Accept All Substitutes:

A Historical Analysis of Cultural Taste Patterns

Through An Examination of Mock Cuisine

A Thesis in Anthropology

by

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Abstract: Mock foods describe a subsection of foods that essentially are transformed in one way or another to emulate a different food in an attempt to subvert one or more of the sensory experiences of eating. Mock foods have been utilized throughout history for various reasons and remain an important category today. Some uses of mock foods include illusion foods during Roman and Medieval times; recipes made during times of hardship such as the Great Depression in the USA and WWII rationing in the UK; and dietary substitutes for health or moral reasons. Though mock foods are actually much more ubiquitous than the average consumer might think, there are few discussions about them. The analysis of mock foods is useful in an anthropological context because they hold great symbolic value and can tell us a lot about their respective historical and cultural contexts. In this paper I will first explain the importance of studying food in general and how mock foods represent a distinctively significant topic in that study. I will then explore mock foods of the past and present and analyze their symbolic meanings and speculate on the role that mock foods will play in the future of our food system.

Introduction

There is no mock foods aisle at the grocery store. Similarly, you will not find a heading titled “Mock Foods” in the pages of your local diner’s menu. Most people will not even be able to name a single mock food when asked. So why are mock foods worth talking about? Mock foods are actually far more abundant than the average eater might think and they represent an under-discussed subsection of foods. At their most basic level, mock foods attempt to be something they are not, or rather, the person preparing the mock food is trying to mimic some aspect of another food, be it taste, smell, sight, or some combination, in their mock food. Mock foods can tell us a lot about our personal food choices as well as the larger social, cultural, historical, and political factors that shape our options. In this paper I will discuss what mock foods are and why we make them. I will look at a selection of mock foods throughout history as well as mock foods that exist today and explain what all of these foods reflect in their respective contexts. Finally, I will consider the role that mock foods might play in the future of our food system. First, it is necessary to establish why studying food in general can be especially helpful to anthropological discussions.

Go to any town in America, and even when options are slim, chances are good that there will at least be a Chinese food place and a pizzeria. If you live in New Jersey, there is the added benefit of a diner in almost every town which expands your options for fast comfort food considerably. Most people will have their opinions on where to get the

best General Tso's or which pizzeria has the best dough and which diner is worth the extra-long drive, but ask these same people who General Tso was or about the arguably non-Italian origins of pizza or where the first diner was actually built and they might appear dumbfounded and even contentious. It is a wonder that we spend so much time thinking about, shopping for, preparing, cooking, eating, talking about, blogging about, and even watching television shows about food and yet its history and meanings are still lost on so many of us.

In his article "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption," Roland Barthes argues that food is more than mere nutrition. He starts with the example of sugar, asserting that it "is not just a foodstuff, even when it is used in conjunction with other foods; it is...an 'attitude,' bound to certain usages, certain 'protocols,' that have to do with more than food" (2008:28). He explains that studying sugar can be useful to many fields, including advertising, sociology, and history. He uses the example of sugar because, writing in a French publication, he believes "it permits us to get outside of what we, as Frenchmen, consider 'obvious.' For we do not see our own food, or worse, we assume that it is insignificant" (2008:28). Barthes concludes that food "has a twofold value, being nutrition as well as protocol, and its value as protocol becomes increasingly more important as soon as the basic needs are satisfied" (2008:34). We will be able to see food's value as protocol especially well in the study of mock foods because they are essentially made to draw on the ritualized meanings of other foods. Barthes wrote this

article over 50 years ago, and while the field has grown in recent years, it seems his call to study food as more than just nutrition has been largely unanswered.

In the preface to *Gastronomy: The Anthropology of Food and Food Habits*, written in 1976, Sol Tax writes that "the very definition of anthropology — the study of man, all he requires, creates, uses, how and where he lives — implies that the study of anything so basic to man's survival as food is essential" and yet even then he felt that "the subject of food...has apparently become 'old fashioned' in past years" (1976:V). This compendium, and others like it released since then, strive to bring the subject of food anthropology closer to the forefront of the field and yet it is still largely a niche study. Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois's contribution "The Anthropology of Food and Eating" to the 2002 *Annual Review of Anthropology* highlights many of the most important studies in the field because they "contend that the study of food and eating is important both for its own sake since food is utterly essential to human existence (and often insufficiently available) and because the subfield has proved valuable for debating and advancing anthropological theory and research methods" (2002:99). They also argue that "food studies have illuminated broad societal processes such as political-economic value-creation, symbolic value-creation, and the social construction of memory" and that "such studies have also proved an important arena for debating the relative merits of cultural and historical materialism vs. structuralist or symbolic explanations for human behavior" (2002:99). Food can tell us so much about who we are, not only on cultural but on personal scales, and it affects and is affected by everything we do. And yet, thanks to

ever-evolving technology, bitter political standoffs, and globalization, we are becoming more and more detached from our food. Maybe the future of food will be everyone drinking standardized, nutritionally-balanced meal shakes but this seems unlikely because, as Barthes says, food "is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior" (2008:29). Food is not merely calories and therefore logical materialist explanations of it alone will not suffice because, as historian Paul Freedman writes, "food reflects the environment of a society, but is not completely determined by it" (2007:8) and as Marshall Sahlins writes in a chapter entitled "Food as Symbolic Code," "production is a functional moment of a cultural structure" (1942:95).

Because food is a universal human constant, it gives us a strong body of material to study from an anthropological perspective. Everyone has to eat and all of our ancestors have always had to eat so we can immediately find a way to relate to the past and to others. Yet we can be very disconnected from global or historical cuisines and the definition of what food is can be very different from one culture to another as it is shaped by a multitude of connected factors. Freedman asserts that "taste says something important about specific places and times. Food is considered as a form of social history, revealing the impact on dining of, for example, postwar prosperity, or the technological revolutions and the desire for convenience" (2007:22). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz's metaphor of humans being stuck in "webs of significance" that they themselves weave is

especially apt when it comes to something like food. For as long as there has been differential access to food, it has been tied up with meanings of wealth and power and therefore has strong associations with politics, economy, and class. By studying the processes that affect patterns of taste, we are able to learn more about ourselves and why we eat the way we do. This kind of self-reflexiveness is especially crucial at a time when our food system is so deeply entrenched in issues of environmental degradation, sustainability, and health concerns. By studying the cultural meanings of the past, we can begin to understand our present as well as where the future may take us.

Food and Rituals

The ritual aspect of food can be evident to anyone who has participated in a holiday meal or even a slice of birthday cake. In his article "Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective," anthropologist Robin Fox writes "because of its centrality in our lives, food becomes a perfect vehicle for ritual, and food rituals become central to most religions" (2002:18). While the religious aspects of many of these rituals may get lost, food remains a central component to many ritual celebrations. Fox goes on to say that "the use of food as ritual is often not so obvious, but when we think of our linking of food with occasions and festivals, and often limiting it to these, it becomes clearer" (2002:20). He uses the examples of English Christmas pudding, American Thanksgiving turkey, and whole suckling pig for Chinese weddings, concluding that "in all these cases,

the special food serves to mark the special occasion and bring home to us its significance" (2002:20). Food is just one part of these ritual events but it undoubtedly plays a large role. We associate the occasions with the food and the food with the occasions. This is just one way that meanings associated with food are made and perpetuated.

Everyday Food Consumption

Even everyday food consumption can be thought in terms of small rituals. Whether a person always eats their meals in a certain order or always pairs certain items together, these actions are considered to be rituals and a recent study has even shown that these rituals might actually enhance how people savor their meals. Referencing the idea that "rituals play a particularly prominent role in ancient and modern occasions for consumption," (Vohs 2013) the individuals who conducted the study sought to determine how everyday rituals involving consumption might affect our enjoyment of the foods. After performing four separate tests, they concluded that "when these behaviors followed a systematic, ritualistic pattern, enjoyment increased; when they did not, or when the behaviors performed were more random and therefore less ritualistic, enjoyment was lower" (Vohs 2013). Eating new foods for the first time in unknown settings might be exciting and enjoyable for some and might even become a ritual in itself, but it appears that sticking to known rituals can enhance the experience of everyday meals because "they lead to greater involvement and interest" (Vohs 2013). In studying mock foods we

will see the roles they play in more elaborate rituals as well as everyday rituals of eating.

