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Voices

On Stage and In Print

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Voices

On Stage and In Print

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Preface

This is the 4th edition of the *Voices* anthology, a collection of student essays from 2010-2011 *Voices: On Stage and In Print*, a program housed within the English Department of Utah State University. Some 2000 students enroll in English 2010 classes each year during the fall and spring semesters, and the essays in this anthology are from among those written by students chosen as class winners by their peers for the *Voices* contest. These winners read excerpts from their essays at a public reading held at the end of each semester in the Manon Caine Russell Kathryn Caine Wanlass Performance Hall on the USU campus.

We who teach writing, we who know the role of writing both in academia and in the workplace, are passionate about creating opportunities for students to develop an appreciation for the power of words, of research, creation and persuasion. *Voices*, including the publication of this anthology, makes that a tangible reality.

The contest is meant to add a little fun and a little incentive to students' writing, but there is reason and pedagogical underpinnings to the experience as well. *Voices* reinforces the following USU Citizen-Scholar objectives:

1. *Being an integral part of every student's experience.* Because English 2010 is the only course required for all USU undergraduates, this conference and anthology can reach nearly every student on campus.
2. *Expressing and communicating through a variety of media.* Students learn how the words on paper translate into speech and multi-media, and undergraduates of any discipline have the chance to publicly present their own work.
3. *Helping students develop intellectually, personally, and culturally.* Students personally experience a live, fine arts reading by peers in a first-rate venue.
4. *Listening and viewing for comprehension.* The reading creates not only a unique visual and auditory experience, it gives students the chance to hear examples of great writing, reinforcing instruction received during the semester.
5. *Developing a capacity for self-assessment.* All students assist in determining the class delegates, furthering their opportunity to engage in self-assessment.
6. *Understanding the nature and methods of humanities and sciences.* Research, writing, presentation, and publication are core methods of any

profession. The conference and provides opportunities and recognition for its participants.

7. *Communicating effectively to an audience.* Not only can students visualize a real audience when writing, they can expect much cheering and applause from classmates when they take center stage.
8. *Understanding diversity in value systems.* Listening to a selection of student perspectives, well-crafted and persuasive, allows students to gain a new appreciation for their peers' perspectives.

The essays you find in this volume are as the students wrote them, with some light editing for mechanics. No attempt has been made to alter these essays for style or content. As such, each essay represents the viewpoint of its author and not the university, the English Department, or the editors. They were selected by fellow students based on criteria set out by the instructors of each class.

Some are serious and others more humorous, some more formal and some more conversational, but all of the essays contain strong elements of writing. All of the essays are likewise open for critique and discussion—they are by no means considered *perfect*. We hope that they will be analyzed and evaluated, perhaps as part of class or group discussions and perhaps individually. They are meant to be used to enhance learning.

We attempted to name the genre of each essay: personal essay, persuasive researched essay, personal persuasive researched essay. The labels are there to assist student and instructor alike, but the naming was difficult. Many essays in the anthology are a wonderful blend of many genres. We applaud that.

The proceeds from the sale of this book are used to fund the *Voices* program for this year, 2011-2012, including the use of the Performance Hall, the publication of the next year's anthology, and an honorarium for its directors and interns. Additionally, students whose essays are chosen for recognition at the reading receive cash awards totaling \$5000. The conference remains self-funded without increasing student tuition or fees.

We want to extend our special thanks to this year's *Voices* interns, Aliya Drake and Natalie Hatch, who spent the year working with us. Their work and expertise has been invaluable. Many thanks also to John Engler, who conceived the idea for *Voices* and has been integral to the success of the program since its inception.

Susan Andersen
Bonnie Moore

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Knowing Each Other Better

Word Meditation Essay

Hilary Webb

“If we are going to live together in peace, we must come to know each other better.” – Lyndon B. Johnson

It is September 11th, 2001 and I am lucky. My dad has picked me up from school and is taking me home where he can see I’m okay. I’m not the only kid going home early today. Virginia Run Elementary has emptied by lunch time. My father tells me things he wishes he didn’t have to as we drive through a tunnel of trees to our yellow house. He is trying to explain the inexplicable in a calm, even voice. I am lucky because I live in a safe neighborhood in Chantilly, Virginia. One with swing sets and crossing guards. The Pentagon feels far away, even though we drive into the city on weekends. Moments later, huddled together on the couch, my family watches other lives go up in flames. Somehow New York City feels closer than D.C., because New York is the city coming right into our home through the screen. It’s as if the smoke from the fire is getting in my face and I can’t breathe. I hold on to my mother’s elbow. My parents tell me, “Make sure Mariam knows you still want to be her friend. Her parents might be worried about sending her back to school. They might be afraid of how other people will treat her.” I am ten. I don’t understand.

* * *

In 2001, 1.8 million Muslims were living in the United States. Dozens were killed alongside other Americans on September 11th. Yet many people “confuse Islam with terrorism, ignore that many Muslims were killed on 9/11, and even equate Muslims with those who committed the attacks” (STL Today). In a poll conducted less than a month after what we now call Patriot Day, only 47% of Americans reported having a favorable view towards Islam. Nine years later, these views haven’t improved. Today, just 37% of Americans report having a favorable view of Islam, and more than a quarter admit to having “some feelings of prejudice toward them” (TPM). In 2009, while the nation seemed ready for an African-American president, many were less tolerant of the possibility that President Obama was not a Christian. Amidst these accusations, Rev. Franklin Graham was quick to reassure Americans, “It’s obvious that the president has renounced

the prophet Mohammed, and he has renounced Islam, and he has accepted Jesus Christ” (ABC News). And on Easter, President Obama spoke about the resurrection and claimed he was inspired by the story of Christ’s sacrifice. The President has arguably had to defend his faith more than any of his predecessors. But why did he feel the need to be so defensive? Why didn’t he ask the public, “Why does it matter?”

At nineteen, I am still struggling to understand the same things and look for answers to the same questions I was asking at age ten. I find some answers in books and articles, but even these cannot explain the prejudices that surround us. How do we begin to write about something like this? I worry that it’s just too sensitive. I consider choosing to focus on a word like “faith”, or maybe “religion”. But a group of 1.3 billion people should not have to hide behind generalized terms. They are one fifth of the world. They are Muslims.

* * *

My friend Mariam lives in my neighborhood, Pleasant Valley, in the house with the brown shutters. Her brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents live in that house too. Sometimes I go there after school. Mariam’s grandpa and uncles go down to the basement to talk together and smoke away from the children. Sometimes I see her aunts praying in a special room with colorful rugs and calendars hanging on the walls. They pray with their arms and foreheads touching the floor. I think that must mean they are praying harder than we do at my house. Mariam’s house smells differently than any other house I have been in. It must be the food they eat from Pakistan, their first home. In the front of the house there are rose bushes all around, embracing the outside walls. At the beginning of summer, Mariam’s grandfather walks down the street to our door and gives some of his first roses to my mother.

* * *

The Arabic root of the word Muslim is typically a reference to peace and submission. The central belief of the Islamic faith is that God revealed himself to the Prophet Muhammad, and that these revelations are recorded in the sacred text of the Qur’an. The teachings of Muhammad revolve around two words: Emaan (faith) and Amaal (acts). Faith leads devout Muslims to follow the Five Pillars of Islam: bearing witness of their faith, daily prayer, fasting, giving a tithe for the poor, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca if possible. Unfortunately, too many of us accept the myths fed to us and believe that all Muslims show their devotion to God through acts of violence. Compare this stereotype to the image of Muslim people given in the Qu’ran: “You are they who love them while they do not love you.”

While some acts of violence have been committed by people who call themselves Muslims, I think we should remember that no faith is free of corruption. “Islam [is] a religion of peace,” writes Uwem Akpan. “Remember, nobody has a monopoly on violence” (Akpan 276).

At nineteen, I wonder why they didn’t teach us all of this in school. How could we spend so much time talking about war without ever talking about peace? There is so much the world has left me to figure out on my own. I wonder why my teachers never said the word “Muslim” out loud and why they didn’t tell us anything about such a major world religion. Maybe if people had been more open about these complicated issues during my childhood, I wouldn’t have such a hard time talking about them now.

* * *

Every July, I have a birthday party at our neighborhood swimming pool. Ten or twelve friends will come and we’ll all jump off the diving board in a row and play sharks and minnows in the deep end. Every year, Mariam has a different reason why she can’t come to my birthday party at the pool. One year my mother asks me, “Is Mariam not coming to your party because her family doesn’t want her to wear a swimming suit?” I look at my mother blankly. She says, “Maybe you should do something different for your birthday this year.” I’m sure that she is wrong. Mariam is just busy during the summer. I can’t imagine anyone’s parents having more rules than my Christian mother and father do.

* * *

In her article on Muslim American women, Almas Sayeed describes her experiences growing up Muslim in the United States: “After a lot of reasoning with my parents, I was permitted to wear shorts to compete in tennis...but I was not allowed to show my legs or arms outside of sports...The small community of South Asian Muslim girls my age...became symbols of the future of our community in the United States. Our bodies became the sites to play out cultural and religious debates” (Andersen 24). Many Muslim women do not feel that they have been forced to cover their bodies, but rather that it is a choice that demonstrates their devotion to God. “Hijab” is the name for the traditional clothing covering a woman’s body, excepting her face and hands. Many women feel that wearing hijab helps them to feel they are putting God first. Covering their bodies also gives many women a sense of self-respect, and reminds them that they are not valued based on outward appearance. Almas Sayeed further explains, “For numerous women...hijab symbolized something much more than covering a woman’s body and hair; it symbolized a way to adhere to

religious and cultural traditions in order to prevent complete Western immersion”(Andersen 24).

Some of us have been taught that Islam is a religion and culture that enslaves women in submission to men. Actually, many women and scholars believe Islam liberates women. They argue that “within the Koranic tradition and life of the Prophet lie the rights and inspiration a woman needs to fulfill her own potential” (Islam for Today). This may explain why 4 in 5 Western converts to Islam are women. In his last sermon, the prophet Muhammad himself taught, “Treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and helpers”(Islam for Today). Faith is not the submission of women to the will of men, but the submission to the will of God. Still, many Muslim American women struggle with finding a balance between Muslim values and cultural norms.

* * *

It’s December, and Mariam is telling everyone at school that her family celebrates Christmas like everyone else. No one questions her. She talks with all of us about Santa Claus and presents, carols and evergreen trees. I don’t know why she’s doing that. I don’t know why we’re all playing along either. On the inside none of us believe her. We know she’s never celebrated Christmas before, because she tells us “Happy Christmas!” instead of “Merry Christmas”. Besides, why would she celebrate Christmas if she doesn’t believe in Jesus? I get off the school bus with her on the last day before winter break. As she turns the corner, she waves and calls “Happy Christmas!” I tell her, “You have a happy Christmas too,” because I don’t want her to feel left out. As I walk home, I wonder what I was trying to protect her from.

* * *

Many Christians would be surprised to learn that Jesus is mentioned in the Qur’an. Muslims believe in all prophets, from Adam to Moses to Jesus. They see Jesus as a messenger from God who performed many miracles (Christian Answers). Muslims also believe that Jesus had a miraculous virgin birth, and that he spent his life doing God’s will.

At nineteen I am relearning what every child already knows. Talking about our differences is a way to find out how much we have in common. We all share similar longings and fears. We ask the same questions. Naomi Shihab Nye, a poet who was raised in an American Muslim family, has said “Trust me, you know everyone. You know them because you’re human” (Nye 25).

* * *

It is September 12th, 2001 and I am lucky. Everyone in my neighborhood is standing together in a circle in the parking lot of our neighborhood swimming pool. It is dark and we are holding candles, the blue glow of the pool sending gentle shadows to our skin. I stand next to Mariam. Some people in our neighborhood have lost family members at the Pentagon. Mariam's grandfather prays for them aloud. He prays for peace. Other people say prayers too. We cry together. I am ten, and I don't understand all the differences between Muslims and Christians. But I can understand the pain and hope we have in common. When I'm nineteen, I will look back and still believe this one thing: we were all praying to the same God.

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Men's Clothing: Too Tiny for a Twelve-Year-Old Girl

Humorous Personal Essay

Kelsie Riggs

I remember the first time I saw a guy in skinny jeans. I thought for a long time about where those jeans came from. Perhaps his younger sister? Dennis Rodman maybe? I also wondered why any man would have interest in such tiny, tiny pants. At first, I would giggle at the thought of a man

What use is there in thinking, acting, and looking like an individual *anyway*? Don't we all *realize* that's a social faux pas? It's socially appropriate to express our individuality, but only if we express it in the same way as everyone else.

wearing something so super-girly, and I wondered why these folks couldn't just buy boys' pants. Then I realized that they actually make skinny jeans for men. This discovery was appalling. How can any man retain a reasonable testosterone level while being squeezed so tightly from abs to ankles?

I recently checked out a website where men's skinny jeans were being sold. I was a little nauseous after a moment or two because men aren't built to model that type of clothing. What is revealed in those pictures ought not be revealed and I can't help but feel that a website that packs a punch like that...well...it should come equipped with a solid "R" rating. Men weren't meant to be booty-licious, and I'm not even going to approach...the flip-side...of those jeans. All

I can say concerning this is, "Put that away." The thigh area of the pants is super-tight as well, as is the calf region. I guess these guys want to show off their sexy, sexy legs for anyone who doesn't vomit on sight. Good luck with that, boys. Six months from now the skinny jean epidemic will escalate to hot pants. Men's legs are the latest craze. Rawr. (Forgive me if I throw up in my mouth.) These men with their oh-so-sumptuous wanna-be woman legs are the beginning of what will progress from skinny jeans to hot pants. Mark my words. It will be over when mini-skirts inevitably get involved, and there will be widespread panic and rioting in the streets. All because men wanna look like J-lo.

In fairness, there have always been people I refer to as "Individual" because I can't tell whether or not I should use "Miss" or "Mister." Growing up, this issue usually involved a heavy glob of loose-fitting

clothing in a fast-food restaurant in some remote town. The person at the register wore short gray hair and a name tag that read “Pat.” In college, however, I am finding that these people exist not only in dead-end jobs in nowhere towns, but on campuses across the nation, perhaps even the world. It seems I am continuously confronted with people whose gender is unidentifiable.

These people come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors, but they all have certain hairstyle. You know the one: Cut to about ear length with a swept bang. The hair is straight and somewhat dull, usually blonde-ish, and sporting a bit of a messy 'do. Aside from the hair and overall lack of masculinity or girliness (they all wear the same amount of make-up), the only other common factor is that they are all quite thin, and their jeans are also skinny.

For those out there who are not well rehearsed in clothing terminology, skinny jeans are very tight denim characterized by an abnormally narrow ankle and calf region. On men, these pants are quite possibly a corduroy cousin to something worn under tunics hundreds of years ago. If you ever feel an unexplicable need to yell, “Charlemagne called! He said he wants his pants back!” you are likely to be dealing with skinny jeans. And don't feel bad for having that urge to call out loud. The urge comes to many people, including myself.

For research purposes, I considered interviewing the first male character I saw wearing skinny jeans. As you may have guessed, this research never took place, primarily because of the concern for that poor man's self-esteem. How could I keep a straight face when I feel I am interviewing Buddy the Elf? How is it possible to be respectful of someone who obviously doesn't respect himself enough to wear clothing that is appropriate for his body? That would be like trying to refrain from laughing while asking Godzilla why he felt the need to wear a little girl's Hello Kitty T-shirt. It is just such a humorous combination that, for the sake of what remains of these men's self-esteem, I decided to leave an interview for someone more tactful. Like a doctor who has been required to perform emergency amputations on these poor, confused boys.

The cause for concern over the skinny jean epidemic is not wholly the fact that guilty individuals may lose feet, limbs, or reproductive organs due to constriction and lack of blood flow. The concern is that the fashion statement that is being broadcast is “ambiguity.” Not only are men content to dress like every other guy; they now must dress like the girls as well. At the same time! No more cargo shorts and loose jeans.

The days of gender differentiation are coming to an abrupt halt, not only in the skinny jeans plague, but in appearance as a whole. Forget a short

manly cut. Orlando Bloom's long elf-hair is so much more popular. Superman's square jaw: out. Ricky Martin's soft facial features: in. It's obvious by now that Girly-man-itis is rampant, so why not hop on the skinny jeans bandwagon? Besides, what use is there in thinking, acting, and looking like an individual *anyway*? Don't we all *realize* that's a social faux pas? It's socially appropriate to express our individuality, but only if we express it in the same way as everyone else. *Duh*.

This isn't to say that every guy with a reasonably tight t-shirt should die a slow, painful death for his crimes against humanity. This simply states that if a person can't identify another person's gender by looking at him or talking with him, something may be askew. Men, I beg you. *Please*. Throw out the skinny jeans. They weren't made for your body anyway.

