

Gleanings

A Journal of First-Year Student Writing ♦ 2013 - 2014



Preface

All of the work included in this journal was written by students who were enrolled in Siena's First Year Seminar in 2013 - 2014. This required course prepares students for the intellectual rigors of college life and beyond by building critical thinking and communication skills as well as by fostering creativity and advocacy. Throughout this two-semester seminar, students are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss the vast amounts of reading and writing that they do both inside and outside the classroom. Siena College is committed to showcasing the intellectual and engaging work being accomplished on its campus, so *Gleanings* was created as a means of celebrating some of the finest and most provocative first-year student writing completed each year.

The submission process for this publication has become increasingly competitive. The editorial committee for *Gleanings* received an overwhelming amount of faculty-nominated writing and had to make difficult decisions about which texts to publish in this fourth volume. A diverse selection of texts is included, though this year the committee was compelled to expand the number of published research essays given the students' impressive work on such fascinating and controversial topics. In addition to recognizing excellence in writing, the committee proudly presents *Gleanings: A Journal of First-Year Student Writing 2013 - 2014* as a useful tool for current and future student writers and for instructors as well.

This year the students' texts are arranged according to two broad categories – “Critical Response Essays and Creative Texts” and “Research Projects.” As always, there is a short introduction to each piece which simply describes the assignment and, in many cases, draws the reader's attention to some of the rhetorical strategies exercised by the writers. Below the title and author, the professor's name and seminar theme is identified. While minor editorial changes have been made to these works-in-progress, they were kept to a minimum in order to preserve the authentic voices of the student authors as well as the integrity of the assignments.

Congratulations to the students whose writing is represented here. The first year seminar team is confident that the readers will appreciate and enjoy the students' fine work.

~ The FYSM team would like to extend a special thanks to the Office of Academic Affairs for supporting this annual endeavor.

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This event paper was written by a student who attended a documentary presented in the FYS film series. Note how the writer is affected by the injustices portrayed in the film and the valuable connections that she makes to the course theme, class discussions, and her own life.

The Need to Speak

By Brittney Aupperle
(Prof. Barranca – “Voice”)

On September 17, I attended the showing of *Food Inc.* in the Standish Library. The movie is about corruption in the food industry; specifically, how monopolistic companies are controlling all aspects of food production. After seeing the film and learning where my food actually comes from, I have changed the way I see the food I am eating, and I am more conscious about the foods I buy in the grocery store. The movie discussed topics no one had investigated before, so *Food Inc.* was a particularly difficult documentary to make because many food companies do not want their methods of production exposed to the public. The fact of the matter is, however, this documentary gave voice to suppressed workers who could not speak out for themselves about the injustices they faced at the hands of monopolistic food manufacturers.

Consumers are blind to the injustices faced by farmers and employees working for monopolistic food companies. Not only is the modern food production system abusive to humans, but it's abusive to animals as well. Many companies are not concerned with producing high quality food for consumers; rather, the main goal is to make a profit off of cheap goods and labor. In the modern food production system, a majority of the processes and practices are not made known to consumers. The food production industries don't want consumers to know where and how food is made because it would be far less appealing. These companies greatly limit what information about their products can be publicly known. The lack of voice, on part of food manufacturers, is intentional. *Food Inc.* explores what the companies are hiding and why there appears to be so much to hide from consumers.

In our FYSM class, we often discuss what it means to have a “voice” and how “voice” can be silenced. *Food Inc.* shows how farmers and those who work for food companies are greatly oppressed by large food manufacturers. The companies threaten employees against speaking out. If an employee speaks poorly about the company for which he or she works, the company often sues or fires the employee. A majority of workers are poor, so they cannot afford to lose their jobs or take pay cuts. The workers are forced to comply with the companies and remain silent about the deplorable conditions they face every day. For example, the producers of *Food Inc.* had a difficult time finding chicken farmers who would share their work or show the conditions in which the chickens were kept. This is because the farmers knew that they would be reprimanded by the company who oversees them if they were to talk. Many of the farmers who

were interviewed wanted to speak out against the injustices they faced and the mistreatment of the animals, but they could not.

The only way *Food Inc.* was a successful documentary was because some individuals spoke out against injustices. One farmer was interviewed for the film, and she said that she was even willing to put her farm and livelihood on the line to expose the poor conditions she was forced to live and work in. The only way to change the corporate influence over food production in the United States is to speak out and expose the corrupted nature behind production. As Americans, we should be able to exercise our right to freedom of speech. Many farmers are under control of monopolistic companies, and their voices are silenced. The only way to change the mistreatment of workers and animals is to speak out and spread awareness, and this film shows that every voice can make a difference.

After having read a variety of essays on biodiversity – many of which framed the issue in terms of what other species do for humans – this writer makes a clear claim about assessing the value of living creatures. In addition to using strong textual evidence from his class readings, the writer bolsters his argument by including a relevant personal example and by posing oppositional views.

The Price is Not Right

By Brian Button

(Dr. L. Woolbright – “The Environment”)

It seems as if every decision that we make throughout our lives is somehow related to some form of monetary cost. Education, houses, cars and land are all discussed in regards to price and value, and the cost of having children is a vital issue to most people. This mindset carries over into modern views of science, as humans try to place a value on what a certain species is worth to us based on whether it can be turned into a marketable product or whether its existence improves our lives in any way. But is putting a dollar value on a species morally right? In regards to the ways in which humans use the environment, we cannot assign a monetary value to animals and their roles in nature based on their worth to us.

First, humans are only one part of nature and have not been granted special rights that allow us to categorize or value other species as “important” or “unimportant.” While we clearly are the dominant creatures of our era, we still are just part of the natural world, and as such, we merely are equal to the other species that share our world with us. Aldo Leopold, the “Father of Modern Conservation,” proposed that the best way to treat nature ethically is to change the role of people from conquerors to members and citizens of the natural world (Leopold 1949). While this concept may offend many people who consider themselves far more valuable than any other component of life on earth, it holds true that the values that we think are the most important are not seen as equally significant to other plants or animals. What does a bear, hawk, or trout care about the dollar amount we say they are worth? They do not worry if the value of the currency that we have attached to them rises or falls, as Wall Street traders would. They know what is valuable for them, and their values are in fields, woods, and streams - certainly not in little green pieces of paper. Take this example: in the past several years, there has been an unprecedented rise in honeybee deaths that most scientists attribute to various factors of large-scale industrial farming. This is causing widespread worry for the continuation of bees that are vital pollinators for countless species of flowering plants in the wild, to say nothing of cultivated crops. Therefore, to many wild plants and the animals that rely on the fruits of such plants, bees are

vital. If these plants and animals were asked to vote and decide if people or bees were more important to them, they would undoubtedly choose the bees.

A similar case can be made for the nitrogen-fixing rhizobium bacteria in the soil that are vital for growing plants. Accordingly, for much of the natural world, tiny-winged insects or microscopic soil bacteria that we barely care about are far more valuable than the egotistical people who envision themselves as rulers over all living beings. Indeed, as Edward Abbey states in his book *The Serpents of Paradise* (1968 p. 21), “We are obliged, therefore, to spread the news, painful and bitter though it may be for some to hear, that all living things on earth are kindred.”

There is no way for us to know the true value of a species if we had nothing to do with its creation and have no real idea as to how it was actually formed. This reminds me of an experience that illustrates my point. When I was in kindergarten, I once found great pleasure in taking a unicorn that a classmate had created out of modeling clay and crumpling it into a ball as my poor classmate burst into tears. Both my teacher and my mother instructed me to never destroy something that I had not made myself, especially if I did not know how valuable it was to someone else and if I could not make them another one. There are important parallels between my childish error and what we as humans are doing to the environment all around us. Scientists have little knowledge about how to restore a lost species, just as I never would have been able to exactly recreate my classmate’s unicorn figure. The closest we can get to knowing how a certain species evolved is still theoretical because nobody was there to watch the process happen and tell us about it. Also, I grossly miscalculated the value of my peer’s unicorn. The model car that I had made out of my portion of clay was worth virtually nothing to me, and if someone would have ruined my creation, I would not have minded at all. The unicorn was evidently worth far more to my classmate than my car was to me, despite the fact that they had both been created from an identical ball of modeling clay.

If two kids differ wildly on their opinions about the value of such trifling matters, how do people think they can accurately value an entire species? As E.O. Wilson writes in his book *The Diversity of Life* (1992 p. 15), “This is the assembly of life that took a billion years to evolve. It has eaten the storms-folded them into its genes-and created the world that created us. It holds the world steady.” How can human beings be so arrogant as to think that they can shamelessly derive a value to put on a species when they had nothing to do with the creation of the species and do not even know how the species was formed?

Some may respond by stating that there is no reason to stop placing prices on forms of life because since the human race began, people have been assigning such values to species of life and exploiting resources according to those assessments, so we should act no differently than our forefathers. However, modern humankind should be held to a different standard than our prehistoric ancestors due to our advanced civilization that causes our lives to be almost incomparable to those led by early humans. E.O. Wilson describes how the extinctions of animals followed humans as their population expanded across the globe, with “the large, the slow, and the tasty” animals disappearing shortly after the arrival of humans (Wilson 1992 p. 246). However, these people were scratching out an existence by killing and eating anything that they could find in a world that was infinitely more hostile to them than ours currently is. If they did not take advantage of consuming the most available food, they would have perished. Also, when one area’s population of edible animals dropped too low, there was always another region on the horizon that surely held bountiful populations of delicious creatures.

Back then, humans had no idea of the long-term impact that they were having on the ecosystems. For all they knew, they were traversing the infinite expanse of a flat world. This is not so for us. Due to our technological “progress,” today almost everyone can pull their phones from their pockets and via the internet see exactly what our influence is. We all know that the world is finite and that our actions have long-term impacts, and most of us have no worry about where our next meal is coming from, let alone if there is a next meal. We have the luxury of choice: vegetarian, organic, burger, fair-trade, fast food, and so on. The choice facing one of our early ancestors was probably more like this: kill any animal that I can catch and feed my family today, or starve. They surely did not know that their actions would forever change the biodiversity of our Earth, but we do not have that blissfully ignorant excuse. Therefore, while people have had adverse ecological impacts since the beginning of humankind, the humans of a thousand years ago deserve to be held to a more lenient standard than we do today.

In our modern world, it is rare to find something that has not had its worth assessed and assigned a dollar value. This is fine for man-made objects, but not so for living creatures. Modern human beings are only a part of the whole of nature and should try to act accordingly instead of arrogantly categorizing animals and plants that they consider less important than themselves. People know little about most species because we had nothing to do with creating them and, accordingly, cannot even come close to generating an accurate or applicable value system. Also, due to the “progress” of the human species, we are hardly similar to our ancient forefathers and should be held to a different standard for trying to value what different life-forms are worth because our ancestors had to fight for survival minute by minute, while we do not. Therefore, it is wrong for us to place a monetary value on any species of life.

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The following is an essay that was composed early in the fall semester after completing the Heritage Unit. Using two readings from class, each student was asked to devise an original thesis about community. Drawing from an essay about education, this writer artfully argues that conflict strengthens communities and finds ample support in a recent work of historical fiction set in the Civil Rights era.

Acidity of Competition

By Rachel Cappello
(Prof. Susan Barranca – “Voice”)

Some people cringe at the word “competition” while others become enthusiastic. Competition is a contest often described with words such as “rivalry” and “opposing teams.” These are fighting words used to push others out of the way so that only one person can win. On the other hand, conflict is described with words such as “disagreement” and “quarrel.” These words show that people in a conflict have different opinions, yet they still listen to the other side and communicate. In the essay “The Community of Truth,” Parker Palmer describes how and why conflict is better for a community than competition, and in the novel, *The Help*, author Kathryn Stockett gives an example supporting this idea. When it comes to a societal issue involving a community, conflict is better than competition because it brings the community closer to working together.

There are many concepts that make Palmer’s idea of “the community of truth” work and grow. One of these ways is through conflict rather than competition. Competition does not work in this scenario because it is secretive and selfish whereas a community is social, is sharing, and has common values. People in competition play the game for their own gain, which they do not want to share. Competition in society is the opposite of a community because, as Palmer explains, it is “an acid that can dissolve the fabric of relationships” (3). People in communal relationships can learn from each other and stretch their knowledge. If these relationships are gone, then there is no community left. Every human must now fend for himself or herself because people are only looking for their own personal and private gain in competition. While this is portrayed as being a closed and individual game, Palmer tells us that conflict is open and communal. In competition one can win or lose, yet Palmer explains that with conflict, “it is possible for everyone to win by learning and growing” (3). By this, he means people of the community always try to help each other and learn more. As long as communities keep these relationships, conflict is beneficial. Because these communities have rules and standards based on observations and interpretations that are not written in stone, they have the ability to evolve and grow.

Palmer is right when he says that the community grows with conflict, but not with competition. While a community may still grow with competition, it will not be for the better.

When individuals act selfishly, relationships within the community often end because no one is looking out for one another. This creates a more competitive community, and such values are driven throughout the population. Intense competition does not benefit relationships, which is why a process using conflict is more favorable.

Palmer's ideal community is based on these thoughts regarding conflict; however, in *The Help*, Stockett's community located in Jackson, Mississippi, is based on competition. The community Stockett writes about is a great example of why conflict is better for society. Again, society works with conflict because it is based on relationships and communication; however, the city of Jackson is built and surrounded by lies and competition. While this is seen throughout the entire novel, one character, Miss Hilly, is an exceptional example. Whenever Celia does something Hilly does not approve of, Hilly's "neck grows taut" (322). This shows Hilly's disapproval of Celia because whatever it is Celia is doing, it makes Hilly's much-worked-on appearance seem drab. Because of this, whenever Hilly is approached by Miss Celia, Hilly "slip[s] behind the podium table" just like she had done plenty of times before (327). Slipping behind the podium sets up the distance Hilly puts between herself and the community, for she does not want to associate with people, such as Celia, who could make her look like a fool. Hilly wants to maintain her impeccable appearance and reputation at the benefit that she organizes. She does this for herself and for the individual profit she would gain from it. Hilly acts like this because she is in competition with all of the other white wives in Jackson, and she wants to be the one everybody listens to and no one questions. However, this cannot go on long because none of the wives actually want to do what Hilly tells them. It seems as if Hilly is successful, yet the reader later learns that everyone else in the town is frightened by her, wary of expressing themselves, and hesitant to cross the line Hilly has drawn.

Stockett shows how the city of Jackson tries to ignore controversial issues related to race and civil rights. The community tries to put on this mask while the rest of the country is taking its off. Outside of Jackson, issues of race and rights are open conflicts and are demonstrated by the March on Washington and the Civil Rights Movement. It can be seen today that the rest of the world had it right; in order to fix these issues, they had to be directly and openly addressed. In the novel, the city of Jackson tries to stifle such controversies, yet the outside world is growing because it is allowing for conflict. Therefore, much better solutions to the problems in society can be found through conflict rather than competition.

Both Palmer and Stockett explain why conflict is better than competition. Palmer has an ideal model that seems impossible to reach, yet Stockett offers a realistic example with Jackson, Mississippi. Competition is an individual game where someone seeks out advantages for himself or herself only. Conflict keeps the line to communication open even when there are issues. Today, society has multiple problems that encompass the majority of the population, yet some people still ignore them. They do this because they do not want the issues to interfere with their own competitions regarding social status and personal gain. It is their goal to shine at the top of a pillar with a gold medal for their achievements. However, what people do not realize is that those whom they knocked down to get there are standing at the bottom trying to knock over the pillar.

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This highly powerful and personal poem was written after viewing the award-winning film,
Sexy Baby: A Documentary about Sexiness and the Cyber Age.

Born in Society

By Nora Consigliere

(Prof. Cheverton – “It’s Not Just Child’s Play: Childhood Social Development”)

According to society
I’ll only be
Beautiful
(so young, so kind, so innocent)
when I’m dead.

I don’t want to walk around
(hey baby, can’t you take a compliment)
with fear making my legs move faster.
I want to live
in a world where my worth
isn’t seen only after I’ve decided

I’ve had enough.

Why should I have
to look like a (computer generated
stick figure
barbie doll)
model
in order to be a real woman?

Take a look at the young
(beautiful, innocent)
girls that grow up in this
(ugly, fat, kill yourself)
society that tells them to be born
beautiful and thin or
Don’t be
Born
at all.

The writer of this essay immediately gains the reader's interest by referring to two themes commonly experienced during the shaping of one's identity – fear and rebellion. Using two class readings to support her thesis, the student carefully selects and analyzes pivotal moments in the lives of two adolescents who lived nearly eight hundred years apart.

Disobeying Our Parents for a Better Personal Outcome

By Danielle Feldman
(Prof. Barranca – “Voice”)

Fear is a natural feeling experienced by most people at some point during their lives. It can have a great effect on how a person acts or responds to different situations. Our parents indoctrinate us, and in doing so, instill a sense of fear in us. We believe many ideas because we just assume our parents are right and because it is what we have been taught. We are subjected to our families and the environment we live in, so we may fear going against what our parents have taught us. This sometimes keeps us from speaking our minds or expressing how we really feel. The fear of going against what we are told suppresses our actions. Often, it is necessary to have the courage to overcome that fear in order to gain happiness and make changes in the world and in our lives. Margaret from Maya Angela's “Finishing School” and St. Francis of Assisi both demonstrate how it is necessary to overcome the fear of disrespecting family values in order to see the world from their own perspective.

The 1930s was a time period of strong racial segregation and discrimination. The main character Margaret from “Finishing School” knew what was ahead for her as an African American woman during this time. From the time she was born, she knew she had to eventually work in a white woman's kitchen. She never questioned this because her mother had indoctrinated her with this belief, and one was never to question a mother's ideas or wishes. While working for Mrs. Cullinan, Margaret's voice was suppressed over and over again. Mrs. Cullinan even wanted to change Margaret's name to Mary simply because it was more convenient to remember. When Miss Glory tried to correct her, Mrs. Cullinan said, “That's too long. She's Mary from now on” (Angelou 2). Margaret could not even defend her identity because as a black maid during this time period, her opinion meant nothing. She was not able to stick up for herself because her mother, fearing repercussions, also taught Margaret to never talk back. Yet Margaret thought to herself, “I had to quit the job, but the problem was going to be how to do it. Momma wouldn't allow me to quit for just any reason” (Angelou 2). Margaret was fed up with Mrs. Cullinan, but her mother had instilled fear in her; therefore, she could not just quit. This fear arose from the misguided idea that black women could hold no higher position

than that of a maid, and if she gave up this job, Margaret would be unable to support herself. But she overcame her fear, broke from her family's indoctrination of fear, and stood up for herself. Instead of simply quitting, Margaret took a different approach to finding her voice - she broke Mrs. Cullinan's favorite dishes and got herself fired. Margaret knew her mother would be disappointed because she had such a good job, but she had to overcome this fear and do what was best for her, which was to not give up her identity.

In "Finishing School," Margaret claims that she was not given a chance to speak up for herself and that she was getting taken advantage of. In order for Margaret to stand up for herself, she had to quit her job. Although she was faced with the fear of her mother, it was necessary for her to get out of working for Mrs. Cullinan. Her mother believed this was a good job for her, so she was afraid of her mother's disapproval. Breaking the dishes was smart of Margaret because she was able to overcome the fear of her mother getting mad in an easier way. Because Margaret overcame this fear, she was able to have a brighter future while learning to speak for herself.

Similar to Margaret, St. Francis of Assisi also had an experience that forced him to overcome the fear of his family. Prior to his conversion to follow God, Francis was a wealthy and privileged young man. A change was sparked in Francis when he experienced post-traumatic stress disorder and an illness from a serpent bite. Because he believed God was punishing him, Francis left his family, wealth, and belongings behind to dedicate his life to service. Francis believed God would guide him and teach him. However, in order to do this, he had to go against all of the lessons his parents had taught him. When his father learned what Francis was doing, he was very angry because Francis was risking the wealth and reputation of their family. Although Francis's father beat and chained him, Francis remained God's helper. According to Thomas of Celano, Francis decided he was ready to give up everything, and "[w]hen he was in front of the bishop, he neither delayed nor hesitated, but immediately took off and threw down all his clothes and returned them to his father" (Armstrong 33). Francis stripped himself of everything right in front of his father without any hesitation. He went against everything his father had ever taught him and showed his true dedication to God. His father renounced him, and Francis officially gave up everything to pursue his dream of helping others. He overcame the fear of his father in order to experience a different view of the world that included doing service and putting other people first.

St. Francis gave up everything he owned in order to become closer to God. He had to go against his father in order to move forward by serving God. Giving up everything and going against his father led him to become a better person. Although Francis was faced with the fear of his father, he overcame this fear to do what he believed was right because it is sometimes necessary to go against what you are taught to accomplish your goals.

Fear is a very common emotion. Specifically, we often experience the fear of disobeying and disappointing our parents. Of course we don't want to let our parents down, but sometimes it is necessary to form our own views of life in order to gain true happiness. Family has a great impact on how we are raised, but it doesn't have to be everything. Overcoming the fear of disagreeing with our parents is extremely tough for some people. As we can see from Margaret in "Finishing School" and from St. Francis of Assisi, overcoming the fear of your family can have a positive effect. If Margaret didn't overcome this fear, she could have been stuck working for Mrs. Cullinan and never achieved anything beyond being a maid. Yet after finding her voice, Margaret (Maya) became a famous author and even became our nation's Poet Laureate. Similarly, St. Francis wouldn't have been able to accomplish his goals of helping the poor and doing great service if he didn't overcome the fear of his father. As we all know, there are many

people today who still dedicate their lives to following in St. Francis's footsteps and his doctrines and beliefs. These two people prove that it is often beneficial to make up your own mind and accomplish your own goals even if it means disobeying your parents.

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In the following essay, the writer questions the veracity, ethics, and impact of the food industry's marketing practices and draws ample evidence from a single source.

Fighting False and Misleading Information in the Food Industry

By Sarah Gansley

(Prof. Peter Murray – “Democracy”)

Distributing false information pertaining to a person's food intake can lead to serious health concerns. Marion Nestle reveals in her book, *Food Politics*, the distribution of false and misleading nutritional information, not only to Americans, but to people all over the world. Companies across the food industry have been allowed by government regulation to present false information to Americans through the food pyramid in order to benefit their specific product in the marketplace. Some misleading advertisements of baby formula for infants in developing countries have even led to the loss of innocent children's lives. In response to these cynical tactics, one group of protestors made a difference by leaking these actions to consumers. By doing so, this group was able to sway consumers away from purchasing the products of this company. The food industry's rewording and shaping of the food pyramid and the false advertisements of baby formula have led people to make uninformed decisions concerning their food intake. This problem, however, can be solved by forming an international regulatory body that has the power to limit false information and improve the nutritional advice given to people around the world.

The famous food pyramid released by the USDA every year does not get published without controversy from the food industry. Though the food pyramid's purpose is to inform a person how to eat healthy, the question soon became about what products it would tell people to buy more of. The meat industry influenced the recommendations of the pyramid by complaining about its wording. Nestle explains how "objections from meat producers shifted 1977 recommendations about meat from 'decrease consumption'... to the even more euphemistic 'choose lean meat'" (78). The meat industry was able to sway the USDA away from nutritionists' recommendations of eating less meat, to the meat industry's preferred message of choosing lean meats. The wording changed from a warning-like tone to a positive tone implying that meat must be consumed. Though meat is high in saturated fats, which is why professionals recommended eating less of it, the meat industry's concern was simply about its economic profit.

This example shows how industry overrides important facts that consumers must know. Instead of the matter being about health, people are receiving incorrect information that has been swayed by the food industry.

Another changing aspect of the pyramid is its shape, which was not always going to be a pyramid. In 1992, the meat and dairy industry disputed the triangle shape because it claimed the areas designated to meats and dairy were ranked low and too small in comparison to the vegetable, fruit, and grain groups. Vegetables, fruits, and grains contain much less fat and sugar compared to meats and dairy, which is why the pyramid *means* to make meat and dairy look smaller compared to the other groups. In an attempt to comply with the meat and dairy industries, though, the food pyramid was changed to a bowl that “meat and dairy producers preferred... because the bowl shape suggested greater equivalence among food groups” (Nestle 62). Again, original information has been changed to a skewed version of reality because of what the industry wants. After research, the pyramid design was chosen to represent a person’s ideal daily food intake, but the industry did not allow this to happen without a fight. Without this attack by the industry, the USDA would not have had to spend extra money to find research that shows a quantitative analysis proving the pyramid over the bowl to be more effective. The complaints from the food industry have a big impact on the information presented by the government to consumers who are not always receiving the best and most truthful information.

Another way the food industry has negatively influenced people with wrong information is the case where Nestlé Food Company marketed baby formula as being better than breast milk for infants. Baby formula is only needed if a mother physically cannot breast feed; in all other cases, baby formula does not provide more benefits than breast milk. In fact, baby formula can be very harmful, especially in developing countries where the formula cannot be properly used. Without clean water and proper refrigeration, baby formula can contain diarrhea-causing contaminants. If these contaminants are consumed, an infant experiences deficiency in nutrients and can die. Still, Nestlé advertises to developing countries that do not have the proper resources.

This situation is unethical, and babies should not suffer the consequences of a misleading, false advertisement. Dr. Cicely Williams also discredits the marketing of baby formula to mothers in developing countries through this statement: “[M]isguided propaganda on infant feeding should be punished as the most criminal form of sedition, and that [the deaths of infants caused by inadequate formula feeding] should be regarded as murder” (Nestle 147). By marketing baby formula as being better than breast milk to people of developing countries that are without ready access to more accurate information, Nestlé creates the possibility that people will unknowingly harm their infant children.

One could argue that, in the end, consumers have the final say on what they purchase, regardless of what nutritionists or advertisements say. When people decide to buy a product, they are doing so willingly. A person may say humans can use their own sense of what is right to buy healthy products that will not hurt them. If a person questions a nutritionist or advertisement, she or he can research this information and make an educated decision. This argument posits that not all the fault should be on the food industry because consumers have the ultimate say in what they purchase.

I disagree, however, because this view narrowly defines all people in the world as having the education and resources to make the best decisions for their bodies. In the Nestlé baby formula case, people in developing countries quite clearly do not have a way to access information themselves on the precautions of using baby formula. All these people know is that

some company is telling them that baby formula can help their children and with this, take it as fact. They cannot go ahead and look up on an internet source the way unrefrigerated or unsealed baby formula can cause a child to become sick enough to die. Advertisements are sometimes the only way they can discover information for their children. These people are simply uninformed, and they take Nestlé's advertisement as fact, thus buying the baby formula.

My argument also holds true in regards to the food pyramid. Just as people in developing countries do not have all the resources to know better than to blindly follow an advertisement, people in America do not always, either. The reason food companies do want to change the wording and shaping of the food pyramid is because it *does* make a difference in consumer's purchasing. If it didn't, why would producers care about changing it? The wording and shaping of the pyramid influences the public's food decisions and purchases. Moreover, some people may not know the factual evidence regarding which food group is healthier, and upon reading the food pyramid, choose to eat meat and dairy over fruits, vegetables, and grains. Not everyone has access to the internet or their own nutritionist. Advertising and false information affects the way people purchase their food and consequently, their food intake.

To take my argument a step further, even people who do have the resources to research their own information will be swayed by misleading information. The food pyramid comes from a government-run organization. People should be able to trust that the USDA releases information for the betterment of American lives. When the food industry becomes part of the publishing of the food pyramid, the concern is not for Americans; the concern is for profit. This is not what consumers are going to think when they are deciding which groceries to buy at a food store. Instead, consumers will trust that the government has provided them with correct information. Everyone is vulnerable to the misleading information, including those who have the resources to double check the facts themselves.

One way people have already worked towards stopping falsities is by letting the world know when a company is presenting wrongful information. In the Nestlé case, boycotters of the product told Americans "not to buy Nestlé products until the company ceased marketing practices that favored bottle feeding" (Nestle 149). By telling the public of such misleading marketing actions taken by a company, the company will decrease in popularity. This could be significant enough that the company will decide to get rid of the false advertisement in order to regain these consumers. In fact, in this real-life boycott "loss in sales were sufficient to induce Nestlé to invest heavily in a public relations campaign to control and correct the damage" (Nestle 149). This proved to be very effective, and out of this, The International Code was introduced by the United States in 1994. The Code is a set of guidelines to regulate food production and sale. By taking up this set of rules, the United States improved in the regulation of advertisements and bettering companies' practices in general.

I believe, however, that The Code is not enough because it is not enforced properly. In the Nestlé case, proponents of the code reported how "two years later . . . Nestlé shifted strategies and were now marketing infant formula and supplements to *pregnant women*" (Nestle 155). The company simply stopped marketing for two years and then switched its audience from *infants* to *pregnant women*. A simple loophole allowed Nestlé to continue unethical practices. Clearly, The Code was not enough to stop unethical advertisements.

To fully solve the problem of false or misleading information being used to influence food purchasing behavior for the worse, I propose that a separate body of health professionals who care about the well-being of others be formed to regulate nutritional information being given to the public. This regulatory body will be dedicated simply to regulating information and

making sure that what is published reflects the views of health professionals and possesses truthful information. Not only should this group set certain rules, but it should make information available to the public when a company tries to publish false information. Because this matter is so important and directly relates to the health of people around the world, this body should be formed by an international group such as the United Nations. The designated people would be carefully picked, and any sign of corruption would result in the person in question being dismissed from his or her position.

This type of organization could be hard and expensive to form, but with patience and the right people, it can be done because there are those who care about the well-being of others and who are willing to dedicate their lives. People, like the boycotters in the Nestlé case, will make a difference. If an outside source, away from the politics of the food industry, makes the call on false information, there would be no incentive for it to allow inaccurate information being passed on. Some nutritionists need to worry about pleasing companies if they receive research grants from these large firms, but this group would be funded by the UN to assure that no outside company can influence this group. This regulatory body would work to make sure that all nutritional information and advertisements include accurate and helpful facts to improve the overall health of all people.

Uninformed people around the world have made poor health decisions due to the false information presented through the food industry, and to solve this, the United Nations must form a group that will regulate information given to the public. The distortions presented in the food pyramid and the swaying of facts by the food industry show the way that companies can bend information to better suit themselves. By changing word choice and the shape of the pyramid to a bowl, specific industries tried to hinder health advice to the public. People could have been swayed to eat more red meat than vegetables, fruits, or grains because of these changes forced by the meat industry, even though it is less healthy for consumers. Even worse than the changing of the food triangle is the advertising of false information regarding baby formula. People in developing countries were given wrong information and as a result, made poor choices for the health of their children. The solution to this problem can be to form an international regulatory body of humans concerned with the safety and well-being of other humans. Its job would be to regulate the information given to consumers so that when purchasers make a decision, it is because they had all the correct information and freely made their choices. With more information, people will make better decisions and overall healthiness will be increased internationally.

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The students in this section were asked to write an informal personal reflection about their class excursion to a local theater production. This inspired writer unabashedly shares her emotional reactions to the play and to a novel which are set in very different times and places.

Crying at the Mountaintop

By Megan Higgins

(Prof. Liptak – “Crossing Borders”)

On Friday January 1, 2014, I sat down with my First Year Seminar class at Capital Repertory Theatre located in Albany, New York to witness the production of Katori Hall’s *The Mountaintop*. This performance was a story based on the night before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. Going into the play I had no idea what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised that this was no boring account of his last thoughts. Instead, this production took Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy to a whole new level because it exposed his imperfections, worries, and doubts while at the same time showcased his undeniable hope for peace, equality, and a want for the baton to carry on after his death. There were some very powerful moments in this play that caused me to get the chills and even cry because I was so touched by King’s passion for a cause. Another time that I felt this outward empathy was when I read the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. Just as much as I could feel Dr. King’s fervor for equality, I could also feel Minerva Mirabal’s passion for freedom in Alvarez’s novel. Although it does not take a lot for me to cry, if a performance or piece of literature can move me to tears, I know it was powerful and meaningful. *The Mountaintop* and *In the Time of the Butterflies* are expressive works because they cause their audiences to feel something and to want to fight for the cause presented.

Throughout the performance of *The Mountaintop*, Dr. King and Camae, an angel disguised as a maid, discussed and argued their different views on whether the Civil Rights Movement should be handled with or without violence. There is one particular moment when I truly felt the pain and frustration that African Americans were facing at this point in history. It was the scene in the play where Dr. King asked for Camae’s opinion on what she would do if she were to speak on the issue. Camae then proceeded to put on Dr. King’s jacket and shoes and stood on the bed so she could exclaim how she was sick and tired of her “brother’s” (white people’s) mistreatment when her people treated them with respect and dignity. She cried out that she is done with marching and ready for some action, and her delivery of the words sent chills down my spine and even caused an unexpected tear. Then, towards the end of the production, Camae showed Dr. King what the future held and how eventually it would be a place where

equality reigned. This scene in the play immediately touched me because it showed that even when tragedy strikes, such as Dr. King's assassination, individuals still never give up hope.

