealand owners of *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha* have constructed two different versions of this restaurant. During the day it is known as the Japanese *Shochiku* and sells takeaway *sushi* and *donburi* (rice bed with meat/fish/vegetables) to passing office-workers. In the evening this location transforms into *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha*, the name by which South Korean international students know it (although there is no sign to indicate this name). A new menu of *soju* and Korean

side-dishes is provided and the clientele becomes almost entirely Korean. In addition to being an example of the ways that many Korean entrepreneurs in Auckland have adopted Japanese cuisine for business purposes (Song 2003), this location illustrates the ways that forms of familiarity are actively and intentionally constituted in the places that South Korean international students patronise. Such familiarity is constituted through food and drink but also through the increased use of Korean language in the evening, the posters selling *soju* that are brought out and the very bodies of students themselves that make this an important node in inter-personal networks.

In this sense Korean restaurants in Auckland are in many ways not simply a replication of restaurants or eateries in South Korean cities. In South Korea such places tend to specialise, providing a particular type or style of food often based on regional or class distinctions. Such restaurants are also often of a fairly basic design, looking and feeling much like a dining room with some advertising and pictures of menu items that are available (Nelson 2000). In Auckland, however, Korean restaurants are a veritable smorgasbord of the Korean culinary and cultural landscape. With few exceptions most restaurants in the inner-city area provide an identical menu of Korean dishes that vary only slightly in cost and quality. *San-Su-Gap-San* is a good example of this. The interior of these establishments is also unlike their counterparts in Seoul or other Korean cities. In Auckland most restaurants have an amazing array of things Korean on their walls, including masks, paintings, calendars, advertisements, or even *soju* bottles, all expressing the very Korean-ness of the place. *Po-Jang-Ma-Cha*, similarly, is decorated in the evenings with posters advertising *soju* that are not visible in its day-time form.

There is, then, a curious confluence of different practices and experiences in the familiarity produced in Korean restaurants in Auckland. At one level, we can recognise that students patronise these locations because they offer the closest experience ('that experience' in one participant's words) to restaurants and bars in the home towns and cities that students come from. Yet, at the same time, these restaurants also deviate from their counterparts in South Korea through the erasure of regional or even neighbourhood variations in food, drink and the practices of preparation and serving. Replacing these sometimes pronounced specificities is a newly mobilised transnational food imaginary (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003) that is a product of the emerging material and symbolic connections between South Korea and Auckland. This is most evident in the quite obvious fact that one does not go to a 'Korean restaurant' in Seoul even if this might be common in cities like Auckland or indeed Sydney, Toronto, New York and Los Angeles. In Auckland the space of the Korean restaurant serves to unify objects (foods, drinks, utensils etc.), practices (languages,[5] food preparation and serving) and bodies that while similar in some ways are not *a priori* connected to each other and must be immersed in a broader Korean-ness if they are to be coherent. In short, these restaurants are an example of how ethno-national cuisine 'only becomes a self conscious, subjective reality when ethnic boundaries are crossed' (Bell and Valentine 1997: 114).

Eating at home

The majority of South Korean international students in Auckland live in two forms of accommodation—homestays or rental accommodation. Many of the participants in this

research originally lived in homestay accommodation for a short period of time before moving into rental accommodation with other Korean friends or classmates, often in or near the inner city of Auckland. There were many reasons for this movement including the desire for greater independence and proximity to urban amenities. However, the most commonly cited reason was the difference between what students perceived a 'home' should be like and how they experienced the homestay. This included different expectations about social interaction, the cooler temperature of New Zealand homes, the different ways of using spaces like bathrooms or bedrooms and, most symbolically, food.