Secrets for Dinner, Shame for Dessert

Personal Persuasive Researched Essay

Amelia Lee Enrico

I don't even like Taco Bell. But, as I pulled up to the drive through all I could think of was getting enough food to calm me down. The lie I told the sixteen year old at the window, that I had lots of family back at home to feed, came out of my mouth faster than my mind came up with it. I literally got one of everything on the menu, paid the bill, and with a shaky hand sped off. Before I knew it, I found myself searching for a garbage can so when I was done with the contents of each wrapper I could just throw them away. No one would know the amount of food that I was about to eat in one sitting.

With a garbage right next to my window, I started into the first bag of food. The feeling of my stomach filling with warm tacos and burritos was the familiar comfort I was yearning for. As fast as I was inhaling the salty, steaming food, I could feel the anxiety melting away in my body. But, like the unforgiving boomerang, I knew the anxiety would come back. Only stronger and more dedicated than ever, eating at my weakening willpower. I also knew and deeply feared that it would invite its friends: guilt and self-loathing. This trio, with whom I am on a first name basis, have regular painful visits.

I searched each bag to see if there was anything that I missed and brushed the crumbs that fell on my shirt since I was eating too fast to care about them. My insides were screaming at me to stop, wanting relief from the extreme amounts of food they had no choice but to endure at my command. The pain in my gut crept to my sides until I felt I was out of breath. The work it takes to push a stomach past normal capacity is unthinkable.

I opened the windows so my clothes wouldn't smell like food, thought of a lie to explain what took me so long, and I headed home. As I drove I checked my rear view mirror as any good driver would. Only I wasn't checking for cars, I was looking into my own eyes with sorrow and the pain that comes with failure. I was glad that it was late and dark, but with every passing streetlight I got a glimpse of the anger and fear in my eyes.

I could hear the voices in my head screaming at me to stop this disgusting and inexcusable habit. It is like I have had feelings of both the binger and the victim. One voice says, "Why? Why do you do this to

yourself? You know that each time you give in this just brings you down and it gets harder and harder not to fall into this pattern.” And the other voice says, “Finally some food. Everyone else gets to eat what they want. You are deprived and might not get to eat again, so get as much now as you can. You’d be stupid to pass up this chance.” As I looked into my eyes I greeted my old friends: anxiety, guilt, and self-loathing. I knew that it was only a matter of time before they would return. I just thought it would take them a little longer this time to find me. Each time I felt the betrayal deepen that the food didn’t keep its promise, heal my wounds, and help me cope. Each time I was left all alone with more hatred for myself. Before I went inside my home to smile and pretend, I took a minute to regain my composure, determined to not let anyone see these thoughts or feelings that threatened me every day. No one could know. No one.

This scene may seem extreme to some but this is an actual event and one of the many times that I have binged. There were more instances like this, but I didn’t want to admit that it was more than just needing to eat like everyone else. It was not until I was 28 and sitting in my second semester of college in my psychology 1010 class that I learned what a binge was. I thought that people with bulimia were the ones that binged and I knew that I was not the kind to throw up the food that I just fought so hard to get my hands on.

The day came for the chapter on eating disorders and the psychology behind them. I found myself tuning out because I had heard so many lectures and seen so many videos in health class on this topic. We even see it on TV with A-list actresses playing the part of a girl that was dying to be thin. I know that the graphic images of girls, so thin you could see their bones, were shown to us from an early age to scare us away from the disorder. I was always jealous and filled with envy because I felt that these girls had it right. They knew how to be in control. They hated food and hated themselves, so they restricted food as a way to punish themselves and to show that they were the ones in control. I hated food and myself, but my punishment was to eat until I was in pain. I had no control.

As children we are vulnerable to learning what our body needs from how much sleep, food, and play time we get in a day. These tools that we need to learn can be interrupted by the pressure of gender roles, stress, family dysfunction, family and social judgments, and just not learning from an early age to listen to what our bodies are trying to tell us.

The professor went over the seriousness of the two disorders that most everyone knows: Anorexia and Bulimia. I was taking notes for the test but not really paying close attention. I hated to talk about these disorders because I felt that everyone was looking at me and thinking, “Why can’t you have any will power and control like these girls? They know when to say when. They obviously have it right and you have it wrong.” I looked up from my notes to see who was burning me with their eyes, but no one was. They were just taking notes or reading along in the chapter like I was. Then with the next slide in the power point presentation the whole room went dark and empty, and it was just the professor and me. In large lettering on the screen above me were the words, “Binge Eating Disorder or BED.”

What? You mean to tell me that there was a name and a diagnosis for the hell that I was going through? I pulled my hoodie on and tucked my hair back so I could cover my face, and cried. We were instructed that this was just as serious as the other well-known eating disorders and was being accepted in the psychology world. We learned that “The Binge Eating Disorder” affects between 2 and 5 percent of adults in the United States and is the most common eating disorder. Unlike other eating disorders, Binge Eating Disorder appears to be as common in men as in women” (Ross). As tears drenched the sleeve of my hoodie, I was jolted into a wormhole of new thoughts and emotions. To my amazement I felt a sense of serenity, not bitterness or betrayal like I thought I would, for knowing that there was a reason for my addiction to food. Not that I needed someone or something to put the blame on, I just felt better knowing that I wasn’t crazy for feeling so helpless. It was like someone actually heard my screams for help and reached out with a name of the disorder that had been my personal hell. It was like opening my eyes for the first time, and finding the sun too bright, I had to shield my eyes with my arm. I knew that I wanted to open my eyes, I just needed to let them adjust to the sun. It would take some time, but I was going to learn all that I needed to know about this disorder. Slowly but surely I was going to make the adjustments to my life so I would no longer be held back in the chains of this disorder.

I started to think of what was wrong with our society and the pressures that we all face, and about how and where disorders begin. The binge eating disorder was not as well known or as recognized as the other disorders. There should be more acceptance and tolerance for those who are struggling with it themselves and for family and friends who are victims as well. So where does it begin? Where and when do we learn how much we should eat? As children we are vulnerable to learning what our body needs from how much sleep, food and play time we get in a day. These tools that we need to learn can be interrupted by the pressure of gender roles, stress,

family dysfunction, family and social judgments, and just not learning from an early age to listen to what our bodies are trying to tell us.

In an average red brick home somewhere in America a young mother is sitting at the table with her child that refuses to finish her plate of dinner. This stubborn child is not to get up from the table until her entire plate is clean. This shows respect for her parents who provide the food and appreciation that she had any dinner at all. Her mother reminds her of the many children that don't have food at all and that she should feel gratitude that she has this luxury. No matter what her mother says, she doesn't want or need to finish her meal. This is not because she lacks the understanding that she is lucky to have food or because she is ignoring the strong feeling of guilt that her mother is laying on as thick as the slab of pork chop that is left on her plate. She is just a young girl and is still learning how to listen to the cues that her body gives her that she is hungry or full. As a mother myself I know that it's a full time job to keep your children fed and healthy, since most children would rather not eat their dinner, especially when it is good for them. I am sure that many adults can empathize with that young girl and find that they don't know when to stop eating for the fear of wasting food and seeming ungrateful.

Understanding and listening to full and hunger cues can be difficult for many people, but for those with the Binge Eating Disorder it is almost impossible. This is because there are so many other things going on inside that the cue to stop eating can be drowned out in the crowd of other voices and thoughts. In the book *Intuitive Eating* by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, we are told about the food police and their roles in our eating habits. The food police are: the nutrition informant, the diet rebel, the food anthropologist, the nurturer, and the intuitive eater. These are the "voices" that everyone has in their head but for some, one voice can be stronger and louder than the others (83). For me the diet rebel is the loudest and the most constant, while the nurturer is the softest and the least heard. This rebel voice can make me want to binge even if I am on my way to eat or have just eaten. It says things like, "No one else has to diet. You are the only one who has to turn away the food that you enjoy. So just to get back at them let's have 10 more because you deserve it." Can you see why this voice would be the loudest and the most often heard? It is speaking to that ignored, angry teenager inside that thinks that the world is against them and that the only way to be happy is to get back at them by doing the opposite, times five.

The Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is included in the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and is characterized by "ingestion of a large amount of food in a discrete period of time and loss of control without the compensatory behavior (vomiting, use

of laxatives) typical of bulimia nervosa” (Fichter). The words “large amounts of food in a period of time” can mean different things to different people. What it means to me is that it is more than just wanting to eat when it comes to a binge.

I am completely overwhelmed with fear. My mind kicks into survival mode and all my thoughts and actions are dedicated to getting the food that can sooth the feelings of guilt and remorse. I am desperate to get my next “fix” of food or I’ll go crazy. During one of these times of eating large amounts of food it’s almost like an out-of-body experience where I can see myself bingeing and don’t have the power to stop it.

As with most people that struggle with body issues and dissatisfaction comes the desire to diet and lose the weight so they can feel better about themselves, but the problem with a restrictive diet is it has the potential of ending in over eating. You think to yourself, “As soon as I am off this stupid diet I will get back to how I really want to eat.” Research has suggested that “dietary restriction has been found to be associated with the risk for over eating and weight problems” (Engleberg). Just taking away food or wanting to start a diet to solve the problem of eating unhealthy foods is not the answer. This will usually lead to feeling deprived and starved, and the answer for that is to eat, and eat a lot. This is not just for those who struggle with Binge Eating Disorder.

Most people who say they are going to stop eating sugar so they can lose weight feel like sugar is all that they are craving. The only way to satisfy that craving that has been running around in your head all day is to shut it up by eating enough sugar to make up for the tortuous hours and days that you were deprived. You give in to that bitter, rebel voice and eat to feel justified in your anger. Then, after you are done with your indulgence of food, the guilt that you hoped the food would silence comes back with a vengeance.

Binge Eating Disorder is an addiction. This addiction is like the well-known analogy of the iceberg. While it looks containable and manageable on the surface, the real problems go deeper and are not always seen. To just suggest to someone who struggles with this disorder to just lose the weight so their health will be better and their life will improve means that they don’t know what lies beneath the water. Someone who has to fight everyday with herself or himself is in a no-win situation. It takes more than just desire. I wake up with that “desire” every day and have even gotten out a paper and set up my plan of how I could enhance my life and face my fears. I have started with online plans, paid for professionals, and begged for help. Yet each time that I fail and give in to the binge, I start the cycle over and wish that I had power and a feeling of control in my life.

I have been lucky to meet with Brooke Parker, a registered dietitian, who has been working for the past eleven years with students at Utah State who struggle with any and all eating disorders. I asked her some of the burning questions that can help me to deal with this disorder. I asked her what steps I have to work through. She said, “By far the habitual negative thinking is the hardest to work through. Also overcoming the internal fears of losing control, weight gain, and not being "perfect" are extremely difficult topics we deal within my office.”

I also wanted to know if this disorder was something that a person must deal with throughout an entire lifetime or if treatment would allow the individual to move on. She said, “I think there is always a need to implement prevention techniques and maintenance strategies. Just as an alcoholic must be aware of potential triggers, a recovery eating disorder or ED patient must be aware and effectively deal with their triggers. They can have a great life free from an ED. They just have to be more aware and WORK to take care of themselves.”

My fear drove me to ask what lies ahead of me in my fight with BED and if there was a high chance of relapse like there is in other eating disorders? She replied with hope in her eyes, “I have seen a lot of ups and down with recovery but generally in my experience there is a steady incline upward, it just sometimes takes a while, even years. A thought I always leave with my clients is this – ‘You can never go back to where you were, because you know too much now.’”

Because I was one of the people who did not know that they had a disorder, my final question was what would help bring a greater awareness to those who do not know that they are struggling with it. “There are national causes and organizations bringing more awareness to the general public. Most of them are coming through the National Eating Disorders Association. I think that open communication and more outlets for treatment are the main areas that need to be emphasized” (Interview). I echo Brooke’s last statement and wish that there could be more open communication and outlets for treatment for those who battle this disorder every day. We have much to learn and a long way to go when it comes to social acceptance and not showing discrimination against those who would rather give up than keep fighting this fight.

Although I am still angry that I am not in control when it comes to food, I feel that what my dietitian, Brooke said, “You can never go back to where you were, because you know too much now,” is the rope that I hold on to. Sometimes I think that I can’t do it, that I am too weak to fight. When I feel like the goal is too far away I try to remember everything that I am

learning about myself and realize that with support from those who love me, I have a glimmer of hope for the future.

I wonder what the rest of my life will be like now that I know about BED. I don't want it to be a crutch or a cop out. I want to be able to have dinner with family or friends without feeling deprived. I want to be able to shop for food without the anxiety of wanting to fill my cart to the brim. I want to be able to walk up the stairs without losing my breath and feel embarrassed because no one else is out of breath. I want to be a good example to my children so they don't have to be ashamed of their mom and so they don't have to fight this battle when they grow up. I hope to one day not have the thought of food be the first thing that I think of when I open my eyes. Sometimes I have fear that this road is going to be long and hard. But now that I know what this disorder is I also have hope. Hope that I can do this. Hope that I am not lost. Hope because I am not alone in this battle. Hope that I won't pass my hatred for food on to my beautiful daughter. Hope that this addiction will not keep me from being happy. I hope that now I can start to live my life, the life that began in Psychology 1010.

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Curfews: The Responsibilities of Parents

Persuasive Personal Researched Essay

Cody Cleverly

At around 2:00 a.m. on Friday night, I could almost taste the spongy soil of the recently tilled garden I was using as my spur-of-the-moment hideout. Terrified almost to tears at the sound of a grown man's uncontrollable profanity, I couldn't move. I said a silent prayer promising God I would never do anything bad again, if only I got away. Before I had a chance to run, I was blinded by the headlights of an approaching police squad car. The officer pulled to the side of the road to get close to the old, rusty passenger vehicle lodged in the neighbor's bushes. After exchanging a few words with the obviously disgruntled vehicle owner, the officer walked to the middle of the road to have a closer look at the four legged figure that stood motionless despite the collision that happened just a few feet away. It appeared to be a cat, with its arched back and eyes that glowed at any sign of light. I knew it was nothing more than a portion of a refrigerator box that I conveniently found in my parents garage. After cutting it into the shape of a cat, spray-painting it black, gluing two dimes on for eyes, and placing it strategically in the road, my next door neighbor and I found ourselves in the present sticky situation. When the officer sat down in the driver seat of his car to fill out a report, we both knew what we had to do. At that very moment we stood up and started to run, working every tense muscle in our thirteen year old legs. Not more than a few minutes later, we had climbed a number of jagged chain-link fences and found our way back to the refuge of my basement. This is only one example of the mischievous activities that consumed my weekends as a teenager.

When I was growing up I did a lot of stupid, reckless things with my friends. I think it's safe to say that at least eighty percent of the ignorant, irresponsible things I did as a teen were at night, and specifically after midnight. Because I didn't have a curfew, I was at liberty to do basically anything I wanted whenever I wanted. If my parents had required me to be home at a specific time, I wouldn't have had as much time to throw eggs at passing cars and put flaming bags of my own feces on peoples' doorstep. My completely uncontrolled behavior was the result of a lack of adult supervision. A curfew is an excellent way for parents to adequately supervise their teenagers.

A study by Andre Sourander, an acclaimed adolescent behavior researcher, concludes that one of the strongest predictors for adolescent

delinquency is poor parental supervision (Sourander 579). When unsupervised, teenagers have a tendency to do things that they know their parents wouldn't approve of. These disapproved activities could be listed for pages, but for now, I'll focus on one: premarital sex. According to D. Hollander, a child research leader, "The more time that high school students spend without adult supervision, the higher their level of sexual activity" (Hollander 106). This statement is one finding from a survey taken by 2,034 teens in six urban public high schools during the 2000-2001 academic year. As a result of this premature sexual activity, sexually transmitted infections are on the rise. Parents could save their teenagers a lot of pain and suffering by simply supervising them more. The solution is pretty clear. Parents need to be close enough to their teenagers to be able to exert necessary control over their actions.

Although they don't have a lot of control, parents need to have power over of some aspects of their teenager's lives.

When studying parental control, a doctoral student at the Center for Developmental Research, Fumiko Kakihara found that, "Children need sufficient regulation of their behavior to learn the rules and structure of social functioning" (Kakihara 1722). An essential part of learning the rules of social functioning is learning and following the rules set by one's parents. Parents must inform their children of what is expected of them. After their children know what is expected, parents need to have enough control to discipline their children for non-compliance to the said rules. Curfews are an incredibly effective way to regulate consequences. Whether consequences are rewards for good behavior, or punishments for bad, they provide important incentives leading teens to follow their parents' rules.