Examining Mock Foods

Knowing that everyday rituals in food consumption can increase our enjoyment of the foods lends some insight into the realm of mock foods. A little discussed subject, mock foods are actually quite common, and not just as historical oddities or modern novelties. You may have heard of mock apple pie or even had a piece of the cracker-based concoction but mock foods are much more present than most people realize. If you have ever had a veggie burger, you have had a mock food. Often sushi that calls for crabmeat will be made with crab sticks, which are actually pieces of white fish that are shaped and colored to look like crabmeat. Even products like Cool Whip, margarine, and Tang are formulated to resemble other foods in texture or taste. At first when we realize how common mock foods and start to think about them, they might seem odd. Why would we try to make foods that look or taste like other foods? This is where the ritual aspect of eating becomes relevant. Mock foods have been made in the past and continue to be made for a variety of reasons, but all of those reasons have some kind of ritual component involved. Whether it be the ingenious illusion foods of Medieval feasts, the clever mock recipes made popular during rationing in World War II England, or modern day dietary alternatives, all of these mock foods send symbols, to guests, to family, and to ourselves. Mock foods can be public or personal, for display of (real or coveted) wealth or for personal comfort. Perhaps more than any other kind of food, mock

foods make evident the symbolic component of food and eating because they disguise themselves as something they are not, often imitating something else with a special cultural significance or a food associated with a higher class. Rather than serving or eating these foods as what they are, they are doctored in ways to increase the enjoyment of the consumer. This makes it clear that the nutritional component is not the only thing important about food.

Mock foods exist throughout history in different cultures, for different reasons. At first glance, the line of mock foods through history might appear to be a somewhat subtle thread in the great tapestry of food but it is useful to study and discuss because of what it tells us about how we view our food, what it means to us, and how it makes us feel. The examples that will be outlined here, ones that show clear symbolic significance, are just a small number of the many mock foods that exist in the history of food and in the modern world.

While the days of elaborate Medieval feasts and dire wartime rationing are gone, mock foods still have a place in our diets and indeed, examining the phases when mock foods were popular reveals a pattern of trends. People of higher classes still use expensive foods as signs of their wealth and on the other end, many others have to contend with minimal food budgets. In either case, we can see the cultural signals that our food choices send out. Freedman argues that "gastronomy expresses an outlook, an aesthetic. Some perceptions of quality seem to continue for centuries. . . Other perceptions change dramatically" (2007:8) and that "throughout history recurrent patterns

emerge in how people thought about food and its place in daily life and the expression of taste," (2007:11). Mock foods illustrate this cycle of trends thoroughly, as we see them rise and fall in popularity but never completely go away. Of course, this cycle does not exist in a vacuum and the trends we see can help to explain and be explained by their respective political, historical, and cultural contexts. By understanding these contexts in which mock foods were popular in the past, we can begin to look at the place of mock foods in modern society and what that says about our current food system and how it might be shaped in the future. Expanding on Barthes's analysis of sugar, Sidney Mintz's seminal work *Sweetness and Power* shows us that something as seemingly simple and ubiquitous as sugar has a remarkably complex history, tied up in a wealth of political, historical, and cultural meanings. Mintz outlines the progression of sugar from its role in the rise of slavery to its status as a luxury item to a cheap commodity used to pacify the working class and by doing so makes the reader more aware of their culinary surroundings. Like sugar, mock foods can be used to tell us about how we attach meanings to our food and then what role these meanings play in our food choices.

What Are Mock Foods?

Patricia Roberts's article "In Praise of Mock Food," published in *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*, first defines "mock" before discussing mock foods: "According to Webster's dictionary, the verb 'to mock' has four meaning: (1) to treat

with contempt or ridicule, (2) to disappoint the hopes of or delude, (3) to defy or challenge, and (4) to imitate or mimic" (2003:17). While mock foods may be made with any of these definitions in mind, they largely seek to accomplish the fourth definition, to mimic the food they are substituting. According to *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, a mock food can fall under any of the following definitions:

- A food that uses a substitution for a primary ingredient: Possibly the most well-known examples of this category include mock turtle soup, which uses more easily attainable meats to substitute for the reptile, and mock apple pie, which uses crackers instead of the fruit.
- A food that is meant to taste like another: Both mock turtle soup and mock apple pie would fall under this category as well, as the chefs who make them are trying to capture the taste of the original with other ingredients.
- A food that looks like other foods or objects: For example, the Medieval illusion foods presented at so many feasts that were designed to delight the guests or shaping a lesser cut of meat into a more prestigious one, such as is called for in the recipe of mutton duck.
- A food that substitutes budget-friendly ingredients for more expensive ones: These recipes, such as mock duck made out of sausage meat, were especially popular during the Great Depression and wartime when traditional ingredients would be rare and expensive.

- A food that uses less of a key ingredient: Again, mock foods, such as war cake or mock angel food cake, made during times of economic hardship or rationing would have to make do with less of certain ingredients like sugar or eggs.
- A food that is meant to be a dietary alternative: For example, veggie burgers for vegetarians or sugar substitutes for people with diabetes or simply those who wish to cut back their sugar intake. [Olver 2005]

Australian food historian Janet Clarkson adds to the list the following:

- Faux food created for religious or other ethical reasons, such as the fake meat served at Lent throughout the ages.
- Faux food for fun, as in illusion foods.
- And faux food for reasons that are "lost to us today. . . There are instructions for mock cock's comb in some 17th-century cookbooks." Not to mention recipes for mock asses' milk. [Nunn 2008]

For a food to be “mocked,” the thing it is trying to imitate must exist first in the society and become established enough that it is familiar to the chef and diners. In most cases, the item being imitated must then become scarce or have some cultural significance attached to it to make the chef want to emulate it.

Mock foods have been around for a long time and exist in abundance today. While recipes for mock dishes can be found in various cookbooks and mock products stock the shelves of our grocery stores, there is very little, if any, discussion about mock foods and what they tell us about our eating habits. The entry for mock foods in *The*

Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America starts by saying that "mock foods provide an insight into America's national heritage" (Olver 2005). It goes on to briefly explain the history of mock foods in America. This is a great start to the discussion but mock foods existed long before America was populated by European settlers. Clarkson asserts that mock foods have been around as long as cooks have and John Stanton, chairman of the department of food marketing at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia says that humans make mock foods simply "because we can" (Nunn 2008). Because of this long and compelling history, it is clear that studying mock foods can tell us a lot about our past and our present. As Roberts writes:

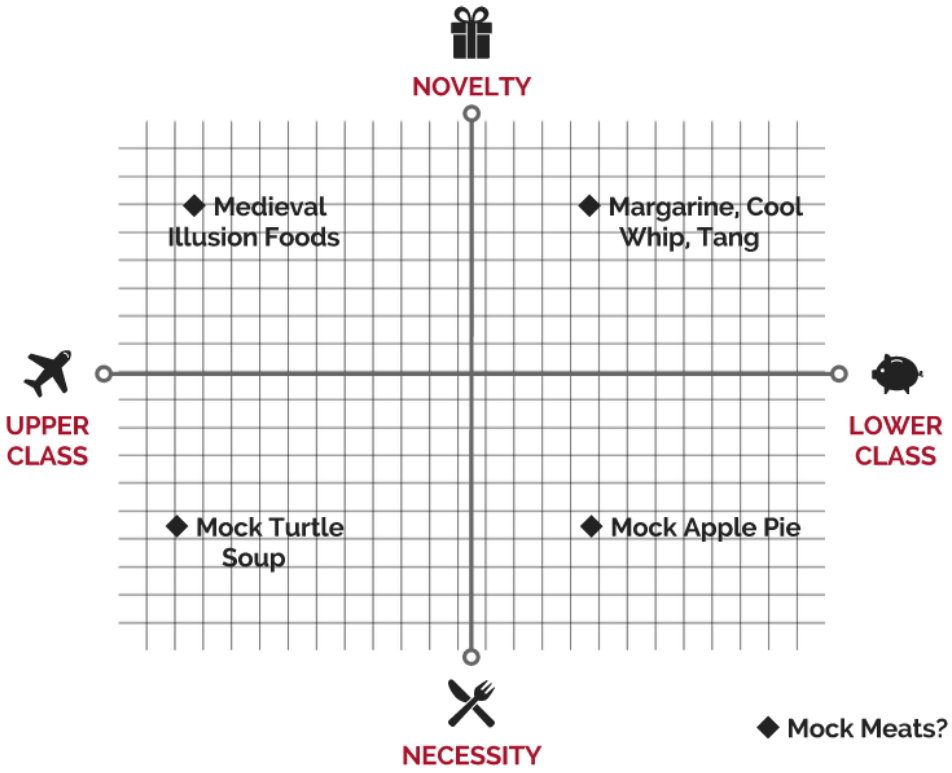
> Dull is the world in which everything is as it seems, and dreary the life whose assumptions remain unchallenged. Mock food forces that challenge upon us, as taste buds tingling and nostrils quivering, we ask, "What is this?" And unlike other philosophical situations in which this question might be asked, in the world of mock foods there is always an answer. [2003:21]

