

Cross-Modal Iconism at Tully's Coffee Japan: Authenticity and Egalitarian Sociability as Projections of Distinction

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Abstract: *Tully's Coffee Japan seeks to differentiate itself from competitors in the chain-cafe service industry. It does this in part through the semiotic figuration of two modernist discourses of distinction: culinary-craft authenticity and egalitarian sociability. This figuration is grounded in the corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism, or the production of a perceived equivalence between elements of heterogeneous sign systems. In Tully's cafes, cross-modal iconism is instantiated through forms of linguistic labor that lend distinction to the company and its workers, products, and customers. On the one hand, employees vocalize set Italianate phrases in entextualized performances scripted by the corporation. The use of these phrases leverages iconic and indexical values ideologically invested in Italian to position Tully's employees closer to an imagined, authenticating origin located in western Europe. On the other hand, Tully's refers to employees with the loanword "ferō," a term hitched to an image of egalitarian sociability thought to characterize democratic European cafe culture. Both the Italianate calls and "ferō" draw upon two historical strains that run through Japan's cafe modernity: elitism and popularism. These strains reemerge at Tully's today in the contradiction between the hierarchical social relations implied by the Italianate calls and the equalized social relations implied by "ferō."*

Keywords: Tullys, coffee, iconism, authenticity, sociability, ferō

Tully's Coffee Japan (hereafter, Tully's) has outstripped its Seattle-based predecessor as regards commercial profit and brand recognition. In fiscal 2012, the company's proceeds ranked fourth among all cafe businesses [*kissaten keiei gyōsha*] in Japan behind Starbucks, Doutor Coffee, and JR Higashi Nihon Food Business (Takai 2014:5). In the same year, its Seattle-based counterpart filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy. In this essay, I argue that Tully's commercial success in Japan may be attributed, at least in part, to the simultaneous projection of two modernist discourses of distinction: one based upon culinary-craft authenticity, the other upon egalitarian sociability. These two discourses of distinction, which effectively differentiate Tully's from chain-cafe competitors, are grounded in a kind of ludic semiosis that must be understood in terms of the place of the foreign in contemporary Japan.

Like workers at Starbucks in North America, the cashier of a Tully's cafe creates a sense of distinction when communicating a customer's order to the barista by using set Italian phrases that foreground the foreign. The phrases selected by the corporation—"con amore" [with love], "con brio" [with verve], "con passione" [with passion], "con spirito" [with spirit], and "con sentimento" [with emotion]—derive from the Italian musical register, but are redeployed at Tully's as adverbs specifying the manner in which the drink should be made. Some customers are unable to identify the phrases as Italian. Others recognize them as being European in linguistic origin, although it is unclear if this recognition is due specifically to the calls' Romance language phonology (rather than, for example, searches for an explanation on the Internet).¹

Tully's provides a metadiscourse on this practice on a page of its website entitled "14th Tully's History" (celebrating the company's fourteenth anniversary since 1997). The subsection marked "We wholeheartedly create each drink carefully, one by one" reads:

When you order a drink at Tully's, there is a word you often hear: "con amore!" What in the world is this?

The *ferō* [employee] working the cash register uses this [phrase] when telling the barista who will make the beverage the name of the drink ordered [by the customer]. There are five types of calls. They've been chosen because they express the sentiment, "let's put our heart into it and make this drink!" ["*ippai no dorinku o kimochi o komete tsukurō*" to *iu omoi kara kimerare mashita*]

The site then offers translations of these five calls:

"Con amore" → with love [*aijō o komete*]
"Con passione" [*kon passhiōne*] → with zeal [*jōnetsu o komete*]
"Con brio" → with energy/verve [*iki iki to*]
"Con spirito" [*kon supurituo*] → with vigor [*genki yoku*]
"Con sentimento" → with emotion [*kanjō o komete*]
[Tully's Coffee Japan, "14th Tully's History"]

Apparently gratuitous displays of linguistic flair drawn from musical terminology (operatic discourse), these verbal rituals in fact constitute a corporate method of semiotically projecting the first form of distinction identified above: culinary-craft authenticity. It is a method that siphons terminology from a language associated with the craft-discourse of coffee production.

In what follows, I approach these Italianate speech acts through the analytics of entextualization and scripting. Entextualization, crucial to the production of "transmittable culture" (Silverstein and Urban 1996:2), describes "the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a *text*—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting. A text, then, from this vantage point, is discourse rendered decontextualizable" (Bauman and Briggs 1990:73). The Italian phrases invoked by Tully's cashiers are just such entextualized bits of terse discourse. The tokens are removed from their (imagined) original context—presumably the discursive genre of musical instruction and performance—and are recontextualized recursively by

Tully's employees and those who cite their linguistic practices (subsequent audience-driven entextualization (cf. *ibid.*:70)). "Scripting," or the enforced adherence to predetermined sequences of discourse, is one species of entextualization that pervades standardized service-labor (Cameron 2000a, 2000b). I return to this notion below in the context of the "performed poetic function" operative at Tully's.

In addition to code-switches into Italian phrases drawn from the lexicon of music, Tully's management deploys non-musical, (presumably) English-language terminology by referring to employees as "*ferō*" [fellows], which the Tully's website translates as "*nakama*" [associate, comrade]. This nomenclature holds true as regards full-time employees and part-time employees (Tully's Coffee Japan, "Commitment to Service"). I will situate the term "*ferō*" and the entextualized calls within an overarching corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism (a perceived equivalence between heterogeneous sign systems, explored more below) that hearkens to the two forms of projected distinction identified above: egalitarian sociability and culinary-craft authenticity.

There are at least two motivations, simultaneously divergent and complementary, behind these linguistic figurations of the foreign. Through recursive decontextualization and recontextualization, Tully's employees use institutionally mandated Italian phrases to manipulate and capitalize upon iconic and indexical values invested in the Italian language by a widespread Japanese language ideology regarding western European languages. Stated plainly, the use of Italian phrases derived from musical terminology emblemizes craft prestige. In this way, it helps employees to achieve perceived identification with their counterparts (Italian employees) in imagined Italian cafes and to legitimize the genuineness of the wider semiotic field composing the surrounding cafe—the project of authenticity. Or, as an acquaintance who worked as a part-time employee at a Tully's cafe put it, the use of Italian "creates the feeling of a cafe" [*kafe-kan o dasu*] and "makes an appeal" [*apīru suru*] for the store as an "authentic cafe" [*honmono no kafe*]. Conversely, the dictated use of "*ferō*" aims to erase (Irvine and Gal 2000) the social hierarchies inherent to the service industry in favor of an atmosphere of pure sociability that accords with an idealized democratic European cafe culture—the project of egalitarian sociability. Overall, the calls and "*ferō*" synchronize with non-linguistic signs at any given Tully's outlet in a type of cross-modal iconism that furnishes a space manifesting culinary-craft authenticity and idealized social and communicative equality. After tracing the historical development of cafes and the way this history informs contemporary ideologies regarding coffee and cafes in Japan, I will analyze the cross-modal iconism observable at Tully's in order to examine the contradictory politics of performing authenticity, sociability, and distinction in Japanese modernity. To make this argument, I will draw upon discourse tokens of service interaction, various metadiscourses (official statements by Tully's, the episodic reportage of acquaintances who have worked at Tully's, and online commentary), and personal observations made at Tully's cafes in Tokyo and Yokohama between September 2014 and July 2015.

Cafe modernity in Japan

Coffee and cafe culture in Japan reflect wider historical oscillations toward the foreign and a drive to establish "modern" institutions such as cafes. This cultural and historical background informs the process by which the use of foreign languages at Tully's can index at once both culinary-craft authenticity as well as egalitarian sociability, or approached from a different perspective, elite and popular culture. In the following discussion, I will primarily reference Japanese theorists of coffee, cafes, and modernity in western Europe and Japan. I do so because I am concerned with the way Japanese cafes and Japanese modernity have been understood as being in a delayed or abject relation to their western European counterparts, and the way in which this relation has informed the imagination of foreign cafes in Japan that Tully's leverages to differentiate itself from chain-cafe competitors.

Usui Ryūichirō (1992:49-50) argues that coffee acquired the image of a “liquor of rationality” [*risei no rikyūru*] and “anti-alcohol” in the context of Enlightenment thought in western Europe. It mediated sociality in cafes, which were “places of sociability” [*shakōba*], in a janus-faced manner. In one sense, coffee functioned to undermine the extant class structure and foster novel forms of public-private relations characteristic of a budding urban modernity by mediating ratio-critical discourse among socially equal cafe-patrons (cf. Kuretani 1996:19).² Yet, in another sense, it mediated the intellectual and artistic activities of urban elites. Parisian cafes, for example, were frequented by socially eminent figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Robespierre, and Voltaire, and later, the U.S. lost generation novelists and post-World War II existentialist writers (Araki 2009:110-113).³ In short, there has long existed a tension in western European cafes between the artistic-political production of prominent social figures and the egalitarian sociability of urban denizens. My contention is that this tension resurfaces in the contemporary chain-cafe service industry as the contradiction between the real asymmetrical power relations of corporation-employee and employee-customer, and the essentialized egalitarianism ascribed to cafe culture in popular imaginations. Today, Tully’s mobilizes precisely these two contradictory vectors to lend senses of distinction to its outlets, products, workers, and customers. It does this within a specific Japanese cultural imagination of coffee and the cafe in western European modernity, one synopsis by Usui as follows: “From our [*ware ware*]⁴ perspective, the modern European urban society was, on the whole, one that drank coffee and espoused ‘liberty, equality, and fraternity’” (1992:166).

