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VOICES

OF **USU**



EDITED BY

**JOHN ENGLER &
BONNIE MOORE**

VOICES OF USU:

an anthology of student writing

2 0 1 7

Editors:

John Engler
Bonnie Moore

Managing Editors:

Breanne Harris
Tyler Grow

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Dear reader of this anthology,

This is no ordinary textbook. This is an anthology of some of the very best work USU students produced last year in their English 2010 classes. In addition, USU undergraduates like yourself edited the essays and designed the layout. This has all been done with a singular purpose in mind: for you to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before you.

Read the anthology.

We invite you to read, analyze, and discuss the work published in this book. Our experience has been that students can learn a great deal from what their peers have done, whether the author succeeded or not. You can gain an abundance of knowledge from scrutinizing this work and applying that knowledge to your own. When you find a compelling image or phrase, ask yourself, "How did they do that?" If a section seems to fall flat, ask, "Why did that not work?" Dig beneath the surface of the content to explore the construction of the work.

Submit a paper or poster to the Citizen Scholar Conference.

Toward the end of the semester, we invite each of you to present at the Citizen Scholar Conference. This conference is a rare and exclusive opportunity for undergraduates enrolled in English 2010. For more information about the conference, see page 156.

Attend the Citizen Scholar Conference.

Even if you aren't presenting at the conference, you can learn just as much by simply attending and seeing firsthand your peers' work. We often hear how useful the conference has been for students. For more information about the conference, see page 156.

Publish your work.

We invite you to submit a paper or poster you completed in your English 2010 class to be considered for publication in the next edition of *Voices of USU* anthology. We publish a new set of student work each year, so don't hesitate to submit your best work for consideration. See page 157 for more information.

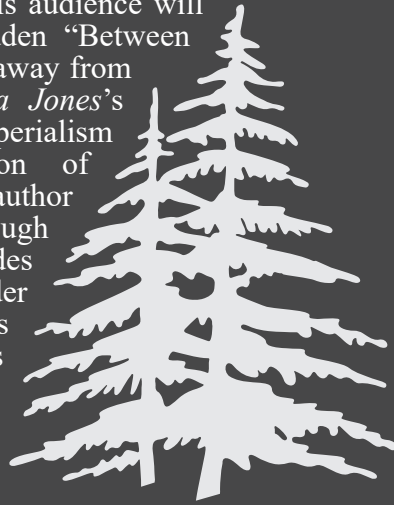
We hope you enjoy reading and learning from your peers. Check out the program website at english.usu.edu/voicesofusu. We also welcome any feedback about this anthology or the conference at csconf.usu@gmail.com

Best Regards,

John Engler and Bonnie Moore

BACKGROUND

In Hunter Klein's essay, he hopes his audience will think twice about the messages hidden "Between the Frames" the next time they walk away from a movie. Klein focuses on *Indiana Jones's* unintentional idolatry of American imperialism and its frequent misrepresentation of archaeology. Even still, the author recognizes some value found through misrepresentation in films; He provides three questions readers should ponder after watching a film: "What messages are being communicated to me?", "Is it a message that I agree with?", and "Do the ends justify the means?" (7).



HUNTER KLEIN



Hunter Klein is from Centerville, Utah. In his spare time, he enjoys visiting national parks, fishing, hunting, and camping. When indoors, he spends time watching movies and playing music. Both listening to and playing Jazz music has been a lifelong favorite for him as well. He performed as a drummer for the USU Jazz Ensemble in the 2016-2017 school year.

Klein is an Electrical Engineering major with dreams of working in research. He will be entering his junior year.

READING BETWEEN THE FRAMES:
Awareness of Political Messages in Film

Hunter Klein

Movies, since their creation, have become the primary medium of legends and history to American society. Frequently, after recommending a book to a friend, or being asked to read a book for school, the phrase "I'll watch the movie instead" comes to mind. As a major source of information to our culture, we need to understand and remember that being "based on a true story" and being a true story are two greatly different things. As awareness of these political overtones is increased, misinformation and misperception will be reduced.

From the beginning, films were interpreted and used to communicate perspectives of the presenters of the film. With the advent of a single camera that could take motion pictures, silent films opened up a whole new medium for which stories to be communicated. *The Great Train Robbery* marked the first film for which a whole story could be told in a continuous fashion. When released to the public, silent films would be played with the accompaniment of a pianist, organist or orchestra. While sheet music was sometimes provided, the majority of accompaniment was improvised with percussive pounding for intense action and lofty serenades of love, all created on the spot by the performer. This was the beginning of film interpretation and message communication ("The History of Film").

Today film is much more complicated and laced with political overtones. Sometimes, these overtones are unintentional and meant to entertain. Other times, these messages are much more deliberate with an ideal message in place. *Indiana Jones* and *The Imitation Game* fall into each of these categories respectively. Three questions are left for the viewer to decide: First "What messages are being communicated to me?" Second, "Is it a message that I agree with?" Lastly, "Do the ends justify the means?" As each of these messages are considered more actively by the consumer, impacts of negative or harmful messages can be avoided.

Indiana Jones is a film franchise depicting a swashbuckling American hero in the defense of archaeology and freedom. In four separate films in the franchise, Jones is often depicted in pursuit of

ancient artifacts ranging from the Ark of the Covenant to the Holy Grail – usually in tow with Nazi or Communist competition. While *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* is commonly viewed as one of the best movies ever made, with a ranking of #39 on IMDB's top movies list, motives of the protagonist are revealed to be more morally grey than we might think. In an interview written for the telegraph, Nick Squire quoted Professor Claire Smith of Australia's Newcastle University: "In pursuit of 'fortune and glory' Jones ignores international treaties, treats human remains as weapons, and destroys archaeological sites in a bid to escape from potential entombment and other worrisome possibilities" (Squires). Another article by Peter Hiscock argues:

Such alternative archaeological views, also termed pseudo-, cult-, or fantastic archaeology, are extremely popular. A hidden history advocated by alternative archaeology is accepted by more people than accept the inferences of scientific archaeology, a pattern that echoes the high frequency of religious and paranormal belief (Hiscock 157).

When observed with the skeptical eye, the theme of American imperialism and personal gain is quickly apparent. Take the famous opening scene of *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* for example. In the beginning of the film, Jones, along with a native guide, gallivant through the jungle to find an ancient south American temple. The purpose of this trip, as you've probably seen or can imagine, is to discover a native idol and bring it into an American museum to preserve it. At first glance this seems like nothing more than what could be expected of an archaeological expedition, until it is revealed that the indigenous people are still around and don't want Indy taking their idol. Jones, of course, does not let this deter him and goes on to retrieve the idol. This provides an interesting message of American imperialism that seems to say "America: we know how to take care of your stuff better than you do." *Indiana Jones* is also guilty of misrepresenting the archeology and

This provides an interesting message of American imperialism that seems to say "America: we know how to take care of your stuff better than you do" (8).

anthropology professions in the form of mass media, therefore leading to the misperception of the majority of viewers.

The disingenuous archeology and advocacy of American imperialism were not the only "social crimes" observed in the *Indiana Jones* franchise. During pre-production of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, the production team was actually denied filming rights in India due to the racist nature of the plot. Later, the Indian government conceded to allow filming to take place. Once the officials saw the film and the depiction of a detestable diet, lack of table manners and overall social inferiority to western culture, the movie was quickly banned in the country. Ethnocentrism, or the judgment of another culture solely on the values and standards of one's own culture, is the major cause for alarm in having these skewed portrayals present in film. As movies represent foreign cultures in a negative way, people who have never had exposure to these cultures will have only films to judge them by. This influence is one that viewers should be wary and attentive of because it could influence how interactions take place with new cultures and people.

Although this perspective throws *Indiana Jones* into a negative light, as far as legitimate archeology and racism goes, it is also possible that this cultural overreach could have positive effects. Peter Hiscock cites another archeologist who shares a contradictory opinion: "Holtorf (2008), for instance, claims that any unreality in the Jones adventures is merely a 'little license' taken by film makers who constructed a character that expresses the spirit of archaeological research and discovery" (Hiscock 160). This leads to the question that Holtorf freely answers, is it ethical to take this kind of artistic freedom with the archeology profession if it inspires a new generation of archeologists?

The Imitation Game is another film which decides to take artistic liberties in order to communicate a political message. However, this film takes a much more direct approach to the message which it is trying to communicate. *The Imitation Game* follows the life of mathematician, and computer science founding father, Alan Turing. Hired by the British government during World War II, Turing played a crucial role in cracking the German encryption machine, Enigma. Turing worked in collaboration with other mathematicians and logicians to crack the "unbreakable" code that changed daily.

In the end, Turing developed what is considered the first computer and successfully cracked the Enigma Code. A paramount tragedy in the life of Alan Turing was his eventual conviction of Indecency, or homosexual activity, by the British police. This tragedy was made ever more poignant to the friends of Turing as his name was slandered throughout the trial. As his heroic work for the government was still classified, not even the judge knew of the great civil service performed by Turing in behalf of the British people. Turing was given the option of jail time or estrogen hormonal therapy. After several months of enduring this chemical castration, Turing committed suicide.

While Turing's story is a true one, its use as a political vehicle was abundantly clear. *The Imitation Game* was released in the United States in November 2014, a mere 8 months before the Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage. A general message of acceptance was ubiquitously present throughout the film with severe condemnation to the British government's prosecution of Alan Turing. Although this movie is based on the true story of Alan Turing, some artistic liberties are taken to tell the story. One reviewer, Michael Gerson, felt that the manipulation of Turing's story was more reminiscent of old saint's tales, saying:

This is the type of biopic that religious people make about heroes of the faith. In this case, Turing was the gay, atheistic, antiwar vanquisher of the Nazis. And he was a martyr of sorts, cruelly subjected to chemical castration for homosexual activity. This is a distinctly modern version of hagiography. But it still tends to miniaturize rather than magnify (Gerson).

Many seemingly minor details were changed in the story of *The Imitation Game* to more strikingly underline the victimization of Alan Turing. One of these distortions was the presentation of Turing's personality. Throughout the film, Turing is presented as an arrogant, socially inept, pompous man who, although initially despised by all of his co-workers, eventually proves to them all that he wasn't just bragging and could actually perform as advertised. Gerson skeptically criticizes the movie's descent into the creative genius stereotype stating that:

The honor roll of creative genius — Beethoven, Byron, Tolstoy, Van Gogh, Schrödinger, Godel, Turing — is often a story of

obsession, compulsion, melancholy and mania. There are, no doubt, happy, well-adjusted geniuses, pottering around their gardens and playing bridge with their neighbors. And manic or depressive illness is less romantic outside the movies (Gerson).

As it turns out, Turing was nowhere nearly as socially detached as he was presented in the movie. Jonathan Lighter reports in his review of the film, "According to the meticulous biography on which the film is based, Alan Hodges's *Alan Turing: Enigma* (1983), the real Turing resembled his screen counterpart only slightly in code breaking achievements and almost not at all in personality" (Lighter 16).

Another completely fictitious element introduced into the life of Alan Turing by *The Imitation Game* was having him investigated for espionage. In the film, the team of Bletchley Park, the research base at which Turing worked, discovers that there is a mole in their facility divulging information to the Axis powers. Turing is made a prime suspect in this process and has his work turned upside down and inside out looking for a spy. In the end, this inspection leads to the revelation that Turing is homosexual. Turing discovers that his co-worker, John Cairncross, is the actual spy. Upon being discovered, Cairncross threatens to tell others of Turing's homosexuality if he reveals that he is a spy. Reviewer Chris Christensen writes that this fiction is "one of the most serious liberties" taken by the film makers (Christensen 178). In reality, John Cairncross didn't even know Turing and was kept in a very separate part of the compound. Christensen references Cairncross' book in which Cairncross attempts to justify his espionage: "The rigid separation of the different units [at Bletchley Park] made contact with other staff members almost impossible, so I never got to know anyone apart from my direct operational colleagues" (Christensen 178). In actuality, Turing's homosexuality was discovered due to a break in at his apartment. Turing suspected that the robber was an acquaintance of the young man with which Turing was romantically involved. This led the police to ask from one question to another, eventually revealing his sexual orientation. This misrepresentation of history furthers Turing's case as a misunderstood and misjudged hero that was victimized for his homosexuality.

As it turns out, Turing was a significantly different person than as portrayed in the movies. This mixed portrayal led to many different responses. Some groups lauded the film for its progressive message

while others condemned it for the exploitation of Turing's life for the communication of a specific message. Chris Christensen complains of this inaccuracy saying:

If you know the history of Alan Turing's work at Bletchley Park, you will find *The Imitation Game* troubling. It is better to read the book that inspired the movie... A certain amount of liberty with the truth seems to be allowable to add a bit of drama to a historical movie, but the plot of *The Imitation Game* pushes this liberty too far. Very wrong impressions of history are created (Christensen 181).

The outrage against *The Imitation Game* didn't come from the message which it was communicating, but rather the abuse of the story belonging to the real Alan Turing. With this in scope, it can lead the viewer to question whether the producers of the film cared more about the historical figure or about the message.

This conflict between accuracy and artistic freedom to communicate something that is important to the producer is a heated one in cases such as this. On one hand, establishing positive messages of acceptance and other values is a good thing. On the other, misrepresenting the character of a real person to establish that message lies in a far greyer area. The nuances of these opposing sides are too specific for each individual film to declare an absolute right or wrong. This is why it is important that consumers educate themselves regarding the messages portrayed in film.

Movies have been shown to have a significant effect on a consumer's understanding of historical events. In her article written for *the Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Danielle Pipitone addresses the widespread misunderstanding of World War II history in the rising generation of Italians. Pipitone hypothesizes that minute inaccuracies and biases in American World War II films lead to a national misunderstanding of the events and motives present in the war. Pipitone cites Jay Winter's book, *The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity*, to illustrate how a mass misunderstanding of historical events can lead to a "collective remembrance" of an amorphous alternate version of history - one which a community will agree upon and relive together, regardless of accuracy. Pipitone writes, "...any act of collective remembrance is 'both a mnemonic

device and a way in which individual memories are relived, revived, and refashioned' (Winter 2010). As in Austin's theory, truth and falsity are not important in this context; what is relevant is that the act of collective remembrance always has an impact on the society that performs it" (Pipitone 629). Squires quotes a similar concern in his paper regarding *Indiana Jones* saying, "The film is low-quality and would raise a smile if there wasn't a danger of drawing into its orbit teenagers who know nothing about the 1950s" (Squire). As consumers take historical fiction as a nearly accurate depiction of past events, community understanding can become warped. While films depicting historical events contain enough accuracy to make them believable, the

true depth and character of these histories will be lost on all those who refuse to take a more critical look at the films and study the actual history.

Whether a film is positive and altruistic or fun but inaccurate, we cannot mandate what producers and directors put in or take out of their films. Therefore

my proposal is that we as consumers pay attention to messages and historical inaccuracies laced in these films so that we may not be caught on the side of ignorance. As greater attentiveness is given to the meaning of these films, greater criticism and understanding can be made to the cultural, political and ethical overtones that the creators desire to teach us. With this eye of understanding and skepticism, more educated decisions can be made as to what media we watch and misinformation can be avoided.

Whether a film is positive and altruistic or fun but inaccurate, we cannot mandate what producers and directors put in or take out of their films (13).

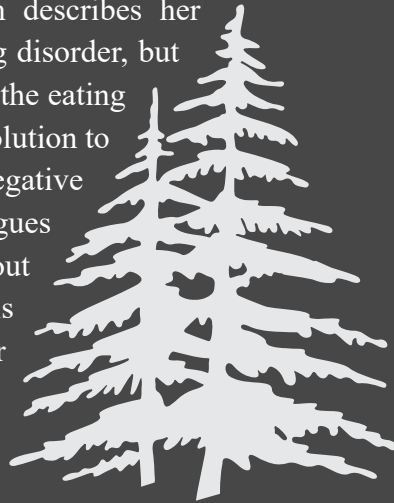
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1. Evaluate Klein's use of transitions between paragraphs. Identify at least one effective transition and one ineffective transition. Explain why the transition is effective, and then offer advice about how Klein could strengthen the ineffective transition.
2. Klein demonstrates *Indiana Jones's* misrepresentation of archeology. Weigh the positive and negative effects of this misrepresentation. Do you believe the misrepresentation is justifiable? Explain.
3. Identify a movie, show, or book that uses ethnocentrism within its storytelling. Does this ethnocentrism harm or inform the culture which it portrays? How does this relate to Klein's proposal?
4. Why do you think films commonly misrepresent events and people? Can this misrepresentation be corrected while maintaining a story's underlying moral? Consider how Klein's argument can help inform your answer.

BACKGROUND

Diet is discussed often as a form of losing weight but it has a different definition in Jensen's essay, "My Diet is Better Than Yours." Jensen describes her struggles as a teenager with an eating disorder, but instead of talking about how to solve the eating disorder itself, she comes up with a solution to solving all eating disorders and the negative connotation the word diet has. She argues that with increased education about healthy diets, how to know what is healthy for you, and where to go for help, this negative connotation will go away and teenagers will be less likely to have eating disorders.



MEGAN JENSEN



Megan Jensen is a junior majoring in dietetics with a minor in psychology. With this degree, she plans to be a nutrition counselor for those struggling with pathological eating behaviors and mindsets. Jensen was born in Hillsboro, Oregon, but grew up in Boise, Idaho. She hopes to bring more recognition to the health benefits of potatoes and Tillamook ice cream as she begins her career. Once graduated,

Jensen desires to begin a nutrition and self-image curriculum designed for elementary school children. Jensen is enthusiastic about food and is eager to make her passion a career.

MY DIET IS BETTER THAN YOURS

Megan Jensen

The scale showed me an outrageous number: 118 pounds. Only 35 pounds less than I weighed just a few months beforehand. I stared at my size zero body in the mirror and shuddered; I tried not to focus on how fat I was, but how could I not? 118 pounds. Still three pounds above 115, eight pounds above 110, and 18 pounds above the 100 pounds at which I told myself I would stop losing weight. Guilt overwhelmed me as I clinched my hands into fists and punched my stomach as hard as I could, aching to be thinner, to weigh less, hoping that this act of frustration would motivate me to not eat for the rest of the day. Hot tears streamed down my face as self-loathing and anger coursed through me. I was hungry and extremely dehydrated, but I had to earn my right to a meager dinner, and clearly I did not accomplish that. My muscles stiffened, and my expression hardened as I realized there was only one possible way to solve this problem: to further restrict my diet. My fifteen-year-old mind did not comprehend the consequences of my continued food restriction, and it did not understand that what I had, what I felt, was an eating disorder.

And still, years later, though my battle with anorexia is difficult to discuss, it is frequently a topic of personal reflection. Through this reflection, I analyze possible factors that led me to the point of self-starvation. Though a few different influences are at play, one has stuck out to me as the most prominent: my eating disorder started with the word 'diet' and a misconception of what it means.

If I ask everybody I know what they think a diet is, the majority would give me a negative answer. Nobody ever seems happy when they are on a diet. Nobody ever seems glad they have the opportunity to be on a diet. The word 'diet' implies sacrifice and discomfort with your body. The word 'diet' is said

My muscles stiffened, and my expression hardened as I realized there was only one possible way to solve this problem: to further restrict my diet (17).

in hushed and sympathetic tones. The word ‘diet’ suggests misery and discouragement, the exact opposite of the emotions food should provide.

Because of my story, it may seem odd to claim that ‘My Diet is Better Than Yours,’ but I believe it to be true. My current diet is not better because I eat less, or because I can successfully cut out dessert (something, I assure you, I no longer do), but due to one simple fact: what I eat makes me happy; it excites me; it adds variety to my life; and most importantly, it no longer controls the view I have of myself.

Contrary to popular culture, ‘diet’ is truly defined as the food we generally eat (Dictionary.com). With this in mind, every single person on earth is on their own diet. Each diet is individual and unique to each person, but I do not believe most people are happy with how they eat.

As a whole, society’s conception of ‘diet’ needs to change, and I believe this is rooted in the false belief that food is an enemy. But

Guilt is the trademark symptom of an anorexic spiral (19).

with a little bit of education, perhaps our relationship with food can improve; perhaps the word ‘diet’ will lose its negative connotation; perhaps fifteen-year-old girls severely restricting their food intake will not get to that point at all. If we are meant to eat 2,000-ish

calories every day for 80+ years (58,400,000 calories total), we may as well enjoy some of them.

But right now in society, individuals do not enjoy their calories. The modern definition of ‘diet’ is taking control of the food we eat. If our culture defines dieting as the “adherence to a specified eating plan for purposes of weight loss,” then healthy eating is seen as something you do when you are trying to lose weight, and *only* when you are trying to lose weight (Schaumberg 90). Many feel immense pressure to reach the “ideal body type” and occasionally begin to use “unhealthy weight loss practices” to achieve it (Quick 425, Paxton 474).

This is the trap I fell into as a teenager. I grew up obese, weighing over 100 pounds by the time I started third grade. When I realized I was a lot bigger than most of the girls my age, I decided to ‘go on a

diet,’ not knowing that I was already on one and perhaps just needed to alter it. But I knew my parents were often trying to lose weight, and that meant they did not eat as much—so I decided to follow their example, and my restrictive intake began.

I first cut out junk food; that seemed to be the general trend of those trying to lose weight. Though it took some work, I succeeded at this first step. As I was doing this, I saw other people around me, skinnier people, eating all the junk food they wanted. Other girls were so thin and flawless that they did not need to lose weight. My observations, however, were only partly wrong. Though the girls around me did not *need* to lose weight, they still *tried* to lose weight. Studies show that “half of adolescent females have tried to lose weight over the previous month,” and restraint at this age is a “risk factor for develop[ing] eating pathology” (Paxton 474, Schaumberg 89).

Like half of my peers, I was at high risk for developing an eating disorder. I did not think I was losing weight fast enough, so I began to restrict my diet even more. I cut out all sugar, and when that did not work, I became a vegetarian. After that failed to produce the results I wanted, I cut out dairy, all the while reducing my daily caloric allotment from 1,800 to 1,200 calories. Cycles of “repeated dietary restraint [for] perceived lack of self-regulation” resulted in an “anorexic spiral” (Schaumberg 91, Fitzsimmons-Craft 923).

Guilt is the trademark symptom of an anorexic spiral. I felt guilty for being fat, so I cut out food. When I cut out food, I got incredibly hungry. When I got incredibly hungry, I overate. When I overate, I felt guilty for being fat. When I felt guilty for being fat, I cut out food, and the cycle continued. It is seen that “periods of energy (i.e. caloric) restriction increase the reinforcing value of food” (Schaumberg 91). ‘Dieters’ (in the modern sense of the word) want to eat more food because they are hungry, but eating more food makes them feel guilty, so they continue to restrict. Because of this, relationships with food get rather confusing; individuals may be unsure if food is a good or a bad thing and instead treat it just as something they need to survive.

However, some individuals can “[practice] dietary restraint without negative consequences” (Schaumberg 89). This is referred to as “flexible restraint” (Schaumberg 90). What flexible restraint consists of guidelines, not concrete rules, and focuses more on “health, not

weight or size” (TriDeltaEO). The diets of these people are guilt-free and full of joy because their food is not accompanied with shameful feelings. They recognize that occasional treats and sweets are okay as long as they do not overwhelm the rest of their diet. A typical eating plan by someone practicing flexible restraint would consist of “more fruits and vegetables,” more whole grains, and “[less] (*notice this does not say ‘zero’*) junk food” (Trivedi 2). Most individuals who practice flexible restraint use it as a tool for weight maintenance and recognize there are no “good and bad foods, but just food” (Schaumberg 91, Paxton 487). All food is meant to provide us with energy and contribute to our happiness.

In the case of most ‘dieters,’ there is a strict list of foods they are not supposed to consume (i.e. forbidden foods); this is called “rigid restraint” (Schaumberg 90). The problem with rigid restraint and subsequent “forbidden foods” is that it can “lead those attempting to re-gain control of their eating to use inappropriate compensatory methods” and “unhealthy weight regulatory practices” (Quick 426, 429). These methods of eating are generally “encouraged, modeled, and normalized” by not only the media but “friends [and] family” (Paxton 475).

My own experience is a perfect example of this. Due to my weight loss, I received attention from many of my family, friends, and peers. With the exception of my parents, who were deeply concerned about my eating habits, all of the comments I received were positive. My physical hunger, though gnawing, was nothing compared to my emotional hunger for attention and a desire to belong. It was an easy decision to continue restricting my diet when I often heard comments such as, “You look great!,” “I’m so proud of your weight loss!,” “How many sizes have you dropped?,” and “You have a lot more self-control than I do.” These comments are part of a trend known as ‘Fat Talk’ and they encourage people to continue restrictive eating habits.

The ‘Fat Talk’ movement first came to light when the TriDelta sorority put out a two-minute video clip in 2008 highlighting the consequences of unhealthy dieting and eating disorders. The video reported astonishing statistics such as, “54% of women would rather be hit by a truck than be fat,” and “81% of ten-year-olds are afraid of being fat” (TriDeltaEO). With these facts in mind, it is no wonder I, as a fifteen-year-old girl, felt 118 pounds was too fat. I remember

times when I would suck my stomach in while sitting down or walking around, afraid people would judge me as pudgy; a strange concern since my stomach naturally caved inward, and my hip bones and ribs poked out of my clothes.

If I felt this way at 15, imagine how confused a younger child might be about their food choices when regarding the same message—that they are never thin enough. From ages 2-11, children “see an average of 25,600 ads per year” (A Look...Ads). Many of these ads show unrealistic weight goals from fashion models who are “thinner than 98%” of the population, and the latest findings concerning new diet trends (TriDeltaEO). Even if a child is not overweight, they start to question whether they look the way they should after repeated exposures to these unrealistic messages.

