Prejudgments of Those Who Eat a "Healthy" versus an "Unhealthy" Food for Breakfast

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The general public has acquired the belief that some foods promote healthfulness while others cause disease and death. Do these beliefs about foods influence our perceptions of those who routinely eat a "good" or a "bad" food? For the present study we attempted to expand our understanding of the impact of categorical thinking concerning the health value of foods. Respondents were given a description of a man (or woman) who typically eats pie (or oatmeal with fruit and nuts) for breakfast then asked to rate the target individual on 42 descriptors. Although considered more humorous and less boring, pie (compared to oatmeal) eaters were generally judged negatively. Further, women (compared to men) who eat pie were considered less likeable, healthy, and athletic. A specific food's reputation for healthfulness can apparently impact our judgments of the individuals who routinely eat the food.

Throughout our daily lives we receive an abundance of messages about the health value of foods: this information is conveyed in commercials, on food labels, by a variety of media outlets (e.g., TV and magazines), and even in American folklore. Specifically, the food industry routinely provides health claims which are not scientifically established. For example, the package of one more reputable breakfast cereal (i.e., Cheerios) suggests that the product can reduce the risk of heart disease, however, the high sodium content of Cheerios (a serving has 12% of the daily value of sodium) may suggest otherwise. An example of the health media's tendencies to disseminate and amplify nutritional messages came from one nightly news segment recently where the term "miracle food" was used when referring to certain types of fish (ironically, the media also frequently warns of the mercury content in these same fish). Similar claims conveying the health value of certain foods was offered in abundance a few years back by both the media and food industry regarding foods that contained bran. One reporter, when referring to the number and intensity of the messages concerning bran, described the situation as "bran washing" (Bruce & Crawford, 1995). Finally, the wisdom that eating an apple daily maintains good health and helps avoid encounters with one's physician and that eating cranberries or drinking cranberry juice promotes urinary tract health are apparently not based in science (Oakes, 2005a; Oakes, 2004a; Vaughan & Judd, 2003). Some influential nutritional authorities seem to support a good versus bad dichotomy concerning food. For example, one nutritionist recently

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suggested that certain foods are clearly good while others are without a doubt bad and that any deviation from this perspective by the health media or federal government reflects the efforts of the food industry to cast doubt, promote confusion, and mask the true health value of foods (Nestle, 2002).

Categorizing foods as good or bad was first described in people with eating disorders over two decades ago (Garner, Garfinkel, & Bemis, 1982). However, the tendency to consider foods as either good or bad for health with very few judged as moderate in health value has been observed more recently among the general public (Rozin, Ashmore, & Markwith, 1996; Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a; Oakes & Slotterback 2001b; Oakes, 2003). Oakes and Slotterback (2001a; 2001b) have found evidence of stereotypical thinking concerning the health value of foods and that discrepancies often exist between health ratings of a food's name (e.g., apple) and ratings of the unlabeled nutrient description of that same food (i.e., the nutrient description of an apple). The name "apple" was considered very wholesome but the nutrient description for an apple was judged as much less healthful. Thus, certain foods that are considered healthful by the media and food industry and those that have a wholesome reputation in folklore are often considered to be most healthful, however, these same foods are often judged to have less impressive nutrient descriptions.

This tendency to consider certain foods as wholesome and others as harmful also appears to impact the perceived vitamin and mineral content of foods. For instance, the apple (a "good" food) was perceived to have an abundance of vitamins and minerals while a caramel apple (a "bad" food) was judged to have significantly fewer of these essential nutrients. Thus, it was shown that adding disreputable ingredients (fat and/or sugar or salt) to foods reduced the perceived amounts of vitamins and minerals in foods (Oakes, 2004b, Oakes, 2005a). Also, some fruits/vegetables with low levels of vitamins and minerals were perceived to contain an abundance of these nutrients while potatoes, which contain high levels, were apparently not considered impressive in terms of vitamin and mineral content. These results suggest the possibility that stereotypical thinking about foods may influence our intake of essential nutrients.

The results from a most recent study indicated that small portions of "bad" foods were consistently perceived to promote greater weight gain than much larger portions of "good" foods. For example, a single Snickers miniature (47 calories) was perceived to promote more weight gain than a large snack consisting of cottage cheese, carrots, and pears (569 calories). Thus, many Americans have apparently assimilated the perspective that reputable foods even when consumed in large amounts do not promote weight gain and that "bad" foods even when consumed in small quantities cause increased weight (Oakes, 2005b).