Mirroring western Europe’s janus-faced cafe culture, Japan’s nascent cafe culture likewise split in two directions in the late-19th and early-20th centuries: exclusivity/sobriety/elite culture versus inclusivity/frivolity/popular culture. Initially, Japanese cafes were predominantly elite institutions. This characterization certainly applies to the Kahiichakan, opened in 1888 and generally identified by scholars as Japan’s first cafe (although this remains a matter of debate).⁵ The founder Tei Eikei, adopted son of a Taiwanese secretary in Japan’s foreign ministry and a speaker of Japanese, Chinese, English, and French, established this western European-style cafe after attending Yale University and visiting coffeehouses in London and the United States (White 2012:9; Kashima 2000:54).⁶ The Kahiichakan closed by 1892, but it foreshadowed cafes erected in the following decades that targeted the urban intelligentsia. The most important among these was Cafe Printemps, opened in 1911 by the Western-style painter Matsuyama Shōzu upon his return from Europe and offering coffee (blended in a shop run by Italians in Yokohama), liquor, and Western food to artists and intellectuals in the capital (Edagawa 2006:60; cf. Kuretani 1996:20). In sum, the Kahiichakan and Cafe Printemps represented a breed of Japanese cafes catering to the elite. In this sense, they were simulacra of what Paul Manning 2013 terms “*Café Central*,” a kind of paradigmatic cafe that emblemizes metropolitan European modernity.⁷

By contrast, Cafe Paulista (meaning “child of San Paulo”) split the difference between elite and popular cafes, and may be considered a forerunner of Tully’s today. Like Tully’s, it provided a quiet venue in which patrons could enjoy coffee at a relatively affordable rate (cf. Takai 2014:31-34). The Brazilian government, possibly spurred by a crisis of over-production that began in 1906 (Usui 1992:210), provided coffee beans gratis to Cafe Paulista’s founder, Mizuno Ryū. Mizuno’s establishment then evolved into the world’s first coffee chain (cf. White 2012:5-6) over the course of the 1910s. Rooted in a foreign country but developed by a Japanese national, the chain’s provenance mirrors that of Tully’s Coffee Japan (and, incidentally, forces us to reconsider coffee’s supposedly unidirectional flow from the West to the “rest” (cf. *ibid.*:92)). Cafe Paulista also recalls Tully’s in a more surprising manner as well:

Cafe Paulista served curry-rice for ten sen per plate. Hirano Imao, a poet and scholar of French literature born in Tokyo in 1900, noted that when he ordered curry-rice [at Cafe Paulista], “the waiter took my order and said in an animated voice ‘one curry-rice’ [*karē raisu wan*] in English, which was extremely Western-like [*yatarā ni seiyō-kusaku*] and pleased me.” [Hatsuda 1993:15]

The mandated use of set foreign phrases at Tully’s, then, has a historical precedent. Furthermore, Cafe Paulista seems to have combined these phrases with a foreign interior design that included chandeliers, Brazilian flags, and gilded furniture (White 2012:45). As argued below, this aesthetic orientation toward signs of the foreign is recapitulated at Tully’s.

In contrast to the more refined venues described above, Cafe Lion, which also opened in 1911, presaged the emergence of a seedier cafe culture that highlighted, not artistic production, but objectified female servers [*jokyū*] (the “epitome of alienated labor” (ibid.:52; cf. Hatsuda 1993:16)).⁸ These cafes eroticized, popularized, and grew architecturally gaudy within the emerging “mass culture” [*taishū bunka*] of the Taishō (1912-1926) and early Shōwa (1926-1989) periods, which oversaw, among much else, the popularization of signs of the foreign (the West) that had previously indexed elite distinction.⁹ During these years, popular cafes assumed a naturalized space within Japan’s culinary and sex-service order, a space that both Starbucks and Tully’s have partially dislodged.¹⁰

Starbucks and Tully’s have, in a sense, pulled the category of the (chain-)cafe from its indigenized position back into a semi-foreign ideological orbit. In the process, they have interwoven the elite and popular strains of Japan’s historical cafe modernity. Starbucks opened its first Japanese outlet in 1996 in Ginza, long a portal for the foreign in Tokyo’s heart and likewise the site of McDonald’s first store in Japan (opened in 1971) (Bestor and Bestor 2011:16). It held 487 stores across the archipelago by September 2003 (Nobutoki 2003b:43). Starbucks filled a gap between pricier private cafes or teahouses [*kissaten*] and chain self-service establishments like Doutor by establishing a powerful brand-image and attracting youth with an extensive menu of sweetened drinks (ibid.:42-44). Matsuda Kōta then founded Tully’s Coffee Japan in 1997 in conjunction with Tully’s headquarters in Seattle—gaining full business and trademark rights only in 2005—and competed with Starbucks for brand recognition, patronage, and, indeed, preeminence in the semiotic figuration of the foreign. One tactic that Tully’s deploys in this competition is to push the cultural coordinates of the cafe in Japan back toward an authenticating and distinguishing European predecessor. Yet simultaneously, it summons an image of egalitarian sociability that stems, historically, from the popularized cafe culture of prewar Japan and the fantasy of the democratic European cafe that it drew upon (if only latently). In this essay, I will address the image of (elite) authenticity at Tully’s before engaging that of (popular) egalitarian sociability, although both are equally integral to Tully’s grander project to establish a sense of distinction for its cafes, workers, products, and customers. In the next section, I will delineate the ramifications and benefits of the gestures that Tully’s makes toward a European predecessor in terms of cultural odor and authenticity.

Cultural odor and authenticity (at Tully’s)

Through its workers’ Italianate calls, Tully’s casts a foreign “cultural odor” that bypasses the corporate origin (i.e. Seattle) and recalls a mythologized craft-origin (i.e. western Europe, specifically Italy) of coffee and cafes first widely imagined in Japan in the late-19th century. Koichi

Iwabuchi uses the term “to focus on the way in which cultural features of a country of origin and images or ideas of its national, in most cases stereotyped, way of life are associated *positively* with a particular product in the consumption process” (2002:27). Tully’s offers the savory odor of coffee in tandem with the “fragrance” (ibid.) of an Italian cafe. Authentic craft production, in turn, emanates a more fragrant and attractive cultural odor. I follow Rossella Ceccarini in understanding authenticity as an “idealized representation of reality” that is often embodied in a range of stereotyped symbols (2011:13); hence by “authentic craft production,” I mean craft production that seems to accord with an idealized representation of craft production. Signs of that authenticity (i.e. signs of that idealized representation) might include material objects, such as an espresso machine of Italian make, or embodied craft knowledge, such as facility with an espresso machine. These signs of authenticity function as a type of cultural capital that fosters a sense of distinction for the cafe and its employees and emits a cultural odor enticing to patrons (cf. ibid.:14). At Tully’s in particular, authentic craft production is inseparable from place-based authenticity (Imai 2015), or the notion that Tully’s cafes, coffee, and employees are meaningfully connected to an originary source (Italy and Italian cafes). In what follows, I will examine the motivations that propel Tully’s to establish an image of authenticity, and will also enumerate concrete manifestations of that authenticity in the products and workers of Tully’s cafes. In the next section, I will address the function of workers’ Italianate calls in enhancing the perceived authenticity of craftwork at Tully’s.