Even in the face of significant changes brought about by increasing global interconnections the contemporary South Korean home-diet often relies on staples of rice, meat and *kimchi*[6]—items that also carry significant discursive meaning[7] (Walraven 2002). Rice, for example, is considered essential to any meal. Indeed, the common greeting phrase '*bap meokeoseoyo?*' literally translates as 'have you eaten any rice?' Meat, by contrast, is still seen as a symbol of wealth as a result of its rarity until recently. *Kimchi*, finally, is often seen as a 'symbolic connotation of [Korean] national identity' (Cwiertka and Walraven 2002: 13) due to its striking hot and spicy flavours and heady aroma. The discursive weight of these food products is, however, not limited to lives in South Korea. Rather, many students and key informants reported that these foods became symbolic of broader anxieties about the difference between 'homestay' and 'home' and a key motivation for departure. A Korean language counsellor explains:

> Korean counsellor: The first reason is food. That's quite difficult. You know if you stayed in Korea—all meals, if you eat *kimchi* I think you can't endure. But here they miss *kimchi* a lot and they always [say] 'kiwi people don't like *kimchi* smell so I can't bring it.' 'I miss *kimchi*.' 'I miss Korean food.' 'I miss some kind of Korean food.' 'I miss Korea.' So if they [want to] eat *kimchi* I think [the] most convenient thing is to stay with other Korean group.

In addition to these reasons there were also many perceived advantages to living with other South Koreans. Crucially, it allowed them to use the space of the home to engage in social activities with Korean food and drink. Most students living in rental accommodation cooked together and almost always cooked Korean food. The ability to control their home space also made it possible to engage in private forms of socialising with friends and classmates, something that was particularly difficult when living in homestays or school dormitories. In preparing for such practices students also engaged in another aspect of the transnational commodity cultures (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003) that have emerged between South Korea and Auckland by purchasing Korean foods through shops run by Korean–New Zealanders. During the period of fieldwork I was invited to a number of dinners at the residences of different students—photographs from one such occasion are presented in Figure 3.

Not all students leave the homestay. In fact some students enjoy their time in the homestay. Yet, even for these students the engagement in familiar culinary consumption practices remains important. In these cases students would enact feelings of familiarity by going to restaurants, by attending events with friends or by making strategic changes to the food provided in the homestay. One diary entry was particularly evocative:

> Diary entry: Today's dinner is Kiwi style rice. But I don't like this rice. Because that is come from

Figure 3 Dinner with a group of South Korean international students in Auckland.

Thailand. So taste, shape and condition is quite different from Korean rice. I have 'Gochujang'[8] that my another Japanese friend give it to me (she took it from KAL ~ [Korean Airlines]). So, I have dinner with this. It tastes quite strange +_+ ;;,[9] but it's little bit similar to 'Bibimbap'[10], about 0.004% ~ @_@.[11] But, I feel much better. Because of the U.F.F ~ [Unidentified Flying Food—the Kiwi style rice]. Also, after my evening school I'm getting better. I hope tomorrow will be good day for me ♥♥ and maybe I'm going to dream about original, huge, delicious 'Bibimbab' tonight. Zzz.

Like the patronage of Korean restaurants South Korean students' preparation and consumption of Korean meals within their homes can also be considered a product of identities that come into existence primarily because of their journey to Auckland. Despite the obvious differences in terms of the form of transnationality that students' are able to engage in there are useful comparisons to be made here with Lisa Law's (2001) study with Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong. In particular, like the women in Law's study, South Korean international students also use the preparation and shared consumption of both regionally specific and more generic ethno-national food as a way to connect with practices and places that were part of their lives before they came to Auckland. To parallel Law (2001: 278) it could be said that these practices incorporate 'elements of history and memory, of past and present times and spaces, helping create a familiar place where memories of life in [South Korea] and migration to [Auckland] might be explored from another perspective'.

Furthermore, like the women in Law's study these students come from sometimes diverse class and regional backgrounds in South Korea. The shared practice of food preparation and consumption becomes a way to overcome these sometimes pronounced differences.

