

## ESSAY 1 PHASE 2

Student 1 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

The food porn community on Reddit is infamous for sharing irresistible foods and their erotic reactions to them. The creator of the subreddit seemingly gives a disclaimer describing the posts to be “nothing suggestive or inappropriate”. Though the food presented is appropriate, its provocative display arouses comments from users that cause reason for such a disclaimer to be made. While some members of this discourse use words like “horny” to demonstrate their immediate reactions to the food, others choose to more explicitly share observations of how food looks or how “dick shaped” it is, for example. Analysis in the language used in the r/foodporn community makes a clear connection between users' reactions and being sexually aroused using various tones. The various tones of informativeness, campy humor, explicit reference, and insatiable temptation help demonstrate how one topic is able to manifest several interpretations. It is only through these interpretations that one is able to better understand not only the r/foodporn community but what food porn is itself.

The r/foodporn coterie proves that a community's name can not only be highly suggestive of the content that is displayed but it also sets a guideline for the type of language used by its members. Being that porn is referenced, makes this subreddit the appropriate place for words like “horny”, “so sexy”, “fuck” or “jack off” to commonly show up in comments without judgment. Words like these are in the foundation of the language of this subreddit and allow users to express a variety of different tones all under one post. One can be of a tongue in cheek humor that shouldn't be taken literally or even a sense of longing for the food displayed. The culture of this community includes members everyday scrolling through new images on their timelines, whether it be of decadent desserts or nachos with gooey cheese dripping off the sides and so much more. Their responsibility then comes to decide whether these posts are worthy to be named “food porn” and how accurately it reflects the content that they highly esteem. Such responsibility helps to invite an informative tone to appear between users. Some members have been seen to take the comment section as an opportunity to show off their knowledge of food or even teach others how to cook the dish displayed. This can be viewed under an image of a chocolate tart, where user HumanHundred commented “that's the kinda food that's so good it's close to

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actually being pornographic". In response to HumanHundred, GreenMedallion replied with "... chocolate is meant to be an aphrodisiac so yeah, you're not wrong hahah". In connection with the meaning of this subreddit as a whole, an aphrodisiac is food that arouses sexual instincts and desires. GreenMedallion helped inform why it is no wonder that the image of the chocolate tart would be deemed acceptable material for a food porn subreddit. In this exchange, there is a collaborative interaction that helped inform not only HumanHundred but also all other members that are reviewing the comment section as well.

Whether it be because of the aphrodisiac of the food displayed, or the desires arouses from looking at it, a lot of the comments in r/foodporn's comment section are of members longing for the food displayed. Posts like the image of a lobster dinner, often become the home for members to express the desperation amongst their food cravings. RebellischerRaakun was one of the members to do this with a comment stating, "you're so blessed to get food like that fucc me" following with an emoji depicting facial expressions of agony and despair. The insatiable temptation in the tone of comments like these seems to evince that acceptable food porn must show decadence and richness and be something you wish you were eating. This could explain how few "healthy-looking" foods are posted in this subreddit since there is high doubt that the majority of people would prefer eating a salad over pizza, for example. The presentation of foods that would be in the diet of someone having a "cheat day" is the main objective of the posts shared on r/foodporn. It is the foods we wish we could eat all the time, the foods we look forward to indulging in after dieting all week, and the foods that stimulate our senses the most. It is the indulgence of these foods, much like the indulgence of sex, that creates the narrative of this subreddit and influences the amorous responses that define it.

Reactions under images in r/foodporn demonstrate a tongue in cheek blurring of the line between food and actual porn amongst its members. It is truly fascinating to see how an image of Challah french toast, for example, can arouse responses like "this makes me really horny" from user Tubby-Thor or replies like "raise your hand if you're horny for french toast" from user RedArrowRUS. This

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playful and humorous exchange supports the idea that these reactions can be drawn from genuine feelings of arousal but most likely is meant in a campy way. Some users like Numptymoop, have even commented experiencing these “horny” feelings for food more so than with people. “Yeah why does food do this for me and not people, wtf” is a question this user brought up and although it most likely was meant to be a joke, the question is still valid. In researching this subreddit group, one may be curious about how porn and these food images could possibly be compared. The sexual tone in the language used amongst members draws from how synonymous food is to actually watching porn. The objective of a subreddit like this is to make someone desire the food presented and wish they were eating it. Watching porn has a similar objective as it is meant to make one desire sex and wish they were engaging in similar intercourse to the one they’re viewing. Imagery is an important factor to both as you can’t touch, feel, or taste the food or even the sex presented. However, despite this, other senses are somehow still stimulated by just looking at these visual artifacts. Although one circumstance is sexual and the other isn’t, the similarities have made them be almost interchangeable to each other. This mentality allows r/foodporn to inhabit comments like “omg I just legit licked my screen”, and even the use of drooling emojis. Now there is reasonable doubt that this user actually licked their screen but this light-hearted wordplay helps demonstrate how the connection with porn and food is amplified and exaggerated for comedic purposes. This all contributes to the overall character and culture of this subreddit and allows it to distinguish itself from all the others.

Members of this community particularly are not one for innuendos and a lot of the language used to describe their reactions explicitly reference aspects in sexual arousal. It is established that one may experience feelings of arousal and the need for ejaculation when watching porn but also when viewing an image of a hamburger as well. However, this didn’t just serve as an analogy when user THEREALKEVINSANE commented “I’m going to jack off now” as his reaction to a hamburger. Unsurprisingly, this wasn’t the only example of this as shortly after user NoneHaveSufferedAsI replied “[enters the matrix and proceeds to masturbate] *jack in, jack off*”. It is one thing to note that viewing food porn has

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similarities to watching porn itself, but everything is escalated when food is shown to create sexual experiences all on their own. While it is important to note that these comments do play into the campy tongue in cheek humor amongst this community, these differ in the way they directly reference sexual events. Even though other comments aren't as explicit as these, a lot of them seemed to simulate that kind of experience. Under an image of lasagna user nanobitcoin said "oh yes. Fuck yes!" seemingly mimicking the sound of moans during intercourse. Member ExoSierra commented "that looks orgasmically delicious" showing how alike the sensation of eating delicious food is to the pleasure of having an orgasm. There was even a resemblance noticed with the challah french toast presented and a sexual organ when disneyho commented, "this is quite literally dick shaped". This simulation of sexual experience through food forms the basis of communication in this subreddit. It is explicit, erotic, and takes no filter to a new level. Sexual terminology is the dictionary from which members find the words that accurately describe their reactions. This creates an experience for the member of this community to be a part of a group with a language of their own rooted in venereal connotation.

In a community of members that view and analyze food in a concupiscent way, there are several interpretations arise from one unifying topic. Although the use of sexual innuendos and terminology, for the most part, is unique to r/foodporn, aspects of their community aren't just applicable to them. We can apply the analysis of various tones and interpretations stemming from a singular topic on a larger scale. Even the comments posted by members can be evaluated in many different forms. One may scroll through the comments with a prudish tone and find them to be vulgar minded and salacious whereas another may find the campy humor to be endearing and comedic. The same goes for any other topic unrelated to food porn, subjects will always be interpreted differently by different people. Whether it be due to personality traits, social upbringing, economic status or moral righteousness can be determined by future inquiries but despite that one thing is sure. R/foodporn, no matter how raunchy the members may seem, interpret the topic of food in tones that are distinct but are all related by sensual reference.

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