I received a similar impression after reading a conversation in Alvarez's novel between Minerva and her sister, Maria Teresa. In the passage, Minerva expressed to her younger sister that it was important to get involved in the rebellion because it was their country and their family's future. This caused me to get very emotionally attached to the novel because it showed a family willing to risk their lives in order to fight for the common good of all people. I ended up researching more about the rebellion against Trujillo's regime because I wanted to see if the Mirabel's cause won out in the end. Thankfully, like Dr. King's cause, it did, but not without the unfortunate casualties in between. However, even though the casualties were tragic, it once again showed that people will not lose hope easily and will continue to fight for the good of mankind.

Nevertheless, understanding peoples' passions for a cause can allow other individuals to put life in perspective because it causes them to realize the bigger issues at play in the world. It can also lead individuals to take part in a cause in order to make a better and more peaceful world. Thus, *The Mountaintop* and *In the Time of the Butterflies* are both powerful stories that truly showcase how one man or one woman's hope can spark hope and change for a nation of people.

In the essay below, the student passionately argues for more accurate portrayals of environmental concerns and activism in mainstream cinema by comparing a box office smash hit and a documentary film while culling evidence from a legitimate website and an ecofeminist text.

Cinema: A Source of Misperception about Environmental Issues

By Sharon Hsu

(Prof. Daly – “Popular Culture”)

It is the modern paradox that society’s view of nature, or the external, is based largely on images projected onto an oversized synthetic screen in an internal, human-constructed building. Simply put, we go inside to learn about what is outside. The danger in this, however, lies in the fact that what is depicted as “the outside” may deviate largely from the truth. The idea of “nature” becomes subjective to the hands, minds, and motives of those involved in the entertainment industry. Because the nature of pop culture often points to entertainment rather than education as its primary goal, the true human-inflicted tragedies of the natural world are generally hidden if it ruins the fantastical mirage presented to the audience. Pop culture thus promotes entertainment value over environmentalism, reinforcing the dangerous misperception that nature does not require human concern or caution.

Though environmental issues are not entirely ignored in movies, they are heavily idealized and glossed over through the simple tactics of avoidance and detail omission. In the hit 1993 American family film, Free Willy, for example, the horrors of the whaling industry are introduced to a superficial depth at best. The film chronicles the development of a friendship between a young boy named Jesse and a show killer whale named Willy. Willy is confined to a local amusement park after falling victim to the nets of whalers that chased his pod, or familial group of whales, through the ocean while yielding large harpoons. Although the whalers are immediately antagonized for their predacious nature, the true brutality of the whaling industry is completely omitted. The whalers chase Willy and his pod as Jesse helps Willy escape from the local amusement park. In this artificially constructed happy ending, the whales win despite the fact that they rarely do in reality. The audience is thus never exposed to the killing of a whale within this movie that deals with whale hunting, which in reality “often involve[s] prolonged and intense suffering” (“Whaling”). Viewers remain uneducated about the horrors that still occur in the whaling industry and remain blissfully ignorant.

When an exploding harpoon, such as the one used by the whalers in Free Willy, is used by industrial whalers in real life, it is meant to “pierce the whale’s body to a depth of 12 inches”

before exploding within the whale's body. Because it "rarely kills instantly", the harpoon instead "causes massive shock and injury" ("Whaling"). The whale is then lifted onto the boat using winches, or mechanical devices that use rope tension. Though "whalers frequently claim that a whale dies within two minutes," there is evidence that it may take over an hour for the whale to die ("Whaling"). Because the audience of Free Willy, however, is never forced to witness any of this suffering on the jumbo-sized screen before them, they are not exposed to this horrifying series of events and thus do not understand the need to act. The realities of what usually happens when whales face whalers are skipped over so that it benefits the plot development and feel-good ending of the movie. There is, thus, a misrepresentation of the whaling industry in Free Willy, which leads to a lack in awareness of and concern about the inhumanities of whaling.

Dissenters may argue that an increasing number of film features in pop culture do in fact seek to advocate for the preservation of nature by exposing the true extent of human destruction on the environment. Oscar Award-winning feature documentary The Cove might be used to make their case as an example of film media meant to rally environmental concern. The Cove, produced in 2009, protests and exposes the techniques behind the Taiji dolphin slaughter in Japan. There is much bloodshed as the audience watches the Japanese dolphin hunters lure migrating dolphin pods into a cove before netting them together tightly and repeatedly stabbing them with spears and knives, sometimes even pulling them out of the water and pressing them against the boats to do so before dropping them back into the water to slowly die. The process is an undeniably torturous and painful one for the victimized dolphins.

While it may be true that the purpose of The Cove is to expose the accurate destruction of humans on the environment rather than hide it, it must be noted that Free Willy earned a worldwide total of \$153,698,625, or 121.5 times more than the \$1,264,619 worldwide total earned by The Cove in box office sales (*Free Willy* and *The Cove*). Although The Cove represents a piece of film media ridden with factual details and dedicated to raising awareness and advocacy of an environmental issue, the significant difference in box office earnings shows that the general public preferred the simplicity and superficiality of Free Willy. Thus, it can be assumed that Free Willy had a larger impact on the environmental attitude of the public than The Cove simply because more people viewed it. The implication of this astounding discrepancy is that the general public understands the role of pop culture and media to be for entertainment, and even though The Cove contains more detailed information about humans' effect on ocean life, Free Willy is comprised of a more entertaining story that is void of any real tragedy. Thus, it became more popular while propelling an inaccurate perception, which was only enhanced by the fact that Free Willy was filmed from a mechanical approach as defined by Carolyn Merchant in her book, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution.

In her book, Merchant outlines two distinctive orders of thought: the organic view and the mechanical view. In the organic order of thought, the earth is viewed as a "living organism and nurturing mother" that should be respected, cared for, and preserved (Merchant 271). Humans take on an enormous responsibility of acting in a way that minimizes the "violating [of] the sacredness of the living earth" (Merchant 271). Every component of nature is seen as a valuable part of a greater whole, and "power was diffused from the top downward through the social or cosmic hierarchies" (Merchant 276). According to the mechanical school of thought, however, order comes in the form of "a rationally determined system of laws" and "power [is] derived from active and immediate intervention in a secularized world" (Merchant 276). The mechanical school of thought revolves around the concept of nature as a machine with nearly interchangeable parts. The general whole of nature, and the effect each piece has on it, is taken

out of consideration. In Free Willy and The Cove, the difference between the applied approaches has resonating effects on the impact each respective film has on the audience.

Free Willy is based on a simplistic, mechanical plot that prevents Willy's character from being considered as a significant piece of any greater whole. Willy's character is essentially a single animal that is victimized and ultimately saved. In all honesty, the part could be fulfilled by any other one whale or even another marine animal. Willy's significance as a whale that is a part of the greater ocean biosphere is not obvious or described in the movie, contributing to the inaccurate portrayal that Free Willy gives of killer whales. The audience never faces the question of why whaling or taking a whale into captivity might bear any repercussions on the natural environment as a whole.

Because the mechanical approach towards the killer whales in Free Willy omits any reflection on why they are ecologically valuable and should be protected, the audience is told that hunting whales is bad but has no idea why. A mechanical approach to the environment in movies thus amplifies the perceived separation of environmental issues and one's personal life. It presents nature as a system made up of interchangeable and unrelated pieces, and it becomes impossible for people to see that the killing and death of whales will ultimately impact them in some way because nature works as part of a cyclic whole and will affect humans. As the audience watches the whales escape and swim off into happily-ever-after, there is no need for concern, and thus, there is no apathy. Here lies the heart of the problem: although they should, people do not act because they are not presented with reasons for why they need to. The mechanical approach in Free Willy not only causes an underrepresentation of killer whales' role in the marine biosphere and the dire state they are currently in because of human activity, but it encourages an ignorant, narrow-minded attitude on humans' place in nature.

The Cove, on the other hand, upholds a strongly organismic view on dolphins in relation to the various bioprocesses of nature. Activists present the issue of dolphin hunting in a way that causes the audience to reflect upon nature as a system that is made of many interwoven parts. The rebuttal to a bored and apathetic, "Why should we care if this happens in Japan?" is overwhelming. The issue at hand is made relevant to the lives of those in the audience, as the film discusses the ecological importance of dolphins in the marine world, which is, the film reminds viewers, a world that humans depend on greatly for many resources. Neither dolphins nor humans are interchangeable parts of nature with little relation to one another.

After watching The Cove, audience members leave the theater with the message that it should care about the issue at hand because, ultimately, it will impact them too. What is depicted in this film is not an isolated series of events that bears no repercussions on the rest of the natural world. Humans are not presented in the documentary as naturally superior figures in the hierarchy of nature who, therefore, have no reason to worry over what happens below. The Cove shows the audience that humans are part of a balanced system that includes dolphins and that they will not be immune to the effects of the diminishing dolphins. It becomes apparent that only humans can put an end to human destruction, and the audience feels a weighty responsibility that comes with the newfound knowledge about dolphin hunting. Driving home the idea that an issue for the dolphins is an issue for all of nature and at the cost of a happy ending, an ominous warning of pending consequences should humans fail to act is presented without inhibition in The Cove. There is no artificial happy ending for the sake of good feelings and false reassurances. Faced with the reality of not only what is happening but what could happen to them, the audience is far more likely to feel compelled to take action after watching The Cove than after watching Free Willy.

Film media in pop culture has and will continue to play a critical role in shaping the general mentality and perception of the public; the environment is no exception to the list of issues and topics. It is unfortunate that the truth is often sacrificed for entertainment value, as the environment ultimately suffers the consequences because of this lack of education. I believe that a paradigmatic shift is necessary if society is to begin solving long-standing environmental issues, and activists need to take advantage of the widespread popularity of movies and use film to reach a wider audience. Pop culture needs to adopt a stronger educational presence by bringing more visual and verbal exposure to the true struggle of environmental activism. For example, subtly integrating more factual information from an organismic approach and choosing education over entertainment value when it comes to truly significant environmental issues would present audiences with a refreshingly non-fantastical view of what is really going on in the world. The “So What/Who Cares?” needs to be illustrated in the visual form to audiences in order to spur much-needed action on environmental issues. If they were more prominently woven into popular movies and films, then general awareness of and concern towards humans’ effect on nature would undoubtedly heighten. Some may argue that there has been an increase in the number of films promoting the conservation and preservation of nature in the last few years. It must be noted, however, that these films inaccurately portray the difficulty of achieving and resolving these environmental issues because they ultimately are made for entertainment and must result in the victory of the protagonist activist. Solutions to the issues seem obvious, and the audience is left with an unrealistic idea of how to begin implementing such measures. A happy ending must be guaranteed for both nature and the character when the purpose is to entertain, but the harsh reality is that the activist does not always and will, in fact, rarely win. Even through these well-intended films, the audience is not able to entirely grasp the severity of the environmental concerns that we face when we exit the movie theater. The way nature is depicted through film media ultimately must change if we are to alter the general public’s mentality of it.

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In 2013, the FYS summer reading was a Julia Alvarez novel about the revolution in the Dominican Republic during the mid-twentieth century. For their first essay of the year, these students were asked to describe the relationship of that culture with its environment and to cite specific passages from the text as evidence. In addition to having a noteworthy thesis and strong organizational plan, this writer demonstrates a very close reading and heightened understanding of the text given the carefully selected quotations in this short essay.

In the Environment of Butterflies

By Bridgette Klein

(Prof. L. Woolbright – “The Environment”)

In the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, Julia Alvarez chronicles the life of the four Mirabal sisters living in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1900s and their involvement in an underground revolutionary movement. A major motif of the novel is the family’s connection to their environment. Alvarez asserts the family’s close relationship to the natural world around them by having the sisters’ important emotions and events reflected in the description of the nature. In particular, the author reflects Dedé’s feelings in her gardening, depicts the environment as a source of comfort, and connects it with moments that are important to the family.

Dedé Mirabal is the only sister who survives the revolution. Throughout the turmoil that engulfs her country, she turns to gardening as a means of solace, and this hobby serves to reflect Dedé’s intense and painful emotions. For example, when her sister Minerva comes to ask Dedé to join the revolution, Dedé fears rejection, which is reflected in the way she sees the garden around her: “Dedé raked her eyes over the yard, half-afraid her sister was finding fault there, too . . . Everything was in its place. Only the new bed where she’s just been working did the soil look torn up. And it was disturbing to see – among the established plantings – the raw brown earth like a wound in the ground” (Alvarez 179). This “wound” illustrates Dedé’s feelings of isolation from her family and shows how much she is hurt by them. They are “neat and weedless,” while she is the one ruining the family’s harmony by not conforming to her family’s commitment to rebelling against the dictator.

Gardening continues to be an important part of Dedé’s life, even as she gets older. The novel opens with her preparing for an interview about her sisters: “The slamming of the [interviewer’s car] door startles Dedé. When she calms herself she finds she has snipped her prize butterfly orchid. She picks up the fallen blossom and trims the stem, wincing. Perhaps this is the only way to grieve the big things – in snippets, pinches, little sips of sadness” (Alvarez 5). Dedé sees her sisters, as well as her own grief, reflected in this flower. This illustrates that nature

is acting as an extension of her and the other members of the Mirabal family, which emphasizes their close relationship with the natural world. It is through Dedé's interactions with these delicate blossoms that she is able to fully remember her lost family and productively, though "in snippets," work through the pain that has accompanied that loss.

The environment continues to serve as a source of comfort for the Mirabal family. This is evident in the lush descriptions that Alvarez uses in the novel. In one of the chapters narrated by the oldest Mirabal sister, Patria, Alvarez writes of "purple mountains reaching toward angelfeather clouds; a falcon soaring in a calm blue sky; God combing His sunshine fingers through green pastures straight out of the Psalms" (160). Through this imagery, which is set during a retreat, the author implies that nature is one of the few constants in the life of the Mirabals' and is a source of hope and a sign of God's presence in the family's strife-filled lives.

Finally, Alvarez illustrates the Mirabals' close relationship with the environment by connecting it to pivotal moments in the family's life. Some of these important scenes take place in the tobacco field that Dedé's husband owns. In regards to using their land in the revolution, Dedé says that she must consult Jamito, her spouse, because "[it's] only fair. He's the one farming the land, he's responsible for this place" (176). The land is so important to the family because it is a means of authority, independence, and self-determination; this is why it is so devastating when their land is taken over by the government. Additionally, Alvarez also set the start of Dedé and Jamito's (limited) involvement in the Dominican revolution in their tobacco field. When his Dedé comes to ask him for help saving her sisters, Jamito "came running across the muddy, just-turned field . . . [T]hey were embarking on their most passionate project to date" (194). The tobacco crop is their life, as they depend upon it for survival, and it is, therefore, fitting that Dedé's quest to save her sisters begins here. The tobacco field is the family's source of survival, just as Dedé is the lifeline for the rest of the family.

The natural environment is an important motif in the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. By reflecting the emotions of the family members, especially those of the character Dedé, and their important events through her descriptions of the world around them, Alvarez illustrates the family's close connection with the natural world. It is through the use of imagery and the setting of important scenes that Alvarez is able to show the reader just how intricately and strongly the Mirabal family is connected to its environment.

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The purpose of this assignment was to research a specific human rights issue, and this writer focuses on the prevalent problem of violence against Indigenous women in the United States, Canada and Australia. Adhering to a specific organizational pattern, the writer gives an overview of the problem, discusses the main factors that contribute to the high rates of violence against Indigenous women, and outlines current and suggested reforms.

Intimate Partner Violence Against Indigenous Women: A Human Rights Violation

By Madison Krizan

(Prof. Strock-Lynskey – “Exploring Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Human Rights”)

Introduction and Brief Background

Intimate partner violence against women is an issue that severely violates human rights. One particular group of women that is extremely likely to be faced with intimate partner violence is Indigenous women found in America, Canada and Australia, along with many other countries worldwide. To have an understanding of this topic, it is important to provide some brief background information. According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), “American Indian or Alaska Native” refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. In the United States alone, 4,119,301 citizens identify themselves as Native Americans (Bachman, 2008). However, each country on our planet has a group of Indigenous peoples whose ancestors first lived in that area. In many countries, Indigenous peoples are known for facing a multitude of issues. Specifically in the United States, Native Americans are forced to deal with substance abuse, poverty and historic marginalization, all within their reservations. However, one of the most prevalent issues that Native Americans face is intimate partner violence. According to domesticviolence.org, intimate partner violence is “behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Partners may be married; heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; living together, separated, or dating” (Creative Communication Group, 2009). Domesticviolence.org also states that these behaviors may be, but are not limited to, name calling/putdowns, stopping a partner from contacting their family or friends, withholding money, stopping a partner from getting/keeping a job, threatened or actual physical harm, sexual assault, stalking and intimidation. 51% of the over 4 million Native Americans living in the United States are female (Bachman, 2008). Three out of every four of these women will be physically assaulted in their lives, and 73% of Native American women’s perpetrators are intimate partners (Robertson, 2012, p. 1). A high rate of intimate partner violence is not an issue

that is unique to Native Americans in the United States. Aboriginal women living in Canada are four times more likely to be domestically abused (Daoud, 2013, p. 1), and in Australia the rate of domestic assault reported to police is more than six times higher for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women (Mitchell, 2011, p. 1). This research analysis will focus more specifically on domestic violence issues affecting Native American women on reservations in South Dakota, Washington state, Arizona, and Oregon, as well as Indigenous women in both Canada and Australia.

Relationship between Topic and Human Rights

Every human being is entitled to a set of rights that offer protection and freedom. These rights should be guaranteed to every person regardless of his or her gender or ethnicity. This means that Native American women should be guaranteed protection from intimate partner violence. These rights are outlined in both the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (2007) as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008). Specifically, intimate partner violence goes against articles 7 and 22 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 7 states that “indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of a person” (United Nations, 2008). According to article 22, “[S]tates shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination” (United Nations, 2008). As for the UN Declaration of Human Rights, intimate partner violence violates both articles 5 and 7. Article 5 states that “no one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” (United Nations, 2007), and according to article 7, “all are entitled to equal protection against discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination” (United Nations, 2007). Intimate partner violence subjects women to a loss of integrity, liberty and security and instead forces them to have to deal with inhumane and degrading treatment that is both violent and discriminatory. The articles noted will be examined in closer detail with regard to how they relate to both my thesis statement and research findings pertaining to the many factors that contribute to intimate partner violence among Native American communities.

Thesis Statement

According to the Duluth Center for Women, a healthy relationship is based on negotiation and fairness, non-threatening behavior, respect, trust and support (2014, p. 1). However, when a relationship turns violent, women receive the exact opposite. Multiple factors go into making Indigenous women living in America, Canada and Australia a group that is most likely to be devastated by intimate partner violence. My thesis for this research paper is as follows: Discrepancies found between tribal and federal laws relating to domestic violence of Indigenous women in the U.S., Canada and Australia that have resulted in violations of their human rights need to be reformed in order to guarantee better protection of these women.

Overview of Major Findings

While domestic violence is a national and international issue for all women, the statistics are extremely alarming for women in Indigenous communities. Not giving women the protection they deserve is not only morally wrong but also completely violates their human rights to a safe and healthy life. In the United States, Native American women are stalked at a rate that is double

that of any other population in the United States, and historically, homicide has been the third leading cause of death for Native American females ages fifteen through thirty-four (Robertson, 2012 p. 1). Particularly, domestic violence has been extremely prevalent in Native tribes in South Dakota, Arizona, Washington State and Oregon. Domestic violence of Indigenous people is not only a problem on a national basis; it is a worldwide issue. In Canada, “the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the 5 years before the study was 12.6% among Aboriginal women versus 3.5% among non-Aboriginal; 25% of the Aboriginal compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal women were assaulted by a current or former partner; and homicide of Aboriginal women was 8 times higher compared to non-Aboriginal women” (Daoud, 2013 p. 1), and in Australia, “NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data from 2001–2010 indicate that the rate of domestic assault reported to police is more than six times higher for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women” (Mitchell, 2011 p. 1).

One major finding that has emerged from my research is the way in which tribal governments, themselves, are currently structured. There are a multitude of issues within this governmental system that makes documenting domestic violence and persecuting criminals almost impossible. One of these issues is confusion. According to Bachman, the author of *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and the Criminal Justice Response: What is Known* (2008), “Complicated jurisdictional issues still produce unique barriers to American Indian and Alaska Native women seeking help from a criminal justice authority on tribal lands. When an act of violence occurs on tribal lands, there are several possible law enforcement officials who may respond” (p. 8). These law enforcement officials include tribal officers, Federal Bureau of Investigation officers, state police officers and Bureau of Indian Affairs officers. This confusion creates a law enforcement system that takes much longer than it should in terms of prosecution. As also noted by Bachman, “Additional problems in law enforcement are exacerbated on many tribal lands by insufficient funding, inadequate training, and victims’ lack of trust for outside authority” (p. 9), and “the unique position of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes as both sovereign and dependent creates problematic jurisdictional barriers that sometimes prohibit an effective criminal justice response to American Indian and Alaska Native victims of violence” (p. 7). Given these issues, I would assert that it is almost impossible for Native women to rely on their tribal law system to protect them in cases of domestic violence.

The second finding that has emerged from my research is the fact that this issue is not unique to Indigenous women in the United States. In fact, internationally Indigenous women of other countries face similar problems that lead to domestic violence being an extremely difficult problem to solve. In Australia, many Aboriginal women experience a “fear and distrust of police, the justice system and other government agencies; many Indigenous people experience anxiety when they are compelled to engage with police and welfare agencies” (Mitchell, 2011). Other factors that add to this issue include a fear of repercussion and consequences, a lack of awareness or access to support systems and cultural coercion to keep quiet about these situations. In Canada, the main cause of domestic violence is the low socioeconomic position that many Aboriginal peoples hold. According to Daoud (2013), 37.6% of Aboriginal household incomes are below the low income cut off in Canada (p 2). This poor socioeconomic position leads to many other problems, such as a higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse and increased risks of violence, including domestic violence (Daoud, 2013).

A third major finding that supports my thesis statement is that federal government systems are to blame for the lack of protection against intimate partner violence for Native American women. According to the United States Government Accountability Office (2010), “The Department of Justice (DOJ) has reported that the crime rates experienced by American Indians are two and a half times higher than those experienced by the general population in the United States” (p. 1). It should be noted that a 1978 Supreme Court decision prohibited Native Americans from prosecuting non-Native defendants. This Supreme Court decision greatly hindered the Native community from prosecuting a bulk of these crimes, leaving them with little to no protection. This, in turn, has negatively affected Native women who are in great need of protection from criminals both on and off the reservation. Not only have Native Americans historically had little power when it comes to prosecution, but the federal government who is supposed to do this job for them is not doing it to the best of its ability. For example, “[I]n fiscal years 2005 through 2009, USAOs resolved about 9,000 of the approximately 10,000 Indian country matters referred to their offices by filing for prosecution declining to prosecute, or administratively closing the matter. USAOs declined to prosecute 50 percent of the 9,000 matters” (United States Government Accountability Office, 2010, p. 3). If the federal government is supposed to offer protection and take care of prosecution yet is not doing this, then what system is left to do it? None.

Thankfully, a fourth finding from my research relates to efforts undertaken at the federal and state levels to fix the previously mentioned problems within law enforcement surrounding Native Americans and to give women the protection they need in terms of domestic violence. For example, on February 20th of this year, a pilot project was created to give three Native American tribes with extremely high rates of domestic violence the right to prosecute non-Native peoples in cases involving this violence. These three tribes are the Pascua Yaqui of Arizona, the Tulalip of Washington State and the Umatilla of Oregon. According to Horwitz (2014) these tribes “will be the first of the nation’s federally recognized 566 Indian tribes to exercise criminal jurisdiction over domestic and dating violence when a non-Indian man is involved.” More importantly, the Violence Against Women Act that was originally passed in 1994 has recently been reformed to offer more protection to Native women. According to the *Introduction to the Violence Against Women Act* (March 19, 2013), “[A]fter 35 years, Congress enacted a partial-Oliphant fix in Title IX of the reauthorized VAWA of 2013 to respond to crimes committed by non-Indian offenders in Indian country. Among its other provisions, Congress amended the Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) of 1968 to authorize ‘special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction’ to tribal courts over non-Indian offenders who commit (1) domestic violence, (2) dating violence, or (3) violate a protection order” (p. 1). Before this amendment to the VAWA was passed, historically, “Indian police have lacked the legal authority to arrest non-Indian men who commit acts of domestic violence against native women on reservations, and tribal courts have lacked the authority to prosecute the men” (Horwitz, 2014). Each of these improvements to law enforcement that has recently been made is extremely necessary in offering Native women the protection they need from domestic violence.

One woman who would have benefitted from these recently passed protections is Veronica Hudson from Victoria, Australia, who was sentenced to six years in jail in 2011 after stabbing her partner during one of his alcohol-induced attacks. Hudson’s story is so frightening that it alone should prove that Native women are in desperate need of protection. According to Dyett (2013), Hudson’s relationship with her partner was “appallingly violent” and Hudson

“described him as cutting [her] arms, hand, throat, pulling [her] teeth out with pliers. That he was incredibly jealous, very suspicious, always believing that [she was] having sex with any male that [she] met, including with [her] son, [her] son's friends or any male around the area, the more he drank, the worse the jealousy was" (p. 1). Although it was recognized that Veronica Hudson was suffering from severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and was remorseful about her actions, she was still sentenced to prison. It is being argued that the main reason Veronica was forced to take these extreme actions is because there are not enough support services available to Indigenous women in Australia, so women are forced to deal with the problem themselves. No woman, regardless of where she lives or what ethnicity she may be, should have to deal with this kind of treatment, and this is why protection that may be given by new pilot projects or the additions to the Violence Against Women Act are completely necessary.

Naysayer Counter-Arguments and Rebuttal

Although it may be extremely hard to discredit the importance of bills like the Violence Against Women Act, as well as the recent amendments that would assist Native American women in the U.S., one group that lobbied hard to prevent these amendments from happening included some Republican legislators serving in Congress. In fact, when the amendments to VAWA were proposed to Congress, Republicans rejected them and created their own scaled-back versions which omitted groups in need like Native Americans. A total of 138 House members voted against the bill, and not one of these members was Democratic. Republicans believed that this bill was "politically-motivated, [a] constitutionally-dubious Senate version bent on dividing women into categories by race, transgender politics and sexual preference" (Bendery, 2013) instead of its only intention being to protect women from domestic abuse.

Although Republicans were hesitant to pass the additions to the VAWA that offered protection to specific groups, including those in the LGBT community, immigrants, and Native Americans, and claimed that this act had alternative motives, I believe that my findings provide evidence that this is not the case. The new provisions of the VAWA are extremely helpful to these groups that historically suffer more from domestic violence than any other group. It especially helps Native women. According to Congress, the purpose of this bill is “to authorize Indian tribes to exercise jurisdiction over crimes of domestic violence that occur in the Indian country of that tribe” (*Introduction to the violence against women act*, 2013). It is my perspective that this power is exactly what Native women need in order to persecute those who have committed domestic violent crimes and allows for justice and protection.

Another group that has argued against the re-authorization of the VAWA and proposed amendments is RADAR (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting). According to a flyer created by RADAR, there are “Six Reasons Why VAWA is Bad for Women” (n.d.). The reasons in this flyer include the ideas that VAWA actually puts women at a greater risk of violence, promotes law enforcement politics that are too aggressive, makes it hard to find actual help when it is needed and does not promote reconciliation. RADAR believes that most cases of domestic violence are minor and can be easily fixed without law involvement, which includes obtaining a restraining order, contacting authorities and expediting prosecution efforts - all of which RADAR believes is unnecessary in most cases of domestic violence.

Despite RADAR’s opinions on the VAWA, the VAWA was created and succeeds at protecting women; it is in no way bad for them. Domestic violence is not something that should

ever be taken lightly, and it is rarely a minor situation. If all cases of domestic violence were handled in the way RADAR expects them to be handled, the violence would not stop and women would continue to live in fear while being treated in inhumane and cruel ways. RADAR believes that action such as restraining orders and police involvement are not needed because there is already enough community support to take care of domestic violence situations. However, through my research I can conclude that this is clearly not true. The VAWA is one of the only bills that offers women protection, and it is extremely helpful to all women, especially those who are at a greater risk of intimate partner violence, such as Native American women.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is my assertion that the findings presented in this research analysis serve to fully support my thesis: Discrepancies found between tribal and federal laws relating to domestic violence of Indigenous women in the U.S., Canada and Australia have resulted in violations of their human rights. Thus, these laws need to be reformed to guarantee better protection of these women. Across the different points made in this analysis, three major conclusions stand out as being the most significant. These include: that Indigenous women all over the world face a plethora of issues; that although all people may face these issues, Indigenous women have an additional barrier of not always receiving the protection they deserve; and that whether this is because of historical marginalization or because of discrimination and racism, it is a violation of human rights to not offer these women the freedom and protection they deserve. This is all especially true in regards to the issue of intimate partner violence. 39% of Native American women will be the victims of domestic violence (*Introduction to the violence against women act*, 2013), and none of these women are guaranteed justice due to fear, embarrassment and an unfair legal system. This issue is not only national. Whether these Indigenous women are from the United States, Canada, Australia or any other part of the world, they should have clear access to help and safety.

In order for these protections to be ensured, I recommend three courses of action to be taken. The first step relates to the need for the new additions to the Violence Against Women Act to be fully enforced and supported by our government. I believe this because the Violence Against Women Act was “designed to improve criminal justice and community-based responses to violence against women, including sexual violence” (*Introduction to the violence against women act*, 2013). The revisions to this bill that were added in 2013 specifically give protection to Native American women. If this bill is fully enforced and supported, then this will be the first step toward these women receiving the protection they deserve.

The second step relates to the need for tribal governments to become a more organized system that people can trust. If the problems of “insufficient funding, inadequate training, and victims’ lack of trust for outside authority” (Bachman, 2008) are eliminated from tribal governments, then cases of intimate partner violence will be dealt with and persecuted much more quickly, leading to justice for the victims.

The third and final step is that all communities, especially those where Indigenous peoples live, must create an environment that is more supportive towards intimate partner violence victims. Many Indigenous women, especially in Australia, report feeling a “fear of repercussions and consequences, particularly in small, interconnected and isolated communities where anonymity cannot be maintained” (Mitchell, 2011). If this fear is completely eliminated

from these communities, then women will be much more likely to report cases of intimate partner violence and get the help that they so desperately need. If all of these recommendations are met, then Indigenous women around the world will be much more protected against cases of intimate partner violence and will gain the human rights that they are currently missing.

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Each student in this seminar was asked to select a book, movie, or television show that he or she watched as a child and discuss its influence while drawing connections to course material. This writer offers a provocative analysis of a popular children's cartoon series and, as directed, makes loose connections among the animated show, social patterns of behavior, and the teachings of St. Francis.

Fairly Odd Lessons: How Cartoons Help Children Understand Their World

By Kelly Kyriacou

(Prof. Cheverton – “It’s Not Just Child’s Play: Childhood Social Development”)

Growing up, I was an avid fan of Saturday morning cartoons, especially those on Nickelodeon. One show that quickly became a favorite of mine was *The Fairly Odd Parents*. The show is centered on ten year-old Timmy Turner, who is neglected by his self-absorbed parents and tormented by his so-called evil babysitter, Vicky. In the pilot episode, Timmy is assigned two fairies, Cosmo and Wanda, to be his personal companions. Cosmo and Wanda explain that they are magical fairies whose job is to help lonely and unhappy children around the world by granting their every wish and enabling them to experience a happy childhood. The caveat, however, is that once the child becomes an adult, his or her memory will be wiped clean of the magic and the memories, and the fairies will be dispatched to another child in need.

For a young child, the concept of having unlimited wishes is extremely appealing and with the aid of his fairies, Timmy is able to embark on all kinds of exciting adventures. However, since children usually do not think about the consequences of getting everything they want, or the effect their wishes might have on others, chaos usually ensues after Timmy makes a wish. In every episode, Timmy finds himself in some negative situation as a result of his wishing. With the help of his fairies, he somehow always manages to resolve the crisis and learns a new, valuable life lesson. Although it is a rather simple cartoon about a young boy, there are a number of societal issues that appear in each episode. If viewers are attentive, they will recognize issues pertaining to social justice, parenting, childhood, and gender. Audiences at home are able to grow with Timmy as he learns to understand the world around him, become comfortable with the idea of leaving childhood behind, and accept that, while adulthood can be daunting, it happens to everyone and should not be feared.

