

Name

Professor's name

Course title

Date

Living Cogs

Fast food culture has long intrigued me, to say the least; not so much the food, but more on the personnel. In my opinion, the best fast food stores have the busiest of employees. Sure, from time to time I have definitely come across some employees who took my orders slack-jawed and listless. But I noticed that the naturally-diligent—or at least those who follow their job descriptions to the letter—would find that they never truly lack things to do.

The Ritzer text has helped shed some light on this phenomenon. After reading his core concepts, I immediately understood why fast food employees behaved the way they do. I also understood why fast foods became so popular in the first place: more than any business, they are representative of our current culture today. And I confirmed at least this much when I visited a nearby store for this assignment. From the employees down to the food, everything had to be efficient. Everything had to be uniform, and everything had to be made and done the same way. I observed, for example, that no matter who mans the frying station (where they cook the fries) their method is exactly the same. Also, everything on the menu can be ordered to go. Next, everything had to be prepackaged so that after the customers are done eating, the only thing employees had to do was wipe the table and put every residue on a bin. You couldn't even tell employees apart sometimes, because they are dressed in the same drab uniform.

Efficiency, calculability, predictability and control—aren't these values highly prized in our society today? But if machines had values, they would probably have the same value. I think this is why many people in society think that they are merely cogs in a corporate machine; they aren't being oversensitive, they really are treated that way by their employers. At the very least, fast food employees are expected to behave in the same way. I believe that is why Ritzer described our bureaucratic society as a home to “settings in which people cannot always behave as human beings—where people are dehumanized” (26).

Works Cited

Ritzer, George. *The McDonalidization of Society*. 6th ed. California: Pine Forge Press, 2011. Print.