The added value created through the projection of place-based authenticity and its attending cultural odor should not be underestimated. In point of fact, a 2006 survey conducted by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan found that while most respondents associated Italy with “Pasta, food, leather goods, clothes, design and brands,” the majority associated coffee with the United States (Ceccarini 2011:67). Although postdating Tully’s establishment in Japan and undoubtedly reflecting Starbucks’ preeminence in the Japanese chain-cafe industry, the survey nevertheless clarifies the benefits of constructing an image of authentic coffee production aligned with Italy in opposition to U.S.-style, late capitalist, standardized coffee production. By foregrounding culinary-craft labor—whose value derives, at least in part, from its opposition to industrialized food systems (cf. Pratt 2007:294)—the entextualized Italianate calls perform and display the propinquity of Tully’s cafes, coffee, and employees to this authenticating coffee-origin. Indeed, as one Tweeter incisively noted, “I think they use Italian because Tully’s is a cafe presenting an image of an Italian espresso bar” (mikihouse4 2013).¹¹

Tully’s seeks to establish a fractal recursion (Irvine and Gal 2000): just as *Japanese* baristas pale in comparison to authentic *Italian* baristas, so *other* companies’ baristas in Japan pale in comparison to authentic *Tully’s* baristas. This recursion is predicated upon a leapfrog technique that involves bypassing Seattle in favor of Italy. And this technique, in turn, complements a marketing strategy at play at Tully’s and Starbucks: to create an authenticating brand-image that underwrites the added value of specialty coffee within the competitive chain-cafe industry. The urban Japanese market, in particular, demands this type of brand-image. As Tully’s founder Matsuda Kōta argued when attempting to win a contract from the Seattle-based predecessor, “Regardless of how good or bad the taste is, it will be difficult to succeed in Japan if you try to widely sell an added value product [*fuka-kachi shōhin*] without an established brand-image” (2002:30).¹² In other words, in order to survive in the market of contemporary (urban) Japan—a market in which culinary choices, distinction, and prestige are closely bound (cf. Bestor and Bestor 2011:13)—products such as specialty coffee require corporate brand-images that lend them distinction and recognition.¹³ Responding to this kind of urban market, Tully’s goes far beyond gambits familiar from Starbucks such as christening drink sizes with Italian names. It brands itself through both the use of Italianate calls within a strategy of cross-modal iconism (explored below) as well as the concrete qualities of its products and workers.

Indeed, in its corporate literature, Tully's actively draws attention to these distinguishing concrete qualities:

[Our espresso drinks] are made with the best beans, the best roasting, and the best extraction [from the espresso machine]. The keyword is "handmade." Tully's baristas have great technical skill [*takai gijutsu*] and a broad range of knowledge about coffee. In every store we insist on making our espresso carefully, drink by drink, and by hand. That is something unique to Tully's that you won't find in other big coffee chains. Even if the drink is just a little off, we make it again from scratch. [Tully's Coffee Japan, "Commitment to Flavor"]

The statements of past and present part-time workers at Tully's echo this commitment to quality coffee-production to a certain extent. In this essay, I will refer to four acquaintances given the pseudonyms Aoi (female), Baku (male), Chie (female), and Dane (female). All were born and raised in Japan, are between their late teens and thirties in age, and have worked as part-time employees at Tully's outlets. According to Aoi, coffee is disposed of and re-brewed every hour to maintain a fresh taste. In a similar vein, Dane ventured that Tully's succeeds in offering beverages that taste better than those sold by other chain-cafes due to the relatively non-automated procedures of production adopted at each store. And notably, of Tully's five fields of concern as outlined on its website—(1) commitment to flavor; (2) commitment to relaxation; (3) commitment to service; (4) commitment to espresso; (5) commitment to [coffee] beans (Tully's Coffee Japan, "About Tully's Coffee")—three are grounded in an artisanal discourse of distinction that gives equal weight to raw materials and the technical skill of their preparation.

Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on excellent craft production on the company's website,¹⁴ Aoi, Baku, and Chie all reported minimal remedial barista training off the floor. While Dane stated that baristas take exams covering certain skills (shots and syrups, milk steaming, etc.) and undergo rigorous training (on the order of nine months), Aoi remarked that the absence of a Starbucks-style competency exam was a decisive pro of the Tully's working environment. In fact, prior work experience in a cafe is not a condition of employment. According to an anonymously managed website entitled "Part-time work[er(s)] at Tully's (rumors and word of mouth)," job-applicants should instead emphasize their interpersonal communication skills during interviews in order to illustrate that they "can provide first-class service as a *ferō*" (Anonymous, "Part-time work at Tully's: (interview, reason for applying)"). Furthermore, all part-time employees at Tully's are required to rotate positions regularly: each employee alternatively takes orders at the register, prepares drinks as a barista, and works the floor (which principally involves cleaning).¹⁵ This rotation allows workers to sharpen their skills over time, but also guarantees that customers will not receive beverages of the highest possible quality because the most skilled baristas are relieved regularly.

In the next section, I will consider Tully's employees' Italianate calls, which complement the concrete qualities of Tully's products and workers in establishing a brand-image of authenticity. These Italianate calls combine with non-linguistic signs of the foreign at Tully's, as well as the appellation "*ferō*," to forge added value through the corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism, or the perception of one kind of sign (e.g. linguistic) as "resembling signs of other kinds—paralanguage, gesture, body comportment, artifactual accompaniment—in interpersonal significance" (Agha 2004:41). Phrased differently, I will delineate two ways in which the corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism is instantiated: through the use of Italianate calls and the use of

“*ferō*.” In the former case, the calls constitute a type of entextualized, ritualistic linguistic labor and performed artisanal craftsmanship that establishes the distinction of (place-based) authentic craftwork. In the latter case, the use of “*ferō*” helps establish the distinction of egalitarian sociability, which erases the inequalities inherent to the late capitalist service industry—inequalities generated, in part, by precisely the invocation of authentic craftwork. Thus the antinomy between elitism and popularism that has historically undergirded Japan’s cafe culture reemerges, though in a different form, in the relationship between these two instantiations of cross-modal iconism at Tully’s.

Instantiation one: entextualized Italianate calls

The customer at Tully’s, like the customer at Cafe Paulista a century ago, is barraged with signs indexing the popularly imagined European cafe. These signs range from sartorial information to the displayed merchandise to quiche to furniture. To complete the semiotic milieu via a form of cross-modal iconism, employees selectively articulate lexemes drawn from foreign languages (Italian and, it seems, English) that are perceived to be commensurate with contiguous non-linguistic signs in the cafe (cf. Harkness 2013:13, 26).¹⁶ This engenders a poetically (Jakobson 1960) supercharged semiotic equivalence that strengthens the sum iconic and indexical force of all signs of the foreign in Tully’s. As such, the cumulative iconic-indexical force of the total semiotic system is greater than the iconic-indexical force of its discrete signs (furniture, clothing, language, etc.).

That this cross-modal iconism of the foreign encompasses non-linguistic sign systems (e.g., espresso machines) is conveyed by the commentary of *ferō*’s. As Aoi stated, the “very expensive machine” at her former store was of Italian make, and produced an “authentic taste” [*honba no aji*].¹⁷ Baku likewise mentioned in an email exchange with the author that his former store contained an espresso machine called “La Cimbali” [*ra chinbari*], which he hoted, is used widely in Italian coffeeshouses [*bāru*]. La Cimbali does double duty here by indexing both the authenticating geographical source from which it derives as well as the authenticity of the craft laborer(s) who employ it. It does this despite being a machine that might, but for its power to index place-based authenticity, mitigate the authenticity of the laborers’ culinary craftwork as a standardized technological medium. As at other cafes like Starbucks, customers can view these machines and the craftsman (barista) who employs them in the individual act of creation.¹⁸ In this manner, the architecture and spatial arrangement of each outlet make visible what some have deemed the aesthetic ideal of authenticity: agent-based, original creation as against homogenized mass-production (Miller 1995:2; Taylor 1991:65).

In addition to these non-linguistic signs of the foreign, Tully’s deploys Italian—the primordial, essentialized language of coffee, one might say—to furnish a marketable patina of authenticity as a branding method that secures a niche within the overcrowded market of chain-cafes.¹⁹ This linguistic choice must be contextualized within the broader field of Japanese ideologies of language. At Tully’s, the indexicality of the foreign utterances derives from a naturalized language ideology, or a set of social and cultural presuppositions regarding a language (Italian) that concribes that language’s use in speech acts (e.g. in calls at Tully’s) and further shapes the interlocutors’ (customers’) interpretations and perceptions of those speech acts (cf. Sergeant 2009:26). The perceived consubstantiality between linguistic signs and their (pre)supposed cultural origins molds language ideologies because certain structural elements of a language (Italian) are seen as corresponding to cultural characteristics of the subset of people thought to speak that language (Italians) (ibid.:30).²⁰ One stereotyped characteristic of this group is authentic knowledge and expertise in the matters of coffee and cafes. Consequently, employing Italian tokens bolsters the cafe’s legitimacy.

Of course, the use of Italian in cafes is not unprecedented. After all, Starbucks in North America insists upon a full code-switch into (something like) Italian to order a double espresso. In addition, the accentuation of Italianness at Tully's historically parallels the broader "*itameshi*" [Italian food] boom in Japan in the mid-1980s and a "more general Italian trend that grew in the 1990s and encompassed Italian fashion, sport, design and cars among other Italian goods" (Ceccarini 2011:54; cf. Sawaguchi 2015:128). Moreover, the deployment of foreign terms to produce a sense of authenticity undoubtedly hearkens to the elitist strain in the history of cafe modernity in Japan. Rather, what is most striking about the Italianate calls at Tully's is that they do not derive from the Italian lexicon of coffee, but from music. The use of terms drawn from a musical register may relate to the meager number of Italian loanwords in Japanese. Since the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japanese linguistic contact with Italian has primarily occurred in the register of music and musical notation (e.g. "*pianissimo*") (Loveday 1996:58). Difficult in any case, cafe patrons would be yet less likely to identify an Italian token as Italian or simply "European" should it not stem from this more familiar linguistic register. At Tully's, several of the few relatively recognizable Italian loanwords are entextualized, extracted from their musical context, and redeployed as (principally) ornamental tokens by *ferō*'s and whoever else cites their linguistic practices (cf. Sergeant 2009:77).²¹ In the process of recursive recontextualization, localized language ideologies confer upon these ornamental tokens essentialized interpretations of Italianness or Europeanness, interpretations that in turn shape the semiotic effect of using these words in calls at Tully's.