One major consequence of a teenager's decisions is trust. A study about parental trust was conducted by M. Kerr, H. Stattin, and K. Trost of La Sapienza University. Their article reads, "Trust should be important in parents' relationships with their adolescents, because parents know that teenagers today face many temptations and that their own teenagers could be exposed to risky situations and bad influences" (Kerr 737). The study concluded that teens with a trusting parental relationship are less likely to break their parents' rules or get into serious trouble. It's apparent that trust between teenagers and their parents is necessary to keep them from making bad decisions. The best way for teens to gain their parents' trust is to follow

If parents aren't taking it upon themselves to require their children to follow curfew laws, they are failing as responsible parents.

the rules and make responsible decisions that both parties can be proud of. An excellent starting place for rules and expectations is a curfew. Parents should impose a curfew on their teenagers when they first begin to do things away from home on their own. As part of imposing this curfew, they should explain to their teens that it is in place to give them a chance to earn parental trust. The curfew can then be adjusted according to whether the teenager meets their parents' expectations or not. If they follow the rules and obey their curfew, an extension should be considered. If they break rules or curfew, they should have to follow stricter rules or an earlier curfew.

I feel that it is a parent's moral obligation to be completely responsible for their children. As part of this responsibility, parents should make sure their children are at home under parental supervision at a decent hour. Not only are curfews a moral obligation of parents, but also a civic obligation. In order to prevent crime and other related issues, cities in the United States have a legal curfew for juvenile individuals. If parents aren't taking it upon themselves to require their children to follow these curfew laws, they are failing as a responsible parent.

I was raised in a home with a high standard of family values. My parents did an excellent job of teaching my siblings and me what was acceptable in our home. Although we knew very well what was expected of us, we needed more than just a conscience to keep us on the right track. While I was at home with my parents, I didn't have a choice. I had direct supervision leading me to do what I knew I should. But as soon as I was away from my parents, they didn't have any control. I was free to stay out as late as I wanted making irresponsible decisions because I was free of a curfew.

Melanie S. Farkas and Wendy S. Grolnick, authors of a number of books about successfully raising children, wrote about a study concerning parental structure in the lives of adolescents. They state, "Findings indicate that structure makes unique contributions to children's motivation" (Farkas 266). Because of my lack of structure, I didn't have the motivation to please my parents with good decisions. As a result, I made a lot of bad decisions. I wasn't the only one either. Compared to my brothers, my decisions were the work of an angel. Since they didn't have a curfew either, they fell into the unrelenting drug culture. They were free to stay out as late as they wanted, and ended up doing illegal drugs and engaging in excessive underage drinking. My parents travelled a lot because my sister played competitive softball. When they were gone, my brothers and I were free to do whatever we wanted in our home. One Saturday night I came home from my friend's place to see more than a dozen cars parked outside my house. It was after 3:00 a.m. when I walked in the door. Upon entering, I could hear loud music

echoing from the basement, and I was immediately set back by the stale, dry, but sweet smell of marijuana. I knew my brothers were druggies, but in

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the house? They were smoking drugs in my parents' house?! Disgusted and overwhelmingly infuriated I warned everyone involved that they had two minutes before the police arrived. Apparently they believed I had really called the cops because the house was empty before I could say Bob Marley.

Where did the parents of twenty teenagers think their children were at 3 a.m. that Saturday night? Because my parents were out of town they didn't have any control over what my brothers were doing, but what about the parents

of the others? In their article about marijuana use in young adults, J. Alfonso and M.E. Dunn of Emmanuel College in Boston, state, "Despite the universal implementation of drug use prevention programs in schools, overall use of marijuana among children and young adults has not decreased substantially" (Alfonso 1,009). Since public and government drug prevention programs are failing, there is only one solution: Parental drug prevention. As I have stated before, the best way for parents to prevent teenagers from doing irresponsible things, is to implement a curfew. Had twenty teens been required to be home at a specific time, my brothers wouldn't have had anyone to party with and likely would have been doing something significantly more responsible.

This past December, my younger brother was caught with drugs and a scale in his backpack at school. He was charged with possession of narcotics with the intent to distribute. Christmas wasn't as fun last year because he was in Juvenile Detention. If he had a curfew during the preceding years, I truly believe his life would be a lot different. He wasn't mature or educated enough to know that drugs would devastate his future when he first started using them, but my parents could have given him the direction he needed had they only given him a little more structure and discipline.

Some argue that curfews aren't effective, and are simply a false sense of security for insecure parents. They argue that other things determine the responsibility of one's children. The truth is, a curfew alone won't make or break successful parenting. There are many factors involved in being a successful parent and raising mature, responsible children. Each parent will have child-raising techniques, and children will end up being a variety of different kinds of people. But studies and reliable observations

have shown that when a curfew is imposed on a teenager, he/she is much less likely to make irresponsible decisions. This curfew lays the foundation for a trusting relationship between teens and parents. I didn't have a curfew as a teenager and I wish my parents had given me one. Although I believe I turned out okay, my brothers didn't. Their case isn't uncommon in teens. Teenagers should be required to follow a curfew because they aren't equipped with the knowledge and experience necessary to make rational, responsible decisions without their parents' guidance.

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Super-Sized Government

Persuasive Researched Essay

Kevin White

Millions of Americans hear the facts about this country's obesity problem and are in awe. As of 2008, 34 percent of Americans over the age of 20 are obese (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Not including those obese, another 34 percent are overweight. A grand total of 68 percent! The even scarier part is that fifty, even thirty years ago, this statistic was nowhere close to where it stands today. From 1980 to 2008, obesity in children ages six to eleven years of age has almost tripled from 6.5 percent to almost 20 percent. The obesity epidemic is starting younger and statistics have shown that it will continue to get worse. Logically, the first two questions that pop into the common person's head are, "What is causing this problem?" and "How can we fix this?" Across the country, much is being done to answer these questions and to solve this problem. Every time you turn on a television you see advertisements for weight loss programs, which rake in billions every year in this country. NBC, ABC, and MTV networks, among others, feature prime time shows that seem to face obesity head on, with very blunt and forward talk. New 'fad' diets seem to pop up out of nowhere and catch on like wild fire. Director Morgan Spurlock produced a film titled "Super Size Me" about the dangers of fast food which was viewed by millions and has grossed over thirty million dollars to date. We, as Americans, seem to have an obsession with weight loss so why does this problem continue to rise? Why is obesity in this country increasing instead of the opposite? There are numerous answers but one over rides them all. The United States Government is to blame for the rising obesity in this country.

There is no doubt that we as a country are becoming a little more round and a little more plump as the years pass by...and the United States Government is to blame.

We need to jump to the root of the problem of obesity. First off, when did obesity start to become an epidemic in this country? In 1985 our country started using a system to measure how obese we were as a whole called body mass index or more commonly known as BMI. To measure a person's body mass index, you take a person's weight and height, type it

into an equation and come out with an index number. For example, I am five feet, eleven inches tall and I come out with a BMI of 24.4 ("Calculate Your Body Mass Index"). Along with installing BMI into the picture, the US government, along with researchers, decided that anyone with a BMI of over 25 is overweight and persons with a BMI of over 30 are in the obese category ("Wikipedia"). So naturally, the night after this was installed, millions of Americans suddenly became overweight and obese. Literally, in the span of twenty four hours, our country suddenly became one of the most obese countries in the world. The reasons why the government did this are countless and I will cover them later, but it is important to ponder over that fact just mentioned. It took us as a country twenty hours to become one of the most obese countries in the world. Personally I cannot believe I am categorized as almost "overweight." It came as a shock to me. I eat well, exercise daily and if I'm honest, you can see my rib cage, yet I am almost overweight. Since you cannot see me, let me give you some names off of the BMI list that are better known. Actors Tom Cruise, Sylvester Stallone, Mel Gibson, baseball player Barry Bonds, boxer Mike Tyson, and NFL quarterback Donovan McNabb are all considered obese according to government standards (List of Famous Overweight People). Former President George Bush, Basketball stars Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant are also considered overweight according to the government standards. Just typing the words "BMI" into a search engine on your internet, you will immediately come upon countless articles with such headlines as "BMI – What a Flipping Joke!" BMI and the government have forever changed the way we look at our weight as a whole (Non Aviation Topics). But the question I ask myself is, maybe this is not such a bad thing. Sure the government is exaggerating this country's obesity but we still have solid proof that after 1985 obesity and overweight numbers have increased across the nation.

There is no doubt that we as a country are becoming a little more round and a little more plump as the years pass by. You can go to any mall and see this phenomenon for yourself. It is undeniable. A common reason, for this trend, that is used by society and the government is the emergence of fast food. There are over 160,000 fast food restaurants in America, with that number growing daily, so anyone could see this as an easy target for blame (Number of Fast Food Restaurants in America). More and more children are depending on fast food as a common meal where thirty or forty years ago, that was not the case. When I talked to my father about this topic, he explained the different mindset in the world today compared to that in his younger days. He said when he was younger, it was a luxury to go out to eat and when he did, on average once a month, he would go to a sit-down

restaurant and indulge himself until he could not eat any more (White). He told me he would even save up change for weeks so he could get a burger at the neighborhood McDonalds. But most every other night, he would come home from school or playing with friends and have a home cooked meal waiting on the kitchen table. This is not the average trend today. Today, when we are hungry, we hop in our cars and grab a bite at a local restaurant. But the main question that needs to be answered is, is the emergence and regularity of eating fast food today causing widespread obesity?

If you are one of the millions that watched the afore mentioned “Super Size Me” documentary, you would be prone to believe that fast food is in fact the main problem. In this documentary, Director Morgan Spurlock decides he is going to eat McDonald’s food for a month straight (Spurlock). He goes out to prove that not only will this increase your weight but other health risks could arise. Naturally, after indulging himself 3 meals a day for

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month, he gained 25 pounds, his arteries started to clog and multiple other issues arose. Without exercise, one of his fast food diet rules, while eating 5000 plus calories a day, we could all predict that this outcome would arise. But the question I was prone to ask was: “How likely is this?” Do 68 percent of this country’s citizens eat this poorly with lack of exercise? I would venture to say, in my uneducated opinion, no. Possibly 0.1 percent of this 68 percent actually do this to their bodies.

A follow-up documentary, “Fat Head” directed by Tom Naughton, sought to prove how unrealistic, biased and untruthful Spurlock’s experiences were. Naughton decided he would eat only fast food for twenty-eight days and see the results (Naughton). He walked a couple miles four

times a week and kept his portions down to around 2000 calories a day, the recommended calorie intake for someone with his size and weight. By the end of his trial, he had lost 13 pounds and went from a 31 to a 28 BMI. Along with the weight loss, his blood tests came out similar to when he started and his cholesterol improved drastically. He also stated multiple times throughout the documentary that he felt “great and full of energy”. How could this happen? Could fast food not be as unhealthy as we are told? Let me explain.

We are taught from a young age that fats, including saturated fats, are bad for your health. These raise cholesterol which causes heart disease. While eating breakfast, you can look over at your Cheerios box and see an “American Heart Association” label on the side with words like “May help lower your cholesterol” and “Good for your Heart”. At least for me, this seemed like common knowledge and something that I was told from a young age. These are great, healthy foods right? I never thought about questioning this until recently. If you go through all of the archives you cannot find any research that proves that high cholesterol causes heart disease, in fact you find the opposite, proving this to be false. Renowned Swedish Doctor Uffe Ravnskov stated “[after research] I realized that the scientific evidence behind the [cholesterol is bad for your health] campaign was non-existing” (Global Oneness). Looking back at history brings back even more questions. The main staple for people a hundred, two hundred, even two thousand years ago was meat. Cow meat, pig meat, bison meat, all types of meat (Lambert). So if meat causes high cholesterol, which causes heart disease, why did those people, even a hundred years ago, very rarely have heart disease when as of 2009, 37 percent of all women in America suffer from heart disease (Facts about Women and Cardiovascular Disease)? Talking to doctors and researchers now days, the answer is simple. The main reason for heart disease is clogged arteries caused by three main things; smoking, stress, and high blood sugar. Not high cholesterol (Heart Disease). With the common person’s lack of knowledge about heart disease, we have been deceived into buying products with the belief that they will help the health of our heart. In actuality, these foods have no scientific backing that they will improve the health of anyone’s heart but instead have helped the obesity epidemic grow at a faster pace.

The other cause of this obesity trend is high blood sugar. If fried meat and fat at fast food chains are not causing the problem, then what is? Grains. Grains are starch and to be simple, starch turns directly into sugar inside the body, which raises your blood sugar level quickly and easily (Mardian). Some of the starchiest foods include rice, wheat, potatoes and flour. Some more common foods include bread, Post Shredded Wheat and Cheerios. When you eat starchy foods, your body breaks them down into sugar and when there is too much sugar in your body, it not only clogs your arteries but is the main reason for fat cells developing. With these facts clearly and scientifically proven, why did I grow up with a United State Department of Agriculture Food Pyramid telling me to eat six to eleven servings of these grains daily?

To give some background, the United States Department of Agriculture is a branch of the “United States federal executive department

[that] is responsible for developing and executing U.S. federal government policy on farming, agriculture, and food” (Mission Statement). With goals to “meet the needs of farmers and ranchers, promote agricultural trade and production” anyone can easily see why the food pyramid was organized the way it is. The saying that “there is always a hidden motive” takes on a whole new meaning with the government. It would be very similar if the United States Fish and Wildlife Service started telling us to eat fish as the main staple of our diets. That would not make any sense. Could the government be wrong about our health? Yes, it is clear they can be and that this time they are. One of their main motives is to promote agricultural sales and through the food pyramid, they are accomplishing this.

On top of this, there could not possibly be a better advertisement for your food than the United States Government. I remember countless times that my mother bought certain foods because of this mindset; she was told they were good for health. Did she do any research? No. She trusted the government and what she was being told. You might be saying that a few years ago, the USDA got rid of the food pyramid and now have a website titled mypyramid.gov where anyone can personalize their own food pyramid. This is a step in the right direction and by step, I literally mean one, small, baby step. Like the old pyramid, they still recommend you emphasize grains as the main staple into your diet (My Pyramid Tips and Resources). Not much else has changed except the fact that it is more personalized and they have some neat graphics on the website.

This leads to a very obvious point; there is a lack of education on proper food and nutrition in the United States. It is clear to see. Nutrition classes in grades K through 12 are massively lacking. Few schools have actually implemented separate nutrition classes whereas most include it into the Physical Education, PE class. The few times nutrition was taught in my experience, my food education was built around the food pyramid and developing a diet around those guidelines. I was led to believe that if I followed this to a “T”, I would always stay fit and healthy for my life. When that came under criticism, as stated before, the USDA came out with mypyramid.gov which in most researchers’ and scientists’ eyes, leaves Americans with the same problems. The question is why the one-sided research from the USDA is clogging our textbooks when new research has and is being done with regards to healthier and more nutritious diets. The government provides the curriculum for the few nutrition classes provided, so towards who else can we point the finger?

The government is helping the obesity problem in one regard, cutting down on illegal immigrants. The reason is that minorities in the United States have a higher prevalence of obesity than the white population.

There are about 12 million illegal immigrants in this country to date, with an estimated 78 percent from Mexico and other Latin countries (Illegal Immigration to the United States). Along with the doubling of Hispanic citizens between the years 1990 to 2000 to 44.8 million, we must look to this statistic as another cause of obesity. You are probably asking what this could possibly have to do with obesity. Let me explain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hispanics had 21 percent higher obesity prevalence compared with whites ("Hispanics Have a 21 Percent"). With the rise of minorities in this country, along with Blacks who have 51 percent higher obesity prevalence than whites, we cannot glance by these statistics and forget them. This is one of the many reasons why obesity continues to climb in the United States.

The final reason why the government is to blame for the rise in obesity has to do with corn. Yes, I said corn. I bet you did not expect that, but corn may be the biggest reason. When the government started subsidizing corn, almost in sync, obesity numbers shot up (Keim). When the government subsidizes something it basically means they fund it or in other words give money. The United States Government gives almost 10 billion dollars a year to farmers in order to grow more corn, almost over three times as much as they give to the second most funded commodity—cotton. You are probably wondering either one of two things; what is so bad about corn, or where is all this corn that farmers are growing? Let me answer those together. For one example, corn can easily be turned into high fructose corn syrup, which is one of the most common ingredients in almost all foods. If you do not trust me, check the ingredients listed on your cereal, or your granola bar or basically anything you eat and you are very likely to find high fructose corn syrup listed. Along with the high fructose corn syrup, you will see multiple ingredients based around corn, all extremely unhealthy. Why? Because it tastes good and it is cheap. And why is it cheap? Because it is subsidized by the government. Also, "chemical analysis from restaurants across the United States show that nearly every cow or chicken used in fast food is raised on a diet of corn." Because of the subsidizing of corn, ranchers now raise their animals on corn, which much cheaper than the old feed and corn enables these animals to grow bigger faster (Keim). This has led the price of meat to shoot down which in turn created the dollar menu at McDonalds. It is very simple, cheap meat equals cheaper fast food which equals more people eating unhealthy.