Considering how early in life children are bombarded with these messages, it is surprising that proper nutrition and body-image classes are not taught until middle school, if at all. In recent years, Sarah Durkin, a professor at the University of Melbourne, Australia, did a study on the effectiveness of body dissatisfaction prevention messages for adolescent girls (7th, 8th, and 10th graders). Media clips highlighting different body-image messages were shown to see which ones the girls related to most. Researchers found their message on how “thin does not equal attractive...was the only message” not rated “[high] on believability,” though it was rated high on relevance (Durkin 387). Durkin took this to mean the girls “want[ed] this message to be true, but simply [did] not believe it” (Durkin 388). This parallels something else the researchers found: none of the information was new to the girls; therefore, the messages were boring and uninteresting to them. As the girls continue to hear these messages, they lose shock factor and influence. Without an alarming impact, the messages become insignificant in the girls’ lives.

To combat this, I look to Brooke Parker, the disordered-eating dietitian at Utah State University. Parker is starting a new curriculum called “Every BODY Rocks” for local middle schools and youth programs to use in the classroom. This curriculum begins by showing that beauty comes in all body shapes and sizes and teaches children how to get out of “self-esteem traps;” Scales and mirrors can teach children to place all of their value on what they look like or the number they see (Parker). Parker discusses how the media can reinforce these self-

esteem traps. One thing that sets Parker apart from Durkin, however, is that she explains how the media can be a positive influence: uplifting quote boards on Pinterest, memorable nutrition slogans from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), natural models in Dove soap commercials, and inspiring posts on Facebook; it is simply a matter of filtering out the ‘Fat Talk’ and filtering in the positive messages.

Next, Parker discusses the importance of biological cues (i.e. hunger and satisfaction), as well as how to recognize these cues, so kids understand what these cues feel like. Parker emphasizes the nutritional aspects of eating but also educates against the stigma that your self-worth is proportionate to your weight—“Do not put all of your eggs in one basket and think of that as your self-worth,” she continues, “Your self-worth is not dependent on one thing alone” (Parker).

This last step is what makes Parker different from other intervention and prevention studies. Though Parker’s message is not new to middle schoolers, she does one thing others do not—she builds up children’s self-esteem. Simply showing a media message about the possible negative consequences of dieting will not prevent restrictive diets, but they will be prevented by helping children feel comfortable and happy with their own bodies. And this is ultimately where the modern definition of ‘diet’ originates—whether or not individuals feel comfortable in their own skin. If schools integrate body-image self-confidence into their curricula, it could help prevent some of those “45% of [adult] U.S. men and women [who] perceive themselves as overweight” from ever having those thoughts (Quick 425). Healthy relationships with food would flourish, and weight would not be a determinant of health.

However, occasionally, thoughts of being overweight are true. With the obesity rate over 20% in all states and as high as 35% in some, there is evidence we all need to improve our diets (“Obesity... Trends”). The difference lies in how we attempt to change our diet. As an obese thirteen year old, I desperately and obviously needed to eat less and eat healthier. I frequently overate, and junk-food was a staple in my diet. What I needed was balance; what I needed was flexible restraint.

Similar to body-image coaching, healthy nutrition coaching (i.e. flexible restraint) needs to be implemented into every child’s education.

Not until I was fourteen did I receive any nutritional education, and this was long after I began my restrictive mindset. The rest of my knowledge was self-taught until I came to college and took nutrition classes. These nutrition classes taught me exactly what I should have learned in elementary school: portion sizes, caloric needs, general nutritional recommendations, and the energizing nature effective nutrition has.

Thankfully, the FDA is already working on this by reaching out to parents and educators, encouraging them to “help children make wise [food] choices;” this is done by providing classroom curricula for children as young as first

Beauty comes in all
body shapes and
sizes (21).

grade (Parents). Education on healthy eating can protect children against those times when their self-confidence and body-image are tested; they can stand firm in their nutritional practices and not crumble like I did. This is as simple as getting children excited about fueling their bodies correctly and joyfully. The FDA provides education for all grades in elementary school, ensuring the information is taught and re-taught in new ways every year. First graders learn about the different food groups and learn that some foods should be eaten more often than others. Sixth graders learn about cooking healthy foods and apply their knowledge to the school cafeteria meals (Parents). The information taught, though not new, increasingly gets more complex and applicable to the children’s lives. Repeated exposure to nutritional information, if taught in exciting and memorable ways, can be successful and useful for a lifetime. Kids will have the tools they need to apply this nutritional information in their daily lives. This way, they do not have to wait until college to gain this information. They do not have to struggle with their body-image. They can grow up confident in how they look and be happy with the foods they choose to eat.

Lack of education is exactly how I ended up ‘on a diet’ as a thirteen year-old girl; I knew I needed to make a diet change, but all of my information came from negative sources. If educators start young, if nutritional and body-image issues are attended to, if children are shown the happiness that accompanies fueling the body correctly, then

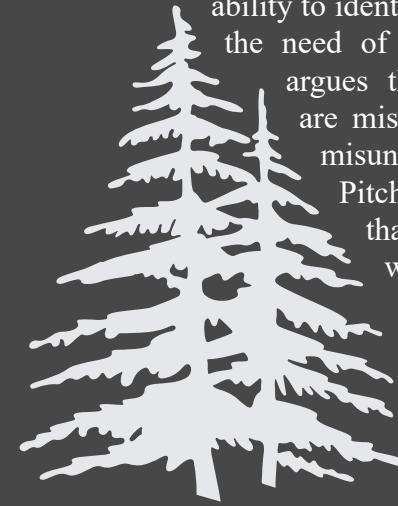
they can be prepared for a lifetime of nutritional joy. Restrictive diets will be unnecessary because individuals will know how to manage their weight in a way that makes them confident. What is needed is alteration, not restriction. Diets are good things, common things, and it is imperative to understand that we will always be on one. But that does not mean the occasional brownie sundae is unhealthy; it simply means that we are getting the most out of our 58,400,000 caloric allotment, which should be everyone's goal. And that is why 'My Diet is Better Than Yours.'

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Titles are important in telling the readers what the essay is about, as well as enticing them to read it. Look at the title of this essay, do you think it is informative? Look at the introductory paragraph, does the title seem to match? How does the title and introduction of this essay affect the way you read it?
2. Jensen relates her own experiences from her youth. What does this contribute to the essay? What rhetorical elements does this tactic rely on and why?
3. Jensen mentions that young children should be taught about portion sizes. How effective do you think this would be? How much control do children have over their diet? Use Jensen's argument to help support your thoughts.
4. Did this essay change your opinion in any way? If so, what were you persuaded of? What evidence or research do you feel was the most compelling to prove the author's argument? Give examples.
5. How could Jensen incorporate literary devices into the text? What literary devices would you use to make the essay more relatable?



Absolute Pitch, also known as Perfect Pitch, “is the ability to identify and produce specific pitches without the need of an external reference” (29). Johnson argues that people who have Absolute Pitch are misunderstood, and it is because of these misunderstandings that people with Absolute Pitch are put on a pedestal as being better than other musicians. Johnson disagrees with this and argues that having this gift of Absolute Pitch has its limits and needs to be seen as such.

BACKGROUND

ANDREW JOHNSON



Andrew Johnson is a full time student at Utah State University, studying Electrical Engineering. Heavily involved in music, he plays a number of instruments and loves participating in vocal performance and composition. He enjoys dance, from Big Band to contemporary, and participated on one of USU Big Band Swing teams. He is also an aerial silks artist. Though having a mountain of interests, he hopes to continue writing both academically and

casually, helping people broaden their perspectives of the world and others around them.

PERFECT PITCH: A Double Edged Sword

Andrew Johnson

A thought experiment: Imagine a world in which very few can label colors. You are with a friend eating lunch in a busy cafe. Your reuben was satisfactory, though your friend continues to complain about his coffee and panini. Abruptly, things begin to change. The faux cedar table you're seated at is no longer that lovely reddish color; it is lime green. Your friend's panini is a revolting puce, the lawn outside the window to your right a burning orange. This sudden shift disgusts you, perhaps making you a bit queasy.

Your friend takes notice of your condition and asks you what is wrong. You naturally reply that colors have shifted and that makes you uncomfortable. Your friend asks you how you are so sure. How could he not know? Isn't it obvious? How could he eat that sandwich when it's turned that repulsive color? You reply that you just know.

He seems unsure of your answer. You glance around and the colors shift back to normal, of which you let your friend know. He seems aware of something changing, but doesn't seem to comprehend exactly what happened. You see realization on his face that you were telling the truth and his excitement sparks. He's amazed. He tells you that you should go into art, that with your gift you would be the best artist because you know what colors are. You may have questions: what does color have to do with being a good artist? Why can't your friend see what you see? Why does he think that this is such a special gift?

Now imagine a world in which very few can label pitches. The situation progresses as before, but instead of color, pitches shift and cause you discomfort. Once again your friend notices your condition and asks you what is wrong. You naturally reply that their singing has shifted and that has made you uncomfortable. Your friend asks how you are so sure. How could he not know? Isn't it obvious? How could he listen to such a repulsive sound? You reply that you just know.

He seems unsure of your answer, but over time he realizes that you're telling the truth. He's amazed. He tells you that you should go

into music; that with your gift, you would be the best musician because you know what pitches are. Similar questions now surface. How does pitch relate to being a good musician? Why can't your friend hear what you hear? Why does he think that this is such a special gift?

This gift, Absolute Pitch (AP)—the ability to identify and produce specific pitches without the need of an external reference—is misjudged and needs to be understood in full, including its disadvantages. These misunderstandings are not only false but also detrimental to all members of the music community, with or without AP.

To understand the damage that is done by assumptions related to AP, we need to understand exactly what AP is. As stated before, AP is the ability to identify and produce specific pitches without the need of an external reference. However, that answer doesn't really scratch the surface of the complexities associated with this ability. Questions concerning the rarity of the ability, the correlation with musical skill, whether you're born with it or can learn it, and its relation with relative pitch naturally come up, and I will try my best to address these questions concisely. In the words of CGP Grey, "The short answer is [unhelpfully simple] and the long answer is fiendishly complicated" (Grey).

AP is a rare ability; although the exact statistic not well derived, it is said that it occurs in approximately 1 in 10,000 individuals (Parncutt and Levitin 2). However, its interest for study is not solely due to rarity. An "oft-quoted" rule in psychology is the 7+/-2 rule, which explains the limit of information processing (Rogers and Levitin). Dr. Daniel J. Levitin, award-winning neuroscientist, author, and musician, explains:

This rule states that for essentially all unidimensional psychophysical continua (and auditory frequency is such a continuum), resolution in a single-interval absolute identification tasks is limited: subjects are able to absolutely identify only five to nine stimuli over the stimulus range with perfect consistency, or alternatively, they are able to place the stimuli drawn from this range into only five to nine categories consistently (2).

In other words, with a range of sensory input—like a string of numbers, a set of random words—one will hold 5 to 9 items of information in short-term memory. AP seems to violate this rule

fantastically, being able to identify well over 60 stimuli (5 octaves of 12 tones each). However, since mistakes in identifying octaves are common, one could say that AP identifies 12 categories, which is a bit less of a violation than before stated (Levitin 2).

With that kind of prowess in identification of pitches, does AP correlate with musical skill? Though a logical answer could be yes, the opposite couldn't be truer. In the words of Dr. Pam Heaton and Dr. Linda Pring,

Mozart—a famous composer with AP—is not a better or worse composer than Stravinsky or Brahms—famous composers without AP (30).

professors of psychology at the University of London, and Dr. Beate Hermelin, renowned Experimental Psychologist and pioneer in the experimental study of autism, contend, “It should be stressed that AP is not a reliable marker for outstanding musical talent in normal populations, as many highly-gifted musicians do not show this ability” (Heaton, Hermelin and Pring 295). Mozart—a famous composer with AP—is not a better or worse composer than Stravinsky or Brahms—famous composers without AP. The history of musicians shows that AP is not a significant factor for music proficiency. Though being able to identify pitches could give some advantage in some areas of music, musicians with AP suffer in other areas of music as well. Calculating intervals and chords, and judging if a melody and a transposed counterpart are the same, are some of the areas that musicians without AP outperform those with AP. Levitin remarks, “their constant awareness of musical pitch labels can detract from their enjoyments of music. As more than one tone-APer has complained: ‘I don’t hear melodies, I hear pitch names passing by.’” (Parncutt and Levitin 1).

However, correctly identifying notes by ear does not mean that those with AP are “perfect.” The term “perfect pitch” was used by geneticists interchangeably with the term “Absolute Pitch,” which implies the completely false assumption that those with AP can tell if a note is perfectly in tune or not. To quote Dr. Levitin, “APers are no better at tone discrimination than other individuals, and they are no more accurate at noticing deviations from perfect intonation. What they are better at is labeling tones...but there is some ‘slop’ or ‘hysteresis’

in their category boundaries”(3). As stated above, there is nothing “perfect” about AP. Those with AP do not have some incredibly heightened sense of pitch perception. They are not perfectly reliable tuning forks. They can label and reproduce pitches within a bounded discrimination, with *absolute* meaning *existing independently* rather than *complete* or *outright*. Those with AP don’t have magical ears; they have a gift, and every gift has limits.

Limits also exist in the period of time wherein one can learn AP. Distinct from relative pitch—discussed later in this paper—AP cannot be learned later in life. Though some argue whether it is nature or nurture, I argue that it is a mix of both a person needing inborn predispositions and a proper environment to learn. *Psychology Today*, a popular magazine making psychology literature more accessible to the public, states, “Training needs to happen very early: adult musicians with AP typically began music lessons around age 5. After age 9 it becomes virtually impossible to develop truly perfect pitch” (Adams 16). Dr. Alan Watson, professor at Cardiff University, gives a similar answer, explaining how most musicians with AP started their music training before the age of seven, and how many adults have long struggled to learn AP “with an almost total lack of success” (315).

Still, not every person that has had early music training is endowed with AP, hence my reasoning of needed predispositions to develop the ability. To contrast pitches with colors again, most everyone can recognize and label colors because, as Dr. Levitin explains it, “the association between basic category color terms and focal colors is supported by the biology of vision” (Levitin 5). A similar association does not exist for sound in the human brain. Specific frequencies don’t hold any special status in the mind. One may then ask, how does anyone develop AP? The answer, as of now, is: we don’t know, hence the need for research on AP. But to quote Dr. Levitin, a likely explanation is that “AP is acquired and developed through systematic training, albeit training of which the subjects themselves, as adults, are unaware” (Levitin 5). This explains why not everyone can learn AP; even those who do learn it can’t remember specifically how or when they learned this skill.

In contrast, many people learn and, in my opinion, should learn relative pitch (RP), the ability to identify pitches using intervals after being given a reference note. For example, if you played two

consecutive notes and told someone with RP the first note was a D, that person would hear the interval between the two notes—for example a major sixth—and they would tell you the second note is a B. However, if you lied and told them that the first note was a C, they would tell you the second note was an A, oblivious to your lie. RP should not be confused with AP as those with RP do not have an internal reference system, unlike those with AP.

Though having an internal reference system to identify pitches on the fly seems appealing to people and musicians everywhere, AP has distinct disadvantages, as with any gift. A study done by Walter A. Brown, MD, et. al. examined cognition, personality, social behavior, and language in musicians with AP. They performed tests, normally applied to identify the broad autism phenotype, on a group of AP musicians and a control group of non-AP musicians. They found those with AP “are more likely to have impairments on social behavior” (Brown, Cammuso, and Sachs 165). Although their scores were not near levels of statistical significance, they further explain that “they were in the range seen in people with the broad autism phenotype and were consistent with the...frequency of global social impairment” (Brown, Cammuso, and Sachs 166).

Another impairment that can occur in those with AP is language development. In the book *The Music Effect: Music Physiology and Clinical Applications*, Daniel J. Schneck (an accomplished violinist and Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering and the Biomedical Engineering Society) and Dr. Dorita S. Berger (music therapy consultant and educator) explain:

If the child’s ‘perfect pitch’ memory has already recorded [encoded] sounds/words according to the child’s initial hearing of them, then those words may not be understood as being ‘the same’, because of who spoke the words and how the words were spoken, even if those words are spoken in the exact same pitches and prosody [rhythm]. These minute differences in speech occur in everyone, some examples being different persons and vocal timbres [think sound texture], or in circumstances different from those that prevailed the first time the child heard them (Schneck and Berger 170).

When learning how to speak, AP may be more detrimental than advantageous.

However, these detriments, caused by and related to AP, are not reserved for those that have it; everyone feels them. For those with AP, the aforementioned, false assumptions can be discouraging when other musicians ask those with AP to perform tasks they cannot inherently complete, such as knowing if a note is in tune. That unneeded pressure is frustrating, being led to believe that because one has a gift, they have a list of other gifts as well. It’s like assuming that because a person plays basketball really well, that person can inherently dunk. This leaves the “assumer” frustrated if the person can’t dunk, and it leaves the “assumee” frustrated because he or she has been told that the ability to dunk should be inherent with the gift to play basketball. Assumptions do not encourage talent or connection; they only leave both sides exasperated and dispirited.

Assumptions have also been taken advantage of, such as the false information that AP can be learned easily. It only takes an internet search to find programs and tutorials claiming to teach “perfect pitch.” These programs scam thousands of people out of their money and create countless wannabes to plague the music community. People shouldn’t be led to believe they can achieve something when, in reality, it is virtually impossible. To say anyone can learn AP only leads people to unneeded hurt and heartache, as well as wasted time and money. This hurt and heartache translates to other areas as well, a noteworthy example being social isolation because they are gifted. Where AP seems so idolized in the music community, those with

I have AP...I know of the jealousy, anger, ridicule, and isolation that comes from being different (34).

AP are not treated the same. They are used as examples of talent, and targets of ridicule, especially when they “fail” in anything related to music. It is a scenario comparable to a student who excels in mathematics, language, arts, or history. Being smart in a subject often leads to embarrassment, taunting by others students, and exaggerated disappointment when they “fail.” Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Professor of Psychology and Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary, discusses these kinds of issues in his article “Psychological and Social Aspects of Educating Gifted Students.” He quotes an interview

with a gifted student, ‘I’m different you know; you show intelligence and you’re outspoken and people tend to isolate you and put a label on you’(180). Isolation is not the answer; it causes us to miss out on what everyone has to offer.

One may refute, seeing my passion and words as making a mountain out of a molehill, blowing an already complicated topic out of proportion. Perhaps another may denounce my claims because AP is so esoteric, and it cannot be fully grasped by the average person, let alone written about and discussed in an academic paper. To those doubting, I give one last source, *myself*.

I have AP. I am a violinist with seventeen years under my belt. I also play the viola, cello, bass, guitar, mandolin, piano, and organ. I have participated in music both in public education systems and private groups. I have experienced first-hand the ability of AP and both sides of the ability’s “coin.” I am well acquainted with what people have told me I could do though I couldn’t. I know of the jealousy, anger, ridicule, and isolation that comes from being different. I am very familiar with the assumptions that people make and their usage of AP as a scapegoat to write off all my musical ability as a quirk of genetics or ethnicity. This opposition must stop now. These unchecked emotions and false assumptions are ruining lives, not just musical aspirations. In the words of Dr. Cross, “Do not treat [a person] as only his or her gift. As [people], their giftedness may play a very small to a very large role in their self-perceptions of worth and self-concept. Focusing exclusively on the gift is similar to focusing only on a person’s skin color, height, or size of ears” (193).

Yes, I claim AP is misunderstood. Yes, I claim the false information surrounding AP is detrimental to everyone in the music community. However, I hope we realize that this applies to more than those with AP. This is a plea for change regarding any gift being misunderstood, and those gifted individuals being mistreated through false information. This is a cry for people who are ridiculed and isolated because they are better at something than the majority of people. This is a plea for the depressed, downtrodden, and lonely that are treated poorly because they have a gift. This. Must. Change. Now. We are human beings first, our gifts only second.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. The author begins with a hook that helps readers gain a common perspective. In what ways does this hook illustrate Johnson's point? Does this hook make AP more relatable to the average audience member?
2. Does the author make it immediately clear who he is trying to address? What makes the address clear or unclear? How does this affect his argument as a whole?
3. Johnson argues that Absolute Pitch (AP) has its limitations and it receives a positive connotation that shouldn't exist. How does the evidence back up this claim? Is it done well or are there ways to improve? Give examples.
4. Johnson describes his own experience of having Absolute Pitch. Does this inclusion add or detract from the essay? What does this inclusion do for his argument?
5. Identify where Johnson placed his thesis. Do you feel this is a good place to begin his argument? Why or why not?
6. Johnson concludes his essay with a plea for change. Are his pleas effective? Do you feel this plea is necessary? Does Johnson effectively convince his audience that change must happen and that this issue is relevant to everyone?



Video games are sometimes considered a man's hobby. This is not the case for Wood. She grew up playing video games, which sparked an interest in pursuing computer programming. Wood recognizes gaming as something all children can participate in, but she argues that more female representation will help break the programming mold that seems to be fostered toward male gamers. According to Wood, if video games include more female representation, women would be more likely to experiment with programming, thus breaking the male dominated stigma.

BACKGROUND

LAUREN WOOD



Lauren Wood was raised in Kaysville, Utah. She received the Presidential Scholarship at Utah State University where she is an Honors student and an Undergraduate Research Fellow. She is a self-proclaimed nerd who loves to cosplay, read, and consume vast quantities of Japanese Anime and Manga. You may see her if you're ever at a Renaissance Faire or go to Comic Con.

Wood is a junior majoring in Computer Science. She is also studying American Sign Language.

VIDEO GAMES, WOMEN, AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Lauren Wood

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO and creator of Facebook, stated during a Facebook Townhall Q&A on September 15, 2015, that he would not have started programming if he hadn't played video games as a kid. He cites Sid Meier's *Civilization* as his favorite game. Like many kids, he certainly spent hours playing this game, but what is most important is his playing sparked a deep interest in creating his own games. "I made a lot of games for myself, and they were terrible," Zuckerberg said of his childhood experience with gaming, "but this was how I got into programming" ("Q&A with Mark"). Zuckerberg's experimentation with writing video games led to the creation of world-changing software and the formation of a corporation now valued at around \$350 billion (La Monica). While most programmers will not experience the same level of success as Zuckerberg, many will start the same way he did, by playing video games. As a child, playing video games can lead to experimentation with technology, spark creativity, and open opportunities for a career in computer science. The video game industry has played a major role in providing this opportunity, but to the detriment of half the population, it has broadly chosen to narrow its focus to boys. This technology should be fostered and encouraged among all children, but more emphasis should be placed on games specifically for girls.

Like Zuckerberg, I spent many hours playing video games as a child, and today I am strongly considering a major in computer science. However, unlike Zuckerberg, I am a woman and may be considered an anomaly in the computer science world. Growing up in the 2000's, video games were almost always created for and marketed towards boys. In some ways, I consider myself lucky to have found a few games I could identify with as a girl, but many girls never realized gaming technology was also created for them. Consequently, it is important to ensure that video games reach all audiences, not just the "target audience" of boys, which has dominated the marketing of video games since the 1990's (Lien). Nationwide, a dismal 18% of computer science majors are female, and with the field growing at its current rate, there is a dire need for skilled programmers ("Data

USA"). Women can fill many of these roles. As such, positive and plentiful female representation in video games is important. It draws more girls into gaming and, like their male counterparts, increases the chances they will begin experimenting with programming.

Video games have been marketed almost unvaryingly to males since the 1990's. This allowed the anti-girl stereotype to prevail in the world of computer gaming (Lien). As a result, girls have been less likely to start playing video games. Case in point, when the game *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* came out in 1998, a commercial for the game asked, "Willst thou get the girl? Or play like one?" The suggestion is that in order to succeed at playing the game you can't play "like a girl." This is obviously marketed towards boys and even proposes that a girl would not be able to beat the game. Yet, when I played the game with my dad as a kid, there was no perceptible gender divide and no specific objective to "get the girl." On the contrary, in *Ocarina of Time*, Zelda disguises herself as Sheik and helps Link throughout the game. The game itself isn't sexist, but the publicists definitely decided to advertise to boys.

Many video game companies still follow that marketing tradition and exclusively cater to boys. Take the modern app *Game of War*. *Game of War* is a strategy-based "battle for domination" game ("Game of War: Fire Age" Game of War). It came out in 2013 and has been running ads featuring the actress Kate Upton. She is highly sexualized in these ads, making it obvious that their purpose is to attract male players (Liebl). In contrast, the video game company Supercell is breaking convention by focusing their advertisements on game play. Their hit battle-strategy game *Clash of Clans* is more popular than *Game of War* and attracts more women players. 33% of *Clash* players are female, whereas *Game of War's* demographics show only 3.7% female players ("Supercell vs Kin."; "Game of War: Fire Age" Channel Pages). *Clash of Clans* sets a positive trend by creating a gaming environment where girls feel comfortable playing.

I am a woman and may be considered an anomaly in the computer science world (38).

Positive female representation in video games is important to encourage girls to play. Best-selling author and parenting educator Rosalind Wiseman conducted a survey seeking to reveal gender preferences in video games. The results included more than 1,400 sixth to twelfth graders from schools throughout the United States. Wiseman found that 60% of female high school students would rather play a game with a female protagonist and 61% of high school boys had no preference or even preferred to play as a female protagonist (Wiseman). This seems to disprove the notion that video games must have a male protagonist to be successful. While the gaming industry may maintain that women should hold secondary roles such as a love interest or sex object in video games, some games, both retro and modern, portray strong female protagonists and enjoy immense success. One example is Nintendo's *Metroid* series, which began in 1986. These games all feature a female hero named Samus. Samus is a bounty hunter that tracks down and kills dangerous *Metroids*. Because Samus is always wearing full armor, her gender isn't obvious. But when the player finishes the game, Samus removes her armor, and the player discovers that she is actually a woman. Although its followers now know Samus is a girl, they continued to buy the subsequent games in the series, and Samus became a strong, female video game protagonist.

Positive female representation in video games is important to encourage girls to play (40).