Michael Silverstein 2004 posits that a connoisseur's ability to demonstrate her proximity to the (imagined) origin of a given "prestige-comestible commodity" such as wine—for example, through the mastery of wine-talk ("*oinoglossia*")—endows her with a type of authority or cultural capital. Analogously, I Tully's employees' terse but reiterative discourse on customers' drinks, culled in part from a foreign prestige register, indexically entails a place-based authentic and authoritative identity in relation to coffee by locating the speaker closer to the beverage's imagined institutional framework, namely, the generic Italian cafe.²² Unlike the Japanese chefs who, beginning in the 1980s, mastered Italian cooking at the source and opened establishments in Japan purveying authentic cuisine to customers (Sawaguchi 2015:136; cf. Ceccarini 2011), *ferō*'s at Tully's are not mobile agents of authenticity (Imai 2015) who travel to acquire the culinary knowledge and consequent cultural capital available at the Italian origin. In this context, the Italianate calls effectively mitigate the fracture between the foreign origin and Tully's employees. For this reason, the authenticating combination of all the signs of the foreign in Tully's cafes, and particularly the linguistic utterances of the employees, substantively supersedes the employees' practical craft knowledge. This is because at Tully's—though not at all cafes in Japan—such knowledge is construed to some extent as an importation. Accordingly, *ferō*'s must repeatedly rehearse the semiotically-derived authority limned above, fundamental to the constitution of a place-based authentic cultural odor, to perform the realest simulation. This task parallels that of the early founders of cafes in Japan, many of whom sought to recreate (an image of) elite Western cafes.

However, this treatment of the calls' functions fails to sufficiently describe the processes by which service laborers can deploy discourse regarding what Silverstein calls "prestige-comestible commodities" recursively and felicitously. I have examined the calls through the analytic of entextualization. Yet the situation is more complicated because workers not only reproduce (that is, entextualize, decontextualize, and recontextualize) ornamental bits of discourse, but do so through a performance within a broader co(n)text of triadic discourse between the cashier, the barista, and the customer. Relying on the work of Bauman and Briggs (1990), I argue that performance is the principal technology of entextualization at Tully's. "Performance, the enactment of the poetic function, is a highly reflexive mode of communication...Performance puts the act of speaking on display—objectifies it, lifts it to a degree from its interactional setting and opens it to scrutiny by an

audience...By its very nature, then, performance potentiates decontextualization" (73). This performance occurs fleetingly in the invocation of the set phrases taken from Italian, and forms a piece of Tully's employees' performances as service workers. In vocalizing tokens replete with the iconic-indexical value of Italianness, *ferō*'s do not recreate an original performance by replicating an original text. Rather, they performatively conjure the illusion of an original performance by reproducing a text, derived from a musical register and mandated by the corporation, that is imagined to be indexical of that performance. And this metaleptic fabrication, in which effect (reproduced text) precedes cause (original performance), is enabled by circulating metadiscourses surrounding Italy/Italian. Nonetheless, contrary to Tully's official metadiscourse, workers' reproductions of this text are not uniform. Indeed, as I illustrate below, each discrete call may be dissociated from its discursive context to varying degrees.

Through their dictated performances, Tully's employees instantiate and valorize the authority and verity of the European origin. Yet, ironically, this sort of semiotic metalepsis in fact removes the source of authority regarding artisanal coffee from the employees themselves. This is because the employees, through their entextualized calls, consistently reconfirm the gap between their own craftwork and the craftwork that is executed at the authoritative source—the source from which the entextualized terms derive (cf. Bloch 1975:16). As such, we may pose the following question: do the calls empower an imagination of Italian cafes and baristas at an origin that is (meta)discursively constructed within a framework of language ideologies regarding the foreign, or the Japanese barista (and his bosses) who attempt to draw authority from that imaginary origin?

Here it is useful to consider the enforced adherence to predetermined phrases by service workers as a species of entextualization known as "scripting" because this notion aptly describes the relationship between the performing *ferō* and the metadiscursive authority that furnishes her with a script: namely, Tully's management. Deborah Cameron (2000a, 2000b) has analyzed the use of scripted sequences of discourse by telephone operators in call centers. Produced with an eye to efficiency, these scripts ensure consistent linguistic performance and help standardize encounters between workers and customers. Scripts prove particularly effective in this regard when combined with top-down "styling," in which management endeavors to standardize the prosodic and paralinguistic aspects of workers' linguistic performances. Cameron notes the utility of styling in "branding," as "language is regulated to ensure operators function, not as individuals with their own personalities (or their own individually constructed on-the-job personae) but as embodiments of a single corporate persona whose key traits are decided by someone else" (2000a:101).

That someone else is corporate management. As demonstrated by the passage from the "14th Tully's History" page on the company's website quoted at the beginning of this essay, Tully's is the metadiscursive authority that scripts the workers' Italianate calls. This scripting casts Tully's employees as idealized coffee-craftsmen associated with Italy and Italianness (although, as noted below, some leniency on the order of styling permits linguistic play and thus the performance of what Cameron calls "individually constructed on-the-job personae"). And the script is exact: there are five calls (no more, no less) with specific translations. The site clarifies that the cashier vocalizes these calls in the discursive context of informing the barista of the beverage that has been ordered. (The barista may repeat the cashier's call in a call-and-response structure in certain stores, but only the cashier initiates the pattern). The site's specification stabilizes the ritualistic nature of the calls by identifying those persons who may felicitously invoke the procedure (cf. Austin 1975). This, in turn, facilitates a double-layered entextualization: that of the calls themselves, recontextualized each time the cashier relays an order; and that of the entire performance, recontextualized by each cashier recursively at stores across Japan. It is this entextualization of the overall performative text that enabled Chie to comment that the calls manifest a certain "Tully's-

ness” [*Tarīzu-rashisa*], and one self-professed “former fellow” [*moto ferō*] to note in his or her blog post: “One thing you can say is that without those calls, it just wouldn’t be Tully’s” (noname#16436 2005).

These calls are not strictly connected to coffee, but rather enjoin baristas to lovingly, zealously, energetically, vigorously, or emotionally concoct the customer’s drink. Dane stated that Tully’s likely makes use of Italian because no one understands the meaning of the words—permitting employees to make their calls “lightheartedly” [*karuku ieru*]—but further ventured that the terms have a generally “brightening” [*akaruku suru*] and “enlivening” [*moriageru*] effect. Tully’s metadiscourse approximates this conception of the calls, but it restricts the target of the words’ effects to the laboring baristas. It thus takes no direct account of the observing customer despite the utility of the calls in impressing that customer with culinary-craft authenticity. Instead, by underscoring the inspirational function of the calls for the *ferō*’s, the corporation’s metapragmatic characterization obscures the foreign odor that the Italian phrases emanate.²³ And it does this regardless of the workers’ own awareness of the calls’ odor. As Aoi phrased the matter, “they didn’t tell us why we had to use Italian, but isn’t [*con amore*] better than ‘with love?’ [*with love*]’ *yorī iin ja nai?*]” To Aoi, Italian sounds (or smells) better than English at Tully’s, although this authenticating cultural odor is belied by the corporation’s characterization of the calls.²⁴

In practice, we find Tully’s metapragmatic discourse on the calls reflected but modified in the metapragmatic discourses of Aoi, Baku, and Chie. When asked the referential meaning of each call, all three *ferō*’s offered answers nearly identical to those provided by Tully’s. This signals the corporation’s position as the authoritative agent of entextualization. Yet each *ferō* proffered a disparate “grammar” (metapragmatic rules of use) for selecting and using the calls in various situations. Aoi exclusively vocalizes “*con amore*,” having been informed that workers most frequently choose this call, because it is the easiest to remember and pronounce. The calls only have addressee-focal indexicality—only have referential significance of some sort in relation to the barista and the customer—when business is slow and there is ample time to consider each word’s significance. For Aoi, then, the calls are predominantly ornamental terms that index precisely the fact that she is working (and so is required to use the calls).²⁵

Baku, who, unlike Aoi, Chie, and Dane, has worked at a Tully’s outlet outside of the Tokyo metropolitan area for an extended period of time, detailed a comparatively complex grammar. Although local language ideologies continue to endow the calls with a foreign odor, they are not denotationally empty for Baku as they are for Aoi. Baku makes use of all five calls, conscious of their meanings and what he determines to be their suitability in any given situation, although he admitted that some coworkers do not differentiate between the terms when busy or fatigued. Baku selects the appropriate call based on the “air” [*kanji*] of the customer. If an attractive female orders a beverage, he usually chooses “*con amore*.” If the customer appears energetic or upbeat, the appropriate call is “*con spirito*.” Hence, while the corporate metadiscourse understands the indexicality of the calls to focus solely on the addressee (the barista), Baku’s idiosyncratic metapragmatics understands the Italianate phrases to index, not only a performance of work in front of a customer (as with Aoi’s metapragmatics), but also the properties of that customer. Similarly, Dane commented that veterans might articulate less common calls (for example, “*con spirito*” rather than “*con brio*”) when an attractive customer enters the store. The marked use of the term informs those coworkers aware of the speaker’s habitual calling pattern that something atypical is afoot. In that sense, the use of relatively anomalous terms indexes the speaker’s status as a veteran.

