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ENG 110 H4
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Meal Analysis Essay

Food. [We need it to] survive, but humans have taken the act of eating food to a vastly different and more detailed level than any other animals on Earth. Making, sharing, and ultimately eating food with others is deeply ingrained in every culture around the world. [Three narratives that tell of personal stories about food will be explored. Sinead Scott talks about how Irish soda bread has ties to her family's past generations in Ireland. Deanna Phipps explores how eating chocolate chip pancakes every Saturday have brought her closer to her family and to her father. Raymond Carver tells the story called *A Small, Good Thing* of a boy Scotty who was hit by a car on his birthday and later dies from brain trauma. His mother Ann had purchased a birthday cake from a baker but never picked it up, and the baker calls relentlessly. All three of these stories comment on the underlying meaning of food, and sharing food with other people. Through eating and preparing food, people can move past simply eating for nourishment. They can learn about their family's history through their dish, and they can grow closer to their family members through sharing a meal.

Often times the food we consume is not based on choice, but necessity. [This is the case for a family Carver writes about whose son is in the same hospital as Scotty, the boy who got hit by a car. Scotty's mother Ann was finding the elevator when "she turned to her right and entered a little waiting room where a Negro family sat... The little table was littered with hamburger wrappers and Styrofoam cups."] Ann talks to the family briefly and finds out their son was stabbed and is being operated on. This family was eating something they could acquire quickly and eat easily in the hospital. [They did not have time for other food possibilities that would be healthier, or taste better. They were absolutely focused on their son and not themselves or what

Comment [1]: Because this is supposed to be an analytical paper make sure not to say things like "we, I, you, our etc"

Comment [2]: Can you include the narratives without explicitly stating that they will be explored?

Comment [3]: Maybe include the title of the essay in here, so you don't have to come back to it later in you essay. Plus, you mentioned Carver's work, so it would maintain a parallel sentence structure among these three successive sentences.

Comment [4]: Find a way to talk about the essays/people you will be quoting but make sure that it makes sense in your intro. Reading this right now, its hard to tell what irish soda bread has to do with a boy dying

Comment [5]: Another thing to make sure of is that you don't summarize the story/essays in the intro

Comment [6]: I think using a stronger word here would be beneficial... they do more than comment on the meaning of food, they express it with great detail.

Comment [7]: who?

Comment [8]: This is where you can add some context about the story

Comment [9]: Don't forget to cite this quote, since you didn't specifically introduce it as Carver's work in the sentence.

Comment [10]: Insert a citation to Carver's short story and page number

Comment [11]: Good point brought up here

they ate. This also happened to Scott's Irish grandparents in Ireland during the Protestant Catholic war. She explains how at the time "Ireland was stricken with poverty, and many families including my grandmother's, relied on soda bread as a major food because it was simple to make, requiring only a few affordable ingredients." The soda bread was an easy, cheap option that in a time of war was sometimes the only one for hungry, poor families. Both these foods were not the most nutritious or enjoyable meals, but because of the situations these families were in it is what they ate. Sometimes, in the future, that same food can become extremely meaningful.

Often times a food begins to have a meaning beyond simply nourishment, and evolves to hold great importance in a family's life. Many family traditions are contingent upon a certain meal and it is rooted in that family's history. Scott talks about making Irish soda bread with her grandmother and how it represents her family's Irish history. She says that

the bread has more meaning than simply a type of bread. It tastes like our history. It tastes like the stories of war and famine, of poverty and struggle that plagued my grandparents and many more generations before that. It becomes a story time of my family's history.

The tradition of making soda bread has been in her family for many generations, and she associates it with more than just the taste of the bread, but of the history rooted in the recipe. If her family did not have this deep connection to soda bread, it certainly would not hold such a place in her life as it does now. Other times a tradition may be born somewhat spontaneously, like in Phipps' case, but the new tradition takes on meaning. Phipps explains that eating pancakes every Saturday with her family

Comment [12]: This paragraph seems a little disoriented...make sure that it is clear what you are trying to say and that it follows your thesis

Comment [13]: Just a small structural thing... maybe switch the order of your examples up, so you don't have two quotes from Scott's essay back to back.

was a predictable time in my life when I knew my whole family would be together, ready to talk to one another and discuss anything and everything...[it is] a moment out of the whole week where we can all just take a break and enjoy being a family.

Because of her initial love for chocolate chip pancakes, her family began to eat them every Saturday. This evolved into a tradition that she now cherishes for much more than the pancakes.

Both Sinead and Deanna's experiences show that no matter how simple a dish might be, it can hold huge underlying importance for a family that could continue for generations.

Through the act of sharing a meal, a special relationship can be formed between people who maybe would not have had the opportunity to normally. This is the case in Carver's story between Scotty's parents and the baker. After coming into the bakery angry about the baker calling them, the boys' parents are met with an apology and sweet buns from the baker. Still in shock over their son's death, they sit down with the baker and talk. Carver explains "Although they were tired and in anguish, they listened to what the baker had to say... They ate what they could... They talked on into the early morning, the high, pale cast of light in the windows, and they did not think of leaving." The baker normally does not get close with his customers and the boy's parents were not trying to get to know the baker, however the act of sitting down and sharing a meal brought them together in a way that never would have happened if they had not stayed to eat. This idea of food forming bonds between people is echoed by Phipps. In her case of family members, they have an existing close relationship, but food can strengthen the bond they have. Phipps tells about how her father would always make a special batch of chocolate chip pancakes for her even if the rest of the family was eating something different for breakfast on Saturday mornings. She explains that "this small and inconsequential action established a foundation of trust for me at a young age... I trusted that, regardless of the situation or prevailing

Comment [14]: Scott and Phipps!

Comment [15]: Good introduction to the paragraph

circumstances, my dad would always be a steadfast rock in my life.” The making of a special food was able to bring Scott and her father together more than anything else could. They had a strong relationship before, but food was able to make it more healthy and trusting.

Food plays a unique and special role in the interactions humans have that moves far from simple nourishment to affecting relationships with one another and to cultural traditions. Carver and Scott show us how in times of struggle like a family tragedy or war, food must be able to adapt based on the situation. Phipps and Scott demonstrate how food is deeply rooted into their family’s traditions, and how it can hold a special place in a family for generations. Carver and Phipps show how food and sharing food can open up and strengthen relationships between people that normally would not occur. Overall, these ideas prove that food is far more important to us than simply for consumption, and meals will hold a place in human nature and culture for the rest of time.

References

Carver, Raymond. “A Small, Good Thing.” *Where I’m Calling From: New and Selected Stories*. 1989, pp. 203-218.

Phipps, Deanna. “Dish of Life.” <http://dhipps.uneportfolio.org/favorite-meal/>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

Scott, Sinead. “You Eat What You Are.” <http://sscott18.uneportfolio.org/2017/02/26/you-eat-what-you-are/>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

Comment [16]: You have a great start to your essay. You’ve chosen some great quotes and are on the right track to making them fit into a well organized paper! I would definitely expand on some things and maybe make sure that your paragraphs pertain to each other as well as what in in each individual one.

Comment [17]: I love how you were able to connect all three works to each other! I also think you’ve done an excellent job fully describing your examples without overanalyzing, while also connecting them together. Just a few things that I think you could focus on include making sure you stay consistent in how you refer to the authors (using last names only).Also, I think maybe expanding on the emotional aspect food creates might be an option to maybe make your essay even stronger. You mentioned a couple scenes in which you commented on bonds and connections, but never really focused on the depth of emotion food can bring to the table. Overall though, I think you’ve really done a good job integrating all of your works and connecting them together.