If, according to anthropologist Igor de Garine, "food and Nutrition in Man is a meeting point between Nature and Culture," (1979:895) then perhaps the artifice of mock foods represents Man's (or Woman's) mastery over Nature to the highest degree, taking elements of the natural world and transmogrifying them as our cultural needs deem necessary. Similar to this statement are the ideas put forward by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. In *The Raw and The Cooked* (1964), Lévi-Strauss claims that certain oppositional pairs, especially those found in the world of cooking (raw/cooked,

fresh/rotten, moist/dry, etc.) reflect the dualistic structure that all societies share, one side representing nature and the other culture. He defines a similar structure in "The Culinary Triangle" and concludes that "we can hope to discover for each specific case how the cooking of a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structure-or else resigns itself, still unconsciously, to revealing its contradictions" (2008:43). If we look at mock foods as our ultimate transformation from natural materials to cultural objects, we can see what they say about the societies in which they are created.

Why Make Mock Foods?

As illustrated in the multiple definitions of what mock foods can be, they can serve a multitude of uses. There seems to exist a continuum along which a mock food can fall, with novelty mock foods being on one end and mock foods made out of necessity being on the other. For the most part, this continuum will fall along social class lines, with novelty foods being associated with higher classes and necessity foods with lower classes, though there are exceptions. To categorize mock foods, we can begin to chart them on a diagram that looks like this:



where one axis represents class, and the other represents the distinction between novelty and necessity. Mock foods can fall just about anywhere on this diagram. For example, mock meats have to be further broken down before they can be charted because they exist in different formats for different reasons. Mock foods can also change in meaning and therefore move along these axes, as we will see with several of these examples. In all of these cases, mock foods carry great symbolic significance, drawing on the meanings of the foods they are emulating. The foods on the chart are just a small handful of examples that were chosen because they represent the extremes of the axes of this diagram. They also all demonstrate the changing meanings of mock foods and food in general.

An example of a range of foods constructed purely for novelty's sake are the illusion foods presented at Medieval feasts. In this case as in many others, when a choice is made to dress up a dish to make it look like something it is not for no other reason than to delight an audience, it is often thanks to being part of a higher social class. Throughout history and in the present day, novelty mock foods have mainly been used as messages of social class. In many of these cases, it would be necessary to be involved in a higher class level because you would not otherwise have time to come up with extravagant mock foods, but there are exceptions to this standard. Novelty mock foods were once mostly reserved for individuals of higher classes because they could afford to play with their food. Now, thanks to advanced food preparation techniques making food more affordable for lower and middle classes, the novelty is not always reserved only for the higher classes. Thus around Easter time every year we can find in any American grocery, convenience, or drug store Cadbury's creme-filled chocolate "eggs" (possibly inspired by Medieval marzipan eggs).

At the other end are foods that will be transformed under duress and scarcity, a necessity for an ingredient that is lacking, such as the foods created during rationing in WWII England. These foods, like many others at this end, are often made by people of lower classes or at least those experiencing some kind of financial hardship because they often have to wind up substituting one or several expensive ingredients for more affordable ones, but of course again there are exceptions. For example, in Victorian England mock turtle soup was enjoyed by those of higher classes who may have had the

initial opportunity to taste the real thing but because of the scarcity of turtles had to contend with more readily available ingredients to concoct an imitation, which was often as time-consuming and difficult to make as the real thing.

Between these two extremes fall a number of other mock foods which do not always fall neatly under the categories of novelty and necessary or reflect class but can still tell us something about the consumers. These are mostly foods that are used as dietary substitutes, which can be for moral, health, or religious reasons. Mock foods based on dietary restrictions, like sugar substitutes or gluten-free bread, can be necessary because of diseases like diabetes or because of food allergies. These restrictions are not necessarily tied to either higher or lower classes. Meat is the food that is most commonly substituted for moral or religious reasons. Historically, tofu was used as a meat substitute in China and various foods took the place of meat for Catholics taking part in Lent. In some cases, such as with many packaged meat substitutes, the alternatives might be more expensive. However, homemade alternatives such as bean “burgers” and portobello mushroom “steaks” offer more affordable options. Similarly, while many dietary alternatives, such as lower-calorie soy or almond “milks” are often priced higher, reserving them for higher classes, margarine, a butter alternative, has become so popular that it is widely available and comparably priced to the real thing.

In all cases of mock food a choice is being made; a person can choose to just eat something in its original format but when it is transformed into a mock food, it is sending a message and it is in these messages that the main difference of use lies. In all of these

cases, people are not only transforming raw ingredients (nature) into dishes (culture) but transforming them into dishes that resemble other dishes to affix the meanings associated with them. As Claude Lévi-Strauss states in *The Savage Mind*, "natural species are chosen not because they are 'good to eat' but because they are 'good to think'" (1962). In other words, we pick the foods we eat for their symbolic meanings and not just their nutritional value.

Questions

When we start to think about mock foods, their colorful past, and how omnipresent they are today, a lot of questions start to arise. Why do we feel the need to "mock" certain foods? Taking one food and forming it into the shape of another or spicing it in a way that mimics another food's taste does not change the nutritional value of the meal. But knowing the importance of ritual in food sheds a bright light on why we make mock foods. This can also help us to answer more specific questions about mock foods. Why were mock foods the center of many elaborate banquets and feasts? Why did the British government stress the importance of the war on the homefront during WWII and devote so much propaganda to food production? Why do vegetarians continue to eat fake meat? Why do many diet trends focus on recreating traditional favorites with "healthier" ingredients or processes? Why do we prefer certain foods over others when they might be nutritionally comparable? Why do some foods have negative connotations, often being associated with lower classes?

In examining the historical and present day uses of mock foods, we can begin to answer some of these questions.

Past

Mock foods can be dated as far back as Roman times and probably existed for as long as humans have been cooking. This is because of humans' ability and perhaps need to transform the natural into the cultural. The advantages of cooking food can be practical (killing off bacteria, making it easier to digest, etc.) but the act of inventing, preparing, adjusting, preserving, and passing down recipes adds important cultural and psychological elements to eating. Familiar recipes can serve as comfort foods to individuals, giving a boost of morale during times of stress. Recipes can also be unified in ethnic cuisines, strengthening the sense of cohesion of a group. In cases like these, recipes create a kind of symbolic system or language. To those familiar with a recipe, it can actually be read, both in the literal sense of its instructions and in the metaphorical sense of the cultural meanings it conveys. Conversely, like an unknown language, an unfamiliar recipe may seem strange, difficult to prepare, or even inedible.

Foods speak to us not only through the associated cultural meanings that we read before they even reach the table but also through the sensory experience of actually eating. All five of the traditional senses are engaged in the act of eating. We modify the taste of our food to our personal liking with seasonings and condiments. We smell our

food while it is being prepared and as we eat it, amplifying the taste of it. We feel the texture of food with our hands and mouths. We prefer foods that are visually appealing. Even auditory cues (the sizzle of a burger or the bubbling of a stew) prepare us for the meal we are about to enjoy. In order to appeal to all of the senses, we spend a lot of time (or pay others) to perfect recipes that will satisfy our own hunger and sometimes that of our guests. Mock foods take the dynamic relationship between our senses and the foods we eat and subvert it in one way or another, usually in an effort to make one or more of the sensory experiences more enjoyable. It is because of this reason that mock foods are actually so ubiquitous, because we always want to make our food better, or at least make it seem that way.

This is why we can see mock foods being used in so many different situations for differing reasons. As Mary-Liz Shaw writes in her article "Faux Foods are as American as Mock Apple Pie," "in prosperous times, mock foods were about pretense and appearing richer than you really were. . . but in tougher times they embraced a wistful reminiscence for things lost" (2009). Shaw illustrates that mock foods can be used by people from all class levels as well as for different purposes.

