Delind (2006) Of Bodies, Place, and Culture- Re-Situating Local Food

Delind, Laura

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The journal title needs to be italicized.


In this article, Laura Delind is trying to emphasize the relationship between people, place, and the food that connects them. In creating the basis for this argument, Delind describes how in today’s culture, the connection between people and food is lost. Today, people food choices are dictated by convenience and ease. Some people, however, have become disillusioned with how the food industry of this day and age functions, and have tried to move back to local food, to organics and homegrown. But even with this new movement to the old way of things, there is still a problem with how people deal with their food.

Delind makes the argument that people are moving back to local food for the wrong reasons. People look at it as a sound investment in their community. Not only will the farmer or the producer benefit, but the money will stay local and come back to help the spender. They also look at it as a chance to boost their health, their diets to try and become more food conscious. While she does feel that these are good reasons for trying to eat locally, they are not enough to keep the movement going.

Delind emphasizes how the relationship between people and food is deeply connected to where they live. A person’s body is physically adjusted to the environmental factors and the normal diet that exists where a person lives. The diet and culture that exists in a place is a connection for people to their past, to their ancestors. Food is not merely something to sustain us, it is something that is a part of us.

While this is a good point, I feel that this idea may be a bit outdated. Yes, food is a part of us, something to be savored and enjoyed, and yes there are many traditions in food, but it isn’t an essential part of our makeup. Food isn’t tied to a place, just as people aren’t tied to a place. Great point. In today’s global culture, food is an international thing. You can walk down a street and see a Chinese, Italian, and Greek restaurant sitting side by side with one another. It is not the local food that matters, it is the carrying on of tradition, no matter where you are. You can keep the traditions and the diet of where you are from going anywhere, and you can use the local food of that place to create those dishes.

I understand Delind’s argument, but I feel that she is not taking into consideration the fact that today’s world is more connected, more mobile. For example, I live on a dairy farm. I personally know the animals that are producing the milk, that are providing our products. I drink milk that comes straight from the barn, no pasteurization or homogenization. My body is physically adjusted to the diet that my family eats, as most others cannot drink our milk without getting very ill. These things, however, don’t connect me to where I live, they connect me to the lifestyle I grew up in. Wherever I end up living, I’ll probably try to find farm fresh milk, and want open land and green pastures. I can leave upstate New York behind and not feel bad, but it is my family culture that I will try to keep going, and the food that we ate, whether it was grown locally or came from the fast food restaurant downtown. Great choice of article and very thoughtful analysis.