For Aoi, the required calls predominantly index the fact that “this is work,” while for Baku, they index something pertaining to the customer before whom he performs his work. Chie described the most complex grammar. For her, a call involves a set of multi-oriented rules, that is to say, a metapragmatics dependent upon and indexing both the barista and the customer. To Chie, the calls are commands that direct the barista to make the beverage in a certain way. For instance, if the barista appears to be fatigued or lethargic, Chie might ask for a drink “*con brio*.” Yet the customer exerts a direct influence as well. If the customer smiles when ordering, Chie may experience feelings of happiness or warmth; in response, she might ask that the customer’s drink be made “*con amore*.” In this regard, her metapragmatics approximates the characterization of the calls offered on the “rumors” website cited above, where they are described as “magic words [*maho no kotoba*] that show care [*kizukattari*] for the person you’re talking to and for the people around” (Anonymous, “Part-time work at Tully’s (early mornings, calls)”).²⁶

These grammars suggest multiple stances toward the processes of entextualization and scripting. Aoi reproduces tokens at the behest of the company with little concern for their referential meanings or illocutionary effects. In these acts of reproduction, she invokes an authenticating, originary Italianness—an Italian cafe in which such calls might be made. Hence, in Aoi’s case, a corporate indexical vector X both points from the employee to the authenticating Italian origin and, reciprocally, points from the origin so indexed back to the cashier whose craftwork is legitimized by that origin.²⁷ Aoi’s formalized language largely ceases to relate to her immediate discursive context (cf. Bloch 1975:15), although her calls weakly index the implicit presence of a customer (see Figure 1).

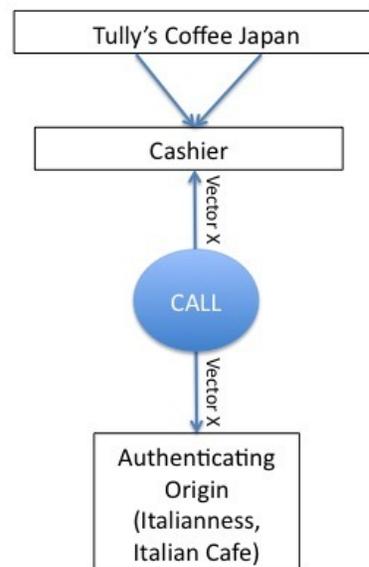


Figure 1. Aoi's Grammar

Baku’s grammar is incongruent with that espoused by the corporation: the call selected depends upon the customer, not the barista. Moreover, for Baku the air of the customer perceived by the

cashier indexically entails the verbal sign (call) whose essence it most iconically resembles. This indicates that an additional indexical vector Y points both from the air of the customer to the verbal token it entails and, again reciprocally, from the verbal token back to the customer toward whom it directs some illocutionary effect. This indexical vector Y intersects the corporate indexical vector X defined above (see Figure 2).

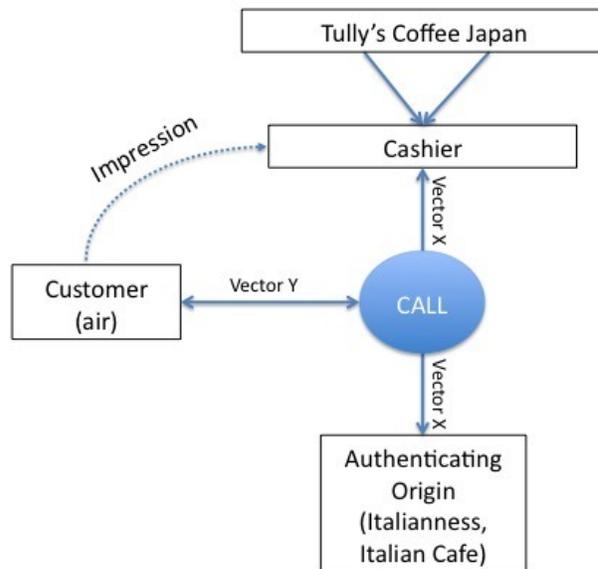


Figure 2. Baku's Grammar

In Chie's grammar, the most felicitous call may be determined by the air of either the barista (indexical vector Z) or the customer (indexical vector Y) as perceived by the cashier. In each case, the call again directs illocutionary force back at the customer or barista while continuing to summon the authenticating Italian origin (indexical vector X; see Figure 3). For both Baku and Chie (and Aoi when customers are sparse), dyadic communication with the barista (interlocutor) becomes intelligible only with reference to the customer (audience). The calls—provided, it must be remembered, by the company—therefore fulfill a socioindexical function close to that of final-particles in Japanese. They mark an emotional stance in an interactional text in which the customer participates as an overhearer in apparently dyadic communication between the cashier and the barista. Hence, the same tokens that the company understands to motivate the addressee (barista) are here construed as indexing the speaker's disposition of wholeheartedness toward the audience member(s) presumed to overhear the cashier's utterances.

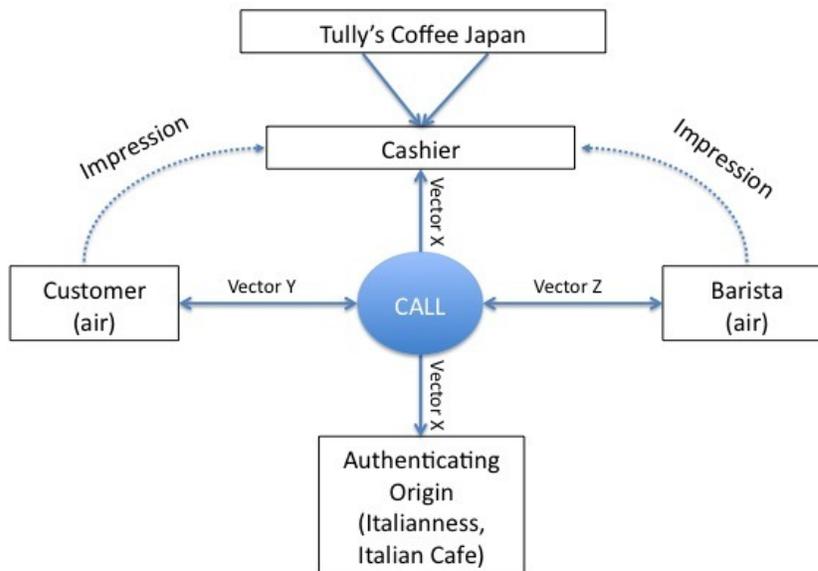


Figure 3. Chie's Grammar

The schemata I have presented are incomplete. Dane identified yet another agent in the grammar of calling when she noted that, if two cashiers are working two registers, they intentionally add variation to the procedure by using different calls. Blogger Debuneko (2015), having inquired into the calls at Tully's, likewise reports variation. According to an employee with whom Debuneko spoke, some outlets specify calls to be used in certain scenarios (contextual determination), while other outlets attach "salutational meaning(s)" [*aisatsu no imi*] to the calls (referential determination). Yet, notwithstanding the limitations of the ethnographic data introduced here, Aoi, Baku, and Chie's grammars elucidate a slippage between the metapragmatics detailed by the authoritative agent of entextualization (Tully's) and those detailed by its ground-level performers (*ferō*'s), and therefore parallel the inconsistent pragmatics of the term "*ferō*" outlined below. This slippage discloses an experiential fluidity in tension with the supposedly fixed structure and effects of the calls as characterized by the corporation.

Baku gestured toward an additional slippage, again between (meta)discourse and practice, that is premised upon management's relatively lenient stance toward scripting versus styling. Put bluntly, Baku and his coworkers parodically play with the text. Cashiers may lower their pitch, extend their vowels and consonants, effect a dramatic cadence, mimic other staff members and their idiolectal quirks, accelerate their speech patterns, and otherwise "horse around" [*fuzaketari suru*]. In this way, the workers enact changes to the script, but do so in a poetical fashion that maintains certain formalized features of the original text. The parallelism between the script and the parody, and the consequent ambiguity between the two, constitutes the core of the act's comedic value: the two have either the same structure or the same meaning, but not both.

Finally, although the corporation's website, all four acquaintances, and many online metadiscourses characterize the use of Italian calls either positively or neutrally, some individuals

are discomfited by the foreign terms. The following is a blog-post from Hatena Diary dating to May 20, 2011 entitled, “The ‘*con brio*’ of Tully’s is meaningless” [*Tarīzu no “kon burio” tte imi nai jan*].