Interestingly, however, food preparation and consumption also serves to reinforce other differences in Korean culture that seem to be more resistant to change, in this case gender. In the discussions and my own experience with students' 'home cooking' only women were involved in the preparation or clean up of meals. This serves to remind us of the way that normalised banal practicalities can reinforce social and spatial differentiation through the re-articulation of national or other identities. In this way while food preparation and consumption provides individuals with a new sense of belonging while sojourning in New Zealand it also reinforces existing differences in the experience of Korean national identity.

Having coffee with friends

It is clear in the above discussion that Korean food and the practices that surround its production and consumption play an important role in the everyday lives of students. However, such practices are not the only notable feature of the culinary consumption of students in this research. Indeed, many students identified in interviews that they regularly patronised ostensibly global franchises like Starbucks and other coffee outlets, and to a lesser extent places like McDonald's and Burger King, in ways that suggest these were also engagements with familiar senses and sociality.

As noted earlier, the entry of McDonald's into South Korea was problematised by anti-American attitudes and the different ways that customers used this corporation's restaurants (Bak 1997). More recently, American coffee franchises have also become common in South Korea (Bak 2005). Starbucks, in particular, has become a familiar sight in the urban landscape of cities like Seoul. In a reflection of the multitude of geographical re-workings that can result from expanded globalising processes however, Starbucks, unlike McDonald's, has for the most part not faced high levels of criticism because it is a between meal social location rather than a substitute for main meals (which would otherwise be Korean). As such, in the rather short period since the first Starbucks opened in South Korea (1999) they have become an essential location in the everyday lives of young (particularly middle-class) urban residents (Bak 2005). Indeed, Starbucks has been constitute as a space in South Korea where fantasies associated with 'the west', 'middle-class global identity' and 'cosmopolitanism' can be played out in the lives of individual patrons. Crucially, however, in contrast to their constitution in cities like Auckland, locations like Starbucks and McDonald's are not viewed as placeless in South Korea but rather as palpable manifestations of the kind of 'foreign spaces' that are desired by certain segments of the population (Bak 2005).

In Auckland, students partake in similar practices. When I asked students where they usually met their friends, they either referred to public places or to locations like McDonald's, Burger King or Starbucks. They never referred to Korean restaurants as a place simply to 'meet' friends. The students said that they liked to meet at these places because they could purchase one item (unlike a restaurant or bar) and still sit and talk for a long time—again these activities primarily include only other South Korean students. Although these locations were notable in most students' everyday lives they seemed to hold particular importance for female participants. One group of female students, for example, noted that every time they went to the city they went to Burger King to get a soft-serve ice cream because 'it's cheap and we can easily talk'.

In other cases many students enjoyed going to global coffee chains, usually Starbucks. In reference to these franchises students made statements like 'I went there in Korea so I go there now'. Additionally they said that places like Starbucks were good places to meet friends because 'everybody knows Starbucks'. Another student spoke more generally about the importance of places like Starbucks coffee shops:

> Yu-Mi: You know, for [us] Koreans, we don't actually care about drinking coffee or tea, [we] just want to have somewhere to sit and talk for a long time. I think [that] you [would usually] want to go [when] you finish your drink but we want to stay for a long time—it's a comfortable place to meet. In Korea, [meeting a] friend in [a] coffee shop [is more] comfortable than [meeting them at] home. For me it's same in New Zealand, there are lots of people in my home so it's [more] comfortable to meet [people] in [a] coffee shop.

