

Christine Nelson

Professor Miller

English 110, Section H-5

18 February 2019

What is Food, Really?

Most Americans love food. There is no escaping it, everywhere you go there are multitudes of fast food chains and restaurants lining all the streets. Society thrives off of eating out and enjoying a nice meal. Food is highly commercialized and many people revolve their lives around it. There's the Food Network, food commercials, food video games, food toys, food challenges, and food movies. Everyone eats to live, but it seems as if more Americans live to eat. Food is an incentive that motivates people to get their work done, finish a project, or just get through their day. It is unimaginable to interchange food here in America. Nonetheless, the replacement of food is discussed by Lizzie Widdicombe in her journal article, "The End of Food." Widdicombe interviews an individual by the name of Rob Rhinehart who believes he can substitute food with Soylent. Soylent is a meal replacement drink, with all the lipids, carbohydrates, amino acids, and minerals one would need for the day. The drink was designed to save busy people time and increase work productivity. Although Soylent may appear convenient, it will never be able to take the place of real food. Food can not be fully substituted due to the special value most people have for it.

The best part of my day is getting to sit down with friends or family to eat a nice meal. Soylent takes away from getting together with others. The drink permits one to eat alone and separate themselves from people. I do see a few benefits to Soylent, however I would not want to completely erase actual food from my pallet. If my day is jam-packed and my schedule is super

tight, then maybe once in awhile I would consider picking up some Soylent. I personally believe that Soylent would be fine for someone to have when they are in a hurry, but it seems excessive to drink on a daily basis. I love my mom's cooking and miss it everyday while I am away at college. There is nothing like going home and eating a home cooked meal or "real food" as I refer it to. The food at college never leaves me satisfied, and I always depart the dining hall disappointed. I have been accustomed to my mom's cooking for eighteen years and completely switching to a different style of cooking is hard. I know that my mom's food is irreplaceable. It may seem cliché, but her food is made with love and is special to my heart. At dinner, my family gets to catch up on each others' days, and it is nice to spend time with one another. As I mentioned in my Favorite Meal essay, "It is the one time where we all come together and focus on each other. Phones and other electronics are not allowed at the table, forcing all of us to talk to one another and not have any distractions." Dinner gives my family a break from work and allows us all to relax. Without taking breaks throughout the day, everyone would be overly stressed and work performance and productivity would decrease. Having meals to break up the day is a nice way to re-energize and catch up with people.

Without food there would be no downtime in the day to socialize with others. Soylent may save the average working person time, but it takes away the connection built between people over meals. The attraction to the drink is mainly because it is seen as a quick alternative, however making cooking a priority in your schedule is not difficult to do. Meals can be prepared ahead of time and most cooking is easy and efficient. There is no 'quick fix' that will work for absolutely everyone, despite what Rhinehart believes. He feels as if Soylent will be a universal solution for everyone, stating, "Mankind's oldest problem would be solved.... and people could be free" (17). There may be some benefits to Soylent, but it is unrealistic to think that a simple

Commented [1]: Maybe you could add in a little bit about how Soylent could help with a busy college schedule.

drink could solve everyone's problems. Having dinner with family or friends may actually help to solve real problems because everyone is communicating and talking about the different stresses that come along with daily life. Talking to others about your day is important for reflection and may help in planning ahead for the next days to come. Connecting with family or friends will help relieve any anxiety or stress. Taking the time to listen shows you care about them and value their importance. There is no comfort surrounding Soylent and all interactions are lost. Soylent dehumanizes us by making it acceptable to lose touch with others and become antisocial. Having Soylent on really busy days where there is no time to eat in your schedule, is reasonable. However completely relying on it over real food does not appear to be mentally or physically healthy. I understand some of the points Rhinehart makes regarding Soylent, but I personally am against abandoning real food. The drink will not solve all of your problems and actual food is guaranteed to leave you more satisfied.

Additionally, there are several negative health effects that one will endure if relying solely on Soylent for an extended period of time. When Widdecombe tried Soylent for a week straight she experienced bloating of the stomach, food cravings, extreme gas, and social repercussions. One does not get all the necessary nutrients in Soylent. The drink does not include phytochemicals found in plants, which provide important health benefits to the body. Additionally, the drink is not organic, contains GMOs, and has gluten and soy in it. Drinking Soylent is not worth the risk, and people should chose to make healthy choices instead. The whole point behind Soylent is to make efficient use of your time and not have to take breaks while working. Soylent takes out all of the socialization one would receive in an actual sit down meal. It is healthy to socialize with others, and there are no traditions surrounding Soylent.

Standard eating practices involve talking with loved ones and enjoying food together. Eating with others creates memories, and most people look forward to family dinners.

Food is irreplaceable due to the immense health benefits one receives from it, as well as the value placed upon it by multitudes of people. People's lives revolve around food. As Widdicombe states, "Meals provide punctuation to our lives: we're constantly recovering from them, anticipating them, riding the emotional ups and downs of a good or a bad sandwich" (14). Food is a nice way to take a break from work and relax. I see each meal as a way to mentally recharge and fuel up for my day. Furthermore, the food industry is the livelihood for many people, and they would not be able to survive without it. I work at a restaurant and depend on the money that I make in order to pay for my necessities. Food is a central aspect in many lives. I know that after a long week of work my dad looks forward to going out to dinner as a family. He loves to spend time with all of us and indulge in some high quality food. Food is comforting and a lot of people choose to spend their free time going out and ordering it. I disagree with Rhinehart when he states most meals are forgotten. In reality, family meals are the most memorable meals one can have. I love sitting down at the table with my family and getting to enjoy homemade food. I may forget the small details, but the time spent with my family is unforgettable. As stated in my Favorite Meal essay, "The food is amazing and rich, but my family is far more important and it is nice to spend quality time with them." I associate many of my mom's dishes with the happy memories we spent together as a family. Now that I am in college, I cherish these times even more and wish I could go home more often to share a meal with my parents.

Given all of these points, I personally believe that food is irreplaceable. Rhinehart has some valid points concerning the time spent cooking and preparing meals. However if the effort is made and one has the desire to eat healthy, it is easy to make time for cooking. Everyone may

Commented [2]: Maybe you could add in a quote from the article about how it is impossible to know exactly what goes into a healthy diet, I believe Widdicombe quoted a doctor saying something like that

be busy throughout their days, but sitting down to eat a simple meal is quite possible. People place sentimental value on food and many family traditions surround it. There is no way Rhinehart could possibly substitute all these wonderful memories with Soylent. My relationship with homemade food is now heightened and I crave my moms food while away at college. No one could possibly replace her food, and many people share the same belief about their loved ones' cooking. Ultimately, the priority for most is food, and future generations are not likely to change their values drastically. Traditions will continue and the history of food will repeat itself.

Commented [3]: Christine,
The overall flow of your paper is good, I think each paragraph blends well into the next and it makes sense. Despite a couple sentence level errors that can be caught by proof reading, the local sections of your paper look good and sound good to me.
As for global, you supported your thesis well and it is clear what information you used to back it up.
While at points it seems almost like you're moving away from supporting the thesis with your paragraphs and anecdotes about food, you always pull it back to the thesis and support it.
Overall very well written paper.

Works Cited

Widdicombe, Lizzie. "The End of Food." *The New Yorker*. The New Yorker. 19 June 2017.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/12/the-end-of-food>