Many different people are pointing their fingers here and there, trying to find the reasons for the rise of obesity in America. The truth is that there are multiple reasons, and many more not covered in this paper. It is easy to point the finger at fast food. They have grown along with America's

growing waist line. But if they are not the true reason, and I do not believe they are, we must dig deeper to see why fast food chains have grown so rapidly. The Government is behind everything, from the growth of fast food, to the misinformation about nutrition ,and even the lack of honest information about nutrition. They had and still have a hidden agenda in all of their actions and until that is changed, we will see ourselves, individually in this nation, blowing up bigger and rounder by the day. Pretty soon the government will be subsidizing J. C. Penny to make bigger clothes.

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The War Outside the World: The Effect of Excessive Gaming on the Family Unit

Personal Persuasive Researched Essay

Betsy Blanchard

By day, he is Kyle^{*}: a respectable IT director for a reputable pharmaceutical company. He makes six figures and even wears a tie. By night, he is Gothmog: an undead priest for an online world. I'm not sure if he actually wears anything.

My father – the donor of half my genes, the husband to my mother – is an avid gamer. After an 8-hour workday and 4-hour round trip commute, the first thing he does upon arriving home is change into sweatpants and sit down at his computer – a spot he will unlikely move from for the entirety of the evening. He is addicted, dependent, and obsessive. In fact, on most days it seems he chooses his online family over the one living within his own home. It is for this reason (among others) that I must insist that online gaming is a carnivorous creature, enveloping its users into worlds of fairy princesses and misplaced priorities. Online gaming is a danger to the family unit and should be discouraged at all possible costs.

Simply put, online gaming is addicting. Games such as the infamous World of Warcraft are designed to be so; use of real-time strategy and infinitely possible progression encourages such dependent behavior. These games are called MMORPGS: multi-massive online role-playing games. It is no wonder that increasing numbers are falling victim to the virtual scene. What is most tragic, however, is the oblivion of those victims to the severity of their actions.

My dad does not realize how much his online devotion tears at our family, despite my many, many attempts to tell him how much we miss him in our lives. Almost without exception, my frustrated pleas are immediately written off as products teenage angst and overactive hormones. Sometimes they are even met with hostility. I'm beginning to get the impression that my delivery could use some tweaking.

A study carried out in China suggests that dependent online gaming results in offline physical, personal and professional issues (Wei, Peng, and Ming), a deduction I have been preaching for years without actual scientific validation.

^{*} Names in this article have been changed

Physically, my father has undoubtedly been affected. Despite the fact that he once was in the military and in better shape than I could ever dream of being in myself, he now makes no time for exercise. In regards to professionalism, my father brings his gaming laptop to work with him and spends his lunch hour fighting warlocks and casting spells. Above it all though, it is in personal relationships that I see the greatest deterioration in his life. In *our family's* life.

When put into perspective, it can be said that my father subjects himself to a second full-time job with the 40+ hours he wastes in virtual lands that do not actually exist. He spends these hours socializing with people he's never physically met (with the exception of one, that is – his college friend Eric, who is equally as dependent and obsessive as my father, just without the children to disregard). He considers these online comrades to be his closest friends, and spends his free time on the weekends gaming with them. He associates more with complete strangers than with his own family and friends.

A frightening statistic indicates that 35% of MMORPG players either agree or strongly agree that it is easier to talk to people online in game sessions than offline. This lack of communication is not only disturbing, but it is poison in a household.

My dad will go so into a game that he completely disregards all that is happening around him. If we want to get his attention, we have to tap him on the shoulder and patiently wait for him to find an opportunity to pause his game and inform all of his companions that he will be leaving momentarily. Then after he makes it very clear that he has minimal time to talk, we end the conversation and avoid having another one for as long as possible. He almost literally tunes out reality. It is hard for us to watch. How can we communicate with someone so withdrawn from actuality? With much difficulty, if at all. In our home, we have psychologically come to consider ourselves as secondary priorities, and we have consequently become especially bitter. This tension is constant and omnipresent.

Despite the fact that an addiction to online gaming is not yet included among illnesses in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), it is a very real disease, one often associated with gambling in regards to addictive severity and said to share “the same neurobiological mechanism of substance use disorder” (Cheng-Sheng Chen). It craves the gamer's constant attention and detracts from typical everyday activity.

When it's time for all of us to sit down for dinner, my father asks for his meal to be brought to him at his desk so as not to interrupt his game play; after all, he has virtual beings to keep from disappointing. As a result, "family" dinners have become almost a laughable concept in my home. On other nights, when he suggests we all watch a movie together, he arrives ten minutes late, laptop and headset in hand. He pays no attention to us or the movie at hand.

Studies regarding personality traits that lead to such addiction are commonplace, but it is my concern that too little attention is paid to the personality factors that are harvested/maintained during obsessive game play—factors that have detrimental effects on family cohesiveness. Too little attention is paid to the amount of time spent on such trivial pursuits. In an article co-authored by Zaheer Hussain and Mark D. Griffiths in

CyberPsychology & Behavior, it is said that 4% of gamers claim to play over 70 hours a week – that's just two hours shy of three days, over 40% of an entire week subjected to pseudo-slavery via World of Warcraft, EverQuest, City of Heroes and the like. No force without a definite addictive capability would be able to yield such alarming numbers.

I can distinctly remember one night during my senior year of high school that my dad and I were sitting in my room and talking. I remember it so well most likely for the rarity of its occurrence, but regardless. It was just after nine, and I was upset because my plans for the night with some friends had fallen through. Despite the depressing circumstances, we were having a great conversation. What cheered me up most that evening, however, was not the actual counsel given to me, but rather the source of the counsel being given. Before I knew it, half an hour had passed. I was in the middle of speaking when he looked at his watch and gasped in horror: it was 9:33 p.m. and he was three minutes late to his scheduled raid. He apologized for the inconvenience and immediately vanished. I didn't see him for the rest of the night.

From the minimal relevant support I was able to gather (the lack of research relating online dependency and familial troubles is astonishing), I read in one article that there is a positive correlation to internet usage and emotional loneliness. This loneliness, they argue, partially creates the vicious cycle that is internet addiction. Because of social issues, a person will seek out a distraction on the Internet. This distraction prevents the person from seeking remedies to their social qualms from those closest to

He is addicted, dependent, and obsessive. In fact, on most days it seems he chooses his online family over the one living within his own home.

them and encourage them to spend more time online away from the problem they are indirectly refusing to fix (Frostling-Henningsson).

I can't help but think that this is one of the many facets of online gaming that my father finds solace in. He is a private man. He does not often share the intensely intimate details of his past. So, instead of seeking out our comfort and support, he turns to the computer for peace and privacy. How many others turn to the computer for this same reason? The numbers could not possibly be quantified, but the truth resonates just the same: what these players are gaining in monitor-time is being taken away from human intervention, human relationships. Dedication to online gaming is stealing attention and comfort that could, and should, otherwise be sought from family.

Growing up in a family of five that more often than not felt like four, I've seen the effects of gaming addiction firsthand. I've heard my mother's many muttered threats of divorce. I've witnessed my sister's frustrated petitions for immediate help with her homework. I myself have often felt that perhaps wielding a spear or wand would elicit more of my father's attention.

Addiction to online gaming survives as a real, growing epidemic that should be exterminated as soon as is physically and mentally possible.

The war is on.

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Broken In

Word Meditation Essay

Kaitlyn Matheson

I stand with the sun behind me as I look over the ancient ruins. My breath comes in shorter intervals, but that is expected after a steep climb. Sleeping in a tent the night before, listening to Inca myths and learning Peruvian songs, has left me cheery—saved for being chilled. With the morning sun gently stretching across my back and my childhood dream laid out before me, I am warm and happy. My view shifts and the mountains start to fade, swirling capriciously from vibrant to muted colors. My eyes open.

Above me is the ceiling I have woken up to since I was six years old. I have been dreaming again of going to Peru and climbing to the ruins of Machu Picchu. It is a dream I have often. For years, I have wanted more than anything else to take this backpacking trip.

I am in high school when Dad comes and talks to me. “We’re going on a family trip the summer after you graduate.” To my utmost disbelief, he tells me we are going to Peru. “We will be backpacking up to Machu Picchu,” he finishes. My father is not one for squealing, and generally I try not to do so in front of him, but I simply cannot help it. I squeal. I jump. I hug. And he even smiles through it. For a brief moment, I realize how undeserving I am of this trip but excitement pushes through too strongly to think about that for long. As an afterthought to my giddiness, I realize I need a good pair of hiking boots. Time to start researching.

* * *

A good hiking boot is the most important piece of gear any outdoor enthusiast can own. One such boot is the Vasque Breeze Gore-Tex. Although waterproof, air mesh nylon panels allow the boot to stay light and breathable in warm temperatures. The unique padded tongues on the Vasque boot helps to relieve pressure from the laces and protect from trail debris entering into the shoe. The midsole of this particular boot consists of the shock-absorbing and lightweight Phylon, which reduces the impact of uneven ground (Vasque).

* * *

July is here and I have time off from work for the period we are to be gone. It is a week before we are scheduled to depart, and I know exactly how many hours until we leave for our flight. I found my pair of hiking

boots months ago: Vasque Breeze Gore-Tex. Although unflattering with my big calves, they do their job well. Since I have been wearing these boots on every walk and hike, they are broken in and ready to go.

A week and a half before our vacation, Mom starts feeling odd aches throughout her body. I am determined to make sure she is well before the trip. Quietly, I clean the house and take care of my younger brother. I do the things a mother normally does because she needs her rest. She cannot be sick while backpacking and sleeping in a tent—that would ruin the entire experience for her. It never crosses my mind that her sickness can be serious. I am young and have not yet learned that the humans around me are not invincible. I still think that bad things happen only to people I do not know, and because this is my life, my family cannot be hurt.

* * *

The sole of a high-quality boot is made up of multiple layers. The primary layer, the insole, provides cushioning for the foot. Beneath the insole, lays the midsole. This section consists of firm material that exists to give support to the arch. A good tread is essential on the bottom of the boot for traction when crossing rough terrain (Hiking Shoe Guide).

* * *

Five days before Peru. I am down eating a bowl of cereal when Dad comes in and joins me at the kitchen table. Every parent has a face that reads “I need to talk with you and I know this will be hard for both of us.” Dad is wearing that face. “Your mother is really sick. We took her to the hospital and they can't figure out what's causing the problem. Her sickness came on so suddenly and so seriously. There is a chance it could be, well, it could be cancer.” He watches for my reaction, but my face is numb. “Or it could be something else. We honestly don't know. They're afraid that in the next week they might need to do emergency surgery. Now, there isn't any way to do surgery while backpacking. I did get travelers' insurance on our trip. Do you see where I'm going with this?” I nod my head.

Mere words can seize your ribcage and compress tightly. I feel as though I have a boa constrictor snuggling up around me. My lungs still want to work, but there is nowhere for the air to go.

My cereal loses its crunch. My boots sit, laces untied, next to empty suitcases.

* * *

When purchasing a hiking boot, it is important to take into consideration the type of hiking that will be done. A hiker who is looking for low impact terrain, sloping hills and trails that are predefined, should purchase a more lightweight shoe. A lightweight boot does not offer enough ankle support for carrying a large pack, but works well under gentle conditions and is less cumbersome.

When expecting to go on and off trails, to climb high inclines and to cross rugged terrain, the heavyweight boot is more ideal. These provide maximum ankle support and allow the carrying of heavy packs (Allard). These heavy-duty boots have longer break-in periods and weigh considerably more but are crucial if hiking serious trails.

* * *

Three days before Peru. Dad is driving while I sit next to him and stare at the sinking sun. I look away from the horizon to see my brave father choking up. My dad grew up on a farm and served as a doctor in the Army. It is startling for me to see men like him cry. "At Mom's and my wedding, our colors were the colors of the sunset," he says to the silence. "That way, every time we see the sun go down, we can think of our day." In a normal setting, wedding colors would not come up and if there was a small chance that they became the topic of discussion, he would probably tell me something along the lines of "Wedding colors are a bunch of crap." Dad knows when people are sick because he has seen that side of life. If he is scared, I am terrified.

I have completely forgotten about the hiking boots that were once so important to me. I am starting to see what really matters. I pull my family closer, and we support each other.

* * *

Hiking boots should have adequate support to protect the ankle from twisting on irregular surfaces. Boots with higher ankles help support the entire foot. This high, stiff ankle is known as a screen collar. Although screen collars are highly recommended, it is also recommended that the boot have a way to protect your Achilles tendon and ankle from chaffing (Hiltz). A good boot will have something such as padded leather to protect the leg.

* * *

Two days before the trip. Mom is in the hospital after a major surgery and the doctors now know what to do. I ask her how she is feeling, and she holds me and cries. She is sorry about what has happened because she knows how badly I wanted to go. She says terrible things about how she stole my dream from me. It's not her fault. It's not true. I don't blame her. I

feel terrible that she thinks some stupid hike is more important to me than she is. It's not.

My parents discover that they can cancel all the tickets except for my Dad's and mine. Mom is going to be okay and I still get to go to Peru. She is happy because she is out of the hospital and Grandma is going to come and stay with her while we are gone. We know what is wrong with my mother, we know that she will be all right with additional medication and surgery, but most importantly, we know she will still be here when we get back.

I have completely forgotten about the hiking boots that were once so important to me. I am starting to see what really matters. I pull my family closer, and we support each other.

July 19. I wake up to my mother crying in the room below mine so I softly walk down the stairs. As a child, it is hard to tell when you are wanted in the world of an adult's pain. I am trying to comfort her when Mom moves her hands away from sad eyes. The face she has on this morning is the same face Dad had on the week before. The "I need to talk with you and I know this will be hard for the both of us" look. My mother has an amazing ability to smooth words over, to make my life seem more magical and sweeter than what it

actually is. In some circumstances though, even a mother cannot make words turn soft. "Your cousin was coming home from a camping trip last night. She was asleep in the back seat when the driver fell asleep. They say it broke her neck. She died instantly. No pain, Kates. She didn't feel any pain."

Mere words can seize your ribcage and compress tightly. I feel as though I have a boa constrictor snuggling up around me. My lungs still want to work, but there is nowhere for the air to go.

At this point I cry. I cry because life is real and dreams are not. I cry because my mom's health threatened to take her away from me. I cry because my cousin, who lived a practically perfect life, was gone. Later, as I sit in my room thinking about the funeral I will be attending that weekend, I see the irony of focusing on finding a shoe that helps prevent accidents from happening. Accidents and misfortune are going to occur regardless if you are wearing some quality shoe or not. That is why it's called an accident.

I put the hiking boots, fully broken in, on a small shelf in my closet where they continue to sit, sturdy and waterproof, in the darkness.

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What You Don't Know Will Hurt You

Persuasive Researched Essay

Callista Cox

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has been known as the world's sole remaining superpower. This means that America has an extremely dominant position in the international system, with the ability to influence events and its own interests while projecting power on a worldwide scale to protect those interests. But the position of being a "global superpower" comes with an ironic twist: while America may be indirectly spreading western culture to all corners of the globe, the fact of the matter is that Americans simply don't know much at all about the very people and foreign countries they are influencing.

The worldwide stereotype is that Americans are ignorant and culturally unaware. But unlike most other stereotypes around the world, this one is unfortunately true.

The reason for this state of ignorance? There is a significant lack of the education of global studies in American classrooms.

Global studies is the study of the political, economic, social, and cultural relationships of the world. It is arguably one of the most important subjects for a student to learn in today's world of globalization. The necessity of knowledge of world affairs has been stressed by countless advocates, from education reformers to former presidents of the United States. The Committee for

Economic Development, a non-profit U.S. government organization, published a manual entitled, "Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security", which states in its introduction:

"We are now at a critical moment in our history. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks demonstrated to many Americans that movements from across the globe impact our country in ways never before imagined. Despite America's status as an economic, military and cultural superpower, we risk becoming narrowly confined within our own borders, lacking the understanding of the world around us that is essential to our continued leadership role in the world community. The day has long passed when a

citizen could afford to be uninformed about the rest of the world and America's place in that world" (Education, vii).