Some companies followed *Metroid's* lead and incorporated female protagonists. The company Valve created a female lead named Chell in their hit game *Portal*. Chell is very similar to Samus as both are the "strong, silent" type. Gender is inconsequential to the player's engagement in the plot and game play. Both boys and girls relate to Chell's plight and delight in the game's humor and objectives. *Portal* was wildly successful and praised as a highly innovative game (*Portal*). Its sequel, the aptly named *Portal 2*, won game of the year from the Associated Press and many others (*Portal 2*). Nintendo and Valve proved that video games could be successful and appeal to more than one gender.

The video game industry's fear of marketing to girls is not unfounded. In 1983, intense competition in the video game market led to many rushed, broken, and genuinely terrible games. These games caused the industry to crash in North America (Meadows). The Japanese company, Nintendo, managed to survive, and it became a big player in the worldwide industry. Nintendo can partially credit its success to male specific advertising (Lien). Before the crash, video games were marketed as fun for the whole family but the new targeted market made the industry safer. Earlier game consoles had very limited capabilities and consequently had poor graphics and small plots. In contrast, the increased power of Nintendo's consoles allowed the games to grow in complexity. Games such as *Mario* often featured strong male heroes saving the weak damsels in distress. It is safer to sell to a specific audience than it is to advertise in general (Lien). These games capitalized on their appeal to the male audience, which narrowed the advertising focus and created a safer market. The industry became successful again but subsequently overlooked a market for girls (Lien). This oversight effectively neglected to give girls equal opportunity to join the technology revolution, which plays a contributing factor in the underrepresentation of girls in the computer science industry today.

However, there is hope that women will soon become more represented in computer science. For one, some developers have created games where the player can generate their own character, by customizing gender and appearance. Games such as *Mass Effect* and *Fallout 4* make character customization a fun part of the game. These fantastic games aren't made specifically for boys or girls; they can appeal to everyone. Secondly, more popular game titles promote female protagonists or, at least, strong female roles. The *Zelda* series maintains *Zelda's* heroic posture and they have also included other female roles like Fi, Impa, Midna, and Navi, who serve as protectors and guides. Even *Mario*, the life-long rescuer of weak damsels, now has a strong female counterpart named Rosalina, who watches over and protects the cosmos. The industry's progress in including female characters may promise a brighter future for women and computer science.

Video games are a known gateway to technology and the computer science industry. For many years, women have been overlooked as a

valuable audience. As an unavoidable effect, gaming largely excluded women as contributors to the technology revolution. While video game marketing is still male dominated, exciting strides have been made to include girls in gaming. As the number of girls who play video games increases, more girls will naturally begin to experiment with computers and become interested in technology. Who knows, maybe the next “Mark Zuckerberg” success story will be about a woman.

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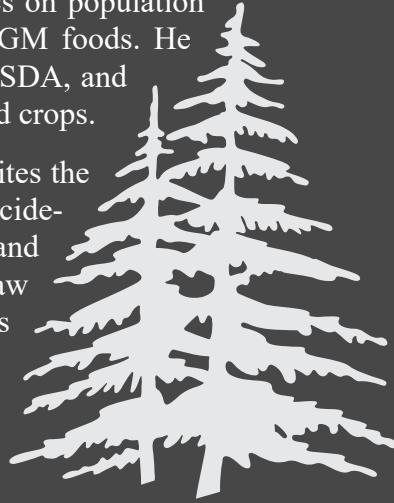
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1. Does Wood mention how to incorporate female representation? If so, where? How could she incorporate it more and where should she discuss it?
2. Who is the audience Wood is trying to address? Are they immediately clear? What makes them clear or unclear? How could she directly address her audience without alienating other readers?
3. Wood mentions many video games that represent women. Do you feel she discusses these enough in her essay? Does she need to give more examples of marketing to male gamers? If so many of these games do exist, why are more girls not playing them? Does Wood address this in her essay-if yes, where? If no, should she have?
4. Did this essay change your opinion in any way? If so, what were you persuaded of? What evidence or research do you feel was the most compelling to prove the author’s argument? Give examples.

BACKGROUND

The acronym GMO (genetically modified organism) has sparked controversial debates in countless social settings. In this essay, Odd uses various statistics on population and food supply to argue in favor of GM foods. He reaffirms the roles taken by the EPA, USDA, and FDA in protecting these highly regulated crops.

Odd, using APA in-text style citations, cites the benefits of GM foods, which include pesticide-free crops, reduced water consumption and pollution, and increased availability of raw materials like cotton. He concludes his essay saying, “Transgenic Crops aren’t so much about having evolution on demand. Rather, they are the answer to the demands of evolution” (50).



STEPHEN ODD



as hiking, skiing, mountain biking, and rock climbing. Extreme sports aren’t everything to him though. He also loves classical concerts, taco trucks, and a good cup of cocoa.

Stephen Odd is from beautiful Cache Valley, Utah and he is currently studying Biological Engineering at Utah State with the goal to work in the medical field designing medical equipment. He tries to get involved at USU and is currently volunteering at a research lab performing DNA analysis of sheep. Odd is a passionate outdoorsman and loves living in a place where he can enjoy all his favorite activities such

EVOLUTION ON DEMAND: Uniting Nature and Science to Further Society’s Development

Stephen Odd

“The situation is dire. Millions of people are barely surviving in the space between malnutrition and death, vulnerable to diseases and outbreak, forced to kill their animals for food and eat the grain they saved for next year’s seeds. This is preventable if the international community takes decisive action. I urge all members of the international community to step up and to do whatever is in their power, [...] The lives of millions of people depend on our collective ability to act. In our world of plenty, there is no excuse for inaction or indifference. We have heard the alerts. Now there is no time to lose.”

Scenes like this one, as urgently described by United Nations Secretary-General chief António Guterres’s words on February 22, 2017, are increasingly becoming commonplace in our world (Tackling, 2017). In less than a century, the global human population will undergo a projected 53.4% increase, resulting in a world population of over 11 billion people. Most of this projected growth is happening in countries that don’t have the economy, infrastructure, or stability needed to support this sharp increase in community size. The world already buckles under stresses posed to humans that we as a species are unable to manipulate, such as natural disasters that seem to become more extreme as the years pass and climates around the world that convulse in unpredictable ways. New parasites, weeds, and pests, with their accompanying diseases, grow in frequency around the globe. In addition to natural phenomenon, human activities such as deforestation, urbanization, war and conflict, mining, and overfishing are escalating. Ecosystems are straining to keep up with the bipolar nature of humans; some wastefully growing too much food while many more can’t grow enough. Incorporating more transgenic crops in agriculture will enable humans to unite nature and scientific knowledge to alleviate these stresses throughout the world and will further societies and their development by providing cheaper products, more stable economies, and healthier populations.

Some scientists and the public in general worry about transgenic crops and cite valid concerns ranging from the economy to human health. The science, though it can seem highly technical and hard to understand, is actually nothing that new. It is also easier to understand than many think. Once properly understood, transgenic crops will no longer appear so shrouded in mystery and their benefits will become clear. So, what is this wonderful science?

To understand that, one must travel back to the beginnings of human history, over 74,000 years ago. Around this time, the human family tree boasted many lineages including *Homo erectus* and *Homo floresiensis*. Fast forward to 12,000 years ago and all but one branch, *Homo sapiens*, have become extinct. This branch of the family tree was also close to vanishing (Development, n.d.). How did our species manage to not only survive but thrive? Around this time humans lived a nomadic lifestyle and lived in small populations. What changed is what anthropology experts now call the “Agriculture Revolution” (Smithsonian’s, 2010). The small, close-knit populations of humans started to invest more time and resources into one of the most revolutionary sciences humans have ever developed: agriculture. Suddenly, these hunter-gatherer groups established small settlements. Abundant labor, reliable food, and increased safety all promoted human population growth. Humans left the Neolithic age a more resilient population by uniting nature and science. By developing new techniques in agriculture, these ancient people laid the framework for modern society. Transgenic crops are the next step in what was started so long ago. These crops have the potential to change modern society just as it changed society 12,000 years ago.

Beginning in the Agriculture Revolution, humans selected crops that gave improved fruits or seeds in hopes to try and get plants that yielded higher quality results. As before, it starts by identifying a problem with a current crop variety: for example, the lack of vitamin A in rice grains. A farmer hoping to solve this dilemma might look much like a baker who has no idea what they are doing. Instead of a pinch of salt or added flour, the farmer may attempt a bit of cross-breeding or creative pollination. Sometimes they, like the baker, get lucky and get a good result. Most often, nothing but an inedible mess is the result. Modern transgenic attempts are more precise and have successful outcomes. Through the processes that are available today,

selecting for traits is much more convenient, controlled, and efficient (Mark, 2014). Modern genetic science and technology has allowed us to understand how plants, like spinach, synthesize vitamin A. Much like a baker reading or sharing cooking recipes, geneticists can copy the spinach’s recipe, or gene, for vitamin A and give it to rice. The geneticist does this by telling rice how spinach makes vitamin A by giving rice the same gene.

Common concerns the public voices include everything from possible negative economic outcomes of the crops to the ethics of these crops (47).

Once the rice has this new gene, it starts to produce vitamin A, and the new rice contains a nutrient needed for good vision and general health.

One of the biggest concerns regarding transgenic crops is the misinformed

public. Common concerns the public voices include everything from possible negative economic outcomes of the crops to the ethics of these crops. Most of these claims, however, are about health-related concerns. Many feel that these transgenic crops are unfit for human consumption. Research conducted by Brandon McFadden, a professor of agriculture and food marketing at the University of Florida, peered into this shroud of confusion surrounding genetically modified crops. Citing research from the Pew Research Center, McFadden clarifies that 88% of the scientists who are members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which is the largest collection of scientists in the world, “agreed that it is safe to eat GM foods.” This was compared to a survey of U.S. adults which found that only 37% “believed GM foods are safe to eat.” It is believed that such discord is caused by people leaning towards their own emotions instead of their logic, and that these issues, and ones like it, have become politicalized (McFadden, 2016). All of this makes for some muddled opinions. Science has shown that no transgenic crops possess greater inherent risk as compared to current agricultural practices. Still, the public refuses to listen. Maybe they just need a better grasp on the science.

The science and technology, once understood, will seem familiar to most consumers. By discussing one of the most common health concerns, allergies, and comparing it to what industry and society is

currently doing, consumers will be able to grasp the concept more. Multiple proponents of more traditional agriculture techniques suggest that by inter-transferring genes among species, allergies could be spread. This threat is a legitimate one, but can be easily sidestepped. Referring to the analogy of cooking, if one is allergic to peanuts they can't cook with peanut oil or eat peanut butter. Does that mean none of us can? No of course not! It means awareness has and is being raised, food items are accurately labeled, and alternatives like vegetable oils are available. Studies on allergies are quite extensive and most of their causes are known, down to the genes that cause them. Geneticists flag amino acids when testing for the safety of genes that share even a 35% homology, or similarity, with known allergens when testing for them which, according to the University of Nebraska's Food Allergy Research and Resource Program, is quite conservative. Once flags have been raised, more testing is conducted on these amino acids and proteins (DeFrancesco, 2013). If known genes that act like allergens arise, then the process of gene transcription is restarted with different genes. Science isn't looking for new subversive ways to kill people off. These are sensible members of society and come from many different backgrounds. The concerns about allergies then, are valid, but already resolved. By using what is already known and put in place, the transgenic science doesn't seem so foreign.

What else can we apply from other aspects of society to help the integration of transgenic crops? Another major concern can already find its answer in the world: the companies that own the modified seeds will become corrupt and manipulate various world populations. The fear is that companies will engineer their plants with termination genes, that would force the farmers to buy new seeds every year. The companies would own the seeds, not the farmer, and could pass unreasonable demands or high costs onto the farmer (Genetically, n.d). What the critics forget in this instance is that the economy is involved. One of the basic tenets of western economics is that there is a free market. If a company is charging too much for a product, other companies will come in and undercut that price as dictated by Market Equilibrium (Market, n.d.). If there are a multitude of companies, the market will be competitive. To curb monopolies or companies having too much control over any particular sector, legislation can be passed (Attorneys, 2010). As an additional protection, current crop varieties

wouldn't disappear either, which provides a safety net for anyone that believes the companies controlling these crops are, in whatever way, too restrictive. As for the concern that companies would purposefully produce toxic crops, they would really have a hard time doing anything subversive because most of the research done on future, current, and past transgenic crops is commissioned by developed countries' governments, meaning the companies must meet these agencies' requirements to receive approval (Ramon, 2014). In the United States, the EPA, USDA, and FDA all control transgenic crops, making them the most tightly regulated crop on the U.S. markets (Freedman, 2013).

What are some of the benefits of using transgenic crops? First off, there is an economic benefit. Modern genetically modified crops are cheaper to produce, grow, and sell. This idea ties back to the Agricultural Revolution. When one farmer produces more food, other members of society have the freedom to become craftsmen, artists, scientists, and the like. In a similar fashion, with these new crops, many areas will be able to produce more high-quality nutrient-rich foods, opening the way for advances in other areas of study (Agribusiness, 2016). Transgenic foods are cheaper for a host of reasons. Transgenic agriculture would offer advantages such as being less dependent on water and pesticides (Attorneys, 2010). This not only would save upfront costs of growing these plants, but would result in a ripple effect throughout most industries (Cheaper, 2013). Industries that use plant goods, such as clothing, energy, and even plastic will all see cheaper raw materials. If cotton is more readily available, cotton products will drop in price. If fields don't have to be sprayed or watered, less personnel are needed to maintain the farm (Freedman, 2013). These

Modern genetically modified crops are cheaper to produce, grow, and sell (49).

types of changes are essential for an economy to develop. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and a global economy is only as strong as its weakest economy. Given engineered crops, many under-developed countries could bring the economic prosperity required for a stable society (African, 2016). Growing crops in more arid places or for cheaper prices will also affect the living standard for many around the world.

One of the major benefits of transgenic crops is their ability to help improve life for so many around the world. Currently, one million people die annually from a vitamin A deficiency. An additional half a million suffer from blindness due to vitamin A deficiency (Freedman, 2013). There is a solution to this! Crops that have been engineered to grow better with less water can be grown in places that were previously considered too arid. Another possibility is to add more nutrients to crops that already grow, such as golden rice, which is the same as typical rice, but is fortified with vitamin A (Freedman, 2013). Countries that cannot grow enough crops to be self-sustaining are costing other countries billions of dollars annually in relief help (Feed, 2004). These less developed countries have developed a dependency on foreign aid, opening the door for instability, destitution, corruption, and low standards of living (African, 2016). Billions of dollars could be spent on other worthwhile projects, such as promoting medicine, the environment, or even helping a broader range of people. As the living standards of these most destitute countries rise so will the living standards of the world as a whole.

Investing in transgenic crops will help lower the costs of modern agriculture, increase more ecological practices, provide essential nutrients, provide stability, and increase the general standard of living for many societies around the world. It is up to us to change to meet the challenge. Those who have the ability to change policies that restrict transgenic crops and their production should immediately do so. We must begin using these crops to help others that are less fortunate. To the leaders of industry and agriculture, start using transgenic crops, and show what can be done with them. As for the rest of us, we must evolve too. We must buy these crops to make this amazing technology work. As we do, our world will change with us. Nature is evolution; it is always trying to present its best self and evolve to meet the challenge of survival head on. Nature isn't perfect, but we know that it is successful.

Stemming from a single cell, life has grown into a complex web of new ideas that nature herself came up with. Humans must accept this push forward, or we will be left to the same fate as others that have failed to evolve quickly enough. Transgenic crops aren't so much about having evolution on demand; they are the answer to the demands of evolution.

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1. Transgenic crops are often referred to as “GMOs” (genetically modified organisms). What tone would this word contribute if used instead? Why is Odd’s use of “transgenic crops” effective?
2. Odd relies heavily on the presentation of evolution and genetic changes over time to bolster his argument. How could other audiences respond to this presentation? What audiences might respond negatively to this?
3. Does Odd’s explanation of economic equality with food markets (on page 48) assuage fears of one company creating a monopoly on food?
4. Odd spends part of his essay addressing potential skeptics to his argument. Describe Odd’s tone in these sections. Is this persuasive to his audience?

BACKGROUND

While some shoes claim to help athletes run faster and jump higher, Capell argues the opposite. Without discounting the practical need for footwear, he demonstrates the science surrounding the physical wear and tear footwear causes on the human body. Capell encourages audiences to reconsider wearing shoes except when necessary; he specifically expands this argument to children who experience the most negative effects by unnecessarily wearing shoes.

He concludes that some footwear is necessary. However, his argument against unnecessary usage is strengthened as he highlights the problematic studies paid by footwear companies, statistics that show the dangers of footwear in athletic performances, and the improved performances of barefoot athletes.



JARED CAPELL



Jared Capell was born in Port Angeles, Washington, and later moved to Meridian, Idaho. He enjoys reading, running, and learning new things. Capell is currently a Freshman at Utah State majoring in Human Movement Science with an emphasis in Pre-Physical Therapy, and plans on furthering his education by attending medical school so he can help people live healthier, happier lives.

NEED SHOES? THINK AGAIN.

Jared Capell

After the advent of Christopher McDougal's *New York Times* bestseller, *Born to Run*, shoe companies from Nike to Vibram, magazines from *Men's Health* to *Runner's World*, and gait gurus from doctorates to amateurs have been up-in-arms in the Shoe vs. Barefoot debate. The opinions of the "experts" are often conflicting, some promoting one extreme and others promoting another extreme. Even the scientific literature and studies generated since this event have been contradictory, argumentative, and influenced on both sides by copious bias. After reviewing the literature, I argue that human beings, children especially, should not wear shoes except when absolutely necessary in order to maintain health, human development, hygiene, and performance.

The 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. The marathon start is delayed due to the smoldering heat of the Italian summer. As the runners line up to start, some take notice of a skeletal figure who wears the Ethiopian racing vest, who seems to think that he can complete the 26.2 mile race without the aid of shoes, for he has presented himself barefoot at the starting line. Certainly he won't make it half way before dropping out; after all, the race is to be run on asphalt and on the cobblestone streets of Rome. As the race begins, he is forgotten, but as it goes on he gradually makes his way to the leading pack...and stays there...and then passes it...and then outsprints the one Moroccan that dared keep up to become the new marathon world record holder. Who is this man? His name is Abebe Bikila. If we change the venue, date, distance, and nationality, it could be Zola Budd, former world record holder in the 5000 meters, or Herb Elliot, former world record holder in the 1500 and the mile, or Faith Kipyegon, or Bruce Tulloh, or any number of athletes. What doesn't change? Bare feet and fantastic athletic performance. Clearly, in habituated individuals, bare feet are no obstacle to physical performance.

In the beginning, we were barefoot. The oldest recorded shoe is from around 5,500 years ago and consists of little more than a fitted cowhide slipper. No raised heel, no midsole, just the foot and

a leather slipper. For the majority of human history, this is the type of footwear that has dominated, in different styles of course, but always the same principle (Ravilious). Sandals, moccasins, huaraches, Inuit mukluks, and, of course, the bare human foot. Soon, shoes become a status symbol, and while poorer classes continue to wear (or not wear) traditional footwear styles through the Middle Ages, the wealthy, noble and prestigious turn to raised heels to elevate themselves above their inferiors. King Louis XIV of France even issued a decree that no one's heels could be higher than his own. Because of this, and the ensuing public mentality, as lower classes entered the bourgeoisie throughout the nineteenth century, they too wanted heeled shoes, which lead to the domination of raised-heel shoes in European footwear that has lasted for centuries ("Dangerous Elegance"). This style of shoe design is very bad for human beings. Besides causing abnormal foot loading and the atrophy and shortening of the lower leg muscles, it also forces the body to make a whole series of potentially harmful gait and postural adjustments from the ankles up to the neck in order to compensate for an uneven foundation (Cowley). Fortunately, this trend was absent from athletic shoes until the running boom of the 1970s, and Bill Bowerman's invention of the modern athletic shoe (McDougall, "The Painful Truth"). Prior to this, athletic shoes of all sports consisted of little more than leather or canvas slippers that sometimes had a thin,

The issue is that we are all buying a product predicated on fallacious reasoning, myths, and pseudoscience (57).

flexible rubber outsole (Larson). Bowerman, track coach at the University of Oregon invented a shoe, the Nike Cortez, that would revolutionize the world of footwear. Bowerman's design features a raised, cushioned heel, which he claimed would "reduce leg fatigue" and "allow for gravity to push the runner ahead of his competitors," as well as allow the runner to take a longer stride by facilitating landing on the heel. As a member of the 1972 Olympic coaching staff, Bowerman had a lot of influence and was able to equip the then-formidable American running team with the Cortez. With his Cortez and his Olympian representatives,

Bowerman converted Nike from a garage project to a multi-billion dollar corporation overnight and the athletic shoe into a status symbol ("Nike Cortez").



Fig. 1. A 1960's shoe by Asics compared with the 1970's Cortez. Notice the difference in construction, especially in the thickness and construction of the sole and heel.

So, what's wrong with that? The issue is that we are all buying a product predicated on fallacious reasoning, myths, and pseudoscience.

Advocates of athletic shoes claim, as did Bowerman, that shoes protect their wearers from impact and injury, and even claim that they can improve performance (Dwilson). Unfortunately, these claims are objectively false. Harvard researchers found that the average shod runner generates sudden impact forces of up to three times their body weight, while habitually barefoot runners generated almost no sudden impact forces (Lieberman, "Foot Strike Patterns"). This is due to the safer, more efficient body mechanics that barefoot gait demands (Lieberman, "Variation in Foot Strike"). With regards to injury, over the last 40 years the running community has seen no statistical reduction in the rate of running injuries, despite great advances in athletic shoe technologies (Murphy). In fact, one of the only shoe-related factors that is correlated to injury rates is the price; those who wear more expensive shoes are 123% more likely to sustain an injury during a given period than those who wear less expensive shoes (Marti). When people believe that shoes offer impact protection they are less likely to use safe body mechanics, and consequently increase impact (Robbins). Since more expensive shoes rely heavily on this sort of advertising, one can understand why their wearers would be injured more often. Many shoes and orthotics claim to correct some of these biomechanical anomalies, although leading researchers in orthotics state that orthotics and motion-control shoes do not correct faulty biomechanics, but rather facilitate incorrect mechanics by reducing pain in ways that are not understood and scientifically unexplainable (Kolkata). This observation lends itself to the speculation that the pain

reduction caused by orthotics and motion control shoes may be a result of the placebo effect. To be frank, no scientific literature (much less peer-reviewed) nor study indicates that any type of shoe can improve performance, which depends on too many variables to consider here.

So, then, how do bare feet compare? As noted earlier, being barefoot promotes impact-reducing mechanics. Also, barefoot locomotion is more efficient. Besides promoting more efficient mechanics, being barefoot eliminates extra weight that must be lifted, accelerated and decelerated over and over again, which consumes energy and oxygen better spent in other ways (Cheung). Even seemingly minute differences in efficiency or running economy can impact performance enormously during endurance-based athletic events like basketball games or marathon running. Consider that world record holder Paula Radcliffe's marathon running speed is only 2.3% greater than Mary Keitany's, yet Keitany's second-fastest women's marathon ever run would finish three minutes and twelve seconds after Radcliffe, which even in the marathon is hardly a small margin of victory. Between 1992 and 2003, Radcliffe improved her running economy by 15%. Since running economy is the number-one predictor of performance and improvement in endurance running events, and is greatly influenced by footwear weight and body mechanics (especially the more efficient mechanics promoted by running unshod), barefootedness may help individuals who are accustomed to it to experience improved athletic performance (Jones 101).

When considering human development, especially in children, there are also several important differences between shod and barefoot living. Hallux valgus deformities, (a.k.a. bunions) which can interfere with normal foot mechanics as well as be painful and unsightly, are absent in surveys of habitually barefoot populations (Shulman). On the note of foot deformities, a study performed in India, and comprised of ethnically identical children, found that children who habitually wore closed-toe shoes were 471.43% more likely to present pes planus (flat foot) deformities than children who were habitually barefoot. Human beings are born flat-footed and the arch of the foot develops in early childhood. The researchers concluded, "Our findings suggest that shoe-wearing in early childhood is detrimental to the development of a normal longitudinal arch" (Rao). While being barefoot is not correlated with reduced injury rates, habitually barefoot individuals

present far fewer cases of excessively high arches as well as fewer cases of excessively low or flat arches, and these extremes in arch height are correlated with increased injury risk (Williams).

Therefore, being habitually barefoot, especially in developing children, may serve as a protective factor against injury by promoting the development of arches that are neither high nor low, thus avoiding the increased risk of injury to which these two groups are predisposed. Furthermore, fungal and bacterial infections of the skin and nails of the feet are also rare among habitually barefoot individuals because their feet are allowed to dry and are frequently exposed to sunlight, which has fungicidal and bactericidal properties (Knight). One of the most important benefits of being habitually barefoot is the neuromuscular feedback that is received from the 200,000+ nerve endings in the feet that improves proprioception, balance, and promotes the establishment of functional gait patterns. This is especially important in childhood, seeing as gait is mastered in childhood and movement patterns are set into muscle memory that can be difficult to overwrite. Shoes interfere in this neuromuscular development and are one of the main causes of gait abnormalities (Crawford). Because shoes frequently disrupt normal human development in these ways, it is not a good idea for adults, much less children, to spend much time in shoes.

If being barefoot really provides all these benefits, why are you or I still wearing shoes? Obviously shoes provide protection from cuts, abrasions, frostbite, and burns, but most people spend a relatively small amount of their time on substrates that pose these risks. One reason why we still faithfully wear shoes is the 1970's anti counter-culture movement. The hippies became associated with bare feet (a product of counter-culture dogmas and ideologies), which lead to bare feet being associated with other anti-society counter-culture behaviors, including homelessness, extremist liberalism, and drug addiction, among others. This resulted in the widespread "No Shirt, No Shoes, No Service" notices posted at the entrances of businesses and institutions that used bare feet as a discriminatory measure against the counter-culture (Capell). In this way, bare feet were not only stigmatized by their centuries-old association with poverty, but also by their association with the counter-culture and its ills. Furthermore, Bowerman's contemporary invention revolutionized the way people looked at footwear. After hundreds of years of relatively little development

in the way of footwear, suddenly athletic shoes were technological. Shoes had reasoning behind them, and innovation, and mad scientist-like waffle-iron-in-the-garage experiments to create a technologically advanced shoe; a shoe that would later have air pockets in the sole, and motion-control design, and energy-return foams, and carbon fiber spring plates, among other innovations.

