

Nora Hantula
Week 9
March 7, 2017
Words Count: 253

Passages:

“...But the hovering wasp begs the question of whether it threatens the watermelon or the child. Here again we see the simultaneous aggression toward and desire for the black body...[the bite] inflicts pain...obliterating the signs of her existence, or, at the very least, by reducing her physical presence in the world one mouth at a time” (Tompkins, 2012: 169, 171).

“Although soy beans were introduced to the United States from Asia on a number of occasions throughout the nineteenth century, it was not until the end of the century that Americans would treat the plant as more than just a novelty” (Newman, 2013: 140).

News item:

<http://www.racistsandwich.com/episodes/2016/11/2/e14-whats-so-political-about-food-photography-w-celeste-noche>

"Food media is predominantly generated by white people for white people, so when the subject veers toward anything outside of the Western canon, it's not uncommon to see things generalised, exoticified, or misrepresented...I think microaggressions in social media are reflective of food media as a whole in that appropriation," (Noche, 2017).

From this week's reading, I was repeatedly struck by passages formed from historical context; I pulled them together to represent the ways that food has repeatedly embodied racism. Throughout the past weeks, I have examined the presence of identity in kitchens, relationships created between cooks and eaters, the independence of women within domesticity, the significance of kitchens with and without hearth, and the fetishism of buzzword food. Last week, I focused on the commodification of the young black male body through music, and this week, that analysis continues.

In *Racial Indigestion*, Tompkins reflects on the open-ended questions that still remain from this era of trading card advertisements. She suggests that products that

carried these cards were not solely purchased by white women, but were purchased by black people too. With this involvement in the economic market, black consumers were now valuable to producers, not only because of the producers' continued advertising of the erotic black body, but because of their participation in the commodity market. This same sentiment is clear in *The Secret Financial Life of Food*. Soybeans were not considered valuable until it became clear that there was a market for them due to their numerous uses. However, despite this use, trading cards still depicted black people as bodies that were not sentient, but could still be inflicted with pain.

Like the "bite" that Tompkins mentioned, food photographers also misrepresent the historical and cultural meanings of food. This microaggression is part due to the exoticism that non-Western foods have for Western folks.