But despite this and other warnings, America has made practically no reasonable effort to include courses in global studies as part of its schools' curriculums. I can personally attest to the failure of U.S. public schools to address the subject. I have moved throughout the United States throughout my life and attended junior high and high school in four of them, but not once was the subject of global studies brought to my attention. The closest I ever came to being introduced to world affairs was in the subject of Social Studies – which was the simplest class I experienced during the course of my high school education. We never had any lessons on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though American troops have been occupying those countries for ten years now. We never even had a single test. The only thing we ever had to do to get an A was to show up for class and rarely open our textbooks. The U.S. simply does not take the education of global studies in its classrooms seriously.

Other countries are not unaware of this fact. The worldwide stereotype is that Americans are ignorant and culturally unaware. But unlike most other stereotypes around the world, this one is unfortunately true. "We're American, so we're not very good at being culturally aware," says Gary Schmitt, director of the program on advanced strategic studies at the American Institute for Public Policy research (Burnham). This is a frightening statement, not only because it makes the "culturally ignorant American" stereotype so glaringly obvious, but because it was admitted by a man with extensive knowledge on U.S. military operations. Since 2005, America has 737 military bases in practically every country on the globe (Johnson). How can we afford to be so culturally unaware when our military is operating on such an enormous level worldwide? It creates a very dangerous situation, both for American soldiers and for American citizens, most of whom do not even know the reasons we are still fighting a grueling war in the Middle East. A July Harris Poll in 2006 reported that 50 per cent of Americans believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction when President George W. Bush sent troops to invade that country, and 64 per cent of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein had strong links with Al Qaeda (Balles). Americans believed those false statements because they were thoroughly repeated in the media by the presidency, and since they were not getting any of the real facts about Iraq and Afghanistan from educational institutions it was all too easy to avoid forming informed opinions. Because of ignorance among the public and even the government, the U.S. entered a war with a country it knew little about. "We've been playing catch-up ever since," states a 2005 Army "Lessons Learned" report

on Iraq (Marash). If the American people and military had been more aware of the culture and politics of the Middle East following the 9/11 attacks, they would not have found themselves so unprepared.

Exposure to global studies is important for more than just national security. It also educates students in world religions, knowledge of which is very important in the U.S. today. Post 9/11, Muslim Americans became the immediate victims of countless hate crimes and violence, even though they are peaceful, legal-born U.S. citizens. The public generalized those who practiced the Islam faith into “a religion of terrorists.” This stereotype, despite the tragedy of 9/11, would have been lessened if Americans had the true facts about other faiths such as Islam. Stereotypes are mainly based on a lack of knowledge, and too often they lead to violence, as illustrated in a firsthand experience by a *New York Daily News* reporter. On September 14, 2001, J.K. Dineen witnessed five teenagers stop in front of the American Muslim Community of East Harlem site. One of the boys asked of Muhammad Chaudry, the owner, “Do you feel sorry for America?” and then give him a punch to the face that sent him reeling onto the floor, cracking his dentures in two and sending blood spurting from his nose (Nacos, ix). Such hate crimes only serve to prove why people in the U.S. must become more aware of religious and cultural differences.

People fear the things they do not know, and after 9/11 the Islam faith was – and still is – one of those things. For example, the Arabic TV network Al-Jazeera, which can be freely viewed around the world for some of the best news coverage available on the Middle East, is nowhere to be found on TV networks in the United States unless you live in Burlington, Vermont or Northeast Ohio. After 9/11, it was instantly accused of being a mouthpiece for terrorists for showing footage of Osama Bin Laden and injured American servicemen. Even today, ten years after the World Trade Centers collapsed, U.S. satellite networks still refuse to add Al-Jazeera to their list of channels based on their claim that the American public is simply “not interested” (Dahl). But I myself have viewed the channel via the Al-Jazeera English website, which is mainly the only way an American can watch the Arabic news network, and can honestly say that there is nothing threatening about it. The feel is very British, of all things, and covers a variety of international news stories ranging from Enda Kenny’s election as the new Irish Prime Minister to a cow named Luna that a girl in Germany trained to jump over fences. I watched several informative clips documenting the uprising in the Middle East that had not been covered by U.S. news channels, and I learned a lot more through Al-Jazeera about the reality of the uprisings in the Middle East than I ever had through Fox News or ABC. America is missing out on a truly global, educational news network

because of the fearful terrorist stereotypes that stem from being unaware of how world culture and religion really are. “This channel gives us news from a truly global perspective,” says a woman who worked on American distribution deals for the English version of Al-Jazeera (Dahl).

Clearly, the need for global studies is very great in the U.S. if the lack of cultural knowledge is turning cable and satellite companies into non-democratic entities that block out certain channels based on prejudice. And as Richard Donnelly, marketing manager of Burlington Telecom, quoted of Al-Jazeera: “I think they’re doing a service to the western world. And really, what are we afraid of? Since when are Americans fearful of the marketplace of ideas?” (Dahl).

Global studies also emphasizes economic relations worldwide, and an important economic event that has been rising throughout the years is the phenomenon of globalization. Globalization has had an extremely strong effect on the world. Businesses that once had no other relations except within their own country are now catering to customers worldwide and setting up international chains. Consumers have greater access to foreign goods than ever before. The amount of international trade in manufactured goods has increased over 100 times in the 50 years since 1955 (Schifferes). It’s obvious that to be economically competitive in today’s world of global business, you must be as competitive as possible. And in order for that to happen, countries must give their citizens the best education possible in order to allow them to reach the high standards of the modern business world, thus helping their company compete in the global market. One of the most frequent things that education officials overlook is the importance of understanding the issues that global studies emphasizes: world cultures, religions, and current events. In order to establish good business relations with a foreign company, it pays to have an understanding of that country’s culture. Not only do you want to avoid offending a potential client, you also need to know how exactly to stay on good terms with them. Business deals are lost or put in danger when American businessmen unwittingly offend their business prospects, unaware of the countries customs or manners. “Americans are way too informal in their dealings with their counterparts abroad, and they end up perceived as uncouth and even obnoxious. Innocence, stupidity or arrogance makes them behave the same in Cyprus as they would in Cleveland,” says P.M. Forni, professor of civility at John Hopkins University (Walker-Robertson). Actor Richard Gere caused an uproar in India by kissing actress Shilpa Shetty on the cheek at an AIDS awareness rally, and the Indian court issued a warrant for his arrest. Protestors even burned effigies of the actor. And in 2009, President Bush used an expletive while at a meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair

in Germany, offending many Europeans who viewed the action as demeaning since the meeting was a formal occasion (Walker-Robertson). Those with opposing views about the importance of global studies may claim that the subject is simply not needed in U.S. classrooms because students who wish to learn about other cultures and the affairs of foreign countries can do so via the internet or by other convenient means during their free time, if they so desire. Teachers may see the addition of a new course to student curriculums as an unnecessary and expensive waste of time. It is understandable that schools and teachers may be reluctant to add another class to the list of subjects they are already responsible for teaching to less-than-willing students. Teachers put forth a lot of effort every day to try and ensure a good education for all of their pupils. However, the effect that the lack of global studies education has had on current American mindsets are obvious from previous examples. One cannot deny that the hate crimes and cultural ignorance that are so prevalent in American society today could be greatly lessened by the understanding that an education in global studies could bring. Adding global studies courses to U.S. schools would be well worth the extra time and funds that would be necessary due to the benefits it would present: a greater knowledge of the world we live in. It is detrimental to keep students confined in a narrow, ethnocentric mindset throughout their schooling because of the negative long term effects that are brought about by such educational neglect. Not only that, but the main source that American citizens look to for knowledge of world events is the media, which often presents unreliable half-truths and creates dangerous stereotypes. If Global Studies is not added to U.S. curriculums, Americans will have no choice but to continue on in their culturally ignorant ways, which obviously have embarrassing - and even violent - consequences. For our own good – indeed, for our own safety – it’s time to look outside our country’s boundaries and start thinking globally.

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Lawn Care: Got Your Goat?

Persuasive Researched Essay

Christian Parsons

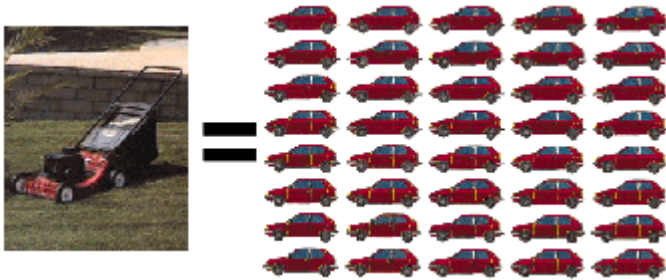
Sweat drips down my face faster than I can wipe it off with my arm. The sun hovers, torturing me with its torching rays. Flies pester my already irritated skin, and my arms can no longer take the paranoid swatting. Breathing becomes difficult, and I can only curse the stupid lawn mower to all damnation for running out of gas- again. All I taste is the sweet condensation of my body, all I smell is the fresh cut grass sliced beneath me. Just wanting to finish my arduous chore, I pull the bag containing the weighty mounds of freshly cut grass out of the infernal machine and carry it to the trash bin that seemingly lies miles away. This strenuous journey provides a moment of pause, allowing consideration of how much I hate mowing the lawn. As I endeavor to dump the bag full of green into the bin, my hand slips, and I suddenly find myself with shoes full of grass, with my legs launching in to their allergic itch. I raise my head to heaven to curse the invention of lawn care, and I am reminded of the sun's presence once again. Almost blinded, I look back to the unfinished lawn, and the mower stares back, teasing me with its inanimate attendance. Sweating with the force and to the degree of Niagara Falls, itching more than when Chicken Pox plagued my skin, and tired and frustrated beyond belief, I yelp, "There has got to be an easier way to do this."

Unless spoiled by affluent family members who can afford a landscaping service, many of us have experienced some version of this scenario. Whether it is rain, sleet, or the blistering shine of summer days, mowing the lawn has inundated our not-so-simple suburban lives. If we stop to think about it, however, it's not only human life that lawn-mowing has afflicted, but the very environment in which we live. We are destroying our atmosphere by releasing gaseous toxins, not to mention the potential physical risks. It may seem like an exaggeration, but by mowing our lawns with gas-powered mowers, we have introduced and sustained an assassin into our everyday lives, and it resides in our garage.

There are several solutions to eliminating gas-powered lawn mowers from our lawn-care essentials; tools that would be ecologically friendlier and safer to our survival. Electric lawn-mowers are prevalent and are a possible solution. But not all climates are "electric friendly." One can only imagine what would happen in a simple rainfall- zap. My solution is as simple as buying a new puppy. Switching from mechanical to biological

lawn domestication, I propose that people swap their lawn mowers, rotating blades, gas cans, and weekend frustrations, for wired fencing, feed, the smell of fresh fertilization, and a spectacle that will have your neighborhood in awe. What am I suggesting? Kill the motor, and fill your front yard with bah-ing grass eaters: goats. We should use domesticated goats for lawn care instead of gas-powered lawn-mowers because of the environmental benefits, physical safety, financial savings, and other practicalities.

Over 5 million gas powered mowers are sold in the U.S. every year. Each weekend, there are an estimated 54 million Americans who mow their lawns. 800 million gallons of gas are used to mow these lawns each year, and of that amount of gas, 17 million gallons are spilled from refueling lawn and garden equipment; that's more loss than the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989, in the Gulf of Alaska (*peoplepoweredmachines.com*). It's hard to believe that so much gasoline is used to fuel the domestication and beautification of our lawns, but it's true. With all of that gas, can you guess how much of it contributes to the pollution of our atmosphere? Well, according to People Powered Machines consumer research, one gas mower expels 87 lbs. of the greenhouse gas CO_2 , and 54 lbs. of other pollutants into the air every year (Cleaner Air). That sums up to be over 5 billion lbs. of toxins released into our air each year! According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a traditional gas powered lawn mower produces as much air pollutants as 43 new cars, each being driven 12,000 miles.



Five common air pollutants of gas powered lawn mowers are Carbon Monoxide, Lead, Nitrogen Oxide, Ozone, and Particulate matter (Cleaner Air). Carbon Monoxide is created in the combustion process of the gas mower, along with the burning of the fuel itself, and its effects are dangerous to our health. Carbon Monoxide replaces oxygen in the blood stream, aggravates already existing heart disease, and impairs alertness in humans. Lead is another pollutant created and released by mowers, and is

usually only emitted by the exhaust of equipment that uses leaded gasoline. Lead increases the risk of harm to the central nervous system, especially in our children. Nitrogen Oxide, like Carbon Monoxide, is created and released in the combustion process of the motor, and it impairs breathing and increases the chance of lung infections and worsens existing lung diseases. Ozone is formed when heat and sunlight combine with pollutants of gas powered equipment. It irritates the eyes, nose and throat, increases asthma attacks and impairs athletic performance. While the ozone layer is an upper atmospheric protection from the damaging rays of the sun, ground-level ozone is a health hazard. While humans have control over most pollutants, (automotive, industrial, etc.), we have no control over the chemical reaction of air pollutants with the sunlight itself. Meaning that besides our

I chose goats as a lawn-mower alternative because of how eco-friendly they are, because of their practicality, and because of how cheap they are compared to hiring maintenance crews.

contribution to gas emissions, the sun controls the creation of Ozone. Ozone alert days occur more in summer days, where heat and sunlight are more prosperous, especially in metropolitan areas. The final pollutant of the 5 most common air pollutants is Particulate matter. Particulate matter includes dust, pollen, soot, and other particles suspended into the air by lawn-mowers. Particulate matter irritates lungs' pathways, which can then cause respiratory infection and asthma. Emissions made by gas powered mowers account for nearly 5% of our nation's air pollution (Cleaner Air).

With so much damage to our air and land, should we not consider alternative solutions for lawn care? Even the supposedly "eco-friendly" electric lawn-mower makes a contribution to air pollution! Does a goat emit toxic chemicals into our atmosphere? If you're thinking that the methane release of a goat's feces has the potential to cause as much harm to our atmosphere as a lawn mower, well then you are dead wrong! (Maybe not about damage to our noses, but that's nothing that a candle can't solve.) While cows and other domesticated farm animals account for nearly 14% of the greenhouse gases that pollute our air, methane released by goats only accounts for 0.0715% (Johnson).

Not only do gas powered lawn mowers pose an ecological threat, but they are also a huge physical threat. There are nearly 80,000 patients admitted into the hospital due to lawn-mowing related accidents (Butterworth). The typical injuries from a lawn-mower are lacerations, either from tripping, falling over, or slipping while mowing, extremities

such as toes, feet, legs, arms, and fingers, are amputated by the dangerous blades of your lawn mower. With blades traveling at nearly 160 mph (3000 RPM), it's a wonder that we haven't turned to safer tools to care for our lawns. Back injuries are also very common, just by pulling the cable to start the mower. Shoulder and ankle strains also occur from just the simple act of *pushing* mowers. According to *stats.org* there were 406 fatalities in 2005 alone, from lawn mowing related accidents- an unbelievable statistic given the common and wide spread use of lawn mowers. Some abnormal injuries from lawn mowers include 2nd/3rd degree burns from gasoline refills, bites (bee stings) from inhospitable insects, and accidents where children and unknowing family members were mauled or mown-over by ignorant lawn mowers. Even objects like rocks and sticks can become deadly when passed over by a lawn mower. Herb Weisbaum wrote in an article addressing the dangers of lawn mowing:

Anyone who's used a power mower know that things sometimes shoot out - maybe a small rock or branch. But Don Root got the surprise of his life a few weeks ago when he was mowing the front lawn of his Bellevue home. A huge rock went flying across his lawn. The home video Root took at the time shows that the rock flew about 50 feet to the driveway where his car was parked. That rock smashed through the passenger side window, continued on through the driver's side window, and went whizzing past his daughter's head. She was standing next to the neighbor's house, about 80 feet away! Root says he's learned an important lesson from this near miss. "I will definitely keep me kids inside the house, the entire time I am mowing" (Weisbaum).

Clearly there are severe consequences to owning a lawn mower. Inasmuch as families mow their lawns almost every weekend, just think of the potential dangers and accidents of each and every single one of these families! What if the rock hadn't missed Don Root's daughter's head? The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 90,000 people will be seriously hurt by a lawnmower in the year of 2011. Lawn mowers are much more dangerous than most of us realize. Is it not for the betterment of our physical safety, and that of our environment, to replace our lawn mowers? Goats are far less dangerous, and when domesticated, pose no threat to our appendages, or the degradation of our atmosphere.

