
Healthy Or Unhealthy Food on the Example of "Resisting the Moralization of Eating" by Maxfield

Is there really a way to decide if the food you are eating is healthy or not? Some people indulge in foods that are high in sugar, but still do not gain weight. Humans is known to have people who have a variety of body types, and along with that each person also has a different metabolism. Therefore, we breakdown foods very differently from one another.

In "Resisting the Moralization of Eating," Maxfield criticizes the way Michael Pollan decided to approach the issues in his article, "Escape from the Western Diet". In "Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating," Mary Maxfield wrote about the reason behind being overweight in America. She stated the "mistakes" Americans make when it comes to eating healthy. Maxfield, also stated that the American way of eating healthy is by eating differently, and less than your normal meal. She also argues that the keys to eating healthy is not by the amount of food you consume but by the quality you are putting into your body (Maxfield). Her philosophy was that we needed to trust and meet our bodies' expectations, but that theory was questionable because it was founded on the assumption that our minds don't tell us what we want, it tell us what we need (Maxfield).

When you think about food, it is neither moral nor immoral, so how do you keep your body health with food that is nutritious when your body sometimes crave unhealthy foods. This is the very reason that humans are more likely to become overweight and more susceptible to disease. Some believe that the major knowing the cause of being overweight is unhealthy food consumption, and lack of exercise. According to Maxfield, most people like drinks such as soda instead of water due to their sweets-loving habits. (Maxfield) The consumption of fast food has been an ongoing epidemic in America for many years. It is one of the leading contributors to obesity in America. This is a big problem for American citizens and not of a concern for our neighboring countries around the world.

Many researchers believe that the regulation of fast food could potentially start declining our obesity rates. Although, Maxfield has interesting observations and makes some valid points, her arguments are very contradicting due to her being biased and not having sources with credibility. For example, she argues that there is no correlation between health and our diets. The way she went about confirming her views on health was to intertwine it with information from her personal beliefs and with the opinions of researchers and scholars. She also argued that Pollan's science and statistically based claims aren't reliable since science is a biased and an opinion based form of study. She also implies that there is no 'right' or 'healthy' way of

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eating and ends her essay with a simple idea: people should eat what and how they want to without learn perceptions of food. (Maxfield)

The main argument that Maxfield keeps reinforcing throughout her essay is that diet and health have no correlation. She tries to deconstruct this idea that she believes to be a misconception. Maxfield begins her deconstruction with a look at the existing links between culture and perceptions of health. "The problem is our understanding of health is as based in culture as it is in fact". (Maxfield) This observation however, is put an end to any kind of logical sense to her argument. Maxfield attempts to back up her claims about health with commentary from other sources, however her sources are unreliable due to their backgrounds. Instead of including information from well known, and credible health specialists, she uses retrieves statements that are made by a law professor and ones from a fat acceptance activist.

This introduced the idea there is a capitalistic motive behind perceptions of health. When you think about it, this does not support her prior claims. Maxfield's argument that health is largely based on and affected by culture is a founded one. Of course, there are some factors involved in health that are universal and undeniable. However, a lot of health and the perceptions surrounding it, specifically those connected to body type and diet are culturally and opinion based. For example, many cultures make richer foods and value heavier body types that may result from such consistent consumption of these foods that are high in fats and sodium. For instance, I'm Nigerian and we eat lots of carbs, and consider people who are on the thinner side to be less fortunate. There's a saying that says, "a man's weight determines his wife's cooking."

However, cultures that have more euro-centric/Western views value a thinner frame and serve food in smaller portions with less ingredients that can contribute to weight gain. The people of the cultures who eat richer foods in larger portions may see eating less or differently as unhealthy and the people who belong to the cultures that feature smaller portions and less fats and sodium may believe eating more or differently would be unhealthy. Both opinions can be true because most ideas of health are subjective. However, if Maxfield wanted to add some credibility to her argument she should have chosen sources better suited toward the subject of the article. The fact that a law professor may or may not share similar views with Maxfield doesn't help her case. If she was writing about the laws surrounding health and diet information distribution, this professor would have been the perfect choice.

Also, her choice of a 'fat acceptance activist' wasn't a wise one due to the fact that an 'acceptance activist', self-proclaimed or otherwise, doesn't have to have any credentials to be given such a title. Having the opinions of respected people within the field Maxfield is writing about would have reinforced her arguments and added some credibility to her thoughts. Next, Maxfield finds a way to argue against the validity of scientific research by stating that science

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isn't reliable because "there is a lot of religion in science" (Pollan) Maxfield also implies that due to this 'religion' present in science, the information supported by science can't be universally applied due to its bias. She goes on to say that this bias that exists in science also exists in our day-to-day choices and conceptions about food. "That 'religion' presents itself in the moralizing of food".

Maxfield claims that this moralization that we place on food leads to our misunderstanding of health and is partly responsible for the "contemporary common-sense science" belief that links health to choices in diet. Maxfield does make a valid point in her notion that perceptions of health in relation to weight and dietary choices is culture based. Maxfield uses the idea that these perceptions are based on culture to support the conclusion of her argument. Maxfield concludes that we need to separate our views on food from our choices and just eat the way we feel necessary "Trust yourself. Trust your body. Meet your needs." Maxfield ends her essay with this interesting statement which suggests that trusting yourself will allow you to live in a healthy way.

Maxfield's arguments are mostly skewed by her own perceptions and lack validity. She challenges science and suggests that the ideas that we have accepted and been taught as a culture need to be discarded of. She finds sources that have no credibility in the field she is writing about and tries to use them to her advantage. Maxfield's main claims are unfounded and seem to lack basic logic. However, her final point in that we can feed ourselves appropriately and lead healthy lifestyles without the input of studies and scholars is one that many of us can apply to our daily lives.

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