

Tanner Figueiredo

Professor Miller

English 110-G

20 February 2019

This Might Sound Cheesy

Food is our way of life, a way of living our lives to the fullest, enjoying the time we have while eating. We are spoiled by our taste buds and our sense of smell and sight and hooked on tantalizing, delicious, aromatic meals. So how can I agree with many of the **assertions** of Soylent in the article *The End of Food* written by Lizzie Widdicombe? A scientific approach of the replacement food “Soylent” in this article is the one way to eliminate the gray, but the article admits that research is lacking to support some of the **claims**.

I found an article that better mimics my feelings. *Minimalist Food For a Streamlined Life* by Stephen Assink states “However long humans have been eating, they have been doing it together. From the first hunter-gatherer societies to our contemporary haute cuisine, food has always been enmeshed in elaborate social rituals, codes, mores, and expectations. Anthropologists have for some time observed that food is a window into how a society functions. Though food can segregate people along class, ethnic, and religious lines, it can also bring together and solidify communities. If it is true then that we are what we eat, what does it say if all our meals are exactly the same and eaten **alone?**”

Assink article does allow Rob Rhinehart his vision on his Soylent product, “But, Rhinehart says, that’s not exactly his vision. “Most of people’s meals are forgettable,” he told me. He imagines that, in the future, “we’ll see a separation between our meals for utility and function, and our meals for experience and socialization.” Soylent isn’t coming for our Sunday

Commented [MC1]: What assertions are made about Soylent in the article? I know that everyone in the class has read the article and knows about Soylent, but an outside reader may have no information on it. I think if you did a quick summary of the article and provide Soylent's claims it would be beneficial. Also make sure you cite the article when you mention it

Commented [MC2]: Is this your thesis? If so, the side you are arguing for is unclear. What is the gray? And what are the different sides? What claims does the article make? When you state it lacks research and support it doesn't exactly sound like you are against it. It sounds more like there isn't enough information to decide whether it is good or bad, and you can take that position, you just need to clearly state it

Commented [MC3]: Finding a quote that expresses your view point is good, you did not set up this quote or explain it after. Who is Stephen Assink and why is he a credible source? Also, why does this quote express your view point? You need to make sure you assert yourself in it, so it doesn't look like you are just going with what others say.

potlucks. It's coming for our frozen quesadillas. But according to Widdicombe, "The Soylent dream is a strange one: a place where our food-related hopes mingle with our nightmares." If you spend enough time with Rhinehart, though, it can start to take hold. Perhaps its appeal depends on how you feel about the dreamer. Though I think it is a great idea in theory, helping out many people with bad time management, I still maintain that Soylent can't be a food solver in itself. For example, some people enjoy the times we have when eating food at either a cookout or wherever people like to celebrate. Although some might object that that don't enjoy the time spent with others eating, I would reply that its been our way of life, our way of meeting new people. What is life without food? Without holidays where we gather around the dining room table?

If I understand the meaning behind the writer's statement about the dreams and nightmares about food, it's easy to proceed here with my responses to it. I believe Widdicombe speaks about Rhinehart's dream and about the hope to streamline our lives. I was totally blown away in her article where she mentions all the financial backers to his idea. Starting from his "crowd-funding" campaign and raising a ton money in a few hours, to having a blog and having his formula on-line that appealed to "D-Y-Iers", to students in a dorm at Cal Tech who loved the idea of Soylent and were happy sitting at their computers sipping Rhinehart's Soylent. This made me realize that there is a gray area on my position and that my belief that the food I know and love right now is one thing, but as a college student might this not be an alternative for me, too? My parents and I spend a lot of money on my food; I spend a lot of time consuming food. However, I feel it would be too much to get use to if I had to convert to Soylent's "Cream of Wheat" tasting drink. I certainly admire Rhinehart, as the co-founder of Soylent, he and several friends started out with an idea to make inexpensive cell phone towers which proved difficult to

Commented [MC4]: Your quotation marks are confusing to follow. If Rhinehart is speaking in the quote it should be, "his response was 'blah' etc". So a quote in a quote is 'while when you quote it is " ". Also, maybe try breaking this quote down into smaller chunks. So quote a sentence or 2, then explain it, and then the rest of the quote and explain it. Make sure you cite Widdicombe after a quote too

