

Reaction Paper 2

Bugs for Breakfast is a very interesting video on the nature and habits of the people and what they like to eat. It mainly features why people eat what they eat. This video has a lot to do with culture affecting the eating factors of what we eat. Culture is defined as the complex system of meaning and behavior that defines the way of life for a given group or society. In this case it defines what people eat. In Bugs for Breakfast, the video explains that everyone needs to eat no matter what culture that you may live in. In Africa, Asia and Mexico it is not uncommon to find people that eat caterpillars, grubs and ants. Rats and mice are commonly eaten in Asia as well as Mexico. Even snake may be eaten in these cultures. We may think that it is disgusting, but as the video says, "We eat chicken embryos and slivers of pig for breakfast." To me it does sound disgusting to eat a lot of these different things, but the video also explains that disgust is a learned response due to culture. The point of this film is to desensitize us to the norms in our society. If we were to be raised in Asia we would think no differently about eating bugs for breakfast than you would eat cheerios with milk. This is something that our culture has taught us. These are the norms. Another example would be our love of cheese. Cheese is grass that has been regurgitated by a cow and then reprocessed and finally becomes milk. When the milk is transported to the processing plant the cheese goes through a solidification process. An enzyme from the cow's stomach is introduced to the milk and soon enough it begins to congeal.

This then is cut, and the curds and whey are then separated. The curds are finally compacted and pressed to become a solid block of cheese. To me this sounds disgusting, but my culture has taught me that this is a very good thing to eat. Another example would be Portobello mushrooms. This is a type of fungus. Who would think to eat a type of fungus? It may sound disgusting but it is one of my favorite side dishes that goes along with steak. Even meat might be viewed as disgusting in many Asian countries. This is due to the fact that in these countries not much meat is eaten. Most of these cultures are mainly vegetarians. You cannot judge these countries on the fact that you just think that they are weird. That would be ethnocentrism. This means that you are judging another culture strictly from the point of view of your own culture and also that you are thinking that your culture is the right culture. What if that culture has never seen a T-bone steak? You might feel pretty dumb if you called them weird.

In Bugs for Breakfast it talks about how many ethnic foods were only just introduced to this country in the last century. As late as the 1940's people still did not know of many other foods that other ethnic groups brought to the United States. The cultures may have even been a little suspicious of each other's cooking according to the video Bugs for Breakfast. Only due to the war, many other ethnic foods were experimented with by the American public. In 1890, Harry Lender started making bagels. It was not till 1926 that they became a part of popular culture. Even Italian food was viewed as weird by the American public till a man named Chef Boyardee made this wonderful food mainstream. Imagine a world without Spaghetti's. This is a food that I was raised on. Every day after school I would crack open a can of this Italian treat and would help myself to some bread and butter. I wonder what I would be eating if America had not tried out this product and made it mainstream. I think that America is a great blend of all

cultures of the world. In what other country can you go to a shopping mall and have foods from China, Mexico, Italy, Philippines, Japan or even Mexico.

All of these ethnic cultures also have different rituals for eating as well as cooking. In Italy immigrants were taught not to cook meat, pasta and cheese together so as to help digestion. They believed that they would probably get an upset stomach from the mixing of these while cooking. When they ate the food it would all be mixed together. Mexicans were discouraged from eating as much tomatoes and peppers because this may contribute to kidney problems in the future. Polish and Hungarians were told that pickles would hurt their urinary tract. These are all ethnic foods that have probably been in recipe books for generations. For us to tell these people that this might or might not be good for them may be a little ethnocentric. Who are we to judge? It has worked for them thus far and why try to fix something that is not broken. There are even different times of eating. At my house dinner is usually at 6:30 pm. This is not a required time. This is kind of the local style time of eating dinner. In other parts of the world dinner may be at 4 PM or 10 PM. Then they may have a light snack right before dinner. It really doesn't matter when you eat, but it all points to a cultural thing. In some cultures not everyone dines at elevated tables. In Japan they usually kneel and eat on lowered tables. I am a Japanese-American and I still only eat at elevated tables or in front of the television. As an example of culture, I am Japanese but I do not eat Japanese food like nato or Nishime. I am a product of my culture. I am more Americanized and would choose a steak or a hamburger versus oyaku donburi. I do not even know how to use chopsticks. This is all due to the culture that I was raised in.

Bibliography

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