The public often swallows up this kind of advertising. Consumers often trust the experts and their scientific advancements so much that they don't realize that the experts are inventing the science they need to sell their product. The public doesn't notice that the only people who are "shoe experts" are those that sell the product. A recent study by the University of Colorado found that while barefoot running is more efficient than traditional shod running, the best efficiency was achieved while wearing ultra-light racing flats (Franz). The study does not hesitate to mention that the ultra-light racing flats featured are Nike Mayflies, a techy \$69.00 shoe that often tears during their first use, sometimes not lasting more than one race. It also contradicts the findings of a meta-analysis of 19 studies that found that running barefoot is slightly more efficient (Cheung). Because athletic shoe companies conduct or fund many investigative studies regarding footwear, biases tend to appear in the literature and often contradict the findings of studies conducted by independent institutions. Even magazines like *Runner's World* fall victim to the distortion of bias. Since the magazine makes the majority of its revenue from shoe advertisements (and once had a bad go of it after criticizing Nike's shoe construction and temporarily losing their advertising contract with Nike) they have since been very careful to recommend shoe styles and models to all runners and only publish either ambiguous or pro-shoe material (McDougall, "The Once and Future Way to Run"). Thus, the best interests of the public are subverted by corporate and media agendas that seek to maintain a multi-billion dollar annual revenue status quo, despite research that indicates that "the current practice of prescribing distance running shoes featuring elevated cushioned heels and pronation control systems tailored to the individual's foot type...is not evidence-based" (Richards).

As false as the athletic shoe industry may seem, it would be incorrect to assume that the barefoot crowd is without its cankers. Barefooters, as they are called, often promote being barefoot as

a way to prevent injury, run naturally, and improve performance, and invite all others to do as they have done (McDougall, "Born to Run"). While the majority of scientific evidence sustains bare feet as a healthier alternative, there has been almost no research done on the transition of habitually shod individuals to a barefoot lifestyle, and no studies can substantiate the claims that running barefoot reduces injury rates. In fact, injury rates and risks may be greater while transitioning than continuing shod (Murphy). The cure-all doctrine preached by barefooters often results in the naïve sustaining serious injuries to their metatarsals and Achilles tendon as they attempt to adopt a barefoot lifestyle overnight. However, gradual, slow transition and re-development of poorly or underdeveloped foot and lower leg tissues can and has occurred for many individuals and is definitely possible (McDougall, "Born to Run"). Wearing shoes only when absolutely necessary will allow people to enjoy the benefits of barefoot living, but "absolutely necessary" may mean something different for everyone, especially while transitioning. For those who grew up without shoes, or for the very accustomed, this might mean wearing shoes only at social functions where bare feet are not acceptable, or shower shoes at a public pool, whereas for someone who is just beginning to transition this may mean starting by spending more time barefoot, indoors before advancing to more difficult surfaces.

In my point of view, I would argue that human beings, and especially children, should not wear shoes except when absolutely necessary for health, hygiene, and developmental reasons. Traditions, stigmas, cultural norms, and lack of knowledge have often been sources of decreased personal, family, community, national and world health, but they don't need to be. When people investigate, compare the evidence, make sound decisions and live their decisions in their lives, they can receive the benefits. Will you?

Consumers often trust the experts and their scientific advancements so much that they don't realize that the experts are inventing the science they need to sell their product. The public doesn't notice that the only people who are "shoe experts" are those that sell the product (60).

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is Capell's primary argument? How does Capell qualify (make exceptions to) his argument? Give examples. How do qualifications improve ethos within his essay?
2. Capell addresses the use of paid studies by footwear companies. How does Capell refute these studies? Give one example or quote.
3. In your opinion, are paid studies ethical when used to advertise products? Why? Do stories about barefoot athletes provide ample evidence for arguing against the results of these paid studies?
4. What rhetorical elements did Capell use to make this essay effectively persuasive? Give examples from his essay.
5. Capell believes children and adults should avoid wearing shoes except when necessary. After reading this essay, do you believe such a goal is attainable? Give examples from the essay that strengthen or weaken his argument.



TELL CONGRESS WHAT PUBLIC LANDS MEAN TO YOU!

Chili Fueled Letter Writing

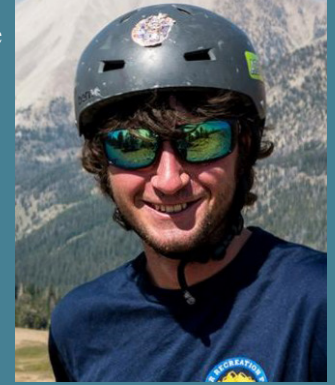
7:00 - 8:30 PM
Thursday, April 27
NR Atrium

Join us for an evening of chili, open discussion on the issues currently facing public lands, and writing letters to our representatives to let them know how we feel about our public lands

Questions?
Contact Nick Benoit

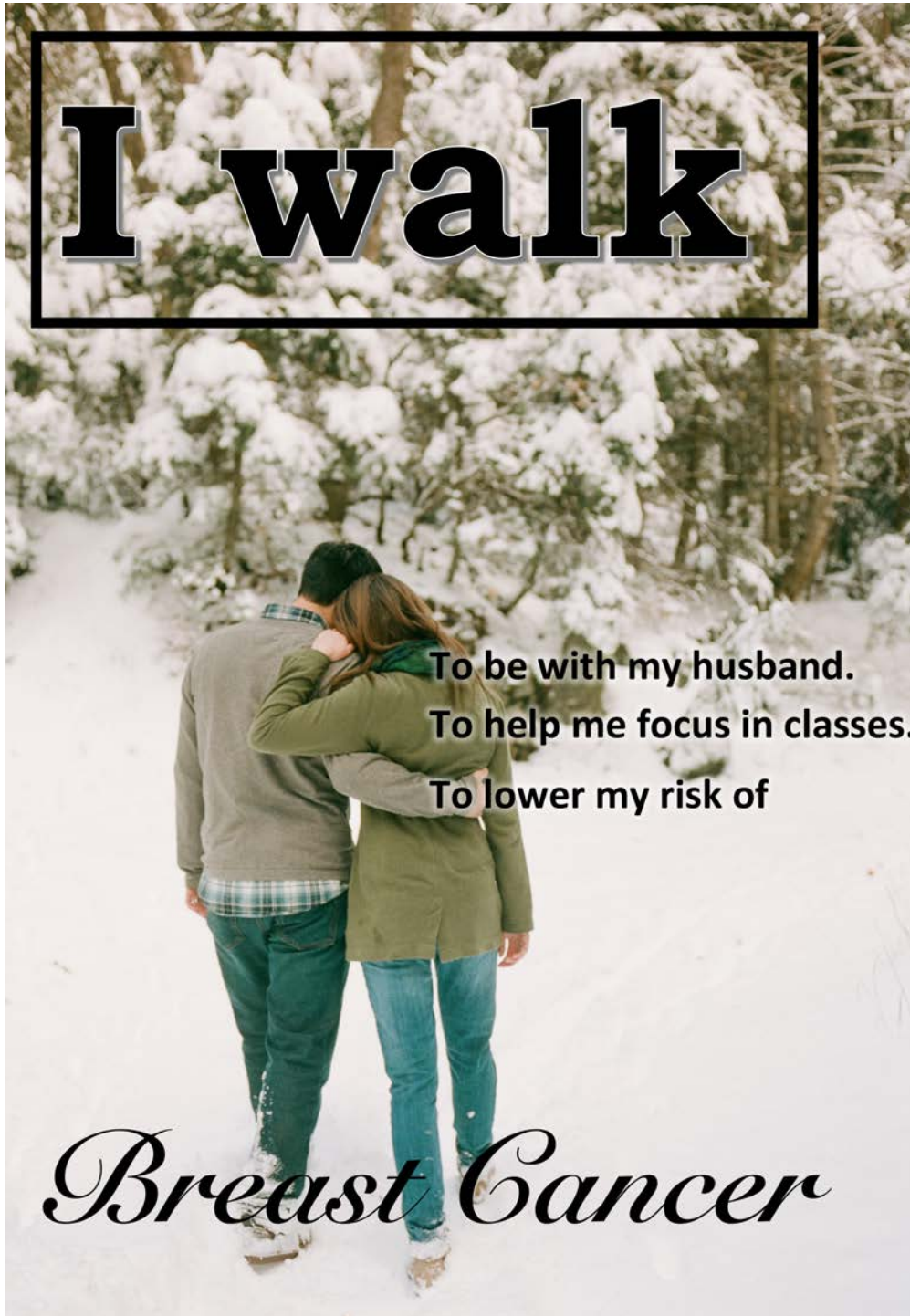
NICK BENOIT

Nick Benoit is a Junior at Utah State University in the Computer Science department. In addition to spending time reading math textbooks, Benoit is also the proud caretaker of a thriving sourdough start, and likes to divide his time evenly between writing code in a dark, cave-like lair and enjoying being out in the hills.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What message is the author trying to convey? Does the color effectively enhance the message? Why or why not?
2. How do the the different text fonts/sizes work visually in their placement on the flyer? How might the design of this text help or hinder the message?
3. How does having a group forum and a letter writing campaign enhance the argument?
4. What effect does the base image have on the argument? What does the image implicitly communicate?



KATE SCOTT

Kate Scott was born and raised in Sandy, Utah, and is the youngest of four children. In the past few years she served an LDS mission in Hong Kong, got married, and recently transferred to Utah State from BYU. Scott is studying communication disorders at USU and plans to attend graduate school and become a speech language pathologist. She was inspired to create this work in English 2010 after her mother passed away from breast cancer. She is motivated to inspire other women, young and old, to find a reason why “they walk” to take care of their bodies.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How effective is this poster at persuading readers to walk? Why or why not?
2. This author uses very clear reasons to support her argument, but does not include any evidence to support those reasons. Does this weaken her argument, or do you trust that her unstated evidence is valid?
3. How well do the three text blocks work visually in their placement on the page? What’s your view of her use of three different fonts? How might the design of this text help or hinder her argument?
4. Why do you think the author chose to use this one single image rather than multiple, smaller images? Do you think this choice has the desired effect for readers?



BE(A)WARE

What means the most to you?

Photos by Eric Pickersgill
Poster Design by Marc Carson

JB ENGLER

JB Engler, 23, is a proud and tenacious husband and father. He lives with his family in Logan while pursuing a degree in Communications Studies. His wife, Elsee, is the light of his life and he prefers to spend his time in her company above anything else. His two month old son is the apple of his eye and he takes great joy in being a parent.

Poster was made in collaboration with Eric Pickersgill, creator of the “Removed” photography series. ©EricPickersgill / www.removed.social



1. What effect does this poster being in black and white have for readers? To what degree does this help convey the argument?
2. Why might the author have chosen to use three photos instead of one, and what's your view of this decision?
3. How effective is the BE(A)WARE moniker? How well does its dual meaning come through?
4. What do you make of the background behind the three photos? Why might the author have decided to use this background rather than a solid color or other photo?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

KEY ELEMENTS OF VISUAL DESIGN

LAYOUT

A design's layout is central to how people feel about the design, and how well it communicates the central idea. There are few rules about how to design layout, but generally, writers want to consider how the eye of readers move through the elements of design—images, graphics, text, shapes, lines, white space, and so on.

IMAGES

Images are an extremely efficient and powerful way to communicate a message but are risky because readers are often left to interpret the images themselves. With that, it is important to choose visuals carefully.

It is also crucial to avoid copyright violations. In most cases, images should not be used without permission of the image creator. Many creators have generously made their images available for use in collections like creativecommons.org, a great resource for student projects.

FONTS

The effect of fonts is generally underestimated. The fonts—including the style, size, kerning (spacing of letters), and line spacing—that are used can further affect the impact of the text by emphasizing or deemphasizing certain textual elements.

TEXT

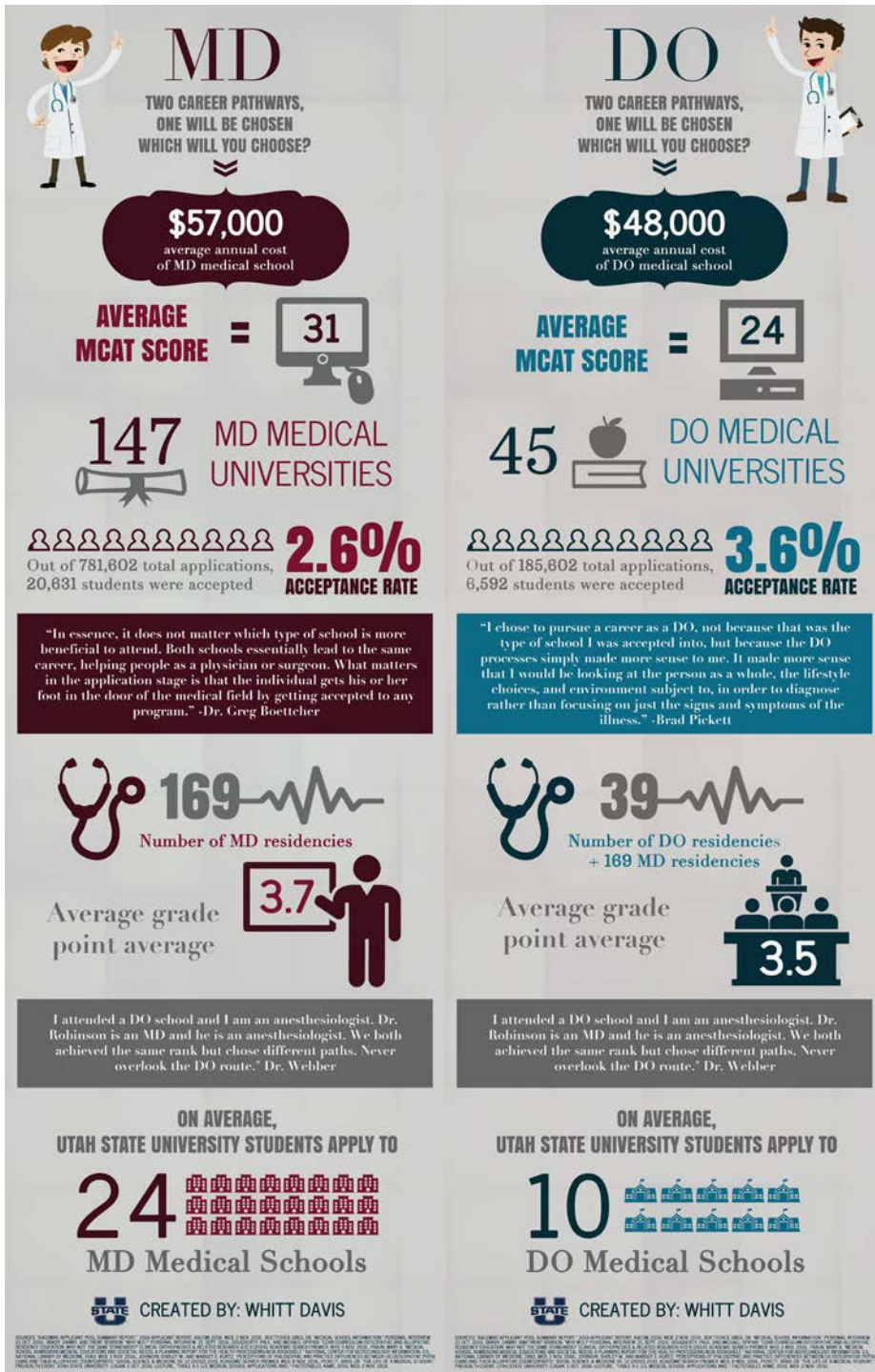
Just because it's visual design doesn't mean words take a back seat. In fact, because fewer words are generally used, the words that are used often carry even more weight and must be chosen with great care. Multiple drafts and revision based on reader feedback are especially helpful in refining the words used to convey the writer's message.

COLOR

Just as we generally expect text to be black, we expect visual design to use color. Color can be subtle or eye-catching, warm or cold, playful or buttoned-down. Color and how it's incorporated into the design plays a major role in how appealing a visual is and how well the ideas are communicated.

STYLE

Much of visual design is intangible, and it's hard to sense the full effect of a design until it's complete. It can be frustrating to not have an exact formula, but it also means writers have the ability to shape their message in unexpected ways. It's important to consider all the elements as a whole and to determine if their cumulative effect is what the writer intends.



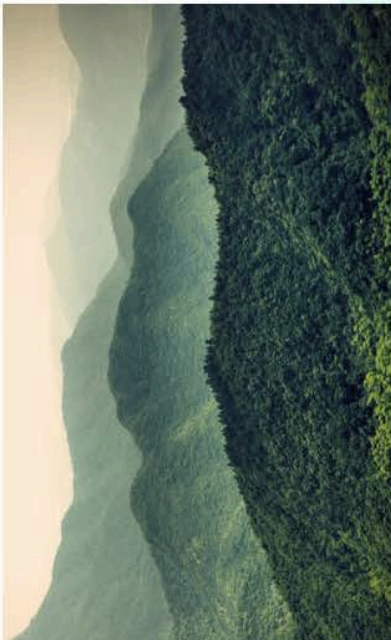
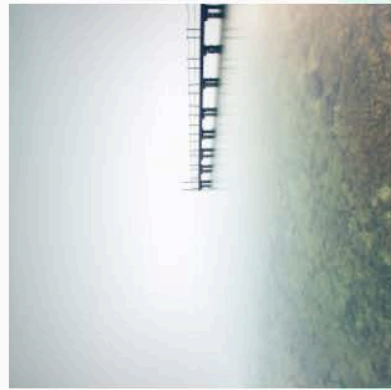
WHITT DAVIS



Whitt was raised in the small town of Declo Idaho, where the main source of labor and income is agriculture. This is where he graduated in a class of sixty and eventually became an Aggie. Davis is a senior at USU. He is majoring in health education and promotion with aspirations of becoming a surgeon. He will be applying to medical schools the end of May 2018. He has thoroughly enjoyed all that USU has offered him and all the great experiences he was presented with along the way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's your first reaction to seeing this poster? How immediately clear is it to you that this is a comparison of paths for medical students? Why was that clear or not clear to you?
2. This poster uses infographic techniques. Would you consider this a full-blown infographic? Why or why not? To what degree do the graphic elements help convey the information?
3. Some might argue that the poster appears to be informational in purpose. Others might say there's an implicit argument at work. Where do you stand and why?
4. What's your view of the use of text and fonts here? What text works well? What do you make of the text that is smaller and less readable? What would you do similarly or differently on a poster of your own?



**"There is more to life
than increasing its
speed."**

-Mahatma Gandhi

MADDISON GARDNER

Maddison, or Maddie, Gardner is a sophomore at Utah State University. She loves her Aggies almost as much as she loves her Aggie Ice Cream. Gardner enjoys spending time with friends and family, playing the piano, and jamming to her many playlists. She is incredibly grateful to attend USU and will always be a part of our Aggie Family.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What similarities or differences do you find between the three images in the poster? How effective are the images at portraying the poster's message?
2. Who do you think is the audience for this poster? How did you arrive at that conclusion?
3. The color palette was deliberately chosen by this author after a study on the effect of color. What effect do you believe the author was aiming for based on the colors used?
4. Why do you think the author chose to balance the use of visuals and text as she did? What effect does that have? How well does it suit her message?

BANNING CELL PHONES?



Do you think that after reading this you will try and regulate how often you use your cell phone? When you keep track of how many times you check your phone in a day it's a little scary realizing how often we check them throughout the day.



Since cell phones have had such a large impact on the up and coming generation companies and schools are now having to regulate when and where you can use your cell phone to help get a handle on the distraction they are starting to become. I believe that this is something companies and schools shouldn't have to do because students and employees should know when to use their cell phone and not have it get in the way of their job or their learning. I do understand that we have become immune and totally oblivious at how addicted we are but there has to be a filter on when we know we can use them and where we can use them without them getting in the way of our learning or job and when to turn them off and interact with other people instead of using our cell phones to avoid making eye contact with someone or using it to escape an awkward situation. Believe me, I am guilty of both of those but after researching this topic, I am finding myself regulating my cell phone use and not listening to music when I go to class like I have in the past so I can interact with people and say "good morning" to them in passing. I am not using it to avoid eye contact with someone, escape awkward situations and I am also trying not to use it in class. I know this sounds absolutely outrageous but believe me, when you start noticing how many times you use it in a day, it's a little scary. If we all can start filtering when we use our cell phones and start socially interacting with people more, our campus would change tremendously.

CARSEN VAUGHN
Utah State University
English 2010



What is your perspective on banning cell phones in the work environment? My parents have their own construction business and they are already implementing this because they have become such a large distraction.

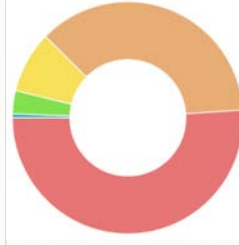


BANNING CELLPHONES?

Would you be against having your cellphone banned while you were at school or work? Many companies are starting to ban cellphones because they are finding their employees are focusing on what is on their phones rather than focusing on work. Schools are also looking at banning cellphones in the classrooms because kids are spending too much time on them.

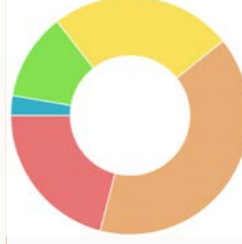
I OFTEN USE MY PHONE LONGER THAN I HAD INTENDED:

We asked this question and were astonished at how many people admitted to them using their cellphone longer than they had initially intended to use it. The red represents students that strongly agree with the question. The orange represents students that agree with the statement.



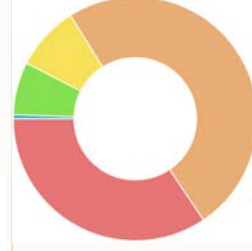
I BECOME DISTRACTED WHEN I FEEL MY PHONE VIBRATE WHILE IN CLASS:

We asked this question because us being students we all know that when our phone vibrates in class our first instinct is to pull it out of our pocket and respond to the notification. We are all used to doing so and we don't realize how distracted we become and shortly after we engage with the notification we zone out in class.



I CHECK FACEBOOK, SNAPCHAT OR INSTAGRAM WHILE DOING HOMEWORK:

My group found it astonishing when we saw the results of this question because these three apps are very popular but I guess we thought students would be more responsible while doing homework and would put their phone away. Instead students admitted to checking one of the three apps if not all three while doing homework.



In today's society we have become so attached to our smartphones. As a college student, I find myself in the same situation pulling my phone from my pocket and using it to avoid eye contact with someone. Cellphones negatively effect work performance by distracting you from your work responsibilities. Smartphones are starting to effect our health, how we socialize and are also hindering work performance. Our cellphones have become more of a distraction rather than a tool we can all use responsibly. In my English 2010 class our class was decided into groups and within those groups we had to choose an issue in today's society. We made a survey and asked a few questions relating to cellphones use in a few different environments. These are the results.



CARSEN VAUGHN

Carsen Vaughn is interested in majoring in Business Administration. He is from Phoenix, Arizona and is a junior. He loves sports and working. Vaughn enjoys writing research papers to gain more knowledge about current issues in the world. He was inspired to write this piece of work because of the current impact cellphone usage has on people in the work place.



In her teenage years, Hamilton felt depressed and alone. Her mother mentioned that there were elderly people who felt the same way, so she started volunteering at local retirement centers and found that she felt less lonely. Because of her volunteer work, she began researching social disconnect and came to find that it affected both youth and senior generations. This led her to start a local intergenerational program called “UtahYOUth Connect”. This program has helped many youth connect with seniors, allowing them to ease their feelings of depression and loneliness. Hamilton hopes that by incorporating intergenerational programs into schools and society, these two generations will each be changed for the better.

BACKGROUND

EMILEE HAMILTON



Emilee Hamilton has always had a great love for both the younger and older generations and has worked tirelessly to bring the two together through her program “Utah YOUth Connect”. Hamilton has won numerous local and national awards for her humanitarian work and hopes one day to spread her program to a national level. Her hobbies include rock climbing, boating, skiing, playing the flute, tennis, and spending

time with family and friends. Hamilton is currently serving a Spanish speaking LDS mission in Louisville, Kentucky. Upon her return, she will continue pursuing degrees in pre-medicine and gerontology at USU.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might this author have chosen a pamphlet rather than some other genre for his argument? How might the genre help or hinder his argument reaching his audience?
2. How well did the author balance the use of visuals and text? Would you have used a similar balance, or done it differently?
3. How do you like the ring graphs? Why do you think he chose not to use a legend or key? Do you like the minimalism or not?
4. How important is the role of color in this pamphlet? Would it have the same effect in black and white?

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS:

A Call for Increased Interaction Between the Young and Old

Emilee Hamilton

Introduction

Picture a cute old lady with permed white hair sitting in a wheel chair: this is Margaret. Margaret is an 82-year-old widow living in a retirement center. Her family lives far away, and she doesn't get visitors often; she finds herself very lonely. Now picture a petite teenage girl with long blonde hair and blue eyes: this is Madison. Madison is a 17-year-old whose father recently died from an unexpected heart attack, and she is having a hard time with it. She finds she often feels lonely and empty inside. However,



Fig. 1. YOUth Connect volunteer at work

Madison and Margaret decided to join an intergenerational program I created in 2011 called Utah YOUth Connect. They now spend time together through fun monthly activities and have found that they are no longer lonely. While Madison and Margaret's enormous age gap makes them unlikely friends, their common desire for connection bridges their differences.

