

論文審査の結果の要旨

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The Authenticity of Celebrity Chef Nobu: Performance, Taste, and Texts

This thesis performs an interdisciplinary analysis of the work of chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa (known professionally as Nobu). Grounded in an interdisciplinary framework assembled from theory and method in food studies, American studies, cultural geography, and spatial theory, the thesis makes the argument that while culinary ‘authenticity’ has been most commonly assessed by reference to a place of origin, in the contemporary elite space of transnational networks the authenticity of a particular cuisine now has to be reconsidered as a quality emerging from the practice of recognized specialists in the context of complex network relations. Essentially, this is an agent-based rather than place-based authenticity, asserted and confirmed in a networked space generated by relationally connected world cities and elite chefs and customers. The concept of ‘agent-based authenticity’ proposed by this thesis and explored in detail through studies of Nobu’s performances, tastes, and texts offers a new and useful way to understand the global popularity and social status of Japanese food.

Although the broad focus of the thesis is on the globalization of Japanese food generally, it proceeds through several case studies, closing in on its primary subject, chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa and his global restaurant business. In its analysis of Nobu, the thesis organizes the research material into three main areas. Extensive participant observation and interviews undertaken in field research, running from 2004 up to the present and covering some fifteen world city locations, provide the substantive basis for these three chapters. The thesis first looks at geographical practices and performances involving food within the space of particular restaurants, and then turns to the question of taste, in particular the significance of umami in the assessment of food authenticity. The third major organizing topic taken up in the thesis has to do with written texts, in particular cookbooks, and their role in generating culinary spaces within and beyond the page.

The thesis has an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and an appendix listing the locations and dates of visits to restaurants and food markets and details of interviews and interviewees. The introduction lays out the methodology and positionality of the research, the Nobu case study, and the structure of the subsequent chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the field of food studies, particularly of Japanese food in the United States, and also starts the discussion of the concept of culinary authenticity. It includes a useful review of Japanese food culture in the US from the early 20th century through to the present, with one section dealing in particular with notable sushi craftsmen and restaurateurs. Chapter 2, which introduces ‘Nobu’s empire,’ employs spatial and geographical theory relating to globalization and world cities and networks to explain the structure and management of Nobu’s restaurant business. Nobu’s culinary network,

established around a collection of world-city nodes, is described, as are his clientele and his invention and dissemination of ‘hybridized’ Nobu-style Japanese food.

Chapter 3 is the first of three chapters dealing with the key elements identified by the thesis as organizing concepts in its analysis of Nobu-style cuisine and spatiality. This chapter focuses on his business as a performance conducted in network space. It analyzes both Nobu’s personal physical activities and daily chef practices and the design of his performance space, the interior and exterior of his restaurants around the world. Nobu’s authenticity is in this way analyzed as a performance maintained through his body in a distinctive culinary space. Chapter 4 moves on to discussing the event of taste in the embodied experience of food. There is a historical review of the fifth basic taste, umami, and a discussion of the importance of umami in the recent promotion of Japanese food culture by celebrity chefs including Nobu, who emphasize the umami/authenticity nexus in the context of agent-based culinary network communities. Chapter 5 deals with cookbooks, considering the various spaces generated in and performed by author-text-reader interactions. Analyzing several Nobu cookbooks, this chapter considers the impact on culinary network spaces of text events involving chefs, photographers, editors, publishers, and readers.

The conclusion pulls the three key concepts together to make a final argument for the validity and usefulness of a spatial (mobile, networked) understanding of agent-based authenticity. The significance of the case of celebrity chef Nobu is restated, the argument being that a geographical perspective which locates Japanese cuisine in a global world-city network rather by reference to a single location-of-origin enables a new way to understand the popularity of Japanese food culture in the United States and around the world.

In the final defense, held on June 18th 2016, several significant and critical points were raised by readers. In general, the thesis received a positive response, with readers noting that it was well-written, professionally presented, solidly grounded in contemporary spatial theory, food studies, and American Studies, and clearly the result of sound field research that had been both intensive and extensive. There were, however, several important issues that readers felt would benefit from more consideration. The biggest issue was the problem of maintaining a workable balance of ‘respect’ and ‘critique’ in this kind of study, in which the researcher has to strive to maintain a workable and to some extent deferential relationship with the celebrity subject in order to enable continued access to the research field while at the same time finding a way to engage critically with the that subject and with the large-scale implications of the study. In relation to the Nobu phenomenon, several pointed questions were raised regarding issues of class, globalization and its new dynamics of inequality, as well as the relations between a mobile culinary elite and local food cultures. Further discussion raised the question of the distinction between ‘agent-based authenticity’ and ‘branding,’ and the tension between Nobu’s maintenance of centralized control throughout his global restaurant business and the inherent uncontrollability of actor-networks.

However, while the readers pointed out several points on which the research as well as the structure and positionality of the thesis could be vulnerable to critique, the unanimous final assessment was that it was a well-written and professional piece of work that was

unquestionably worthy of being accepted as a doctoral thesis for the award of the PhD degree.

上記の理由により、本審査委員会は博士（学術）の学位を授与するにふさわしいものと認定する。