This section will look at examples of mock foods throughout time and from different regions. We can see common threads appearing through history. We can also see how many of these foods are still relevant today and how others lost popularity because their meanings were lost. In each case, the mock foods presented are

representative of wider currents of their time and place and I will discuss the connections between the mock foods and their contexts.

Earliest Accounts

The best accounts of mock foods first being used for feast purposes can be traced back to Roman times, around the 1st century AD. For as long as there have been class differences, food has been used as a marker of class. While prehistoric archaeological evidence can show us traces of what people ate, it would not show us how these foods were prepared or presented. Bioarchaeologists are even able to determine class differences based on the effects that diets will have on a skeleton. This can help us to see the differential access to resources and inequality of societies that might not have written accounts of these subjects. However, because mock foods only *appear* to be something else, we can only know that mock foods were being made from historical accounts and recipes. Freedman asserts that "the preparation of food has involved a craft that, unlike metalwork or glass-making, is by definition ephemeral and so hard to reconstruct" (2007:9). It must also be specified that not all historical societies recorded recipes or accounts of meals or at least these accounts have not been found. Therefore, mock foods are not apparent until some of the earliest historical societies, namely that of Ancient Rome.

Most of the earliest mentions of mock foods seem to be for entertainment purposes, which again goes hand in hand with the rise of hierarchical societies and the material signs of social stratification. In "The Good Things That Lay At Hand: Tastes of Ancient Greece and Rome," economist Veronika Grimm writes that "the Romans developed an enthusiastic interest in good food and good wine, and as the empire expanded they put much thought and effort into the technology required to produce these" (2007:80) and that "by the time their history began to be written the Romans were beyond the 'simple life' and well on the way towards the development of a great empire and a world-class cuisine" (2007:81). The account of Trimalchio's feast in Petronius's first century AD work *Satyricon* includes such dishes as live birds sewn up inside a pig, another roasted pig stuffed with sausages (fig. 1), a hare decorated with wings to resemble Pegasus, and more live birds in fake eggs (Raff 2011). Though this story is fictional, meant to ridicule the ostentatious displays of wealth of the nouveau riche freemen, we can assume that it is somewhat grounded in reality. These mock foods lie far at the novelty side of the novelty-necessity spectrum as well as the high class end of the class spectrum. What is interesting about this example is that it is seen as being in poor taste by the "true" nobility. This was not the de rigueur treatment that guests at later Medieval feasts would come to expect but rather people who had once belonged to a lower class rising in the ranks and making it known. This was not merely a display of wealth but that of upward mobility, separating them from their old, lower class ranks but from the new, highers ones as well.

A more tangible example of mock food from Roman times is less provocative but demonstrates the power of the empire nonetheless. It is actually a mock spice. Silphium, a fennel-like plant that could not be domesticated, was collected by the people of the Greek city Cyrenaica in North Africa. Trade of the plant led the city to become very wealthy to the point where coins from the city were stamped with a likeness of it. Silphium, now extinct because it was so popular and overharvested by the Romans, was so beloved that instead of simply doing without, cooks used a near relative, asafoetida to imitate the flavor (Grimm 2007:92). This might be likened to later instances of mock oysters which were invented as a way to mitigate the dwindling populations along nineteenth century American coasts. Oysters were initially popular with royalty in Renaissance Europe; it was said the Henry V would eat three hundred of the mollusks "to work up an appetite" (Roberts 2003:17). Later, Americans continued to down oysters to the point where populations were greatly decreasing. Enterprising chefs then invented different recipes for mock oysters to satisfy demand while giving oysters a chance to repopulate. Unlike silphium, we are still able to enjoy oysters today and maybe if the Romans had compromised their taste earlier, silphium would still be around.

Though these examples of mock foods in Ancient Rome carry different purposes, one for novelty and one to replace a depleted ingredient, both stand as symbols of the Roman empire's wealth and power. Feasts of mock foods were outward public displays of newly accumulated wealth. The symbolic message of Trimalchio's feast is strong: to the wealthy citizens of Rome, a freed slave acquiring great wealth would seem unnatural

and thus the foods he serves to his guests are likewise unnatural. The use of asafoetida to replace the spent silphium shows the power of their trade as well as their unquenchable greed and also stands as a cautionary tale about sustainable practices.

Fig. 1. A still from the 1969 film *Fellini Satyricon*, based on Petronius's work. A slave at Trimalchio's feast cuts into a roasted pig (presented as a recently slain pig) as if to gut it and reveals an assortment of fully-cooked sausages and organ meats. Dir. Federico Fellini. United Artists, 1969.

"Golden Age" of Mock Foods

Through history, the use of banquets to display wealth became more and more fashionable. In the European Middle Ages, elaborate feasts with illusion foods exploded in popularity. Freedman writes that "Medieval Christian Europe. . . developed a magnificent, highly decorative cuisine, based in certain respects on Roman precedents mingled with adaptations from Islamic Spain, Africa and the Middle East but with its own aesthetic of flavours, ceremony and presentation" (2007:23). We can see accounts of these foods in the plethora of cookbooks from the period. Indeed reminiscent of Trimalchio's banquet, a guest at a Medieval lord's feast could expect to see a peacock

made of bread dough, chicken liver paté, and sliced almonds, with gilded head and tail made of lettuce, red beets, eggs, cheeses, parsley, radishes, anchovies, and real peacock feathers (Sass 1976:40, fig. 2); "a meatloaf called yrchouns, meaning either urchins or hedgehogs -- they were stuck all over with slivered almonds to indicate spines" (Nunn 2008); and "trout roe pottage, prepared so that it appears to be peas" (Martino 2004:66). These foods were crucial to the feasts because the skill of the chef reflected the wit and power of the lord. As Helmut Birkhan asserts:

> The imitations of dishes and special presentations assume a deeper, almost philosophical meaning if we consider the theory of Levi-Strauss, according to which the preparation of food constitutes one of the major culture-creating achievements of humanity, the cooking of the raw an act of establishing culture. In these dishes man transcends nature either by transforming the foodstuffs (e.g. cooked peas turned into a hare-roast), or by preparing them in a nobler or more artistic form, as is the case with the special presentations. The chef thus becomes a creator, like the painter who adds symbolism to his depiction of nature, who transcends nature by capturing the meaning given to it by God through his creation of meaning. [1995:94]

Medieval illusion foods had many layered meanings. An abundance of food on its own would be an adequate display of wealth and power but the Medieval lords were not contented with that. These dishes were the epitome of food as power; not only over a lord's peers but over all of nature. Illusion foods were a way to show power over nature

because they transformed foods into masterful creations, oftentimes into actual mythological beasts. These feasts were held at a time when competing European powers were fighting to acquire and maintain control. A lord holding one of these feasts was not only asserting his own power but also the power of his kingdom. These foods resonate with events of the time, placing them securely in a very specific historical context, but also echo the conquest days of the Roman empire, showing how trends are always recycled, even when it comes to food.

Fig. 2. "The Feast of the Peacock," The Book of the Conquests and Deeds of Alexander, 15th century. This scene shows a "reanimated" peacock, one of many Medieval illusion foods, being presented to a table of lords and ladies.

Transitioning from Artifice to Nature and Back Again

By the 18th century, a marked shift in cooking took place that seemed to echo the currents of thought in the political and scientific worlds. With the French Revolution putting an end to the extravagances of the aristocracy and the Age of Enlightenment bringing ideas of reason and logic to the mainstream, food tended to shift to a more "natural" aesthetic. Jennifer J. Davis writes that during this time, "as an ideology of the *natural* slowly gained ground in aesthetic philosophy, those same highly prized skills of disguise grew increasingly suspect" (2009:36). According to Freedman, "establishing French grand cuisine in the seventeenth and eighteenth century meant rejecting the distortions and ostentations of medieval food in favour of purity and intrinsic quality," (2007:18), a shift in ideology that is reminiscent of the natural food movements of today that have grown as a response to the popularity of processed foods. Of course, this was not the end of mock foods and it would not be long until one of the most infamous mock recipes would gain massive popularity.

Fig. 3. "The Gryphon and the Mock Turtle." John Tenniel. ca. 1865.