For the present study we attempted to expand our understanding of the impact of stereotypical thinking concerning the health value of foods. Specifically, the goal was to examine whether routine consumption of a "bad" food (i.e., pie) for breakfast versus consumption of a "good" food (i.e., oatmeal with fruit and nuts) influenced judgments about the eaters. Although others have examined the impact of combinations of meals or total dietary intake on social, moral, and physical judgments of a target person, we chose to examine only two foods. Further, although we chose two foods with vastly

different reputations (i.e., pie versus a mixture of oatmeal with fruit and nuts), the "good" food (i.e., a bowl of the oatmeal) could easily contain similar or more fat, carbohydrates, and calories than the "bad" food (i.e., a slice of pie). This was important because dietary fat content is the nutrient that best predicts the health rating of a food name for men and is the only predictor for women (Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a; Oakes & Slotterback 2001b; Oakes, 2003). Others who have reported that the type of meals (or diets) consumed influence judgments of personality and physical characteristics of a target individual have manipulated the fat or calorie content of the meals examined (Barker, Tandy, & Stookey, 1999; Bock & Kanarek, 1995; Stein & Nemeroff, 1995; Fries & Croyle, 1993; Chaiken & Pliner, 1987). Will a person who routinely eats a "bad" food containing similar (or smaller) amounts of fat, carbohydrates, and calories as a "good" food be judged more negatively compared to a person who routinely eats the "good" food? Does the name "pie" carry such negative weight or "oatmeal" such positive weight (likely influenced by media and food industry) as to influence the judgment of those who eat these products?

Further, we sought to investigate possible gender differences between those who eat pie versus oatmeal for breakfast as well as gender differences among the research participants. For instance, do male and female respondents rate pie eaters differently on certain characteristics (participant gender differences) and are women who routinely eat pie for breakfast evaluated differently than men who eat pie (i.e., target gender differences)? Previous investigators have reported target gender (rather than participant gender) differences primarily with manipulations involving high versus low fat/calorie meals. For example, women who ate small meals were considered more feminine and attractive compared to women who consumed large meals (Bock & Kanarek, 1995; Chaiken & Pliner, 1987), however, meal size had a much smaller impact on perceptions of men (Chaiken & Pliner, 1987).

Finally, it was often unclear from reading the work of others if the dependent variable (e.g., meal size) predicted the ratings for all of the descriptors examined and if not, which descriptors were not correlated with meal size or total diet? Also, are people who routinely eat a "bad" food considered positive in any characteristics? Previously Fries and Croyle (1993) found that individuals who eat high-fat diets are considered more fun loving. Thus, we examined a variety of descriptors (42 in all) that assessed morality, cognitive ability, personality traits, and physical characteristics; with the intent of determining whether or not a person who routinely eats a "bad" food is considered uniformly negative.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 209 undergraduate students enrolled in the Fundamentals of Psychology course at the University of Scranton. The average age was approximately 19 years; 79 were male and 130 were female. Participation in the study fulfilled a research requirement for the psychology department (other options were available for

the students to fulfill this requirement). Participants were told that they would be asked about their views of other people. No participants were dropped from the study for any reason.

Materials/Procedures

Participants were given one of four surveys with a sentence-long description of what an individual named Pat usually eats for breakfast and asked to rate

"Pat" on 42 different adjectives and descriptors. For example, some of the participants read the following, "Pat is a 25-year old female who usually eats oatmeal with fresh fruit and nuts on top for breakfast." A between-subjects design was used: the manipulations involved target gender and target breakfast (i.e., the term "male" replaced "female" and the oatmeal concoction was replaced with the term "pie"). Thus, the remaining respondents were asked to evaluate Pat when described as a male who normally eats oatmeal (with fruit and nuts), a female who eats pie, or a male who consumes pie for breakfast. Previous work had shown that pie generally is considered unhealthful while oatmeal is typically viewed as wholesome (Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a; Oakes & Slotterback, 2001b). The participants rated Pat on 42 different descriptors (e.g., friendly) using a 7-point Likert scale (with 1 = "not at all" and 7 = "very"). The order in which the adjectives were presented to the respondents is identical to what is depicted in Table 1 (i.e., aggressive was rated first and masculine/feminine last). Some of the descriptors were positive (e.g., intelligent) while others were more negative (e.g., lazy). Many of the descriptors have been used in previous research while others were added by the authors.