Sangmee Bak (2005) addresses these issues in regards to Starbucks and coffee franchises more generally in South Korea. She notes that Starbucks was the first outlet to offer espresso-style coffee in South Korea and, since then, successful establishments have only followed their model. This contrasts significantly with New Zealand's experience where European-style espresso coffee was first introduced and made popular by local independent retailers in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Liberty 1998). Moreover, despite the entrance of Starbucks these independents still hold a significant portion of market share. Bak (2005) has also found that demographically the customers of Starbucks in South Korea are more likely to be middle-class urban residents in their twenties (exactly the demographic of international students in Auckland). They are also more likely to be women than men. Like McDonald's in its early years, many people patronise Starbucks primarily for the social space that it offers—where groups of friends, workmates or classmates can meet and converse for long periods of time.[12] Indeed, Bak notes that many Starbucks customers actually dislike the taste of espresso coffee, preferring for the most part the much weaker and sweeter form of instant coffee common in South Korea for many decades. Hence, participants in her research stated that they went to Starbucks to socialise because it was a popular place to go and engage in forms of socialising that are symbolically foreign but increasingly familiar.

In contrast to the Korean restaurants in Auckland the different outlets of global franchises located here are not strikingly different from their counterparts in Seoul or other South Korean cities.[13] In the case of Starbucks, the 'third place' design of the now ubiquitous café franchise intentionally replicates iconographic environments that will be familiar to patrons regardless of whether they cross a city or a national border. It is this familiarity that is expressed in the practices of students through statements like 'I went there in Korea so I go there now'. Amongst the rise of consumer culture in South Korea Starbucks and other coffee franchises have become a part of everyday experience for many individuals in cities like Seoul, exemplifying how 'the foreign has become the familiar, [and] the different has become the domesticated' (Scapp and Seitz 1998: 2). It is as a result of this normalisation of a global institution in the local environment that Starbucks is a familiar part of South Korean international students' everyday lives both in South Korea and Auckland. Just like the patronage of Korean restaurants and the preparation and consumption of Korean food, students' patronage of Starbucks coffee shops engages with Korean students' 'history and memory, of past and present times and spaces,

helping create a familiar place' (Law 2001: 278) in what is otherwise a foreign location.

Global and transnational familiarity

In each of the three sites discussed above it is quite clear that students are seeking out and/or creating spaces that feel familiar, providing a sense of security based upon the knowledge and enactment of everyday behaviour. Two aspects of this familiarity—the patronage of Korean restaurants and production and consumption of Korean food at home—seem to map quite accurately on to the assertion that 'routine practices and habits (including cooking and eating) are a common way to shore up community identity when geographical proximity recedes' (Bell and Valentine 1997: 91). Yet, contemporaneously, the inclusion of ostensibly 'global' locations like Starbucks and the similar explanations given for patronage there suggest that there may be more than just an intentional shoring up of community or national identity taking place through these practices.

Certainly, it is clear in students' responses that particular foods like *kimchi*, *gochujjang* and 'Korean-style rice' become symbolic of feelings of general longing for Korea as home(land) and that consumption of such foods can be a temporary reprieve from such loss. Additionally, the practices of 'Korean' food preparation and consumption appear to be performative of Korean national identities not simply in general ways but also quite specifically gendered ways as well. However, the consumption of food and drinks at global franchises also appears to occur in a familiar space and also involves the performance of particular identities that, while not unequivocally 'Korean', are also based on prior experience and knowledge in South Korea. As such, it may be better to conceive of all of these practices as strategies that attempt to access and/or re-create in different ways everyday lives that existed in South Korea before students came to Auckland. At times this will involve the enactment of transnational identities and discourses, at other times however it will also include the re-creation of identities that are an engagement with globalising processes that also exist in South Korea. This is an important corrective to many arguments about the significance of food in transnational lives, which, at times, slip into a form of culinary essentialism through their heavy emphasis on the role of a 'pure' national cuisine in connecting migrants to homelands (see e.g. Cwiertka 2002; Gabaccia 1998; Yoon 2003).