I think it’s pretty well known that, when you go to Tully’s Coffee [*Tarīzu kōhī*] and order a drink, the cashier tells the person who will make that drink what you ordered after saying something like “*con brio*.”

Wondering about the meaning of “*con brio*,” I looked it up. It seems to be the Italian phrase “*con brio*,”²⁸ meaning “with energy” [*iki iki to*].

What meaning does saying this word have, and moreover saying it in Italian? They’re just putting on airs and trying to be cool. There’s absolutely no reason to say it in Italian.

This is Japan, so at least say it in Japanese! Jeez (haha). [nymercerst 2011]

The blogger rejects the term’s role in creating an image of an Italian cafe. Indeed, nymercerst seems to take issue with an invasion of the foreign. She or he iconically equates Japan as a geopolitical entity with the Japanese language via the deictic signal “this” (“this is Japan” [*Koko wa Nihon nan da*]). Perhaps frustrated with Tully’s branding strategy, nymercerst denounces the disingenuous theatrics of employees who are, no matter the words they use, Japanese: “they’re just putting on airs and trying to be cool.”²⁹ This may also be a negative reaction to a foreign prestige register, or even the elite strain of cafe modernity in Japan. That is, the blogger may feel annoyed or intimidated by the use of terminology indexing upper class or cosmopolitan pursuits (Italian music) in a space that nominally fosters social equality based upon flattening industrial standardization and anonymous economic transactions.³⁰ In the following section, I examine this tension at Tully’s between the culinary-craft authenticity emblemized by the Italianate calls and a special kind of egalitarian relationality emblemized by the appellation “*ferō*.”

Instantiation two: “*ferō*”

In this section, I argue that the use of “*ferō*,” like the use of entextualized Italianate calls, instantiates the corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism at Tully’s. The appellation helps generate an image of open and equal sociability productive of a sense of distinction for Tully’s workers, products, employees, and, derivatively, customers. Yet, in doing so, it highlights the indelible tension in the contemporary cafe-service industry between hierarchical relations among employees, managers, and customers, and pure sociability of the sort that Tully’s attempts to cultivate in its outlets. As noted above, this tension has a historical precedent in the antinomy between elitism and popularism that has typified cafe culture in Japan since the early-20th century.

The corporation’s concern to engineer a space defined by its uninhibited sociability is conveyed by its “commitment” to relaxation as outlined in the following statement:

Our hope at Tully’s is not only to serve delicious coffee, but also to provide a living room in the city that functions as a space of relaxation and communication [*machi no ribingurūm to shite no rirakuzēshon to katarai no ba*]. While Tully’s coffee shops [*Tarīzu kōhī no shoppu*] have designs that will catch your eye even in the middle of a stylish neighborhood, you feel oddly relaxed once you enter the store.

First is the color of the walls. In order to create a relaxed atmosphere we've made them a warm brown color...For the chairs we've chosen something a bit unique. Known as a "pitchfork chair," the backrest takes the shape of a *kumade* rake [meant] for [raking] hay, and the legs take the shape of a hatchet. It's country style, but when placed within a store with relaxed hues it appears both modern [*modan*] and [also] relaxed. The "pitchfork chair" is one important item in producing [*enshutsu*] a space with a Tully's Coffee atmosphere. Also [important are] the soft lighting, the pleasant Jazz background music, and the fragrant aroma of coffee...

The concept of Tully's coffee shops is to create a comfortable space where, through specialty coffee, people gather and culture is transmitted among circles of people [*hito ga atsumari, hito no wa kara bunka ga hasshin sareru*]. [Tully's Coffee Japan, "Commitment to Relaxation"]

The corporation here yokes the relaxed to the sociable, the reposed to the communicative. It thus connects contemporary Tully's workers to the *jokyū* female service laborers in early-20th century Japanese cafes who performed affective labor on behalf of male guests. Tully's workers inherit this legacy, albeit to a lesser degree, insofar as they labor to furnish a "third place" (Oldenburg 2013), or a space in which individuals released from the social chains of work and home can commune over common interests and sow seeds that may later grow into full-fledged social bonds.³¹ The passage quoted above enumerates some of the myriad signs that coalesce to form the relaxed and "modern" atmosphere of Tully's cafes, one that restores patrons' weary bodies and lubricates social engagement. Instrumental jazz music, for example, helps construct this atmosphere, and contrasts with the louder pop-music typically playing in Starbucks in both the United States and Japan.³² Baku mentioned that this music suits the comparatively elderly patrons of Tully's, while Chie commented that it provides background noise devoid of distracting lyrics.

The appellation "*ferō*" interlocks with the non-linguistic signs described in this passage. It helps construct an image of a space of open social engagement, a space "committed" to relaxation, that resonates with the image of democratic European cafes that Usui describes with such pith: namely, "places of sociability" [*shakōba*]. Undoubtedly, however, the notion of unfettered social engagement in the vein of the 19th century European cafe is a fantasy (what Ellis (2008) describes as a "polite fiction").³³ And it remains as much at chain-cafes today. The majority of Tully's customers that this author informally observed during ten months of intermittent patronage arrived either alone or in contained groups. While Tully's successfully provides its patrons with a space for social interaction inasmuch as anyone with currency may enter and speak with their companions, few would argue that the culture of contemporary chain-cafes in Japan (or in the United States) facilitates stranger-stranger communication in the fashion of idealized Parisian cafes.³⁴ Nonetheless, the company upholds the creation of a space of open communication as a corporate goal, which in turn draws upon latent cultural conceptions of cafe culture.³⁵

The use of "*ferō*" facilitates the production of such a space. Just as Starbucks refers to its employees as "partners" (Nobutoki 2003b:44), Tully's uses the conspicuously egalitarian term "*ferō*" to refer to its workers. Certainly, "*ferō*" emanates an authenticating cultural odor of the foreign, and in that sense it parallels the Italianate calls. But the term more explicitly makes reference to a world of egalitarian sociability that is central to the fantasy of the cafe as a space and institution in Europe and, from a later date, Japan. Matsuda, the founder of Tully's, recounts the moment he hit upon

"*ferō*" as follows. After working grueling hours at Tully's first store in Ginza, Matsuda reached his physical limit, at which point his part-time workers selflessly took over the barista role and solicited customers as he had. When he grew discouraged about the store's prospects, his employees reassured him that Tully's would succeed in Japan:

I saw the part-time workers trying so hard and upholding the principles [rinen] of Tully's so earnestly, and before I knew it I came to think:

"Whether you're the president, a store manager, a full-time employee, or a part-time employee, the feeling of love for Tully's doesn't change. Everyone working at Tully's is a *nakama* [associate]!"

And so, when I came up with [Tully's] corporate policy, I used the name [*namae*] "fellow" instead of "employee" [*jūgyōin*]. Since then, everyone who works at Tully's has been referred to as a "fellow" without distinction [*wake-hedate naku*]. [Matsuda 2002:188-189]

This anecdote does not indicate why Matsuda selected the term "*ferō*" to refer to employees as *nakama*, and I have been unable to ascertain the word's provenance. Nonetheless, the narrative suggests that, like Aoi on "*con amore*" (Italian) versus "with love" (English), Matsuda found "*ferō*" (English) to sound (or smell) better than "*nakama*" (Japanese) at Tully's. This may be because the term registers solidarity of a foreign ilk (e.g., Anglo-American republicanism³⁶) that is anathema to stereotypes of Japan's hierarchical corporate structure. Matsuda has also fortified this sense of solidarity between workers by having *ferō*'s refer to each other by first name, which helps them "feel closer to one another" (ibid.:189).³⁷ This strategy echoes Brown and Gilman's classic study (Foley 1997:315) of the gradual shifts in second-person pronominal distinction in European languages—essentially, honorific versus non-honorific forms of second-person address—that dovetailed with increasing social mobility following the Industrial Revolution. Similarly, Tully's method of engendering a space of fantasized "conversation as pure sociability" (Manning 2012:48) is encoded linguistically: the use of "*ferō*" to refer to employees projects a sense of solidarity upon the co-text of signs composing each cafe.³⁸

Yet, despite all of the foregoing rationales for using "*ferō*," in his book Matsuda himself writes "*arubaito ferō*" (196), translatable as "part-time worker fellow." This slip uncloaks the ideological erasure of hierarchy that the term "*ferō*" facilitates when used alone. And indeed, in practice the pragmatics of "*ferō*" are individualized, inconsistent with the corporation's metadiscourse, and, on occasion, more compatible with the historical strain of elitism in Japan's cafe modernity than with the equality that Matsuda envisioned. Chie stated that all part-time employees refer to each other with the formula [first name+*san*] or [first name+*chan/kun*]; the store manager does the same. The use of *san* or *chan/kun* (less honorific, more intimate and diminutive suffixes) depends on the interlocutor's age: if older, then *san*; if the same age or younger, then *chan/kun*. (Alternatively, older workers may refer to younger coworkers as [nickname+*chan/kun*]). The use of these suffixes departs from Matsuda's vision of totalized equality. The area manager, furthermore, refers to part-time employees such as Chie with the formula [first name+*ferō*], which hints that "*ferō*" may mark employees of lower corporate status. Again, this application of the term unveils a slippage between theory and practice. Judged by its corporate definition, "*ferō*" accords with the idealized solidarity of humanity thought to be proper to Enlightenment cafe culture. Yet Chie's statement informs us that, contrary to the corporation's metadiscourse, the appellation may index the addressee's lower social standing.