Loneliness, or social disconnect, like Margaret and Madison experienced, is far more than an emotional problem. Researchers found social disconnect threatens mortality more than obesity and physical inactivity. The study also revealed the combination of social isolation and loneliness is as dangerous to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and being an alcoholic (Holt-Lundstad, et. al). So, how can we help slow the debilitation of millions of isolated seniors like Margaret who live in America's nursing and assisted living homes? I believe there is a feasible, effective way to improve the quality of life for these isolated residents by integrating them with school-aged youth like Madison in fun activities to benefit both parties. By bridging this generational gap, such integration will ease the social disconnection of both groups and provide a plethora of benefits through increased education and overall health.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as of 2014, 1.4 million elderly residents lived in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or retirement homes (83).

The Problem

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as of 2014, 1.4 million elderly residents lived in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or retirement homes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Astonishingly, a full 85%

of these residents report never having visitors (Williams). Although the facility directors and workers doubtlessly try their best to help ease a resident's loneliness, nothing can substitute for having someone, who isn't paid to do so, show they care. Researchers say these seniors' social disconnection puts them at greater risk for cognitive decline (James et al.); this risk increases their chance of developing clinical dementia by 64% (Holwerda et al.). Additionally, studies show loneliness doubles the chance of sickness or death in seniors, increasing the likeliness of colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and depression (Power, et al.). Social disconnect is more than an emotional problem, and it affects more than the elderly.

Youth also suffer from loneliness in greater numbers than before. Tim Smith, BYU researcher and co- author of a recent study on the effects of loneliness, said the association between loneliness and risk for mortality is actually greater among younger populations than it is for older people. He went on to say, "Although older people are more likely to be lonely and face a higher mortality risk, loneliness and social isolation better predict premature death among [younger populations]" (Hadfield). This social isolation is real and affects more than a quarter of Americans (McPherson, et al.).

However, premature death isn't the only problem facing lonely, disconnected youth. This loneliness and social disconnect may well be the root, if not a contributor of many youth problems today. Scholar Vicki Rosebrook conducted a study and discusses how these feelings of disconnect have arisen. She claims that America has become separated by age in the last 40 years and argues that we no longer interact with

those of different ages. Traditional family tasks that once brought generations together, such as caring for the elderly or raising kids, are now hired out, leaving our society feeling disconnected, empty, and meaningless. This loneliness and social disconnect contributes to many youth problems today including alcoholism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, youth suicide, and violence. We could prevent or lessen these risks if we treat our generational disconnect as the root of these problems (Rosebrook, Shared Sites), but not treating this disconnect has a price. According to Measure of America, youth disconnection and the problems that come with it have an “astonishingly high cost to taxpayers: \$26.8 billion in 2013 alone” (Disconnected Youth).

Instead of treating these interpersonal problems, we employ a superficial means of connection, such as social media, to fill the void. The use of social media has increased for all ages in the past ten years but has especially shot up for youth. Since 2005, the rate of social media use among youth has increased from 12% to almost 90% (Perrin). Although social media helps us to connect with others and temporarily feel less lonely, it is not a permanent solution. Youth spend an average of 7.5 hours on their phones in the form of entertainment every day (Azzam). While youth are using these devices, they feel great! As soon as they stop, the hollow void within them returns and the need for deep, meaningful connection remains unfilled. This disconnect can be filled only by meaningful interactions with others in person by returning to the art of talking to others in person, and physically being present in their lives. However, most adults today are busy working hard. They cannot fill that void for their children, but one group can: the elderly. One of the best ways to fulfill our need for deep social connection, the root of most social problems we face today, is intergenerational interaction.

Intergenerational interactions are defined as, “the purposeful bringing together of different generations [through] ongoing mutually beneficial interactions...” (Rosebrook). Intergenerational programs bring the youth, defined as the ages between 3 and 25, and elderly, ages 65 and up, together to help narrow the generational gap and build the community.

My Story

In 8th grade I was numbered among many of the disconnected and lonely youth in America. I didn't have any friends. I was depressed and lonely, and my self-esteem was very low. However, this experience taught me a lot of empathy for those who were lonely, so that when my mom came to me and told me that there were people in retirement centers that felt the same way, I knew I could make a difference. I started volunteering at local retirement centers and was amazed at how happy the seniors were to have me and how much they looked forward to our visits. As I interacted with my “grandfriends,” I not only eased *their* feelings of isolation and loneliness, but I found I was no longer lonely or depressed, and my self-esteem soared. I learned through making a positive difference in someone else's life, I could make a difference in my own. By experiencing firsthand the positive effects of intergenerational interactions, I developed an overwhelming desire to help other lonely youth make a difference in the lives of these elderly residents who felt so alone.

This led me to begin researching social disconnect and find a way to lessen this devastating loneliness felt by both generations. I discovered bridging the gap between both groups through on-going, fun, intergenerational activities would ease many health issues, and those involved would gain a hands-on education that couldn't be taught in a classroom.

Benefits of Intergenerational Interactions

Intergenerational communities are essential for overall physical well-being of the elderly. The elderly living in intergenerational communities, where they contributed and were also helped, self-reported “feeling better, improved health, and generally more positive outlooks on life” (Power, et al.). Power went on to say, “social connectedness and community involvement are two of the most powerful determinants of our well-being; for older adults, the more they stay connected and involved, the better their overall health” (Power). Power states stress and other negative emotions are directly tied to the overall physical health of the older generation. Connections to other people have a direct effect on their health. “Social interaction appears to help people increase their positive emotions and reduce the intensity and duration of negative emotions, which in turn boosts their ability to fight off disease” (Power).



Fig. 2. Margaret smiling for the camera

Benefits for the youth involved include: increased self-esteem, they learn valuable social skills, feel loved and needed, and come to learn they can make a positive difference by doing something simple for others. Beyond this, youth benefit from decreased loneliness and more overall satisfaction with life. They practice empathy, gaining an increased understanding for other's feelings, and they are less likely to participate in age-based prejudice or "ageism." Children who have positive relationships with older adults in their childhood are found to have reduced depression, increased self-efficacy, better moderation of stress

and psychopathology, and improved psychological well-being; they handle divorces effectively, and get along better with their family. They are also less likely to engage in risky behaviors (Kennison).

By participating in hands-on intergenerational service, youth learn from experiences they can't find in school. They learn life skills through interactions with the elderly such as the ability to express emotion, the ability to work in groups, and manners that "are not only significant for school success, but also assist in life readiness" (Rosebrook Shared Sites). Social-emotional development is also significantly increased for children who participate in intergenerational programs (DeVore). The data of one study indicated that the personal/social skills of preschool children in intergenerational programs were enhanced by 5.84 months compared to children in non-intergenerational programs (Rosebrook Shared Sites). As youth have increased exposure to the elderly, they become less shy, more comfortable around older adults in general, and learn how to be comfortable talking to older people (Devore). According to the Minneapolis-based Search Institute, a nonprofit organization which aims to promote healthy children, youth, and communities, "Children and teens who volunteer just 1 hour a week are 50% less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or engage in harmful behaviors" (Ginsburg).

Another positive educational benefit for both the youth and the elderly is the reduction of ageism, the most common type of prejudice. Ageism, defined as judging someone's character and abilities based on their age, is usually negative. Ageism can be expressed towards both the elderly and the youth. However, studies show that ageism is decreased and combated by positive interactions with the other party (Bousfield). Both the elderly and the youth come to understand and appreciate one another better and release harmful assumptions and stereotypes about the other as they interact.

Utah YOUth Connect

After researching and discovering all of these amazing statistics, I knew I had to do something about it to make these benefits a reality for myself and for my peers. My research helped me find many existing national intergenerational programs such as Generations United, but for me, I wanted a local program that would positively affect all school-aged children and retirement centers in my community. This led me to create an intergenerational program called "Utah YOUth Connect" to link approximately 16,000 students in the Cache County School District, with approximately 640 elderly residents in local retirement and assisted living centers through fun, monthly intergenerational service.

In order to create my own intergenerational program, I visited our ten local retirement and assisted living centers, assessed residents' needs, and listed their wants, contact information, and possible elderly activities on



Fig. 3. YOUth Connect logo, www.utahyouthconnect.org

my website, www.utahyouthconnect.org. Then, I secured a sponsor, Firehouse Pizzeria, to reward volunteers for service by recording their "servies" (service selfies) on the Utah YOUth Connect's Facebook page. Next, I solicited help from church, city, and school leaders through letters and presentations and requested two youth to represent their organization on our Utah YOUth Connect Advisory Board. I then enlisted principals from each school to provide year-round student visitors, letters, and decorations for the 640 instituted residents and

raised \$5,000 from grants and businesses for transportation. Finally, I raised awareness for our seniors' loneliness in our community and encouraged involvement in Utah YOUth Connect to ease social disconnectedness through an extensive advertising campaign; the campaign included YouTube videos, commercials, assemblies in elementary and middle schools, and interviews on ABC Channel 4, Channel 2 News, and Aggie TV.

To date, Utah YOUth Connect volunteers have provided over 20,000 service-hours to their new "grandfriends" in the past five years. But what makes Utah YOUth Connect so powerful is that it brings together our community in a common cause to positively influence residents' health

Utah YOUth Connect...brings together our community in a common cause to positively influence residents' health... while empowering youth to take action, serve with friends, gain a greater education of the stages of life, and boost their self-esteem (88).

by bringing needed attention to the institutionalized seniors, while empowering youth to take action, serve with friends, gain a greater education of the stages of life, and boost their self-esteem.

One of the greatest success stories I experienced through Utah YOUth Connect was that of Maria, an early member to our program. Maria had a rough background. She had started a gang but then had the courage to leave. However, she was still experiencing backlash from them. She joined my program, and when we went to the retirement center for the first time, we saw her change and her age-based prejudice dissipate. When I talked to her after we went, she told me, "I thought the elderly were going to be grumpy old people who threw plates at me when I walked in. Instead they were super happy and loved me for me." They saw beyond her past and helped her realize the good within her, and that she could make a positive difference. They were appreciative of whatever she did no matter how small.

After this experience, Maria went back to her school and started her own Utah YOUth Connect club and got lots of other students involved. She told me one of her friends that she took to the retirement centers for the first time didn't have grandparents that lived close by,

and when she took him to the retirement center, he bonded with this older lady and adopted her as his grandma, and now, either visits or calls her every day. Because of intergenerational service, Maria went from being one of the shyest people I know to being one of the most outgoing. Her grades improved, and she realized that she could make a positive difference in her life and in the lives of others.

Conclusion

Richard L. Evans sums it up best in his religious presentation when he said the following about serving the elderly: "It takes someone beyond mere hired service, beyond institutional care or professional duty, to thaw out the memories of the past and keep them warmly living in the present. We cannot bring them back the morning hours of youth but we can help them live in the warm glow of a sunset made more beautiful by our thoughtfulness and unfeigned love" (Monson). Both the youth and the elderly suffer from loneliness or social disconnection today. However, as we incorporate intergenerational programs into our schools and society, we will not only help the youth and elderly feel loved and needed, but we will also increase their overall health and education. I encourage everyone to get involved in intergenerational interactions of any kind. Like Margaret, Madison, Maria, and countless more, you too may find that just *one hour* can change *two lives* forever.

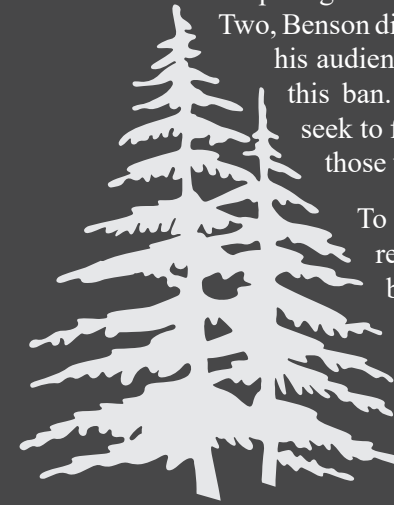
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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Hamilton begins her essay with a description of two lonely people. How does this hook the audience? Is it effective? How could you use this tactic in your own essay?
2. Hamilton uses a lot of sources. Do these sources support her argument? Or do they speak for her? How could they be used more effectively?
3. Discuss the elements of ethos, pathos, and logos in this essay. Does this essay appeal to one of these more than the others? If so, which one and how is it accomplished?
4. Consider Hamilton's use of images throughout her essay. Do you think they are helpful in supporting her argument? Why or why not? Refer to a specific image for reference.
5. If this essay was used as a promotional text for Hamilton's program, would it be effective in receiving more participants? How could this be made into a promotional argument for the program?



President Trump's "travel ban" on Muslims from various countries lay the groundwork for Tanner Benson's essay.

Comparing the ban to the Japanese internment of World War Two, Benson dives into the psychology of perspective to help his audience understand why many Americans support this ban. He argues that progressive liberals should seek to find common ground and understanding with those who support the President's executive action.

To find this common ground, Benson urges readers to seek out their personal implicit biases, like those which broadly categorize conservatives as "racists" and "bigots." In his conclusion, he states, "By fostering an environment of understanding, then and only then can we take a step in the right direction . . . away from hate" (102-103).

BACKGROUND

TANNER BENSON



Tanner Benson is a filmmaker originally from Park City, Utah. He is double majoring in History and English, with a minor in Philosophy. Through these programs, he is learning how to think and how to tell stories that matter and that will provoke change in the world.

GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT: Japanese, Muslims, and Republicans

Tanner Benson

*Those who would give up essential Liberty,
to purchase a little temporary Safety,
deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.*

—Benjamin Franklin

The Internment of Yesterday and of Tomorrow

December 7th, 1941: The Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, bringing an impartial United States into a raging World War. Barely two months later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, which states that to protect against threats and espionage, the military should designate “military areas” from which anyone could be excluded. The result is the internment of over 110,000 humans of Japanese descent, many of them American Citizens just like you and me. The only difference is that instead of immigrating from Europe, their ancestors came from Japan. Many patriots, to this day, say that Roosevelt was within his rights to protect the country from those who had just bombed us. Maybe they are right. What most sane people can admit is that A) something had to be done, and B) in hindsight, the internment was probably not the best way to go about it.

This year, the newly-seated President signed an executive order that forbids immigration from seven majority Muslim countries (which was later reduced to five). As the title says, it was an order for the *Protecting [of] the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States*; it is a statement that sounds eerily similar to Executive Order 9066.

One of the biggest arguments against the new ban was that it would lead to another internment. Does this theory hold water? Could it be possible that history could repeat such a horrendous part of itself? After having had to apologize to an entire race of people, have we not learned our lesson?

In order to plead the case for the possibility of a modern-day internment, we must do two things: first, we must learn how it is that

the first 1942-1945 camps came about, and second, as progressives, we have the responsibility to understand harsh realities of what it means to be prejudiced. Before we liberals go screaming “racist” and “bigot” to those across the aisle, we need to realize that they think that they are just as non-racist as you and I believe ourselves to be. Perception and education are key, and in this case, the key to preventing an Internment today is through implicit biases.

Mindbugs: Optical and Social Illusions

Here is an optical illusion (Fig.1) popularized by psychologist Roger Shepard. The table on the left appears to be long and thin, while the

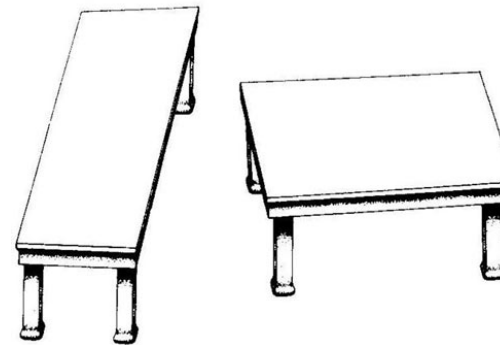


Fig. 1. Roger Shepard optical illusion

table on the right is sitting more flat. However, both tabletops are the same exact size. If you don't believe me, trace the left one on a sheet of paper, and superimpose it over the one on the right (Mind: Blown). Shepard concludes that the reason our perception is skewed is because the human brain is

so adapted to living in a three-dimensional world that it automatically makes us interpret the drawing as such; he calls this *unconscious interference*. In fact, our brain is so comfortable in the three-dimensional world that once we know the tables are different sizes, we still can't see it (*Blindspot 5*). This phenomenon has come to be called a *mindbug*. Another expert in the field of perception, Ted Adelson, nodded to the experiment saying that mindbugs “demonstrate the success rather than the failure of the visual system” (*Blindspot 8*). Mindbugs already inhabit our brain, and, as we see with the tables, they produce errors in how we perceive the world around us. They also affect our ability to reason, remember, and make decisions.

Psychologists Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald are leading the charge in studying how mindbugs affect other (especially social) aspects of our lives. They have written books, given lectures, and developed a widely popular method through which you can test your own social mindbugs, which will be discussed later. To understand how racism relates to optical illusions, we must understand the term

anchoring. Anchoring is how we are able to categorize the world around us; through drawing on previously stored information, we can do so in a split-second. For example, when a white person is asked

to picture a black person, they are not conjuring an image that comes from a vacuum in their skull; rather they are drawing on all of the past information they have stored up there and using that as a starting point. Facial construction and pre-constructed social group biases give us the ability to judge others in a split second, but that

Perception and education are key, and in this case, the key to preventing an Internment today is through implicit biases (95).

does not mean we are judging them accurately (*Blindspot* 15-16). We ask ourselves: are people like him trustworthy, or are people who look like her likely to be peaceful or violent?

Bernard Madoff was a Wall Street god who fell from grace after being arrested in 2008 on fraud charges; he popularized the Ponzi Scheme. He had scammed a lot of Americans out of a lot of money. He targeted all kinds of people, but many of his victims were Jewish investment firms. We can see something very interesting when we examine the Madoff scandal in context of anchoring. These Jewish investment firms saw a young, well-dressed Jewish man walk into their offices with a proposal. Right away, they knew they could agree on at least one thing, for they all shared a common social group. These firms were more likely to trust him based on his identified social group, despite being grounds for which one should not solely be trusted.

Banaji and Greenwald have discovered that tragedies occur from decisions to both inappropriately trust or mistrust, especially when those decisions are made on the basis of group membership. They note that thousands of years ago, it may have been a life-saving decision to stay away from someone who looked differently than you. But as we can see with the Madoff example, the demands placed on us to survive change and sticking with those who are like us may not be the best option all the time.

Analyzing the Japanese Internment

Before I jump to my outcry against liberal hypocrisy, as I call it, let us first understand how all of this applies to the Japanese Internment of WWII. In the late 19th century, the US landed in the midst of one of the biggest surges in nationalism our nation has experienced, especially



Fig.2. A political cartoon from 1899 representing the perceived Chinese attack on Western European colonialism.

on the West Coast in wake of the gold rush. It was a time of prosperity, and jobs were abounding. People had been immigrating to the U.S. to live a fruitful life, take advantage of the American Dream, and advance their class status for the benefit of their posterity. In California, that meant that there was a boom in Asian immigration, especially among the Chinese. What happened when a hard-working Chinese man got a job that a lazy white man was vying for? You probably recognize the phrase, “they’re stealing

our jobs!” In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, prohibiting any immigration from China. The official text of the Act stated that Chinese immigrants “endanger the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof.” By 1924, this had expanded to include (or rather, exclude) *all Asian immigration to the United States*. This all probably sounds familiar too. Anti-Asian propaganda made sure that everyone was on “America’s Side.”

Such was the social setting of our Great Nation at the time of the Pearl Harbor bombing. Let’s just say suspicions and blood ran high. Just like in the Madoff situation, light shines on FDR’s thought process when the idea of mindbugs is applied. Since 1882, the number of Asian immigrants has been severely hindered, thus leaving very few possibilities to interact with anyone of Asian descent. Even deeper,

the majority of Asian immigrants were living on the West coast; few, if any, had made it to D.C. If Roosevelt was not interacting with very many Asians and Asian-Americans in 1941, what *anchors* did he have from which to draw his pre-judgment? Was it not from propaganda such as political cartoons (Fig. 2)? It's no wonder that he had such a mistrust of the Japanese! His mindbugs were hard at work, and his reality was misconstrued. Remember what Banaji and Greenwald said about decisions to either trust or mistrust? The tragedy occurred to Madoff's victims because of a decision to trust based on group identity. The American tragedy occurred due to a decision to mistrust based on the same merits.

Michelle Malkin, in her book *In Defense of Internment*, wrote that during war survival of the nation comes first and civil liberties are *not* more sacrosanct (xiv). While this may be true, the problem lies in the fact that many of the 110,000 victims were citizens of the very nation which Malkin is suggesting we protect. In no way am I defending the horrors committed by America during the Second World War; I am simply providing ground on which critics can understand why they happened. Data-misinterpreting mindbugs caused FDR to overlook some very key information about whose loyalty was truly at risk.

Malkin includes examples of spy transmissions intercepted by the U.S. from Japan which indicated the Japanese were indeed trying to get spies here on American soil. This sounds like it would provide probable cause to look into the loyalty of Japanese here in America, right? Here is a copy of the transmission received that shows mindbugs at their finest (or rather, their worst). Known as the M.A.G.I.C. Cables, these messages, when examined, reveal more about how our country acted than it does about what the Japanese accomplished on our soil. Points (5) and (6) say:

(5) Utilization of U.S. citizens of foreign extraction (*other than Japanese*), aliens (*other than Japanese*), communists, Negroes, labor union members, and anti-Semites, in carrying out the investigations described in the preceding paragraph would undoubtedly bear the best results...

(6) Utilization of our "Second Generations" and our resident nationals. (*In view of the fact that if there is any slip in this phase, our people in the U.S. will be subjected to*

considerable persecution, and the utmost caution must be exercised.) Emphasis added.

No. 119

FROM: Tokyo (Matsuoka) January 30, 1941
TO: Washington (Koshi) # 44.

(In two parts—complete).
(Foreign Office secret).

(1) Establish an intelligence organ in the Embassy which will maintain liaison with private and semi-official intelligence organs (see my message to Washington #591^a and #732^a from New York to Tokyo, both of last year's series).
With regard to this, we are holding discussions with the various circles involved at the present time.

(2) The focal point of our investigations shall be the determination of the total strength of the U.S. Our investigations shall be divided into three general classifications: political, economic, and military, and definite course of action shall be mapped out.

(3) Make a survey of all persons or organizations which either openly or secretly oppose participation in the war.

(4) Make investigations of all anti-Semitism, communism, movements of Negroes, and labor movements.

(5) Utilization of U.S. citizens of foreign extraction (other than Japanese), aliens (other than Japanese), communists, Negroes, labor union members, and anti-Semites, in carrying out the investigations described in the preceding paragraph would undoubtedly bear the best results.
These men, moreover, should have access to governmental establishments, (laboratories?), governmental organizations of various characters, factories, and transportation facilities.

(6) Utilization of our "Second Generations" and our resident nationals. (In view of the fact that if there is any slip in this phase, our people in the U.S. will be subjected to considerable persecution, and the utmost caution must be exercised).

(7) In the event of U.S. participation in the war, our intelligence set-up will be moved to Mexico, making that country the nerve center of our intelligence net. Therefore, will you bear this in mind and in anticipation of such an eventuality, set up facilities for a U.S.-Mexico international intelligence route. This net which will cover Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru will also be centered in Mexico.

(8) We shall cooperate with the German and Italian intelligence organs in the U.S. This phase has been discussed with the Germans and Italians in Tokyo, and it has been approved.
Please get the details from Secretary Terasaki upon his assuming his duties there.
Please send copies to those offices which were on the distribution list of No. 43^a.

Fig. 3. A 1941 M.A.G.I.C. cable transmission intercepted from Japan to the United States.

The Japanese government thought the most effective spies would be Americans who possessed *no* Japanese heritage at all, adding only afterward should second-generation Japanese citizens be used, and then used only with extreme caution, suggesting an *as needed* basis. The Japanese then were to recruit extremist groups that had been marginalized by the United States.

Dissecting Racism and Implicit Biases

The verb “intern” means “to restrict or confine, within prescribed limits, as prisoners of war, enemy aliens...” (Dictionary.com). Roosevelt did not send labor union members and anti-Semites to internment camps even though these groups were on the top of Japan’s list for recruiting spies. Does that make him a racist? Sure, but he was not acting as a racist but as one who truly believed he was doing the right thing. People like the President are whom Banaji and Greenwald refer to in the subtitle of their book, *Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People*. Each one of us strives to align our desired selves with our present actions, but, believe it or not, we all see race. We all put people into categories. Categorical differentiation is a human necessity. Gordon Allport, who wrote one of the first studies on prejudice in America, said that we cannot possibly avoid separating our thinking into categories (*The Nature of Prejudice*). Banaji and Greenwald provide an eye-opening example in how blindly we trust a person wearing a white cloak in a hospital—that we willingly strip naked for them. Our categorical mind tells us that he or she is a doctor. I don’t know about you, but I’m not in the habit of asking to see a degree from every doctor I go to. My brain sees the cloak and gives the green-light.

Each one of us strives to align our desired selves with our present actions, but, believe it or not, we all see race (100).

As a hard-left, Sanders-supporting liberal, I’m sure you’d like to prove to me that you don’t have any preference to any race and that you believe in equality for all. The latter of those statements is likely true, while the first, most likely, is not. Banaji and Greenwald gave us a way to check. It’s called the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT). It provides a scientifically-proven method for which you can learn how your own mindbugs affect how you categorize others around you. Try it if you dare wish to know the truth. Half-Black author Malcolm Gladwell took the IAT and was shocked to learn that he had a moderate preference to Whites over Blacks. His mother is Jamaican and he marveled that “the person in my life who I love more

than almost anyone else is Black, and here I was taking a test which said, frankly, I wasn’t too crazy about black people” (*Blindspot* 57). He says that that moment was creepy, dispiriting and devastating. That’s why I noted to take the test if you dare wish to know the truth. It truly can be heart-breaking to learn that everything you fight for on the streets is contradicted in your subconscious.

