Overview of the Book

*Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal* is among the most interesting pieces of modern literature created by Eric Schlosser. The book, which touches on many sectors of the American society, has been criticized as much as it is been praised by many gurus in the world of English and literature. The book is written with a wide array of purposes, the primary purpose being to enlighten the American society, more so the young and middle aged population which constitutes a big percentage of the working class in the American society. The book, which is written majorly focusing on the post-war period, takes many approaches towards enlightening the society on what happens in such sectors as the food industry, the agricultural sector as well as the government departments (Schlosser 118). The exploitation of labor is as well addressed in the book as the writer endeavors to bring out the whole picture in explaining how the average fast food meal is brought to the table. Apparently, the book is addressing one of the most common problems and health threats facing the American society today. Eric Schlosser borrows from history and uses a foreshadow approach in trying to make his book as comprehensive as can be. This paper endeavors to explain the various strategies that Schlosser employs to make his book capture the attention of the potential reader.
**Writer’s Purpose**

Eric Schlosser’s purpose in the book is considerably wide. The major reason as to why this is so is because, Schlosser does not address one idea, but a wide array of ideas that touch on various parts of the American society including the government and its most important departments. The predominant use of the military, for instance, in the introduction and the first chapter is a clear indication that Schlosser endeavors to dig into the most important departments of the government. The purpose here is to illustrate the ease with which the strongest parts and structures of the government, such as the department of defense, can be sabotaged. Secondly, the author has the purpose of enlightening the citizenry, especially, the young and middle aged Americans that the fast foods, which are favorites to many, may not be as healthy a meal as they look or taste. In straightforward terms, Schlosser is clearly against the consumption of such fast foods. The fact that Eric Schlosser uses real life examples in the book is clear indication that he wants his message to appear as real as possible.

**Writer’s Audience**

Clearly, the book endeavors to drive a message to all people that partake in the consumption of fast foods in American restaurants such as the popular, McDonalds. The author is clear on the target audience as he uses very clear illustrations. The author targets to drive his message to children, young adults as well as the middle aged in the American society. Apparently, these are the most prominent consumers of the fast foods. Worth noting is the fact that Schlosser is clear on his choice of audience. Even so, the author does not limit his message so much for the purposes of the said target group. The book somewhat contains messages that can be interpreted differently by different groups, bearing relevance to one and having no impact on the other. The predominant reference to children in the book covers parents as well. The
major presumption in the book is the fact that children cannot fully determine what they want to eat. As such, the parents can as well be included in the targeted group. The target group is a combination of many heterogeneous groups. If it were to be evaluated as such, the target group can be said to be the fast food consuming American populace.

*The Writing Strategies Employed By the Writer to Engage the Audience*

The writer of the book has employed quite a number of strategies in an attempt to attract the attention of the reader. The strategies used have come out as effective tools of achieving the intended purpose. Perhaps the most prominent writing strategy employed by the author is imagery. Arguably, imagery is the most effective writing strategy in as far as making a piece of writing interesting is concerned. In the introduction, the use of imagery is seen in the way Schlosser describes the location of the military base to which the pizza was to be delivered. Schlosser successfully uses words to establish a visual imagination or picture, which enables the person reading the book to have a clear understanding and perhaps imagination of what the author is saying.

The second predominant strategy employed by Eric Schlosser is contrast. The contrast in the book is introduced and used in many parts all through the chapters. For instance, Schlosser says, ‘J.R Simplot an eighth grade dropout had emerged as one of the richest men in America’ (Schlosser 115). The author manages to bring out the two contrasting pictures which are extremely contrasting considering that in the real world, a drop out, especially at eighthgrades, wouldn’t make it any further than being a pauper in society. Such use of contrast is meant to awaken curiosity in the reader. The contrast used by Eric Schlosser as well appears in such areas as where he explains the differences between the outward appearance and nature of the American
fast foods versus the inner intrinsic value of the food. Such contrast manages to raise awareness in the people reading the book.

The use of direct quotes is a critical feature as it manages to bring a sense of realism into the picture of the book. Such quotes as “we have come full circle. You increasingly find two classes of people in rural Idaho, the people who run the firms and the people who own them” (Schlosser 115). The direct quotes are among the primary strategies that an author uses to indicate to the reader that the claims of his writing are actual sentiments shared by other people in the real world. Besides using direct quotes to illustrate realism, the author employs the use of inclusive language. Inclusive language is a writing strategy that puts the author and the readers in the same circumstances. By predominantly using such words as we, we et cetera; Schlosser brings himself out as part of the American society. He as well intends to make the reader realize that they belong to the target group. The use of inclusive language is seen in such things as the subtitle What We Eat (Schlosser 3).

Other features and strategies employed by the author include such things as the use of foreshadowing as well as historical references. Such references are intended to indicate the extent to which the central idea of the book has gained prominence over time. In this case, Schlosser endeavors to explain how the problem or rather issue of fast foods came to gain prominence in the American society. This is the historical part. As for the foreshadow strategy, the author endeavors to make the audience try to picture their lives ahead of time. The fact that the author uses foreshadow is an indication that the central idea is an integral part of society and is expected to be so into the foreseeable future. Apparently, the problem in this book is centered on fast food. Even so the author employs the strategy of overshadowing in explaining the effects of the fast food culture. He, in his opinion estimates that the fast food culture will continue being
a peril. An example of the foreshadowing feature is where the author describes how the archeologists will come to discover that the Americans in the military camps consumed fast food (Schlosser 3).

The Effectiveness of the Writer’s Strategies from My Perspective

In my personal opinion, the strategies used by Eric Schlosser are quite effective. For instance, the use of irony at the beginning of the book is quite effective in making the reader seek to understand why a pizza was being taken into a military camp, a place well honored and highly guarded. The irony in the book is quite interesting as it makes the story catchy and keeps the reader speculating. Other strategies such as historical reference are as well effective as they quote the exact dates and years in history when particular events occurred. This manages to bring out an aspect of realism as the reader can at any time make reference to the authors claims.

Such things as repetition and foreshadows are meant to emphasize the importance of the central idea. Apparently, they manage to do so as the book appears like more of a documentary than a mere narration. Considering that the writer predominantly used direct quotes, it is clear that the point is emphasized. The wide reference to history and American social life serves to make the book an all embracing text. By all embracing it means that the text covers almost all sectors of American socio-economic life as well as the political life which is characterized by social classes.

General research responses to the book

In "Fast Food Nation" Thoughts on "Fast Food Nation" By Eric Schlosser (Part 2), the book is described as a success in bringing out the idea that the author intended to explain. The response is positive and breaks down the book into various parts, analyzing the target populations differently. The positive response given by "Fast Food Nation" Thoughts on "Fast
Food Nation" By Eric Schlosser (Part 2), is a reflection of the ideas that the entire society of American readers thought about the book. Conversely, there are other critics that argue that the book does not reflect the modern society as it draws a lot from the historical periods of the American society. According to most critics, such things as the exploitation of the undocumented immigrants are real, yet unverifiable.
Works cited