Baku first remarked that “*ferō*” is not used within the store, but next asserted that the word is a “Tully’s original.” He lauded the term for its capacity to signal that all employees, regardless of age or rank, are equal and must aid one another. Aoi explained that one uses “*ferō*” as a term of reference when introducing visiting *ferō*’s from other stores (often with the formula “this is *ferō* [name+*san*]” [*ferō no* (name+*san*) *desu*]); when speaking to a third-party not associated with the store; and in notices of events for employees (for instance, a coffee study-group for *ferō*’s). She concluded that Tully’s uses the word because it is “cool, easy to say, and produces the feel of a cafe [*kafē-kan o dasu*].” But contrary to Baku’s declaration that the term embodies true equality, Aoi lamented the considerable disparity in the treatment of part-time and full-time employees. For her, the ideological erasure that motivates the use of “*ferō*” fits unevenly with the actual power relations among employees at Tully’s cafes.³⁹

In these ways, the moments in which “*ferō*” fails to furnish egalitarian sociability highlight, *ipso facto*, the tension in the cafe-service industry between the hierarchy among employees, managers, and customers, and the egalitarianism attributed to cafe culture in popular imaginations. Images of the Parisian cafe evincing fraternity coincide uneasily with those of the skilled (and therefore lauded) barista because they intimate even and uneven social standings, respectively, among workers and between the corporation, workers, and customers. Nevertheless, there is one, perhaps ironic, manner in which the calls and “*ferō*” cooperate to foster a sense of distinction (rather than fostering opposing senses of distinction). It concerns the authenticity of the group of craftsmen construed as laboring in harmony. Despite possessing prestigious craft knowledge, Tully’s employees perform before two bosses—the corporation (shift manager) and the customer—who demand both the commodity’s production and sale from the same individual(s) (cf. Manning 2012:49). The Italianate calls described above index and perform authentic culinary-craft labor for these bosses. Yet the calls simultaneously index and perform an exhortation to labor, and commune, as an egalitarian work-group of *ferō*’s. In this sense, the calls (exhortations) align the productive performance of Tully’s workers with a kind of craft labor that features the egalitarian dyad of cashier and barista. This image of equality between laborers contributes to the place-based authenticity of Tully’s cafes by demonstrating their proximity to egalitarian European cafes. But again, this apparent congruity between the two instantiations of cross-modal iconism is at least in part illusory, for the authenticity derived from producing an image of socially equal *ferō*’s working in harmony conflicts with the real hierarchies that characterize authentic, prestigious culinary-craft labor.

Conclusion

Italianate calls of musical origin, made reproducible through entextualization, enjoin *ferō*’s to work with a soul. These calls emanate an authenticating foreign cultural odor that confers an aura of craftsmanship upon the performance of coffee production. Phrased differently, a corporately-managed semiotic ideology—one that implements and deploys a naturalized, consubstantial relationship between coffee-producer and Italian speaker—frames the use of Italianate phrases as constitutive of the authentic labor process. The calls are thus essential to generating a sense of distinction for Tully’s cafes, products, and employees, as well as customers who gain a modicum of cultural capital by selecting Tully’s as their coffee supplier. At the same time, Tully’s deploys the foreign appellation “*ferō*” to represent a piece, but point to a different facet, of this same strategy of projecting modernist discourses of distinction: egalitarian sociability.

Why can the fantasized egalitarianism of the cafe coexist with the social stratification inherent to a corporation selling specialty coffee in a late capitalist economy? Precisely because it is by and large an illusion, albeit one with historical foundations dating to the late-19th century in Japan. To succeed commercially, the corporation requires the brand-image of a cafe that fosters egalitarian

sociability. But in order to distinguish itself from competitors within the chain-cafe service industry, Tully's must concurrently construct an image of culinary-craft authenticity to accompany its drinks. It therefore mobilizes set Italian phrases as representative of "European language," describable as a discursively constructed cultural symbol (cf. Sergeant 2009:134), to strengthen the perceived authenticity of its cafe practices. These calls compose only a piece of the sum semiotic field of each Tully's outlet that indexes the skill and legitimacy of employees as coffee connoisseurs. The calls paradoxically coexist with an imaginary notion of pure sociability embodied in the term "ferō." Nonetheless, as I have suggested, the calls also index and perform an exhortation addressed to Tully's workers to labor as socially equal *ferō*'s and, by doing so, to better approximate the imagined foreign craftsmen who labor in harmony.

In sum, these two figurations of the foreign at Tully's—prestigious culinary-craft knowledge emblemized by the calls (a project of authenticity), and the erasure of hierarchy in favor of equalized social relations mediated by commodities and emblemized by the term "ferō" (a project of egalitarian sociability)—interweave, contradict, and illuminate the problematical politics of authenticity, sociability, and distinction in Japanese modernity. These contradictory vectors can successfully synergize at Tully's because they are both, in part, semiotic constructs produced through the corporate strategy of cross-modal iconism.

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Endnotes

1. Cf. mikihouse4 2013, a tweet responding to a previous tweet by user domesoccer that reads: "It sounds like the Tully's employees say 'van fore' after taking a customer's order." Cf. Debuneko 2015, who reportedly waited over a decade to ask the meaning of "con brio": "According to an employee, 'con brio' is an initial call [inisharu kōru] (a call [kakegoe]) that means 'with verve [iki iki to] (please!).' Whaaa! That's what that was?! Knowing little about coffee, I'd arbitrarily thought it was a way of roasting beans, or some [foreign] country's word for 'order.'" Cf. 753 2007: "I looked it ['con amore] up, and apparently it's Italian. Apparently it's a [specialized] musical term [are, itariago rashii desu ne. Ongaku yōgō rashii desu ne]." [↗](#)
2. Kuretani records this trend in reference to London's coffeehouses, but we may apply his analysis more broadly to western Europe's cafe culture. The proximate discourse in Western scholarship on egalitarian ratio-critical discourse in cafes spins out of the seminal work of Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989). Cf. Ellis 2008 for a summary, and Ellis 2006 for a trenchant historiographical critique, of Habermas' discussion of the public sphere. Cf. Fraser 1992 for a critique of the public sphere in relation to "the limits of democracy in late-capitalist societies" (109); Warner 1992 on the contemporary public sphere, the mass media, and the mass subject; Warner 2002, particularly on the "poetic function of public discourse" (82) in public and world-making; and Taylor 2002 on the public sphere as an "extrapolitical, secular, metatopical space" (116). On the differentiation between public and private space as a language ideology, see Gal 2005. Cf. Laurier and Philo 2007. [↗](#)
3. See Watanabe 1995 for an empirical study of the development of cafes and cafe culture in Europe (particularly Paris). [↗](#)
4. The denotation of "ware ware" is ambiguous, but the word likely points to "the Japanese." [↗](#)
5. Cf. White 2012:9; Hatsuda 1993:11; Takai 2014:25. For a dissenting opinion, see Nobutoki 2003a:10-11. Non-Japanese nationals visiting Japan were consuming coffee, and on occasion sharing coffee with Japanese, long before the Kahiichakan opened. Note that Miriam Silverberg differentiates between Japan's initial coffee-serving institutions ("coffeehouses") and their early-20th century descendants ("cafes"), with the first of the cafes being Cafe Printemps (1998:212-213). More categories could be added: milk halls, bars, salons, eateries [inshokuten], "teahouses" (or, again, "cafes") [kissaten], special kissaten [tokushu kissaten], emerging [new] kissaten [shinkō kissaten], and so forth (cf. Hatsuda 1993, esp. 21). As an elaboration of the social nuances and legal standings of these institutional types falls outside the scope of this essay, I have opted to refer to Japan's coffee establishments uniformly as "cafes." I use the term "coffeehouse" in reference to England's (London's) coffee establishments because this is the term employed in most literature on the topic. [↗](#)
6. Among the cafe's attractions were newspapers, magazines, wine, and tobacco. It also hosted a coeducational society (danjo kōsaikai) known as the Tōkyō Kinrankai (composed of Imperial University students at the time) (Araki 2009:116; Kashima 2000:54). [↗](#)
7. With this term, Manning refers to the eponymous Viennese cafe that inspired Alfred Polgar's manifesto, "Theory of the Café Central" (Polgar 2007). [↗](#)
8. The popularity of jokyū inspired the establishment of Cafe Lion's raunchier cousin, Cafe Tiger, following the 1923 Kantō earthquake (Hatsuda 1993:19; cf. Takezawa 2006:42). Note that Cafe Printemps also employed attractive female (bijin) waitresses in addition to male waiters (Kashima 2000:58). Cf. Silverberg 1998 and Silverberg 2006:73-107 on the historical emergence, and the cultural construction and functions, of jokyū in urban, pre-Pacific War "modern life" [modan seikatsu]. For a more recent ethnographic study of alienated female service workers in urban Japan, see Allison 1994. [↗](#)