Since Timmy has an unlimited supply of magical wishes, he can wish to have anything he wants at a moment's notice. These wishes allow him to acquire opportunities and luxuries that other children in *The Fairly Odd Parents'* universe do not have, which makes one question if Timmy is obligated to use his wishes for more than his own personal desires and endeavors. In

Marjorie Kelly's essay "Are You Too Rich if Others are too Poor?" she concludes, "Those with money have an obligation to care for those without" (449). According to Kelly's argument, Timmy has a moral responsibility to help others in need because he has the ability to do so by using his fairies. But this is not the case since Timmy is initially given his fairies because he is considered the child in need. Nevertheless, in the episode titled "Birthday Wish!", this needy child loans his fairies for a day to his babysitter's younger sister because she is miserable on her own birthday. Also, in the episode "Moooving Day," Timmy uses his wishes to help his mom sell houses because he notices that she is struggling with her real estate job. Although he is only a ten year-old and therefore inclined to be selfish at times, Timmy understands that he can help others by using his wishes for a greater good.

St. Francis, like writer Marjorie Kelly, was a proponent of social justice and helped those who were less fortunate. If he had been able to watch "Birthday Wish!" or "Moooving Day," St. Francis would have approved of the message sent to the television viewers. After being raised in an affluent family, allowing him essentially to have anything he desired, St. Francis rejected his family's wealth and gave up his life of privilege to serve others. Like St. Francis, Timmy is given unlimited opportunity to obtain whatever he wishes. While he does not grow to reject his fairies, Timmy learns over the course of several seasons that the world does not revolve around his needs and that he should use his fairies to help others as well. In this way, the show demonstrates how children begin to recognize problems in the world that they were blind to before and how, as they grow, selfishness evolves into selflessness.

Another lesson this show aims to teach children is that getting what you want is not always what is best for you or for the people around you. For example, as depicted in the episode "Christmas Every Day!", Timmy wishes he could celebrate Christmas daily. Unfortunately, his wish has a negative impact on the rest of the world. Since it is December 25th every day, there is a shortage of toys in the North Pole, which results in presents being taken away from children who do not have magic fairies. Timmy's fairies, as well as every fairy in Fairy World, are also left powerless because they loan their magic to Santa Claus every year on Christmas, and now that it is Christmas every day, they have no magic left. Even the adults in Timmy's hometown of Dimmesdale are affected because they can no longer work, go to the bank, or buy food from the store because everything is closed for the Christmas holiday. Timmy and his fairies have to figure out a way, without magic, to make the calendar move to December 26th in order to save everyone. Ultimately, Timmy learns that if every day is Christmas, the holiday itself becomes less special, which teaches him the value of appreciation.

As a learned value, appreciation plays a significant factor in the show, especially in the episode, "A Mile in My Shoes" when Timmy's fairies are called away to Fairy World to get their "crowns certified" and their "wands tuned up." This means that Timmy must go a full day without magic while the fairies are gone. As expected, things do not go as smoothly for him without his fairies, and when they return, Timmy is angry. In the way that most children believe their parents are able to support them and give them whatever they want with no trouble, Timmy is under the impression that being a fairy and having unlimited amounts of magic to dispense is easy. His fairies, however, claim otherwise. In order to prove to Wanda and Cosmo, who appear to be acting as his surrogate parents, that children have it tougher, Timmy wishes to be their fairy godparent. After struggling to carry out his duties as a fairy, Timmy comes to realize that being a fairy is not as easy as he originally thought, and he tells Cosmo and Wanda that he would rather be a child because he has them to make everything better. This episode teaches children

that they should treat people, especially family members, who help them with the respect and dignity they deserve.

The show also introduced gender issues to its viewers and alternative perspectives on how males and females are socialized as children. Looking back, I realize that there are some unflattering stereotypes illustrated in the cartoon. One that sticks out prominently in my memory is the way female characters are portrayed in certain episodes. In “A Wish Too Far,” a popular girl, Trixie Tang, and her cheerleader friend, Veronica, make their first appearance in the series. They both ignore Timmy until he asks his fairies to make him popular by wishing for cooler clothes to wear to school. He also wishes for a big party at his house so that he can invite all of the popular kids. As characters, Trixie and Veronica send a message to viewers that females are vapid, arrogant, and obsessed with superficial and materialistic things. This is reinforced when Trixie begins to accept Timmy only after he wishes to be popular. Another time female characters are negatively depicted is in the “Boys in the Band” episode, when Vicky is portrayed as obsessed with teen idols and mean to little children. These characters have an impact on children and socialize them into thinking of females as shallow individuals who have no redeeming qualities and who do not have to face consequences for their behavior.

However, these gender stereotypes are challenged in one particular episode. In the episode, “The Boy Who Would Be Queen,” it is Trixie’s birthday, and Timmy cannot decide on what is the perfect gift for a girl. He inadvertently wishes himself into being a girl and then uses his “girl mind” to go shopping for Trixie’s gift. While Timmy is at the mall, he stops inside a comic book store and finds Trixie, disguised as a boy, reading a comic book. She reveals that she dresses herself as a boy so that her friends do not judge her for liking “boy stuff.” As they spend the day together, Timmy and Trixie participate in typical girl and typical boy activities, such as having their hair done in a salon, playing video games at an arcade, watching soap operas, and reading comic books. Timmy begins to see Trixie as a person rather than just as a girl. By the end, Timmy is a boy again, in a hair salon without Trixie, getting his hair washed and his nails cleaned while watching wrestling on television with the other women in the salon. While the show does not go the extra mile to label Timmy and Trixie’s activities as “kids’ stuff” and continues to refer to gender-specific activities, it still challenges gender stereotypes and opens the door to alternative thinking for children as they grow and realize that males and females are not so different and that they are all just people.

As well as guiding its core fans through childhood, *The Fairly Odd Parents* also addresses a common fear of children, which is the fear of growing up. A prevalent theme throughout the series is that adulthood is bad and something to be avoided at all costs. Timmy’s parents are not portrayed as particularly good or caring people because they are either always working or going out and leaving Timmy at home with a babysitter. Vicky, who is a teenager approaching adulthood, is also seen as a bully who is mean to Timmy and finds joy in tormenting him. Even Timmy’s teacher, Mr. Crocker, is a cruel, twisted man who revels in giving Timmy failing grades every chance he gets. All of this reinforces the stereotype that all adults are out to ruin the lives of children and keep them from having fun and being happy. However, this, too, gets challenged and children eventually acquire a better understanding of what it means to be an adult.

In the made-for-TV movie, “The Fairly Odd Parents: Channel Chasers,” Timmy is punished and has his television privileges taken away. He is sick of grown-ups telling him what to do, so he wishes for a magic remote that allows him to run away through television shows and travel from channel to channel. The remote falls into Vicky’s hands, and she uses it to travel to

the “Dictator Week” channel, which enables her to become the future dictator of the world. Because of this, an adult Timmy travels back in time to find ten year-old Timmy so he can stop Vicky from reaching the “Dictator” channel. Although Timmy vows to never grow up or leave his fairies, by the end of this movie, he realizes that the adult Timmy is not so bad, and he finally accepts that one day he will grow up and have a family of his own, without Cosmo and Wanda. I think that this is a great message to send to young audiences because it portrays the succession into adulthood in a much more positive light.

Although this cartoon was initially made for entertainment purposes, I believe that it plays a significant role in shaping the lives of children. Each episode’s sequence of events leads to a new revelation for Timmy, which results in moral values being instilled in the viewers watching at home. Timmy and his fairies teach children to help, respect, and appreciate people; encourage them to find commonalities with others; and show them that adulthood is not to be feared because childhood is a natural process in life that should be welcomed with open arms.

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The students were instructed to use at least three of the texts and/or films examined in class and make an argument about the “naturalness” of sexuality and its different forms of expression. The writer deftly utilizes scholarly material and cinematic sources when questioning the binary systems associated with sexuality and the “naturalness” of heterosexuality and monogamy in western societies.

Rethinking “Natural” Human Sexuality: Hetero-Monogamy as a Man-Made Construct

By Kelly Lloyd

(Prof. Pojmann – “Masculinity, Femininity, and Sexuality in the West and the World”)

Similar to the way most societies work to construct strict social rules regarding the roles of their people based on categories such as ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and gender, societies also work to establish rules regarding sexuality in terms of sexual identification, orientation, behavior, libido, and the structure of romantic sexual relationships. The placement of these rules is based on the idea that they will help maintain social order and that without them, the collapse of society is inevitable. As one could assume, traditional western values of sexuality significantly overlap with their respective gender roles in which men are expected to take on a powerful masculine persona, having both physical and social power over the more domesticated women. In addition to having greater physical strength, financial power, superior emotional toughness, and social and political dominance, men are also assumed to be naturally more sexual than their female counterparts, who supposedly only engage in sexual activity for the purpose of conceiving children and pleasing their husbands. Beyond normalizing the assumptions of the male and female libidos, western values have long asserted the apparent naturalness of heterosexual, monogamous-style marriage, claiming any other form of sexual expression and any other structure of romantic sexual relationships to be immoral, unnatural, and an overall threat to humanity. The stigmatization of alternate sexual experiences has led to a great deal of social and emotional struggle faced by those who prefer a lifestyle different than that outlined by the standard narrative of western culture. Many societies have even gone as far as pathologizing and/or prohibiting certain forms of sexuality by law. The purpose of these rules is to maintain a certain level of stability in society, more specifically to prevent a situation in which humanity is threatened by the normalization of non-monogamy and/or homosexuality. Because of social norms, both forms of alternate sexual expression and their practice pose a threat to the growth of the human population, the apparent purpose of life itself, and are, therefore, seen as unnatural.

The terms “normal” and “natural” are often used interchangeably to describe desirable traits and behaviors of people in a specific society, though in reality the two have very different meanings that are completely independent of one another. Natural behavior is inborn rather than acquired. It is sincere and not affected by society or adopted for a special purpose, though it may be affected by biological or evolutionary processes. A social norm is very different. In fact, it can almost be considered the opposite of natural behavior, for it is defined by collective group behavior and interaction in society and is influenced by politics, religion, media, and education. Sexual norms and nature often oppose one another, as seen in Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha’s book *Sex at Dawn*. These psychologists argue that natural behavior is the product of individual experience and free will, whereas normal behavior is learned and imposed on people by an external power. It varies as a function of cultural values specific to a certain society, which is a powerful difference marked by lesbian history and literature expert Lillian Faderman in her book, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*. If behavioral standards, unlike natural behaviors, vary with time and cultural values, as can be seen in George Chauncey’s *Gay New York*, they, therefore, cannot be considered natural. People in modern society hope that time will bring more knowledge about the matter, along with greater understanding, tolerance, and acceptance within our society in order to curb the stigmatization of sexual deviants that leads to widespread emotional and social trauma for those who are outcast by society. This is shown in Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer’s documentary film *Out in the Silence* and Mary Kane’s TV movie *If These Walls Could Talk 2*.

In this paper, I will argue that natural human sexuality is not limited to an exclusive heterosexual monogamous paradigm, but rather, it is inclusive of all types of sexuality. This is because natural behavior is based on individual experience rather than socially constructed rules set to protect society, especially considering the incredible degree of variation among social norms seen throughout time and around the world. Furthermore, since sexuality is based on individual experience, there must be some variation within homogenous sexual groups, suggesting that sexuality is not dichotomous in actuality, but rather a continuous spectrum within which all its forms are equally natural. As long as one’s sexual preference or lifestyle is not a direct threat to the public (e.g., pedophilia), it should not be scrutinized by society or determine one’s normalcy or moral capacity. The standard narrative of contemporary western society implies that a heterosexual and monogamous marriage is the only natural form of human coupling and sexual expression. This rule serves to protect society and humanity as a whole by promoting the expansion of the human population as the only true natural form of human conception and relies on a male-female fertilization process (while ignoring the notion of the Virgin Mary, a story of the Christian faith to which most westerners submit, which posits the mother of Jesus Christ being impregnated without insemination). It is clear that heterosexuality, or at least the sexual behaviors associated with it, is natural, as the human being, along with most other animals and even plants that inhabit the earth, thrives on it to avoid extinction.

Monogamy, however, is not required for the perpetuation of life and is, therefore, not as clearly natural. While it serves to protect people from certain sexually transmitted diseases and infections and supposedly acts as an economic trade-off system in which females and their offspring are taken care of and provided for by the alpha-male partner who seeks regular sexual access and the ability to “spread his genetic seed” to future generations (Ryan and Jetha 49), it is not as clearly natural, at least biologically speaking, as is heterosexuality. Monogamy, at least in the eyes of western culture, is perceived as natural, for it mostly is based on issues of morality rather than any real scientific evidence. According to western values and culture, marriage is

supposed to be based on love, affection, compassion, and loyalty. One ought not to stray from his or her beloved husband or wife because a supposed lifelong commitment to that person has been made. Along with the emotional investment associated with western marriage comes the investment that men and women put into their families. Because of the nature of human conception, it is difficult to question issues of maternity; however, issues of paternity are much more of a concern. Without true monogamy, a man could be unknowingly left caring for a child who is not biologically his, expending his time and resources to raise another man's child and, therefore, propelling another man's genetic code into future generations at the expense of his own (Ryan and Jetha 56). Without monogamy, a woman could lose access to her man's resources and support, which is a potentially detrimental situation for her and her baby. According to psychologists Ryan and Jetha, people have "hankerings and aversions deeper than cultural influence, at the core of [their] animal being" (23), which implies that they act not according to the rules of so-called naturalness and morality, but rather on impulse and what serves to make them happy at any specific time. Why is it that our culture insists on promoting a lifestyle of monogamy and heterosexuality, when single pair bonding and male-female marriage is not what will bring happiness to every man or woman? This is not to say that monogamy and heterosexuality are wrong but rather that they are not "right" for everyone, as sexuality is an individual experience, and some individuals may be more attracted to a lifestyle of many partners or to one of same-sex pairing.

If a certain behavior or way of life is natural to a certain species, it can be expected that this behavior will be carried out universally across time and culture with little variation. The idea that monogamy is the only natural form of coupling, marriage, or family structure is proven wrong by societies in which the very idea of monogamy is seen as strange, or even immoral. How can something be natural to all human behavior if, in some societies, it is not even recognized as a possible way of life? Many components of both traditional and contemporary western marriage considered "natural" are anything but universal. In some societies, sexual exclusivity is not practiced, and in some instances, it is even discouraged. Various cultures around the world view sex and marriage differently than we do in the West. In fact, engaging in sexual relationships with hundreds of people is considered the norm in some cultures (Ryan and Jetha 120), whereas in others, it is custom for women to engage in sexual activity with the close friends and relatives of her spouse, or even with her own family (121). Such practices would leave a western woman stigmatized as a whore, a prostitute, a cheater, a home wrecker, or an incestuous criminal.

Despite western society's insistence on the moral necessity of staying committed to one person over the course of a lifetime, there is no creature on Earth, according to Ryan and Jetha, that is more "urgently, creatively, and constantly sexual" than the human being, both men and women alike (47). If it is true that women, by nature, are inherently uninterested in sex for reasons other than conception and pleasing her husband, like for her own satisfaction, for example, how are we to explain the clitoris- a female sex organ meant specifically to stimulate sexual pleasure in a woman? From a biological and anatomical standpoint, female eroticism is a natural fact, yet it is so widely refuted, criticized, and shamed. Women are told time and time again that any expression of sexual desire is "slutty," or wrong, or makes them impure, dirty, or unworthy of love. In some areas around the world, efforts to prevent female sexual activity even go as far as to mutilate the human body through female genital cutting in which the clitoris is removed and/or the vagina is sewn shut, thereby preventing sexual gratification on the part of the woman at best, or making it extremely painful or even impossible, at worst. It is likely that

social practices of subverting female sexual desire through genital mutilation and/or the social stratification and stigmatization of highly sexualized women (i.e. “slut shaming”) are what created the ideology behind the apparently limp female libido, rather than the other way around (Ryan and Jetha 39). If women were inherently asexual, why would we need to prevent them from engaging in sexual activity through acts like genital cutting? Why would we feel the need to keep them from engaging in sexual activity through the use of derogatory name-calling? And how, exactly, do we explain the existence of lesbian relationships if the only reason women eventually subvert to sexual coercion is for the purpose of pleasing a man or for conceiving a child?

If the reasons for engaging in sexual relationships extend beyond a woman’s “obligation” to bear children and please her husband include achieving a sense of pleasure and happiness within herself, who is to say that the sexual relationships of women are “supposed to be” with men and men only? If a woman finds more pleasure in sexual activity with other women, as opposed to men, who is to say she is wrong? In fact, as it is discussed in Lillian Faderman’s *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, romantic and sexual experiences shared by female pairs (e.g. “romantic friendships” as they were called in the mid-to-late 19th century) were once an accepted social institution among middle class women and were even encouraged, that is until these relationships began to be perceived as a threat to traditional heterosexual values. It was believed that if a woman engaged in self-pleasure, or worse, engaged in sexual activity with another woman, she would “waste her love ... and not have any to give to Prince Charming when he comes to claim his bride” (Faderman 50). It can be inferred that homosexuality was considered a matter of choice, almost as if it were a mere phase of exploration and experimentation, and that heterosexuality was still the nature of all humankind, but as Faderman puts it, “One is a lesbian if one is born a lesbian, and nothing can make a lesbian heterosexual [H]eterosexuality is ‘natural’ only to one who is born heterosexual, just as homosexuality is natural to the born lesbian” (61). In other words, one is not born heterosexual and later decides to become homosexual; an individual is born with his or her sexuality just as he or she is born with eye and skin color. People’s sexual orientation, whatever it may be, is born to them. It is an experience specific to themselves as individuals and is just as natural as that of anyone else’s, even if it may not fall in line with the views and practices of mainstream society.

George Chauncey, renowned professor of history at Yale University, took an interesting perspective on homosexuality. Though his focus was primarily on the experience of gay males in New York City before and after World War II, his model of sexuality as a more fluid and continuous spectrum, rather than the more conservative and rigid binary classification, provided new insight on the naturalness of various sexual orientations, behaviors, and experiences, which can be applied to a broader demographic of the human population. Chauncey identified various subdivisions of gay male culture in his discussion of “queers,” “fairies,” “fags,” and “trades,” to name a few. As Chauncey explained it, there appears to be varying degrees of homosexuality. For instance, a “fairy” is part of the most highly visible subgroup of gay culture, for this person deviates more than others in terms of normal male dress, speech, and overall behavior, taking on what is basically a female role in society. A “queer” is not as immediately identifiable, as this person maintains his masculine role in society, often even despising the concept of “the fairy,” yet he still identifies as gay (13). While the examples of the fairy and the queer represent variation within gay culture, the concept of a “trade” works almost as a bridge between homosexuality and heterosexuality - a grey area between the apparent dichotomous black and white paradigm of modern western sexuality. A trade was seen as a “real man,” some

embodiment of the aggressive masculine ideal, who was not homosexually interested, but who would still accept the sexual advances of a gay man (16). In this context, homosexual behavior was not seen as deviant. In fact, homosexual behavior did not necessarily make one homosexual; rather, it helped to identify a person's individual presentation of his or her sex and gender. Only if a man acted effeminately in the general social order was he considered homosexual and, therefore, deviant. These men were still regarded as normal and complete. They were not grouped with homosexuals, at least not until the second stage of cultural redefinition, when the sexual identity and the role of the "trade" virtually disappeared and a more binary system of classification based on sexual object choice rather than gender identification took place. At this time, men began to refer to anyone who encountered a homosexual experience as gay, and one would only be considered "straight" in the total absence of both homosexual interest and behavior (Chauncey 21).

The problem with the binary construction of sexuality can be seen in situations in which social environments are segregated by sex - such as females living only with other females and males living exclusively with other males, as they do in prisons and in the military. Since humans are inherently sexual beings, and in a situation where same-sex relationships are the only possible means of sexual release and gratification, it is not uncommon to see homosexual activity between heterosexual people. For men, especially, a certain level of sexual attraction and arousal is necessary prior to engaging in sexual activity; therefore, even men who are for the most part heterosexual are clearly able to be sexually aroused by other men. When I refer to "mostly" homosexual or heterosexual men and women, I am referring to American biologist, zoologist, and sexologist Alfred Kinsey's research on sexuality during the 1940s and 1950s, which suggests that sexual orientation is a continuous spectrum with men and women falling somewhere in the middle. Kinsey made a number of shocking conclusions about the natural fluidity of sexuality that directly refuted the restrictive binary paradigm that still exists today. Kinsey created a scale ranging from 0 to 6 with 0 representing pure heterosexuality and 6 representing pure homosexuality, and anything in between was a combination of the two. A person either identified more with one group over another, or equally with both, and, thus, he or she was identified as a 3. According to his study, 11.6% of white males between the ages of 20 and 35 were given a rating of 3 for this period of their lives, identifying equally with heterosexual and homosexual interests, and 37% of all men interviewed had a homosexual experience leading to orgasm (Kinsey). The study also reported that 10% of American males surveyed were "more or less exclusively homosexual [identified as a 5 or 6] for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55," yet only 4% had had strictly homosexual experiences throughout their lifetimes (Kinsey).

How is it that if as many as 37% of all men ranging from 0 to 6 on the Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale admit to intense homosexual arousal to the point of orgasm, and if 10% of the male population is exclusively gay, though only 4% lack heterosexual experience, we are still stratifying sexual orientation into two extreme categories and pathologizing or stigmatizing those who admittedly fall into anything other than pure heterosexuality? The reality is that people do not fall into just two categories of "gay" and "straight," or even three if you include "bisexuality" as a category of sexual orientation. Sexuality exists on a continuum in which there are certainly people on opposite ends, identifying as strictly heterosexual or homosexual, but with many more falling somewhere in between the two. This implies an equal degree of naturalness at all levels of the spectrum since no overwhelming majority exists at any one point. Unfortunately, refusing to see the fluid spectrum of sexuality as normal has dire consequences for many people in society.

The films *Out in the Silence*, directed by Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson, and *If These Walls Could Talk 2*, directed by Mary Kane, explore the social and political struggles faced by homosexuals in western society. *Out in the Silence* tells the story of a young high school boy, by the name of CJ, struggling to fit in after “coming out” to his peers. While CJ was by no means a “fairy,” he became tired of hiding who he truly was and made the decision to risk social stability in a trade-off for emotional relief. What he found, instead, was the harsh reality of the discrimination faced by gays in his rural Pennsylvania town. He constantly was verbally harassed and physically assaulted by his classmates, and these abuses were ignored by the school’s administration, whose main purpose is to look out for the well-being of its students and to ensure a safe environment. According to CJ’s mother, the stress and emotional pain that came with the ostracism left him suicidal by the time he turned 16.

Unfortunately, CJ’s experience is not uncommon. In addition to the social and emotional traumatic struggles faced by gays in western culture, there is a longstanding history of political injustice faced by men and women of homosexual orientation. According to Chauncey, the sexual revolution of the 1920’s and early 1930’s brought growth and visibility to the gay subculture of New York, resulting in a strong cultural reaction in the mid to late 1930’s. New repressive anti-gay legislation began to come into play as anxiety about homosexuals and hostility toward them grew during the era of the Great Depression, promoting a broader crack down on cultural experimentation at the time (9). At first, the subversion of gay culture was characterized mostly by suppression of drag balls, homosexual images in the film industry, and refusal to employ or even serve gays in restaurants, clubs, and bars - some of the most frequent meeting places for gays in metropolitan areas (8). This pattern of oppression is strikingly similar to that of racial segregation faced by blacks during the same period of American history, and while segregation has eased somewhat, even today there are laws restricting homosexuals’ marital rights.

The film *If These Walls Could Talk 2* shows an elderly lesbian couple who have been romantically involved for most of their lives, yet they are unable to officially declare themselves as a married couple due to the fact that same-sex marriage was universally prohibited in the United States at the time. Because of their unofficial marital status and following the death of her beloved partner, one of the women was denied the right to the home in which she had lived with her lover and helped to finance for many years. She also was robbed of many of her partner’s valuables, even those which she had paid for as gifts, on account that she did not have the legal right to inherit her lover’s property following her death. This is just one issue that married straight couples do not have to be concerned about. In many areas of the United States, gay marriage is not recognized, for it is seen as a threat to the Christian value of the sanctity of marriage. The problem with that argument lies in the fact that the United States does not have an official national religion, and given the Constitution’s First Amendment, which guarantees the freedom of religion, there is a separation of church and state. How is it that we, as Americans, who claim to embrace and promote “freedom for all,” justify a political policy that discriminates against the gay demographic and robs people of their freedom by claiming, in the name of Christianity, that their chosen way of life is “unnatural” when Christianity, like all other religions, is, in itself, a man-made construct and therefore has no authority to decide the naturalness of anything?

While the films mentioned above do not reflect the hardships faced by those who prefer a non-monogamous style of marriage, it can be assumed that this specific population of people would face similar social, emotional, and political difficulty in western society. People of most,

if not all, societies seem to have some sort of psychological need to set rules regarding the personal lives of their members. They feel the need to stratify nearly every aspect of human life into a binary system of right and wrong, of moral and immoral, and of natural and unnatural. The problem here is that social expectations vary across culture and time and, therefore, are not the equivalent of nature. Rather, at least in terms of sexuality, what is truly natural behavior is determined by the individual, not the group. It is unfair and downright wrong to restrict natural human sexuality to a paradigm characterized strictly by heterosexual monogamous style relationships when, in reality, this type of relationship is seen as the norm in only certain societies. As Kinsey demonstrated, even that assumption is a stretch. If sexuality is the product of individualism, it is morally wrong to deny individuals or groups social acceptance and political equality. *Everyone* is different in this aspect of their lives, and no one group is superior. Because there are no real rigid homogenous groups but rather a continuum of varying individual experiences and preferences, it would be wrong to assume any one sexual lifestyle, like those of most western-style monogamist heterosexual relationships, is any more natural or morally correct than another.

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In response to the same assignment regarding the “naturalness” of sexuality and its different forms of expression, this student develops a sound argument about the social construction of sexuality through her fastidious use of material extracted from monographs and film sources.

Cultural and Societal Influences on Sexuality

By Heather McAllister

(Prof. Pojmann – “Masculinity, Femininity, and Sexuality in the West and the World”)

Sex is everywhere nowadays. You would be hard pressed to flip through a magazine, listen to music, or watch television without seeing or hearing something sexual. All over America, people are constantly trying to push the envelope, from Miley Cyrus twerking with little people, to high fashion brands putting out ads resembling gang rape; nothing, it seems, is off limits. But, after taking a closer look, it seems these ads and displays of sexuality that are supposedly new and exciting, are all very much the same. They all feature scantily clad couples and romantic notions, but they consist of strictly heterosexual couples. This seems strange, for homosexuality is not exactly a new thing, as historians can attest. Homosexuality has been around for thousands of years, much to the surprise of the average American. Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer, directors and producers of *Out in the Silence*, as well as Mary Kane, who directed *If These Walls Could Talk 2*, directly address the issue of sexual discrimination and biases. Lillian Faderman, author of *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*, and George Chauncey, author of *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, detail the history of homosexuals in America, highlighting their natural existence and their gradual acceptance by American society. It is clear from this evidence that no form of sexuality is strictly natural, as all forms of sexuality have all been culturally influenced and constructed.

First, before deciding what is natural and what is not, it is imperative to define what being natural even means. There are two ways in which people associate nature with sexuality that are considered with high regard, essentialism and social constructionism. Essentialists believe that one is born with his or her sexuality predetermined, and from birth one is either homosexual or heterosexual (Faderman 8). This idea lends itself to the notion that sexuality is just as natural and random as the color of one’s eyes or the texture of one’s hair. Contradicting this idea are the social constructionists “who believe that certain social conditions were necessary before ‘the lesbian’” or any other non-heterosexual sexuality, “could emerge as a social entity” (Faderman 8). In other words, homosexuality required specific social circumstances for it to be established and for it to thrive. Many renowned scholars agree with the social constructionists view, including Lillian Faderman and George Chauncey. According to Faderman, “urbanization and its relative anonymity and population abundance were essential” to the rise of homosexuality (8).

The cultural norm of keeping one's private life private, led to the rise of homosexuality and gay subcultures. This is no surprise when one considers the complex subculture of gay men in New York City, and how it was only possible because of the city's dense population. Faderman suggests in her work that women faced more obstacles with lesbianism because they needed a certain amount of "leisure and some degree of social privacy" (38). These requirements are easily attainable now, but less so before the 20th century as women of lower and middle classes had many household duties to attend to. The lack of free time prevented the prevalence of lesbianism until the early 20th century, when women began to acquire jobs outside the home, allowing them independence from their family and men. Thus, Faderman and Chauncey demonstrate that the possibility of a homosexual lifestyle "had to be socially constructed in order for [people] to be able to choose such a life" (Faderman 9). Without social constructs, like women being allowed to work and gain independence, or urbanization's anonymity, homosexuality would not be as popular and widespread as it is today. Therefore, it is clear that homosexuality is culturally constructed, as its very existence is dependent on society.

Notions about sexuality have recently become ambiguous due to changes in the common understanding of the word nature. The definition has been distorted by modern day Americans to mean whether or not something is socially acceptable or moral. Therefore, when homosexuals claim that their sexuality is natural, they do not mean it is completely free of cultural influences; instead, they are arguing that homosexuality is morally acceptable. Such a perspective causes disputes between homosexuals claiming to be gay from birth in order to attain equality with heterosexuals and with right-wing conservatives complaining of the supposed unnaturalness of the homosexual because they believe it goes against their morals. This confusion between natural and unnatural sex has led to sexologists and psychologists pathologizing homosexuals throughout history. Homosexuals were diagnosed as psychologically abnormal or unhealthy because of their sexual preferences. Sexologists who first "discovered" lesbianism claimed that "lesbians were abnormal or sick" (Faderman 3). Before the twentieth century lesbians were considered "rare women who behaved immorally" (Faderman 2). Women were hospitalized ostensibly due to "hysteria and bizarre behavior" but really because they were lesbians (Faderman 41). One young lesbian was even committed to a psychiatric facility, as if she were schizophrenic or bipolar. We are left wondering, why are people, specifically men, going to such great lengths in order to categorize and condemn homosexuals? Lesbians were initially called "female sexual inverts" by early sexologists, again insisting that lesbians were psychologically damaged or abnormal (Faderman 39). According to Chauncey, "[P]olice, doctors, and private investigators alike generally used technical terms such as invert, pervert, [and] degenerate" when referring to gay people (14).

All of this causes the dehumanization of non-heterosexuals; gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people are all treated like second class citizens because of their sexual preferences. It was a popular belief of early psychologists in the late nineteenth century that homosexuals "were only born to the parents of the degenerate class who themselves lacked the appropriate 'strong sex characteristics'" (Faderman 40). Though it is not true that homosexuals or their families are lesser than heterosexuals in any way, this knowledge did not stop men from becoming "afraid...they would be labeled gay themselves" if seen being too friendly with other men (Chauncey 22). This fear of being ostracized created and has perpetuated homophobia and encouraged the false idea that heterosexuality is natural and homosexuality is unnatural.

Complicating the matter, the idea of homosexuality has evolved markedly over time. Since its creation by early sexologists, in an attempt to name a trend of abnormal gender

behavior, the label of homosexual has transformed from a one way ticket to the psychiatric ward, to a frequently accepted lifestyle choice. Lesbianism started out being described as “romantic friendships” and was thought of as something noble and beautiful (Faderman 1). Those relationships were not what modern day America would consider lesbian relationships, as the women who engaged in them were still encouraged to pursue men, and there was perceived to be no sexual contact between the two women. In fact, the very thought of two women touching each other in such a way was considered inappropriate. But this was not an issue for many women since lesbianism was nearly impossible before the 20th century. Back then, it was practically unfeasible for women to be financially independent given that most women did not work and those who were hired hardly received equal wages because of their sex. Therefore, lesbianism, as it is understood today, was not an option. Those who were determined to live separate from their male counterparts had to first “seek ways to become an economically and socially independent human being” (Faderman 3). These women who pursued a life free of men began the development of lesbianism, as defined by early sexologists. Some scholars, such as Lillian Faderman, go as far as to insist that “the concept of lesbian barely existed” before the 20th century (Faderman 2). This is not because there were no homosexual relationships among women, but because the term lesbian is “culturally constructed” as renowned philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler would say. Therefore it is nothing more than what we assign to it (6). Chauncey suggests that homosexuals have always been present, even bold about their existence, more so in the past, than now. He argues that gay men were “forced into hiding in the 1930s, ‘40s, and 50s” (Chauncey 8). Homosexual men created an entire gay subculture pre-World War II, with “its own language and customs” that heterosexuals were completely oblivious to (Chauncey 1). Homosexuality, for both men and women, began as a cultural phenomenon and is therefore neither natural nor unnatural.