Of all the possible solutions to the risks of lawn mowers, why would I suggest the seemingly humorous replacement of such machines with goats? Is it because they are cuter? Because they're more entertaining to watch? Because I wanted to make this paper more interesting? *No!* I chose goats as a lawn-mower alternative because of how eco-friendly they are, because of their practicality, and because of how cheap they are compared to

hiring maintenance crews. There are several businesses that rent out their domesticated animals for the enhancement of their lawns. Some businesses include Brush Goats 4 Hire, Wooly Weeders, and several ranchers and farmers who rent out their goats and sheep to help enhance and mow the lawns of the more ecologically aware. Goat herders can be found anywhere in the United States. Wherever there is a farm, there are potential goats for hire. Sandra Solaiman, a Professor of Animal Nutrition and Applicable Sciences, explains that:

The goat is an extremely agile, gregarious, and opportunistic creature. Management, through innovation and creativity, can successfully use those characteristics for the enhancement of their own lands. Goats can be used for noxious weed abatement, rejuvenation of abandoned and eroded lands...and poisonous/toxic plant and chemical eradication. Goats used for land enhancement can improve soil fertility as [they] increase the amount of organic matter in the soil. As the percent of organic matter increases, the percent of water-holding capacity by volume and the extensive root system of plants increase. Livestock redistribute nutrients in [a] browsing system. The manure [of the goat's] deposits improve the physical characteristics of the soil and the applicable plants.

Solaiman expresses further that goats are an incredibly practical source from which mankind can benefit. The use of goats will not only benefit the population using them, but will lead to the better care and sustainment of the goats themselves. Goats can be, and have been used, for lawn care for several homes, as well as some major businesses and resorts. Google, Yahoo, and many Golf Resorts, have used this growing fad to cut and care for their green lawns. "Instead of using noisy mowers that run on gasoline and pollute the air, we've rented some goats from California Grazing to do the job for us," explains Dan Hoffman on the Google Blog. "A herder brings about 200 goats and they spend roughly a week with us at Google... and are herded with the help of Jen, a border collie. "Once or twice a year, a large herd of goats can be seen just past our parking garage in Sunnyvale, grazing happily on the tall grasses of the hill beyond," says Yahoo. "We have a special fondness for the goats and are always sad to see them go (which, based on their voracity, happens much faster than you'd imagine) (Crum)."

More and more people are exploring this alternative form of lawn mowing, because the goats have a minimal carbon footprint; and they work for cheap. "At New York's Vanderbilt Mansion, groundskeepers are using nine goats borrowed from a local farm to maintain five acres of their

massive property. It will take the animals four months to clear the area, which features a steep hillside that has given human landscapers difficulty in the past (Doocy).” The total cost for the project is \$9,000. While that figure sounds like a lot, it’s actually quite a bargain considering it costs them \$15,000 to hire humans for a single visit. Additionally, with the goats, the hillside remains clear all summer long, into the fall.

Hillary Rosner, a reporter for *Grist Magazine*, broke her lawn mower and decided to rent out a herd of goats instead. (*Grist Magazine* is a magazine dedicated to turning the gloomy aspects of our ecological and political roles into something more humorous and enjoyable.) She rented from a man named Jim Guggenhime, the owner of a grazing business called Nip It in the Bud. He and his herd of approximately 200, travel around the nation helping to keep the ecosystem in balance. Guggenhime agreed to dispatch a crew of 32 to Rosner’s urban yard as a test run, to see if the small-scale mowing venture could be profitable. A colleague was sent a day earlier to fence off the sections of the yard that she didn’t want eaten. The next day, Guggenhime came with his herd of goats, and led them into their new buffet. When the time came to leave the goats overnight, Guggenhime turned on an electric charge in the fencing to thwart would-be escapees. In the morning, Guggenhime loaded his goats back into the trailer, and journeyed to his next client’s plot of land. “Two weeks later, I’m still something of a naturalist celebrity in the neighborhood. Here in my yard, native grass, delicate and shimmering, has begun to peek through the many lumps of residual goat poop. My vacant lot has become a nascent (if fragrant) Eden. I’m going to bring the goats back in the fall” (Rosner).

It may surprise you to hear that using goats to replace lawn mowers is a growing rage, but it’s true. Slowly, through a goat’s hoof, mankind is working harder to decrease his carbon footprint. Goats are the new black.

Goats are a perfect alternative to the toxic habits of lawn care that we practice today. Along with all of the goats’ vegetative activities, they provide mankind with many other products used to enhance our lives. Goats can be used for so many other practicalities. Milk, cheese, soap, drums, gloves, and meat, are all other uses for a goat. While using it for meat would be counter-productive to the message of this essay, it is still another use. The most common domestication of a goat is for its milk. “Delicious with a slightly sweet and sometimes salty undertone, goat’s milk is the milk of choice in most of the world. Although not popular in the United States, it can be found in markets and health foods stores throughout the year.” (*whfoods.com*) Goat’s milk is a good source of calcium, tryptophan, protein, phosphorus, riboflavin (vitamin B2) and potassium. Goat’s milk has also been proven to enhance the metabolism of both iron and copper, especially

when there are problems with absorption of minerals in the digestive tract. Goat's milk can also be an excellent calcium-rich alternative to cow's milk. It contains many of the same nutrients found in cow's milk. Unlike cow's milk there is no need to homogenize goat's milk. While the fat globules in cow's milk tend to separate to the surface, the globules in goat's milk are much smaller and will remain suspended in solution (*whfoods.com*).

Goats have played a role in food culture since before our species could make fire, proven with the help of ancient cave paintings showing the hunting of goats. They are also one of the oldest domesticated animals, considering that the herding of goats came about 10,000 years ago in the mountains of Iran. Goat milk, and the cheese made from it were revered in ancient Egypt. Some pharaohs even had these foods placed among them in their burial chambers, along with their other treasures. It was also widely consumed by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The milk of goats has remained popular throughout history and is still consumed on a more extensive basis worldwide; even more so than cow's milk. (*whfoods.com*) Milk is just one of the practical benefits of a goat. The goat is truly an opportunity for man to manage. (Solaiman)

Looking back at the incredible physical and environmental dangers of an everyday lawn mower, it is obvious that mankind needs to find a safer alternative. With over 80,000 injuries a year, 17 million gallons of spilled gas polluting the ground, and 5 billion pounds of air pollutants, lawn mowers should be targeted as one of the millions of factors that are killing us and our way of life. By replacing these killers with goats, we can take a step forward in the nourishment and sustaining of our race. The replacement of every 500 gas mowers would spare the air 212 lbs. of hydrocarbons (smog ingredients), 1.7 pounds of nitrogen oxides, 1,724 pounds of carbon dioxide, and 5.6 pounds of irritating particles (Cleaner Air). Lawn mowers are murdering the human race with every square inch of grass we mow, and we are ignorant to our own demise. By renting out goats, as funny an idea as it is, it would lead to greater outcomes for our lawns and for our environment. Our land would be much richer, the air much cleaner, and our lives much healthier. Have I got your goat? Well, if I have, it's about time you got one yourself.

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Disrobing: Utah's Struggle with Nude Art

Persuasive Researched Essay

Laura Taylor

Back in 2006, amid the hustle-bustle of the typical lunch crowd at my junior high school, I received an atypical amount of attention from boys. The subject of this attention? A binder chock-full of drawings and photographs of nude reference figures for my sculpting lessons. For a group of junior high students in a conservative part of Salt Lake City, endless pages of 'nakee bodies' drew an overwhelming amount of mostly negative attention. Suddenly, I became a corrupt, twisted fourteen-year-old because of the nude pictures— and perhaps even a lesbian, considering that some of the forms were female. For the first time, I felt that girls had a significantly higher maturity level at mid-teen than boys. However, it wasn't just these boys that drew a line between themselves and my art. Since, I have received many slightly disgusted looks, long pauses, and embarrassed giggles when mentioning my own nude artwork or even famous artwork containing nude figures. Even as a young artist, I had developed an appreciation for the human form and unceasingly wondered: what's all the fuss about?

In history and still today, nudity symbolizes a plethora of themes and ideas. Biblically, nudity represents the innocence of subjects like Adam and Eve. Ancient artists' nude sculptures and paintings depict the body as timeless and universal. My artwork uses nudity as a means of celebrating and exploring the differences of body types and stages of growth, and the similarities amongst humanity. Today, however, I find that film, advertising, music, and other forms of pop culture associate nudity with one thing: sex. Eureka, here was the fuss!

In Utah, efforts to discuss nudity in art, explore the merit in the human body and the beauty it exhibits remain far and few between. However, no society is impenetrable by pop culture. Thus, my junior high peers had never studied Michaelangelo's *David*, seen Goya's *La Maja Desnuda*, nor discussed those few illicit pages in Anne Frank. Instead, their ideas of nudity came from glimpses of it in commercials, descriptions of it via "The Real Slim Shady", and the forever-infamous internet pop-up.

Even when most Utahans appear to agree that nudity is not synonymous with sex, it seems in a place like Utah, which focuses on the censorship and besmirching of sex, sexy nudity is swept under the rug and with it goes the beautiful, innocent, and timeless nudity in art. Now don't get me wrong, some nudity in art is sexy; some art revolves around sex as it

is an intricate part of the human experience like eating, laughing, and death. But in Utah today, the sensationalism of sex causes us to lose the ability to see the human form as a subject of beauty and academic study. Now, I'm not suggesting that we strip down at school and work and live our whole lives naked. I'm simply pointing out that at some point we start ignoring that all people have naked bodies under their jeans and blazers. I suggest that rather than hiding nudity from our children and young adults, we ought to cultivate their taste for the human form.

Nudity in art is definitely not all good or all bad, not black or white, not clearly defined or understood. But Utah needs to catch up on the times and accept that nudity will not disappear, that maybe it even provides a positive opportunity for the progression of body image, and that it certainly should not be scoffed at, giggled about, or shaded from our eyes in disgust.

In November of 1997, Brigham Young University removed a Rodin sculpture entitled *The Kiss* from "The Hands of Rodin" exhibit on campus. The sculpture, depicting a nude couple romantically embracing, was completed in 1889 and, though controversial in its day, is now hailed as possibly the most romantic sculpture in history. *The Kiss* is not only illustrious, but highly valued as well. A replica of the original sold for 2.5 million dollars in 2005 (Artinfo.com). University director of the Museum of Art, Campbell Gray, maintained that "Nudity isn't the issue, it's more the latter [a lack of dignity]" (*The Deseret News*). However, because the sculpture holds a reputation of so romantic and loving a piece, one has to wonder how much nudity actually played a part in the University's decision. Here, I ask: when does removing artwork to protect the eyes of young adults (ages 18 and up in BYU's case) begin to disrespect great artists? Considering that artists create great nude art all the time, the answer is in the past, the present, and the future. The sheer lack of respect for artists, who's pieces we have the privilege of viewing, may portray Utahans as immature and ignorant. A true-blooded Utahan, myself, I know this depiction to be misleading as many are mature and intelligent-- an image to promote over those who make headlines by banning great art.

To further justify the purpose of nudity in art, it is prudent to establish the purpose of art in general. In 1959, Norman Mailer pronounced his belief that "The final purpose of art is to intensify, even, if necessary, to exacerbate the moral consciousness of people." Art, though often a pleasant

pastime and relief from the stresses of life, is not meant to make the viewer feel warm, fuzzy, and/or comfy. Art establishes subject matter to encourage the viewer to think, to bring up ideas, and to make an uncomfortable yet important statement. Imagine a parent opting out a child from learning about the slave trade or the holocaust because they are “uncomfortable topics.” Like studying death, substance abuse, and war, the reason to study the human form is to sacrifice comfort, to defy ignorance, and increase understanding and appreciation. Personally, I found nudity as a means to relate some wonderful, horrible, emotional, uplifting, heart-wrenching, and ultimately THOUGHT-- PROVOKING themes from the artist to the viewer. Of course, some nudity can be shocking and I don’t suggest we shove it in the face of children. But imagine when we develop our children’s taste for the human form in an aesthetic, academic, philosophical, and/or natural way. Imagine when we study classic or modern art to begin a commentary on nudity, its representations both good and bad, the power it invokes in an audience, and its ability to translate the major themes of life.

Not far into my artistic exploration, I discovered my muse: a full-figured female form. The more curves there are the better! Consequently, I’ve learned to see the beauty within the shapes of a more plump or developed body as opposed to skinny bodies. I believe that this appreciation of the form results in my positive body image. In Utah, the nude body is not studied early in life, if at all in many cases. Girls in particular, however, develop body image issues as early as their preteen years. Rather than studying the curvy women of Titian’s paintings or the beautifully-distorted figures of Picasso, girls see hints of nudity from actresses and models with “perfect” physiques and usually in a sexual context. How else should we then expect these girls to see sexiness and skinniness if not the pinnacle of beauty?

In 10th grade, my class made collages from magazines representing themes in literature. Throughout all the magazines was a ‘Got Milk?’ ad of a middle-aged woman, naked but posed so as not to be too explicit, with a beaming smile on her face, celebrating her healthy body thanks to Milk. I remember seeing this ad and thinking to myself “How wonderful! That woman proudly loves herself and her body!” Just moments after this perhaps overly-mature thought, a boy leafing through another magazine said “Gross! A naked old lady!” Immediately everyone whipped their heads around to please their curiosity and then, just as quickly, shuddered and turned away to protect their eyes. I thought, “Don’t we all have bodies like that lady and aren’t we even possibly more insecure than her? Couldn’t we all learn something from this proud, healthy, beautiful body, even in its 60s? Aren’t we going to be in our 60s someday?” One definitive reason to study

nude art early in life, that I see, is that every child notices their own body at a young age and developing an appreciation for the human form in general can only encourage developing an appreciation for one's own body.

Nudity in art is definitely not all good or all bad, not black or white, not clearly defined or understood. But Utah needs to catch up on the times and accept that nudity will not disappear, that maybe it even provides a positive opportunity for the progression of body image, and that it certainly should not be scoffed at, giggled about, or shaded from our eyes in disgust. Utah's residents interested in worldliness and education need to work towards being all-right with seeing the "nakee bodies" of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Rather than prevent our children from discovering nudity, we ought to introduce them to the classical and beautiful forms of art early on so that they may learn to appreciate all bodies and not only see and study nude figures, but be able to distinguish their eminence from Beyonce's latest perfume ad. We ought to, for the sake of fourteen-year-old artists everywhere, who aren't ashamed of their affinity for naked, curvy women, give a little nod to the human form.

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Classic Dating...Gone With the Wind?

Persuasive Personal Researched Essay

Laurel Patton

When I was a little gal I grew up on movies like *Beauty & the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*. I grew up believing in fairytale love. I was confident that my prince charming would someday come gallantly on his white horse, or his magic carpet, and sweep me off my feet just like in the movies. Sadly, those dreams of fairytale love crashed into the truth of reality. I realized that love did not come that easy, and that carpets did not fly.

As a girl living in the 21st century I cannot just expect a modern day Cary Grant to wittily make me fall head-over-heels in love. Romance doesn't work that way, and it took me awhile to understand that the old-fashioned dating and gentlemen had changed. Dating is not the same: communication has changed, as have many dating methods. Classic roles have been confused, and people do not know what is expected anymore in the dating world. Easy routes have begun to take place to ease the hard times of dating. These changes have made it seem like classic courting and chivalry have gone with the wind, but if we dig a little deeper we will surely find that the classics are still deeply rooted within the modern methods.

That is right, my friends. Chivalry still exists, just not the old-fashioned way. Older methods advance with time, and I believe that time is what has shaped my good ol' friend chivalry into what it is today. The new appearance in classic chivalry happened with change, and there are several factors that helped cause this change. The feminist movement gave women many rights, including the opportunity to vote for our nations leaders, equal opportunity in the workplace, and more possibilities to pursue education, and the opportunity to vote for our nation's leaders. While the feminist movement was beneficial, it also took a stab at chivalry. Back before the movement, it was clear what the men should do in the dating world: Open the door for the lady, pull out her chair, pay for the meal, and stand when a lady left the table. The feminist movement gave women just as much right as men to ask out, open doors, and share their jackets. Okay, maybe I took it too far with the jackets, but you get my point. Role confusion among the modern day gents has affected greatly classic chivalry. Men are confused—before it was easy to know their role in the dating world, but with the rise of feminism, things have changed for the men (Stefanson).

Men may be confused on their role in the modern dating world, but in a recent survey, one hundred percent of the forty singles asked said that men should ask out on a first date, and only seven of the forty thought that chivalry had died (Dating in the 21st Century). These responses tell us that many singles believe that chivalry is still out there, and men are still expected to make the first move. However, research also shows that it is the women who call the shots even in the beginning. In Nigel Barber's book *The Science of Romance*, there was a study done by Timothy Perper and Karl Grammar. Perper's and Grammar's studies were done in singles' bars and night clubs. They found that from the beginning women will let loose on

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several nonverbal tactics to lure in the man of interest. Nonverbal tactics (i.e. body language) include: giggling, swaying of the hips, seductively licking the lips, touching a man's shoulder or his face, invading personal space, and you cannot forget the batting of the eyelashes. Most men feel like they are in control at the beginning, but the truth is that the women have them beat.

