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Prof. Miller

Meal Analysis Essay

Meal Analysis Essay (Title to Come)

Food is delicious. Food helps us survive. Meals give us a purpose. As I explore both the Favorite Meal Essay's of my peers and Michael Pollan's article, "Out of the Kitchen, Onto the Couch," I have started to explore the tension that exists between food and meals. We crave food simply because it tastes good, but meals evoke our human emotions and help connect us to times in our past. As our society has shifted towards a fast-paced society, we have had less time to focus on creating meals and have spent more time finding food that we need to help us survive and get through the day. Food is a tool, while meals are stories. Both Pollan's article and the Favorite Meal Essay's of my peers hint at a greater significance of meals than just taste; meals are an important aspect of society because meals evoke human emotion and remind us of our past which is highly valued in our fast-paced society today.

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Today's society is fast-paced. The demands of the everyday job require more time at work and less time at home, something that has had a significant effect on the culture of home cooking. In his essay, Pollan explains how human labor has become extremely demanding in the past 50 years, increasing our time spent working and decreasing the amount of time we spend at home. Pollan explains, "Since 1967, we've added 167 hours—the equivalent of a month's full-time labor—to the total amount of time we spend at work each year, and in households where both parents work, the figure is more like 400 hours. Americans today spend more time working than people in any other industrialized nation—an extra two weeks or more a year" (14). Pollan

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shows us that industrialized societies, specifically America, have less time to devote to home cooking, suggesting that cooking is taken less seriously in countries that have little time to devote to it. Pollan argues that people are spending more money to corporations to produce their food due to the increased demand of labor in the workforce, ultimately suggesting a correlation exists between meals, time, and resources.

One of the problems with society today is the direct correlation between meals, time, and resources; increasing demand for human labor is decreasing the number of time humans can spend focusing on things such as cooking or interacting, leaving little time to devote to home cooking. However, meals fill the aspect of our humanity that craves social interaction and memories. In her essay, "Favorite Meal Essay Round 2," Ingalls describes how spaghetti is her favorite meal because of the memories that are called to mind every time she sits down to enjoy the dish. Ingalls explains, "It reminds me of helping my mom in the kitchen throwing in shakes and pinches of spices into the mix. It reminds me of time with my family spent over dinner watching as we all grew up. Through all of these meals spent with family, I never realized they would be some of my favorite memories, we were just having fun" (1). There is a part of our humanity that craves the memories associated with a good meal; meals remind us of simpler times when we had the chance to cherish time spent with our loved ones. |

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To create a meal, there is a specific process that the food must undergo in order to form one cohesive meal. Pollan describes, "Yet even the most ordinary dish follows a similar arc of transformation, magically becoming something greater than the sum of its parts. Every dish contains not just culinary ingredients but also the ingredients of narrative: a beginning, a middle, and an end" (13). Each meal has a story. Whether that story is hours of time spent in the kitchen

with grandma crafting the perfect chocolate chip cookie or rushing from the porch carrying steak to be charred on the grill, each meal has a specific process it undergoes to transform from a medley of ingredients to one magical dish. In her favorite meal essay, Natalie describes how salmon is turned into the dish her family knows and loves. Natalie describes, “Once home the true magic of the dish began. My dad would rush in the kitchen and immediately transfer the salmon right out of its delicate white paper and into the 9x13 baking dish. I could not take my eyes off of what was taking place in the kitchen, the movements of my dad that he seemed to know by heart, similar to a choreographed dance performed an innumerable amount of times”

(1). |

Commented [4]: Olivia, from what I'm seeing, this is an extremely great essay with immense potential. I really enjoy how you're adding these sources from both the NYTimes article and from Favorite Meal essays from past peers. The only thing that strikes me for you would be to fix the mechanical errors that I've suggested. Otherwise, everything flows very well to me. Great job.