For many people, one’s sexuality is a choice, and the idea of nature has been wrongly applied to it due to misinformation and ignorance. Saying that differing sexual preferences are not wholly natural, however, does not mean that being homosexual is wrong in any way. On the contrary, it is perfectly acceptable and allows for a more diverse and beautiful world. Early essentialists will disagree about the lack of involvement of nature in one’s sexuality, though it has been disproved by many well-known sexologists and philosophers. Many Americans claim the existence of a “natural sexuality” to fortify their own false arguments used to condemn homosexuality. Forcing homosexual Americans to claim that they are in fact natural creates an endless cycle of falsities. Those who are gay say it is natural, that they were born this way, though researchers have proven that many of those who claimed “born gay” status were not. When asked to elaborate on their earliest knowledge of their sexuality, they cited sexual events and feelings, things that occurred well after birth during childhood. A small number surveyed did fit the “born gay” box. This argument about what is sexually natural spurred radical anti-gay activists to claim that homosexuality was unnatural, and that people who practiced such a lifestyle were not going against nature, but against God and morality. But when sexual preference is a personal choice, something influenced by so many factors, such as family, friends, societal norms, geographical location, and personal opinion—none of which have anything to do with nature—this argument of unnatural sex has no standing. Consequently, this begs the question: Do we become a heterosexual “under a cultural compulsion to become one,” if heterosexuality is not natural? (Butler 8). To a certain extent, people are heavily influenced by culture to choose an appropriate sexuality, causing many to be heterosexual not because of nature, but because of social norms.

I personally have witnessed very positive opinions of gay and lesbians. My high school, a Quaker institution, was extremely open regarding sexuality. I had numerous gay and lesbian friends and teachers, and not one was ever made to feel uncomfortable or unnatural. Yet, this is the exception. There are numerous reports of bullying and violence targeting gay teens in American schools. In just the past few years, countless gay teens have felt so isolated that they have taken their own lives. As witnessed in *Out in the Silence*, directed by Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer, being gay is still looked down upon in certain geographical locations. The documentary showed how many parts of the country are still paralyzed by this fear of difference and by a person's choice to love someone who is not the opposite sex. The subject of homosexuality has become even more controversial and polarizing as gays and lesbians enter pop-culture and the media. Commercials featuring gay and lesbian couples have become less rare, though they still receive some outcry from radical anti-gay activists. But Faderman reports that "there are enough positive public images of the lesbian now and enough diverse communities so that lesbians are assured that they are at least as healthy as the heterosexual woman" (Faderman 5). Ellen DeGeneres, who once hid her sexuality from the world, is now able to celebrate her union with her partner, Portia De Rossi, on live television and be applauded for it. The same thing has occurred with gay men, as television shows such as *Glee* and *Modern Family* have risen in popularity, and homosexuals have finally been allowed to demonstrate the normalcy of their lives and the similarities they share with heterosexuals. We are finally coming to a time when we can see that different forms of sexuality are not strange or morbid, but perfectly healthy and acceptable. And while some of us are still struggling with our demons, there has been immense progress already made, from recognizing the wrongness in pathologizing homosexuals to praising their difference. Fortunately, there is hope that one day American society will all be as accepting as my little Quaker school.

With so much sexual content constantly being shown to us, it is difficult to discern what is right, or what is natural, or what is a distortion of reality. Arguably, no form of sexuality is strictly natural as all forms of sexuality have been culturally influenced and constructed. According to essentialists, "[T]here have always been [homosexuals] in the past just as there are [homosexuals] today" (Faderman 8). While I do not disagree with the existence of homosexuals both in the past and present, it is necessary to highlight the rapid increase in numbers as it became more socially accepted. And while we are not yet at a place where homosexuals and heterosexuals can live in complete harmony, I believe we are well on our way to becoming a more tolerant and open-minded world so long as we understand and acknowledge that neither sexuality is wrong.

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In response to an assignment that required the students to attend an on-campus event and to frame an analysis of it around a class reading, the author of this essay asserts a connection between a popular social event on campus and the ideas expressed in Stephen Covey's bestselling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Note the student's skillful use of the rhetorical moves suggested in FYS's adopted writing guide, *They Say / I Say*, particularly his integration of textual evidence and his use of signal phrases.

The Truth About Bingo

By Daniel Scoreta
(Prof. Redkey – “Leadership”)

When people hear the word “bingo,” their first thought is that it is just the game that elderly people in retirement homes play. It is meant to be a harmless stress-release for those who enjoy playing it. However, the key difference in Siena's bingo night is that there is intense competition for the spoils of winning. Taking a look at bingo from this perspective makes one wonder how such a simple and innocent game could be expressed in a form that does more harm than good. In Stephen Covey's terms, the main problem with the way bingo is run at Siena is that it encourages the “Win/Lose” paradigm of human interaction.

First, the way in which Siena facilitates “Win/Lose” bingo is with its typical organization of the event. There is usually a gathering of over two hundred people, and each person is given one bingo card to use. All of the prizes are in the very front of the room, and they are clearly made to be the primary influence for the whole event. This is the vital mistake that Siena makes, as this encourages the wrong play style and motivation. Covey describes “Win/Lose” with the brief description, “If I win, you lose” (207). What Covey really means by this is that there is only one winner, while every other player loses. Of course there is no way for you to win the flat screen television that the girl across the room won ten minutes ago, and because these prizes are set up as the goal, if you have not won it, then you, without a doubt, have lost. This set up proves to be very detrimental to Siena's bingo night as a whole. You only need a few visits to this event to get a feel for what is going on. There are numerous times where a hint of animosity is in the air from individuals who are angry about their failure to win something and about others who have won. The fact that Siena stresses the material objects during bingo ultimately leads to the downfall of its purpose. Covey explains this well with his words, “[T]he Win/Lose mentality is dysfunctional to . . . cooperation” (209). What Covey means by this is that the “Win/Lose” mentality absolutely eliminates any chance of working together. Overall, it seems that the main goal of bingo then should be to help students bond, rather than segregate them into victory driven cells.

The subsequent step would then be to think about the solution to Siena's bingo catastrophe. The way Siena frames bingo is the true mistake, rather than the bingo night itself.

Siena presents the idea of bingo as a material-driven game facilitated by the “Win/Lose” mentality. The key to solving this problem is also located within the paradigms of human interaction, but within a different paradigm known as the “Win/Win” mentality. Covey describes the “Win/Win” model as “a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions” (207). Covey stresses that in order to achieve Win/Win, every individual must have the intention of mutually assured victory. Siena needs to encourage this type of thinking in its bingo night, as opposed to the present “Win/Lose” mentality. The college can do this easily with merely a reframing of the end goal. For example, if Siena stressed that bingo night is merely a tool to keep the students occupied and entertained and served as a stress release from a busy work week, it would have much greater impacts on the student community as a whole. What I mean by this is that if every student went in thinking that this event is something fun to do that lets them take a break from school work in a stress-free environment, as opposed to the current idea of it being a heated, stressful competition for material prizes, it would do the community a lot more good. Covey supports this by saying in “a Win/Win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan” (207). If Siena stressed the greater good of bingo, all students participating would realize they are winning in the long run, instead of believing they have lost in the short run. Moreover, the “Win/Win” mentality coincides with Siena’s Franciscan values which are lacking in Siena’s current bingo nights. In all, it is abundantly clear that the “Win/Win” mentality is the most effective paradigm and that all events that utilize this framing are the ones that have the greatest impact on the community at large, keeping everyone satisfied.

Work Cited

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Referring to at least two assigned readings, the students in this section were asked to write a response to the following question: What is the effect of warfare upon the environment and what may be the reasons for this ecological crisis? Strong topic sentences and transitional phrases help to clarify the writer's points as he skillfully presents and analyzes class material.

The Deterioration of the Environment Stems from Human Nature

By Saarang Singh

(Prof. M. Woolbright – “War”)

The effect of human behavior upon planet Earth is profound. What was once a planet teeming with lush forests and pure resources has become an abused and congested breeding ground for greenhouse gases and toxins. All of this is the fault of humans and our efforts to embark on the advancement of civilization through the centuries. One specific example is the environmental destruction that war has brought. However, the exponential deterioration of the natural world is not rooted in war, but rather in human nature. As humans, our instinctual recognition of the dominance and ease of control over what is around us, combined with our resistance to change until faced with personal and immediate danger, have led to the abuse and ultimate decay of the earth's environment. It is through certain vectors like religion and war when this human nature and the impending danger that we are shaping our own demise become apparent.

When humans are presented with a sense of authority, it is through our instinct and human nature to use this authority to its limit and ultimately to abuse it. Humans have a consistent habit of asserting a great deal of dominance over what we perceive as “only ours.” What helps prove that this is human nature is the fact that this has been evident for a long time. For example, in the article “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,” Lynn White argues that the damage cause by humans toward the environment is because of Christianity. He states, “Christianity insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (White 4) and suggests that in earlier years, humans took the sense of security and sense of control that Christianity seemed to provide and continued to do what they pleased. They performed actions which seemed to be justified as acts of God but rather were abusing the protection they were given, or felt they were entitled to, as followers of one of the world's most popular religions. Such actions and behavior have led to the destruction of the natural world as humans exercised this exploitation of nature far beyond what one would imagine God had intended. We have destroyed habitats and exhausted the earth of fragile resources for personal gain without any initial thought of regret.

This idea carries on through humans' confrontation with the environment during war. Like the confidence felt by followers of Christianity that stemmed from the religion's early dominance in some of the world's biggest empires and countries, the prominence of a strong military causes humans to show our instinctual nature for abusing power. All great militaries have caused major destruction to the planet, but it is often justified and overlooked because of the power of that militaristic force. Rather than sticking to normal weaponry when fighting wars, humans have now abused the resources of earth and concocted weapons that cause not only an increase in casualties, but also destroy the environment completely beyond any point of becoming habitable again. During World War II, Germany's and the United States' armed forces used flamethrowers to burn down regions and expel enemy forces. The damage of this weapon was drastic, but its use seemed justified in the eyes of its users when the enemy was pushed back or terminated. Essentially, the effects of using such a devastating weapon were overshadowed by the success of humans' personal goals, regardless of the fact that the environment was taking an obvious toll in the process. This can simply be rooted in the fact that humans have always pushed the limits of our dominance to a point of abuse. In this case of this current situation, however, it is the environment taking the toll.

Throughout modern warfare, humans have shown this mentality quite strongly, as it is depicted in *The Green Zone* by Barry Sanders. For example, Sanders shares that within the first two days of the United States' attack upon Iraq, it dropped 800 tomahawk cruise missiles. He adds, "800 bombs multiplied by 80 pounds of depleted uranium equal 640,000 pounds, or 320 tons of radioactive waste dumped on that country *in just the first two days of devastation*" (Sanders 83). At the time of this, however, citizens were not very focused upon the devastation of the environment, but the focus was much more upon the tactical significance of this "Shock and Awe" attack. Only after the damage was done did someone point out the obvious that we so quickly overlooked before. It seems that through war, human nature intervenes, and our ignorance toward reasoning or rationality yields the abuse of whatever we please.

Although there is much to suggest that instinctual human nature may be the root of why things like war are destroying the environment so harshly, some may argue that many people do not believe in the advancement of humanity through war or religion and instead believe in the conservation of our environment at all costs. Thus, human nature cannot be a possible conclusion for this occurrence. However, more often than not, people do not suggest these things without a clear initiative. Without the rising levels of greenhouse gases and the impending danger of pollution, there would not be a plethora of activists supporting a cleaner environment. Without a clear and impending danger or some sort of incentive, the initial action by someone derives from their own human nature. One can look to St. Francis of Assisi for an example of this. Had he not gone through war and spent a year in solitude, he most likely never would have become a saint who preached morals and values far different from what he previously had lived by.

Essentially, this all points to there being another underlying aspect of human nature involved with why the state of the environment has become what it is now. This underlying aspect is our resistance to change. Our habit of continuing to do what we want derives from an instinctual aspect of our human nature altogether. Had this not been part of our human nature, we most likely would have changed our lifestyles much sooner and much more drastically than we have in recent history. Ultimately, this suggests that until we are faced with an obvious reason to act differently, humans will continue to act how we please, which consists of a lifestyle pursuing personal gain regardless of the effects of our actions.

One of the consequences of humans abusing our power over the natural world is that the damages have eclipsed possible reconstruction efforts and abilities. The environment has been affected so drastically by humans over the years that our own safety is now in jeopardy. While warning signs may have arisen, humans continue to live in whatever ways that we find comfortable and enriching, rather than compromising certain aspects of our lifestyles to sustain the natural world's purity. Even though efforts are being made to change the factors that may have caused this, the reality remains that our instinctual actions have already made the lasting effects of causing the irreversible deterioration of the natural world.

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For this assignment, students were asked to generate a thesis-driven analysis using at least two of the sources read for class as support. The following essay explores the restrictive rules placed upon women and the rule-breakers who are catalysts for social change.

Ladies, it is Time to Break the Rules

By Courtney Tomeny

(Prof. Haas – “Women: Their Voices, Their Values, Their Vision”)

Societal rules have often dictated how women are supposed to act in order to be considered respectable, proper women. Some women quickly fall into step with these rules that society has placed upon them, whereas other women have broken the mold and made their own rules, their own way. After centuries of oppression, women are no longer content to sit idly by and let their lives be decided for them; they are ready to decide their own fate. It is crucial for a woman to recognize the need to be her own person, even if it means breaking the rules of society.

One of society’s many rules governing women is the standard of beauty they are expected to achieve. They are told how they are supposed to look and dress without ever questioning it. If women stray from this ideal image of beauty, then they are considered unattractive or unfeminine. Susan Douglas, author of The Rise of Enlightened Sexism, rejects the idea that women should conform to the media’s view of the ideal woman. Douglas establishes the idea that these standards, these rules, exist when she says that “girls are supposed to conform to preexisting (mostly male) standards of beauty and behavior, to comply, to obey” (Douglas 53). In order to be considered beautiful in society, women are supposed to be skinny, have long legs and disproportionately large breasts. When opening a magazine, people are bombarded with images of photo-shopped models and told that this is the only way for women to be considered attractive. Douglas elaborates on this physical standard for women when she writes, “Today, young women are not supposed to desire either the bodies of Marilyn Monroe (too zaftig) or Audrey Hepburn (too flat-chested), but an impossible melding of the two, in which the ideal body type is, well, the body of a lanky twelve-year-old boy with Pamela Anderson’s breasts attached” (Douglas 217). Douglas aptly uses the word “impossible” to describe how women are supposed to look, according to society and its “rules”.

This unrealistic ideal about how women should look is a problem for everyone because as more and more women try to achieve this impossible standard, their health is deteriorating rapidly. Anorexia and bulimia are on the rise as countless women try to mold their bodies into what they are told is beautiful, even if their body types are not capable of it. The rule for being beautiful is harmful and taking away from women’s individuality, so there is no just reason for

its existence. Douglas also describes the women who have rejected these impossible standards - the feminists who have broken the rules. Not all women feel the need to conform to society's ideals and are, indeed, content with their own appearance. More and more women have thrown off the barriers, or the corsets, keeping them from equality and have gladly accepted the feared f-word (feminism) to describe themselves. Douglas is quite outspoken and, therefore, breaking the rules herself, as she pushes women to eat a meal without counting calories and to be who they want to be, not who they are told to be.

Another rule that has been crafted by society is that women should let men control them and have no say in their own lives. Whether it is a father or a husband, women are supposed to allow the men in their lives make decisions for them. Although it has gotten better with time, women are still expected to do as they are told, without question, but this is never how it should be. St. Clare of Assisi was a rule breaker herself. Sr. Margaret Carney, an expert on St. Clare, discusses Clare's life and her sacrifices to serve God by explaining that "any woman who tries will pay a great price...to break with her family's expectation is a form of social suicide. She will risk everything-reputation, physical safety, the primal bonds of daughter, sister-to be part of this Christian adventure" (Carney 32). Clare went against everything that she had been told, everything that she knew, to pursue what she truly valued, and now she is known as St. Clare. She broke the rules of her day when women did what they were told without question, and she never looked back. She is the embodiment of Douglas' idea of a strong, independent woman who can think and act for herself; as such, Clare provides the perfect example of how women need to take their destinies into their own hands. Looking at Clare, we see that sometimes women need to reject what they know and make their own decisions, even if it is social suicide. Fathers and husbands do not possess all the answers, so women must decide what is right for themselves. They should be in charge of their own fate, even if it means disregarding the rules that society has foisted upon them. From the powerful Doctor Bailey, who commands the screen on a popular television program because she does not care about what others might say, to Hillary Clinton, a woman who ran for the United States Presidency, women are refusing to be controlled.

Society's rules for women are endless, and one of the most prevalent is the idea that women should be good wives and mothers, sacrificing their careers and economic equality with men as a result. Society has this view that if a woman is in a position of power, then she must be neglecting her husband or her children. This idea is wrong because it oversimplifies everything. There are cases where families are neglected for careers, but one does not necessarily impact the other. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is a well-known historical figure who fought for women's rights. The extent to which she fought, however, is oftentimes overlooked, and so is the fact that she did this all while maintaining a family. In *The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments*, Stanton mimics the Declaration of Independence to show the utter hypocrisy of the American government - a government that says men must fight for freedom and democracy yet neglects to grant women their freedom, thus negating the possibility of true democracy. Stanton has no qualms about pointing out the countless injustices women have suffered: "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman...[H]e has compelled her to submit to law in the formation of which she had no voice" (Stanton 1-2). Time and time again, women have been told what is expected of them, without ever having a say in their own lives. Stanton most certainly broke the rules when she completely disregarded the idea that she should be happy and content with what she had and instead wrote this scorching declaration, documenting all of the wrongs done upon women through the years.

Stanton was adamant in her desire for equality, and she did not care what stood in her way. She threw off the rules of her time when, instead of only marrying and birthing countless children with a permanently affixed smile upon her face, she had a family *and* took one of the most prestigious documents in the history of America and threw it back into the faces of her male compatriots. Regardless of the repercussions, she broke the rules and pursued her own life, something that women need to continue to do. The notion that women cannot have both a family and a successful career is simply wrong. One must only look so far as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who managed to be a mother, wife, and a women's rights leader. Women do not need to sacrifice their careers to raise their children or keep their husbands happy. Their priority should be their own happiness, and if achieving that happiness means breaking the rules of society, then so be it.

For some people, the idea of women breaking the rules and achieving equality might not seem important, but it most certainly is. Women are just as capable as men are and could help to improve the world, if given the equal opportunity. If women were not expected to quit their jobs to care for their families, then they could be working to find a cure for cancer or solving the economic problems that always seem to plaguing the United States. Women are intelligent, capable beings, and it should not just be women who desire equality for themselves; men could gain just as much as women if the rules of society were to dissolve.

Susan Douglas, St. Clare, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are all women who sought a change in their own lives as well as for the world, and they went after it, no matter how many shocked gasps were heard around them. With no regard for what people might think of them, these women broke the rules and became the feminists that are still talked about today. True equality is still a far-off reality for women, but with the continued actions of women who followed and are following in the footsteps of Stanton, Clare and Douglas, women are that much closer. More women need to throw off the metaphorical chains that oppress them and become the women that they want to be, regardless of the dirty looks. It is time women rip up the magazines that criticize a perfectly healthy body and ignore the celebrities that tell them they need a man to be happy. So break the rules and have some fun, ladies!

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This writer tackles the topics of women in the military filling combat roles and women being subjected to the draft. Note how the author anticipates and addresses plausible counterarguments surrounding these controversial issues.

Distinction and Destruction for Women in the Military

By Olivia Westwood
(Prof. M. Woolbright – “War”)

There is much controversy in the military relating to the involvement of women in direct combat roles and relating to the draft. Personally, I believe the two are very different scenarios and, therefore, should be looked at and analyzed separately. The principle issue is that “equal does not mean the same.” The women already in the military chose their lifestyle and shouldn’t be held back because of their gender or because of male dominance within the service. However, if women were to be drafted, they would suffer because they are not genetically the same as men and shouldn’t be treated as such.

Women who enlist in the military choose to go, and that’s why equality in the sense of direct combat is important because they are choosing that way of life. If women enlist in the military, they should be allowed in combat because they have earned it and deserve the same treatment. These women are prepared and undeterred by the consequences, and I do not believe it is anyone’s place to decide what is and what is not too dangerous for them. In Band of Sisters by Kirsten Holmstedt, women in the military were interviewed about their experiences. These women make it quite clear that for those who join the military, they can handle the situations that are thrown at them. After following the stories of many women in the military, Holmstedt concluded that all of “[t]hese women warriors insist that they are no different from their male counterparts and they don’t want to be treated as such. They shrug off the idea that the torture they might endure as a POW would be greater than what a male would suffer” (Holmstedt xxii). The torture argument is extremely popular among those who do not believe in allowing women to fight in combat; however, these women are unfazed and do all they can to prove that they belong in these positions and are capable of the same achievements as men.

I believe that the controversy surrounding direct combat for women stems from the superiority complex of men. When women participate in direct combat, they rise to the same tier as men. Because of this step, women do not have such a hard time integrating into the male community, and they earn respect much easier as more and more women fill direct combat roles. This is true because as women prove their capabilities to their leaders and fellow troops, it becomes easier for those men to become more accepting of other women who join the military.

So, as more women join the military and fight to their potential, it paves an easier path for others who will follow in their footsteps.

Although gender gaps in our society have narrowed, they still exist in many aspects of our lives, especially regarding the military. In the essay “White Privilege and Male Privilege,” Peggy McIntosh declares, “Virtually all men deny that male overreward alone can explain men’s centrality in all the inner sanctums of our most powerful institutions” (72). The military is one of the institutions. Women are constantly trying to gain respect in the military, and these efforts would not be so challenging if they were men. However, men will deny that this is the case. They proclaim that everyone has to earn it and that the reason men are in top positions is because they worked their way up. If everyone has to gain respect, and women already have, then why are they still being questioned about combat roles and held back because of their gender? In Band of Sisters, Holmstedt told the story of Army Captain Robin Brown, who was flying a Kiowa helicopter and was shot down. Her co-pilot Chief Warrant Officer Two Jeff Summer already had a close relationship with Brown before the fall; however, afterward he felt “a new and intense relationship with his co-pilot that one would typically associate with a sibling” (42). If more male soldiers went through life or death scenarios with female soldiers and realized that women are just as capable of staying calm and taking care of a deadly situation, they would learn to trust and respect women more in the future, just like Summer. However, the reason that women are still not being accepted in these roles is that since they are permitted in direct combat, the gap between men and women is narrowing, upsetting the superiority of men. Since then, respect and regard are slowly being shown to women. Also, because women couldn’t participate in direct combat, men had another reason to resent them, making it even harder for women to “earn their stripes.” With these certain barriers crumbling, there is no doubt that women should be accepted into the roles they deserve. All in all, I believe that women have proven that they are ready for direct combat, and that it is only male privilege questioning and preventing them from gaining more prestige and authoritative positions in the military.

However, the draft is something entirely different. Even though forcing men into the draft is undesirable for our society, including women in this equation would be detrimental. Not only would a generation be wiped out, but most women involved in a draft would be mentally, physically, and emotionally unprepared and would only hurt themselves as well as hinder the military’s cause. The point of this statement is not to say that women are incapable, but to prove that those women who voluntarily join the military and those who would be drafted are highly different in many aspects. It takes a woman with great perseverance, strength, and passion to join the military, and without these qualities she would never succeed. There is not much that can be done for a woman without these traits. For athletic women with absolutely no interest in fighting, the military’s training would be bearable at best. Now imagine a woman with no previous experience in sports or even exercise, trying to keep up with the strenuous training the military requires. For this woman, the draft could quite possibly be one of the most terrible experiences for both herself and the military’s efficiency. She would hold back the preparation of her group, making the whole unit lose time to train. She would suffer more injuries and strain than most in basic training, therefore making her more susceptible to capture or death if she were to be put in the field. Last but not least, her attitude towards the military alone would affect those around her, bringing the morale of her group down as well.

All this can also be said about men who do not share the physical and mental qualities of soldiers. However, for men it is physically easier and quicker to reach these standards, and although the draft is still a great difficulty for these types of men, it will always be easier for a

man than for a woman to adjust to these situations solely based on genetic makeup. This being said, no woman at all would be better than a woman lacking in both departments of physical ability and motivation. Just because the military needs more bodies does not mean it will be more effective if women are required to join.

Many claim that if people advocate for women in direct combat, then there should be a draft for women as well. However, if women were to take part in the draft, then it would not be giving them equality; it would be treating all women as if they are capable of doing the same physical things as men, which is entirely unfair. Kathleen Parker in the article, "Cowards, War and Women," states, "It is certainly true that some women are more fit than some men, but it is also true that most aren't as capable of becoming as strong as men." Furthermore, it would be unfair to throw in 18-25 year old women and treat them as if they are physically capable of being on par with men, especially if they have no desire to be a soldier. It is bad enough that we have a draft for men already. What would the United States military look like if it started sending out unfit young women into the field? The answer is ineffective, unimposing, and most of all desperate. This statement is in no way diminishing the capabilities and achievements of women already in the military, but rather is showing that the military would appear to be unsupported and unpopular if it needed to draft women as well.

It may seem as though I am saying that it is acceptable for men to be drafted or participate in direct combat because they can handle it and that it's their job instead of a woman's. Yet, plenty of women have proven this to be incorrect and have shown the world that they are capable and prepared for the next step. However, genetics do not lie. This is why I argue that women should be allowed in direct combat because they have earned it and deserve equality, but the draft should not be expanded to women because they are not the same as men and are unable to perform the same physical tasks and tests without the proper motivation and preparation behind it. Having a draft for women would not benefit anyone because the women who are incapable of doing tasks will be looked down upon, thus making it harder for the women who worked so hard for respect and for assimilation.

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The author of this research essay successfully uses the three main forms of rhetoric – ethos, pathos, and ethos – when advocating for the passing of the DREAM Act. In addition to providing strong points in favor of this bill, the writer anticipates and addresses opposing views, thereby strengthening her own argument.

Undocumented and Uneducated

By Suman Ali

(Prof. Paul Murray – “Race and Rights”)

**“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send those, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp besides the golden door!”**

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus is the poem that is engraved on a bronze plaque and mounted on the lower level of the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. This poem is the foundation for what the United States is meant to be. It was built on the idea that immigrants would be welcomed with compassion and given the opportunity to a better life. Recently, that idea has not been fully enforced. Some people believe that treating immigrants who illegally come to the United States as criminals is not right. For that reason, they argue: “Whether or not they come with Washington’s permission, immigrants to the United States nonetheless deserve the compassion Lazarus promised” (Bhagwati and Rivera-Batiz). However, there are senators who are working to improve that. The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act was first introduced in the United States Congress in 2001, and then once again to the Senate and House of Representatives in 2011. If passed, this bill would provide qualifying undocumented youth the chance to become eligible for a six year conditional path to citizenship which would require the completion of a college degree or two years of military service (“Welcome to the DREAM Act Portal”). Although this is a bipartisan legislation, the Republicans have heavily opposed it, which has made it very difficult to even discuss within the House of Representatives. This bill would be highly beneficial to the thousands of undocumented youth residing in the United States. It would allow them to pursue their education and also enter the work force. Permitting these young people to take part in these opportunities could result in them becoming the future leaders of the United States. Many of the undocumented youth entered the United States when they were young and had no choice but to reside with their parents. Undocumented youth are being prevented from pursuing the same opportunities as other American children. Regardless of the fact that they grew up in the United

States and culturally are considered “American,” they are being punished for their parents’ decisions. The DREAM Act is a bill that should be passed in 2014 because it will be economically beneficial for the undocumented children as well as for the United States as a whole.

Republican Senator Jeff Sessions, of Alabama, is one of the Senate members who opposes the DREAM Act. Senator Sessions argues that with the passing of the DREAM Act, the United States would only be sending a message that we are not committed to a lawful process of immigration in our country (King 262). Not only does he argue that the process is being jeopardized by this act, but he also argues that allowing this bill to pass would be rewarding those people who entered the United States illegally. It would grant them a guaranteed pathway to citizenship and would entitle them to billions of dollars in financial aid as well as other government benefits. However, the students who would be eligible through this act are the ones who have lived and grown up in the United States. They are students who rightfully deserve the government benefits the country has to offer. The DREAM Act is designed to help the undocumented youth residing in the United States. However, if it were enforced, it may give people the idea that by entering the United States illegally, there is hope for them to live the American Dream. This likely would result in an increase of illegal immigrants (King 262).

Senator Sessions also argues that the DREAM Act sends a message that we are not committed to the process of immigration in our country. However, Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, one of the members who introduced the act, argues that innocent children should not be victims of our broken immigration system. Senator Durbin and many other politicians, including President Barack Obama, state that the DREAM Act is not a reward for the undocumented youth. Rather, it is a chance. President Barack Obama stated, “We should stop punishing innocent young people for the actions of their parents by denying them the chance to stay here and earn an education and contribute their talents to build the country where they have grown up” (King 268). The immigrants who are believed to be the problem of this country are not the undocumented youth. These youths are often not even aware of their undocumented status, and they are simply trying to take part in the opportunities provided by the United States.

There are many ways in which the DREAM Act would be beneficial to the undocumented youth. However, it would also be beneficial to the country as well – specifically the states. Cardinal Roger M. Mahony’s article “The DREAM Act: We All Benefit” explains that the DREAM Act would increase revenues and reduce deficits while also creating an educated workforce and filling the ranks of our military (466). Currently, people who are not American citizens are not eligible for driver’s licenses, nor do they have easy access to health care. However, the states who do support the DREAM Act and allow undocumented immigrants the ability to obtain a driver’s licenses and access to health care would notice a population increase which would benefit the economy of their state (Bhagwati and Rivera-Batiz). It has been noted that many undocumented immigrants leave states that punish them with harsh policies and resettle in states where they feel as if they are more welcomed.

Drivers’ licenses and health care are some of the many rights Americans expect to receive. Another benefit many Americans expect is the securing of federal aid for higher education. Every year, thousands of American students graduate from high school and move on to colleges and universities in order to further their education. However, many of these students would not be able to do this if they were not granted aid from their residing states and the federal government. Every year, mixed with thousands of high school graduates are undocumented students who cannot move on to college. Not only are their parents illegal immigrants who most

likely do not make enough to afford college tuition, but also their undocumented status prevents them from receiving federal aid, forcing their education to come to a sudden halt. Current taxpayers invest large amounts of money to educate the young people in the United States, undocumented children included. Not allowing these undocumented children to further their education prevents them from becoming productive taxpayers in the future. Essentially taxpayers invest money into students, so they can get an education and reach their fullest potential (Mahony 267).

The biggest problem with undocumented students is not the fact that they are undocumented, but rather that many of them are not aware of it until it comes time for them to apply for federal aid. Until that day arrives, many parents keep this a secret from their children for many reasons, one of them being the fear of deportation. When these undocumented students attempt to apply for financial aid, they put their names into the spotlight. If the wrong person were to find out they were living in the United States, they could easily be deported. However, many people argue that this is unjust. The government targets immigrants living in the United States illegally. However, they should focus more on the deportation of those who are causing more harm to the country, such as those with criminal records. For example, in the article “Keeping the Dream Alive,” Christopher Connell details a personal experience of an innocent young man being deported. There was an instance where a freshman going to college was stopped by border patrol and was asked whether he was a U.S. citizen or not. When stating he had been living in the United States since he was five years old on his father’s visa, patrol checked an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) database where his name did not come up. Because of this, he was taken into custody and brought to a federal detention center in New York where he spent six days and nights until his family posted a \$5,000 bond. Instead of going onto college and becoming a productive, tax-paying citizen, this young student is now fighting legal battles with little hope.

Taking undocumented youth into custody and detaining them creates a negative image of their entire population. It especially misrepresents the undocumented youth who do not have any criminal records. Another important misrepresentation is using the word “illegal” to describe them. The word “illegal” immediately has a negative connotation associated with it. The children who are referred to as illegal have in fact not done anything illegal themselves. It is their parents who brought them to the United States at young ages when they could not have a say in what they did. Angelica Rubio, the writer of “Undocumented, Not Illegal: Beyond the Rhetoric of Immigration” explains in her article how the word “illegal” dehumanizes millions of U.S. residents (51). It dehumanizes them in the eyes of many American citizens who come to the conclusion that these “illegal” immigrants simply travel to the United States so they can take advantage of the government and all that the country has to offer (51). However, what many Americans do not realize is that although the United States has a lot of opportunities to offer, immigrants are not always granted permission to take advantage of them. These undocumented children are harshly judged and stereotyped for actions that they had no control over. Allowing the DREAM Act to be passed would prevent these children from facing this harsh judgment that they do not rightfully deserve.

The harsh judgment faced by the thousands of undocumented youths causes many of them to live in fear. Many avoid situations that would result in people finding out the truth about their citizenship that causes them to isolate themselves and end up being lonely. The fear of deportation on top of being lonely, results in detrimental psychological and sociological effects, and educational problems. These are some of the main reasons why the DREAM Act would be

very beneficial to our undocumented youth. In addition to giving them access to the same rights as Americans in the United States, it would allow them to stop living in fear of constantly being deported and judged.