At the same time, however, the fact that these different sorts of culinary objects can be so intimately involved in the constitution of familiarity also points to the importance of sociality, alongside corporeality, in the enactment of food cultures. Indeed, what binds the consumption of Korean foods at restaurants and students' homes to the consumption of coffee in Starbucks is not simply the different familiar senses involved, nor the material origins of such products but the way that these different 'materials and practices are put to use and get bound up with the making of a particular culture' in contemporary Auckland (Latham 2006: 92). This is to argue then that what the preparation and consumption of these foods allow for is forms of sociality—meeting up and spending time with friends who are living similar lives—that are clearly pleasurable and fulfilling for those involved. Moreover, and finally, to recognise the role of sociality alongside corporeality also makes space for thinking about the ways that processes differently labelled globalisation and transnationalism come together in the making of everyday life-worlds for individuals

like South Korean international students. It is to show that the reworking of geographical scales identified in both these literatures is neither unidirectional nor all-embracing but rather always the result of multiple trajectories that cohere in often unpredictable ways in the making of emerging and often temporary constellations of social relations (Massey 2005).

Conclusion

In this paper I have illustrated the ways that South Korean international students' patronage of Korean restaurants in Auckland, their preparation and consumption of Korean foods at home, and their socialising practices at global franchises all constitute collective acts of remembrance. The purpose of such acts is to overcome the splitting of memory and lived experience that is so common for individuals who migrate, even temporarily, across borders. These acts of remembrance serve to overcome the estrangement of migration by remaking the relations with spaces that appear to be unfamiliar through the process of re-inhabiting such spaces by reprocessing practices and experiences. Interestingly, for South Korean international students in Auckland, this process of re-inhabitation is facilitated by the presence of both Korean restaurants and food distributors and a number of global franchises that are recognisable elements of both South Korean and New Zealand urban landscapes. On the one hand, these practices reveal the ways that Starbucks coffee, a version of one of the oldest globalised products, has become localised in South Korea and has subsequently been re-globalised through the journeys students have made to Auckland and the practices they engage in here. On the other hand, foods like *kimchi*, a highly localised part of the Korean diet that has been influenced by earlier global connections, is transnationalised by another wave of South Korean diaspora and is subsequently becoming increasingly domesticated in Auckland's urban landscape through the re-inhabitation practices of students. Finally, in considering the intersection of processes that are differently labelled globalisation and transnationalism I have also pointed to the importance of sociality alongside corporeality in the constitution of familiarity. Indeed, I have highlighted the fact that it is not simply the sensuality of food consumption that makes it a crucial part of everyday lives. Rather, it is the way that culinary consumption affords people the opportunity to come together and enact social worlds that are familiar and that, in the case of South Korean international students, make it possible to at least temporarily reground everyday lives that have been uprooted in the processes of migration.

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Notes

1 *Hanmun* is the Chinese origin script that sometimes accompanies *Hangeul* (Korean alphabet) in writing.
2 *So-ju-bang* literally translates as *soju* (see Note 3) room or house. These locations pervade the urban landscape of cities like Seoul and offer relatively cheap beer, *soju* and basic Korean dishes (Nelson 2000).
3 *Soju* is the Korean national liquor; it is a potent potato-based spirit that is drunk by the shot glass usually along with spicy food.
4 As with most Korean restaurants in Auckland *San-Su-Gap-San* serves food with the uniquely Korean metal chopsticks.