That’s where the key lies to preventing our President from repeating Roosevelt’s mistake. We cannot accuse the other side of being racist when we too are racist. What we can do is teach them about how we all share implicit biases so that they know we, too, are struggling for equality in our own minds. This chart shows the results of everyone who has taken the IAT concerning preference to other people over

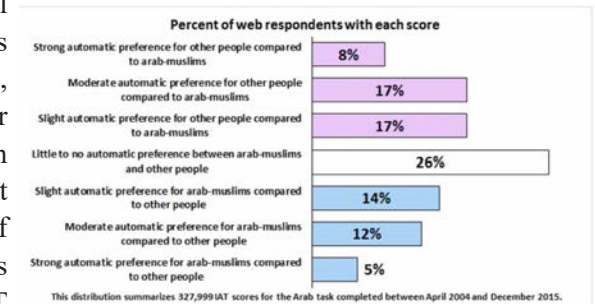


Fig. 4. Summary of scores from the IAT.

Arab-Muslims. As you can see, 26% of people have no preference for either. It appears to be the highest mark, but this is deceiving. 31% of people have slight to strong preferences to Arab-Muslims, while a whopping 42%, nearly half, place Arab-Muslims below others. Like Malcolm Gladwell, how many of those 42% believe whole-heartedly that they are not racist? How many of those 42% are Democrats? If you don’t believe your result, take the test again and again until you see that your score isn’t going to change. Our biases are truly and utterly subconscious.

Countering Racism in Trump’s America

Perhaps one of the more conservative filmmakers and authors of our day is Dinesh D’Souza. In his book, *What’s So Great About America*, he says, “I am constantly surprised by how much I hear racism talked about and how little I actually see it” (D’Souza). Let’s analyze that statement. We see discrimination all around us, every single day. Not just against Blacks or Muslims, but against women, Hispanics, LGBTQ+ members, and so many more groups. How can someone say that racism is not seen? In *Blindspot*, Banaji and Greenwald sum

it up perfectly. It's true, that just like D'Souza, an overwhelming majority of America claims to not be racist in any capacity. We all see ourselves as doing good. However, the psychologists outline the two forms in which racism is still present though unseen. The first form is that there are racists out there who recognize their biases yet hide them from the public. The second form is much more common, and that is the person who tells the public that they are not racist because they do know about their implicit biases. Banaji and Greenwald stress emphatically that "the consequences of the second will prove to far out-weigh the first as that group is a decreasing minority" (186-187). Essentially, more harm will come about through those who do not yet recognize their own biases. Is there any other way to recognize and stop discriminatory behavior in ourselves unless we first uncover our mindbugs?

When we, as liberals, jump to say that the travel ban was signed by a bigot voted into power by racists and sexists and all other kind of -ists, we leave them rolling their eyes, because in those rolling eyes, they are not any of those things! Just as in our eyes, we are not any of those things! The real beginning of the Japanese Internment camps started in 1882 when the U.S. decided to limit our exposure to those who are different than us. In the same vein, our nation took a very frightening step, however small it may seem, in that direction with the Muslim ban.

In Short

Americans in the 1940s had limited-to-no contact with people of Japanese heritage. Due to that fact, the only image that could be conjured was one from the horribly racist propaganda. Today, we face a nation that is severely striking out against the faith of Islam as a whole rather than focusing on the miniscule percentage of radical extremists. When Islam is mentioned, the only images we've seen on the news are mug shots. It is no wonder the faith as a whole gets a bad rap. Islam is not our enemy. Muslims are not hateful and violent. It is a select minority who dominate our skewed perception.

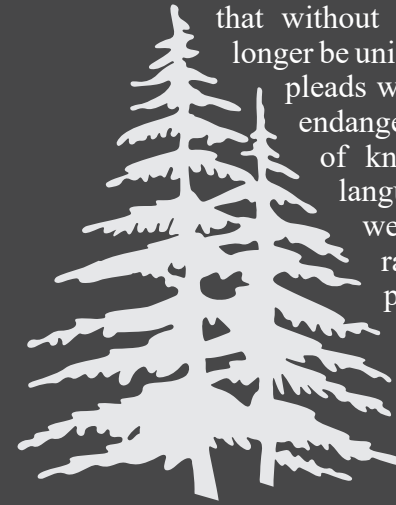
We are on the path to another internment. As progressives, we need to act if we truly want progression. We need to recognize our own implicit biases and let the other side know that we, too, are subconsciously racist. By fostering an environment of understanding,

then and only then can we take a step in the right direction—away from internment and away from hate. We need to lend the same understanding we fight for in the streets. It is time for us, all the "basement dwelling Sanders supporters" and all the "nasty women" to unite together for progression; it is not enough to unite together if we do not cross the aisle with an attitude of understanding with which both sides can vie for change. If we continue to foster hostility by shouting "racist" and "bigot" across the aisle, there will be no one to blame for the next internment except for us.

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1. What argument does Benson make with Roger Shepard's optical illusion? Do you believe Benson strengthens his argument by including this visual aid, and how could he make this argument without including the photo?
2. Benson's argument is not immediately clear to his audience; identify both his audience and his argument.
3. Benson refers to himself as a "Sanders-supporting liberal." How does this allusion affect the audience's understanding of Benson's personal political views?
4. How does Benson's use of personal pronouns (I, you, we) change the tone of his argument?
5. Benson uses ethos (appeal to authority) by citing several notable researchers within his essay. Which source do you believe is used most effectively within his essay? Why?



In her essay "Language Endangerment: Losing the Symbolic Web of Culture," Reid argues about the importance of having different languages. She believes that without different languages, countries will no longer be unique and they will lose their cultures. Reid pleads with her audience to care about language endangerment because there is an "abundance of knowledge and life connected to those languages...by limiting our language use, we actually minimize our ethnic horizons rather than broaden them" (108). She proposes that each person should become multilingual and avoid cultural and lingual superiority in their thoughts and actions, by doing this, the world will be more multicultural, allowing for new ideas.

JANELLE REID



Once upon a time, in a small, hick town of Salt Lake, Janelle Reid was born. In a hospital. Not the side of the road where most accidents happen. This accident happened in a hospital. And then she grew up. Oh no. Here is her essay she wrote last year. You're welcome (it's gotta be the best essay in here cuz Janelle wrote it).

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT: Losing the Symbolic Web of Culture

Janelle Reid

It is incredibly easy to assume one language is superior to another because more people speak it. Even here in America, where we have no official language, we like to force English upon people as the superior language and treat other languages as inferior; which is led by the attitude of “We live in America; speak English.” About a month ago, I overheard part of a phone conversation; the caller looked down in frustration at her phone as she had to dial a number to continue, saying, “I shouldn’t have to press ‘1’ to continue in English. We live in America; you should assume I want English.” We may think it harmless to have such thoughts, or even that we are correct in assuming people should assimilate to the majority language, but it is exactly this kind of thinking that leads to language endangerment, and eventually, extinction.

Of the 6,000 plus languages in the world, about half of them are endangered or becoming extinct (Austin and Sallabank 313; Turin 846). Lisa Evans, writer for *The Guardian*, documented over 2,000 endangered languages and 244 languages that are already extinct (Evans). Of the endangered languages, she placed them into different categories of vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, and critically endangered based on the transmission rate (how quickly the language is shared). She offers this key for understanding the severity of endangerment:

Vulnerable - most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)

Definitely endangered - children no longer learn the language as a «mother tongue» in the home

Severely endangered - language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves

Critically endangered - the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently

Extinct - there are no speakers left (Evans)

Note how nowhere in this “key” does it list a specific number of speakers required to bump it into the next stage. Instead, it deals with whether or not people are learning it and what percentage of the population fits into this category.

Charted below are a few of Evan’s documented languages:

Table 1. Lisa Evans documents endangered languages (Evans).

Name in English	Number of speakers	Degree of Endangerment
<i>Sicilian</i>	5,000,000	<i>Vulnerable</i>
<i>Belarusian</i>	4,000,000	<i>Vulnerable</i>
<i>Lalo</i>	400,000	<i>Vulnerable</i>
<i>Lombard</i>	3,500,000	<i>Definitely Endangered</i>
<i>Kangdi</i>	1,700,000	<i>Definitely Endangered</i>
<i>Moksha</i>	200,000	<i>Definitely Endangered</i>
<i>Languedocian</i>	500,000	<i>Severely Endangered</i>
<i>Nafusi</i>	240,000	<i>Severely Endangered</i>
<i>Maricopa</i>	100	<i>Severely Endangered</i>
<i>Koraga</i>	16,665	<i>Critically Endangered</i>
<i>Pangvali</i>	16,285	<i>Critically Endangered</i>
<i>Xiri</i>	87	<i>Critically Endangered</i>
<i>Aasax</i>	0	<i>Extinct</i>
<i>Rangkas</i>	0	<i>Extinct</i>
<i>Singa</i>	0	<i>Extinct</i>

Because the degree of endangerment deals with transmission rate rather than the number of speakers, you may notice the numbers do

not appear to line up. For instance, among the critically endangered languages, some, such as Koraga, have fewer than 20,000 speakers, while Xiri has just 87 speakers. Some severely endangered languages, such as Maricopa, fall right between these numbers. As younger generations stop learning their culture's language, that language becomes endangered, and eventually, extinct.

So why is this a problem? Why should we care if languages are disappearing? The answer is simple: we should care because of the abundance of knowledge and life connected to those languages. Although having one global language by eliminating others has the promise of unity and free trade of ideas, in reality, by limiting our language use, we actually minimize our ethnic horizons rather than broaden them. The pros of having a diverse language base far outweigh the projected positive outcomes gained by allowing that diversity to be lost. The harmful effects of language extinction include culture loss, forgotten traditions and ideas, lost knowledge, and imposed superiority among the preferred language users. Culture is so intertwined with language that if we lose even one language, we have lost an entire world of culture, ideas, beliefs, and knowledge.

Importance of Language

Language is one way we account for our many cultures. This is because different cultures naturally have different languages, and even if two cultures share a language, their dialects will differ. Physical barriers divide languages; additionally, people create and adapt words into with their way of life. Language guides how we function in society and helps us figure out how we fit into our surrounding society. Every language has multiple words for several singular ideas or concepts to provide clarity.

In English, we only have one word for uncle, whether it is your mother or father's brother or brother-in-law. Further distinction for these kin is not required. However, in the Australian language, Kayardild, a critically endangered language with eight speakers, the uncles on the mother and father's side are known by different names (Evans; Anderson 49). This helps distinguish what roles the corresponding uncles perform. An example of this in the English language is found in the performance of weddings. The maid of honor holds a higher prestige with bigger responsibilities than any of the

bridesmaids. Calling her "the maid of honor" rather than "bridesmaid" helps wedding guests understand her important role. Language discerns the different roles each member plays in society and "without the support of language, the speakers themselves may lose track of distinctions that were once central to their community and its social life" (Anderson 50). Different words for differing statuses with disparate connotations help us know which roles we may or may not perform.

Societal roles are not the only important factor language plays in a community. There are many different ways of thinking, and language guides and allows many different ways of thinking. Cultures have an abundance of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge, not found elsewhere, because they lead different lives, which leads to new discoveries and developments. A culture's background or history impacts thinking a great deal. The foundations of a country, how it was set up, the governmental system, and the evolution of a culture all shape how people see the world, and in turn, guide their thoughts. Different cultures and places, with particular languages and connotations attached to their words, are exposed to varying experiences, and with those, ideas. When we lose languages, "[we're] losing concepts that have been refined over millennia" (Harrison). Years and years of cultural history have passed down through generations, shaping the values of a society, creating various ideas and beliefs throughout the world. Only upon hearing every side of an issue can one truly make an unbiased decision; why would cultural ideas be any different when considering the ways of the world? "Language diversity is an insurance against the extinction of ideas and knowledge" (Harrison). There are many diverse ways of thinking in the world leading to otherwise unimaginable ideas. The Sapir-Whorf thesis is "the idea that people see and understand the world through the cultural lens of language" (Macionis 71). This does not mean everyone in a society thinks the same thoughts; their thoughts are limited by what they know of the world, and their knowledge of the world is limited by *language*. By limiting language, we limit thought—the very thing that sets us apart from animals. When we "view language through the lens of thought," we can better understand other cultures, along with our own (Turin 861). The more languages we allow to coexist with our own, the more diverse our pool of thoughts is. It is only by diversified

language that we can have assorted ideas and knowledge.

Just as losing language causes us to “[lose] concepts that have been refined over millennia,” it also causes us to lose knowledge “refined over millennia” (Harrison). Saving languages has “great potential for increasing our awareness of systems of knowledge and ways of being in the world” (Perley 138). This knowledge is not widely available among the world because “languages convey unique forms of cultural knowledge,” which are not readily available or relevant to other cultures (Turin 849). That does not make such knowledge any less useful, especially for science. One may easily think a culture, unintegrated into the larger world, holds little or no value in the world as a whole, but just the opposite is true. Stephen R. Anderson, a professor of linguistics at Yale, argues that small, traditional cultures have immeasurable value in science.

Languages spoken by small and historically isolated groups may preserve knowledge of the natural world that can be of immense value.... Traditional cultures [have]... a familiarity with the curative and medicinal uses of various local plants and other substances... [many of which] are unknown to science outside the region.... The loss of a traditional language generally entails loss of access to this knowledge base (Anderson 45).

Not only would we lose refined ideas and culture by allowing languages to become extinct, but we would also lose a wide range of knowledge.

If we let languages die in the hopes of creating one universal language, or in the belief that it is not worth the time and energy spent to save languages, we will lose access to worlds of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge. Language is not merely having the ability to talk amongst ourselves and to communicate with our friends and family; “language is the thread that weaves members of a society into the symbolic web we call culture” (Macionis 113). Without language, we lose our heritage, traditions, and culture. Without culture, we lose our identity and place in the world.

Rebuttal: A Unified Language

If we allow languages to become extinct, the hope is that we will have one universal language, and we will live in a utopia where everyone understands everyone. Time spent preserving languages could be spent learning one global language (Casnocha). The

internet may even aid in this, crossing physical barriers and helping everyone learn one language. With the extensive availability of certain languages, it may seem better if we allow one language to take over the world, provide us with one universal language, and the vision of easy communication. However, people will still create and adapt words to fit into their way of life. Over time, there will be several dialects, so different they might as well be different languages (Anderson 23-24). And then, what would we have gained? Nothing, but the loss of knowledge, indefinite cultures, infinite ideas, and beliefs. People will lose their sense of belonging in society, with their societal roles unclear. So why force a dominant language onto another culture under the false belief that it will help?

Conclusion: Diversity Through Language

We should not learn new languages solely to communicate with our friends and family—we already do that. Rather, we should learn

Not only would we lose refined ideas and culture by allowing languages to become extinct, but we would also lose a wide range of knowledge (110).

new languages to broaden our horizons and to communicate with a new culture of people. It is important that upon becoming “grammatically adult” in a language, we do not remain “a cultural child, with no real sense of what

[is] locally relevant, resonant, and meaningful” (Turin 862). Upon learning a language, we should not merely understand the words but understand their meaning and the culture associated with it. This will ensure a culture’s ideas, beliefs, and values do not become extinct.

We can become multilingual, and by doing that, we will become multicultural as well. Languages are not a “zero-sum game” where only one language can survive at the expense of another (Anderson 9). Some people may get stuck in the mindset of “We live in America; speak English,” or “My language is superior to yours; assimilate and forget your heritage.” People may believe the economically advantageous language should be the only existing language in their region, when in truth, many languages can exist in harmony and provide diverse

benefits. Languages and cultures are incommensurable.

Rather than minimizing our horizons by draining the language pool, let us broaden them by embracing new languages and cultures. About half of the world's languages are in danger of extinction (Turin 846). This means half of the world's cultures, ideas, and knowledge also face extinction. We need to take action against this now; once a language is extinct, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to bring it back in its entirety. We may be able to revive the language's words, but not its cultural ties. "Once the language dies, access to everything it embodies dies with it" (Anderson 47). If we do not act now, "future generations will no longer have this choice" (Anderson 47). In order to act against language endangerment, we must first change our attitude regarding the languages targeted for endangerment. "Attitudes to language are of key importance" (Austin and Sallabank 313). The attitude of language superiority or inferiority leads people to stop learning and encourages the discontinuance of a minority language, pushing it into extinction. "Attitude change is essentially a cognitive activity yet is formulated through social activity" (Austin and Sallabank 314). Majority speakers believe "majority rules" and the minority needs to conform. We need to act against the masses who believe they are superior. We must not get stuck in the mindset of "We live in America; speak English," but rather adopt the mindset that "We live in America; embrace your culture and join the melting pot." We must remember that every person matters, every culture matters, and every language matters.

We can help to save languages by not assuming language superiority or inferiority. In assuming language superiority, we assume cultural superiority, saying we are better than they. Do not allow this kind of thinking to aid in the loss of a culture. In a utopian world, it may seem nice to have one language, but this line of thought fails to recognize how the harmful affects of losing languages far outweigh any potential benefits. Once we recognize the benefits of keeping minority languages, that attitude can begin to change and aid

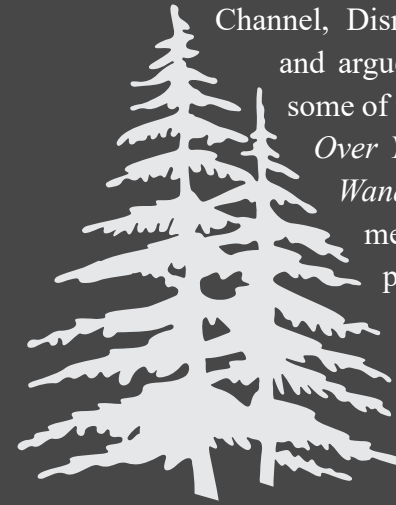
We can become multilingual, and by doing that, we will become multicultural as well (111).

in saving languages, cultures, and ideas. Keeping as many languages alive as possible is beneficial, not just to the speakers of that endangered language, but to the entire web of people that language may touch.

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1. Reid included a section of her essay titled “Rebuttal: A Unified Language.” How does this section apply to the argument as a whole? Is it effective? Why or Why not?
2. Who is Reid’s audience? Does she make them immediately clear? Give examples of instances where you see her focusing the argument to her audience. Are there moments when the focus seems unclear?
3. Does Lisa Evans’s Language Endangerment Chart aid Reid’s argument?
4. Look up one of the languages on Lisa Evans’s chart that you are unfamiliar with. Describe where the language is from and why it might be in danger.
5. Reid explains that languages develop and change over time. What implications does this explanation of language’s development have on Reid’s argument? Does Reid sufficiently address these implications in her proposal? Explain your answer



Festin uses a Proposition Letter written to President Gary Marsh and Senior Vice President Eric Coleman of Disney Channel, Disney Junior, and Disney XD platforms and argues that they should continue producing some of their cartoon shows, particularly *Wander Over Yonder*. Festin believes that shows like *Wander Over Yonder* teach kids uplifting messages, and they should continue to be produced. Through personal experiences and interviews as evidence, Festin encourages Marsh and Coleman to “decide what you, and by extension, Disney will stand for” (121).

BRITTANY FESTIN



Brittany Festin is a sophomore studying mechanical engineering and physics with the goal to one day go to space. She plays violin in the county symphony and is currently serving an LDS mission in Birmingham, Alabama. Festin has a love of cartoons and animation and is a big fan of geek culture, attending and cosplaying at multiple Comic Cons.

TOONING UP TODAY'S TV

Brittany Festin

Dear Mr. Gary Marsh and Mr. Eric Coleman,

First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I promise not to waste your time. Second, thank you for all the hard work you've put into Disney's cartoons, from the ones that are long over to the ones that are currently airing. It does not go unnoticed by the fans.

I'd also like to congratulate you on the quality of the cartoons produced by Disney over the past few years. From the decade long run of *Phineas and Ferb*, and the more recent conclusion of *Gravity Falls* and *Wander Over Yonder*, to the mid-season finale of *Star vs. The Forces of Evil*, these shows have gained quite a following from kids, teens, and adults alike. This aside, these shows won numerous awards: *Phineas and Ferb* won two Primetime Emmy Awards; in the Annie Awards, *Gravity Falls* was nominated for Best Animated TV for Children and won an Outstanding Achievement for Directing in Animated TV; *Wander Over Yonder* won the Annie Award for Best Animated TV for Children; and *Star vs. The Forces of Evil* was nominated for the Annie Award for Best Animated TV amongst others (IMDB).

I, and many others, enjoyed these internationally acclaimed shows from childhood into adulthood, and now that we're older, we wonder, "Why did these shows end?" *Phineas and Ferb*, obviously, had had a good run and it was time to say goodbye. *Gravity Falls* was put to an end at the creator's request. However, what about *Wander Over Yonder*? Created by cartoon legend, Craig McCracken, this show was originally pitched to have three seasons but was cancelled after two. Many fans around the world are confused and saddened by its cancellation and have ignited the Save Wander Over Yonder campaign in response. In this letter I intend to show exactly what made all of these shows so enjoyable to a large demographic, and why a third season for *Wander Over Yonder* should be considered.

Each show was unique in style, story, characters, and worldbuilding. They weren't afraid to step outside the box, and

again, the fans thank you for letting them do so. While these shows are different from one another, they do have some characteristics in common. I conducted a survey that asked viewers what their favorite shows were and what made them "good." The top answers, in order of popularity were, *Gravity Falls*, *Phineas and Ferb*, *Star vs. the Forces of Evil*, and *Wander Over Yonder*. The top three characteristics listed for what made them good were the plot and characters, humor, and style. An honorable mention is they portray values or teach something to the audience. Specifically, *Wander Over Yonder* was mentioned as "the best antidepressant I know of," teaching "a lot about caring for others," and also received acclaim for its refreshing plot and style (Festin).

These shows tend to stand out from others because of their prosocial content. Prosocial can be defined as "relating to behavior that is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship" (Google Search). Honestly, what show does this better than *Wander*? The main character's motto is, "Never hurts to help!" (*The Nice Guy*). Other worthwhile mentions include, "The darkest of times call for the sunniest of smiles," (*The Party Poopers*) and from the recent series finale, "An enemy is just a friend you haven't made yet" (*The End of the Galaxy*). Many shows today lack the uplifting messages so needed in our world. The fact that these shows continue to preach these messages makes them stand out even more, draws people to them, and makes people invest in them.

Many shows today lack the uplifting messages so needed in our world. The fact that these shows continue to preach these messages makes them stand out even more, draws people to them, and makes people invest in them (117).

In a University of Wisconsin study, the Department of Communication Arts determined that "children who watched prosocial content behaved significantly more positively or held significantly more positive attitudes than others" (Mares and Woodard 16-17). When children behaved this way, they had higher self-esteem, did better in school, and had more positive friendships (Padilla-Walker 1). Another study published by the *Journal of Broadcasting and*

Electronic Media researched ways to measure prosocial content and social and emotional learning (SEL) in children's television. The study included factors such as social awareness and other interpersonal skills, decision-making, and emotion. It also discussed different ways these skills are displayed, whether implicitly or explicitly. Not only do the quotes above demonstrate the benefits of prosocial thinking and behavior, but they also highlight the importance of interpersonal SEL skills and implicit and explicit pedagogical techniques like cooperating, helping, modeling, skill-plot integrating, and naming. (Christensen and Myford 3-5).

Mares and Woodard also discovered prosocial content affects older audiences more than younger ones (16); this is great because Disney XD's target age group ranges from young children to teenagers. Many of these kids are ready to move to junior high or high school and will need to utilize prosocial behavior and SEL skills more than ever. In fact, in the survey "The Best and Worst of Cartoons," the average age of the subjects was 19.63 years old (Festin). (This is probably due to survey's medium (online) and how it was shared—primarily through social media). It's also been shown that older kids remember plot-relevant information better than younger kids (Christensen 1). If you take into account the implicit pedagogical technique mentioned in the Christensen study of skill-plot integration, then by combining these three factors (prosocial content and SEL skills, skill-plot integration, and a primary focus on entertainment and story) you have an excellent recipe for a good show with positive effects on audiences of all ages.

Gravity Falls is a prime example of these three factors. Many of the fans are teenagers and young adults, giving them the advantage when it comes to plot-relevant information, and in *Gravity Falls*, there was almost too much information, with the ciphers and foreshadowing. Along with this, viewers received great character interactions that integrated SEL skills to move the plot forward, especially with regards to themes such as trust, handling emotions, and interpersonal relationships. *Wander Over Yonder* did this too. While granted, the plot advanced more in season two, the plot of any particular episode revolved around one of the main characters using an SEL skill or displaying prosocial behavior. This show especially focused on interpersonal skills and relationships, from Sylvia and Wander's friendship to Commander Peepers and Sylvia putting their differences

aside to save their friends. It's also good to note they were often implicitly modelled or explicitly identified. One particular example that comes to mind is from the episode "The Flower." This episode was great because it addressed the fact that, yes, Wander was sad and the situation was pretty bad, but just because he was sad didn't mean he gave up hope—a great message for the world we live in today.

Furthermore, animation is a great medium for sharing these messages. They open up a whole new world of possibilities; from cryptids and aliens to an insane roller coaster, you can accomplish things in animation that you can't in live-action television. They provide an opportunity to take risks, and in the process, leave the door open for improved writing, well-developed plots, witty humor, and superior art. "The strength of the cartoon seems to be in the combination of picture and humor" (Ginman). A study was done in the University of Kentucky on children's memory for televised stories. It found children remember those stories better when they are presented visually (Lorch 1). What better way to do this than through cartoons? It has also been shown that using various production techniques, such as sound effects and physical movement, guide the viewer's attention and comprehension (Lorch 2). These are particularly useful and can be used to their full potential in cartoons. Beyond this, animation appeals to a much larger audience; after all, nearly everyone enjoys an animated Disney movie.

While much academic and research-based evidence exists regarding this matter, personal experiences are just as important, if not more so. I reached out to the "manager" of the Save Wander Over Yonder campaign to get a statement from her. She said:

I was seriously ill, to the point of being bedbound and as a result I became very depressed and suicidal. I had to find ways to pass each day and push my depressing thoughts aside. I saw Wander advertised on Disney XD and checked it out. The first two episodes, The Box and The Hat filled me with such a warm feeling. From my experience with depression, the world actually looks much darker, as if a shadow looms over your vision. The bright colors of the show helped to lift that shadow and the humor made me laugh, from small giggles to outright laughter. WOY offered me an escape into their world filled with kindness, color, creativity and cute, unique and inspirational characters. I became

invested in the lives of the characters as mine was so boring and they gave me a new adventure to follow and something to look forward to with the new episodes.