Turtle soup can be dated to 1751, when it first appeared in the 4th edition of Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery*

Made Plain and Easy. Seven years later in 1758, the recipe for mock turtle soup appears in the 6th edition (Davidson 1999). Several mock versions exist but the most common one called for a less expensive and more obtainable calf's head. In fact, this recipe became so pervasive in Victorian society that Lewis Carroll fashioned a character after it in his popular book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). The mock turtle that Alice meets has the body of a turtle and the head, hooves, and tail of a calf (fig. 3).

Mock turtle soup has an important place in Victorian history because it was a symbol of the colonization, globalization, and imperialism of the British Empire at the time. Travelers who sailed around the world would have brought back the creatures; Charles Darwin famously ate turtle on his voyage from the Galapagos Islands (Chatfield 1987). For Victorian English citizens, eating turtle was not only a delicious novelty. It also signified the global power of their country. While the imitation's main ingredient varied from the genuine in many ways (land vs. sea, head vs. whole) it was made to mimic the ideas associated with the original. To market it as calf's head soup would not have the implications that come with turtle soup. It even became so popular that newly established canned soup companies started producing canned versions. As evidenced in a 1912 Campbell's soup ad (fig. 4), by this time mock turtle soup had become a kind of prestige food in itself. Campbell's touted its canned version because mock turtle soup

Fig. 4. A 1912 Campbell's ad for mock turtle soup. The Pittsburgh Press, Nov. 27, 1912.

Fig. 5. A 1947 Campbell's ad for mock turtle soup.

was “too expensive to make it at home.” As late as 1947, mock turtle was still seen as a prestige food, as evidenced by a Campbell’s ad, showing a well-off family enjoying the dish (fig. 5). However, over time turtle soup and its mock cousin fell out of fashion because the meanings they originally signified were lost on consumers.

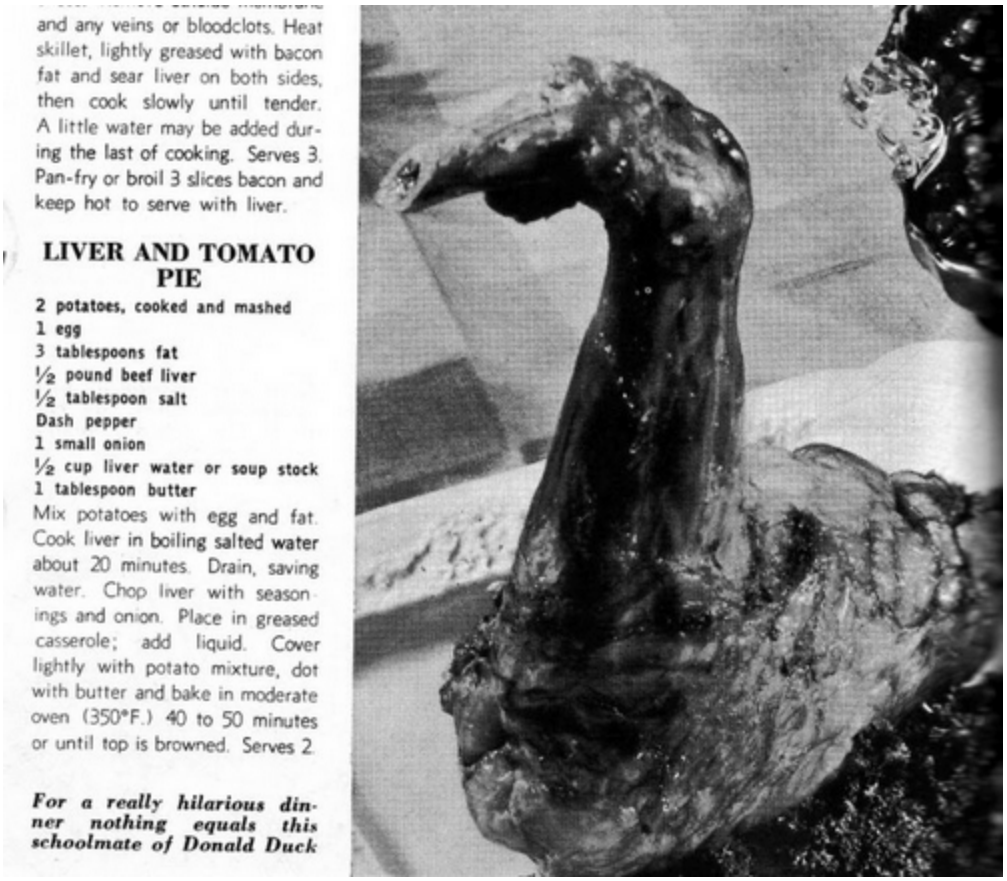
Mock Foods For Health and Wealth

Around the turn of the 20th century, mock foods were being used more as dietary substitutes or to keep budgets down. Practical cookery was being favored as evidenced by cook books like *Marion Harland’s Complete Cook Book* from 1906, which touts “thousands of carefully proved recipes--prepared for the housewife, not for the chef.”

Fig. 6. A butcher’s chart for lamb, suggesting the shoulder be used to make a roast “duck.”

Included in Harland's comprehensive cookbook are recipes for mock roast chicken (a kind of chicken meatloaf made from chicken giblets, eggs, and steak); mock pâté de foie gras (again made with chicken giblets or alternatively, calf, lamb, or pig liver); two recipes for mock turtle soup (one with the usual calf's head, the second with white beans); mock squabs (made from veal); mock fried oysters (made from salsify, otherwise known as oyster plant); mock cherry pie (made instead with cranberries and raisins); and imitation terrapin (a kind of smaller turtle made here with creamed chicken, lemon juice, and sherry). Helen Watkeys Moore's *Camouflage Cookery* from 1918 is an entire cookbook of mock recipes which strives "to bring together palatable and economical recipes, by the best known American cooks, for those who wish to prepare wholesome and appetizing dishes." Moore's book includes thirteen recipes for different mock soups, eight recipes for mock oysters, several different recipes for mock seafoods, six recipes for mock terrapin, eleven recipes for various meat preparations (about half of which are actually vegetarian), and an assortment of mock sausage, poultry, game, salad, desserts, sides, sauces, nuts, and fruits. These recipes show how women of the time were expected to deliver appetizing and attractive meals while remaining within a budget. Rather than simply making dishes that would have been budget-friendly and serving them as what they were, they would use these creative recipes to emulate more prestigious foods.

Mock duck made from lamb is a perfect example of a recipe made for economic reasons (fig. 7, 8). As Mary J. Lincoln writes in *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book*



and any veins or bloodclots. Heat skillet, lightly greased with bacon fat and sear liver on both sides, then cook slowly until tender. A little water may be added during the last of cooking. Serves 3. Pan-fry or broil 3 slices bacon and keep hot to serve with liver.

LIVER AND TOMATO PIE

2 potatoes, cooked and mashed
1 egg
3 tablespoons fat
½ pound beef liver
½ tablespoon salt
Dash pepper
1 small onion
½ cup liver water or soup stock
1 tablespoon butter

Mix potatoes with egg and fat. Cook liver in boiling salted water about 20 minutes. Drain, saving water. Chop liver with seasonings and onion. Place in greased casserole; add liquid. Cover lightly with potato mixture, dot with butter and bake in moderate oven (350°F.) 40 to 50 minutes or until top is browned. Serves 2.

For a really hilarious dinner nothing equals this schoolmate of Donald Duck

Fig. 7. A shoulder of lamb transformed into a duck-like shape, *Culinary Arts Institute Encyclopedic Cookbook*, ca. 1965

(1884), "this Mock Duck is an attractive way of serving what is usually considered an inferior piece of meat, and solves the vexing problem, 'how to carve a fore quarter of mutton.'" City chicken (fig. 8) is a similar thrifty mock recipe and involves no chicken at all. This dish was meant to emulate fried chicken for those who would not have easy access to chickens, such as city dwellers in Pittsburgh where the recipe is thought to have originated. The fact that they called it "chicken" and not merely fried pork and veal cubes

Fig. 8. A 1932 ad with a recipe for city chicken. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. November 2, 1932.

undoubtedly must be due to the fact that chicken would have been a more prized kind of meat. The recipe first appeared around the turn of the century and remained popular through the years of the Great Depression. These recipes reflect the growth of the middle class around the turn of the century as well as innovations in the kitchen. While there were more and more conveniences, more women were also in charge of the cooking themselves instead of having cooks on hand and therefore had to find or invent recipes that were attractive, filling, and stayed within the family budget.