Grammar says this about his study, "Women have an impressive arsenal of non-verbal weapons and many chose them consciously and deliberately" (91). Men may ask out on the first date, but it is the women that trigger the date through their "non-verbal weapons." Chivalry is not dead, it is merely hiding, and most men are

willing to be the modern-day gentlemen that women want them to be. The men are waiting for the go ahead, and guys are not going to get the subtle hints with women relaxing on their couches anticipating their knight in shining armor to come knocking on their front door. The only man candy that women will meet that way is, their good friends, Ben & Jerry. Although it would be nice, the world will never (like the popular Weather Girls song) rain men. Women cannot blame men for the absence of chivalry. Classic chivalry may be gone, but modern day chivalry is still very much alive.

Modern day chivalry maybe alive, but it does not mean that it is easy to find. Especially when first dates, and first impressions, get awkward. I myself have been an awkward dater/courter since day one of my dating career. In fact, you could probably call me the awkward date queen, and I doubt that a soul would object. When it comes to courting and or dating I am simply awkward. If you do not believe me, here are just a few of the first

date experiences that I have had. Date number one, food stuck in my two front teeth the entire date. Trying to help me out, my cute date would ask me questions like, “What’s the color of your tooth brush?” Sadly, me being my awkward oblivious date self just kept on talking, and answering his teeth related questions with food remnants chillin’ on my bicuspid. Date number two, I hit my date in the face with a croquet ball, which then led to breaking his thick rimmed glasses, which then proceeded to give the poor boy a bloody nose. Date number three, this date was a video game designer, and he looked over at me and said, and I quote, “In a few years if you are playing a video game, and the character looks like you don’t be surprised...I design people that I find interesting.” I hope that clearly defined how awkward my dating life is and continues to be. When it comes to courting guys, I am no smooth operator. In fact, one time I actually had a guy knock on my front door in the hopes of getting my number. In the process of him walking in, I, awkward McGee, on my way over to greet him, tripped over a laptop cord and beautifully belly flopped onto the hard kitchen floor—so much for a first impression. What if the belly flopping first impression could have been eliminated? Would it have changed the man’s impressions of me?

Technology has seemed to make awkward first impressions obsolete. This, my friends, is where Facebook comes in. Thank you, Mark Zuckerberg. Because of you the Facebook first impression exists, and we awkward souls can now say goodbye to bizarre blind dates and belly flopping first impressions. The Facebook first impression gives more information than you would probably get on the first date. Information like family, religion, favorite movies, books, music, and TV shows are readily available for friends to see. Research has proven that the Facebook first impressions can be very accurate; the photos alone that are posted can bring loads of information about a person and their personality (Cornblatt). Thirty-one out of the forty singles surveyed admitted to Facebook stalking/creeping before going out on a date with someone (Dating in the 21st Century). I myself have taken part in Facebook stalking. Facebook stalking can bring a wealth of information without ever having to go on a date with a person. The profile picture gives you an idea of whether or not you are attracted to that person, and then the info page gives you an idea of things that you may have in common. Social networking may have changed the way we begin dating, but it is just a part of the modern dating puzzle piece.

There are now several pieces that fit into the dating puzzle. Online dating is another one of those pieces. People order pizza online, buy airplane tickets online, and find their favorite outfits online. Why not find Mr. Perfect online? Online dating websites have made courting simpler. In the first half of 2003, Americans spent \$214.3 million on personals and dating

sites (Egan). Online dating is a huge money market right now. People can browse and find dates at their leisure and in their bunny slippers. However, just as it is important on your Facebook page, it is also important when online dating to have an accurate profile. “Profiles are as intrinsic to online dating as cards are to poker” (Egan). Dating profiles never sleep; they are there to make a first impression anytime anywhere.

The phrase “opposites attract” has been thrown out the window with online dating. Research has shown that most people look for mate similar to themselves (Conkie). Especially in online dating, singles look for profiles with people that have similar interests and values. Online compatibility tests give singles an accurate mate who best fits their description, and their personality. Ordering Mr. Perfect online, it’s just that simple, find a profile that accurately fits what you want and Presto! You’ve just found yourself a perfect man, but is he really as perfect as his profile makes him? I have never participated in online dating, however, a very close friend of mine got involved with online dating and it became an addiction. She would look up guys constantly and chat with them through email and text messaging. The girl had a date every weekend, but she started losing relationships with friends, and her community, and her Mr. Perfects didn’t seem as perfect in person as they did in their profiles. Online dating is simpler and more comfortable; however, it still has similar side effects as classic dating. Side effects that may include: heartbreak, obsession, and nervous breakdowns.

In this fast paced world of work it is hard to look for that special someone. For matchmakers it is their job to scout out the merchandise for you, and find what they feel is your best match (Leung). Matchmakers find you dates that seem to fit your description and give you that chance of making a love connection in the hustle of the modern day. The plan seems perfect right? Have someone do all of the scouting for you and then bring you back all of the worthy prospects. I do not mean to be the bearer of bad news, but sometimes other people do not catch your same vision when it comes to your ideal catch. Last year I was set up on a date with (in the eyes of my matchmaker) a perfect match. This guy seemed to have it all; he was a foreigner, a gentleman, made the big bucks, and was pretty good looking. However, as the date went on the Swede and I had about as much in common as a PB & J and a Hot Pocket. The date consisted of a lot of silence and hot chocolate; the short two hours seemed like an eternity. It was definitely hard to see how in the eyes of the matchmaker he was my “perfect match,” but looking more closely into the description I gave, he was pretty spot on in what I thought I wanted. Sadly folks, sometimes what you think you want is not always what you need, and you cannot always rely on others to bring home the bacon.

Text messaging has seemed to become an all-star piece to the dating puzzle. Text messaging eliminates the small talk, and makes it possible to just get straight to the whole purpose of the conversation—allowing the phone-call-phobics to communicate with their crushes, and giving the afraid-to-ask-outs an easy alternative. Lovely text messaging has made conversations a whole lot easier. The only problem is that sometimes you get text messages like this one; DNR 2MOR? If you received this as a text message would you be as confused as I was? DNR 2MOR, also known as, Dinner Tomorrow, is just one of the many possible ways that someone may ask you out in a text message. When solely relied upon text messaging has a way of messing up everyday communication. I saw this happen in my own life. This boy and I would text up a storm, the conversations would go late into the night and they were always fun and enjoyable, but when it came to actually dating the guy we got in the car and there was nothing but awkward silence. After the date was over, I went to bed kind of bummed that my fun texter was a boring dater. I was awakened to the vibration of my phone buzzing off my night stand. I opened up the message only to find a, “Hey how are you?” From the guy I had just been out with. I closed my phone thinking, “And why couldn't you have asked me this on our date?” The thing that Mr. Texter was missing was the balance between using the modern dating tools with the classic dating tools. Just because you have a nail gun, does not mean that you should get rid of your hammer. Text messaging is a modern day tool that makes courting more simple; however, the classic rules of dating and etiquette should not go ignored.

I have come to the conclusion that fairytale love and gentlemen still exist. It just comes later in the dating puzzle. Dating has definitely changed from the past and the specific pieces to the modern day dating puzzle only help make dating easier. The new technological advances are just tools to helping awkward and nervous people to landing their dream date. The modern day dating tools like social networking, online dating, text messaging, and matchmaking, may make finding dates easier, but at some point in a person's dating career classic courting will prevail. It will prevail because at some point, these “dating tools” are going to present you with a personal date, and on that personal date good ol' fashioned etiquette and conversation will show their true colors. Helping us decipher whether or not the “perfect match” was just a virtual fantasy or a true reality.

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Rods, Rivers, and Access Rights

Persuasive Researched Essay

Tristan Carlisle

As the cold water rushed passed my legs, I took a moment to enjoy the beautiful scenery around me. A forest of tall pine trees lined the river banks with a mountainous backdrop cascading above the tree line. Suddenly, a fish jumped out of the water and took my fly. I set the hook and the fight was on. As I reeled the fish in closer, I caught a glimpse of a beautiful rainbow trout. As soon as he saw me, he took off again, pulling much of my line out with him. After a couple more rounds of this, he finally gave up and allowed me to net him. His rainbow colored strip sparkled in the sunlight as I held him in my hands. I removed the hook from his mouth, made sure he would survive, and released him back into the river. Every summer, from the time I turned 12 years old, I have been able to make more memories such as the one described above. Future memories similar to this one are now being threatened by a new Utah Bill that restricts access to 2,000 miles of Utah's rivers (Dougherty).

Utah citizens should be able to access public waters and create memories such as the one described above. Utah law grants ownership of all natural waterways to the public, though there has been much disagreement as to what kind of access the public should be given to waterways that run through private property. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in *J.J.N.P. Co. v. State* that the public has "the right to float leisure craft, hunt, fish, and participate in any lawful activity when utilizing that water" (*Conatser v. Johnson*). While most agreed that this decision gave the public access to the river when in a raft or boat, there was still some disagreement as to whether the public could wade a river or touch any part of the riverbed. In June of 2000, a group of people floated down the Weber River in a rubber raft. In the process of floating the river, they floated through private property in which the raft, the oars of the raft, and a few of the group members all touched the streambed at some point. The owners of this land, the Johnsons, tried to order those fishing, the Conatsers, off the river. The Conatsers refused and were cited for trespassing. This led to the 2008 Utah Supreme Court decision, *Conatser v. Johnson*, in which the justices clarified the earlier *J.J.N.P. Co. v. State* ruling by stating that to "utilize" the water included floating, wading, and walking in the river bed up to the high water mark. This ruling caused the Senate and the House to write bills to modify the law, in which House Bill 141 was approved by both

houses and signed by Governor Gary Herbert in early 2010. HB 141 makes it illegal for any person to touch any part of the riverbed on private property for any recreational purposes. It also disallows floating on rivers that an individual can't prove as "navigable" (State of Utah).

For those who have not yet discovered the great sport of fly-fishing or the joys of river rafting, know that this law affects you also. While it may take away a right that you aren't concerned with, I will discuss many ways in which bills such as this one can affect even those who aren't directly involved. Its effects will come in indirect ways, such as threatening a struggling economy and possibly causing the beginning of many laws that give a few wealthy people more rights while taking rights away from the average Utah citizen.

It seems to me that everyone should have equal rights to enjoy every aspect of this beautiful state we live in. We have grand mountains, red rock deserts, crystal clear lakes, green forests, and many other natural wonders in our state that all belong to the public. All of these places allow people to make many great memories while enjoying the awesome landscape of Utah. What if the state were to give landowners the right to cut off access to roads that led to the arches or to Bear Lake? I'm not saying that this is where HB 141 will lead; I'm just saying that it wouldn't be fair to deprive the citizens of Utah access to such amazing things, and it also isn't fair that anglers are denied access to some of Utah's most beautiful rivers.

According to the Supreme Court's decision of 2008, original Utah law gave the people of Utah the right to stand in a streambed on private property and enjoy the opportunities the river gives us to be in the outdoors. State lawmakers should not be able to overrule a Supreme Court decision by writing a new law. As I reflected on this thought, I started to wonder why our lawmakers would be so quick to pass such a law. Through my research, I have realized that our senators, house members, and governor probably had more personal reasons for passing such a bill. Steve Ault, an owner of private property on the banks of the Provo River, was one of the people who testified in favor of the bill (O'Donoghue). He also happens to be Governor Herbert's brother-in-law. This has to make one wonder about the real motivation behind putting a law into place that is so unpopular with outdoor enthusiasts and others. There is a possibility, in order to please private landowners, that lawmakers are making personal rather than public decisions.

There are two other major factors that support this idea. First, if our lawmakers were worried about the good of Utah then they would have realized the effect that a bill such as HB 141 will have on Utah's economy. Outdoor businesses in Utah currently provide more than 65,000 local jobs

and account for \$7 billion in annual revenue (Hargrave). Also, the fishing industry alone is worth \$700 million (Hugelmeyer). Frank Hugelmeyer said, “The governor’s action is a disservice to an outdoor business community still struggling to recover from the recession and will discourage new businesses from locating in the state, thus hurting Utah’s overall economy and tax base” (Hargrave). There is little doubt that this new bill will adversely affect the sales for Utah’s outdoor businesses. Again, this shows the possibility that lawmakers are making personal rather than public decisions in order to please private landowners.

The other factor to consider is the speed and secretiveness involved in the passage of this bill. A bill that should have taken months or even years to study, write, and pass was moved very quickly from step to step with little thought given to the adverse effects the bill might have. According to Ray Grass, HB 141 was drafted in secrecy, then was reviewed and passed in a short three hours. He said, “Such bills are circulated through the water community, then go through an interim study for a year or two, and then legislation is carefully written to include compromises,” suggesting that HB 141 did not follow standard procedure (Grass). At the time HB 141 was being written, another bill, HB 80, was also being written. HB 80 was a bill that contained many compromises and could have satisfied both private property owners and recreationists. However, the Utah Farm Bureau refused to accept HB 80 due to minor disagreements and the bill was stalled just long enough to pass HB 141, making HB 80 obsolete. Again, had our lawmakers been interested in the good of Utah, they would have accepted a bill that was a good compromise between no access rights and full access rights to rivers on private land.

The main supporters of HB 141 are private landowners. Therefore, they are the main oppositional group to my argument that all public waterways should be accessible to the public. “I am signing HB 141 because we need to begin the process of addressing the unfortunate gulf between outdoor recreationists and private property owners. I recognize the potential conflict between private property rights and the right of public access to Utah’s waterways,” said Governor Gary Herbert (O’Donoghue). The main and strongest argument from private landowners is the private property rights guaranteed them by the Utah constitution. Any Utah citizen has the right to own land and choose whom to allow on the land. While I agree that a landowner should not be told who can and cannot be on his or her land, the river does not belong to the landowner. As quoted above, Utah waterways belong to the public. They are maintained and fixed with taxpayers’ money. If there is a poison or disease in the river that is killing plant and animal life, the taxpayers pay for the damages. Because I am a

taxpayer and my money is going towards the conservation of Utah's waterways, I should be able to access those waterways for any legal recreation. Nobody would stand for having to pay for a timeshare without being allowed to use it, and we shouldn't have to pay taxes to maintain rivers that we are not allowed access to.

Next, landowners argue that allowing the public to access rivers that run through their land causes problems with litter. In this situation, I am on the landowner's side. If I owned land on one of the beautiful rivers in this state, it would really upset me to see careless people littering it. However, there is already a law in place that prohibits littering. Utah code 76-10-2701 states "a person may not throw, deposit, or discard, or permit to be dropped, thrown, deposited or discarded on any park, recreation area, or other public or private land, or waterway, any glass bottle, glass, nails, tacks, wire, cans, barbed wire, boards, trash or garbage, paper or paper products, or any other substance which would or could mar or impair the scenic aspect or beauty of the land in the state." (Utah State Legislature). This law is punishable by a fine or even jail time. Therefore, it is not necessary to have a second law in place that disallows the public to access state waterways to prevent littering. If landowners catch someone littering their land, then they can call the police and have them arrested or fined for littering.

The last complaint from landowners is that, when people walk over their land, it can be very damaging to the beauty of the land, leaving trails and killing plants. Along with this, the peace that a landowner gets from being alone on his or her land can really be disrupted when the public is walking across it. Once again, I completely understand why a landowner would feel this way. If I owned land, I would put much of my time and resources into keeping it beautiful so that I could have a place where I could be detached from the world without being bothered by others. Yet again, there is another law that protects landowners in these instances. Before HB 141, sportsman could access the river either by floating or wading. This right to access the river did not include crossing any part of private land unless one was in the river. As a fisherman, I could not have set foot anywhere on private land other than in the river bed itself. If I had crossed the high water mark by just one inch, I could have been cited for trespassing. Wading or floating a river does not create trails, kill plants, or otherwise disfigure the land. Also, the invasion of privacy is minimal with regards to the river because the river is usually loud enough to block out any noise that a fisherman might make and fisherman aim to be as quiet as possible for fishing purposes.

As a teenager, fishing provided me with many hours of entertainment. There are many other things I could have been doing with

my time. Amongst these activities are things that could have gotten me in trouble. By occupying my time with fishing, I had less time to be doing illegal things. Like other teenagers, I had very little money. Without money, there is very little I could do to keep myself entertained. Fishing cost me a total of 24 dollars for a full year, which was the cost of a fishing license. This is one of the cheapest wholesome activities I could have been involved in. One newsletter tells of a study done at the University of North Carolina, which found that “teens who take part in a wide range of physical activities, particularly with their parents or at community recreation centers, are at less risk for engaging in sex, substance use, violence and delinquency than their sedentary peers who spend more time watching television or videos” (The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter). It also goes on to say that involved teens usually don’t have as many problems with low self-esteem and that they tend to get better grades. Fly-fishing is one such activity that might help teens to stay active. With less access to the river, I would have had a lot more time on my hands to be doing other things, some of which may not have been considered good activities.

