

Alexis Mousley

Michelle Szetela

English 1010

October 8, 2013

Could Some Industrial Food Be Just As Beneficial As Farming?

In the article “Not All Industrial Food Is Evil,” published on August 17, 2013, in *The New York Times*, Mark Bittman questions how a pound of tasteless and watery tomatoes cost \$2-\$3 a pound when 2lbs. of canned tomatoes, that had a better taste to them, could cost only half that amount. Now that businesses have to produce so much food for the population and with “the processes tomato market is international, with increasing pressure from Italy, China, and Mexico” (Bittman para. 19), the question of ‘how can they produce so much food at a timely rate, yet make sure it had nutrition?’. We are surrounded with the Mid Wests idea of farming with overcrowding animals in pens, and crops used for junk food, fuel, and used for the animals to feed them with. Canned tomatoes and fresh market tomatoes are grown the same way, canned ones just have a few extra steps added to them.

Mark Bittman uses pathos appeals in the first couple of paragraphs to draw you in, by saying how neat the rows of plants were and how well they looked and how well cared for things are. There isn’t just one thing growing everywhere, but multiple things that look fresh. “Rominger farms around 6,000 acres of tomatoes, wheat, sunflowers, safflower, onions, alfalfa, sheep, rice and more.” If you know anything about farming and you know what crop rotation or even what cover cropping means and what it does for the growing of food, Bittman uses pathos to appeal to you by saying that the Rominger farm uses those techniques to grow their food. They use crop rotation to help grow the plants and make sure that the plants have the nutrients so that they can grow strong and healthy. At the Rominger farm

there “[is] diversity, crop rotation, cover crops and, for the most part, real food.” He uses both ethos by showing how well the farm takes care of their plants so you want to eat things from there and pathos by getting you to believe that you feel good about eating something that came from there, to show that it is safe and actual food you are eating.

Bittman goes on to explain how farming has grown and how it has improved. By using pathos appeals he shows that farmers have come up with a way to grow as many tomatoes as they can. With a network of buried tubing, it “reduces waste and runoff and assures roughly uniform delivery along the row” (Bittman para. 4). Where as in older times they would dig ditches next to the rows and they would be flooded with water from a canal. The tomatoes then at the back of the row would suffer from too much water.

He then uses ethos to get you to think about what is actually in tomatoes. He states, “Tomatoes are bred to ripen simultaneously because there is just one harvest” (Bittman para. 5). How do they get them to ripen all at the same time? In the last part of paragraph five, he again states, “Tomatoes are grown for processing, bred for acidity, disease resistance, use, sweetness, wall thickness, ripening date and so on” (Bittman para. 5). With the great demand of tomatoes, it seems impossible to grow so many “perfect tomatoes” in the time that we need them in. What about the off season? With new technology and with the science that we now have, these things are possible. But does that mean, the genetically altered tomatoes are just as healthy as your same ole tomato?

We know that tomatoes and other things aren’t really grown organically because of the speed that they need to grow, but Bittman uses pathos and says, “oddly, affordability is not the problem; in fact, the tomatoes are too cheap. If they cost more, farmers like Rominger would be more inclined to grow tomatoes more organically; to pay his workers better or offer benefits to more of them; to make a better living himself” (Bittman para. 18). So why not spend a little more on vegetables so that we can

have healthier food and the workers who produce the food that we eat, make a little more to help provide for their families? It's because we want the cheapest thing and to save as much money as we can.