Even vegetarian substitutes were gaining popularity in this period, as seen with cookbooks such as *Mrs. Rorer's Vegetable Cookery and Meat Substitutes* from 1909 and Maria McIlvaine Gillmore's *Meatless Cookery: With Special Reference to Diet for Heart Disease, Blood Pressure, and*

Autointoxication from 1914. Considering the explosion of high-fat fast foods and the rising consumption of beef in America that would come in the mid-20th century, Mrs. Rorer was somewhat ahead of her time in her denouncement of eating too much meat. She divides vegetables into four groups, one of which has "meat value and take[s] the place of meat" (Rorer 1909:7). Her recipes include mock clam bouillon, mock oyster soup, and mock clam chowder (all made again with salsify); mock meat soup (made with carrot, turnip, celery, rice, and peas); mock veal roast (made from peanuts, lentils, and breadcrumbs); mock tenderloin steak (made from "meat" nuts: walnuts, peanuts, pine nuts, and almonds); mock turkey (made from bread crumbs, nuts, rice, and eggs); mock fish (made from hominy grits, mixed nuts, and eggs); and mock ham (made from kidney beans, walnuts, pecans, almonds, and pimientos). Gillmore similarly contends that "the more elaborate the food, the more quickly does [man's] heart succumb to the strain put upon it. So it falls upon the women to meet this condition" but also that "one need not, like Nebuchadnezzar, subsist on grass alone just because meat has been condemned, for there are many delicious dishes to take its place" (1914). Gillmore's recipes include mock bisque soup (made from tomatoes, baking soda, milk, butter, and cornstarch); mock beef rissoles (made from rusk-crumbs, grated cheese, milk, mustard, and horseradish); mock whipped cream (made from milk, flour, sugar, and vanilla); and mock angel food cake (made with the same ingredients as regular angel food cake but with only two egg whites instead of the regular dozen). These recipe books show a growing awareness of the effects of one's diet on health. While the health craze as we know it today did not really

come to fruition until the later part of the 20th century, it is clear that the discourse of health was already in effect at this time. Later, when we examine modern diet trends, we will see echoes of these recipes.

Both mock recipes used for economical purposes and those used for health reasons showed that women had a lot of responsibilities in the kitchen. Though they did not have many of the rights they have today, they were still expected to essentially keep their families running. The role of a housewife is often denigrated today but clearly these women would have had a lot on their plates.

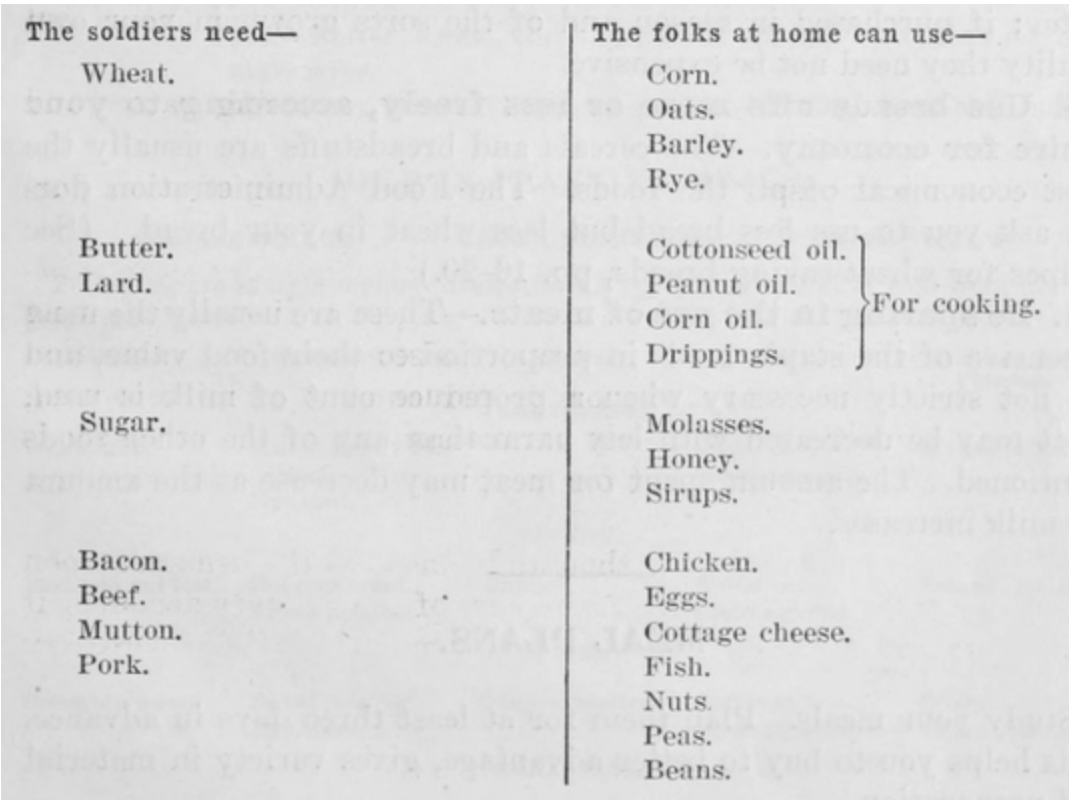
Depression, Wartime, Rationing

In the opening number of the 1960 musical *Oliver!*, based on Charles Dickens's 1838 novel *Oliver Twist*, the workhouse orphans imagine that their usual supper of gruel is something much more glorious and even dream of the indigestion that rich gentlemen suffer from. This scene quickly shows the audience the life of these orphans; everyone can relate to food and even those who are lucky enough to never go hungry can relate to a growling stomach. This scene shows how even though they are struggling with horrible working conditions and meager portions of food, their imagination is their escape, their declaration of independence. This is not too far off from the motivation behind mock foods during times of hardship. In times of hardship, mock foods have provided a way for people to enjoy foods that were once abundant as a way to keep spirits up and to help mitigate the fear and uncertainty they must have felt.

In "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," Mintz writes that "the role of war in dietary change must not be overlooked. . . War as an agent of dietary change has. . . been researched. . . however, we argue that the role of war-and the role of many kinds of social changes- has been relatively neglected in food studies" (2002:105). Mock foods springing from necessity are especially apparent in times of need. Around the turn of the twentieth century, people were introduced to and became more dependent on convenience foods and varied diets. When events like wars or economic depressions happened that took these foods away, chefs (usually women at home) would have to be clever and creative, not only to keep costs down but to keep spirits high for the whole family and to serve as examples to neighbors and friends. WWI, The Great Depression in America and rationing during WWII in England provide prime examples of mock foods being used during times when certain foods were unavailable or too expensive. During these periods, middle-class families were becoming accustomed to the convenience that new food technologies, such as superior storage and grocery stores, would afford. When tragedy struck, in the form of wars and economic crisis respectively, food was one of the most important ways that families were affected. While luxuries like clothing and technology could be put on the back burner, everyone still needed to eat, and because families had just gotten used to certain levels of convenience, mock foods were a shrewd way of imitating those comforts. Food was not important just to feed people but was used to keep up morale and continue the daily culinary rituals that people had become accustomed to.

A 1918 pamphlet entitled *War Economy in Food*, was distributed to American

housewives and included tips and recipes designed to be frugal during wartime (fig. 9). The pamphlet starts off with "The President's Call to the Women of the Nation" (1918:5), again showing the responsibilities of women in the kitchen. One of the most intriguing recipes is for war cake, under the heading "Recipes for Conservation Sweets"



The soldiers need—	The folks at home can use—
Wheat.	Corn.
	Oats.
	Barley.
	Rye.
Butter.	Cottonseed oil. }
Lard.	Peanut oil. } For cooking.
	Corn oil. }
	Drippings. }
Sugar.	Molasses.
	Honey.
	Sirups.
Bacon.	Chicken.
Beef.	Eggs.
Mutton.	Cottage cheese.
Pork.	Fish.
	Nuts.
	Peas.
	Beans.