Commented [MC5]: How does Soylent do this? You keep talking about Soylent but you have not stated what it is exactly yet. To give your essay more clarity you need to include background information on the articles you used and what Soylent is so the reader understands that it is a meal replacement

Commented [MC6]: Your ideas are all over the place. You quote about the purpose of Soylent and how it doesn't want to replace family meals and then another quote about the hopes/nightmares and now you are discussing socialization and history. Try to separate these ideas and have a clear topic sentence that matches with the concluding sentence

Commented [MC7]: I like how you are playing the middle ground, but to do so I feel like you need to dive into each side of the argument so the reader can understand why there is a gray area.

accomplish, and then hit it out the park on the synthetic food business. Further, I wish I could come up with a money making idea similar to that of Silicon Valley's "lifehackers". These were people who had a concept of streamlining the obligations of daily life so one would have the means to do all the things you wanted to do and not just the necessary things. Lifehackers really took to the idea of Soylent. Once again it appeals to me in theory when I consider trying to do school work, eat meals, do laundry, clean my room, and have time to play soccer and go skiing - the two things I love to do. Still, I am a skeptical.

As I was doing some reading along the lines of this article, I learned that scientists and government agencies for years have been working on solutions to ending world poverty. Widdicombe spent a fair amount of time with Rhinehart listening to his dreams and vision, trying his product and making her own chocolate slurpy, but preferring his recipe as more pleasant. She found that one of Rhinehart's latest dreams is to produce Soylent using algae (ugh) as the basis of the formula and to eliminate the need for farming to solve the world's hunger. He has really bit off a huge undertaking in my estimation if governments haven't been able to do this yet, but there may be a need to do something in the near future if civilization will continue to exist as we know it. If that's a dream, it is also a nightmare from my viewpoint; I would hate eating an algae based Soylent instead of sitting down with my family and relatives for a Portuguese feast.

On the other hand, today's food supply is filled with additives, pollutants, adulterants and poisons. I have noticed that the television news is constantly headlining various recalls on lettuce, romaine, and other produce and meat products. Food that you think is healthy for you may not be so until all foods are better regulated. It makes me wonder about what I am eating in my Portuguese Kale Soup that may not be good for me. Government food regulatory agencies need to step up and make crucial decisions to resolve the food crisis may be coming. And today's

Commented [MC8]: You might want to change your topic sentence or break up the paragraphs. You are combining the poverty argument and the algae idea into one and this doesn't work. Also how does this support your argument? You need to explain why what you are saying is relevant to the argument

Commented [MC9]: I like how you made a contrast between the algae and real food. To make this stronger try including a quote from your fav meal essay or sensory images so the reader can picture the differences.

Commented [MC10]: How does Soylent play into this? You could set Soylent up to be a good thing in this paragraph and then at the end or a separate paragraph counter it with how it doesn't have phytochemicals or something

chemically intensive farming with fertilizers has compromised our soil and water and put a strain on our global food supplies. I think this is a paradox, that since the rise of the large-scale food production we have now, there is the resulting decline in nutritional quality. It is making people overweight, yet many people in the world cannot get enough to eat.

Another nightmare regarding Soylent is it is impossible to make it both total sustenance and pleasurable at the same time. I found an article in the New York Times under the section State of the Art and titled *The Soylent Revolution Will not be Pleasurable* to support this claim. “Soylent’s fatal flaw is that it can’t offer both. It optimizes for total sustenance at the expense of any pleasure. So while the drink might be nutritionally preferable to eating a diet of pizza, ramen and frozen dinners, I doubt it would be more pleasurable than doing so. There’s a lot of variety in pizza and ramen.” Soylent, meanwhile, will always be just the same. Rhinehart feels you can have your pizza and still have Soylent. I did find it interesting that NASA is interested in it as are hospitals and I surmise the military. They have for a long time used Soylent type of food in space missions and the army has provided soldiers in the field with ration packs and hospitals liquid diets to patients. I don’t think I would survive in outer space or the army and I have no interest in being in the hospital.

The taste of Soylent sounds like a boring, joyless food product in my opinion. It may offer complete nourishment (although that is debatable without the addition of phytochemicals that come from plants) since you may not live maximally stated Walter Willett, the chair of the nutrition department at Harvard School of Public Health who Widdicombe cited. He also said “We’re concerned much more than just surviving.”