RESULTS

A two (participant gender) by two (target gender) by two (target breakfast) ANOVA was used to determine the influence of the experimental condition on judgments of each of the 42 descriptors. An alpha level of .01 was used to control for Type 1 errors due to the large number of ANOVAs used. As can be observed in Table 1, the type of breakfast consumed often (34 of 42 cases) impacted judgments of the characteristics assessed. Those who eat pie for breakfast were generally considered to have more negative characteristics compared to individuals who eat oatmeal (i.e., a main effect for breakfast type): pie eaters were viewed as more aggressive, overindulgent, lazy, selfish, immature, undisciplined, unhappy, weak, immoral, overweight, sloppy, and masculine. Further, pie eaters were judged to be less successful, attractive, intelligent, healthy, popular, clean, orderly, athletic, confident, energetic, caring, responsible, concerned about appearance, health conscious, educated, and underweight. Similarly, those who ate pie for breakfast were considered less likely to date or marry, to have less will power, and to be a less worthy role model. On the other hand, pie eaters were judged to be more humorous and less boring than those who ate oatmeal for breakfast. Main effects for breakfast type were not observed for the characteristics demanding, likeable, dishonest, hostile, friendly, rude, greedy, conceited, and brave.

TABLE 1
Means (SD) for Male and Female Targets as Well as the F (Probability) for Type of Breakfast Consumed for Each of the Personality Characteristics Examined. Respondents Rated Each Characteristic in the Order Shown Below.

		Type of Breakfast		
Characteristic	Target Sex	Oatmeal Mean (SD)	Pie Mean (SD)	Breakfast F (Probability)
Aggressive	Male	2.70 (1.11)	3.20 (1.10)	006.86 (.01)
	Female	2.68 (1.06)	3.00 (1.16)	
Successful	Male	5.00 (1.23)	3.78 (1.27)	068.50 (.001)
	Female	5.30 (0.91)	3.68 (1.05)	
Likely to Marry	Male	5.05 (1.22)	4.42 (1.23)	031.50 (.001)
	Female	5.29 (1.11)	3.87 (1.29)	
Demanding	Male	3.61 (1.45)	3.20 (1.39)#	000.14 (.750)
	Female	3.91 (1.48)	3.98 (1.51)	
Likeable	Male	4.86 (1.23)	5.33 (0.92)*	001.41 (.250)
	Female	5.12 (0.89)	4.85 (0.99)	
Overindulgent	Male	2.95 (1.43)	4.80 (1.41)	105.01 (.001)
	Female	2.70 (1.29)	5.19 (1.47)	
Dishonest	Male	3.05 (1.33)	3.04 (1.12)	000.03 (.900)
	Female	2.88 (1.18)	2.94 (1.12)	
Hostile	Male	2.73 (1.17)	2.60 (0.99)	000.03 (.900)
	Female	2.79 (1.19)	2.98 (1.17)	
Lazy	Male	2.59 (1.60)	4.42 (1.75)	074.00 (.001)
	Female	2.48 (1.36)	4.71 (1.56)	
Attractive	Male	4.39 (0.89)	3.53 (1.10)*	070.59 (.001)
	Female	4.98 (1.12)	3.23 (1.15)	
Intelligent	Male	5.66 (0.86)	4.07 (1.26)	109.43 (.001)
	Female	5.52 (0.79)	3.81 (1.19)	
Will Power	Male	5.66 (0.91)	3.09 (1.27)	268.98 (.001)
	Female	5.80 (1.00)	2.64 (1.40)	
Friendly	Male	5.09 (1.03)	5.27 (0.93)	000.07 (.800)
	Female	5.20 (1.05)	4.77 (1.23)	