The lessons they taught really helped me to recover from my depression and challenge my anxiety. I aimed to be more like Wander, talking to people, helping them, leaving the house to go to places. I aimed to be strong like Sylvia and confident like Hater and hardworking like Peepers in order to turn my life around. I also started drawing again as the show's colors and creativity really inspired me. The show got rid of my feelings of hopelessness and gave me hope and the determination and motivation I needed to fight off the depression and cope with my illness (Peepsqueak).

Another fan of the show, Sarah, said she enjoyed the show because:

The animation is gorgeous and so full of life, the writing is funny and clever, and the characters are so easy to love. Wander's attitude is inspiring and watching him get so excited about helping people genuinely motivates me to be a kinder person. I would love for the show to come back. I know the writers had so many plans for where it could go (Sarah).

As for me, my own experiences with these shows have been great. They entertained me, brought me joy, and reminded me to "try a little harder to be a little better" (Hinckley). I made friends through them, and they even inspired me to take up art again! More often than not, I've found episodes of *Gravity Falls* and *Wander Over Yonder* that have directly applied to my life, and they gave me that little boost of inspiration and motivation I needed. Even still, we're not the only ones impacted by these programs. The shows have real-life effects on people, and that's not something one should discredit.

I understand that Disney can't keep producing a show that gets low ratings or doesn't bring in enough revenue, but I also sincerely doubt that Disney doesn't have enough money

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to fund one more season of a show that has so many fans. Consider this: if *Wander Over Yonder* was saved, it would probably cause quite a stir and people would want to check it out and see what the fuss was about. It's also been shown that shows with prosocial content get just as good, if not better, ratings and responses from viewers than shows designed to sell merchandise (Stipp 3). While I'm sure you had reasons for cancelling the show, I pose the question, are they still applicable and aren't there substantial reasons to bring it back and give it a second chance?

If you've made it to this point in the letter, I applaud you. Disney has a history of producing great entertainment, through movies *and* cartoons. I urge you again to consider giving *Wander Over Yonder* a third season to finish it's story and give Craig McCracken and his crew an opportunity to do astounding work. If 38,000 petition signatures and hundreds, if not thousands, of letters and emails won't convince you, then please consider airing reruns so that the fans can prove its worth through ratings. This show still has much potential in its story, prosocial messages, and the joy and silliness it brings to its viewers. It's time to decide what you, and by extension, Disney will stand for. Will you "strive to live up to [Disney's] legacy by continuing to create and share compelling storylines?" (Policies and Approaches 1). Do you really believe dreams come true, it "never hurts to help," and that "enemies are just friends you haven't made yet"? I know that I, and so many others, believe in this, and we hope and pray that you do too.

Thank you for your time. I hope this letter finds you well.

Sincerely,

Brittany Festin

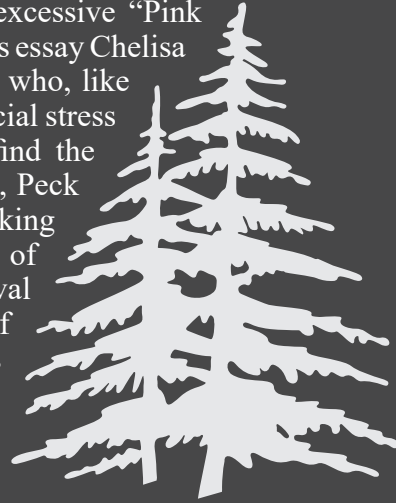
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1. Festin used a letter to write her argument. Why did she make this rhetorical move? What does this do for her argument?
2. Festin's primary audience is clearly stated in the letter format. Who might a secondary audience be? Would this secondary audience successfully be able to enact her proposal?
3. Festin explains that she understands that Disney can't keep a show with low ratings and revenue. How well does she support this claim in her argument? Does she need to provide evidence that explains why the show was cancelled?
4. A good persuasive letter addresses the other side of an argument to help gain a consensus. Does Festin address the other side of her argument? Give examples. Do you think Festin's essay would have been stronger if she did? How could she have made this approach?

BACKGROUND

Many states currently tax tampons as luxury items. In fact, the average woman could pay excessive “Pink Taxes” over the course of her life. In this essay Chelisa Peck finds common ground with men who, like the women in their lives, feel the financial stress of the Pink Tax. While some men find the tampon topic too taboo for discussion, Peck uses various financial statistics and striking political history to argue for the end of this tax. By advocating for the removal of the luxury classification on all of these hygiene products, Peck hopes men around the country will support this cause.



CHELISA PECK



Chelisa Peck is from a large family in Richmond, Utah. She graduated from Sky View High School where she was heavily involved in various extracurricular activities. She is studying Bioveterinary Science and will complete her sophomore year upon her return from serving an LDS mission in Frankfurt, Germany. She loves music and making people happy. Some of her hobbies include singing, dancing, reading, playing with her pets, eating, napping, and going on adventures.

RED IS THE NEW PINK

Chelisa Peck

Listen up boys. I’m bringing up a taboo topic, but it’s necessary for you to know if you’re ever going to come in contact with women. Trust me. Today we’re going to talk about feminine hygiene products, period. Yes, I know it’s uncomfortable to talk about, but it’s uncomfortable to experience; so sit tight! Imagine this: being on a roller coaster ride, so excited your stomach feels a little fluttery, and all that comes with the ride! Sounds great, right? Yeah, that’s not what a period is like, so I’m here to show you how it is more commonly experienced: screaming pain in your abdomen.

You feel like throwing up. You’re stuck, curled up in the fetal position. Any movement hurts you everywhere. You feel as if you’ve been stabbed and nothing could make you more happy than to rip your insides out with your bare hands. You want to scream at your stomach (uterus) that you already know you’re not pregnant, and you didn’t need the reminder. Sometimes you may become upset and even cry without knowing why. There’s embarrassment entwining with worrying constantly over whether or not you are accidentally bleeding through your pants or if you’re getting blood on your seat. Yay, hormones! There are other things I won’t go into detail about for your sake. A week later, it’s over. For now. The next month, you experience all of this, yet again...and again...and again, for upwards of 30-40 years. Sounds like a luxury, right? This is what many women commonly experience as they go through their period.

You know what else is experienced when dealing with a woman’s period? The Pink Tax, also known as the Tampon Tax, is a luxury tax placed on female hygiene products. Let’s take a look at what a luxury tax is. According to the *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, a luxury tax is a

You feel like throwing up. You’re stuck, curled up in the fetal position. Any movement hurts you everywhere (125).

“levy on articles that are not essential to a normal standard of living” (*Columbia* 1). In other words, if something isn’t necessary for living a normal life, it is classified as a luxury. This means that, according to most state governments in the US, the hygiene products helping to alleviate risk of infections, messes in clothing, beds, and anywhere a girl might sit or stand, allowing girls to go to school, receive a full education, and work a full-time job, among many other things, are placed under this luxury title. While they place feminine products in the same category as real estate, jewelry, cars, and other such luxuries, they are not similar. Feminine hygiene products are to help women be able to live a normal standard life at all times, throughout each month and through the years. So far six states have actively rid themselves of the Tampon Tax. Five other states don’t have sales tax, nor a Tampon Tax. The other states are unwilling to recognize the detriment of the Tampon Tax on women, often due to the perceived effects of no longer having a luxurious Tampon Tax.

Even though there are several ways to combat abolishing Tampon Tax and its effects, these other states find it easier to leave it as is and not deal with it, but this isn’t working. Sweeping this tax under the rug has gone on too long and needs to stop. In Utah, there was a woman who tried to push to end the Tampon Tax but an all-male legislative committee shot it down with an 8-3 vote (Golden). The Tampon Tax should not be considered a luxury tax. Keeping clean from periods is not a luxury; it is a necessity and keeps a woman and her surroundings clean and sanitary.

Imagine if *men* were to go to the bathroom and, for several days every month, blood were to constantly run out as well, leading to a high risk of infection. Then, if products were released to combat this and make the experience more sanitary, or even the slightest bit more bearable, it would likely be exempt from tax—despite the potential state revenue. However, since men don’t experience periods, the tax isn’t addressed as it should be. Most men do not want to hear or think about a woman’s period. It is often treated as something shameful, to be kept covered up, and not talked about. Nevertheless, it is a normal biological process women can’t control, but they can use products to maintain hygiene and normal life—for which they are taxed.

You may still consider the products a luxury. Many girls in Africa do, because they do have to constantly miss school or jobs and/or

frequently get pregnant very young. This is also common for girls in the US who experience extreme poverty or homelessness. Here in the US, the lists of preferred donations for homeless shelters include feminine hygiene products because they are expensive and not commonly donated. Due to a lack of donations, the non-profit organization, Distributing Dignity, is dedicated almost entirely to collecting hygiene products for women in homeless shelters. However, they can’t bring in as many products as are needed without help. According to Joanie Balderstone, a founder of Distributing Dignity, “Women want to help other women, especially with something so essential” (Balderstone). In other words, if a woman is able to help another woman, she is very likely to do so. However, she can’t help another woman if expenses keep her from helping herself.

Now let’s take a look at the expense: the tax in Utah is about 6.6%, while a package of 20 tampons averages \$6. If a woman goes through one package per month, that’s 12 packages a year, raising the total tax paid on one product to about \$4.75. If women experience 30 years of periods, each woman will pay around \$142.56; that’s enough to have bought packages to last about two more years. However, some women have certain problems with how often she has her period, how heavy the bleeding is, and for how long. These symptoms happen for various reasons and can be devastating in several aspects, including financially. For me personally, I can bleed for up to three months. I used to be regular but my cycle was thrown completely off when I got extremely stressed two years ago, and it has not righted itself. After bleeding for three straight months, it finally leaves... for about a week and a half, and then comes back. This equates to roughly \$21 in Pink Tax paid per year, for only me, in a house of three other menstruating women. This means just the tax is quite high when added up. I’m not the only woman who experiences such problems; many others are affected by similar problems. In fact, one in ten women do, or there are certain conditions that cause a woman to hardly ever stop bleeding (Office of Women’s Health). At this point the cost is extremely high, though less than a full hysterectomy which comes at higher cost than simply money, such as the recovery of the body and loss of reproductivity. Many would rather not have a hysterectomy in order to not bleed, even with bleeding disorders, and are forced to pay the tax of sanitation. This needs to stop; the expense of the product with the tax is too high.

A few years ago, this topic wasn't discussed much. In fact, between 2015 and 2016 there was three times as much media coverage as there was on this topic in 2010 (Rhodan 7-8). Now that women and men are starting to speak up about the discrimination of this tax, things are starting to be done. As it spreads like fire in the media, efforts to rid states and countries of this tax have shot up. Protests have sparked across the world. In the UK, the most effective protests have been women free bleeding (not using hygiene products in order to show the effects of a period). Unfortunately, that seems to be the only thing that gets their all-male parliament's attention. In Canada, all this government needed was a few online petitions. In France, it took a large protest of men and women for them to lower their Tampon Tax. Australia had several protests and the women were promised that the tax would be removed, but it still has not been removed (Reproductive 174). Various states in the US needed different types of protests to even consider removing it. California had several online protests. New York had a court case levied against it by five women (Butcher 7-8). Both have rid themselves of the tax. Yet the war is not over yet, mainly due to the controversy surrounding abolishing the tax.

There is some controversy as to whether or not the tax should be removed from the equation. Some of that controversy comes from the reality of other necessities also being taxed. Similar disagreements come from other exemptions possibly needing to be made if they remove the tax, which would cause a loss of major revenue that funds society so it can function at its highest capacity.

Often the most common argument is that toilet paper is a necessity, but it is also taxed. A few reasons why this is an invalid complaint include: first, part of the reason that the Tampon Tax is a problem is that it is gendered towards females, due to their menstrual system. Toilet paper on the other hand, is a common item used by both males and females making it fair in taxation as both are taxed equally. Another reason that toilet paper shouldn't be placed in the same category is the fact that it truly is a luxury, albeit one taken for granted in our society. In many other societies, substitutes are used; those may be leaves, other types of paper, or, less commonly, countries such as the Philippines use running water that cleanses a person after using the restroom. This may seem odd or gross to some people who are used to the idea of toilet paper, but those who are introduced to using the

cleansing water instead often come to prefer that to toilet paper. For a period, running water is illogical because sitting on the toilet for about seven days straight or longer is impractical, as is continually rinsing yourself that whole time; so, that method would not work. Sometimes leaves and other such things are used to combat a period but they are ineffective and lead to a higher risk of infection, leaving a woman's life at risk.

Toilet paper isn't the only taxed product complaint from men when faced with talking about the Tampon Tax. Another product they often mention as their form of a taxed "similar necessary item" is condoms. However, condoms are not even in the same category, because although they are used for another biological process, their need of them is completely voluntary. If they are needed, it is because of a choice and controlled by the person, while needing feminine hygiene products does not result from such a choice. If the person didn't make the choice that leads to the use of a condom, then they wouldn't need it. The biological process of a period is not controlled by the woman. That is what makes all the difference and is why these products should be considered a necessity and not taxed while condoms don't fit on that spectrum. Another reason that it is fair to tax condoms is that they aren't only used by men. Also, condoms are made for the woman to use instead of the man. This distributes the tax across both men and women and isn't directed towards one gender. Yet, in some places, such as Australia, condoms aren't taxed while feminine hygiene products are, even though tampons, pads, and sanitary napkins are much more of a necessity than condoms are.

Others worry that if some tax exemptions are made now, then others are also going to need to be made. To begin, there are already exemptions that have been made, most importantly on medications. However, other items placed under necessity but not taxed commonly are foot powders, dandruff shampoo, lip balm, agricultural equipment, newspapers, and the list

This would keep the governments from having to draw a line anywhere—which they say they don't want to do. As shown, though, they have drawn the line, and it's much further on the luxury side than they seem to realize (130).

goes on. If not making exemptions so others wouldn't have to be made was the goal, then legislatures shouldn't have made any exemptions in the first place and then simply lowered taxes per item. This would keep the governments from having to draw a line anywhere—which they say they don't want to do. As shown, though, they *have* drawn the line, and it's much further on the luxury side than they seem to realize. However, they don't want to shield feminine hygiene products from the luxury tax as much as they do newspapers or lip balm: things they could tax while making room for actual necessities.

This brings me to my next point. Another reason legislatures are reluctant to abolish the Tampon Tax is due to it being a major source of state revenue. It is guaranteed income from about 50 percent of the population during many years of their lives. States do not want to lose this money, so they tend to say that if this tax was lifted, they would simply raise taxes on everything else. "But while it appears to cut taxes, it could actually do the opposite," said Billy Hesterman with the Utah Taxpayers Association. "Eliminating the tax might mean lawmakers would raise the overall tax rate" (qtd. in Golden). In other words, the money would need to be made up somewhere. As stated previously, if states were to start taxing items that are considered a necessity at this time but really aren't, then they should be able to lift the Tampon Tax without hurting the state's income.

I have given several ways to combat the effects of dropping the Tampon Tax. To recap, this could include taxing items under necessity that aren't as much of a necessity as feminine hygiene products. This would help in drawing the line as to whether items are considered necessary or not by removing the luxury items from the necessity list and replacing them with an actual necessity so the lawmakers had something legitimate to base their decisions off of. Or what would have been simpler in the first place, but could still be put in place, is to tax everything, have no exemptions, but to lower taxes per item. It would not abolish the Tampon Tax, but it would make it less painful and easier to deal with. This would still give the state its revenue without hurting pocketbooks, especially with these hygiene products.

Women aren't the only ones affected by the Tampon Tax, men often are as well. In families that a man is involved with, even as a child, the family's money goes into these taxes month in and month out for years. For families with several women and girls, more and

more money goes into this tax. Money that could be spent other places, such as food, disappears into the tax on a couple of products.

As has been shown, the Tampon Tax should not be in place and needs to be disposed of due to it harming the ability to keep some women in this country sanitary and living a normal, standard life. When women try to talk about it and work to convince lawmakers to abolish it, they are brushed aside as complaining, and nothing is done about it. But if men band together with women and show the lawmakers how big of an issue it truly is, then something is more likely to be done. You may still be a bit undecided on whether or not you agree, but keep in mind that this affects every woman in your life and their money, that of their families, and others. The problem is not isolated to women. Help in leading lawmakers to listen and help us all. Raise your voice in calling for an end to this tax that we may all be free and unburdened by it.

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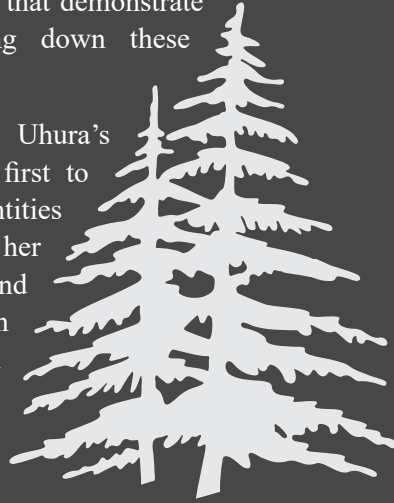
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1. What problems does Peck identify as potentially hindering lawmakers' efforts to abolish the Pink Tax? After reading this essay, do you believe state lawmakers can reasonably implement these changes?
2. Evaluate Peck's use of statistics and mathematics within her essay. As a reader, explain how her use of numbers is effective or ineffective. Does it detract from her primary argument or bolster it? Explain.
3. Peck identifies an audience in the opening lines of the essay. Is this her primary audience? Is identifying a single group an effective rhetorical strategy?
4. Discuss the following: when can an author effectively use passive voice? Where does Peck use it effectively? Ineffectively? Explain.

BACKGROUND

Fiona Van Leeuwen takes on televised stereotypes by setting her phaser to kill. That is, Van Leeuwen dives into major plot points within *Star Trek's* 51-year history that demonstrate the franchise's dedication to breaking down these stereotypes.

From Captain Kirk and Lieutenant Uhura's ground-breaking interracial kiss -- the first to air on television -- to the shifting identities of genderless Borgs, the author takes her audience on an adventure across space and history. However, she focuses less on dueling aliens and more on the inspiration the show provided her, a budding engineer hoping to break through the stereotypes found within her future career.



FIONA VAN LEEUWEN



Fiona Van Leeuwen was born in Rockford, Illinois and moved to Sandy, Utah when she was two-years-old. She is currently studying Chemistry and Aerospace Engineering here at Utah State University. She dreams of becoming an astrophysicist to explore the universe just like her heroes in comics and TV shows. In her spare time, she enjoys playing her flute and saxophone, listening to podcasts and

music, riding her bike way too fast, and, of course, watching *Star Trek*.

BORGs AND BREASTS:

The Evolution of the Women of Star Trek

Fiona Van Leeuwen

Star Trek, the pop culture phenomenon that began with Captain Kirk beating up aliens and getting his shirt ripped, influenced changing ideas about gender roles. While the crew of the Starship Enterprise explored strange new worlds and sought out new life and new civilizations on the final frontier, the *Star Trek* franchise provided a guiding light to a more equal and inclusive world. Through the turbulence of the 1960s to the turn of the century, women have become more prominent in society. Through leadership, sexuality and sexual situations, and real-life impacts, the women of *Star Trek* were inspirations to many—not just as mothers or caretakers, but as leaders and diplomats. Through the evolution of the series and its spin-offs, the visions of women making an impact in society has taken humanity where it hadn't gone before.

The 1960s were a time of turmoil for the United States: a president had just been assassinated, the civil rights movement was in full swing, and the Cold War had heated up into a frantic space race. Social issues—such as a push for greater acceptance of minorities and homosexuals, the sexual revolution, and the rights of women—became prominent at this time. This was a decade of momentous change, especially for women and minorities. Women were beginning to find independence for themselves from society's standards despite limitations. “In the second half of the twentieth century in America, a woman's world was confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children, and home” (Kaszás). But even with these expectations, the recognition that this was not the way of the future was gradually becoming apparent with the changing face of media.

Gene Roddenberry was part of this wave of change in media, coming out with a show about humanity exploring the stars and the mysteries they hold: *Star Trek*. Out in the final frontier it was safe to experiment with new ideas, but the risks the show could take were often limited. For example, the role of Spock, the chief science officer and second in command, was originally supposed to be a woman, but

the creators were told that having a woman in a position of power was unbelievable. In the end, *Star Trek: The Original Series* “ultimately reflected the values of the larger culture,” and women were given subordinate roles (Wilcox). Even with these challenges, Roddenberry created a diverse, multiethnic crew that showed off a united Earth. This integrated crew worked together, despite their differences, and created an accepting environment. There is a lot of diversity in the crew, but one character seems to really stand out.

Lieutenant Nyota Uhura was a unique character. She was an African American woman working on the bridge of a primarily white male crew. She was the communications officer on the bridge and was visible in almost every episode of the original series. Even her name was impactful; in the language of Swahili it means “Star Freedom.”

Through leadership, sexuality and sexual situations, and real-life impacts, the women of *Star Trek* were inspirations to many--not just as mothers or caretakers, but as leaders and diplomats (135).

Her power was shown by her bravery and intuition. In the episode “Mirror, Mirror,” Scotty, Captain Kirk, Uhura, and Doctor McCoy are all stranded in an alternate universe. To get back to their own universe undetected,

Uhura must get Sulu’s attention away from his control board. Going over and flirting with Sulu might not seem like much, but her charm completely captivates him as she puts herself in an unwanted sexual situation. When he begins grab her waist and get a little too comfortable, she slaps him and later pulls a knife on him. Her ingenuity and bravery helped to get the crew back to their universe.

While this one character does not seem to be the face of a movement, she did influence one. When Nichelle Nichols, the actress who plays Uhura, was thinking of quitting the show, Martin Luther King Jr. told her “You can’t do that! ...Your character is the first nonstereotypical role on television, and is in a position of authority. People who don’t look like us see us for the first time as we should be seen. As equals. Don’t you see? Star Trek has changed the face of television” (Kaszás). After this, Nichelle Nichols decided to continue the role and Uhura

went on to further influence television and the future of American freedom. In the episode “Plato’s Stepchildren,” Uhura and Kirk are forced by aliens to kiss. While she tells Captain Kirk she is afraid, she stays strong and doesn’t get upset. This monumental episode showed the first interracial kiss on television between the fourth in command, Uhura, and the captain, Kirk. This may be written off as an insignificant event, but a huge controversy emerged, and some southern TV stations refused to air the episode (Kaszás). The simple act of two people kissing showed how the world could change.

This is not Uhura’s only contribution to transforming the world as we see it. In the 1960s, the space race with the Russians was extremely competitive. Oddly enough, even with all these challenges, NASA discriminated against women becoming astronauts. Even women like Jerrie Cobb, who was the first woman to successfully pass all the required tests in 1959 to become an astronaut, never made it to space (Kaszás). By the time *Star Trek: The Original Series* was cancelled in 1969, NASA was beginning to change its tune. NASA later recruited Nichelle Nichols to get minorities and women interested in the space program after years of shutting them out. Guion Bluford, the first African American astronaut, Sally Ride, the first American female astronaut, and Mae Jemison, the first African American female astronaut, all attribute part of their inspiration to becoming astronauts to Uhura (Kaszás). Proving that representation matters, Uhura showed people that they could pursue their dreams and escape from stereotypes. From this diversity, the United States became stronger as a society. and Uhura proved to be a guiding star for many.

The Original Series was not the end of *Star Trek* pushing society’s bounds. With the following series, which started in 1987, *The Next Generation*, characters developed into a more diverse crew with unique talents. The show became less violent and more about diplomacy. From the decline of the Cold War, the increased care for the Prime Directive rose in the *Star Trek* universe. Another substantial change occurred from one small alteration; “while the original series mission was to ‘boldly go where no man has gone before,’ the new *Star Trek* is gender neutral: it seeks to go ‘where no one has gone before’” (Wilcox). From that one word change in the opening credits, *Star Trek* became more inclusive and meaningful by using a gender-neutral tone for the exploration of space, which had been a primarily

male domain until then.

In 1993, *Deep Space Nine*, the next chapter in the *Star Trek* saga, was released. The creators and writers of this series took an even darker twist of the issues at the time including war, terrorism, and political corruption. Characters that emerge from these backgrounds begin to take on a unique view, like Kira Nerys, who was a freedom fighter, or a terrorist, depending on the perspective. In a primarily secular society comes a species that is deeply religious, the Bajorians (Oglesbee). Through changing times, the issues changed, too. The year 1995 marked the beginning of another new journey, this time with a unique situation to solve.

Star Trek: Voyager marked an unmatched journey for a crew stranded across the galaxy and making the return journey home. Led by the intrepid Captain Katherine Janeway, the crew encounters unfamiliar problems and species never seen before in the *Star Trek* universe. The show has a profound sense of family and togetherness, with characters that must adapt and grow because of the extreme circumstances. The unique hybridity of the cast makes the story special. This was a new final frontier, even more bizarre and out there than the original. Even with these challenges, the crew has a great leader to help guide them home. Captain Janeway is a scientist, calm in high stress situations. She is a mother and a father figure, feminine as well as a feminist. Most importantly, the captain is a powerful leader and one that makes a lasting impression. This combo of characteristics sparked controversy and caused “scrutiny from fans and critics alike” (Dove-Viebahn). Of course, not everyone felt this way. Fans often write their own stories depicting characters in various situations, whether it be a great battle or a more romantic story. As with any fandom, the fan fiction can range from G-rated to explicit. Oddly enough, it is these explicit encounters that often spark the most interest. *Academically*, of course!