Fig. 9. A chart showing substitutions housewives could make during WWI. *War Economy in Food*. 1918

(1918:28). Alternately known as depression cake, it was made with molasses, corn syrup, raisins, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, flour, and no eggs or milk and almost no fat. This was a popular way to have something like a dessert while rationing. Obviously cake is not a nutritionally necessary kind of food but its associations with hospitality and comfort

would be crucial during times of hardship. The recipe does not seem particularly outlandish or unappetizing, but the fact that it had to be differentiated from “peacetime” cake showed how people were getting more and more used to a large amount of sugar in their diets. In *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz explores the initial association of sugar with prestige and traces its journey as it became more available and a symbol of upward mobility for the working classes. Clearly at this time, sugar was a symbol of prosperity and when it had to be rationed during wartime, people just had to pretend they could still have it in heaps.

Fig. 10. Three children enjoy carrots on sticks, a healthy, if unsatisfying, alternative to ice cream in WWII England.

While Americans were encouraged to be frugal with their food so that certain items could be sent overseas to troops and people in allied countries, the British people had to contend with strict rationing from 1940, just after the start of the war, to 1954, nine years after the war had ended (Charman). During this long span of time, housewives, again, were expected to keep their families fed, healthy, and happy. Working with only a limited stock led to a wide range of mock recipes. British mock recipes included mock cream (made from margarine, sugar, dried milk powder, and milk); mock goose (made from lentils, bread crumbs, onion, sage, butter, chicken stock); mock duck (made from sausage meat, onions, apples, and sage); mock apricot flan (made from carrots, almond essence, plum jam, and pastry); mock marzipan (made from soya flour, sugar, margarine, and almond essence); mock banana (made from parsnips, banana extract, and sugar); and carrots on sticks meant to take the place of ice cream (fig. 10). British people were expected to maintain normalcy in the face of war as evidenced by the now overused motivational slogan "Keep Calm and Carry On" that was first printed in 1939. Diane Duane proposes that author C.S. Lewis was greatly affected by wartime rationing and it is evidenced in his writing:

> The first sense you get in Narnia about Lewis's attitude toward food is an air of profound nostalgia for the lost paradise of a varied, ample diet, and a willingness to wallow in the nostalgia somewhat. The very first meal any human experiences in Narnia, the high tea. . . is a perfect evocation of a turn-of-the-century British

> tea. . . the middle-class tea you would properly have in someone's home, a meal rather than a snack, long on protein, carbs, and comfort. For Lucy. . . who was as hungry as anyone else in Britain and (some of his letters reveal) as bored by the limitations and substitutions of wartime food, this meal would have smacked of Heaven. [2010:89]

Instead of, or perhaps because of, eating mock recipes, Lewis recreated his nostalgia for pre-war food in the only way he could.

Possibly the best known mock food, mock apple pie deserves a mention. While the invention of mock apple pie was likely in the 1800s, by pioneers crossing the country with limited supplies, the recipe was officially co-opted by Ritz (fig. 11) at the height of the Great Depression in 1935 when crackers would have been cheaper and more available than apples (Stern 1988). This, like the mock recipes of WWII England, was a way to keep spirits high despite a time of great hardship and stress. As America was going through economic struggles, having a small remembrance of how things were was crucial in looking toward the future with positivity.

Fig. 11. Ritz cracker mock apple pie recipe, ca. 1970s.

Present

The days of feasting as conspicuous consumption as was done in Ancient Rome and Medieval Europe are far in the past. On the other hand, though many still go hungry because of economic disparities, there is a great abundance of food with more and more innovations each day. And yet, today we still see mock foods being used for all the reasons they were used in the past. With food being so abundant now, we can play with it. We do not simply have people making foods but we have people remaking and "bettering" foods. Mock foods now exist more in packaged ready-to-eat forms but there has been a resurgence in mock recipes that follow guidelines of certain diet plans, such as keto or paleo as well.

This section will demonstrate how mock foods are still around, how they tie to

historical mock foods and how they are meaningful today. While modern mock foods are rarely ever called so, they are made based on the same principles of mock foods from the past. We can see echoes of Roman banquets and Medieval illusion foods in foods based on a sense of artifice and we can see dietary concerns in keto and paleo recipes or in foods that imitate the texture and taste of meat without the allegedly harmful effects.

Resurgence of Artifice

Reminiscent of the artifice that was so esteemed in the past, mock foods for entertainment never entirely went away and seem to be increasing again in popularity today. Restaurants that play with food show that some do not need to worry about where their sustenance is coming from. Molecular gastronomy might be seen as a trendy fad, but it has been responsible for some noteworthy developments in the way we enjoy food. Inventions like the Aromafork take molecular gastronomy and the sensual experience of food to another level by enhancing or masking the odors of foods with artificial scents. A promotional video for the fork states: "Trick your mind with Aromafork. Imagine eating vegetables while tasting bubble gum." At $58.95 for a starter kit, the Aromafork may seem unnecessary for something that has no nutritional value or tangible benefit. However, like the illusion foods of the past, the appeal of the Aromafork is in its mastery over nature, and this time

Fig. 12. One of chef Bob Blumer's novel creations.

not even just over nature but over ourselves and our own brains. We are invited to "trick our minds" as the ultimate display of technology over biology, culture over nature.

Celebrity chef Bob Blumer delights in "surreal" recipes such as his savory lamb cupcakes with beet-dyed mashed potato "frosting" (fig. 12; savory food made to appear sweet) and "soft-boiled eggs" made up of white chocolate mousse "egg whites" and mango "yolks" (sweet food made to appear savory). Again, it seems common that those of us who are lucky enough to not have to worry about where our food is coming from will always find ways to play with it. However, Blumer's recipes are not exclusively available in upscale restaurants but instead made available to a broader base through his cookbooks and online recipes. As long as one can afford the ingredients and the time to experiment with strange, new dishes, he or she can experience something similar to the illusion foods of the past.

Diet Trends and Restrictions

Now more than ever, innovations in food technology allow us to come up with a multitude of alternatives to the vast array of options on the market. Dieting is not a new concept and neither are diet products. Margarine has been around since 1869, when it was created by French chemist Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès in response to a challenge proposed by Emperor Louis Napoléon III to invent a substitute for butter (Enjoy Margarine Everyday 2013). Now thanks to its cheaper price and health claims, Americans consume three times as much margarine as butter.

Many of these modern diet trends are based on the concept of cutting out certain types of food. Of course, like with any restrictive diet, people still want to eat the foods they are not allowed to have and therefore come up with substitutions. By coming up with mock recipes or eating healthier substitutes, people can maintain the food rituals they are used to, which can be especially important for those who have a difficult time dieting. Freedman writes:

> In the modern world, concerns about the interrelation of health and food have produced any number of odd combinations: fads for diets coinciding with a growth of obesity; fears about ties between various foods and disease (eggs, saturated fats, trans-fats) coinciding with increased consumption of artificially processed ingredients; exaggerations of the benefits of one or another kind of food (vegetarianism, oat-bran, high-protein regimes)... They may be symptoms of a sense of displacement because of the separation from the sources of food and even from its day-to-day preparation - of being at the mercy of a food industry whose organization of farms, fisheries and livestock into immense and ecologically damaging factories has created justified but not squarely recognized anxieties. [2007:12-13]

Recipes for mock foods that follow diet guidelines show a kind of crisis of identity with our food choices. We want to be healthy and slim and yet we want to still eat pizza and burgers and french fries. Perhaps these recipes are our way of reconciling the products of our modern food system with the “natural” diets that we are more suited for our bodies.

Thanks to the dissemination of online recipes, dieters can now experiment with many healthier mock recipes. The keto or ketogenic diet is low in carbs and high in fat. This goes against the standard bread-rich diet, which is essentially a product of the modern agriculture system and innovative food technology, and therefore requires some creative recipes (fig. 13). Bread is filling and therefore the basis of many comfort foods so it is not surprising to find a plethora recipes for keto bread, keto pizza, keto bagels, and keto cookies. Of course, bread is one of the cheapest foods we can buy while some of the ingredients required for keto-friendly bread substitutes, such as psyllium husk powder and almond flour, can be expensive and hard to find, reserving these recipes for those who can afford them. Still, these recipes are innovative options that allow us to enjoy familiar tastes in healthier packages.

Fig. 13. Keto pizza with crust made of mozzarella cheese, cream cheese, egg, almond flour, and psyllium husk powder.