Continued

A target gender by target breakfast interaction was observed for six of the personality characteristics: these included likeable ($F(1,208) = 7.18$, $p < .01$), attractive ($F(1,208) = 7.73$, $p < .01$), healthy ($F(1,208) = 8.60$, $p < .001$), athletic ($F(1,208) = 6.75$, $p < .01$), weak ($F(1,208) = 9.74$, $p < .005$), and masculine/feminine ($F(1,203) = 14.87$, $p < .001$). For the characteristics "likeable," "healthy," and "athletic" men and women who eat oatmeal for breakfast were considered similar ($p > .10$ for all three characteristics). However women (compared to men) who eat pie for breakfast were judged as less likeable, less healthy, and less athletic ($p < .02$ for all three characteristics). Women (compared to men) who eat oatmeal for breakfast were rated as more attractive and less weak ($p < .02$ for both characteristics). There were no differences in attrac-

TABLE 1 (*Continued*)

Characteristic	Target Sex	Type of Breakfast: Oatmeal Mean (SD)	Pie Mean (SD)	Breakfast F (Probability)
Healthy	Male	6.48 (0.88)	3.07 (1.29)*	615.24 (.001)
	Female	6.52 (0.63)	2.51 (1.10)	
Popular	Male	4.34 (0.99)	4.11 (1.21)	015.52 (.001)
	Female	4.55 (1.03)	3.53 (1.03)	
Selfish	Male	2.98 (0.93)	3.38 (1.06)	015.42 (.001)
	Female	3.02 (0.98)	3.81 (1.32)	
Rude	Male	3.00 (1.10)	2.75 (1.06)	000.01 (.920)
	Female	2.93 (1.13)	3.31 (1.26)	
Greedy	Male	2.95 (1.36)	3.04 (1.36)	005.72 (.020)
	Female	3.00 (1.11)	3.83 (1.37)	
Immature	Male	2.86 (1.46)	3.91 (1.49)	045.16 (.001)
	Female	2.39 (1.07)	4.11 (1.38)	
Clean	Male	5.61 (1.10)	3.75 (1.24)	108.92 (.001)
	Female	5.46 (1.01)	3.85 (1.17)	
Orderly	Male	5.91 (0.91)	3.80 (1.34)	113.04 (.001)
	Female	5.66 (1.00)	4.06 (1.20)	
Athletic	Male	5.06 (1.29)	3.15 (1.22)*	180.92 (.001)
	Female	5.38 (1.12)	2.60 (1.20)	
Boring	Male	4.23 (1.58)	3.56 (1.41)	006.97 (.009)
	Female	4.25 (1.46)	3.77 (1.50)	
Confident	Male	4.95 (1.06)	4.11 (1.15)	043.44 (.001)
	Female	5.00 (1.03)	3.68 (1.33)	
Undisciplined	Male	2.43 (1.23)	4.35 (1.28)	143.96 (.001)
	Female	2.23 (1.06)	4.79 (1.36)	
Energetic	Male	5.52 (1.13)	3.89 (1.40)	087.98 (.001)
	Female	5.54 (0.99)	3.81 (1.39)	
Unhappy	Male	2.84 (1.20)	3.44 (1.23)	015.24 (.001)
	Female	3.09 (1.28)	3.96 (1.41)	
Conceited	Male	2.95 (1.20)	3.02 (1.24)	000.02 (.900)
	Female	3.07 (1.13)	2.96 (0.94)	

tiveness or weakness evident for men and women who eat pie for breakfast ($p > .10$). Finally, for masculine/feminine, men who eat oatmeal and men who eat pie were rated similarly on this scale, $p < .90$. However, women who eat pie for breakfast were considered much less feminine than women who eat oatmeal, $p < .001$.

For three of the characteristics a participant gender by target breakfast interaction was evident. A participant gender by target breakfast interaction was evident for the characteristic "orderly," $F(1,208) = 9.51$, $p < .005$. Specific comparisons (using t-tests) revealed that female respondents considered oatmeal eaters to be more orderly, $M = 5.97(SD = 0.79)$, than did the male respondents, $M = 5.45(SD = 1.13)$, $p < .01$.