Captain Janeway is often paired up with her first officer, Commander Chakotay. While this doesn't seem important, the way the fan fiction was written about them was vastly different than the other fan fictions (i.e. Kirk and Spock). The women writers behind these fan fictions are important to give credit to. Going out on a limb, these women put forward what they wanted to get out of a relationship and that how they feel about intimacy is just as important as how their

partner feels. The women who typically write these fictions like the pairing because Janeway and Chakotay are an equal couple. Neither of them are passive characters, and both are in assertive leadership roles. The fan fiction is written about emotions and feelings rather than physical action. Some attribute this to the character's androgyny. With this androgyny, Janeway is mostly cast as traditionally male role, being obsessed with her work and out of touch with her emotions, while Chakotay is very spiritual and interested in settling down (Somogyi). This contrast makes the dynamics of the relationships presented unique and unlike other *Star Trek* fan fiction written.

Sexuality and *Star Trek* is not a new combination. Often pushing bounds, the writer wrote scenes that were risky for the times. In *The Next Generation*, Commander Riker falls in love with an asexual alien (“The Outcast”), and Lieutenant Commander Data, an android, gets seduced by Lieutenant Yar (“The Naked Now”). In *Deep Space Nine*, Jadzia Dax, who appears to be a young woman but has a genderless symbiont being within her that has lived through many lifetimes, sees a wife from a previous life and is still in love with her (“Rejoined”). The Doctor, a hologram in *Voyager*, which is essentially a computer program, falls in love with an alien (“Lifesigns”). The snap shots that *Star Trek* provide give a different perspective to love and life. These unique characters seem to push bounds, but what really makes these characters special is that they do not seem to have a problem with their gender or sexuality. They simply are. Some other characters also have these traits but they come off as vastly different than these loveable characters.

Captain Janeway is a scientist, calm in high stress situations. She is a mother and a father figure, feminine as well as a feminist. Most importantly, the captain is a powerful leader and one that makes a lasting impression (138).

The Borg are some of the most infamous villains in the *Star Trek* universe. Half machine, half living being, they as a collective are set on assimilating who they want. With the blur of machine and organisms, these beings are not defined by male and female. When

Seven of Nine, a member of the Borg, had her connection with The Collective severed, her body began to reject the Borg implants she had lived with for so long. Not by choice, Seven of Nine became a human once again. While that was the case, her humanity was almost non-existent. Harry Kim, an Ensign on *Voyager*, took an interest in Seven from the beginning. Honestly, it is almost impossible not to. She is stunning with big breasts complete with a curvaceous body. When Harry invites her to a late-night meeting in the episode “Revulsion” to discuss “an inspiration about the sensors” (Scheck), Seven begins to analyze him, trying to figure out what he really wants. When she finally concludes that it’s sex, she tells him to “take [his] clothes off” (Scheck). Terrified by Seven of Nine’s directness, Ensign Kim backs off. Seven’s lack of understanding makes this episode particularly hilarious. The fact that this Playboy-resembling Borg wants nothing to do with sex shows that it is not outward appearance that matters, but how someone feels about the sexual relations.

A similar character in *Star Trek Enterprise*, a Vulcan named T’Pol, is like Seven in a lot of ways. One significant difference is that T’Pol decides to explore her sexuality with the help of medications. Still with her Vulcan sensibility, in the episode “Harbinger,” the man she approaches for the sexual encounter is unsure, even though it is only logical “that the contrast between her decisiveness and the hesitant stance of the male creates a humorous effect” (Scheck). Through the humor, the idea that women are also safe to explore their sexuality becomes an important theme. *Star Trek* created a safe environment for exploration on all fronts of life, not only for its characters, but for the viewers as well.

The sense of exploration that I have gotten from *Star Trek* has inspired me a lot. When I was in seventh grade, I saw my first episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. In the episode, called “Inner Light,” Captain Picard lives an entire life on a planet in a couple of hours. It was so powerful for me, and from

that one episode, I was hooked. I would get home from school and watch these characters explore the galaxy, doing things that a girl who dreams of becoming an astrophysicist has wanted to do all her life. It helped me bond with people and connect with others I might not normally talk to. For a show about acceptance and diversity, the fans have a surprisingly negative stigma around them. A small group of people who watch the show judge fellow fans based on their gender and race, deciding who the ‘real fans’ are. I have dealt with the people who think this show is stupid, the people that feel like everything is a competition, and that my nerd show couldn’t have had as big of an impact on my life as I claim. They’re wrong of course, and I have decided to take a piece of advice from Uhura and “have learned not to fear words” (Kaszás). This is part of my identity and showed me that pushing bounds and getting out of my comfort zone is part of growing. It has given me my own chance to explore the world, and I am not giving that up for anything.

In the world we live in now, gender seems to be important. For some reason, society thinks we need to fall into boxes, whether conscious of it or not. At our own university, only 14 percent of the College of Engineering is female while the College of Education is 78 percent female (USU). These staggering statics at our own university seem to reflect society’s ideas about gender roles and the need to encourage men to be teachers just as much as women to be engineers. I know there have been a few times when I have felt discouraged for being a female engineering student, but coming from someone whose has a stay-at-home dad who is an artist and a mom who is an engineering manager, I have always been told to break bounds. Representation in the media of both genders breaking stereotypes is needed if we want an accepting and inclusive future. So, perhaps a better title for my paper would be ‘The Evolution of the *People of Star Trek*’ because the beautiful thing about *Star Trek* is that they didn’t care about gender, sexuality, race or even species. They didn’t care what someone looked like, or talked like, or even their spiritual beliefs. They defined us as human; everything else was just a description. This future is a future that we can all aspire to: getting to that final frontier where everyone can boldly go forward, no matter what.

This is part of my identity and showed me that pushing bounds and getting out of my comfort zone is part of growing (141).

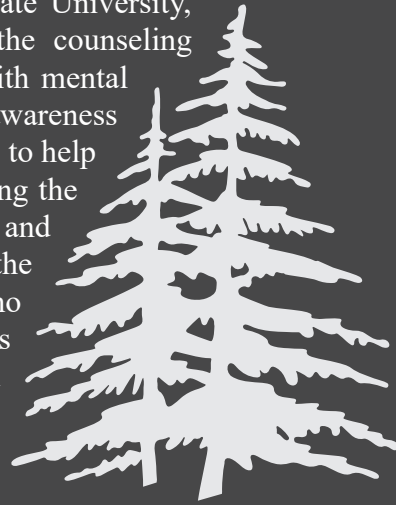
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1. Evaluate Van Leeuwen's title as though you haven't read the essay. As a reader, do you believe it benefits or damages her pro-feminist message? Explain.
2. Near the essay's conclusion, Van Leeuwen offers an alternate title for her essay. Consider the answer you gave in question one; which title do you prefer? Why?
3. After reading Van Leeuwen's conclusion, explain Van Leeuwen's final argument. According to Van Leeuwen, who is affected by gender stereotypes portrayed in the media?
4. Most people who are passionate about a show seek to share it with others. While this is not Van Leeuwen's primary objective, does her essay motivate you to watch *Star Trek*? How does her passion for *Star Trek* benefit her overall argument?
5. Who is Van Leeuwen's primary audience? Secondary audience? Whether or not you personally agree with her argument, does she effectively apply her argument to men and women?

BACKGROUND

Mental Health is often discussed at Utah State University. In her essay “Can We Talk About This, Please? Improving Mental Health at Utah State University,” Ririe discusses the importance of the counseling programs at Utah State in helping with mental illnesses. Ririe argues that more awareness needs to be spread throughout campus to help those students who need the counseling the most. Ririe uses her own experiences and research to back up her argument for the need for more awareness because “no one needs to suffer with mental illness any longer than necessary. Let’s talk about this and make a lasting change for our university” (151).



MEGAN RIRIE



Megan Ririe was born and raised in the Utah Valley, where she graduated in the top 30 of her academically competitive class. She has a full academic scholarship at Utah State University, majoring in Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education and minoring in Sociology and Computer Science. She loves learning about anything and everything, but when she is not busy with school, she also loves singing and dancing and playing the piano and ukulele. She is excited to be a senior, and is looking forward to continuing her education at graduate school, studying speech language pathology.

CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS, PLEASE? Improving Mental Health at Utah State University

Megan Ririe

Accelerated heart rate. Uncontrollable shaking. Intense aches in my shoulders and back. A deep pit forms in my stomach. Breathing becomes incredibly difficult. I literally cannot move. My body goes completely numb. I feel pathetic, helpless, and unable to do anything as my life spins out of control. I can only describe it as pure fear.

These symptoms all describe anxiety disorder, a mental illness that directly affects 18% of the adult population in the United States. Mental illness is defined as a condition that affects a person’s well-being through thoughts, emotions, or mood (“Mental”; “What”). According to authors Jessie M. Quintero Johnson and Julius Riles in their study of mental illness, college-age students display the most vulnerability to mental disorders; “approximately 27% of people between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness” (1). This statistic fits with the data found in a recent survey of Utah State University students. 27.3% of respondents reported they have been diagnosed with a mental illness such as anxiety or depression. Additionally, more than 90% of respondents said they personally know someone with a mental illness (M. Ririe). Let me say this again, more than one in four people at this university directly deal with the effects of having a mental illness, and an overwhelming majority experience the indirect effects by knowing someone with a mental disorder.

With these statistics in mind, one can clearly see that mental illness impacts nearly everyone at Utah State University in one way or another, whether by personally having a disorder or by knowing someone who does. With such an enormous prevalence at this university, mental illness deserves to be discussed more. So, why isn’t it?

Unfortunately, stigmas against mental illness exist, and these stigmas prevent the population from talking about this issue more often. My brothers Devin and Seth, who both have anxiety disorder, have expressed reluctance to talk about their mental illness because they fear their friends will treat them “completely different” or “walk

more carefully around [them] because they are worried about... triggering something.” They even worry their “friends will think of [them] as a burden.” Nicolas Rüsç, Matthias C. Angermeyer, and Patrick W. Corrigan studied the stigma against mental illness and found that “significant benefits, e.g. possibly increased self-esteem and decreased distress of keeping one’s illness a secret, and costs, e.g. social disapproval” exist, and individuals must compare these advantages and disadvantages when they decide to disclose their mental illness (533). In the minds of most people with mental illness, the possibilities of social disapproval far outweigh any benefits.

Even with the stigmas that cause limited discussion about mental health in mind, the university has programs in place to improve the mental health of its students. The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Office in the student center offers individual counseling and group therapy, along with various workshops and outreach programs (Bentley; Utah State University). But one fact remains—even though these programs have the potential to do so much good, students cannot utilize them because they simply do not know they exist. Students at Utah State University must increase their awareness of the programs offered to improve mental health because doing so will get rid of the negative consequences of stigma against mental illness, encourage people with mental illness to seek the help they need, and increase the overall mental health of the university.

When one suffers from a mental illness such as anxiety and depression, they also face the negative consequences that stem from the stigmas associated with the label. The term stigma comes from a historical practice of “literally branding members of castigated groups in order that they carry a visible sign of disgrace” (Hinshaw 23-24). Think of the discriminating claims used against African Americans before the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Because of the stigmas associated with colored skin, others saw African Americans as

More than one in four people at this university directly deal with the effects of having a mental illness, and an overwhelming majority experience the indirect effects by knowing someone with a mental disorder (145).

inferior, even inhuman, which led to white people justifying horrible acts of bias and prejudice. While I do not argue that people with mental illness experience the same stigmas as African Americans, there are instances where people view their peers with mental illness as “less than fully human.” Additionally, those with mental illness are perceived as broken, and research shows that people have more reluctance when interacting with them (Pescosolido 3-9). Therefore, the negative consequences of being part of the mentally ill minority do exist.

Although the mentally ill lack physical markings in society today, they still carry the underlying shame and scorn associated with the label. Consequences of the stigma against those with mental illness include a lack of social support for those who experience mental disorders, as well as feelings of hopelessness on the part of the individual, which can in turn lead to a worsening of symptoms (Hinshaw 179). The stigma associated with mental illness can also have a negative impact on the relationships an individual with mental illness has with others. A study conducted in 1989 by Otto F. Wahl, a University of Hartford psychology professor, and Charles R. Harman, who works with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, shows that the stigma against those with mental illness negatively affects the quality of relationships with family and friends. (On 22).

How can students decrease these negative consequences at Utah State? It starts with talking about mental health issues more openly. Rüsç, et al. studied different ways to reduce the stigma against mental illness and found that “brief educational courses on mental illness have proved to reduce stigmatizing attitudes among a wide variety of participants” (535). Thus, when the students of Utah State University discuss mental health more openly and become educated about the nature of mental illness, the associated stigmas will diminish.

Some research does suggest education about mental illness does not actually decrease the stigma attached to it. Matthias C. Angermeyer argues that multiple studies show even when a population increases its education about mental illness, the stigma associated with it does not go away (146). Other scholars have found that education about the genetic nature of mental illness sometimes leads to “higher levels of stigma” and those with mental illness are seen as “almost a different species” because of the “sense of permanence” associated with the

genetic mark (Pescosolido 11; Rüscher et al. 553).

Even with this evidence that shows how talking about mental health issues can have the opposite impact than desired, the experiences of those with mental illness show that when people talk about mental health, the consequences of stigma dwindle. For example, opening the dialogue about mental health issues can help those with mental illness feel less like a part of the castigated group and more like a part of a community. Lauren, a college student who struggles with depression, says she has become increasingly more open with other people about her mental illness over time. As she talked with more of her peers, she “realized that there were so many of [her] friends who struggled with the same things.” Devin, a college student with anxiety disorder, reiterates this point when he says, “I feel like it helps me to have people to talk to.” By talking about mental illness more freely, those with mental disorders will realize they do not need to suffer alone.

Programs to reduce stigma and the negative consequences associated with it do exist here at Utah State University. Perhaps one of the most successful programs is the Mental Health is No Joke campaign. This week-long anti-stigma initiative celebrated its second year this past March with continuing traditions of keynote speakers, workshops, and a benefit concert, as well as new traditions such as the hope wall and Light the Night. Ty Aller, the co-founder of this event, said the main goal of the initiative focuses on “facilitat[ing] conversations around mental health, so people can feel like they can... actually talk about it and not... need to hide” (qtd. in Howard). Anti-stigma programs such as this show success in reducing stigma. As Nancy C. Andreasen, a renowned neuropsychiatrist, said in her book, *The Broken Brain*, when people receive accurate information about mental illness, they can relate “with greater compassion, understanding, and patience” (8). At Utah State University, anti-stigma programs have the power to educate students about mental illness so the consequences of stigma disappear.

However, anti-stigma programs do tend to reach those who already agree with the message that mental illness is just as serious as physical disease and should be treated as such (Rüscher 535). Therefore, the university must advertise anti-stigma programs more so all students, not just those who already know about these issues, are made aware.

Unless the student body becomes familiar with them, these programs will not have the desired effects of increased understanding of mental illness for the entire university population.

In addition to helping resolve the consequences caused by stigma, increasing awareness of mental health and the programs offered here at USU will encourage people with mental illness to seek the help they need. People cannot use programs they do not know exist. When I struggled with anxiety as a sophomore at Utah State, I only knew to look for mental health programs on campus because my brother, a student at Brigham Young University, received therapy through his school. It honestly took me a while to find the CAPS office because I did not know where to look. Eventually I found the resources offered here, and I received the help I needed.

Other students at this university have expressed a similar lack of knowledge of the programs offered here. One survey respondent, when asked if they had heard about any mental health programs at Utah State, said, “I had no idea this was a resource at USU.” In fact, more than half of the respondents indicated they had never heard about programs to help improve mental health offered through the university (M. Ririe). In order for individuals with mental illness to utilize them, these programs need attention.

As people talk about mental health issues, those with mental illness can strengthen each other. Lauren has found that as she opened up about having depression, she realized many of her friends struggled with the same things. She said, “It made me feel better, not that my friends were suffering as well, but that we both had a common enemy that we could fight together. ... I knew I had someone I could talk to who would understand.” Seth talks openly about his anxiety because as he tells people about his mental illness, they become more comfortable with the idea of having a friend with a mental disorder and can then help him when he goes through a panic attack. Trevor Sean Olsen, last year’s president of Utah

As people talk about mental health issues, those with mental illness can strengthen each other (149).

State University's Student Association, explained the purposes of the Mental Health is No Joke campaign included increasing discussions about mental health. He said they designed the Hope Wall, where students posted the name of someone who helped them through a hard time in life, to "be visually engaging for people to participate in," so students can see "everybody has been through something and that we all have a chance to make a difference in somebody's life" (Howard). These programs show individuals with mental illness that they do not suffer alone, and they can receive support from the community. When students with mental illness are aware of programs like this, they will be able to use these resources and receive the help they need.

Not only will increasing awareness of programs to improve mental health help decrease stigma and encourage people with mental illness to seek help, but it will also improve the mental health of the university as a whole—for both individuals with mental illness and those who have normal mental health. As awareness increases, more people with mental illness will know about and have the opportunity to participate in programs that can improve the management of their mental illness. Through personal experience, I know the programs at USU help people with anxiety and other disorders. When I first experienced panic attacks in college, I wondered how I could ever live with the episodes of paralyzing fear. However, going through individual counseling at USU equipped me with tools and strategies to help me when I have an anxiety attack. I have not experienced a complete cure—I still experience anxiety on a weekly basis - but I have better mental health because I now know how to live with my anxiety.

Charles Bentley, the public relations manager at the USU CAPS office, reports "most people that come [to the USU CAPS office] do get relief from the [mental pathology] that is bothering them." Additionally, an open attitude about having a mental illness becomes a treatment strategy in and of itself. Seth has said "being more open with my anxiety... has been a major thing in getting through panic attacks."

Increasing awareness of programs offered here at USU can also benefit those with no diagnosable mental illness. Many workshops offered teach skills that can help everyone, not just those with a mental disorder. These topics include effective communication and interpersonal skills, mindfulness, stress management and wellness,

and decreasing test anxiety (Utah State University). Programs such as these help eliminate the day-to-day stresses of college life, and everyone at the university can utilize them.

Some argue that increasing awareness of programs offered at USU will not increase participation. While they are justified in making this claim, even some participation transcends none. Currently, many programs at USU are severely underutilized. In the recent survey of USU students, only 5% of respondents said they had participated in programs to improve mental health through the university, although several respondents indicated they would use these programs if they knew more about them (Ririe, M.). Even though not everyone that hears about the programs at USU will actually participate, by increasing awareness of these programs more people will have the knowledge to participate if they so choose. Increased awareness of programs will lead to increased participation, which will thereby lead to increased mental health throughout the university.

Mental illness presents itself as a real problem in society today, and it affects nearly everyone on campus at Utah State University, whether directly or indirectly. As a result of this, USU should prioritize mental health. The only way to resolve these issues is to bring them out in the open. Students at Utah State University need to familiarize themselves with the programs offered here so these programs can be utilized and thereby benefit the community. As awareness increases, the mental health of the university as a whole will improve.

Students at Utah State University can participate in the solution to this problem. As they become more aware of programs to improve mental health, they will have the knowledge they need to receive help for themselves or to direct friends in need to the appropriate resources. After receiving therapy here at Utah State, my muscles relax, and I breathe easily. I feel peace, hope, and in control of my life. I can say I no longer experience the same pure fear.

No one needs to suffer with mental illness longer than necessary. Let's talk about this and make a lasting change for our university.

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1. Ririe uses the personal pronoun (I, you, we, etc.) "we" in her title. What effect does this have on the essay as a whole? How would the tone of the essay be changed if she used a different pronoun such as "someone" or "anybody"?
2. Does Ririe address how the university could increase awareness of mental health and the counseling programs? If yes, where? If no, should she have addressed these concerns?
3. If Ririe were to expand her argument to address other universities throughout the state, what might she change and/or add to her essay to reach these audiences?
4. Ririe explains that society as a whole attaches a stigma to mental illness. Do you agree that Ririe's proposal will help combat this stigma? If you were to expand on Ririe's argument, what might you add to help combat mental health stigmas not just at universities but in other situations as well, like in the work place?

RESOURCES INDEX

As you consider employing different rhetorical tools, here are essays you may consider studying as models. Naturally, you may find favorites that are not listed under every tool they employ, but consider these a starting point as you develop and hone your skills.

Audience Awareness

Borgs and Breasts
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Intergenerational Programs
Red is the New Pink

Conclusion

Can We Talk About This, Please?
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Tooning Up Today's TV

Critical Thinking

Evolution on Demand
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Video Games, Women, and
Computer Science

Diction

Intergenerational Programs
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Perfect Pitch
Tooning Up Today's TV

Evidence

Intergenerational Programs
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Need Shoes? Think Again.
Perfect Pitch

Grammar

Can We Talk About This, Please?
Evolution on Demand
Perfect Pitch

Paragraph Unity & Development

Evolution on Demand
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Perfect Pitch

Parenthetical Citation

Borgs and Breasts
Can We Talk About This, Please?
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Need Shoes? Think Again.

Persuasiveness

Borgs and Breasts
Can We Talk About This, Please?
Evolution on Demand
Guilty Until Proven Innocent

Purpose

Can We Talk About This, Please?
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Intergenerational Programs
Language Endangerment
Red is the New Pink

Rogerial

Can We Talk About This, Please?
Reading Between the Frames
Tooning Up Today's TV

Sentences

Borgs and Breasts
Language Endangerment
Need Shoes? Think Again.
Reading Between the Frames
Red is the New Pink

Source Credibility

Can We Talk About This, Please?
Evolution on Demand
Intergenerational Programs
Need Shoes? Think Again.
Perfect Pitch
Red is the New Pink

Source Information

Evolution on Demand
Intergenerational Programs
Language Endangerment
Perfect Pitch
Reading Between the Frames

Source Integration

Borgs and Breasts
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Red is the New Pink
Video Games, Women, and
Computer Science

Structure

Evolution on Demand
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Red is the New Pink
Tooning Up Today's TV

Thesis Clarity

Evolution on Demand
Intergenerational Programs
Language Endangerment
Tooning Up Today's TV

Thesis Quality

Borgs and Breasts
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Red is the New Pink
Video Games, Women, and
Computer Science

Title & Intro Paragraphs

Borgs and Breasts
Evolution on Demand
My Diet is Better Than Yours
Need Shoes? Think Again.
Perfect Pitch

Transitions

Guilty Until Proven Innocent
Intergenerational Programs
Need Shoes? Think Again.

Works Cited Page

Evolution on Demand
Intergenerational Programs
Need Shoes? Think Again

PRESENT AT THE CONFERENCE BECAUSE

- » Over 1,500 undergraduates have presented since this program began
- » It's great practice to present to an actual audience and to see how well your ideas are received
- » It's a great line-item on your resume for grad school and future employers

HOW TO:

- Watch for the Call for Abstracts midway through the semester and submit a 200 word abstract about your presentation
- If you're invited to present, attend the prep meeting the week before
- Put together an 8 minute presentation about your research
- Come to the conference and present

ATTEND THE CONFERENCE BECAUSE

- » Over 13,000 students have attended this conference since it began
- » It's a great chance to see the kind of work your peers are doing
- » It can help give you new ideas about how to improve your own work

HOW TO:

- Watch for the announcement of the conference date toward the end of the semester
- Choose one of the four conference sessions to attend (9a, 10:30a, 12p, 1:30p)
- Come to the session ready to observe what the presenters are doing, perhaps take notes for yourself
- If you feel so inclined, ask the presenters questions for clarification about their material
- Take what you learned from your observations and make improvements to your own work

Publish in Voices of USU Anthology

PUBLISH IN THE NEXT ANTHOLOGY BECAUSE

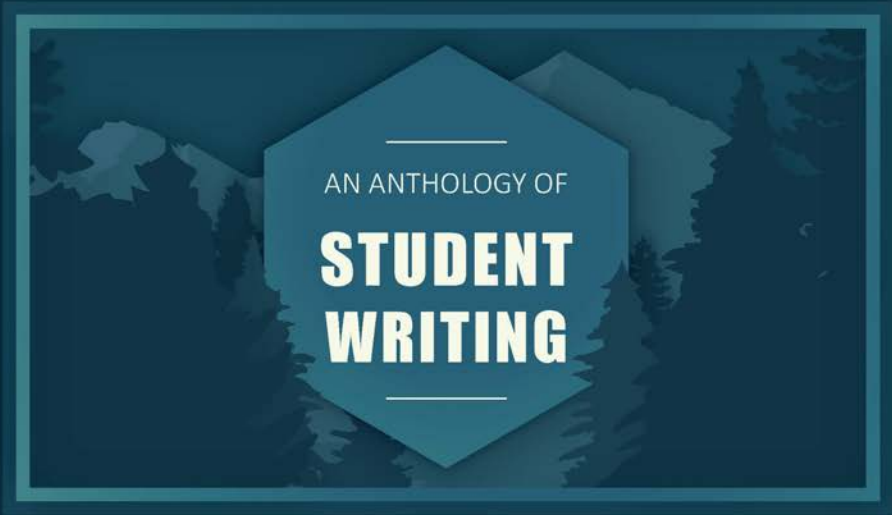
- » Undergraduates almost never have a chance to be published
- » Well over 100 USU students have had their work published in the book
- » It doesn't cost you anything to submit your piece
- » Knowing you're going to submit gives you extra incentive to really do your best work (which can only help your grade, too)
- » It's a great line-item on your resume for grad school and future employers

HOW TO:

- Watch for the call for submissions throughout the semester
- Polish your own work, including reviews from your classmates and your instructor
- Submit your work at our website, english.usu.edu/voicesofusu

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions regarding the Voices of USU program, including any questions about CSC or the anthology, send an email to the director of the program, Rachel Quistberg, rachel.quistberg@usu.edu or to our Voices interns at cscconf.usu@gmail.com



The written and visual rhetoric featured here was chosen from among the best work produced by students enrolled in English 2010. Many of these authors also presented their work at USU's Citizen Scholar Conference.

Voices of USU celebrates excellence in writing by providing undergraduate students of all backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity to have their work published. The writing in this anthology covers a variety of topics and interests, capturing the unique 'voices' of USU.



NONREFUNDABLE | NONRETURNABLE