Waterways are maintained by taxpayers, they are a good source of entertainment that keep us out of trouble, and by original Utah law are owned by the public. Also, the outdoor industry is a big part of Utah’s economy and will certainly be negatively impacted by HB 141. It is a bill that affects all of Utah, not just anglers and rafters. Access to rivers should not be restricted because of a few wealthy landowners who would deny the public from enjoying a day fishing on the river. It is important that we let our senators and governor know through letters and petitions that we do not support this law and that we want access to our beautiful waterways returned to us.

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Slow Down

Persuasive Researched Essay

Hayley Evans

April 12, 2011

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
Department of Health and Human Services
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
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Dear Mrs. Kathleen Sebelius,

I am concerned about our health as a nation. You may be nodding and thinking to yourself, “Yes, I KNOW. You as well as three hundred million other people.” However, I am not concerned about the typical complaints you may receive, such as the new health bill or Medicaid issues. Our society’s health is declining due to our fast westernized pace. This pace needs to be altered and slowed before our physical, mental, and emotional health completely diminishes.

America has a phenomenal reputation. We strive for opportunity. We dream, and we reach those dreams due to our hard work and determination. We are privileged to have the freedom to accomplish these goals, and in turn our society is highly recognized and respected. Citizens of other countries around the world yearn for the ‘American Dream’ lifestyle. However, do they know the price that is paid? At what cost is this dream worthwhile?

You, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, seem to be living the dream. As a mother of two sons, balancing your family life along with your busy but outstanding career, I wonder if you ever feel like you are so busy that you are going through the motions without any quality time in your life for pleasure? I hope you can fit in that time, but many well-meaning, hardworking Americans across the nation cannot. The Supermom Syndrome, complaints of burnout and fatigue, and stress related illnesses are unfortunately becoming more popular amongst the frantically busy.

The Supermom Syndrome is what takes place when a parent does everything above and beyond for their family and community, which allows them to be looked up to as a model figure, but causes their own needs take a backseat. Trying to be a “super mom” can cause emotional or physical suffering (Justmommies, 2011). Some parents cannot juggle all the stresses of full time careers, family, extracurricular activities, and running their household all in one day. Many parent’s schedules, as well as personality characteristics, inhibit their ‘super mom’ abilities and stress is created trying to keep up with society (Justmommies, 2011). Would you agree that it’s not helpful to be a parent who does ‘everything’, if ‘everything’ ends up hurting their mental health, putting their own and even their child’s future in havoc instead?

Our children are the future of America. Accurately so, the majority of society treats our children with respect and gentleness due to this futuristic belief and provides many opportunities for our youth. However, these high expectations for our children come with a price. With the stress of becoming the greatest athlete, best violinist, or the student who obtains the most scholarships to college, children are missing out on their childhood. Children need to be busy, but not so busy they don’t have time to play. Kids need to be very active, but simple play is enough (Nemours, 2008). Quality play has diminished and our children’s generation play style is becoming known as ‘Sedentary Play’ (Stanford Prevention Research Center, 2007). Sedentary Play is defined as childhood activities that do not include exercise, such as computer and video games (Stanford Prevention Research Center, 2007). According to a recent Stanford report, our fast-paced society has not given our children enough time, opportunities, or places to play (Stanford Prevention Research Center, 2007). The Playground Association, formed in 1906, gave children the gift of simple play (Nemours, 2008). Simple play can be as effortless as being out in nature, doing physical tasks such as kicking a ball, doing a cartwheel, or participating in jump rope. When kids are playing simple games by themselves or with their friends or siblings it helps them learn important life skills (Nemours, 2008). Because of your prestigious position and the high health values that you stand for, I can see that you too want the upmost health for the children of America. From experience, you know that your actions helped mold your kid’s lives in their day-to-day interactions. Slowing down our lifestyle by letting our children simply ‘play outside in the dirt’ will help our children learn and grow in necessary developmental ways (Nemours, 2008). If we do not direct our children to the upmost health in every aspect of their life, the future may not be as bright.

We should not forget the health of those who are keeping our nation alive today, with or without children to look after. Millions of working adults suffer from burnout and prolonged fatigue. According to Leone *et al.*, “The most widely used definition of burnout is... a syndrome composed of enhanced feelings of exhaustion (extreme and severe fatigue complaints), cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy” (Leone *et al.*, 2009). Fatigue is not only inhibiting our society’s workplace, but has a major impact in families and the home setting (Leone *et al.*, 2009). Research shows that burnout and fatigue contribute to somatic complaints, depression, and other illnesses (Leone *et al.*, 2009). Hard work has taken America to great heights because of our work ethic, but if we are so exhausted that we are unhappy and our professional efficacy is decreased, is it worth it? Some may say, yes, of course it is. America is what it is today because we push ourselves to the limit, sacrificing pleasure to improve our lives. I myself am a college student who has to work long hours to make it until my next paycheck, trying to improve my life and my future. However, I don’t always relax when I need to, feel sick because I am so busy, and sometimes veg in front of a screen to cope. I understand that many working adults and parents also are in similar predicaments; not many people *love* to wake up early on Monday morning to go to work. For some, these sacrifices are worth the price they pay. But the majority of people don’t know what they are missing out on because they don’t have a choice—society’s pace rips that choice right out of their hands. They want to slow down their pace, to truly enjoy life to its fullest, but how?

It may seem unavailing to slow down this high-speed westernized culture, but a slower pace can commence and prosper with the White House support along with the nation’s active decision to change. Leo Babauta, the author of *The Power of Less: The Fine Art of Limiting Yourself to the Essential...in Business and in Life*, is a voice that can help our nation alter its pace. He feels that our society is going too fast and that our ‘more-is-better’ mentality is causing more problems than creating good (Babauta, 2009). His book suggests ten different ways to help our society become grounded so we can be better adults, better parents to our children, become more valuable in the work place, and learn to simply enjoy life more. He starts off by stating that physically doing less, being present in the moment, disconnecting from technologic devices, and focusing on people are the first steps to slowing down your life style. Appreciating nature, eating slower, driving slower, finding pleasure all things, single-tasking rather than multi-tasking, and deep breathing are the final but essential rules of living in a more grounded fashion (Babauta, 2009). I have personally focused on driving slower and eating slower, and the difference it makes is amazing. I

feel calmer while driving and find so much more pleasure in my dining experience. Life just doesn't seem like it's going through the motions when I am taking my time doing the simple things.

Additionally, what if our country decided to take a break, or more commonly known as a Siesta, in the day? Other industrialized countries, such as Spain, Italy, Brazil, and India participate in this beneficial break in their workday and take a mid-afternoon nap. A ten to twenty minute nap has been shown to improve productivity by over 30%, alertness by up to 100%, and reduce stress and the risk of heart disease by 34%. Many people report more energy through out their day and higher rates of happiness and wellbeing (Kingsley, 2006).

As the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, you can support these leisurely and balanced tactics and implement them into our health and educational services. Your influence in the White House can bring about big changes like implementing laws and guidelines for Americans to help change their lives. I am convinced that with your encouragement within the White House amongst its well-established members to change our fast pace, America's life satisfaction will soar and our physical, mental, and emotional health will increase.

I would like to conclude with great thanks for the services you already provide to our immaculate country. I write these changes in regard to the way I hope to live my life, and the way I hope you live yours— a combination of hard work and pleasure. But most importantly, a balance of a less hectic lifestyle is what I eagerly seek for you, me, and our country. With several changes in our nation's lifestyle, we will continue to reach greater heights and discover strengths we have not yet fathomed.

Sincerely,

Hayley Evans
Enclosure

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Snip Snip

Persuasive Researched Essay

Tiffany Maughan

In May of 2002, Virginia became the first state to formally apologize for sterilizing thousands of people with disabilities. Virginia Governor Mark Warner said, “In 1924, Virginia, like many states, passed a law permitting involuntary sterilization. Today, I offer the Commonwealth’s sincere apology for Virginia’s participation in eugenics. We must remember... past mistakes in order to prevent them from reoccurring” (Reynolds). Eugenics is “the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding. It is the effort to improve the inborn characteristics of man by the study of human heredity and the application of those studies to human propagation” (Haller 3). America practiced two forms of controlled breeding, positive and negative eugenics. Positive eugenics suggests that families with desirable characteristics should reproduce as much as possible in order to strengthen America’s “germ plasm.” An ardent eugenicist, Theodore Roosevelt frequently warned the people of race-suicide and advised his fellow “fit” citizens to produce large families (Reilly 43). Conversely, negative eugenics promotes the restriction of reproduction of the “unfit” by surgical means. The movement in America began in the beginning of the 20th century and hit its climax in the 1920s and ‘30s. The eugenics movement dramatically changed when the United States Supreme Court declared sterilization constitutional and fell within the police power of the state; the verdict proved a landmark case that swept up the nation in the eugenics movement (Reilly 87). The Supreme Court’s decision required several factors be brought to fruition: the scientific background needed to be established, technology needed to progress, and Americans had to be convinced of the value of human sterilization.

Considered the father of eugenics, Francis Galton coined the term in 1883 (Galton 24). Literally interpreted eugenics means well born. Galton, a wealthy English gentleman, possessed a great love of statistics (Haller 8). He belonged to the elite portion of the group of men referred to as Anglo-Saxons. These men became the main proprietors of the eugenics movement. In the late nineteenth century it was already a common belief among members of this class that anyone outside their circle was of lower intelligence and worth. This superiority complex made the transition to eugenics easy. Francis Galton observed that the “leaders of British society were more likely to be related than chance alone might allow” (Selden 2). To him nature far outweighed nurture. Discounting other possibilities such

as influence and wealth, he decided on a hereditary interpretation of why men with connected family backgrounds ruled his country. This thought led him to propose a program of selective breeding that would shape the eugenics movement.

Francis Galton borrowed many ideas from his cousin, Charles Darwin. Phrases such as “survival of the fittest” and “struggle for existence” originated in Darwin’s research and with these thoughts came a new scientific mindset. Darwin pointed out, “we civilized men, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick... our medical men do their utmost to save the life of everyone. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man” (Darwin, 136). Perhaps even more important to the American Eugenics movement than Darwin’s contributions was the rediscovery of Gregor Mendel’s pea plant research in 1900. The first to find that when plants were cross-pollinated, particular traits were transmitted to future generations in predictable mathematical ratios, Mendel revolutionized the way the scientific community viewed reproduction. Mendel explained that what he termed ‘elements,’ modernly referred to as alleles, controlled what characteristics would be expressed in an organism’s progeny. “Even though it would soon become evident that their position was without strong scientific justification, American Mendelian eugenicists naively applied Mendel’s notions to all complex human traits” (Selden 2). This over application of Mendel’s discovery, combined with Galton’s and Darwin’s work provided a scientific background for the movement.

In 1895 the eugenics movement sported a large support group. For supporters a frustrating roadblock arrested progression, technology. In 1896 many states passed a law to regulate marriage for breeding purposes. The law stated that “no man and woman either of whom is epileptic, or imbecile, or feeble-minded” shall marry or have extra-marital relations “when the woman is under forty-five years of age” (Haller 47). Although violation of the law was punishable by a minimum of three years imprisonment, many supporters of eugenics felt this law was not strict enough and would be broken. “The waifs and strays, the vicious and lawless, and above all the unrecognized, unsuspected defectives in all ranks of society it [marriage restriction law] is powerless to reach,” was a common judgment (Haller 48). Most eugenics activists strove to enforce sterilization laws. However, no safe and fast method of sterilization existed. Castration and ovariectomy, the complete removal of male and female reproductive organs, was the only sterilization option available. These methods of asexualization led to a dramatic change in hormonal balance. Dr. Hoyt Pilcher, a leading eugenicist

and superintendent of Kansas State Home for the Feeble-Minded, stated that castration resulted in “a most excellent soprano voice in the men, indeed a castrated man resembles a large woman” (Haller 48). These extreme results caused unrest in the minds of the general public and were regarded as a mutilation of the human body. However, with the technology of salpingectomy, the cutting and tying of the fallopian tubes, and vasectomy, the cutting and tying of vas deferens, a superior method was introduced (Goddard 108). Sterilization in this manner did not destroy the enjoyment of sex or alter the internal hormonal balance. These methods soothed the public’s fears and paved the way to legalized sterilization.

In a democratic land it is important for the public to support a law. In order for the eugenics movement to move forward, the approval of the United States people was a necessity. Regardless of whether it was correctly applied or not, there existed some scientific evidence supporting the case that aided the credibility of the eugenics idea. Many people believed the application of mendelian genetics to be correct. The American Breeder Association (ABA) purported many ideas to the public. “With a committee focusing on the presumed hereditary differences between human races, the ABA popularized the themes of selective breeding of superior stock, the biological threat of inferior types, and the need for recording and controlling human heredity” (Eugenic Archive). Another group, the American Eugenics Society (AES) also organized committees to convince the public. Cooperation with Clergymen, Religious Sermon Contests, Crime Prevention, Formal Education and Selective Immigration were some of the AES’s most successful organizations devoted to popularizing eugenics.

Perhaps the most influential propaganda tool, Fitter Family Contests dominated the stage at State Fairs across the country. Just as a farmer would bring his finest pigs to be judged, mothers and fathers lined up their children in hopes of winning a gold medal inscribed with the words “I Have A Goodly Heritage.” A comprehensive IQ test for each member of the family, a medical examination, and a pedigree study contributed to the decision of who would receive the gold medal. Alongside the booth for Fitter Family Contests typically stood a display which proclaimed such facts as “Every 15 seconds \$100 of your money goes for the care of persons with bad heredity” and “Every 50 seconds a person is committed to jail in the United States. Very few normal persons ever go to jail” (Bruinius 237). On weekdays high school students studied eugenics as a legitimate science and on weekends sermons were given, hailing the genius of eugenics and urging members to follow the movement. In the cinema “The Black Stork” was a popular movie supporting eugenic sterilization. By 1928, eugenics was a topic in 376 separate college courses. Bombarded from all sides Americans came to

support the movement and view those around them as lesser beings, unfit to procreate (Eugenic Archive).

Legally mandated sterilization was the most radical policy supported by the American eugenics movement. In some cases action preceded legislation. Even before states began enacting preliminary laws allowing sterilization, many physicians were performing sterilization. Despite these rulings, sterilization did not gain widespread approval until the late 1920s. The case of Carrie Buck was like a heavy rock dogmatically pushed uphill by the backs of eugenic activists to finally reach the zenith and careen downward to widespread sterilization. The law authorized sterilization of the “socially inadequate,” which encompassed the feeble-minded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed, and the dependent including “orphans, ne'er-do-wells, tramps, the homeless and paupers” (Eugenic Archive). At just seventeen years old, Carrie Buck was the first person to be legally sterilized. She had a child, but was not married and her mother Emma was already a resident at an asylum. A Red Cross nurse examined Carrie’s baby and concluded she was below average. To those who believed that feeble-mindedness and sexual promiscuity were inherited traits, Carrie fit the law’s description as a “probable potential parent of the socially inadequate offspring” (Reilly 68). Dr. Albert Priddy provided expert testimony stating, “These people belong to the shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of anti-social whites of the South” (Rilly 69). Relying on these comments, the judge concluded that Carrie should be sterilized in order to prevent any more defective children from being born.

The decision was appealed to United States Supreme Court. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes composed the formal opinion for the Court in the case of *Buck v. Bell* where he wrote the now infamous words: “It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind... Three generations of imbeciles are enough” (Eugenic Archive). This ruling condemned over 60,000 United States citizens to be forcibly sterilized.

The American eugenics movement festered below the surface for many years prior to its breakthrough in 1924. The success of this case was realized only because judges were convinced of the scientific background supporting eugenics and of the advantages in sterilization through “humane” techniques. Propaganda and repeated exposure to the virtues of eugenics slowly and deliberately bound the American people to the idea of a betterment of society through the suppression of those lower unfit individuals. Carrie Buck’s case allowed legalized sterilization to take place

in the United States until 1976. The German Nazi government adopted a law in 1933 based off of this case that provided the legal basis for sterilizing more than 350,000 people. In recent years, investigation has shown that Carrie Buck's sterilization was based on a false diagnosis and her defense lawyer was corrupt. Carrie's child resulted from a rape by a foster family's son, not promiscuity. Her "feble-minded" daughter was on the honor roll in high school (Eugenic Archive). As Governor Warner stated in his apology to the victims of eugenics, we must remember the past. We must learn from the past, and we must prevent these mistakes from reoccurring.

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A Note to English 2010 Instructors:

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