5 There are sometimes quite significant differences between the dialects used in South Korea. So much so that films made in regional areas like Gyeongsangdo and Jejudo often have subtitles for audiences in Seoul.
6 *Kimchi* is a pickled vegetable dish that has a number of varieties and is a member of the 'fermented vegetable group' that also includes sauerkraut and the Japanese *tsukemono* (pickles). It is commonly made through a process of fermenting salted cabbage with garlic, vinegar and chilli for a period two or more weeks. As well as possessing a spicy taste it often has a quite pungent smell (Walraven 2002). Although *kimchi* has been a part of the Korean diet for many centuries its contemporary form almost always uses chilli peppers as a key ingredient and is hence thoroughly influenced by the arrival of this plant in the eighteenth century (Walraven 2002).
7 Indeed, Boudewijn Walraven (2002) has argued that even in the face of some decline in the consumption of these foods they have actually increased in symbolic value in everyday life in South Korea.
8 *Gochujjang* is red chilli paste, an essential ingredient and condiment in many Korean dishes.
9 ' + _ + ' indicates exhaustion or feeling dead.
10 *Bibimbap* is a common Korean dish of rice, vegetables, egg, meat and, crucially, *gochujjang*.
11 '@_@' indicates feeling dazed or confused.
12 This contrasts significantly with the vision of Starbucks founder Howard Schultz who envisions Starbucks as a community-oriented 'third-place' where people would come and interact with other customers that they do not know. As Bak has noted: 'Korean customers also prefer a certain amount of privacy for their group, which is related to another unique feature of Korean Starbucks stores. In most places, there are partitions (which Starbucks calls 'walls') that visually and physically divide areas' (2005: 49).
13 Indeed, unlike McDonald's, only one Starbucks in South Korea (in the central Seoul neighbourhood of Insadong) has a Korean language signboard on its exterior (Bak 2005).

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Abstract translations

Sur le kimchi et le café: la mondialisation, le transnationalisme et la familiarité avec la consommation culinaire

Cet article discute des choix de consommation en matière culinaire que font des étudiants internationaux d'origine sud-coréenne à Auckland, Nouvelle-Zélande en vue de réexaminer la production transnationale de la familiarité. Plus particulièrement, cette étude vise à savoir dans quelle mesure la consommation culinaire par des migrants transnationaux est toujours le reflet d'une déclaration de «loyauté collective», ou si elle relève de la reproduction d'identités locales et nationales. Cet article met en lumière, à partir de recherches d'étudiants, que si certains aspects de la familiarité qui s'expriment dans la consommation culinaire semblent être de nature locale, c'est-à-dire sous la forme d'un code «coréen», d'autres aspects semblent plutôt représenter des formes de familiarité «-mondiale». Ainsi, on peut montrer que, dans le contexte de cadres transnationaux, la consommation culinaire peut également correspondre plus exactement à une tentative de recréer la familiarité en se référant aux éléments propres à la vie quotidienne avant la migration qui comprendraient des produits qui semblent être à la fois de nature locale et mondiale. Cette sorte de familiarité n'est donc pas nécessairement le reflet de loyautés ou d'identités collectives, mais témoigne au contraire de l'importance que prennent le savoir-faire pratique ainsi que les sensations familières dans le sentiment d'appartenance et d'attachement.

Mots-clefs: consommation, nourriture, Corée, Auckland, transnationalisme, familiarité.

De Kimichi y Café: la globalización, transnacionalismo y la familiaridad en el consumo de comida

En este papel hablamos de las decisiones de toman los estudiantes internacionales de la Corea del Sur en Auckland, Nuevo Zelandia con respecto al consumo de comida, como medio de considerar la producción transnacional de la familiaridad. En particular el estudio cuestiona hasta qué punto se puede decir que el consumo de comida por migrantes transnacionales es siempre una declaración intencional de 'lealdades colectivas' o trata de la re-producción de identidades locales o nacionales. Haciendo uso de una investigación llevada a cabo con estudiantes, ilustramos que, aunque algunos aspectos de la familiaridad practicada en el consumo de comida parecen ser 'locales' en el sentido de que se reconocen como 'coreanos', otros aspectos parecen representar formas de familiaridad 'globales'. Por lo tanto, sugerimos que el consumo de comida en mundos transnacionales también puede representar, de forma más sutil, un esfuerzo de crear la familiaridad a través de una referencia a características de la vida cotidiana antes de emigrar, la cual puede haber incluido productos tanto locales como mundiales. Esto quiere decir que la familiaridad no necesariamente tiene que ver con lealdades colectivas o identidades, sino con sensaciones familiares de pertenencia y apego.

Palabras claves: consumo, comida, Corea, Auckland, transnacionalismo, familiaridad.