

The omnivores dilemma: a natural history of four meals by michael pollan

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The First Draft of the Research Paper, Omnivore's Dilemma (Industrial Corn)

Introduction The book, "The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals" is an enlightening literary piece by Michael Pollan. The book appeared before its readers in the year 2006 and the book captivates a huge volley of inquiries on the selection of the meals owing to the unselective nature of omnivores who tend to have almost anything and everything for their breakfasts, lunches and dinners. This tendency in human beings gives rise to dilemma for the choice of food and time of taking them. To justify these dilemmas in human nature and choice of meals, Pollan investigates the entire food habits of Americans or American way of eating. To investigate and analyze the entire food chains of human food habit, Pollan throws an in-depth light on each of the food chains initiating from the industrial food to the final source of the final meal. The book is divided into three neat parts, bearing the titles, 'Industrial Corn', 'Pastoral Grass' and 'Personal the Forest'. Apart from this, there is also one introduction bearing the title, 'Our Natural Eating Disorder'. 'Industrial Corn' is the first part of the book and it contains seven chapters. In this portion of the book, Pollan tends to explore the food chain from which the vast variety American meals evolve. This portion of the book also throws light on the food chain based on industrial food that is widely dependant on corn. It exposes the nature and the way corn is consumed by American masses in their food directly through food or used as a feed to the livestock. Corn is widely used in the processing of chemicals like glucose and used widely in the manufacturing of high-fructose corn syrup and ethanol. The first portion of the book, 'Industrial Corn' is a thorough discussion on the process how the corn plant has actually

dominated the entire course of American diet achieved through a proper blend of factors pertaining to biology, politics and culture. The seven chapters that compose the first portion of the book, 'Industrial Corn' bears the following titles chronologically, 'The Plant: Corn's Conquest', 'The Farm' 'The Elevator' 'The Feedlot: Making Meat', 'The Processing Plant: Making Complex Food', 'The Consumer: A Republic of Fat', 'The Meal: Fast Food' (Pollan, 2006). Pollan starts with discussing that corn plant controls the American diet to a great extent. It dominates the American way of food. To investigate the way the corn plant exercises its influence on the American food habits, Pollan starts his investigation from the grass root level and in order to accomplish it, he visits a corn farm in Iowa owned by George Naylor. And through his first hand knowledge gained from the fields where the plant is being cultivated, Pollan contends that it is the plant that has depended on human beings for its survival and the huge cultivation of the plant has actually benefited it. Along with this, the importance and function of petroleum that supplied lifeline to the transport system and cultivation and growth of corn in American food supply are thoroughly discussed in this portion of the book as well. Light on the fast food meal is discussed as well to accomplish and discuss the end result of the food chain dependant on industry. He also places a wide criticism on the industrial model of agriculture. He also discusses that how the scientific invention and innovations of the process like Haber process is helpful in nitrogen fixation which allows a fast and far-reaching simplification of the agricultural process. He puts forth a valid argument that at one plane, the farmers use the local knowledge on the production of the plant that is based on their cultural

cognition and on the developed paradigm this knowledge gained more scientific grounds inside laboratories. To this point he contends that scientific progress involved in the process of corn production which is taking place in laboratories in the modern era, has a negative impact on the agricultural process for the production of corn. In this regard, Pollan views that revival to the localized agricultural methodology would certainly solve many problems related to environment and health culminating from the modern agricultural practices, specifically the methods involved in the production of corn. The investigation of Pollan does not end with the visit of farm in Iowa. He further throws light on the feedlot where he keenly observes the condition under which a steer is kept before it is slaughtered. He explains that how the steer is given a diet which predominantly contains corn which has an adverse effect on an animal that is actually having the metabolic system apt for consuming grass. Pollan at this point claims a very valid point where he mentions that the unnatural diet consumed by the steer definitely has certain detractions in the value of nutrition produced in the meat of the steer and with a few definite adverse effects on the quality of animal's life.

Moreover, Pollan also explains the way the use of excessive antibiotics provided to the feedlots has led to many fatal diseases like mad-cow disease and other drug resistant microbes which actually culminated to many other health hazards which would never have been any point of concern if the feedlots would have been provided in natural conditions inherent in their pedigree (Kamp, 2006). References Kamp, D. (2006). Deconstructing dinner. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/23/books/review/23kamp>.

html? pagewanted= all Pollan, M. (2006). The Omnivore's dilemma: A natural history of four meals. USA: Penguin Press.