Rhinehart has found quite a following and maybe he is on to something with Soylent, but I would recommend a name change although he did it on purpose knowing that some people

Commented [MC11]: Why is this relevant to your argument? I like this paragraph, but I feel bringing in NASA and the military draws away from the main point of it. You could easily put those in their own paragraph and discuss the practical/utility purpose of it. Try to just focus on the pleasure/taste of Soylent in this paragraph

Commented [MC12]: What does it taste like? Can you pull a quote from the Widdicombe article? Can you compare it to the Portuguese kale soup? Including these details will create contrast which will make Soylent appear more bland and real food more exciting. This will also help to finish off the paragraph

Commented [MC13]: What does Soylent mean and why did Rhinehart do it on purpose? How does that play into what Soylent is as a product (taste, ingredients, making it, etc)

would think of the movie *Soylent Green*. I find that the benefit of Soylent giving you an inexpensive food and more time in your day doesn't compare to the benefits that real food can give you. Widdicombe states this as a downside, too. I certainly look forward to my meals, especially with my family and even more so at gatherings with my Portuguese relatives. I love to go out with my friends and eat, too. But being in college, I find it difficult at times to sit down and eat a meal; is this a paradox of never giving up on eating and loving the food I am accustomed to, but still appreciating the need for a product like Soylent to supply me with food nutrients at paper writing/exam times?

In conclusion, I do give up eating a meal here or there out of the need to study or because of soccer practice, but consuming Soylent as a lifestyle is a no for me. I am more in favor of the pleasures of food such as chewing it and eating different textures. Yes, Rhinehart is right, there are some forgettable meals, but in my life the seesaw swings more to satisfying, delicious food like the Portuguese Kale Soup I wrote about in Part One. These are very memorable meals and occasions for me, and I would never want to go without them. Soylent for utility and function maybe, but I'm firm about the benefit of food for experience and socialization!

Works Cited

1. Widdicombe, Lizzie, and Lizzie Widdicombe. "The End of Food." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/12/the-end-of-food.
2. "Minimalist Food For a Streamlined Life." *The Hedgehog Review*, 16 May 2014, iasc-culture.org/THR/channels/THR/2014/05/minimalist-food-for-a-streamlined-life/.

Commented [MC14]: Discuss the benefits, what are they and how does this compare to Soylent. How does this make it hard to take a side. What does Widdicombe say to make it a downside. You state good points, but you need to follow it up with more support.

Commented [MC15]: I like how you include different paradoxes because they help to demonstrate the gray area with Soylent. I feel like this should be a start of a paragraph though, because you say it and it gets left hanging at the end. When you have it at the beginning you can pull information and facts to further demonstrate the paradox

Commented [MC16]: Is there anyway you can include a quote from your first essay instead of just referencing it? Also your concluding sentence makes it seem like your point of view shifts from being neutral to promoting food over Soylent. If you can clarify it, it would make your argument stronger

Commented [MC17]: Make sure you cite the Soylent Revolution article, and in your essay, articles are quoted not italicized. Also you need to put in text citations into your essay where you mention ideas from the articles you took them from or after a quote

Dear Tanner,

You have really solid overall ideas for your essay, but you need to work on clarify your ideas and how they are relevant to Soylent. Provide a background of what Soylent is and set up the 2 different sides of the argument. To clarify your ideas, make sure your topic sentence matches what your concluding sentence states. Then in the middle where your evidence is dive deeper into the overall meaning of the quote and why it supports your argument. You have it all there, but you need to take it a step further. Additionally, I like all of the quotes you have in your paper, but you need to set them up better or improve your analysis on them. For example, your second paragraph is only a quote and there is no set up or analysis of it, or your third paragraph where your topic sentence is a quote with no introduction to the context of it. With out a set up, it if difficult to follow why this is relevant to the argument at hand. Finally, to make your thesis clearer. It looks like you are taking a stance in the middle ground, but to do in your thesis try to emphasize both sides of the argument and how there is a best of both worlds. By doing this you can demonstrate the differences in the body paragraphs and why when it comes together there is that happy medium in having both Soylent and real food. Also to make your real food argument include quotes from your fav meal essay to have the reader experience the emotions through the sensory detail you provide.