Currently, the DREAM Act is not as widely known as lawmakers in support of the bill anticipated. It was introduced in 2011, and since then has been shuffled away into the wider picture of immigration reform as a whole. However, it is important that this act not be thrown to the side. The passing of the DREAM Act has also been delayed due to the fact that the Republican Party controls the House of Representatives. However, the House Democrats recently made an effort to bring the topic to the floor for discussion. Ashley Parker, writer for the *New York Times*, wrote in her article "Democrats to Try Long-Shot Tactic for House Immigration Vote" that the attempt failed because the Republicans of the House refused the discussion. Nancy Pelosi, a Democratic leader in the House stated, "It is time for Republicans to stop catering to the most extreme, anti-immigrant wing of their caucus, and allow a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform our nation so urgently needs" (Parker). Like Pelosi, many Democrats agree that the immigration reform is necessary; however, it cannot be passed unless both major political parties are in full support of it.

Until the time comes that the Republicans take side with the Democrats on this issue, lawmakers in Washington want to encourage other undocumented youth to take a stand and fight for the passing of the DREAM Act. They believe that if youths, especially in the Latino communities, get together and speak on the issue, they will be able to make more progress. In order to encourage the Republicans in the House of Representatives to talk about the issue, lawmakers are getting on social media calling the effort #DemandAVote (Parker). They believe that with the support of people outside of Washington, immigration reform can become a major part of the upcoming elections.

If passed, the DREAM Act would give undocumented children a chance at becoming legal American citizens if they either pursue a college education or if they commit to the military. It is an act that would benefit both the states and the undocumented youth. The economy of the states would benefit by our undocumented youth who would be able to get an education they could use to contribute to the community. Regardless of the opposition, the bill has slowly been getting more publicity and hopefully should become one of the major reform movements of 2014.

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For their final research project, the students in this class were asked to report on a community concern. Because they had to have a stake in the problem, guidelines for the assignment included the use of first-person point of view and the conduction of a personal interview.

Wasting the College Years Wasted

By Angela DeRosso
(Prof. Liptak – “Crossing Borders”)

“Drink my beer and smoke my weed, but my good friends is all I need. Pass out at three, wake up at ten. Go out to eat, then do it again, man I love college.” This verse from Asher Roth’s 2009 popular and over-played song, “I Love College,” has somehow become the soundtrack to the American University experience. In today’s culture, when considering a typical weekend evening in a dormitory, funnels and beer pong come to mind as opposed to exam cramming and essay composing. Let’s face it - cheap beer and fake IDs have become the hallmarks of the college years. There is a reason the majority of college students partake in the consumption of alcohol. It’s college, so that’s what students believe they’re supposed to do, despite the fact that it’s illegal for most. Adolescents are exposed to an immeasurable number of movies, television shows and songs that glamorize alcohol consumption and epitomize college as the idyllic place to partake in a few too many drinks, and Siena students are no different. While Siena College is a small private school that thrives off of its Franciscan heritage and charitable traditions, unfortunately underage and excessive drinking is still present on its campus. Siena may substitute the frat brothers with friars, but when it comes to underage drinking, this college is no different than any other American institution of higher education. Underage drinking is a serious issue on Siena’s campus and on almost every other college campus in the U.S., mainly because of the way it is adorned and romanticized in popular culture.

Each year alcohol-related injuries conquer the lives 1,825 college students between the ages of 18 and 24. Nearly four out of every five college students partake in the consumption of alcohol (*Fact Sheet*), and virtually everyone is affected by alcohol on campus. But alcohol-related problems are not what most people think about prior to entering college. Before arriving at Siena College, my friends and I would fantasize about how much fun college would be based on the inaccurate depiction in popular culture. While I had thought the college parties would be exhilarating and lively, I never believed that students drank as frequently as every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Once I arrived on campus and realized how much many students relied on alcohol to relieve stress and have fun, I grew apprehensive about how rampant underage drinking was in the college setting. However, I should have expected this. The television and cinematic programs that exemplify college behavior always orbit around hard liquor and lite beer. Once considering this, I realized that shows such as *Blue Mountain State* and

movies like *Animal House* marketed alcohol as the key to having popular friends, attractive partners, perpetual fun, and overall happiness during the college years. These are just a few of the copious reasons college students partake in alcohol consumption.

When college students were asked in a survey why they drink, the most popular responses were that alcohol breaks the ice, enhances social activity, provides fun and something to do, and facilitates bonding and sexual opportunity (*Fact Sheet*). Listed on the University of Minnesota's website were these reasons along with others such as, establishing or building social status, following the culture of alcohol consumption on campus, and relieving peer pressure and academic stress (*Alcohol Use*). Nearly all of the modern flicks that are set on a university campus incorporate a large number of these aspects. This leads us to question if we should be pointing the finger at popular culture when a student gets transported from campus to a hospital with alcohol poisoning.

Numerous studies have concluded that television shows, movies and popular songs across the board neglect to depict negative consequences when featuring alcohol intake. In an examination of popular radio songs, a large portion of them revolve around alcohol consumption, and nearly none of them bring forward negative repercussions. Rap music and country music have been found to be the chief genres that incorporate alcohol consumption. As two of the most popular and up-and-coming genres, they both associated alcohol with rebellion, identity, pleasure, sensuality and personal power (Grube). Nearly all of these aspects can be identified in Asher Roth's rap number, "I Love College," which integrates sexualized women, "thirsty Thursday," and beer pong.

I took it upon myself to embark on a search to find more evidence in mainstream and current media. I visited the Billboard Hot 100's website and analyzed the list of the most popular U.S. songs in April 2014. Within the first twenty songs on the list, alcohol was a main subject in seven of the hit tunes. Just to name a few, numbers include, "Loyal" by Chris Brown, "#Selfie" by The Chain Smokers and "Turn Down for What" by DJ Snake. None of the seven songs in the listing of the first twenty noted any repercussions to alcohol intake; rather, it was associated with celebration, pleasure, happiness, wealth and sensuality in all of the songs' lyrics.

Perceptibly, music is not the only medium that places alcohol consumption in a positive light. Movies and television have been proven to influence young and adolescent viewers. In a popular film that is commonly viewed by college students, *American Pie 2*, the characters, who are university students, drank alcohol 18 times and an additional 23 times alcoholic beverages were visible (Engles et al). Nearly a decade ago, it was proven that 71% of all programming depicted alcohol use and that 77% incorporated a reference to alcohol. In a 1996 study, the top 200 movie rentals of that year were analyzed, and alcohol was shown or consumed in 93% of them (Grube). Drinking was associated with wealth or luxury in 34% of these references and pro-use statements were present in 20%. In television, research suggests that regular drinkers on television tend to be characters of high socioeconomic status, attractive and glamorous (Grube). Other sources have concluded that movies, television shows and advertisements endorse the substance by using prototypes of the ideal person in an attractive context. To top it off, these idealized characters are usually the protagonists of the program (Engles et al). Studies have also validated that these portrayals do influence viewers' perceptions of alcohol consumption, and it was reported that adolescents who viewed more television were more likely to agree that people who drink are happier and have more fun at proceedings such as sporting events (Grube).

Obviously, the influence of popular culture extends to college-aged viewers as well. According to Joel Grube in "Alcohol in the Media: Drinking Portrayals, Alcohol Advertising,

and Alcohol Consumption Among Youth,” a 2001 study entailed exposing college students to one of two versions of the film *A Star Is Born*. One version depicted negative consequences of drinking for the protagonist, which included poor performance at a concert, fighting, and death due to an alcohol-related incident. The second version had these accounts edited out and substituted them with more positive outcomes. The result signified that the positive version of the film led to more favorable attitudes towards drinking and encouraged stronger intentions to drink. The students in the study also were inclined to believe that alcohol serves as a mechanism for stress management (Grube). While the film *A Star is Born* may not be popular among college students today, results of the study prove that alcohol’s depiction in film alters the perceptions of its viewers, for the students who were exposed to the clip that incorporated positive outcomes had a more elated view of alcohol in the real world.

While Siena College is a Catholic institution, it is not blind to the fact underage students drink on its grounds, and it is aware that some students drink excessively. However, in order to give an alternative message to the one portrayed in popular culture and to discourage its students from giving in to what appears to be the social norm, there are number programs on campus geared to mitigate college drinking. While wandering the halls and navigating through the many buildings here on campus, one will most likely come across a poster with a statistic regarding alcohol and the way Siena students react to alcohol-related issues. This is known as “social norming,” which is a campaign that is carried out by Siena administration whose aim is to inform the students that contrary to what they think, not everyone is, indeed, drinking.

Siena is not the only higher education institution that has carried out a social norming program. Researchers have shown that college students drastically overestimate the percentage of their peers who drink heavily. They also validate that this misconception encourages more students to partake in the carousing. This has influenced American universities to adopt programs that reveal the truths regarding the amount of college students who drink. However, these programs are usually small-scale and short-lived (DeJong). At Siena, the social norming campaign has been in action for several years now, and it appears to be successful. On the college’s website under “Social Norms,” Siena argues that the crusade combatting on-campus alcohol consumption is in fact working. A chart depicting data collected over a three-year period (2006-2008) shows the reduction in high-risk drinking. The data presented announces a 23% decrease in the number of students who partake in binge drinking, which is typically classified as consuming five or more drinks (*Social Norms*). However, one may become weary of these statistics after visiting Public Safety’s webpage. Here, it is stated that the number of disciplinary referrals for on-campus liquor law violations has swelled dramatically during the period between 2010-2012. In 2010 there were 446 criminal offenses regarding the liquor law violations on campus. This number climbed to 642 the following year in 2011, and by 2012, the number of referrals has skyrocketed to 789 (*Campus Crime Statistics*). Nearly all of these offences occurred within the residence halls on campus. If the number of students partaking in binge drinking has declined as stipulated by Student Affairs, I can’t help but wonder why the number of disciplinary referrals has progressively risen to this extent.

One explanation for the increase in offenses is that Siena’s residential staff and public safety are on top of their game and are perhaps less reluctant to write up students violating the alcohol policy. Donald Denz, the residential director of Plassmann Hall, vocalized that on average he meets with 5 students per week for disciplinary actions. He admitted that four of these cases are typically alcohol-related. In addition, as a freshman residence hall director, he shared that he has the largest influx of alcohol-related cases, for first-year students account for

the most transports and alcohol-related vandalisms. Denz claims that this is always the toughest group to handle and believes this is because students arrive with a skewed perception of college. He even shared that some students confess to him that they had expected college to be more like the exaggerated form presented on television and movie screens (Denz).

Donald Denz has only been at Siena for a couple of years; however, he worked at Niagara University prior to taking on the position in Plassmann Hall. When asked how Siena's disciplinary actions taken against alcohol-related offenses compares to those taken by Niagara and other universities, he expressed that Siena offers more education to its culprits. Niagara's punishment usually consists of a discussion about what had transpired followed by community service. Siena's plan of action calls for multiple steps. First, a dialogue is held to discuss the physical and educational repercussions of alcohol. If offenses continue, a second dialogue is mandated in order to determine why the issue persists and what can be done to help the student. If transgressions never cease, the student is then required to attend a separate class known as "Basics." Of course, there are fines and penalties included with each violation (Denz).

According to Siena's *Student Handbook*, there are penalties for underage students who are just in the presence of alcohol. In addition, the college prohibits recreational activities that encourage "rapid consumption," even if no alcohol is present, such as water pong and possessing accessories like funnels. Siena treats this issue with such severity because alcohol on campus not only affects the students who choose to partake in alcohol consumption, but the entire population as well. I have spent numerous nights helping friends who have gotten sick from drinking too much in addition to worrying endlessly about a friend who wouldn't stop drinking once she was already impaired. I have been woken up in the middle of the night from screams and cries from girls who drank too much, and I can't even count the amount of times the hall bathroom has been caked with liquor-induced vomit. In a study analyzing the effects alcohol had on students who chose not to drink, three out of four students experienced at least one of the following consequences of another student drinking: sleep and study interruptions, physical harm, unwanted sexual contact, property damage and date rape. Alcohol usually negatively impacts the academic performance of students who choose to drink, and the same study concluded that frequent binge drinkers are twenty one times more likely to have missed class, fallen behind, damaged property, had unplanned or unprotected sex or driven a car after drinking (*Fact Sheet*). Not surprisingly, the typical college-themed film or television series neglects to show the severity of these effects if they are addressed at all. In fact, the characters are hardly ever shown attending class or studying.

The recent and popular television series *Blue Mountain State* follows this pattern. Out of all three seasons, academic faculty or administration are only featured in one episode. The characters struggle with their marks and end up philandering their way to good grades instead of actually attempting to do the work. Personally speaking, a large portion of my male peers are infatuated with this show, while my female friends, on the other hand, are turned off because of this show's chauvinistic nature. While only one episode features scholastic aspects, every episode features drugs and excessive drinking, and all of the female characters are objectified. The adolescent viewers of this program are disappointed when they experience actual college and realize that it's not all about the carousing and not every female is open to all sexual encounters. Also, there are not any negative consequences to drinking and drug use. Unfortunately, many of my friends have expressed that they thought college would be more like that portrayed in *Blue Mountain State*.

Personally, I believe that alcohol will continue to be a dominant force on college campuses, including Siena College's. It is not until society reshapes its ideology about college drinking by changing how it is portrayed in popular culture that we can begin to truly eliminate the problem at hand. The social norms campaign at Siena is an ideal mechanism for altering perspectives; however, it goes rather unknown to students whereas popular culture continues to have a more dominant and lasting effect. The radio, television set and big screen have Americans on a diet of alcohol, which is associated with sexiness, fun and happiness. Also, alcohol is advertised as the remedy for most challenges and ailments. Until this distorted view point is reshaped, underage drinking will be a dominant problem at Siena and on other college campuses.

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This student also was assigned to research a community issue and weaves relevant personal experiences and interactions with scholarly material in the body of the essay. The writer argues that it is time for our campus administration to create a policy for the perpetrators of cyberbullying and to heighten awareness while providing support for the victims and the rest of the community.

Freedom of Speech or Freedom to Bully?

By Kirsten Dunn

(Prof. Liptak – “Crossing Borders”)

Life is too short to not enjoy. It is too short to not be yourself. It is too short to be bullied. Bullying has always been an issue, but there has yet to be a solution primarily because of the conflict with the First Amendment, which protects the right to freedom of speech. Freedom of speech has allowed individuals to get away with severe harassment with minimal to no consequences. Harsh words and fighting were the original forms of bullying, but with the advancements in technology, bullying has now gone viral. Over the past decade, cyberbullying has become a prominent issue throughout schools. It has more recently become an issue in colleges, causing victims to drop out, suffer severe psychological damage, and in some instances, take their own lives because they cannot deal with the pain, shame and embarrassment. The psychological impact of cyberbullying never goes away, and the effects get more serious as the victim ages. Through education and laws being created and enforced, cyberbullying can be prevented. I believe that Siena should instill a cyberbullying policy to help prevent any further damage to students.

Defined as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices,” cyberbullying has recently become an easy tool for bullies to reach their victims 24 hours a day 7 days a week, without physically having to attack them (Hinduja and Patchin 1). Social media has affected bullying along with the types of bullying that can be considered as cyberbullying. The most commonly used form is through social networking sites, with text messaging following close behind (Hinduja and Patchin 1). I do not know a single person who does not have some social media account or a cell phone, thus making it so easy to cyberbully. Kids are always connected to the social world because of their phones, so by sending a simple text message or posting a status, a bully can easily destroy a victim’s day, self-esteem or reputation. If a policy is put into place in colleges, I believe that students will be more hesitant to post or send harassing comments because they may be fearful of the consequences, whatever they may be.

As time has progressed, the types of bullying have changed. According to the book Banishing Bullying Behavior by SuEllen Fried and Blanche Sosland, there are ten major types of bullying which have become more popular than physical violence (45). Three examples would be denigration, outing and flaming. Denigration, also known as “dissing”, has become a popular

source of bullying that enables the bully to post or send rumors or gossip about an individual to damage his or her reputation (Fried and Sosland 45). Denigration tends to be used when a bully is jealous of another individual, so in order to feel better about himself or herself, he or she posts a negative comment to harm the individual he or she is jealous of. Flaming is similar to denigration because bullies will post nasty comments to start trouble. Using vulgar language, a bully might try to intimidate a victim to make him or her think less of him or herself. In both cases, the bully is trying to belittle the victim and satisfy his or her own emotional problems (Fried and Sosland 46).

When reading these examples, one might think that bullying is a very childish thing to do and, therefore, should only happen in grade school. However, I have seen this happen first-hand on Siena's campus. During the first semester and the beginning of the second semester of this past school year, there was a Twitter account called Siena Confessions. On this page, students would post horrific tweets belittling other students. Many students would do this out of jealousy or to get revenge on an old friend. Oftentimes girls would post crude comments about other girls because they were jealous of looks or others' relationships with boys. Although I personally was never victimized on the site, I know plenty of people who have been, and they were very hurt because of the lies that were written out of jealousy and hatred.

When I interviewed my resident assistant (R.A.), Jessica Sarro, and asked her if she had ever seen these two forms of cyberbullying, she immediately spoke of the Twitter account, Siena Confessions. She said that as an R.A., it hurts to see students' and hall mates' names posted on the page because she feels that it prevents them from partaking in student life. By this she meant that students tend to stay in their rooms instead of going out and mingling with classmates who could potentially become good friends and even a support system for the victim. Sarro said that unfortunately all that she could do was tell the students not to follow the page and not to let the tweets "get to them." She concluded by saying that if Siena had a cyberbullying policy, the Twitter page may not have been made because students would fear the punishment based on a zero-tolerance policy (Sarro). This would be an important first step in the prevention of cyberbullying.

Siena has been fortunate in the fact that no student has taken cyberbullying too far. In cases of other colleges, students have taken their lives because of cyberbullying, specifically because of the third example of bullying, outing. According to Fried and Sosland, "outing" is when a bully publicizes personal information about a victim, often sexually related, which damages a person's reputation (45). There are new stories on the news each year of college students committing suicide because a roommate or friend leaked personal information that individuals did not want to share. Just a few years ago, there was the story about a boy who committed suicide after his roommate posted videos of him having intercourse with another man. The boy had not shared with anyone that he was gay, so when he was "outed," he was psychologically affected to the point of committing suicide. No life should be lost because of cyberbullying, and colleges need to start addressing how it can be prevented.

"Worthless." "Depressed." "Don't deserve to live." These are some of the feelings victims of bullying experience (Hinduja and Patchin 1). Imagine waking up every day experiencing these emotions. Imagine how difficult it must be to be comfortable with yourself. Now imagine trying to partake in college life feeling like this. College is difficult enough without having to worry about feeling safe. The classes and workload are plenty, so to add being a victim of cyberbullying seems unbearable. It is intolerable for some students who experience severe psychological issues such as depression, irritability and have thoughts of suicide (Hinduja and

Patchin 1). When I interviewed my R.A., Jessica Sarro, I asked if she recognized any symptoms of a victim of cyberbullying. She said that from her experience, she feels that students have difficulty concentrating on their work. Their minds are on whether they are being mentioned in another post or checking to see if they received a harassing text message (Sarro). This is unfortunate because a victim could be a very good and smart student, but their work could suffer because they are focused on another potential attack.

Cyberbullying does not just affect school work but also the social life an individual. When someone is being bullied, he or she is likely to be very introverted and stay in places where he or she feels comfortable, such as the dorm room. As I stated earlier, when interviewing my R.A., we spoke about how cyberbullying would socially impact the student's life on campus. Although Siena is not a big party school, there are still things to do. R.A. Jessica Sarro said that the students who are victims of cyberbullying do not trust others, so they seclude themselves. In doing this, they prevent themselves from not only attending parties but also opportunities to be part of Siena's campus. This is unfortunate because college is a time when individuals can find themselves. For most, it is when they decide what to do with the rest of their lives. If they are afraid to go out because of bullying, then people will not have the opportunity to discover themselves.

A close friend of mine serves as an example of what cyberbullying can do to a student. She was a victim of being bullied on Siena Confessions. This case was similar to the one I stated earlier in which a girl was jealous of how pretty my friend was, so she posted a nasty remark about my friend's relationships. Although what was said in the post was untrue, it still prevented my close friend from going out for several weekends in a row because she was embarrassed. Luckily, with the help of her friends, and the deactivation of the Twitter account, my friend now has the confidence to go out without constantly worrying about being talked about. Yes, the account was shut down, and my friend was no longer being targeted on Twitter. However, the temporary shutdown of Siena Confessions does not guarantee that all forms of cyberbullying will stop. If Siena were to instill a permanent zero-tolerance cyberbullying policy, students would be less likely to worry about being harassed in posts on social media and in text messages.

As mentioned previously, cyberbullying takes place all over college campuses, so one would think that policies would be put in place. I thought Siena, especially as a Franciscan school, would have a strict policy against cyberbullying, but I was wrong. During my interview, I asked my R.A. about Siena's cyberbullying policy; I was shocked to find out that it does not have one. Siena has established punishments against hate crimes, such as probation or suspension, but it does not clearly offer a punishment for cyberbullying. Learning this made me more curious, so I asked my resident assistant about the training that she received for students who were victims of cyberbullying. Her response was that she had not received any specific training for cyberbullying yet felt that the school should definitely include a cyberbullying workshop so that the residential staff was equipped to help victims because it has become such a pervasive problem (Sarro).

Resident Assistant Jessica Sarra continued to express her concerns about cyberbullying and went on to say that it is hard to even deal with such issues because there is no policy in place. Jessica stated, "I tell the girls that if they see cyberbullying, to tell an R.A. or mark it as spam on a social media site. If it's a friend doing the cyberbullying, tell them that it's not okay because they'll be more responsive to their friends" (Sarro). This stood out to me because I agree that students are more receptive to their peers than to authority. If friends confront a bully and say it is "not cool," then there is a greater chance of it stopping. I know from my own

experience that kids stop doing something if they do not receive the attention they want or if friends say that it is wrong. A zero-tolerance policy would promote this culture on campus. Another key recommendation that Sarro gave was for others to ignore the bully, for if the bully does not get support, then he or she is more likely to stop. Although this is all good advice, it does not necessarily stop cyberbullying. If a zero-tolerance policy was put into place, students may be less likely to take part in cyberbullying because they know it will not be taken lightly. It may also encourage students to inform school officials of any cyberbullying that is taking place so that the bully can be identified and punished.

Like Siena, there are many schools across the country that have not established an official cyberbullying policy. There are numerous reasons as to why a universal policy has yet to be made, but the most commonly argued reason is because of the lack of clarity. I say this because there are 21 states that prohibit cyberbullying, but of those 21 states, none give a specific definition of cyberbullying (Hayward 1). John Hayward is a senior lecturer at Bentley University, and in his article “Anti-Cyberbullying Laws are a Threat to Free Speech,” he speaks about the ambiguities surrounding cyberbullying policies. Many states see the problems cyberbullying is causing and are attempting to pass legislation that helps to prevent as well as to establish punishment for cyberbullying. Hayward agrees that cyberbullying is wrong, but the legislation is not clear enough to be passed. He argues that because there is not a specific definition of what cyberbullying is, then it is in the hands of the court to decide whether it is a situation involving cyberbullying or perhaps one of free speech (Hayward 2).

Freedom of speech is part of the Constitution that enables all humans to speak their minds without getting penalized. The concept of free speech has been used in multiple cases where bullies are accused of wrong actions, and they, in turn, say that they are free to post or send whatever they want. With that being said, grade schools, high schools and colleges in California are devising legislation that determines what counts as freedom of speech and what counts as a true threat (Hayward 2). This, unfortunately, leads to the bigger issue of what counts as a true threat. As a state, California has yet to define “a true threat,” leaving it in the hands of local courts to decide.

Like the state of California, Montclair University in New Jersey has been trying to set up a policy against cyberbullying without it interfering with a student’s right to free speech. The university has set rules about cyber-bullies not being allowed to come into contact with their victims. If they are caught speaking of the situation or to the victim, the bully is then suspended (Orlando 1). This may seem like a good plan, but it has brought conflict and questions, such as, “Do universities have the right to regulate student behavior on social networking sites?” (Orlando 1). The people who are against this rule being put into place argue that college is a time for growth. They say that cyberbullying should not seriously affect the life of an adult, but if it does, it is not the school’s fault. Thus, the victim should handle the problem on his or her own, instead of blaming the school. A professor at Montclair University argued: “[Strict] policy needs to be extremely clear and provide detailed definitions of what behavior violates free speech,” otherwise the university has no right getting involved in the student’s personal life (Orlando 4). This statement further shows that clarity is a major issue involving cyberbullying. Some students say things without them meaning to be offensive, yet they come across as such. With a clear definition of what cyberbullying is, students will be more careful in their conversations and posts so that they do not violate the legislation and, thus, avoid negative consequences that may affect their academic standing at the college.

Advocates for more concrete cyberbullying policies have a completely different outlook than those who are against it. People in favor of such policies say that bullying can leave horrible scars on an individual. Because it is the job of the university to protect all students, advocates believe that “it’s a disgrace that people are attempting to defend outright bullying under the U.S. Constitution” (Orlando 1). I, too, am in favor of strict policies and think that harassment should be punished, not accepted as free speech, because the effects of bullying are just as serious as the right to freely speak. I admire Montclair University for training its staff to help cyberbullying victims in multiple ways. For example, the university is hiring a staff that has strong technical skills, which will allow them to discover and help protect students from future harassment. It is also putting its residential life leaders through special training, so they can identify and help the students who face cyber issues (Orlando 2). The ultimate goal of this is to give all students safety and stability throughout their college years and the ability and freedom to live comfortably without the fear of harassment. Siena College should look to Montclair University as a model of what could be done on campus to help prepare for and prevent cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying can happen in an instant. One quick text or post can destroy an individual’s entire outlook on life. I believe that Siena should create a no-tolerance policy that prevents cyberbullying from occurring. In order for this to happen, the administration board must first come together and decide how to define cyberbullying. They must clarify and give examples of cyberbullying and specify the consequences for each type. In doing this, students will not be allowed to “diss” the school or other students. If Siena’s name is mentioned in a post, or a student of Siena is harassed by another Siena student, it should be brought to the attention of Siena administration, and the bully should have to meet with Student Affairs to discuss an appropriate punishment. Since it would be a zero-tolerance policy, the consequences should be severe. For example, if the bully commits an act once, a student is automatically on probation. If it happens twice, a student is suspended from all activities, including class attendance. If it happens three times, the student is expelled and is not allowed to register again at the school. With this strict policy, I believe that the amount of cyberbullying will decrease drastically on campus, allowing students to have the full college experience without worrying about being harassed.

In addition to this policy, the school should organize sessions that teach students about cyberbullying. The more they know, the less likely they will do it or allow it to happen. Residential advisors should also be required to go through training which will allow them to effectively work with any student who is being harassed. This training should include practice trials of bullying situations along with education on being able to identify a situation in which a student is being bullied. To further prevent cyberbullying, especially amongst incoming freshmen, during the orientation there should be mandatory education workshops on bullying and the effects of it. Having students do mock bullying exercises will help them be able to identify a bully or to be aware of friends being victims of bullying. In doing all of this, the campus culture will change, and, hopefully, this would further prevent cyberbullying from happening.

Bullies have always been causing problems at schools. Yet as technology has advanced, bullying has only gotten easier; it no longer has to be done face-to-face. Because of this, bullies no longer see the true harm they are causing. Too many young lives have been lost or ruined because of cyberbullying. It has prevented students, even on a small campus like Siena, from being able to express themselves and enjoy their time as college students because they have experienced or because they live in fear of harassment. I believe that a zero-tolerance policy can

be enforced and that it will protect students from future harassment. Siena, the school known for holding doors, should also be known for their happy students who can enjoy their time knowing that there is a zero-tolerance cyberbullying policy in place.

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Explaining how and why mid-twentieth century American cities and their surrounding areas were organized and highlighting the damaging effects of sprawl, the student writer makes a strong case for implementing smart growth initiatives in this research-based essay.

Smart Growth's Positive Impact on the Environment, Public Health, and Society

By Jenna Kersten

(Prof. L. Woolbright – “The Environment”)

In a post-World War II world, there has been an increasing tendency towards suburbanization in the United States, also known as urban sprawl. This has become a very real problem as the compact design of cities gave way to expansive subdivisions, interstate highway systems, and fast food chains. In recent years, many have called for a solution to this problem, which is detrimental to American society both environmentally and socially. There are various models that have the potential to successfully combat the problem of urban sprawl, such as a strategy called smart growth. The implementation of the smart growth method of urban planning is essential to counteract the damaging impact of sprawl on the environment, public health, and American society in general. This action is needed to ensure that the negative effects of sprawl do not continue far into the future.

Before discussing the historical basis of urban sprawl, it is important to establish the general policies of smart growth initiatives. While the implementation of smart growth policies would obviously vary by region, there are some goals the policies share on a broader level. The general idea of smart growth is that of a concentrated urban area surrounded by agricultural areas (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2013). They were formed with the intention of having mixed land uses, wherein residential and commercial areas are intermingled. The residential spaces offered would consist of more affordable housing, thereby enhancing the diversity in age and economic status of these communities. Walkable neighborhoods and a stress on the use of public transportation are significant in this design. Additionally, while it is definitely important to support attractive and engaged communities in these areas, there is also an emphasis on the preservation of open space for agricultural and aesthetic purposes outside of smart growth communities. On the whole, the intention of this plan is to foster community spaces that adopt an attitude of what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) refers to as a “strong sense of place” and improve the overall quality of the environment and the lives of the individuals (2013).

Urban sprawl, the problem that smart growth will help to combat, was caused by the growth of the modern suburb as we now know it. As a result of the nation's mentality following World War II, the Federal Housing Administration encouraged returning veterans to purchase homes by decreasing the down-payment costs of low-risk mortgages in white, suburban neighborhoods (Flint 2006). Many were drawn to and took advantage of this opportunity, and

homogenous developments like Long Island's Levittown sprung up all across the country. This suburbanization encouraged the growth of an automobile culture. The idea of independent mobility, when combined with the thought of escaping the perceived corruption of city life, was too good to resist. Areas were soon built around the concept of automobile travel, beginning with Los Angeles, California and moving eastward. To further continue this trend, larger roadways were built as a result of the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, enabling the "self-perpetuating suburb" (Flint 2006 p.34) to become a long-lasting component of American life. It has become the standard, the ideal of middle class life for the bulk of Americans and continued in earnest and with vigor from the 1950s to the present day. However, suburban life, manifested in urban sprawl, is not the cookie-cutter, Eisenhower-ideal that it is often made to seem. Urban sprawl has had an extremely detrimental impact both in the communities that it has directly affected and on society in general. The best alternative to the dark side of urban sprawl is through the use of smart growth in American communities.

Urban sprawl has had a tremendous negative impact on the environment. Due to the manifestation of urban sprawl in the United States, a culture that relies mainly on the use of automobiles for everyday transportation has emerged. This is one of the main contributing factors to this country's very high level of carbon dioxide emissions. Recently, the EPA has discovered that about 28% of all carbon dioxide emissions are caused as a result of transportation sources (Wang et al. 2013). With the help of smart growth, automobile transportation would decrease as a result of more walkable communities with more bike paths and more convenient public transportation. This would lead to less carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Additionally, the aspect of mixed land uses in smart growth policy would ensure that when people did have to drive, they would be driving shorter distances. The majority of places they would go on a regular basis, such as work or shopping, would be closer and would preferably be reached through the use of public transportation. While some may complain about the loss of individuality in terms of being able to travel at a time that is convenient to them, they will ultimately realize that the smart growth model is one that truly fosters accessibility. There may be a slight lifestyle adjustment needed, but ultimately this is a system that will increase the convenience of travel, not hinder it. These various factors, when compounded together, suggest the potential for a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions in areas where smart growth is implemented.

There is proof of the benefit of smart growth that has already occurred in various places in the United States. For example, a 2009 study gathered data from the NHTS Virginia Add-On Survey, which obtained information from 15,213 households in Virginia meant to represent the different types of land use and population differences in the state. On average, the results indicate that smart growth is, indeed, related to a decrease in carbon dioxide emission levels. The most practical aspects of this data indicate that "balanced and connected" neighborhoods have 9% lower carbon dioxide emissions than the current levels of land use and connectivity (Wang et al. 2013, 68). On the whole, this suggests that smart growth can have a positive impact on the environment by decreasing the carbon dioxide emissions in the neighborhoods and areas where it has been implemented. While smart growth and other forms of environmentally sound urban planning are not the only means through which to lessen human impact on the environment, if implemented on a widespread scale, it has the potential to have an extremely positive impact.