TABLE 1 (*Continued*)

Characteristic	Target Sex	Type of Breakfast Oatmeal Mean (SD)	Pie Mean (SD)	Breakfast F (Probability)
Caring	Male	5.18 (0.81)	4.93 (1.03)	006.64 (.010)
	Female	5.04 (0.83)	4.45 (1.12)	
Humorous	Male	4.27 (0.90)	5.07 (1.21)#	012.93 (.001)
	Female	3.98 (0.94)	4.49 (1.37)	
Brave	Male	4.00 (1.18)	4.02 (0.93)	003.33 (.070)
	Female	4.09 (0.88)	3.68 (1.50)	
Weak	Male	3.57 (1.28)	3.73 (1.08)*	012.56 (.001)
	Female	2.96 (1.17)	4.09 (1.30)	
Immoral	Male	2.68 (1.14)	3.18 (1.25)	009.52 (.002)
	Female	2.80 (1.00)	3.32 (1.30)	
Overweight	Male	2.34 (1.08)	4.84 (1.34)	200.91 (.001)
	Female	2.48 (1.32)	5.11 (1.19)	
Sloppy	Male	2.30 (1.17)	4.22 (1.27)	126.86 (.001)
	Female	2.45 (0.91)	4.38 (1.29)	
Role Model	Male	5.05 (0.86)	3.42 (1.18)	124.12 (.001)
	Female	4.96 (1.01)	3.13 (1.13)	
Responsible	Male	5.64 (0.81)	3.65 (1.16)	166.41 (.001)
	Female	5.54 (0.93)	3.68 (0.98)	
Conc. Appearance	Male	5.27 (1.21)	2.72 (1.19)	212.26 (.001)
	Female	5.63 (1.41)	2.62 (1.24)	
Health Conscious	Male	6.32 (0.74)	2.55 (1.36)	678.24 (.001)
	Female	6.36 (0.70)	2.26 (1.14)	
Educated	Male	5.70 (0.85)	4.15 (1.03)	114.57 (.001)
	Female	5.59 (0.87)	3.94 (1.10)	
Underweight	Male	3.34 (1.29)	2.62 (1.30)	037.75 (.001)
	Female	3.73 (1.17)	2.30 (1.08)	
Masculine/Feminine	Male	3.56 (0.90)	3.53 (1.05)*#	018.63 (.001)
	Female	5.60 (0.97)	4.31 (1.39)	

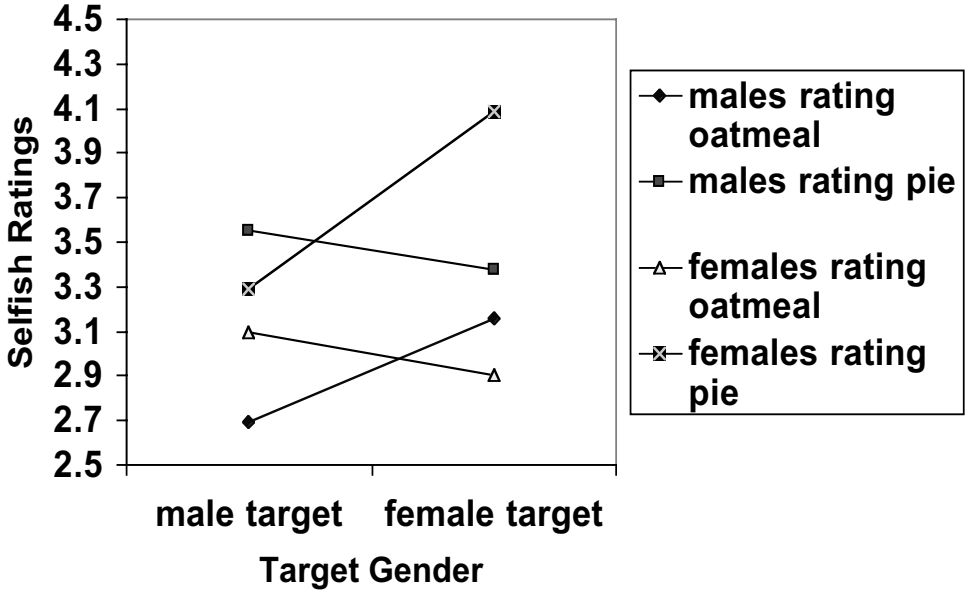
* target sex x target breakfast, $p < .01$
# target sex main effect, $p < .01$.

However, differences were less evident for male, $M = 4.24(SD = 1.28)$ and female, $M = 3.73(SD = 1.24)$ respondents concerning the orderliness of pie eaters, $p < .05$.

