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A Passion Rooted at Heart

Despite the arduous process of canning tomatoes, Erica Strauss still finds it delightful to spend 16 hours from her day dedicated to this activity. Within Strauss' blogpost "Zombies vs. The Joy of Canning: Motivation in the Productive Home", her desire to pursue a life of an urban farmer does not solely rely on the political-economic factors; it also depends on her own love to keep a productive home. Although Strauss agrees that "we owe it to local farmers to source directly from them" (Strauss 78) and reject industrial food, much of the reason why she can her own tomatoes, make jam, etc. relies on the gratification from her hard work. Choosing to follow an urban farmer path is very much a radical statement according to Strauss because you are seeking "greater productivity and less consumption" (Strauss 79) within your household. While such motives are very good reasons to follow this political movement, she argues that we are driven to action due to fear or anger. In fact, Strauss makes it her main point that we should be driven to action due to our passion for what is urban farming.

From the beginning of the blogpost, it is very clear that Strauss questions why she dedicates a good chunk of her time towards canning her own tomatoes, growing her own lettuce, and cooking from scratch. Although she presents many micro-economical levels of reasoning toward her course of actions, she does not reveal her thesis until the reader reaches the conclusion of the blogpost. Strauss claims that in order to be an urban farmer,

one must love food enough to work for it (Strauss 80). It should not feel like a burden that we are attempting to control. An important piece of evidence Strauss provides to support this thesis is the fact that you must be comfortable enough in getting your hands dirty and your brows sweaty (Strauss 80). It is more than just surviving hard labor; you must be able to celebrate it. Having the drive to stay up late in order to wait patiently by the canning pot is a step one must enjoy as Strauss learned to do. This also correlates very much with one of Strauss' values regarding urban-farming. An important warrant the reader can identify regarding Strauss is the fact that she respects the gains reaped from hard work as a result of enjoying the process of urban-farming instead of viewing it as a chore. This provides a lead way to a second warrant regarding Strauss' values for becoming an urban-farmer: the productivity and healthy consumption that can be achieved within households. By growing one's own crops and keeping a garden, you are straying away from the dependence on industrial food.

It is very interesting as to how Strauss limits her thesis in order to provide an improved comprehension behind the difficulty of urban-farming. Strauss qualifies her claim by stating that because of big political-economic factors that serve as a backdrop for productive home-keeping, "the simple pleasures that come from nurturing [...] are sometimes lost" (Strauss 79). This is important to keep in mind because while supporting the movement of a productive home promotes a good cause, it does not mean you are accomplishing it with zeal and purpose rooted at the core of your heart. Strauss argues in support of her qualifier that we feel obligated to do something because by doing so we are making our "political statement in a world gone mad" (Strauss 79). However, this is not how we should approach any topic of matter, according to Strauss. What it comes

down to is the mere fact that “you have to do this stuff because you like it” (Strauss 80). Even though Strauss believes in the many benefits of productive home-keeping, there are many claims that she finds hard herself to believe in. Strauss provides her rebuttal by rejecting the idea that individuals can save more money by canning their own tomatoes. This is not possible unless their garden is yielding “a lot of excellent-quality canning tomatoes” (Strauss 78).

I believe the author of this source, Erica Strauss, has successfully established her ethos in order to write this piece. Strauss has worked in restaurants in the Seattle area for more than 10 years and has attended culinary school. She took her interest in food and gardening to a new level by growing a garden that yields an amazing array of fruits and vegetables. She also maintains an intensive blog which documents her gardening triumphs, recipes, etc. Strauss has proven her credibility over this topic due to her expertise and multiple years of experience in the field of urban-farming. Strauss also displays logos within this piece by providing many pieces of evidence and reasoning that appeals to one’s logic. Her message by writing this piece was to make individuals understand that becoming an urban-famer is difficult without a yearning for it from the bottom of your heart. Strauss was able to support this thesis with valid reasons and even provided a qualifier to help her audience understand the complication behind maintaining a productive home. The author also successfully managed to employ pathos within her writing. Strauss was able to convey to her audience of household mothers, as well as productivity-seeking individuals, that true results arise from love and dedication to the hard labor that goes behind urban-farming.

The context behind this persuasive blogpost is significant historically. Strauss wrote this piece in 2012 when Midwestern farmers were experiencing severe droughts. The droughts affected the farmers negatively which impacted companies and consumers that depended on cheap cereal grains and products made from them (Strauss 79). This was the spark that led to the urban-farming movement. This also goes hand in hand with the author's exigent circumstance to create this source. Strauss wanted to appeal to her audience that, despite being politically motivated, true results from urban-farming cannot be achieved until one acquires the passion to truly love it and adopt it into their daily livelihoods. In fact, Strauss' purpose behind this piece is so individuals attempt gardening themselves and make changes to their daily lifestyle that show true productivity and healthy consumption. She wants her audience to try something else besides industrial food for a change and understand from that experience. Without understanding the hard labor and dedication that stands as the backbone for urban farming, it will be hard for an individual to truly understand the merit of a productive home.

Works Cited

Strauss, Erica, and Holly Bauer. "Zombies vs. The Joy of Canning: Motivation in the Productive Home." *Food Matters: A Bedford Spotlight Reader*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.