Additionally, the influence that urban sprawl has had on public health cannot be overlooked. The automobile culture that has emerged has impacted more than just the environment; it has also led to the development of the fast food industry. McDonald's originated

as a drive-in in southern California, though it quickly developed into the international model that is familiar today (Schlosser 2001). While this is a result of a variety of factors, it can be linked to the increase in the prevalence of fast food chains as a major source of food. The desire for quick, cheap, and convenient food has become necessary in a fast-paced, automotive world. The ease of getting a fast food meal when driving around from one place to another is hard to resist, despite the high fat and oil content of such food. This is especially due to the great distance between work places and residential areas that heightens the need for more convenient meal options, as many people may not have the time to cook healthy meals. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, at least a third of adults and one in five children are obese, which the inherent unhealthiness of the fast food industry has greatly contributed to (Brody 2013). Indirectly, the spread of urban sprawl also has played a role in rising American obesity levels, for the way that communities have been built is also conducive to them. Suburban developments encourage a society that must rely on cars for transportation, rather than on walking or biking. In this sort of environment, it is easy to see how obesity levels are ever-increasing (U.S. Department of Health 2012).

Smart growth would help alleviate the problems of American obesity. An emphasis on public transportation and more walkable communities would reduce the need for frequent automobile travel, thereby also lessening the impact of the fast food industry. People would spend less time driving and would have more time to cook in their own homes. Additionally, more active communities would arise as these areas would be designed for the integration of more physical activity through alternative modes of transportation—such as walking and bike-riding—in everyday life. Through a decrease in the number of and need for fast food restaurants in American society, as well as an increase in opportunities for incorporating exercise into everyday life, American obesity may begin to decrease. Smart growth has the potential to alter the way that urban sprawl has negatively impacted public health by reversing the trend towards obesity and an inactive lifestyle.

On the whole, smart growth policies would also have a tremendously positive impact on American society in general, in relation to both interactions between people and in relation to the government. However, despite bountiful evidence to the contrary, there are those who do not believe that smart growth would be a practical and effective solution to the issue of urban sprawl. There is the idea that the implementation of smart growth policies would require a shift in the cultural mindset of many suburban Americans that most likely would not successfully occur (Downs 2005). If these policies were put into effect, there would be two major changes for suburban homeowners. The first is that it would result in a decrease in the value of their homes as new, possibly less expensive homes would be built in their communities. Secondly, if these more affordable houses were available, it would allow for people from lower-income households to move into the neighborhood. This occurrence has the potential to upset existing homeowners who may be concerned for what Downs refers to as certain “social, educational, and security reasons” (2005, 370). This sort of “Not in My Backyard” attitude is thought to be pervasive in American society and a definite obstacle to the successful implementation of smart growth policies (371). However, this kind of mentality could go away in time, as people come to realize that the benefit that smart growth will have on society.

In our current societal context, it is easy to see that one’s quality of living is determined by one’s income and social status. However, this has resulted in impoverished neighborhoods and communities, predominately in cities, that do not have the same health standards as their suburban counterparts. One of the aspects of smart growth - that of affordable housing - has the

potential to dramatically change this reality, though it is not the intention of the initiative. Some regional building models across the country have been successful in this regard. For example, Massachusetts has what is affectionately referred to as “anti-snob laws” (Mallach 2011, 296). These laws encourage affordable housing projects, with the state’s approval, in all municipal areas that initially refuse them. However, this only occurs if less than ten percent of the municipal region consists of available affordable housing. This concept in community planning has been implemented in other regions of the United States, including California, Connecticut, and New Jersey, and these types of projects fall in line with the smart growth idea of high-density, mixed housing areas. While they may not seem to directly relate, programs such as these heighten the success of other smart growth initiatives. For example, the creation of more affordable, diverse, and high-density housing will allow for complementary improvements in public transportation industries. These industries may reduce the frequency of individual automotive transportation, which would, in turn, be helpful in decreasing carbon dioxide emission levels, an environmental benefit of the smart growth model.

Smart growth would need to incorporate the use of various government programs in order to be effective and would require greater community involvement in the areas where it is implemented. Currently, the majority of power over land use planning resides in local governments. However, in order for smart growth to be successful, it would require that authority to be transferred from these local governments to the state or regional authorities (Downs 2005). This is because the state would have the power to persuade urban areas to create a growth boundary for the region while also effectively preventing any additional development outside of this boundary. While this transfer of power may not easily go into effect, it will ultimately benefit of the communities at large due to the positive aspects of smart growth.

While, as previously stated, many states have put smart growth policies in place, the use of incentive programs specifically have been implemented to a very successful degree in the state of Maryland. In the 1990s, there was the prediction of a population increase of one million by 2015. However, there was an additional recognition that the state’s cities, such as Baltimore, were declining in population while that of surrounding suburbs was increasing. Due to this, the Maryland Smart Growth plan was put into action (Cohen 2002). Included in this were several major initiatives with the intent of protecting the environment, using taxpayers’ money to support infrastructure development conducive to hindering the effects of sprawl, and not supporting infrastructure building projects that would be in favor of the continued development of urban sprawl. The first of these incentives was the 1997 Smart Growth Areas Act. This essentially was what its name implies: it keeps state funding flowing into projects that develop housing and economic projects in cities and inner suburbs. The second is the 1997 Rural Legacy Act, which gives grants toward the purchasing of land in rural areas around cities that could be used for sustainable agriculture and other purposes. It acts as a provider of “greenbelts around developed areas, and maintain[s] the character of rural communities” (Cohen 2002, 294). Another option, the Job Creation Tax Credit Program, gives tax credits to businesses for each additional full-time job that is created. Finally, the Live Near Your Work Program provides grants to people who buy homes near their workplace. Overall, the basic goal of these programs is to generate economic activity in the cities and inner suburbs, to create better environments in those places that would entice people to move there, and to allow for a higher standard of living for the people who already do. Furthermore, these programs provide for not only improved urban spaces, but rural as well, by encouraging the development of agricultural land around the smart growth community.

In addition to this, the implementation of smart growth can also incorporate greater community involvement in local politics in the areas where it is being considered. As mentioned previously, there are some who are opposed to smart growth, despite its many benefits. The practice of deliberative democracy can be applied to this situation to ensure that the voices and concerns of those in the community are heard. This deliberative democracy would involve civic discourse through the means of public debates and town-hall meetings. All opinions would be shared and addressed in the decisions for how to implement smart growth through the deliberation of policies in an open and very public way (Resnik 2010). Doing so would generate greater civic involvement in these areas and communities of people who are satisfied with the policy decisions of their government.

On the whole, it is fairly apparent that there must be a solution to the problems of urban sprawl, and sooner rather than later. It has had a negative impact on the environment because of the increasing levels of carbon dioxide emissions due to automotive transportation. Also, American obesity levels have skyrocketed, and American society is very divided in terms of economic status. All of this can be positively impacted through smart growth policies. Carbon dioxide emission levels will decrease, obesity levels will lessen, and American society will become more accepting of diversity overall. Smart growth will stop the harmful trend towards urban sprawl in the United States and positively impact American citizens for years to come.

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Through her clearly defined points and references to a plethora of sources, the student writer imparts her passion for and knowledge about the power of the mind in the treatment of cancer patients.

Meditation, Seven Millimeters Deep

By Sidney Lawson

(Prof. Ellard – “Science and Religion”)

In times of modern medicine, advances in technology and thinking have revolutionized the treatment of cancer and other diseases that have baffled doctors for decades. The brain, previously classified as the spongy organ responsible for our movements and memories, has become an integral part of the research of and medicinal response to such diseases. The idea that the brain can command the body is one thing; the idea that it can heal the body is another. Eastern meditation, very common to the spiritual beliefs of Buddhists and Hindus, has for centuries provided a connection between the mind, the body, and the power of positivity in the daily lives of its participants. With the ever-growing pool of disease that is resistant to medical treatment, is it possible that the best and most durable weapon is already being carried around with us beneath seven millimeters of bone? The cure for cancer is much more complex than the positive mental thoughts in the brain, but the large arsenal of weapons the brain possesses most certainly plays a role in how individuals process and endure disease treatment.

The practices common to eastern meditation, per the influence of spiritual beliefs and practices of Buddhists, for example, go hand in hand with increased positivity and sense of self. The progressive nature of cancer has proven to be a sturdy opponent to the advances of modern medicine, and maybe medicinal forms of cancer treatment just are not enough. Eastern meditation and the power of the mind provide an advanced treatment in its most simple form. *I argue that there is an intense connection between an authoritative bodily environment, like that created through meditation, and a reduction in cancer symptoms.*

The power of persuasion wielded by meditation is multi-dimensional. The mindset that accompanies the practice of regular meditation has the ability to bring about great changes in the body. Suggestion is defined as the psychological process by which one person may guide the thoughts, feelings or behaviors of another (Harrington, 2008, p. 34). The most relevant example of suggestion, for the purpose of this argument, is the relationship forged between doctor and patient during the treatment of illness, and the following story illustrates this point. Mr. Wright was a very sick man diagnosed with lymphosarcoma, or cancer of the lymph nodes. When he failed to respond to any form of treatment, his doctors all but gave up hope for his survival. Mr. Wright, however, had a different path in mind, and it was dependent on the newly developed

drug, Krebiozen. Mr. Wright fought to be included in the drug's trial, and when he was, he showed a remarkable recovery - that is until he heard that the drug was ineffective in most cases. This news sent him spiraling back into relapse. His doctor convinced the man that he had received a defective dose and injected him with a new one, only this dose consisted of distilled water instead of drugs. Nevertheless, Mr. Wright's condition once again improved. Shortly after, the American Medical Association announced that the drug was worthless. Two days later, Mr. Wright relapsed and died (Harrington, 2008, p. 32).

So what is the point of this tale? Mr. Wright was being controlled by the power of suggestion. His doctor's belief that the drug would improve his condition combined with his overwhelming positivity contributed to the reduction of cancer symptoms, including tumor size. This is just one of many documented medical cases where the power of suggestion and positive thinking by both patient and doctor provided a more successful cure than any medical concoction. Skeptics have voiced their opinions on this method of treatment and claim that if the illness can be solved by the mind, then it must have been created by the mind to begin with, or that suggestion strips a patient of their autonomous right to treatment (Harrington, 2008, p. 33). These notions of skepticism are no match, however, for the evidence supporting the power of the mind; Mr. Wright would tell you that.

Now, how do positive thinking and suggestion relate to the use of meditation as a cancer treatment? If you think of meditation as purely physical action, in one "dimension" so to speak, then you are bound to argue the correlation between meditation and cancer. However, if you think of meditation more as a regular way of life that involves an individual's deep understanding of self as well as a more positive, compassionate mindset, then the case for the correlation between the two becomes quite strong.

So if I wanted to think of meditation in a two or three dimensional way, what logic would I have to impart? To meditate is to exercise the mind in serious reflection (Merton, 1960, p. 67). With this path of thinking, the term "meditate" is not confined to religious sentiments, but it encompasses the broad umbrella of sober mental activities that involve complete mental commitment. It must also be evident that reflection in a meditative context does not have to be solely intellectual, and to an even lesser extent involve pure reasoning (Huber, 1965, p. 63). In a certain sense, meditation acts as a tool to jump-start the self-healing of the mind through a consistent state of relaxation and oneness in thought. While meditation and self-healing of the mind do not share the same definition, the relationship that is cultured by meditation does support the initial stages of self-healing of the mind.

Thomas Merton (1960) wrote, "One who really meditates does not merely think, he also loves, and by his love he enters into that reality and knows it so to speak from within, by a kind of identification" (p. 65). Continuation of a meditative practice can teach people the patterns and habits of their minds and often leads to a more positive and well-rounded way of thinking (Delmonte, 2012, p. 312). In addition to mental advancements, meditation establishes a more sound connection between mind and body. More specifically, some who are involved in the research of mind and body have come to refer to the connection as mind-energy-body. In this example, energy represents the sphere that serves as the bridge between our minds and our physical state (Chaoul, 2012). An individual can become more aware of the connection between his or her mental and physical capabilities. This strengthens the correlation between meditation and the treatment of disease through the use of positive thoughts.

Now, doctors don't solely use suggestion as treatment for cancer. Traditional medicinal techniques for the treatment of cancer include radiotherapy, surgery and chemotherapy.

Radiotherapy uses precise, high-energy rays to kill cancer cells by damaging molecules inside the cell. Surgery is not a novel concept by any means; doctors directly remove the tumor, attempting to clip the disease at its source. Chemotherapy involves the use of prescription drugs to interfere with the process of cell division, and, therefore, doctors attempt to control the root cause of the tumor. Cancer research is constantly evolving and is becoming much more individualized, especially with the development of treatments based on a patient's genetic makeup. While these physical treatments are often successful, a majority of the time they provide an impermanent solution to the cancer problem.

Another major factor in the treatment of cancer is the relationship between a patient and his or her doctor or medical caregiver. While an individual is undergoing cancer treatment, s/he most likely forms a very strong, personal bond with his or her doctor (Miller A., 2006, p. 213). We have already explored the importance of positive thinking on the patient side, but who would have thought that positive thinking by the doctor could helpfully impact the patient? The double-blind situation involving the placebo effect is a perfect example of the mental power a doctor holds during treatment (Harrington, 2008, p. 33). In this type of study, neither the patient, nor the doctor knows if the patient is receiving a drug or a placebo treatment. Despite the fact that the doctor has no insight on the distribution of placebo or drug, evidence suggests that a physician's beliefs can even affect the results of a blind study such as this (Dossey, 1993, p. 135). Essentially, a positive, hopeful demeanor on the part of the doctor can often correlate to improved patient condition.

When viewed in separate spheres, cancer and meditation have very little in common. However, the impact of meditation on cancer and patient recovery is astounding in its own right. It must be acknowledged that meditation has been used in the treatment of illness and disease for centuries. Headaches, for example, are one such illness that recruits the help of meditation to curb crippling symptoms. There are two primary branches of meditation used to treat disease. The first is Concentrative Meditation in which an individual focuses on a single image or mantra. The second is Mindful Meditation which stresses awareness of all thoughts, feelings, sounds and images that may enter the mind. What is it about these forms of meditation that help to combat disease?

The answer lies mainly with the elimination of stress and its related symptoms. The onset of cancer can bring about enormous physical and mental stress for a patient. The personal reflection of a recovering cancer patient described the immense stress of treatment and her practice of meditation during remission. The patient's story exemplifies the power of a meditative practice while recovering from cancer (Miller S., 1998). While this story is a bit dated, its age really speaks to how meditation is a form of additional treatment that will never quite go out of style. The practice of meditation not only provides a relaxing outlet for the body, but it also creates an oasis of peace for the mind. Habitual meditation contorts the brain into a stress alleviating machine (Specia, Carlson, Goodey and Angen, 2000, p. 620). A "meta-analysis" of 10 studies found that Mindfulness Meditation improves the overall mental health of cancer patients (Nowinski, 2011). This leads to a more sound and relaxed mindset, and, in turn, this has shown a correlation to a decrease in cancerous side effects. For example, a study of 60 breast cancer survivors found that women who practiced meditation reduced the number and severity of symptoms. A pilot study examined the role of a particular meditative technique called "the work" on breast cancer survivors. Through a special practice of meditation, it was concluded that physical, social, familial, emotional and functional well-being were significantly improved due to the practice (Lev-ari, Zilcho-Mano, Rivo and Geva, 2013, p. 490).

Outside of research studies, there is concrete evidence that doctors and hospitals are utilizing meditation and relaxation techniques in their interactions with patients. Jon Kabat-Zinn developed the system of mindfulness-based stress reduction at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center almost 30 years ago (Elias, 2009). However, the use of meditation in hospitals today doesn't end there. There are over 31 documented hospitals across the country incorporating some type of Transcendental or Mindfulness Meditation into their medicinal practices (Elias, 2009).

The surmounting evidence for the correlation between cancer symptoms and a stable mind-body environment is still highly disputed. While the simple thoughts of positivity or regular meditation are not directly responsible for curing cancer, they do play a role in the regression of symptoms. The progressive nature of cancer treatment is making the future brighter for those impacted by the disease. Medicinal cures may only extend so far, however. Evidence shows that a person's mindset during and after treatment has a startling effect on treatment outcomes. Maybe in this world of constant advancement it is best to go back to basics. Acknowledging the connection between the environment of our minds and the environment of our bodies may be the simplest, yet most effective cure we could ever dream of.

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This annotated bibliography was completed for a final research project on women and social justice. Using a variety of sources, the student researcher explores how prostitution is handled in America's legal system and later argues in her final essay that pimps and solicitors should be held more accountable when it comes to child sex-trafficking.

Annotated Bibliography for Child Sex-Trafficking in the U.S.

By Madeline Reed

(Prof. Haas – “Women: Their Voices, Their Values, Their Vision”)

Brown, Patricia Leigh. "An All-Hands Approach Aids Girls Most at Risk." *New York Times* January 28, 2014, New York edition. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014>.

This article is from the highly credible *New York Times* and talks about the experience of Toni, a California teen, who had gotten involved in several illegal activities, including prostitution. It talks about her in the beginning, but then highlights Girls Court, an organization that works with victims of child sex trafficking and provides social services to aid girls at risk. The article talks about New York instituting 11 of these kinds of intervention courts statewide as part of the national movement and makes the case that these organizations are effective. This article offers a well-rounded argument by focusing on a different organization that has similar goals to GEMS, yet it takes a slightly different approach. Patricia Brown has been a contributor to the *New York Times* and the *California Watch* for years, and she has had her work published in national magazines. She also has written about this topic before, making her a recognized expert in the field.

GEMS. <http://www.gems-girls.org/>. Last modified February 2014.

I chose this website because it provides details about the sex trafficking of children in the United States, an issue that is not widely covered. It is run by a very credible organization, GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services), which has been around since 1998 and is headed by Rachel Lloyd. There is a definite bias in favor of these young girls who have been victimized, but the facts are gathered objectively. Lloyd is a recognized expert on the subject, and this website provides current information on the topic and is updated on a regular basis.

Lloyd, Rachel. *Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale: A Memoir*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.

Rachel Lloyd is the creator of GEMS and a recognized expert in sex trafficking. This memoir documents her personal experiences with the commercial sex industry as a teenager and how she became dedicated to helping other girls escape "the life." This source shows first-hand what the sex industry is like in the United States and provides a first-hand perspective of the sex trafficking of children. Lloyd has a bias for viewing young girls in the sex industry as victims, rather than as prostitutes and criminals. This source helps expose flaws in the legal system when it comes to young women being tried as adults, which is made worse because they are victims. This book helps to shed more light on the actual experience of these victims.

Marcus, Anthony, et al. "Is Child to Adult as Victim is to Criminal?" *Sexual Research and Social Policy* 9, no. 2 (October 20, 2011): 167. doi:10.1007.

This journal article was published in the credible database Spring Link. The main author, Anthony Marcus, is a professor from the department of Anthropology at CUNY (City University of New York) and has published several articles on the subject, including *Street Teens and Moral Entrepreneurs: Ethnographies of Sex and Commerce* and *Anti-Anti-Trafficking? Towards an Ethnography of Human Trafficking*. As a result of the two-year study that he and his colleagues conducted on the relationship between pimps and sex workers, he argues that organizations like GEMS seek to simplify the issue by saying that all workers under 18 are automatically victims. It is a useful source because it is academic and highly-respected, but it will be challenging to use because it is difficult to understand. This source offers a counterpoint to Lloyd and addresses another argument that could be made.

Schmidt, Michael. "F.B.I. Charges 159 Men with Forcing Teenage Girls into Prostitution." *New York Times* (New York, NY), July 30, 2013, New York edition. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013>

This article is also from the *New York Times*, but it is more objective. While the other article offers another possible solution to the issue of young girls being exploited, this one merely reports facts. It is an informative source to use because it is easy to understand, and the facts are credible because Schmidt is a reputable and experienced crime reporter. This source is good for statistics about prostitution in recent years.

Shutta, J. Eagle. "Does Biology Underlie the Oldest Profession? Prostitution and Sex Disparities in John Behavior." *Biodemography and Social Biology* 57, no. 2 (2011). DOI:10.1080.

This journal article is from a credible database and peer-reviewed publication. Again, because it is an academic piece, it probably may not be quoted as frequently since it is more difficult to understand. This source offers a psychoanalysis of Johns. Knowing the mindset of solicitors is not the main point of my thesis, but it can help to show why this issue continues.

Smith, Linda. "Shared Hope International." Shared Hope International. Last modified 2014.
<http://sharedhope.org>.

Linda Smith was a United States Congresswoman who went to India where she saw one of the most notorious trafficking districts. As a result, she decided to start an organization that offers an alternative to jail time for prostitution. The organization turned to the United States and participated in advocating for a Trafficking Victims Protection Act. It has an obvious agenda to not only raise awareness, but also to sell a video, much like GEMS. While the organizations have similar reasons for existence, this one also focuses on global issues, showing a different perspective. This source could also help to compare international vs. domestic issues with trafficking and possible solutions.

Very Young Girls. Directed by Nina Alvarez and David Schisgall. New York, NY/ US: n.p., 2008. DVD.

While this documentary is associated with GEMS and Rachel Lloyd has a hand in it, there is a lot of useful information that is different from the website. It shows shocking footage of actual pimps and how they lure girls into the industry. It also features testimonials from victims of the sex industry in the United States, an issue that is difficult to shed light on since sex trafficking of children is perceived to be a problem in other countries rather than one closer to home. "The School for Johns" clip inspired me to choose this topic because seeing the lenient punishment of johns evoked a strong reaction. This scene shows a class that has been set up by police for sex solicitors, or Johns, in lieu of jail time. It is infuriating to see them be able to take a class and have a clean record while these girls are branded for life. GEMS, the organization featured in this documentary, is legitimate as shown by its website, and the clips add a first-hand perspective to my topic.

This research project required each student to select a person, place, or event from his or her home geographical region that had national and/or international impact. Sheer curiosity led to this student learning more about a local writer's contribution to American literature, history, and culture.

Walt Whitman: The Voice of America

By Nicholas Roden
(Prof. Nolan – “Local History”)

Walt Whitman is an American poet and journalist born in Huntington, which is on Long Island in New York. Whitman is considered a legend in American literature because he wrote poetry that while criticized during his lifetime, influenced countless writers and readers. I am interested in Whitman because his birthplace and childhood home is only ten minutes from where I grew up. I have always been curious as to why he is such a revered member of American history and wished to learn more about him. Walt Whitman earned his national recognition for his poetry and his chosen themes related to humanity, nature, and war. During his time, Whitman's writing was considered revolutionary because of his departure from traditional poetic components. He frequently used free verse style, which made him seem like a poet for the average American. Praises for Whitman's works were widespread, for he was able to break “through the deadness of copied forms which keep shouting above everything that wants to be said today, drowning out one man with the accumulated weight of a thousand voices in the past” (Waldron, 2011). By acting as the voice of the average American, in both style and content, Whitman was the poet that was able to push poetry's boundaries in America.

Whitman's early influences came from his work as a journalist and his exposure to theatre and classical music growing up. In his teenage years, Whitman worked as a reporter in both Long Island and in New York City. His exposure to New York City and its reputation as a melting pot of culture became a “formative influence on his writing, for it was during this time that he developed the habit of close observation of the ever-shifting panorama of the city, and a great deal of his journalism, poetry, and prose came to focus on catalogs of urban life” (Price & Folsom, 1998). Whitman was able to witness the city's transition into a metropolis as immigrants from Europe came flooding in, bringing a change in the city's culture. Also, Whitman found entertainment in theatre and music, and these outlets influenced his writing. Walt Whitman's poetry is known to be “crowded with allusions to song and the singer. The singer is poet . . . the poet in everyman, in the worker, in the individual, in America en masse” (*Walt Whitman*). These influences showed Whitman the importance of communicating one's message to a large audience in a way that is understandable and relatable.

Whitman's motivation to construct *Leaves of Grass*, his collection of poetry and life's work, came from both his own desires and the influence of others, most famously Ralph Waldo

Emerson, who was a revered and prominent American poet when Whitman was growing up. Emerson wrote an essay entitled “The Poet” in 1844 that described his vision of the perfect poet. He envisioned the poet abandoning strict poetry guidelines, an idea that Whitman embraced. Whitman was obviously inspired by this as “in his preface to the first *Leaves of Grass*, he takes Emerson’s ‘poet’ and enlarges him to what he calls the ‘Greatest Poet,’ offering a program similar to Emerson’s” (Williams, 2010, p. 42). Whitman always desired to write poetry that could speak to and for the people as a whole rather than focus on himself. He wanted the voice of his poetry to be “large enough to speak for the workingmen and farmers who, in his radical vision, he saw as the substance of the nation” (Zweig, 1984, p. 29).

Despite the modern praises of *Leaves of Grass*, the collection of poems was originally bashed by critics in Whitman’s lifetime because of his lack of adherence to poetry standards of the time. Whitman’s focus on the inner workings of the average man and other themes, as well as his use of free verse instead of abiding by traditional, meter-set poetry, led to criticisms “that the poems were nothing more than a ‘heterogeneous mass of bombast, egotism, vulgarity, and nonsense.’ *The Christian Examiner* . . . regards it [*Leaves of Grass*] as one of its [American literature’s] worst disgraces” (Stewart, 1925, p. 211). Critics also believed Whitman didn’t achieve the message he wished to portray as “the spirit of Mr. Whitman’s poetry is the contrary of the democratic spirit, because it is deficient in clearness, in consistency, in art, and in common sense” (Kennedy, 1884, p. 600). The harsh criticisms of Whitman’s poetry help show the challenges of his work being accepted by the public yet add to his legend, for they show that great works will be recognized even if they are not universally, or initially, accepted.

The Civil War was a crucial period in Whitman’s career and personal life as he dealt with family involvement in the war and the effects of the war on the Union. Thus, it inspired Whitman to create poetry that would impact his fellow countrymen. Whitman was a nurse for the Union during the war because he witnessed the destruction the war had caused and also because his brother was a soldier. As a nurse he interacted with the soldiers whom he cared for, learning their stories and experiences. Whitman took these first-hand experiences and began to write poetry on the war that looked “for a balance between the good and the horror of war, although a trend toward a negative evaluation emerges” (Padgett, 1980, p. 151). This poetry was well-received by Americans because they were able to connect to his descriptions of a war between countrymen that many people didn’t fully understand. While this was a tragic time, it helped to bring Whitman “back to life,” and it established his poetic reputation: “An unpredictable sequence of events following the end of hostilities ensured his transformation from the ‘eccentric and slightly outré misfit’ to beloved national poet” (Fuller, 2011, p. 215).

One of Whitman’s prominent poems regarding the Civil War is “Song of the Banner at Daybreak,” which shows two different, but parallel ideas about the war - the desire to fight for one’s country and the fear of danger and death. In the poem, a child tells his father that he wishes to fight in the war and defend his nation’s flag. Opposite the child is the father who calls his son a “foolish babe” for wishing to be involved in a war “with passions of demons, slaughter, and premature deaths” (Whitman, “Song”). Poems like these showed Whitman’s ability to give multiple perspectives on a topic, which in this case is war. The Civil War marked the time Whitman’s poetry began to have national impact as the subject matter connected with Americans, allowing Whitman’s image to grow nationally.

Returning to the work that Whitman was and is most known for, the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* was published in 1851; however, this would be the first of many editions of the

expanding collection. Throughout his life, seven different editions were published, all with new poems. For Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* was like an open canvas as the more poetry he wrote throughout his life, the more he added to the collection (Ryan, 2014). What had started as a small collection of twelve poems transformed into a massive catalog of over 400 poems. His constant desire to add to and expand *Leaves of Grass* was the work of an “inspired poet and skilled craftsman . . . adjusting and altering and rearranging. For the rest of his life, he would add, delete, fuse, separate, and rearrange poems as he issued six very distinct editions of *Leaves of Grass*” (Walt Whitman). It is obvious that Whitman was never truly satisfied with one edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Instead, he devoted all of his efforts to adding new poetry and altering existing poetry in his attempt to create a perfect version of the collection, which could never be reached.

One of Whitman’s lasting influences is the spread of poetry written in free verse, which means that the constrictions of meter is abandoned, and the form flows as naturally as speech. Traditionally, poetry before Whitman’s time strictly obeyed meter while Whitman wished for his poetry to be read as if it were being spoken in a conversation. According to Krystal Waldron, “The speech cadences of American language are rooted well thanks to Whitman. Whitman’s poetic structure was far from metrical; it is based on . . . intonation . . . as well as the pitch of voice” (Waldron, 2011). While not initially accepted due to how unusual and foreign it seemed when compared to traditional poetry at the time, free verse began to spread as people realized the freedom it gave poets in crafting their work. Alfred Kreyborg, an American poet who gained prominence after Whitman passed away “felt that Whitman had been the guiding spirit behind the free verse movement, [and] that ‘with the advent of the free verse movement, the spirit of Whitman was reborn’” (Brown, 1961, p. 39).

The main lessons that shine through Whitman’s poetry are those that deal with internal personal issues. He tried to reach people on a personal level so that they could understand the basic aspects of humanity. Whitman’s poetry can be seen as a sort of celebration of human life as “he tries to make wondrous the common, the commonplace, the everyday. Even more, he tries to have us think it possible that what is cheap or coarse or ugly or artless has its own beauty also - the beauty that any person or thing has just by being there” (Kateb, 1990, p. 557). Not only did Whitman want his readers to find beauty in everything, he wanted people to act in a way that promoted positive ideas. An example of Whitman’s optimistic message is in the poem “O Me! O Life!”, in which he asks what is good in a life filled with “trains of the faithless, of cities fill’d with the foolish” (Whitman, “O Me!”). In an answer to his own question, Whitman compares life to a “powerful play” and in which we may “contribute a verse” for the better (Whitman, “O Me!”). According to C.K. Williams, “[M]orally, what he [Whitman] teaches is to be accepting, to be generous, unselfish; to refuse or reject anyone else’s suffering, or pain . . . he wants us not to be afraid of ourselves, even of our dark darkest, most doubtful selves” (Williams, 2010, p. 185). Whitman’s works were impactful because they promoted positive messages for any person to read and embrace. The ideas promoted by Whitman could contribute to a society where optimism is embraced and where people treat themselves and those around them well.

Walt Whitman’s work was never truly appreciated until after his death, when readers began to understand his style of poetry. This led to a path of praise for Whitman and inspiration for those who read his work. Whitman’s themes of the human spirit and of optimism are still celebrated because they are timeless messages. His views on equality amongst people were celebrated not only by poets but by people who dealt with social justice issues. He was able to reach and impact various “socialists, anarchists, and freethinkers . . . [They] found a source for their personal and political activism in Whitman’s radical egalitarianism” (Bohan, 2006, 5).

Whitman's national impact can be shown in the fact he was able to influence not only other poets, but also leaders in social movements, and perhaps more importantly, the average American.

Walt Whitman is an American poet who was born in Huntington, Long Island and is celebrated to this day for his writing. Whitman was impactful because he embraced free verse poetry and wrote poems that were accessible and personal. Whitman's embracement of writing poetry that any American could connect to in a style that could be read as if someone was naturally speaking it, allowed his work to be widely spread and praised to this day. Author Paul Zweig claims that "if art is a measure of a culture's deepest understanding, of its felt reality, then Whitman's contribution cannot be understated" (Zweig, 1984, 346). Such praises illustrate the national and international impact Whitman's poetry has had on people, culture, and literature.

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For this research project, the students were encouraged to select a topic that they were passionate about and complete some preliminary research prior to developing a more specific research question. Because of her enthusiasm for horses, this writer chose to focus on the benefits of equine therapy for those battling diseases and chronic illnesses.

Horses as Healers: The Role of Hippotherapy in Treating Mental and Physical Handicaps

By Sarah A. Rothstein
(Prof. Redkey – “Leadership”)

What walks on four legs, is covered with a soft layer of fur, has a huge heart, and works miracles? It is a therapy horse which is used across the globe to treat different diseases and chronic illnesses in people of all ages. Hippotherapy “is a physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes” (American Hippotherapy Association [AHA] 2010). Hippotherapy provides not only physical benefits but also emotional, mental, social and cognitive ones that are unparalleled in other physical therapy techniques. As more individuals turn to hippotherapy as a primary means to treat their illnesses, the medicinal power of the horse and the miracles it provides are becoming apparent. As riders reap the benefits of hippotherapy on physical, mental, and emotional levels, it is obvious that hippotherapy is more effective and successful in treating various handicaps when compared to traditional methods of therapy.