A participant gender by target breakfast interaction was also observed for the characteristic "health conscious," $F(1,208) = 15.04$, $p < .001$: t-tests revealed no differences for male,

$M = 6.18(SD = 0.69)$ and female, $M = 6.45(SD = 0.72)$ respondents concerning this characteristic for oatmeal eaters, $p < .10$. However, pie eaters were judged as less health conscious by female, $M = 2.12(SD = 1.05)$ compared to male, $M = 2.88(SD = 1.44)$ respondents, $p < .01$.

FIGURE 1
Male and Female Participants' Ratings of Selfishness of Target Pie and Oatmeal Eaters



Finally, a participant gender by target breakfast interaction was evident for the characteristic "educated," $F(1,208) = 7.21$, $p < .01$. Specific comparisons revealed that female respondents considered oatmeal eaters to be more educated, $M = 5.84$($SD = 0.83$) than did male respondents, $M = 5.32$($SD = 0.81$), $p < .005$. There were no differences found for male, $M = 4.17$($SD = 1.12$), and female, $M = 3.97$($SD = 1.03$) respondents concerning the education level of pie eaters, $p < .40$.

A participant gender by target gender by target breakfast interaction was evident for the characteristic "selfish," $F(1,208) = 6.85$, $p < .01$ (see Figure 1). Follow-up comparisons (using t-tests) indicated that male participants judged men who ate pie as more selfish than men who ate oatmeal for breakfast ($p < .02$). However, female participants did not consider men who eat pie versus those who eat oatmeal to differ in selfishness ($p < .50$). On the other hand, female participants rated women who eat pie for breakfast as much more selfish than women who eat oatmeal ($p < .001$). Male participants indicated no differences in selfishness between women who eat pie and those who eat oatmeal ($p < .50$).

DISCUSSION

The present findings suggest that we make judgments of others based only on whether they eat a "bad" food (pie) or a "good" food (oatmeal with fruit and nuts) for breakfast. These findings are unique because only a single food was manipulated in a meal and calorie/fat content of the foods, according to nutritional tables, would likely

be similar. Thus, at least at the present time it is not necessary to present respondents with extremely high calorie/fat versus extremely low calorie/fat meals: a manipulation involving a single "bad" food and a single "good" food will suffice. We can only speculate whether or not this same manipulation would have produced similar effects 20 years ago. However, the present findings may well be a reflection of the efforts of the modern health media and food industry to promote certain foods as healthful while at the same time criticize other foods as harmful.

The participants judged the target individuals very differently based only on what they typically eat for breakfast. However, a person who eats pie for breakfast could easily have a very healthful diet overall. Further, reputable foods are not always better to eat than less reputable foods. For example, Americans perceive apples to be more healthful than potatoes, however, the nutrient description for the potato is considered much more healthful than that for the apple (Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a). Further, whether a "bad" food is a good choice would depend on how the food is made and its ingredients, e.g., piecrusts can be made with oils that are considered healthful and pie toppings can be composed of oatmeal and nuts. It appears that the names of foods can carry a negative or positive reputation (depending on the food) which may often not be an accurate reflection of the food's nutrient content. Further, a food's reputation can impact our views of the individuals who routinely eat the food.

There was a tendency evident in the present findings which suggests that women are evaluated somewhat differently than men based on the food they consume for breakfast. Women who eat pie for breakfast were considered less likeable, healthy, and athletic compared to men who eat pie. Further, pie-eating women were judged as much less feminine than women who usually consume oatmeal for breakfast; and, only female respondents considered women who eat pie more selfish than women who eat oatmeal. However women who eat oatmeal were considered more attractive and less weak than men who routinely eat oatmeal for breakfast. Thus, similar to the findings of Chaiken and Pliner (1987) who examined high calorie versus low calorie meals, women who eat a "bad" food for breakfast are perceived somewhat more negatively than both men who eat a "bad" food and women who eat a "good" food for breakfast. However, women who eat oatmeal for breakfast, if anything, are viewed more positively than men who eat oatmeal.

Additionally, the female respondents may have felt more strongly than the male respondents that pie eating was generally associated with negative characteristics and that routine oatmeal consumption was predictive of more positive characteristics. Female respondents considered oatmeal eaters more orderly and educated and pie eaters less health conscious than did male respondents.