9. "Taishō modernism" and interwar popular culture were characterized by continuing urbanization, proliferating communication technologies, and expanding sites of consumption and entertainment. On Taishō modernism and interwar popular culture, see Silverberg 2006, esp. part 1. Silverberg writes that some forty thousand cafes, emblematic of this emergent mass culture, were operating nationwide by 1933 (ibid.:25). [↗](#)
10. This process was accelerated by the post-1923 infiltration of more licentious cafes from Osaka into Tokyo (Hatsuda 1993:19; Takezawa 2006:42). On the fate of this eroticized modern cafe culture in the 1930s, see Garon 1997:106-110. [↗](#)
11. Alternatively, this could be rendered as: "Tully's is a cafe based on the image of an Italian espresso bar" [Tarīzu wa Itaria no espuresso bā o imēji shita kafe (da)]. [↗](#)
12. Note that Matsuda was speaking in reference to Ben & Jerry's ice cream as an exemplar of added value products. [↗](#)
13. In fact, concerns in Japan today regarding authentic cuisine extend beyond the foreign to the domestic Japanese. In recent years, the Japanese state maneuvered to have washoku [Japanese cuisine] named an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, and it succeeded on December 5, 2013. Inseparable from "idioms of cultural heritage to promote, protect, and prove the essence of culinary authenticity, internationally and domestically" (Bestor 2014:59), the washoku craze has also been linked with programs of shokuiku [food education] among schoolchildren instituted in 2005. This culinary education has emerged, in part, in response to anxieties concerning dietary globalization and the saturation of foreign foods in Japan (Assmann 2015:167-168). [↗](#)
14. See, for example, the gustatory characterizations of various types of coffee beans, complete with simple charts ranking body and "refreshingness" (subsection "beans" within Tully's Coffee Japan, "Product Info"). [↗](#)
15. Cf. Laurier 2013 for an ethnographic study of the barista's skills in a Western context. [↗](#)
16. Harkness understands cross-modal iconism to describe a "qualic transitivity" in which Peircean qualia (concrete instantiations of abstract qualities), existing across a range of dimensions of social and sensorial life, are perceived as collectively instantiating some broader quality. To employ this terminology in the context of this essay: Tully's attempts to regiment the perception of analogies between disparate sign systems in its cafes such that the qualia characterizing these systems are seen to collectively instantiate the overarching abstract quality of foreignness. [↗](#)
17. "Honba" is a spatialized idiom suggesting that the machines help produce the flavor (in a dual sense) of the "original place." [↗](#)
18. Cf. Holm 2013:176. [↗](#)
19. Although this does not surpass speculation, the move to brand Tully's by foregrounding foreignness may be related to the self-avowedly "foreign" childhood of Tully's founder Matsuda Kōta. Matsuda spent much of his childhood in Boston and Senegal and first encountered coffee in France on vacation (Matsuda 2002:63). His upbringing, perhaps not coincidentally, is reminiscent of the cosmopolitan background of the Kahichakan's founder, Tei Ei-kei. [↗](#)
20. Irvine and Gal, adopting Peircean terminology, use the term "rhematization" to refer to this identification of iconic relations between a language and the cultural characteristics of its speakers (Gal 2005:35 n5; Gal 2013:34). [↗](#)
21. To the extent that the terms' musical denotations perdure (and so are not only ornamental in function), they frame coffee-making as an aesthetic form, like music. I thank Kathleen Riley for pointing this out. [↗](#)

22. This concept of proximity to the origin echoes James Farrer's contention that culinary workers hold specialized culinary capital, or human capital specific to the institutions and social relations that collectively compose transnational "culinary field[s]" (2015:104). [↗](#)
23. I use the term "metapragmatic" to refer to the various discourses about discourse (pragmatics) by the workers and the company, and specifically differing ideas about what the terms of their discourses index. [↗](#)
24. While unclear, Aoi's reasoning seems to align with the data gathered in the aforementioned survey conducted by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in 2006. These data suggest that while coffee may be widely associated with the United States, only France competes with Italy when it comes to matters of food and design (Ceccarini 2011:67). Americans (like me) consume coffee copiously, but it is Italians and French who excel in its craft production. As such, Italian ("con amore") imbues Tully's and its baristas with artisanal authenticity better than English ("with love") ever could. [↗](#)
25. Compare with the following statement by the "former fellow" referenced above: "It's not as though we [the employees] are thinking about the meaning as we speak, but [these words] are certainly from the heart" (noname#16436 2005). For noname#16436, the calls "mean" something in a different way than for Aoi. They perform an unthinking emotive function (Jakobson 1960) that expresses "the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about" (354) and represents that speaker's emotional state with immediacy or transparency—that is, with authenticity of a different sort. [↗](#)
26. The blogger next outlines the self-motivating, emotive function of the calls: "[These calls also] pep up the person making the call...And it's odd, but when you use one of these calls a smile naturally comes to your face, even though you're doing your job, and you can have fun working." If that is so, then this function of the calls also benefits the corporation by enhancing the affective labor of its workers. [↗](#)
27. I have included two arrows pointing from the corporation to the cashier in all three figures to represent the multiple potential calls that Tully's supplies to the ferō's. [↗](#)
28. In this instance alone, "con brio" is written in roman characters. [↗](#)
29. Non-Japanese nationals with the appropriate credentials (i.e. a visa that permits them to be employed in Japan, and, presumably, Japanese language skills) may in fact apply for part-time positions at Tully's (Tully's Coffee Japan, "Arubaito Q&A"). [↗](#)
30. Some customers may feel that the Italianate calls subordinate individuals lacking fluency in coffee's specialized craft-terminology. This sentiment would accord with the division of linguistic labor that is part and parcel of craft commodity production (Manning 2002). Additional ethnographic work at Tully's, however, would be required to substantiate this claim. [↗](#)
31. Tully's attempts to subsume itself within a discourse of community values by, for example, placing community bulletin boards in its outlets and holding picture book contests whose proceeds are marked for NGO initiatives (Tully's Coffee Japan 2014a). Likewise, as stated in a 2014 press release announcing a hike in product prices: "We at Tully's will continue to strive to respond to the diversifying needs and expectations of customers in various ways, and to become a 'community cafe rooted in local society' [chiiki shakai ni nezashita komyunitī kafe] in the eyes of our customers" (Tully's Coffee Japan 2014b). [↗](#)
32. This form of jazz differs from that played in the jazz cafes of the early postwar years in Japan. While early postwar Jazz was initially a U.S. idiom, the unremarkable jazz heard at Tully's today plays at a low enough volume to successfully recede into the background as a kind of calmative white noise. [↗](#)

33. Such cafes were often not the well-regulated crucibles of reasoned debate that Habermas envisioned. They could be uproarious and were arguably exclusionary (cf. Ellis 2006, 2008; Laurier and Philo 2007). [↗](#)

34. Cf. Laurier and Philo 2006 for an ethnomethodological study of the potential for conviviality among unacquainted patrons in the public space of cafes. Cf. Laurier 2008 for an ethnographically rich analysis of a conversation between two cafe patrons as informed by the spatial arrangement of surrounding customers and furnishings. Cf. Roquet 2016:133-136 on co- (rather than inter-)subjectivity, a concept that aptly captures the predominant mode of stranger-stranger relationality at chain-cafes in Japan. [↗](#)

35. Analogously, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz described Starbucks as a “third place” and an “oasis” (Koishihara 2001:68). [↗](#)

36. I thank Kathleen Riley for this observation. [↗](#)

37. Matsuda adds: “You cannot do the work of a manager unless you love, not only your customers, but also your part-time workers” (2002:189). [↗](#)

38. This sense is amplified by the seating arrangement typical of Tully’s outlets: namely, series of small tables with two chairs that can be rearranged to accommodate larger groups. Nevertheless, spontaneous dialogue among strangers is uncommon. There are also seats intended for single customers, and solitary patrons will often occupy a single table with two seats. [↗](#)

39. This is not to say that the corporation does not have a vested interest in dismantling hierarchies among workers. As noted above, the shift-system at Tully’s requires regular rotations between positions. It thus minimizes specialization among ferō’s by reducing the amount of time any given employee spends mastering one set of skills (cleaning, cashier-work, coffee-production, etc.). Inhibiting specialization in this manner allows the corporation to pay relatively uniform wages to part-time employees. In this sense, regular rotations under the shift-system may be understood to represent a corporate policy that militates against the development of the inter-employee hierarchy that artisanal specialization might create. [↗](#)

40. This is the English title provided on Sōai’s website. [↗](#)

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