Hippotherapy was first mentioned by Hippocrates and is derived from the Greek word “hippos” meaning “horse.” Hippotherapy became an established form of therapy with the formation of the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) in 1992, whose mission is “to educate and promote excellence in the field of Equine Assisted Therapy” (AHA 2010). The AHA defines hippotherapy as an alternative form of therapy meant to incorporate skills into riding lessons that improve a rider’s sensory processing and neuro-motor functions. It is a form of passive riding in which the rider does not play an active role in directing and commanding the horse. The instructor is a certified physical, occupational, or speech therapist who has the skills to help patients with disabilities enhance their cognitive and physical functioning. The instructor draws upon the unique movements of the horse’s gait beneath a rider’s body to treat a diverse array of handicaps. Hippotherapy is used to treat autism, brain injuries, cardiovascular issues, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, emotional and learning disabilities, post-polio speech impairments, spina bifida, and spinal cord injuries (Ride To Walk n.d.). The ability of hippotherapy to treat a wide range of disorders provides hope to the 500,000 people in America who have Cerebral Palsy, the 4,000 children with Down syndrome born in the United States each

year, the 1,500 babies born each year with spina bifida, and the more than 1 million children who experience brain injuries each year (“How Many of Our Children” 2009). The staggering number of children and adults suffering from illnesses and handicaps only increases the need for hippotherapy to become a better known and accepted form of therapy that is incorporated into the treatment plan of patients to improve their overall well-being and livelihood.

Both hippotherapy and physical therapy share the common goal of improving the physical health of a patient. However, hippotherapy has the power to extend into the realm of mental, emotional and cognitive health. Hippotherapy introduces patients to the opportunity to interact with volunteers, instructors and other riders as it “transcends therapeutic methods and provides people with the joy of participating in a program that offers social, athletic, and personal rewards, while providing benefits as well” (Ride To Walk n.d.). In contrast, physical therapy has one goal in mind— “to make daily tasks and activities easier...may help with walking, going upstairs, or getting in and out of bed” (Husney 2011). The patients who seek treatment often face more than just physical challenges and have delays or shortcomings in their emotional, psychological, and mental health. These needs cannot be adequately addressed by the care and attention a patient receives from a physical therapist alone when compared to the care a patient receives from an instructor/therapist, a volunteer, and a horse in a hippotherapy session.

Hippotherapy improves flexibility, balance, and muscle strength as “riding gently and rhythmically moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait” (Ride To Walk n.d.). The horses’ ability to mimic the human gait improves muscle tone and reduces muscle rigidity. Also, the horse’s movement provides patients and instructors with the opportunity to perform a wider array of exercises and achieve more goals in one session. For example, a study conducted on patients with Rett Syndrome (RS), a “complex neurological disorder resulting from a genetic fault in the X chromosome,” demonstrates how hippotherapy is more effective at improving the symptoms of the condition. The main symptoms of the disorder include “reduced functional abilities in fine and gross motor skills, along with the development of stereotypic hand movements, scoliosis and growth retardation” (Elaine & Meir 2011 p.248). The varying effects of RS make traditional therapy methods ineffective, but “hippotherapy can be adapted to each student’s needs” and exercises can be modified to cater to each individual’s circumstances (Elaine & Meir 2011 p.250).

Hippotherapy “activates deep muscles not usually operated through conventional physical therapy,” providing drastic benefits to riders as they are thrown off balance and forced to stay atop the horse by controlling their postural response in reaction to the horse beneath them. Exercise machines do not have the same range of motion as a horse and fail to mimic the natural human gait. Therapists working with horses have the skills to “elicit versatile, favorable responses” from the horses that best suit the rider’s needs while the rider is “simply sitting on the horse; advancing to walking and keeping balance while trotting.” Each of these different gaits provides different movements, speed, and directions that shift the riders in different ways that can’t be recreated using exercise machines in traditional therapeutic settings (Elaine & Meir 2011 pp.250-257).

Hippotherapy adds a whole new dimension to therapy by changing where and how it takes place and the mood created throughout sessions. It is able to transform the arduous and often painful task of physical exercise into a “positive experience and provides an alternative to the daily, pain filled existence” as patients work their bodies and minds while enjoying the leisurely activity of riding a horse (Hakanson 2010 p.50). For instance, I volunteer at a therapeutic riding facility and worked with a woman suffering from multiple sclerosis. The

hippotherapy sessions not only improved her physical functioning, but also her outlook on life. She spent less time in waiting rooms and more time “close to nature” and experiencing “sounds and smells that differed from a traditional health-care environment” (Hakanson 2010 p.50). The barns where riding lessons take place have an “environmental dimension characterized by leisure time and role change” that erases the stigmas associated with traditional physical therapy such as “handicapped,” “incapable” or “impaired” (Hakanson 2010 p.50).

In addition to bringing patients close to nature, hippotherapy has proven effective in increasing the spiritual and emotional well-being of cancer patients. Tampa Bay Radiation Oncology, a cancer treatment center, realizing the medicinal powers of horses, is “taking their patients from the doctor’s office to the farm for a day at the ranch where they can spend quality and therapy time with the horses” (Vickery 2013 p.1). The change of routine from the traditional clinical setting where the focus is on the illness of the patient to the ranch where the focus is shifted to letting the patients learn “about the horses, groom them, and gain the therapeutic benefits of the program” and is welcomed by all those who attend. The cancer patients reported increased motivation, self-worth, and hope as they experienced the healing power of the horse in “a safe and caring place that provided relief, support, and peace” (Vickery 2013 p.1). The change of environment and location increases the mental and emotional well-being of the patient, making them more receptive in their traditional physical therapy sessions.

Hippotherapy addresses the mental and emotional needs of a patient rather than focusing solely on physical improvements. Therapists specializing in hippotherapy utilize the horse as “a conduit to reach our goals...[as] the horse is custom-made to give rhythmical dynamic input to flexors and extensors of the trunk... It’s just a beautiful tool” (Mcgraw 2007 p.2). As an increasing number of therapists are made aware of hippotherapy, more patients, especially young children, are beginning to reap its benefits. As stated in an article in the *Washington Post*, parents of special needs children are finding that hippotherapy is the most stimulating to the emotional, physical, and mental being of their children. Specifically, the parents of a child suffering from cerebral palsy stated, “We’ve done quite a few different things with Daniel...and this one we’ve stuck with, because of his interaction with the horse” (Mcgraw 2007 p.2). When choosing a form of therapy for their children, parents are not only concerned with the physical health of their children but also with their happiness and mental well-being.

Hippotherapy provides patients with the chance to build a relationship with the horse; a relationship that can’t be created by traditional therapeutic means. The horse is a therapeutic animal, similar to a cat or dog brought into a children’s hospital, as it fulfills the “congenital need of humans to communicate with nature” (Hakanson 2010 p.49). Hippotherapy transforms “the traditional patient role into a three-part relationship between rider, horse, and therapist” in contrast to a traditional setting where communication and interaction are limited to the patient and therapist only (Hakanson 2010 p.46). The ability to work on communication, social, and relationship skills, while at the same time building up physical stamina and strength, is a characteristic of hippotherapy that is unmatched by traditional therapy methods.

Many children and adults with physical handicaps suffer from low self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth as they feel limited in many areas of their lives. Hippotherapy provides an outlet for children to increase their self-confidence while spending time outdoors and with others. The Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Center (TRRC) in Glenwood “is outfitted to support hippotherapy clients with gentle horses, therapists on staff, and a hydraulic lift, designed to help wheelchair users onto their horses” (Mcgraw 2007 p.1). An increase in self-confidence

and self-worth is accompanied by rides into the woods on horseback as “kids with disabilities spend their lives in a wheelchair or in bed,” but horseback riding “does an amazing thing for their self-worth...in essence, they are leapfrogging beyond what a normal child can do, and that is what they need” (McGraw 2007 p.2). I had the opportunity to work with a young boy who had both of his legs amputated at birth. His prosthetics prohibited him from playing contact sports and left him feeling abnormal and weird. However, I saw a change in his attitude and outlook toward his condition as he learned how to ride his favorite horse, Cosmo. The increase in self-confidence that stemmed from attending hippotherapy sessions led him to compete at a local horse show where he took home third place. The ability for a handicapped child to exceed the limitations of their physical ailment, even if only for the course of the hippotherapy session, does an enormous amount of good for their psychological health.

Despite the evidence and research studies conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of hippotherapy, some argue that the risk factors associated with it do not outweigh the known physical, mental, and emotional benefits that stem from building a relationship with the horse. These critics argue that the dangers of riding a horse make traditional therapeutic means more reasonable. As with any form of physical activity, there are inherent risks associated with riding a horse, and riding “can result in broken bones, spinal injuries, even brain damage” (Coulson 2007 p.1). In fact, an article from BBC states that “you are actually 20 times more likely to have an accident on a horse than on a bike” as a “horse isn’t a machine--it hasn’t got brakes, and you’ve got a lot further to fall” (Coulson 2007 p.3). Despite this unsettling statistic, the same article states that nearly three million people horseback ride in Britain alone, and that “riding lessons are as much a part of life for many families as piano lessons” (Coulson 2007 p.3). The risks associated with riding and the tragedies that people hear about are often accidents that occur when proper safety procedures are not followed. Therefore, a family would be misinterpreting the data and evidence if they restricted their child from attempting hippotherapy under the assumption that horses are dangerous animals and “an accident waiting to happen” (Coulson 2007 p.1). Many misconceptions surrounding horses are due to their overwhelmingly large size and body mass, yet despite this, “few horses deliberately attack humans” (Strickland 2000 p.1). When safety precautions are taken into consideration, the risks of injury from horseback riding are drastically reduced, and the overall enjoyment and benefits received from riding are increased.

Studies conducted to determine the effectiveness of hippotherapy have focused primarily on the benefits for children and young adults and not older adults. This leads many critics to believe that hippotherapy cannot be used to treat older individuals. William Benda, a physician and hippotherapy advocate states that the “future benefit is much greater for the 4-year old than a 40-year old,” according to an article published in the *Washington Post* (McGraw 2007 p.2). However, the results that adults obtain from hippotherapy, compared to those obtained from traditional therapy sessions, are much greater. For example, fifty- two year old Scott Downing has been receiving hippotherapy following a traumatic brain injury (Lunen 2010 p.1). The challenge of riding and caring for the horses is a vital component in the healing of his brain. The same degree of challenge and difficulty cannot be recreated in physical therapy sessions conducted in clinical settings. Downing’s therapists are “kind of excited that this might be able to help him return to higher function” and “help him get back to work more quickly” (Lunen 2010 p.2). Downing is just one example of how hippotherapy can be a critical and vital tool in the process of recovery and healing in older patients suffering from an injury.

Despite the benefits that hippotherapy provides to riders of all different ages and backgrounds, there have been many negative factors attributed to it in regards to cost, insurance coverage and availability. The burden of the additional cost of hippotherapy sessions, on top of other medical bills, begs the question of whether hippotherapy is worthwhile. A typical price for a thirty minute hippotherapy session is thirty to fifty dollars, which adds up quickly as most patients will attend sessions continuously, sometimes for years (Michaud n.d. p.2). These sessions are expensive as they “require not only a horse, but also a lot of volunteer support, and stabling and a riding arena” (Mcgraw 2007 p.2). However, traditional physical therapy sessions can run at approximately the same price, and the patient isn’t receiving the same level of benefits. Price cannot be the deciding factor when choosing on a course of treatment that has the possibility to significantly improve the well-being of a loved one.

Another negative factor argued by many critics is the lack of insurance coverage which leads many families to “pay out of pocket for every session which may not always be feasible” (Michaud n.d. p.3). The lack of funding on the part of insurance companies is due to their misunderstanding of hippotherapy as “recreational and not therapeutic” (Harris 1997 p.1). However, as more patients and families broadcast their interest in hippotherapy and participate in research studies, insurance companies will view hippotherapy as “medically effective and necessary” (Harris 1997 p.1). As more insurance companies see the medicinal value of hippotherapy, “the therapy would be used more often” and would also solve yet another negative component of hippotherapy—accessibility. Currently, hippotherapy is not available in all locations which “could cause it to be hard for people to make arrangements for transportation . . .” (Ratliffe & Sanekance 2009 p.2). For example, there is only one center specializing in hippotherapy in Rhode Island, and for those who are not located near the center, hippotherapy may not be a practical option. Finding a solution to this problem will be easier than most think as the availability often is not limited by the number of ranches in an area but by the number of ranches that specialize in hippotherapy. To rectify this problem, more ranches need to hire specialized instructors and broaden the range of clientele they cater to, especially since it is “clear that horseback riding will be a recreational and therapeutic option that parents and children will continue to pursue” (Ratliffe & Sanekance 2009 p.2). The negative factors currently associated with hippotherapy will become less problematic in the future as the impact of hippotherapy on the lives of those it touches becomes well-known.

Despite the research, surveys, and clinical trials conducted to measure the effectiveness of hippotherapy, critics argue “beneficial results have been suggestive but not conclusive. Further research needs to be conducted to produce more definitive results” (Michaud n.d. p.2). I acknowledge and agree with this argument; more research should be performed in order to increase the effectiveness of hippotherapy and broaden the population of people aware of the treatment. Many studies performed in the past are “simply descriptive in nature . . . [and] do not allow any confidence in a causal relationship between hippotherapy and improvement in patients” (Zane n.d. p.1). This finding is based on the fact that many tests have included a small group of study and were done “with survey instruments that may have been unreliable” (Zane n.d. p.1). Advocates of hippotherapy, including myself, recognize these shortcomings and now “identify the need for conducting valid, well-designed experiments that will hopefully prove that hippotherapeutic techniques can effect change in consumers” (Zane n.d. p.1). Advocates are also suggesting different research methods to ease the woe of critics such as “single-subject research to begin to generate a solid research base in order to empirically determine the effects of this therapeutic approach” (Zane n.d. p.1). The conducting of more research will serve to create a

domino effect, leading to the establishment of more therapeutic centers and an increase in coverage by insurance companies.

Horses not only have the biggest of hearts but also the power to heal in more ways than one. From their ability to mimic the human gait and increase physical functioning of handicapped individuals, to being able to put a smile on an autistic child's face, the true beauty of a horse cannot be captured in any other realm of life. The ability of therapists to draw upon these unique characteristics of the horse has opened up a world of opportunity for many handicapped individuals. The physical benefits of hippotherapy coupled with the emotional and mental benefits it provides trump the results obtained by traditional physical therapy.

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The students in this section were assigned to write an essay containing a thesis that sprang from the ideas articulated in their assigned readings. This author chose to argue against the use of nuclear energy and offers impressive scientific evidence in this rich, convincing essay.

Opening Pandora's Box . . . of Radioactive Material

By Kelly Russo

(Prof. L. Woolbright – “The Environment”)

Pandora thought she had closed the lid too late and believed all the evils of the world had escaped, but she was mistaken. Lingered in the very corner of the box, along with hope, were a few iniquities and wicked catastrophes, such as radioactive disasters. Humanity currently possesses the key to that legendary Pandora's Box in its hand. If the lid is pried open again, all the remaining evils of the world will fly out, including radioactive leaks. These radioactive leaks, if released, will no longer be able to be contained again. It is like an all-encompassing beast with no concrete form against which we could attack. It is invisible yet entirely deceptive in nature, lacing the water we drink and the air we breathe. It will be unrestrained as it infiltrates the world, wreaks havoc on all earth's inhabitants, and preys upon the wellbeing of humans. All are vulnerable to its immense effects. We, as mere mortals, have no ability to stop it once it has been released. Radioactivity may provide power to the nation, but harnessing that power is like harnessing a thrashing monster.

The power that the radioactive nuclear plants contain is too potent for mankind to govern. As Newton Minnow argues, “Power has limitless capabilities for good—and for evil. And it carries with it awesome responsibilities—responsibilities which you and I cannot escape” (Warren 2011). These words were first stated in 1961, in a speech Minnow gave to the Federal Communications Community. The essence of this insight remains a cornerstone on how humanity should function. This year, James Hansen, a leading environmentalist, along with three other colleagues, released a letter pleading with society to convert to nuclear power since we are desperate for both an energy crisis solution and an environmental intervention (McKibben 2011, p. 275). However, in doing so, he largely ignored the implications involved. Hansen essentially asked us to dive headlong into a situation that will, without a doubt, result in a loss of life. If society were to embrace nuclear energy as the major source of our power, it would need to be confident in man's usage of it. At this point, we are not responsible enough to handle all the implications nuclear power plants introduce. Just as Pandora lost all control once she opened the lid, so, too, will we if we recklessly embark on the nuclear power mission at this time. It is entirely too dangerous to convert to nuclear powers since, as experts have noted, “Humans have not [even] evolved to a point where they can responsibly split the atom” (The Atomic States of

America 2012). The scale of impact if something goes awry is unforeseeable and counter-intuitive to natural processes. Thus, nuclear reactors should be eliminated because they have little economic benefit, open up a possibility of wide-scale terrorist attack, and pose serious medical threats.

Nuclear power plants hide behind a façade of cheaper operating costs than coal power plants, while, in reality, the economic benefits are almost nonexistent. The costs of building nuclear power plants are, on average, about \$5 billion (WNA 2012). In the United States, the cost even reaches about \$12 billion in some cases (SU 2012). With a typical 11% interest loan, paid out over the given time span, a \$5 billion price tag quickly becomes a \$17 billion price tag (SU 2012). Some critics admit that the initial cost of building a nuclear power plant may be extremely costly but claim that the nuclear power plant pays itself off over time since it has lower operating costs than coal (Haider 2013). It is true that the cost of functioning a nuclear power plant is only 1.37 cents/kwh (the equivalent of 12,001cents/kilowatt-year) in comparison to 2.51 cents/kwh (the equivalent of 21,987.6 cents/kilowatt-year) (NEI 2012). This assumes that the nuclear plant is working at normal capacity, has typical heat rates, has average overnight capital, and has fixed operation and maintenance expenses, as well as variable operation and maintenance expenses (EIA 2013). However, this is hardly an accurate portrayal. Although nuclear power plants cost less money to run, a meltdown at any one plant could economically outweigh all the savings. Based on the pattern of a nuclear disasters occurring once every 16 years, although we would save 478,646 cents/kilowatt in that time frame, we could lose up to 30 times that amount in crisis restoration (Nuclear Energy Institute). These cleanup costs will often consume every last cent and more than what was saved throughout the years.

In 1986, the cleanup cost of the Chernobyl disaster exceeded the economic benefits derived from all other power reactors operated in the Soviet Union (The Atomic States of America 2012). This means that of the 54 nuclear power plants in the Soviet Union, their combined economic savings did not even equal the price tag of the disaster at just one plant. Three Mile Island (TMI) was another example of cleanup costs outweighing the money saved in operating nuclear power plants (The Atomic States of America 2012). When unit two at TMI had a meltdown, it cost nearly \$1 billion to defuel the station (The Atomic States of America 2012). An additional \$1837 million was spent in the decommission and decontamination of the reactor site (The Atomic States of America 2012). Moreover, the site had only been functioning for 90 days! Sadly, these meltdowns are not extremely rare. In just the past 50 years, three major meltdowns already have occurred. This equals about one major meltdown every 16 or 17 years. That is a whole lot of money for the world to start shelling out every 16 years.

Even when a major meltdown has not occurred, there have been numerous cases of suspected leaks that require exorbitant financial resources to help repair the damage. According to the United States government, radioactive tritium has leaked from over 75% of United States nuclear sites with the number and severity increasing as time goes on (The Atomic States of America 2012). When the public is made aware, changes will have to be made to reestablish a sense of security. This means those repair and cleanup costs are only going to grow exponentially as the public realizes there are leaks. The nuclear power companies are also heedlessly wasting American tax dollars. Six hundred million dollars was spent on lobbying for nuclear power (PSR 2011). Another \$63 million was spent on campaign contributions (The Atomic States of America 2012), and \$8 million was paid to a public relations firm, Hill and Knowlton, a company famous for representing the shady tobacco industry (The Atomic States of America 2012). Like the campaign Hill and Knowlton made claiming that cigarettes were not

bad, so, too, are they trying to pull the wool over our eyes and blind us from seeing the truth about nuclear plants. This excessive waste of money should be put toward a better use, such as investing in other alternative energy resources.

At the same time that nuclear power plants are draining our limited funds, they also are opening up the possibility of wide scale terrorist attacks. It is almost impossible for these plants to be properly defended against hijacking and sabotage, for they provide the perfect opportunity for wide-scale distress. Even the Natural Resource Defense Council issued a statement that nuclear meltdown was only one of the numerous drawbacks of nuclear power, arguing that security was also a major issue (Nuclear Power Vital, say Experts 2011). Not one of America's commercial power plants is secure enough to withstand a large scale terrorist attack reminiscent of 9/11 (Reuters 2013). The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the U.S. only requires a site to be able to defend itself against a maximum four or five people (Reuters 2013). However, the 9/11 attack plan involved 19 people, which far exceeds a site's defense capacities (Reuters 2013). Furthermore, these sites are not required to provide a shield from the attack of sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (Reuters 2013). Another risk is that nuclear power plant sites and research centers have bomb-grade material that could easily be transformed into weapons if placed in the wrong hands (Reuters 2013).

There is also the major threat of attacks being made with the intention of sabotaging the materials and causing nuclear meltdowns. This is risky not only for the reactor site itself, but also because of the spent waste pools where leakage into mainstream water could lead to major meltdowns and extensive discharge of unsafe radioactive material. In fact, a plan was exposed that al-Qaeda contemplated attacking a U.S. nuclear power plant in 2001 (Reuters 2013), and still today, the country must be on high alert for such an attack (Reuters 2013). Even this past October, threats from an unknown source against the plant at TMI were delivered to the local airport (ABC 2013). It is true that terrorists intend to inflict the maximum amount of damage possible and nuclear power plants hold that potential. According to Daniel Hirsch, president of the Committee to Bridge the Gap, nuclear power plants are "amongst the most high-value targets that we have in the US" (ABC 2013). They are like ticking time bombs waiting for someone to light a spark. Although higher security can be implemented, there is no way to foolproof the security plan to perfection. Attackers will always find some way around the roadblocks set up. Terrorists simply should not have such a ready-made weapon of destruction at their disposal.

Finally, a major topic of concern is that nuclear power plants bring about medical threats that are just as worrisome as terrorist attacks. The plants have been linked with a copious number of cancer cases. These radioactive leaks infiltrate our water systems and air supply, exposing our bodies to alpha particles (The Atomic States of America 2012). Alpha particles, which are ejected by the nuclei of unstable atoms, are subatomic pieces containing two protons and two neutrons (EPA 2012). These alpha particles can cause gene mutations (EPA 2012). Furthermore, it does not take multiple cases of alpha particle mutations to entail a cancerous disease. A single alpha particle triggering a solitary regulatory gene mutation can end a person's life (The Atomic States of America 2012). Sadly, some people do not even know their lives are at risk, and some are not even aware they reside in relatively close proximity to a power plant. One woman, for example, did not realize this until a friend pointed out how excessive the funerals in her hometown were (The Atomic States of America 2012). She lived in Shirley, Long Island near Brookhaven National Laboratory, which had three nuclear reactors on site (The Atomic States of America 2012). At the same time, one out of every nine women in her community developed breast cancer (The Atomic States of America 2012).

The spike in cancer was not unique to the area around this particular plant; numerous plants have shown trends of astronomical cancer rates in surrounding regions. In one reactor community, in spite of regulation policies, there were rows of houses stricken with cancerous residents (The Atomic States of America 2012). Questions began to mount as the evidence became clear that families were being affected by merely the presence of a supposed well-functioning, regulatory nuclear power plant. People began to really wonder about the integrity of the NRC (The Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and the companies that owned the plants. It was discovered that the owner of Millstone nuclear power station had been removing contaminated fuel from the reactor long before the given timeframe set for health precautions. Studies are still being performed on the health effects it will have on those Connecticut residents (Petroni 2012). It was also unearthed that the Exelon power plant had been leaking tritium for almost ten years with no action taken. The NRC even caught wind of this information, six years before it was handled. In 1996 alone, 250 thousand gallons were leaked at the vacuum breakers (The Atomic States of America 2012). By 1998, the company admitted to spilling over 6 million gallons, and another 3 million the following year (The Atomic States of America). Cases of local cancer victims soon spiked and lawsuits were drawn up (The Atomic States of America 2012). The NRC lacks the wherewithal to handle such companies and does not even evaluate whether insufficient evacuation plans or earthquake risks should be taken into consideration when reapproving nuclear plant sites. It is a scary thought that such a danger is looming and so little forethought is used.

One day, nuclear power might be an ideal source, but today is not that day. We cannot be complacent about introducing such a major threat with so many dangerous factors pending. Although many are quick to turn to it as an alternative energy source, we have to be confident and sure nuclear power is safe before making a decision. Nuclear power may be better for the environment than coal burning, but the safety and health of our people is the most important priority. We cannot implement a system knowing it will sacrifice the lives of many, when even one life lost is too many. Furthermore, other clean energy sources are still available, which can be used to eliminate CO₂ emissions – ones that do not compromise the health of citizens. Alternative energy sources such as wind and solar should be utilized more regularly to provide this power. Money that is wasted on nuclear power cleanup and lobbying should be put to use in refining wind and solar energy sources. As shown, nuclear power is not as cost effective as many assume. Critics can no longer hide the facts while claiming nuclear power is the best economic option. Wind and solar power are viable sources that can be implemented now. Hansen made the claim that we need to switch to nuclear power because there is no time to waste on improving other options. However, the technology for other energy sources is already in existence, so implementing it on a large scale could begin as soon as plans are put in place. Costs may be a bit extensive for solar and wind power initially, but the cost of life lost to nuclear power is far greater. Man currently has a weighty decision on his hands. This mythical box containing radioactive material, which man now possesses, “holds the powers of creation and destruction” (The Atomic States of America 2012). If Pandora had originally kept the lid shut, the world may never have known of misery. However, if man reopens the lid now, the world may never see a future.

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When prompted to research a topic that he was passionate about, this student took a cross-disciplinary approach to studying music. In addition to giving historical and sociological background information, the writer provides recent physiological and psychological support from pioneers in the field when constructing his argument for the addictive nature of music.

The Powerful Effects of Music: What Music Can Do and Its Addictiveness

By George Santoire

(Prof. Elizabeth Redkey – “Leadership”)

Music is more pervasive in our world than ever and has become a staple of modern society. It is commonly blasted through the ears of teenagers and adults alike, from the enormous speakers on concert stages and from the ceilings of department and grocery stores. Music litters the big screen and television shows. It is now found in crisp clarity and complexity in every video game on the market and has quickly invaded the internet, where it now pours out of the speakers of tablets, laptops, and desktop computers. As Chris Loersch and Nathan Arbuckle state, “[A]ll these various sources create a world in which many individuals rarely leave the comfort of a musical environment.”¹ The music industry continues to be an enormous multi-billion dollar business, and beyond this legitimate industry, the world of music piracy continues to create and distribute illegal music. Clearly the world has given great importance to music, and listening to music has continued to be one of the most pleasurable and satisfying activities for decades now. It consistently rates as one of the top 10 most pleasurable things in life.² Because it is so easily obtained and carried nowadays, people can get constant pleasure from music. Therefore, I argue that not only is music incredibly pleasurable, with its great ease of availability and endless variety of selections to choose from, but that the enjoyment that comes from listening to music can even lead to addictive behaviors. Thus, music can have profound effects on all of us.

The Origins of Music

Music has existed since the dawn of humankind. Neanderthals—modern humans’ closest relatives—even possessed some form of music. The oldest known instrument, a flute made of bone, was found in Slovenia in the Divje Babe Site and was carbon dated to be at least 43,000 years old.³ Music’s origins have largely remained a mystery to most academics, though, and theories abound for humanity’s propensity for music production and its musical capabilities. However, the two most prevalent theories are that music evolved for sexual selection and

developmental purposes and that it evolved to facilitate group living or overall group cohesiveness.

Following the sexual selection and developmental argument, children seem to become sensitive to, and will begin to move to, their mothers' voices roughly between the thirteenth and twenty-fifth week of being in the womb and will even move to the "steady rhythm" of their mothers' heartbeats and breathing.⁴ Infants, interestingly, continue to seek out auditory stimulation after birth, especially repetitious and rhythmic sound much like they had in the womb, such as forms of speech that are "rich in emotional meaning,"⁵ which is usually very common in "baby talk." One study done out of the University of California at San Francisco found that when newborn rats were exposed only to an environment filled with ceaseless white noise, the rats developed an abnormal auditory cortex, and months after their white noise stimulation, the rats had major physiological as well as anatomical abnormalities in their auditory cortices. These problems continued well after the end of the study, yet when the rats were brought back into an environment of typical auditory stimulation, their auditory cortices slowly began to return to how they appear in normal rats.⁶ Infants seem to feel an overall calming effect from rhythmic sounds as well.⁷ This underscores the fact that "acoustic rhythm" seems to be a "key requirement for the normal growth and maturation of the neural systems that process auditory information."⁸ Gene Wallenstein further concludes: "An early preference for experiencing repetitious and rhythmic stimulations could have a profound effect on the many forms of adult behavior. Indeed, such preferences may lead to the development of our fondness for a host of pleasurable phenomena such as music production and perception, dance, poetry, and ritualistic behaviors, to name but a few."⁹

This phenomenon can also be seen in how people typically use words that fit most rhythmically into their sentences (the existence of poetry further solidifies this conclusion), and many people enjoy the rhythmic sounds of nature as well.¹⁰ Scott Smith also points out that in one study, brain scans were taken of young adults between the ages of 19 and 21, and those who had taken music lessons as children tended to have significantly larger areas of the brain which are related to hearing and self-awareness.¹¹ He also points to an additional study which found that those with musical training had an overall greater amount of white matter in their brains and better overall communication between the regions of their brains as well.¹²

All of this suggests that music can indicate a healthier potential mate because the production of music is typically a "reliable marker of phenotypic quality"¹³ and is usually associated with higher cognitive thinking. In addition, adults who have the capability to create music, typically have a greater mating success rate as long as all other variables are controlled.¹⁴ Wallenstein further states that "just as [it is] the case for body symmetry, it is possible that an innate receiver bias in the form of a preference for repetitious and rhythmic sounds could have been co-opted as a courtship display through sexual selection,"¹⁵ and, for what it's worth, music production has always been more prevalent in men than in women. This seems like a logical conclusion since similar themes can be seen in the animal kingdom with other primates, whales, and particularly birds. Females of certain species have been shown to prefer males with larger, more complex song production abilities.¹⁶ It is even possible that humans may have communicated through song before we communicated through speech.¹⁷

The idea that music exists to facilitate group living is an equally compelling argument, and the theory of it influencing a community is also rooted in evolution. As previously mentioned, there is evidence of music production that dates back nearly 50,000 years ago from the Neanderthals in Slovenia. In a series of seven studies done by Loersch and Arbuckle, out of

the University of Colorado and the University of Ontario's Institute of Technology respectively, it is argued that music evolved to facilitate social communication. Loersch and Arbuckle center on the idea that music has the "unique ability to influence mood and behavior of many people at once, helping to mold individual beings into a coordinated group,"¹⁸ citing as evidence Sun Tzu, the great Chinese military leader, who used music, among many other things, to organize his great military feats. This definitely seems plausible, since multiple studies have found that music can influence mood and can strengthen current emotional states.¹⁹

Loersch and Arbuckle further state that with the use of music, information and even emotions can be more quickly transferred to other members of a group, whereas direct spoken communication would take more time and could even distort the original message to some degree.²⁰ Through their series of seven studies, these researchers found that the extent to which a given person is affected by the music they are listening to is "directly tied to a variety of other well-established group processes that underlie social living."²¹ Across the first two studies, Loersch and Arbuckle found that the more an individual reacts to music, the more likely he or she would change his or her actions to support group membership. The third, fourth and fifth studies provided evidence that a specific song was not causing this change in behavior of supporting greater group membership. They also solidified the fact that musical reactivity is related to social motivation, and the final two studies ultimately show that a direct causal relationship is linked with musical reactivity and participants' social motivations by displaying that when an individual's "sense of belonging was threatened they became motivated to reestablish ties [and thus] became more affected by the music they heard."²² As previously alluded to, pre-historic man, who did not possess the language faculties that modern humans do, may have first used forms of music to communicate with others and within a group as well.²³ Through all of this, we can conclude that music likely has an effect on social communication, group living, and group cohesiveness²⁴ and that music is a group process.²⁵

Clearly, whether the musical capabilities within humanity exist for the reasons of human development, exist for mating purposes, exist for the purpose of facilitating group living, or exist for a combination of all of these reasons, music almost definitely serves some evolutionary purpose and therefore is likely to continue being a major and pleasurable part of our lives, much like food and sex.

