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January 28, 2016
Week 4
Word Count: 228

“Eating, the seemingly most quotidian and universal of bodily acts...Sarah Josepha Hale reveals diet as a crucial technology through which nations are formed as communities against racial, moral, and physiological contamination...by partaking of the substance [bread], seemed to mingle their own physical constitution with that of the nation’s, unpolluted by the richer foods of decadent monarchies or the exotic fare of the tropics” (Tompkins, 2012: 57, 61, 63).

“Corn had a dual identity...indispensable to the slave trade: corn was both the currency traders used to pay for slaves in Africa and the food upon which slaves subsisted during their passage to America” (Newman, 2013: 28).

“Don’t expect any quick action on the Farm Bill that’s due in 2018...60 votes will be needed in the Senate...numerous consumer groups with a variety of interests and concerns also want to be heard and exert an influence...the purposes of a Farm Bill is to provide safety nets for farmers” (Mueller, 2017).

The texts this week beg to ask, what is the significance of eating and our relationships with each other? From my perspective, I find that eating is food is commodities; but it does not always feel that way, there is more separation. In *Racial Indigestion*, the theme of eating is more than just nutrition, but power and historical racism that flows in and out of the mouth. I do not find the sensual mouth to be shocking, but the xenophobia and nationalism, that is not often too far from the plate, highlights the violence that has historically contaminated our food.

What we produce in our gardens and what we choose to eat are parts of our identities. In some cases, like the African slaves who were only given corn, food can also play a role in the defamation of an identity. Commodities today present a similar kind of lock on the lives of farmers and consumers. Reliant on government subsidies, farmers are a part of a scheme to produce more grain in order to keep their businesses and feed their families. These same subsidies are what trap consumers into buying cheap products that are produced with HFCS and low-cost wheat. Whether or not we can agree that ‘eating is

food is commodities,' it is evident that there is sufficient systematic damage to the intersecting relationships between the three.

Mueller, Ray. (2017). No fast track for 2018 Farm Bill. *Wisconsin State Farmer*. Retrieved from <http://www.wisfarmer.com/story/news/2017/01/30/no-fast-track-2018-farm-bill/97245900/>.

Newman, Kara. (2013). *The Secret Financial Life of Food: From Commodities Markets to Supermarkets*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. (2012). *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century*. New York: New York University Press.