



STREAM

S2. Affect-ionate Appetites: Desire, Disgust, and All the Feelings in Between

STREAM ORGANIZER(S)

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DESCRIPTION

Living in the murky shadow of late capitalism is weird. And yet, we must eat.

To eat or consume necessitates yielding to the affective pressures that maintain certain appetites as credible, certain foodways as tenable, and certain identities as economically viable. As Ben Highmore reminds us, “because food is orchestrated around the body,” it “intensifies” the swirl of affects, both good and bad, that inform the intersection of physiological tendencies and cultural values (2010, 126). Consumption is shot through with hierarchies of the human/animal, laborer/consumer, technological/natural, racialized, whiteness etc... Eating ethically is an imperative that undoes itself even as it is spoken. Simultaneously, eating and consumption can be agentic, life-sustaining, and creative, a source of sensory pleasure and discovery. Generational wisdom, diasporic legacies, and innovative identity performances emerge from the possibilities found on the way to the plate. The intimacy of shared eating and consumption can be a gift. Or, food-related methods might trigger the question of “what more I could do for my soup,” a radical invitation to active engagement with the world that productively disrupts habitual forms of knowing and valuing (Mol 2021, 62).

Because negotiations among multiple forms of eating and consumption are laden with affective assumptions, this stream invites participants to explore eating, appetite, and consumption as processes that engage and/or forestall a range of affective possibilities. Participants might explore these spaces through investigating discourses directly related to food and eating. For example, dominant rhetorics often maintain self/other boundaries through references to extreme or deviant eating, fostering atmospheres of fear and disgust that stick to certain bodies and populations. Participants might also turn toward the metaphorical, considering where the undergirding epistemologies of consumption ripple outward to other forms of behavior and thought. For example, patterns of consumption practices are rooted in or dovetail with broader flows of public feeling, and exploring those connections might provoke generative questions about both.

Possible topics might align with the following starting points or journey elsewhere.

- Which discourses encourage limits on the affect surrounding eating and consuming? What “feminist killjoy” perspectives are productive starting points to shake loose these formations? (Ahmed 2023, LeMesurier, 2023)
- Where are forms of racialization enmeshed in affects related to particular objects of consumption and/or demographics? (Wazana Tompkins, 2024)
- What forms of writing and composing about eating and consumption assume a universal body that is anti-Black? (Jackson, 2020)
- What eating-related discourses and rhetorics offer glimpses of a new “poetics of relation” or poetics of question that reconfigure relationships of eater/eaten? Food and the land? (Glissant, 1997)
- What “minor feelings” might reframe dominant epistemologies around food, eating, and appetite? (Hong 2020)
- What ways of eating and/or consuming, or forms of attention to eating and consuming, engage dominant affective infrastructures in surprising, subversive, mundane ways? (Stewart 2007)