The Context in Which Music is Addictive

Whether that pleasure is addictive or not is a different issue, however. The traditional definition of addiction has always come from the *DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)* which describes an addict as someone who has a "substance dependence" and that "the essential feature of Substance Dependence is a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues to use the substance despite significant substance-related problems."²⁶ It goes on to say that "there is a pattern of repeated self-administration that usually results in tolerance, withdrawal, and compulsive drug-taking behavior."²⁷ However, in the new *DSM-V (Fifth Edition)*, the definition for addiction has now expanded to not only include substances, but behaviors as well, which certainly allows for the possibility of listening to music to be defined as an addictive behavior, although such a thing is not explicitly stated.²⁸

A further definition of addiction is found in the 2012 edition of *The American Society of Addiction Medicines (ASAM)*, which states that "addiction is characterized by the inability to consistently abstain; impairment in behavioral control; craving; or increased hunger for drugs or

rewarding experiences; diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behaviors and interpersonal relationships; and a dysfunctional emotional response."²⁹ Another definition comes from a study done by Antje Cockrill, Margaret Sullivan, and Heather L. Norbury in which they refer to R. Iain F. Brown who created a six-pronged model or definition in 1993. The following is a summary of Brown's findings:

Salience refers to the idea the desired activity becomes top priority in the user's life. The user's day is consumed with either the activity or thinking of doing the activity. Secondly, *euphoria* implies living for the 'buzz' or excitement of the activity. Thirdly, *tolerance* can be built up by reoccurring use or participation in the specific activity. *Withdrawal symptoms* are negative effects when one stops the particular activity of interest. *Conflict* refers to issues that arise between the user and those near them, or internally, due to the use of a particular activity. Finally, relapse and reinstatement refer to the reuse of substance or activity after attempts to stop.³⁰

Music's Powerful Effects

Across these broad, but largely overlapping series of definitions and models of addiction, there is evidence for addictive behaviors associated with music. From the many studies done over the years, it is, at the very least, clearly and definitively evident that music, and indeed sound in general, can have a significant impact on our mental state. For some people, music can also go so far as to creating a temporary feeling of being transported to a different world, especially under the effects of psychotropic drugs, which can greatly influence and enhance the effects of being in a different world that listening to music creates.³¹ This is especially interesting since, as humanity has evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, we have evolved side-by-side numerous psychotropic plants.³² These plants have traditionally been used in many tribal rituals that also included a variety of music, so it may be possible that there is some evolutionary connection.

One other particularly interesting phenomenon concerning music is binaural beats. Binaural beats are two simultaneous sounds where the effect of listening to them can only be heard when using stereo headphones or ear buds. One side will play a sound of 250Hz for example and the other 260Hz, which when heard creates a "beat" of 10Hz inside your head, although it is more of an auditory illusion. What is so surprising is that despite the fact that they probably cannot be used as a good tool for cognitive growth, one study found that just listening to binaural beats can increase one's divergent thinking capabilities.³³ Another interesting field, music therapy, has been used to treat patients with a variety of disorders and diseases as well, including Alzheimer's disease, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorders, and addictions.³⁴ Conclusions that were made at a recent neuroscience conference coincide with these facts as it was said that music might have the ability to help with learning disabilities, as well as even having the potential ability to heal brain problems.³⁵

As stated previously, music also has the ability to impact our moods. There exists a significant number of studies that show music can actually strengthen emotional states that are particularly powerful, such as depression or behaviors associated with substance abuse.³⁶ One study out of Istanbul, Turkey, even found that certain genres or subgenres of music can be associated with psychological problems. For example, researchers found that listening to heavy metal has some correlations with "suicidality, self-harm, depression, drug abuse, recklessness, antisocial behavior, school problems, arrests and family dysfunction."³⁷ They go on to say that

“rap [music] has shown to be linked with alcohol abuse, illegal-drug use, aggressive behavior and arrests,” that “dance, hip-hop techno, and reggae music were reported to be related mainly to alcohol and illegal drug use,”³⁸ and that “a newer music style, emo music, was also suggested to be associated with psychiatric problems”³⁹ The study concluded that preference towards certain genres of music “may be interpreted as red flags for psychiatric problems.”⁴⁰ However, in one study out of Penn State University, it was found that regardless of the music genre being listened to, it will increase the quality of the listener’s mood and intensify any already positive emotional state.⁴¹ Another study found that adolescents and young people who listen to heavy metal aren’t actually hurting themselves but rather are using the music to treat their feelings of depression. Hence, “it may be true that some adolescents may not ‘hurt’ but ‘heal’ themselves with music and use music to adapt to life,”⁴² which supports the idea of using music as a form of therapy. A study at the University of Ottawa even found that intentionally listening to music for its inherent pleasure or to find some personal meaning, likely helps to produce positive development in an adolescent and may help one’s overall quality of life.⁴³ This only reinforces that idea that pleasure that can come from listening to and engaging with music and that regardless of minimal direct evidence of addictive behavior, music can still have a profound effect upon us.

Direct Evidence of Music’s Addictive Qualities

However, beyond the deep-seated pleasure music can provide for us and its powerful effects it can have on us, direct evidence of addictive behaviors associated with music do exist. One groundbreaking pair of studies put this exact idea to the test in order to determine whether music is actually addictive. Returning to Brown’s six-pronged model of addiction, Cockrill, Sullivan, and Norbury used twelve participants aged 18–35 and gave them the task of writing in diary for seven days while depriving the participants of their MP3 players. The researchers then analyzed the diaries using Brown’s six different characteristics of addiction.⁴⁴ They found that every participant—12 out of 12—experienced withdrawal symptoms from the loss of their music; 7 out of 12 experienced salience, or the loss of their music, causing it to become a central piece of their lives and thoughts; and an additional 7 out of 12 experienced some sort of conflict, whether it was between those whom they interacted with or within themselves. Only 5 out of the 12 reported experiencing any euphoria, but since all 12 out of 12 experienced withdrawal, it is likely they all experienced euphoria as well, particularly when they returned to their MP3 players. Only one relapsed, but it is likely, if given more time, others would have as well.⁴⁵

In their second study, Cockrill, Sullivan, and Norbury developed a large questionnaire, complementing the diary study. The participants were asked to respond to everything from how they used their MP3 device, to the benefits they saw from it. They also were questioned about the MP3 design and product satisfaction. The researchers sent the questionnaire across the world, getting responses back from Europe, North America, and Asia.⁴⁶ When they collected 272 completed questionnaires, they divided them into three different “clusters” - the “heavy users” (Cluster 1), the “functionalists” (Cluster 2), and the “casual users” (Cluster 3). The heavy users showed the greatest addictive behavior and supported the findings from the previous study. All participants scored particularly high on questions containing content such as “‘using MP3 player longer than intended,’ ‘thinking about player even if it is not on,’ ‘looking forward to using again,’ ‘use to escape from negative thoughts,’ ‘prefer to listen to music to spending times with others,’ and ‘life is boring, empty and joyless without player,’” which are all strong indicators of addictive behavior.⁴⁷

Another particularly important study found that certain music excerpts or songs likely contribute to expectations, which then influences musical reactivity and emotional arousal. Also, any kind of familiarity - knowing what to expect, or being able to predict what comes next in a piece of music - possibly plays an important role in the emotional arousal and pleasure taken from music.⁴⁸ In a comprehensive article written by Line Gebauer, Morton L. Kringelbach and Peter Vuust, much the same thing was discovered as well: “[M]usical pleasure cycles are driven by the dynamic interplay between the listener’s expectations and the statistical regularities in musical structure.”⁴⁹ These scholars go on to say that music is especially pleasurable when our expectations are met, but in a contradictory way, music can also be particularly pleasurable when our expectations are not met, and instead we are completely surprised.⁵⁰ This kind of behavior—getting emotional arousal from the anticipation of enjoying the music once again—is essentially the same as the salience previously discussed. Eventually that anticipation can wear off with many songs and pieces of music, however, and so something has to come along to replace the feeling from the old song, which, in some sense, is comparable to a drug addict having to get a new “fix.” A final study concerning loud music specifically, found that simply loud music can be addictive. Schmuziger et al. discovered through an extensive questionnaire that people who have been exposed to a great deal of loud music in their lifetimes, particularly members of pop and rock bands, are significantly more likely to develop an unhealthy compulsion toward loud music.⁵¹

All the evidence from the various studies, articles, and books point to the conclusion that music can be addictive. Although some may argue that music is not addictive through the lens that it is only something pleasurable and cannot take the form of addiction no matter how much one enjoys it, I disagree. Many things that previously have been considered odd behaviors, compulsions, or merely pleasurable activities, are now officially seen as addictions. Two of the most commonly known addictions today, alcohol and nicotine, were once considered merely pleasurable, and it took years for them to be considered officially addictive.⁵² More recently, addictions such as gambling addiction and sex addiction have sprung up and are becoming widely and officially accepted. Like many addictions that have been added to the *DSM* over time, music will likely land a spot there in the future, especially since, as Gebauer, Kringelbach, and Vuust declare: “[T]he evidence from the literature shows that music is remarkably similar to other primary rewards such as food and sex with distinct phases of wanting/expectation, liking/peak pleasure, and learning.”⁵³ Again, both sex addiction and food addiction are becoming more accepted and legitimized as addictions today, too. Even if music is not considered an official addiction right now, it certainly has the potential of being labeled one in the future as the prevalence of music addiction will probably continue to grow because of increased accessibility, much like sex addiction has been catapulted by the massive growth in pornography. At the very least, it is clear that music can greatly impact us. Similar to sex and food, music serves a benefit to the majority of humanity and will definitely help contribute to a healthy life and a better overall quality of life for anyone, despite its potentially addictive qualities.

Notes

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17. Smith, "Psychology."
18. Loersch and Arbuckle, "Unraveling the Mystery of Music," 778.
19. Smith, "Psychology."
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The assignment was to choose an issue facing our environment and research a possible solution for it. By prefacing with an exposition of hydrogen fuel cell technology, the writer's argument for the pervasive use of hydrogen-powered vehicles becomes even more compelling.

The Hydrogen Fuel Cell and Transportation

By Kelly Whalen

(Prof. L. Woolbright – “The Environment”)

Earth is currently plagued by a variety of environmental crises. Many of these ecological issues can be traced back to human activities. Climate change is a problem that is entirely caused by humans burning fossil fuels, and there is no indication that the rate of heating of the earth is slowing down. After years of scientific discussion, people finally have begun to realize that the only way to slow climate change is to change their behaviors. This realization has caused people to look for different energy sources, especially in regards to transportation. With hundreds of millions of cars on the road in the United States, it is very easy to see that better ways of powering cars are desperately needed. Researchers have recently started looking into the hydrogen fuel cell as an alternative to the internal combustion engine in cars. Although hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles are not readily available to the public, they will be the future of transportation. This is because there is no negative environmental impact associated with the operation of the fuel cell. They operate more efficiently than many other power sources, and scientists and the government are working hard to bring down the costs and improve the infrastructure associated with hydrogen fuel cell technology.

Before we compare the hydrogen fuel cell to the internal combustion engine, it would be good to explain what the hydrogen fuel cell is. The hydrogen fuel cell is an electrochemical device that converts stored chemical energy directly into electrical energy. This concept originated in the early 1800s by Sir William Grove. Grove was a chemist who mainly focused on electrolysis, a process that uses energy to separate water molecules. He realized that he could probably create electrical energy by using a reversed electrolysis reaction, which would combine hydrogen and oxygen to create water. Francis Thomas Bacon, an English engineer, built the first fully functional hydrogen fuel cell in 1959 (Orhan, Sheraf 2012).

The hydrogen fuel cell has a fairly simple design. It consists of a fuel electrode (anode) and an oxidant electrode (cathode) that are separated by an electrolyte. The electrodes are coated in a platinum catalyst, which helps the reaction occur more efficiently. In the fuel cell, hydrogen gas is delivered to the anode. There, the electrochemical reaction begins, and the hydrogen gas gets oxidized to create two hydrogen ions (protons) and two electrons. The electrolyte membrane allows for the newly produced protons to pass through it and get to the cathode. The electrons

that were also produced are not able to pass through the membrane, so they are forced to travel through an external circuit to get to the cathode. Since electricity is simply moving electrons, the inability of the electrons to pass through the membrane creates electrical energy. At the cathode, the protons and the electrons meet up again in the presence of oxygen, and the three reactants combine to create water. The entire reaction can be expressed through the equation, $2\text{H}_2 + \text{O}_2 \Rightarrow \text{W}_{\text{elec}} + \text{heat}$ (Orhan, Sheraf 2012). Now that we understand how the hydrogen fuel cell successfully produces energy, we can now begin to understand why it will be the future of transportation.

In the United States, driving from place to place is an essential activity. According to the 2012 census, there were over 246,283,000 motor vehicles on the road in the United States in 2009. That is a figure that has nearly doubled since 1990. In 2003, all of these motor vehicles combined travelled a whopping 2891 billion miles (Hordeski 2009). With so many cars on the road, it is very easy to see that transportation can be a huge source of carbon emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency (2013) has predicted that 28 percent of all carbon emissions in this country are related to transportation. That is approximately 18,000 million metric tons of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere each year by cars that are on the road in the United States. Throughout the past few decades, the scientific community has become certain that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are directly related to the rise in global temperatures. Climate change is a serious problem that has an impact on everyone and everything on this planet. As populations rise globally, there will naturally be more people on the road. If we continue to power cars using the internal combustion engine, our carbon dioxide emissions will continue to rise at a staggering rate as the amount of cars on the road increases. This is precisely why we need to start relying more heavily on technologies such as the hydrogen fuel cell in the transportation sector.

The Environmental Protection Agency's first proposed solution to transportation-related carbon emissions is finding an alternate fuel source. Its second proposed solution is to develop more advanced technologies for powering vehicles. Hydrogen fuel cells do not directly emit any greenhouse gases. The National Academies recently conducted a study that concluded that hydrogen powered vehicles can reduce gasoline use by 24 percent by 2035, and 69 percent by 2050 (Dong, Greene, Lin 2013). Those major reductions in gasoline use would dramatically decrease carbon emissions, thus slowing climate change. If these become more widespread, they can dramatically help to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions. The hydrogen fuel cell fulfills both of these ideas that the Environmental Protection Agency deems necessary to solving the crises caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

The only environmental issue associated with the hydrogen fuel cell is how the hydrogen gas is produced. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (2013), the main form of hydrogen production is natural gas reforming. During this method of hydrogen production, methane (natural gas) reacts with water to create hydrogen gas and carbon monoxide. After this first reaction, the carbon monoxide that is produced then reacts with water to create even more hydrogen and carbon dioxide. Many people might think that it is counterintuitive to use a fuel whose production also releases carbon emissions in a more expensive technology. However, many scientists and government agencies have explicitly stated that even though hydrogen production releases carbon dioxide, the amount released is not nearly as much as what is released by internal combustion engines in cars (Kandlikar 2009). Also, this method of hydrogen production is not the only method that is used. A lot of hydrogen is produced through electrolysis, and research is being conducted on the methods that incorporate the use of other

renewable energies to help make the electrolysis process more efficient. An ideal form of hydrogen production would be an electrolysis reaction that has an energy input of sunlight in order to break the bonds of water (Hordeski 2009). This method is great because sunlight is an unlimited source, and it is renewable. Producing hydrogen by using the sun's energy would be perfectly emission-less, and it would solve any environmental problem associated with hydrogen as a fuel source. This technology is not yet widespread, but research is being done to improve this method. Even though the hydrogen fuel cell can be indirectly traced to carbon emissions, again, these emissions are not nearly as high as that of cars using internal combustion engines.

If the environmental benefits of using a hydrogen fuel cell do not convince you that it is superior to the internal combustion engine, maybe its high efficiency will. The internal combustion engine creates energy by burning hydrocarbons to release the energy stored in their bonds. It then converts the chemical energy into heat energy, which is then converted into mechanical energy. If the desired output is electricity, the internal combustion engine has to go another step to then convert that mechanical energy into electrical energy. Since we do not live in an ideal world, none of these energy conversions completely conserve energy. This makes the internal combustion engine very inefficient, especially when compared to the hydrogen fuel cell. The hydrogen fuel cell creates electrical energy through a very simple one-step process, and it is a direct conversion to electrical energy. Since there are fewer conversions in this process, less energy is being lost to the outside environment (Orhan, Sharaf 2012).

The conceptual idea that energy is commonly lost to the outside environment is not the only thing that makes the complicated energy conversions of the internal combustion engine less efficient. There is a physics principle, the Carnot efficiency, which states that not all of the heat energy in an engine can be used to do work. It also states that in order for ideal efficiency to exist, the heat engine cycle must be reversible and that entropy must remain constant. This principle limits how efficient an internal combustion engine can be. However, since the hydrogen fuel cell is an electrochemical device, it is not governed by the Carnot cycle. The only thing that limits the efficiency of the hydrogen fuel cell is the chemical efficiency of the fuel, which at most operating temperatures is much higher than the Carnot efficiency of an internal combustion engine. In the realm of transportation, the hydrogen fuel cell has a 40-45% efficiency while the internal combustion engine only has a 15-25% efficiency (Orhan, Sharaf 2012). Not only are hydrogen fuel cells more efficient in regards to converting chemical energy to electrical energy, but also hydrogen gas actually has a lot of stored chemical energy. In comparison to oil, hydrogen gas has three to four times the amount of energy (Hordeski 2009). As far as efficiency goes, hydrogen fuel cells are the clear choice over internal combustion engines.

Even though they are dramatically more efficient and better for the environment than internal combustion engines, hydrogen fuel cells have one major hurdle they have to overcome in order to be palatable to a mass market. This hurdle is the cost of the technology. When given a choice between two objects of a similar nature, people tend to purchase the cheaper option. This is the primary reason why hydrogen technology in cars has not hit the market yet. The hydrogen fuel cell is currently much more expensive than the internal combustion engine. The cost of producing hydrogen gas is relatively low, almost as low as the cost of gasoline production (Cannon, Sperling 2004). This means that the high cost of hydrogen cars is associated with the hydrogen fuel cell that produces the energy that will power the car. The reason why the hydrogen fuel cell is so much more expensive than the internal combustion engine is because the catalyst for the electrochemical reaction is platinum, a precious metal (Crawford 2013). Although platinum is the best choice as a catalyst, many scientists and engineers are working on

developing ways to carry out the electrochemical reaction with a different catalyst. In both the United States and Europe, a lot of money has gone into funding research to find better materials for hydrogen fuel cells. The European Union has partnered up with the European Space Agency in a \$54 million five-year project to find a better catalyst, and preliminary studies have shown that nickel, cobalt, and copper could all possibly be good replacements for platinum in hydrogen fuel cells (Hordeski 2009).

Scientists are not the only people who are working hard to bring down the costs of hydrogen fuel cells for transportation. In the United States, the government acknowledges the dangers of climate change and realizes that it has to find cleaner fuel sources. In 2003, President Bush stated that the government would invest \$1.7 billion to develop a more sustainable energy and transport system (Chalke, Inouye 2004). This money would go towards making alternative energy sources cheaper. The government could see that the main issue with hydrogen energy being widely accepted is its high cost. The Department of Energy is a government agency that supports the bettering of hydrogen fuel cell technologies. When it realized that the cost of fuel cells might drive away market appeal, it created the Fuel Cells Technologies Office in order to study better ways to create energy from hydrogen. The Fuel Cells Technologies Office set several goals in reducing the cost, bettering the production, and working out the distribution of hydrogen power. Since the creation of this office, the cost of hydrogen power has dropped more than 80 percent (Dong, Greene, Lin 2013). If good infrastructure is built before hydrogen vehicles are released to market, the market success of hydrogen-powered vehicles in the future should be very high.

The proper infrastructure is also needed in order for hydrogen cars to be the main type of vehicles on the road. If hydrogen cars were to hit the road today, there would be a major problem because there would be no refueling stations. However, since governments see the need for alternate fuel sources that do not produce greenhouse gases, many have shown their willingness to help fund the building of the proper infrastructure. California is a prime example of a state government wanting to reduce emissions by supporting hydrogen vehicles. The state has a goal of having one million zero- emission vehicles on the road by 2020. It plans on supporting this goal by investing \$18 million in building hydrogen-refueling stations throughout the state in order to better accommodate hydrogen vehicles (Crawford 2013). If governments continue to support hydrogen vehicles by reducing costs and improving infrastructure, there is no doubt that they will be the future of transportation in this country.

It is obvious that we need to find better fuel sources for transportation. The transportation sector accounts for a very large amount carbon dioxide that is released into the atmosphere, which causes climate change. The hydrogen fuel cell is the answer to this problem. It cleanly creates energy, which means that greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced. They also are a lot more efficient than the internal combustion engine. They create electrical energy in fewer steps than their hydrocarbon burning counterparts. The chemical energy stored in hydrogen gas is also greater than that of gasoline. Although hydrogen fuel cells are more expensive than internal combustion engines, government support and advances in technology are driving their prices down. In a few years, the cost of a hydrogen fuel cell powered car could be comparable to that of a standard vehicle. Even though they are not fully market- ready, there is no doubt that hydrogen powered cars will be the future of transportation.

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When asked to research a controversial social justice problem or concern that affected her community, this student chose to write about Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the man who was elected pope of the Catholic Church in 2013 and who took his papal name in honor of St. Francis of Assisi.

That's *Not* What Pope Francis Meant

By Sarah Wunderlich
(Prof. Barranca – “Voice”)

No one could have guessed what the man Jorge Mario Bergoglio was going to do the day that he became pope and stepped before the people. Luckily, for the Catholic Church, he has remained a huge advocate of Catholic social teaching. This is especially important in the modern world where the Church is criticized for many traditional teachings regarding homosexuality, the sanctity of human life, and the equality of women. Pope Francis, with his non-judgmental attitude, has managed to uphold controversial Catholic teachings despite being misunderstood by both conservatives and liberals. This attitude is beneficial for the Church and necessary for revitalization; therefore, Pope Francis needs to continue his current behavior.

Since the Church is so conservative, it is no surprise that in today's very progressive age there are stark disagreements with its traditional social teachings. One of these teachings regards same-sex marriage. This has been an issue of debate for many years now, and the Catholic Church's teaching about homosexuality is one that has been refuted by many. The Catholic Church believes that marriage is a sacred relationship between a man and a woman and can only be consecrated in the sacrament of marriage. Because same-sex marriage is not between a man and a woman, the Catholic Church does not approve of the practice. Pope Francis's opinion can best be seen in his “Who am I to Judge?” speech outlined and discussed in the *National Catholic Reporter's* article entitled, “Forthright Talk as Francis Gives Interviews.”

When asked about same-sex marriage in this talk, Pope Francis does not refute the Church's stance and states, “[T]he teaching of the church . . . is clear and I am a son of the Church” (“Forthright” 7). Here the pope accepts the Church's stance by not arguing against it and says how firm and clear the Church's position is on the matter of same-sex marriage. He then elaborates saying that he belongs to the Church, or is a “son of the Church,” meaning that he aligns himself with it. Therefore, the pope did not deny or try to argue against what the Church's stance was because he states his agreement and affirms the teaching. However, how he handled the conversation was drastically different than what has been seen with previous popes. Instead of being harshly judgmental, he was a tender “non-judger.” As the writers of the article put it, the pope wants to “shift the church's emphasis from condemnation to mercy” (7). The pope

doesn't wish to push people away from the Church because of these issues; instead, he wants to work to hold them up with "mercy" and invite those once pushed away back. The culmination of these changing tones is seen as he states that the church has no "right to interfere spiritually in the lives of gays and lesbians" and goes further by asking the question, "Who am I to judge?" (7). All of this shows how the pope is trying to push away the traditional ideas and notions of the past and how he himself does not condemn those living outside of the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality. In failing to condemn homosexuals, he is not closing the Church's door on them. This makes homosexuals feel more welcome in the Church and shows how the pope is working to revitalize it. Since Pope Francis does not knock down this particular Catholic social teaching and instead only works to uphold it, I argue that Pope Francis has upheld this Catholic value while aligning the Church with modern values held by today's world.

Another set of controversial Catholic social teachings that often have been debated are the values regarding the sanctity of life. Since it is created by God, Catholics believe that all life is sacred and that it is sinful to end a life. To the Catholic Church, life is defined as the time of conception through natural death. This stance, therefore, becomes an issue when debating the subjects of abortion and euthanasia. A Catholic organization, the Knights of Columbus, put on its website what Pope Francis believes in regard to abortion. The pope remains adamant about the teachings of the Church saying, "I consider that the battle against abortion to be part of the battle in favor of life from the moment of conception until a dignified, natural death" ("The Gospel of Life"). This reflects how Pope Francis is in favor of the Catholic teaching because he claims that fighting against abortion is fighting "for life," and he condemns the idea of terminating life "from the moment of conception" to "natural death" as does the Catholic principle ("The Gospel of Life"). However, the typical, non-judgmental attitude of Pope Francis comes out in his own book, *On Heaven and Earth*, when he pushes the moral issue of abortion off onto science saying, "I separate the issue of abortion from any religions concept. It is a scientific problem" (Bergoglio 107). In saying this, the pope manages to separate the issue of abortion from the Church since he claims it to be an issue of science. Since he says it is not a Church issue, he manages to keep a non-judgmental attitude towards Catholics who believe in abortion while keeping a very firm, traditional, and Catholic stance on the matter. Because he is not judging pro-choice Catholics, he once again is inviting all of them back and initiating important revitalizations within the Church.

The debate regarding the Catholic teaching of the sanctity of life also can be seen when discussing euthanasia. As with abortion, the pope manages to uphold this social teaching while keeping the same non-judgmental attitude. In his book, the pope writes, "Active euthanasia is different; that is killing" (92). He clearly aligns himself with the teaching of the Church since he identifies the act of euthanasia as "killing," thus upholding Church teaching (92). However, he continues to maintain non-judgmental attitudes by affirming the choices some families take with euthanasia. He distinguishes between "active euthanasia," the killing of an elderly person just so he or she can die, and a more passive form of euthanasia, or "pulling the plug," which is done for dying, suffering persons (92). The reason why he finds no wrong in "pulling the plug" is because he considers the "extraordinary methods" used to keep a dying person alive to "conserve life" to be undignified for the suffering person (92). In simpler terms, the pope claims that because the person is already dying and suffering, it is okay to practice euthanasia so the dying person can pass peacefully (92). By agreeing with one aspect of euthanasia, he softens his judgment on euthanasia as a whole which helps modern Catholics who are wrestling with this choice. These positions of non-judgment will help revitalize the Church because it will bring it once again into

the modern world; therefore, people will feel less distanced by it. But, the pope still manages to uphold the Catholic principle of life being sacred until death because by the time “extraordinary methods” would be used, the person would be essentially already dead (92).

Throughout much of its modern history, the Church has been seen as sexist due to its exclusive beliefs on who should lead it. The Catholic Church believes that its leaders are fulfilling and modeling Jesus in their positions, and since Jesus was a man, they believe that men are the best suited to fulfill this role. Pope Francis affirms this in his book: “Women...do not exercise the priesthood, because in Christianity the High Priest is Jesus, a male” (102). This shows that he believes in what the Catholic Church states about women because he reiterates the belief in this statement. However, like so many times before, Pope Francis works to keep a non-judgmental attitude. He does this by expressing the importance of women throughout salvation history, such as the Virgin Mother Mary, and points out that the Church is always referred to as a woman (103). By publicly recognizing the value of women in the Church, even though they are not leaders, the pope maintains open views while continuing to uphold the very judgmental views of the Church. It is in this non-judgmental attitude that he manages to not distance women from the Church. By embracing their importance, Pope Francis is revitalizing the Church and making women feel welcomed and appreciated rather excluded.

One might argue that Pope Francis has not maintained Catholic values because of the overwhelmingly positive liberal response. Typically, liberals disagree with many of the Catholic social teachings, especially those regarding homosexuality and abortion. In the article “Pope,” Damon Linker states that “Progressive Catholics...have responded enthusiastically to Francis’s change in tone” (28). This means that more liberal Catholics are finding themselves agreeing with Pope Francis. Since liberals rarely agree with the Church yet are finding themselves aligned with the teachings of Pope Francis, then some may argue that Pope Francis is not upholding the values of the Church. Conversely, conservatives, who often find themselves agreeing with the values of the traditional Church, are finding that they do not approve of what the pope is saying, so, again, one can say that Pope Francis is *not* upholding these values.

Damon includes other comments in his article and cites a blog entry written by homosexual Catholic, Andrew Sullivan: “Everything he [Pope Francis] is saying and doing is an obvious, implicit rejection of what came before” (28). Another Catholic states, “This conviction – that the Pope is in the process of making a radical break with the past – has fast become conventional wisdom” (28). Sullivan’s phrase, “obvious, implicit, rejection of what came before” implies that the Pope is breaking with traditional Catholic values, including those regarding social teachings, and the words “radical break with the past” in the second quote, also imply that the pope is moving on to a bold, new future while leaving behind the traditional past. Some Catholics even go as far to say that a new “Vatican revolution is underway” (28). If Pope Francis is breaking with the conventional past, then this implies that Pope Francis is breaking with traditional Catholic values, which would also mean that he has not upheld them throughout his papacy.

However, I disagree. The main reason why these people believe that such a “revolution” is under way is because of Pope Francis’s non-judgmental attitude regarding these issues, and the “Progressive Catholics” are so “enthusiastic” about the Pope because of the “change in tone” (28). This “change of tone” is his attitude of love and mercy rather than that of condemnation (28). One cannot blame these liberal, progressive Catholics for misinterpreting him when one considers the extent of the change. Even *National Catholic Reporter’s* Richard Rohr writes in his article “The Top Person Can Never Be Wrong”: “He has forever changed the Catholic

conversation” (8). However, these progressives overlook one factor, and that is the change is only in tone or only in conversation (Linker 28). Pope Francis has never said that same-sex marriage and homosexuality was approved by the Church openly or passed an official Vatican decree; those who want this radical change will just have to wait their turn (31). Just because this radical change is *not* occurring does not mean that the Church has not been changed whatsoever because it certainly has in the tone with which it handles certain issues. Because of this extreme change in tone, Pope Francis has opened the door of the Church to the modern world allowing it to be revitalized without changing its core, defining beliefs.

Another reason why it might appear that the pope is this new, radical Church figure is because many of these progressive Catholics take what he is saying entirely out of context. The most common statement that is misinterpreted by Francis is seen in his “Who am I to judge?” comment (“Forthright” 7). Many people take this remark to mean that he does not place condemnation on same-sex marriage; however, they fail to realize that this comment was made following a statement that he shouldn’t “interfere spiritually” with homosexual Catholics (7). When the comment is taken out of context, as these progressive or liberal Catholics take it, it can easily be misinterpreted as the pope being “pro-gay.” However, because of the previous statement of not “interfering spiritually,” this statement and comment is suddenly morphed into something else entirely (7). He is now appealing to the person’s freewill and claims that he has no business following a Catholic’s spiritual life since that is between the Catholic and God, not the Catholic, God, and the pope. Therefore, Pope Francis is not actually condemning same-sex marriage but rather condemning the judgment that many other people cast on those not following a Church teaching, which is a statement entirely within Church doctrine. By not judging homosexual individuals, the pope is not closing the door on them. Instead, he is opening it up and allowing the Church to be revitalized into the modern age. Therefore, because what Pope Francis actually means by his comments is within Church teaching and even beneficial for the Church, then I argue that he still manages to uphold Church teachings.

These misinterpretations are not trivial, however. It is important that as the Church leader, Pope Francis’s statements come across clearly. As discussed, the primary reason for these misinterpretations is because of his non-judgmental tone on these issues. Even though this non-judgmental, loving stance on these issues raises confusion regarding Church teachings and his meaning, I still consider his open attitude to be vital to the Church, especially in the modern age. Why? Because by expressing this attitude, Pope Francis is showing that the Church is open for all, or as he puts it in *The National Catholic Reporter*, “The Church is the home of all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people” (7). This means that the Church should be a place where all people, no matter who they are or what they believe, should feel welcome. In emphasizing how the Church is for all, Pope Francis is welcoming back those once pushed away. For instance, in the past few years many Catholics, especially gays and lesbians, have felt excluded by the Church because of its harsh judgment on same-sex marriage. Thanks to Pope Francis’s non-judgmental stance on highly-debated Catholic values, homosexuals are once again feeling welcome. This open attitude is revitalizing the Church and paving the way into the modern era. Therefore, even though this attitude can cause problems, Pope Francis should continue to take this non-judgmental approach since it is making those who felt ousted by the Catholic Church feel more welcome and therefore is revitalizing the Church.

So who was this humble man who stepped out on the podium that election day? It turns out that this man was one who would bring about a whole new perspective on what the Church believes and who welcomes back, through his non-judgmental tones, many people to the Church

who once were ostracized. Pope Francis has initiated an incredible time of revitalization, and even though he might be misunderstood from time to time, he has upheld controversial Catholic social teachings. If the media and other Catholics stop taking what Pope Francis says out of context and stop misinterpreting him because of his non-judgmental attitude, the world will really see what Pope Francis actually means.

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