In Questionable Taste: Eating Culture, Cooking Culture in Anglophone Postcolonial Texts

Date
2009

Author
Phillips, Delores Bobbie Jean

Advisor
Ray, Sangeeta

Abstract
My dissertation produces an extensive and intensive study of the culture of food in postcolonial literature and cookbooks that describe particular regions and cultures. My interrogation treats novels and cookbooks that depict food and eating in Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean to argue that while both cookbooks and novels depict as unstable the connection between food and culture; the key difference lies in the manner in which each genre describes that instability. My dissertation uses memoir cookbooks (cookbooks that use the autobiographical accounts of their authors as a method of organizing content and providing context for recipes) and literary depictions of cooking and eating to trouble the neat tautology that establishes food and home as interchangeable cultural signifiers of equal weight. I evaluate the work that cookbooks do by comparing them to representations of cooking, eating and food in representative novels that frame depictions of citizenship and the nation in deeply ambivalent terms even as they depict delicious meals, well-laid family tables, and clean, productive kitchens. I use both cookbooks and novels to illustrate how the text under consideration in my dissertation act out the concerns that structure postcolonial critique. If regional cookbooks provide obscured or incomplete insight into the cultures they purport to authentically depict, then the novels I study provide openly ambivalent accounts of cultural identification. My dissertation begins by examining how pan-cultural cookbooks do the work of drawing multiple nations beneath the aegis of the global--and how this work fails to engage the problematic cosmopolitics of globality as revealed in two South Asian novels. I then examine African texts to analyze the difficulties that press bodies into motion--hunger and impoverishment, political disenfranchisement and oppression, and attenuated relationships with cultural traditions. The dissertation then moves to America via the Caribbean, examining diasporic longing in Cuban expatriates and the manner in which regional cookbooks and memoirs construct the past by reinventing the spaces that their authors have left behind.

URI
http://hdl.handle.net/1903/9568

Collections
English Theses and Dissertations
UMD Theses and Dissertations

DRUM is brought to you by the University of Maryland Libraries
University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-7011 (301)314-1328.
Please send us your comments.
Web Accessibility
and the like. The result is, however, that translations very often have a different lexical texture from unmarked prose in the receptor culture. Page for academic positions in Anglophone / diasporic / postcolonial / global literature that begin in 2017. Last year's page: Anglophone 2016. New page for 2018 positions: Anglophone 2018. Salary information from previous job season available at English Lit Salaries for AY 2015-2016 and English Lit Salaries for AY 2016-2017. See also: English Literature 2016-2017. Please use “Heading 3” to format the names of schools / positions when adding them to the appropriate category below. Loading RSS data