# The Rich Get Thinner, the Poor Get Fatter by Warwick Sabin

(“Is there an Ethics of Eating?” in America Now 9th ed.

 *Vocabulary / Using a Dictionary/ Parts of Speech*

1. What is the root of the word of *ensnared* (paragraph 6)? What does its prefix mean?
2. Define *processed food* (paragraph 9)? How does it differ from fresh food?
3. What is an *epidemic* (paragraph 7)? How do you understand the phrase *obesity epidemic?*
4. What is *elite* (paragraph 12)? In this sentence, which part of speech is the word *elites?*

*Responding to Words in Context*

1. What is an *obesity rate* (paragraph 3)?
2. From what language is the word *cuisine* (paragraph 1) derived? What is a Southern cuisine (paragraph 1)? A regional cuisine (paragraph 7)?
3. Sabin says forces are “corporatizing and homogenizing our society” (paragraph 16). Given that pronouncement, how do you understand what these forces are doing to our food choices?

*Main Ideas*

1. Why are “traditional” Southern foods so high in calories?
2. Explain why the poor people of a hundred years ago were likely to be very thin while the poor people of today are more likely to be very fat.
3. Why are fruits and vegetables often very difficult to find in the local supermarkets of rural areas when they are grown relatively close to those areas?

*Analysis of the writing/Writer’s Strategies*

1. What is the effect of the change in point of view (from first-person plural to second-person singular to third person) throughout the article? Which point of view is dominant? Why?
2. Sabin writes, “By an extraordinary twist of economics, the fresh, local produce once available cheaply at the back-road farm stand has become the preserve of the elites…” (paragraph 12). How do you understand the phrase “an extraordinary twist of economics,” based on the statement that follows? Think about the history of the South and the changes the author explains.
3. Why does the writer end the essay by stating that the message to the poor of this country seems to be “Let them eat (Little Debbie) cake” (paragraph 18)?

*Critical Thinking*

1. Sabin quotes some startling statistics about the change in obesity rates in this country from 1990 to 1998 (paragraph 6). Do you agree with the reasons given for this change? What other factors might be at play?
2. What sorts of foods are available in your grocery store? Do you know where they are from? What affects your choices when buying food to eat?
3. Why might a “local food movement” (paragraph 16) be considered a “form of social protest”?

*Writing Assignments*

1. Research “Southern cuisine” and include the examples of foods given by Sabin in this essay. Consider the history of the South pre-and post-Civil War. What do you know about the region? Based on your research, explain how the cuisine of the area is a reflection of the region agriculturally and economically.
2. In a brief essay, agree or disagree with the argument Sabin lays out for why the poor of this county seem to be suffering from obesity disproportionately when compared with more affluent people. Are there points left out that Sabin didn’t make?
3. What is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention? Why is it concerned with the issues of obesity and food choices brought out in this article? Is it a good organization to monitor such issues? Why or why not?