

## Introduction:

*The Omnivore's Dilemma*, written by Michael Pollan, is an in-depth discussion and journey that takes the reader through the steps and processes that are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] culinary culture because our nation was built on many different nationalities and races of immigrants with their own individual food cultures.

The omnivore's dilemma<sup>1</sup> simply stated is the decision that we have to make about what we should eat on a daily basis. For omnivore's such as ourselves, this can sometimes be an excruciating decision, while other animals, such as [REDACTED]

Pollan believes that the best way to answer questions regarding what we are to eat is to follow the processes and steps that are involved in the creation of the individual meals. He does this by following corn, from seed to feed, a cow from birth to death, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] food chains<sup>2</sup> that sustain our ability to survive. The three food chains that Pollan describes are "the industrial, the organic, and the hunter-gatherer." (7)

## Chapter 1

Pollan begins the first chapter of this work by taking you on a journey through the common day supermarket. As you are very aware, the common day supermarket allows individuals to purchase almost any type of vegetable, fruit, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] what lies in the butcher's case. The protein products that we purchase are all born somewhere, fattened somewhere else, and then slaughtered at perhaps another location. Where the meat we purchase comes from is not a simple answer; Pollan will try to show his readers where some of this meat begins and how it ends up on your dinner plate.

[REDACTED] American food producer. The reason corn is the feed of choice is because of the huge amount of corn we produce each year and the increasing amount we will produce in years to come. We have to do something with all the corn! From your steak to your Coca-Cola (High Fructose Corn Syrup) that you wash it down with, corn is everywhere you look.<sup>3</sup>

The significant role that corn plays in the industrial food chain can be attributed to its 4<sup>th</sup> carbon molecule creation abilities. Most plants during photosynthesis create compounds that contain tree carbon atoms, but corn

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Rozin, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that relies mainly on fossil fuels rather than sunlight for its energy.

<sup>3</sup> Pollan continues on to mention that corn is even in your "nonfood items as well- everything from the toothpaste and cosmetics to the disposable diapers, trash bags, cleaners, charcoal briquettes, matches, and batteries, right down to the shine on the cover of the magazine that catches your eye by the checkout..." (Pollan, 19)

creates 4 carbon compounds, this is why this group of plants is commonly referred to as C-4. The ability to create four [redacted] survive in areas of high heat and water scarcity. The interesting thing about corn is that without humans to remove the husk, separate and plant the seeds corn would most likely not be as common as it is today; possibly even extinct.

## Chapter 2

The first important lesson that is taught in this chapter is to remember that the most important thing to a corn farmer is their yield. The [redacted] corn that allows his yield to be much higher than was prevalent during the time that his father was a farmer. Today, Naylor is able to have thirty [redacted]

[redacted]

**The turning point in corn production was the use of ammonium nitrate after World War II as fertilizer and the process of nitrogen [redacted] 2 out of every 5 people would not be alive. The process “works by combining nitrogen and hydrogen gases under immense heat and pressure in the presence of a catalyst. “ (44)**

*“When you add together the natural gas in the fertilizer... [and all [redacted] of a gallon of oil to grow it...” (Pollan, 45)*

“Since the farm no longer needs to generate and conserve its own fertility by maintaining a diversity of species, synthetic fertilizer opens the way to monoculture...” (45) The ability to “fix” nitrogen has allowed us to stray away from the natural processes of biology and move toward a philosophy of industry.

Pollan continues to tell [redacted] necessary for George Naylor and many farmers like him to continue increasing their output of corn each year to make ends meet. “[The] plague of cheap corn goes on, impoverishing farmers, degrading the land, polluting the water, and bleeding the federal treasure, which now spends up to \$5 billion a year subsidizing cheap corn.” (Pollan, 54)