On the other hand, some are displeased with the fact that students in West Virginia are being served “nutritionally modified” junk food in an effort to keep them healthier (Forget ‘Faux Food’ 2007). Similar to keto recipes, these schools are sneaking healthier foods into familiar shapes. The schools want to make sure the children do not have to sacrifice their food rituals and are probably worried that if they did, they would not eat the healthier options but is this the best way to make kids eat better or is just a

bandage solution? Again, we have clearly become accustomed to a certain kind of diet but instead of trying to trick children into eating healthier just so we can perpetuate our food rituals perhaps it would be more beneficial to implement more fundamental changes to our diets.

Meat "Analogues"

One of the most common questions that any average person might have about mock foods is why do vegetarians eat fake meat (fig. 14)? It might seem to be a contradictory practice: refusing to eat dead animals but then eating foods made in the likeness of dead animals. However, many vegetarians choose to stop eating meat for moral reasons and not because they dislike the taste. Likewise, many vegetarians grew up eating meat and therefore want to maintain the rituals they grew up with. This is especially true in the case of fake meat products that actually try to taste like meat ("chik'n," "beefless"). The concept of mock meat can actually be traced all the way back to the 10th century AD in China, where tofu was referred to as "small mutton" (Tan 2008:101). On the other hand, most of the meat substitute options that might be made to look like traditional meat dishes are only formed into arbitrary

Fig. 14. Canned vegetarian mock duck made from wheat gluten, complete with skin-like texture.

shapes that have no actual connection with real meat. For example, meat does not naturally come in convenient patty shapes and for a meat substitute to "copy" that shape is really only taking advantage of a convenient form. Things like bean "burgers" might still be mimicking the ritual of traditional sandwich-style meats, but they refrain from trying to mimic the taste of meat. The fact that we use names associated with meat to describe these foods that have nothing to do with meat just shows the dominance of meat-eating culture in American society. Because we have basically "mastered" nature and the production of food, many of us are in a position to choose foods based not only on our dietary needs but on moral, social, and even political reasons. However, for many vegetarians it is not enough to just eat tofu cubes or seitan chunks and thus we wind up pressing it into familiar shapes, that have associated cultural meanings. Now vegetarians can enjoy Tofurky at Thanksgiving and any variety of meatless burgers on the 4th of July without interrupting their food rituals (fig. 15).

Fig. 15. A small sample of mock meat products available in grocery stores: burgers, fish, chicken-style nuggets, and even calamari.

Future

With technological advancements come inevitable waves of change for food. The agricultural and industrial "revolutions" undoubtedly affected our diets in ways that are felt to this day. Now that we are entering a post-industrial era, how will it impact our food?

In the past, people were able to utilize mock foods when necessary as part of war efforts or to mitigate the effects of economic crises. Would it take another crisis for us to change our food habits? Not necessarily. Food habits are always changing naturally and often go back and forth between artificial and natural. Our current food habits may be bad but if history is any indicator, they will change on their own. Maybe we just need to nudge them in the right direction and mock foods potentially have a role in doing so.

Meat From a Test Tube

It is often said that if we forget our history we will be doomed to repeat. Looking to the past might give us some insight into the future of our food. As Roberts writes, "the origin of mock oysters is grounded in gluttony." Oysters became so popular at one point that they were overfished but this did not lessen demand so chefs had to invent dishes that mimicked the real thing. This can be extrapolated to modern fish and meat industries. Our modern methods of fishing and meat production are not sustainable on such a large scale. If the world's fish and meat supplies become depleted, will we have to turn to mock

foods to take their place? In his article "Faux Food to the Rescue," Phillip Ball proposes that "by making meat artificially, we would liberate masses of land that can revert to wilderness" (2004). This is not the same "faux" meat that many vegetarians already enjoy, but rather laboratory-grown beef made from stem cells in a culture dish (Jamieson 2013). Judging from people's negative reactions to GM crops, this kind of diet is probably a long way off. Some have even given the lab meat the unfavorable yet unimaginative moniker "Frankenburger." What is it about a laboratory setting that makes us automatically suspicious of any food created therein? Why is the "scientific" diametrically opposed to the "natural," the real? Are plant products that take on the shape of a meat sandwich any more real than lab-grown beef? Does the implication of slaughtering a living creature, the pain and work associated with the process, make "real" beef better? Would people who are vegetarians for moral reasons bring meat back into their diets if this becomes the alternative? Clearly there are a lot of questions associated with this method of producing meat that probably will remain unanswered until it hits the market, if it ever does.

On the other hand, the fact that we eat so many mock foods without a second thought and throughout history have turned to mock recipes in times of need may be signs that artificial meat will be welcomed. Freedman writes:

> There is now... a tremendous anxiety about food simultaneous with an enthusiasm for innovation; a sense of limitless possibilities as more cuisines enter the sophisticated urban first-world marketplace together with belated anxiety over

> such developments as genetic manipulation, artificial enhancements and the exhaustion of a once bountiful nature (so that luxuries from ortolans to Caspian sea caviar are either unavailable or about to be unavailable). [2007:10]

Maybe if things continue going the way they are and we keep using whatever we want, we will have to rely more and more on mock foods for practical reasons. Meat producers have to treat animals very poorly to keep up with demand and "what consumers want." Maybe instead of pushing the supply to keep up with the demand, we again need to focus on changing our rituals. Perhaps the gateway to changing our demands is through mock foods. We can see that fake meats have increased in popularity because sales of soy foods have increased from $300 million to $4 billion from 1992 to 2007 (Cober 2009:57). If people make such emotional attachments to food so as to imitate it when not available, then trying to change people's habits by force is never going to work when it comes to ecological changes. But if we can find ways to placate people's needs for familiar foods through substitutions while preparing for the future of food in the face of factors such as population growth and climate change, we might make the transition an easier one.

The idea might be a scary one because of our associations with food and autonomy. Numerous dystopian science fiction works have explored the trope of standardized rations from *Soylent Green*'s titular foodstuff to *Snowpiercer*'s jelly-like protein bars (both of which turn out to be made from unsavory ingredients). Because of associations like these, it is not hard to see why some make the leap from the scientific

lab setting to a future where all our food is standardized, optimized, and most likely kept mysterious. We dread such a future because of the colorful, tasty, memorable meanings that food can have. A good portion of our identities comes from what we eat. On the other hand, seemingly reveling in this association, Soylent, a nutritionally-complete drink was created "from a need for a simpler food source" (Soylent 2014). So there might be room for lab-made meat on the table but it needs to be introduced in a way that takes cultural sensitivities into perspective. We cannot ignore this piece of advice from the 1918 pamphlet *War Economy in Food*: "Don't give the new dishes a black eye by having too many of them at once. Use all the ingenuity you have to make them both taste and look well. Food habits, like other habits, are not easily changed. Lead gently into the new realm" (1918:12).

Cultural Meanings and Implications

In this essay, I have shown the significance that mock foods have had in the past and what they said about their respective cultures. I have also shown that mock foods are still largely relevant today and they can tell us a lot about our personal food choices. For the future, I have speculated on the role that mock foods might play in a cultural environment more and more concerned with sustainability and food systems. Examining mock foods throughout history and in the present can tell us a lot about our relationship with food. Clearly, food is more than just energy and the symbolic meanings we attach to

it can inform us about the broader social contexts in which we find them. While it appears that mock foods may be a symptom of the kind of economies that produce class structures and abundances of goods, they have been present throughout history in many different forms. No matter our opinions of them, it does not appear that mock foods will be going away anytime soon. They have become ingrained in our grocery stores to the point where most people do not even realize their existence. Though recipes and food products, like anything resulting from that all-encompassing web of culture, go through trends, it appears that mock foods are part of a larger oscillating pattern where we go back and forth between appreciating artifice and innovation and shunning it for a return to simple, natural fare. As a result of the relatively recent industrialization of the food market which gave us a wealth of processed convenience foods, there has been a trend calling again for natural foods, as evidenced by campaigns such as the Slow Food movement, and this cycle will most likely continue in this fashion.

In order to create solutions for global food problems, we need to take taste and cultural significance into account and not simply force new diets onto people. What might be logically, nutritionally, and scientifically sound might be considered inedible by some. Taste is embedded in a multitude of cultural, historical, political, and economical meanings and studying why we ate and still eat mock foods for different reasons, whether they be to display wealth on one end of the spectrum or to imagine that things are just a little bit better on the opposite end, helps us to tease out some of these meanings and

gives us practice for looking at the larger contexts that play a role in our food decisions and how those might be shaped in the future.

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