Some food scholars have suggested that there is a long-standing and pervasive belief in our culture that "we are what we eat." Thus, if we eat "bad" foods we become fat and offensive (Rozin, 1996). For example, if we eat animal flesh we become more animal like. In fact, two authors writing in the 1930s took this concept to a strange conclusion by suggesting that it is most healthful for humans to eat things most like themselves because the body could process this material more quickly and easily:

essentially, although they recognized the importance of the cultural taboo, they were making a case for human cannibalism (Furnas & Furnas, 1937: 75).

In the present study pie eaters were not uniformly rated negatively. No differences were evident between pie and oatmeal eaters for several descriptors (e.g., dishonest and friendly) and for two characteristics pie eaters were rated more positively (i.e., less boring and more humorous) than oatmeal eaters. Previous investigators have suggested that respondents may use a schema or stereotype of what they believe a person who eats "bad" foods to be like when rating the target (Fries & Croyle, 1993). For example, in the present study, a person who eats pie for breakfast is considered to be fun loving but lazy individual who lives mostly in the present with little if any capacity to delay gratification. Such a schema could easily be acquired, at least for men, by watching popular television shows (e.g., *The Simpsons*, *The King of Queens*, and *The Drew Carey Show*) and even certain movie favorites (e.g., *Tommy Boy*, *Animal House*, and *The Odd Couple*). We had a much harder time thinking of female characters depicted in movies or TV who routinely eat "bad" foods.

In the current study we used a most simple method: only two foods were examined and other than using a between-subjects design no attempt was made to disguise the purpose of the study. We did not consider it problematic that the respondents may have some awareness of the study's purpose: unlike racism or sexism, it appears that admitting to negative beliefs about people who eat "bad" foods is not considered socially inappropriate or politically incorrect. Some readers may question whether pie and oatmeal (with fruit and nuts) would actually be similar in calorie and fat content. The nutritional label for Quaker Oats indicates a serving size to be a half-cup that contains 150 calories (grams of fat = 2.5, grams of saturated fat = .5, grams of sugars = 1, and total grams of carbohydrates = 27). The nutritional label for Diamond Walnuts indicates a serving size to be a quarter cup which contains 200 calories (grams of fat = 20, grams of saturated fat = 2.0, grams of sugars < 1, and total grams of carbohydrates = 4). A banana (i.e., fresh fruit) contains about 105 calories (grams of fat = .5, grams of saturated fat .2, grams of sugars = 17.8, and total grams of carbohydrates = 27). Thus, an estimate of nutrient contents for oatmeal with fresh fruit and nuts using the suggested serving sizes would be 455 calories, 23 grams of fat, 2.7 grams of saturated fat, at least 18.8 grams of sugars, and 58 grams of carbohydrates. According to Pennington (1998) a slice of Mrs. Smith's Apple Pie contains 310 calories, 14 grams of fat, 2.5 grams of saturated fat, 18 grams of sugars, and 44 grams of carbohydrates. Pennington provides calorie contents for 74 types of pie, the mean caloric value for these 74 varieties was 314 calories: the caloric values ranged from 184 calories (for homemade strawberry pie) to 520 calories (for pecan pie). There is no doubt that oatmeal with fruit and nuts could easily contain high levels of more vitamins and minerals than pie. However, we have repeatedly found that Americans in general give minimal attention to vitamin and mineral content when rating the health value of food names: in fact, women do not consider vitamin and mineral content at all when considering the healthfulness of foods but instead rely solely on fat content (Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a; Oakes & Slotterback, 2001b).

One potential problem with the present study involved the fact that we compared oatmeal (which is likely considered a breakfast food primarily) with pie (a dessert food). Perhaps some of the respondents do not consider pie a "bad" food but instead judge it inappropriate for breakfast. This belief may have influenced the results, if so, probably in only a minimal way. We know from previous research that pie is indeed considered a "bad" food and that oatmeal is viewed as a "good" food (Oakes & Slotterback, 2001a; Oakes & Slotterback, 2001b). In the future it would be interesting to evaluate another "good/bad" pair or compare two "bad" foods that differ in ingredients (e.g., pie versus hamburger). Further, it may be interesting to convey the calorie content of the foods to the respondents in a future study. Knowing the calorie content would likely make little difference, i.e., pie is a "bad" food regardless of its calorie content. Finally, it would be helpful to examine an older sample to determine if age/cohort variables impact views of those who eat "good" versus "bad" foods.

NOTES

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