Chun 1

Joshua Chun

Helen Sandoval

Writing 10, Section 20

October 9, 2014

Know What You Eat

Media owns the 21st century. If garbage is marketed, someone will buy it. It has great influence all over the world. The power of the media is quick spread of information and the ignorance of the audience. The uninformed public is weak and will buy what is in the market without a second thought. Jill McCorkle is a great example of this in her essay, “Her Chee-to Heart” where she fantasizes of all her guilty pleasures. Her addiction to junk food is strongly connected to her past (she enjoyed all different junk foods when she was younger) which keeps her from abstaining from the chemicals in them. Although these chemicals might not be related to obesity, these chemicals are very harmful to our bodies.

One of the most popular and prevalent ingredients in food today is high fructose syrup. This blend of fructose and glucose produces a sugary substance that is able to be mass produced for a cheaper price than sugar cane, the old source of sugar. This revolutionary change in the food industry made it possible to produce all the snacks we love for a much cheaper price. If and when high fructose corn syrup is consumed in large portions, it increase cholesterol and ultimately makes people fat. Sugar is the main source of energy that the body uses to power the brain, muscles and just about everything else in the body. However, unused sugars are stored up in the body as cholesterol and fat. In Laura Beil’s article, “Sweet Confusion: Does high fructose
syrup deserve such a bad rap?,” Beil, through a series of studies and research, concludes that high fructose corn syrup is not directly correlated to obesity but rather, that humans eat too much period. (Biel).

Many studies have shown however, that the consumption of high fructose corn syrup is not directly related to obesity, high fructose corn syrup is unhealthy in other ways. The high demand for corn to make high fructose corn syrup has shifted the cash crop to corn, genetically modified corn. In the early 2010’s, the United States produced 32% of the world’s corn crop. However, all if not most of the corn grown in US used pesticides to keep bugs out of the crop. Genetically modified corn has very little evidence of affects to the human body but, the pesticides that are able to be used on them definitely do. These pesticides may cause short-term illnesses like nausea but, can also cause long-term illnesses like cancer. They can also affect children, under the age of 12, in their brain. Because the brain is not fully developed until about age 12, if children come into contact with the pesticides use on crops, it may permanently damage them.

The fight against obesity is a tough battle to fight because the population values their happiness over health. McCorkle thinks, “[I think] maybe this is the key to a true junk-food junkie’s heart: happiness.”(McCorkle). One example of this is the attempted soda ban in New York in 2012. Ex-Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed prohibiting the sale of sodas and other sugary beverages larger than sixteen ounces. This proposal would discourage citizens from buying sugary beverages in large amounts. It wouldn’t have been impossible to buy the same amount of drink, just inconvenient and a bit more expensive. What used to be one big bottle would be a bothersome 2 bottles. This money could then be used on other things to help improve
the city as a whole but, the people of New York cared more about what makes them “happy” than what would make them “healthy[er]”. Mark Bittman talks about how taxing bad foods can be used to promote health in his article, “Bad Food? Tax it, and Subsidize Vegetables”. A big reason why Bittman’s idea seems farfetched is because in much of America, happiness is greater than health. People don’t want to tax bad foods even if it meant it would help them buy healthier food. The main issue that Bloomberg was attacking wasn’t the sugary drinks, it was the amount of sugary drink that New Yorkers were consuming on a daily basis. America is addicted to bad food, if it can even be called “food.”

The word food has lost its meaning over the years and has been broadened to a whole variety of items. In Michael Pollan’s “Eat Food: Food Defined,” Pollan defines food as what our grandmother or even our great-great grandmother would call food. (Pollan). In their day, bread was made from flour, yeast, water, a pinch of salt, and maybe honey for a bit of flavor. Bread today is unbleached enriched wheat flour, thiamin mononitrate, high fructose corn syrup and a whole list of words that take over two tries to pronounce. A lot of the chemicals found in our food is used to replace or fabricate something new. In Bittman’s talk he says, “It’s not the beta-carotene, it’s the carrot.” (Bittman). Putting the same chemicals that’s in food will not make “food” healthy. It’s not the individual ingredients that make something healthy.

Having knowledge of what is being put into our bodies is crucial to living healthy lives. Relying on labels and reviews on the internet aren’t what make a food healthy or unhealthy. Even animals know what a poisonous frog or mushroom looks like, if they just ate whatever looked good, they would be fat too. It’s just that poisonous food in our society is masked by a
cheetah wearing sunglasses. But, knowing what we eat isn’t enough to sustain a healthy diet. The average human just eats too much period. The biggest factor isn’t the chemicals in our food (though it is a big problem), it’s how much we consume. The US must change its definition of food closer to what it was back in our great-great grandma’s days. Simply eat food.
Works Cited


