

Gleanings:
A Journal of First-Year Student Writing



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Gleanings: A Journal of First-Year Student Writing

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All of the work included in this journal was written by students who were enrolled in Siena's First Year Seminar in 2017 - 2018. This required course prepares students for the intellectual rigors of college life and beyond by building critical thinking and communication skills as well as by fostering creativity and advocacy. Throughout this two-semester seminar, students are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss the vast amounts of reading and writing that they do both inside and outside the classroom. Siena College is committed to showcasing the intellectual and engaging work being accomplished on its campus, so *Gleanings* was created as a means of celebrating some of the finest and most provocative first-year student writing completed each year.

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While slight editorial changes have been made to these works-in-progress, they were purposely kept to a minimum. The FYS team deems it important to preserve the authentic voices, the authorial choices, as well as the integrity of the assignments when compiling this journal.

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After an incredibly successful first year at Siena College, rising sophomore, Connor A. Lynskey, unexpectedly passed away in the summer of 2018. It is with immeasurable sorrow and respect that the First Year Seminar team would like to acknowledge this heartbreaking loss and commemorate his short life by dedicating this 8th volume of *Gleanings* to Connor, whose desire to learn was palpable and whose work and presence perpetually "gleaned" of vitality.

The short passage below is from one of Connor's out-of-class-event reflection essays:

"My entire life I have taken for granted that I am privileged in every sense of the word . . . Although I have definitely faced some obstacles in my life, there is no comparison between my struggles and other people's struggles . . . Each and every one of us have faced our own trauma throughout life. Maybe I will not be as blessed tomorrow as I am today. Life is a path that is very unclear and my life could be changed in an instant. So, right now, I am going to focus less on things I want and more on about what I have." (October 2017)

Though Siena mourns the loss of this young member of our community, these powerful words will serve as a living memory of Connor Lynskey, whose intellect, perseverance, compassion, and generosity will forever serve as inspiration to all who are blessed to have known him in the material world.



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After culling the sources, this author developed her own original argument about why it is important for women be in superhero movies and to be their own superhero.

Bam! Crash! Pow the Patriarchy!

By Brianna Blake

Dr. Haas - Women: Their Voices, Their Values, Their Vision

A superhero is a protector. Though they may not be completely pure and virtuous, they are sure to be on the side of good in the end and make the right decisions. It is not the powers they have that make them heroic, but their actions. Superheroes rush to fight evil in order to protect those who cannot fight for themselves. For many years, people have been presented with mainly male superheroes: men in tights and capes, flying around and saving damsels in distress. However, women need to be represented as superheroes, too. Seeing a female superhero is important because it shows not just girls, but women of all ages, that women are strong and powerful. Women do not need a man to come and save them; they can do it themselves. With female representation amongst superheroes, women can see themselves in those heroes, and they can know that within themselves there is a strength. Female superheroes are needed to show girls of all ages that they can be their own hero and fight all of the battles that life puts them through.

The idea of female superheroes may not be extremely popular, but it is definitely not new. Just around the time when superhero stories were gaining a larger audience, a female hero appeared. Wonder Woman, the most famous female hero of all time, was created in the early 1940s by William Moulton Marston. Once Wonder Woman comics began to gain popularity, it was obvious that these stories had an impact on young girls. People of the older generation noticed this and disapproved, fearing that the girls were going against what was the norm and breaking typically female roles. That is why when Marston died and others took over writing for the Wonder Women series, she became more passive, allowing men to save her rather than save herself.¹ They took the positive, strong female hero that Wonder Woman was and who little girls wanted to grow up to be, and turned her into someone they thought little girls should grow up to be like. For a long time, Wonder Woman was not the strong female hero the world knows her to be today. It was during the feminist movement of the 1970s that Wonder Woman turned into the feminist icon she is now.² When Wonder Woman is seen as a powerful hero who defeats villains on her own, proving she is independent and can be her own hero, the women of the world will follow suit.

Representation is important. It shows groups that are seen as inferior that there are strong people similar to them. If a person sees someone who looks like them on screen taking down bad guys and being

¹ Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 188.

² Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 188.

hailed as a hero, then they will start to think that just because they are a woman does not mean they cannot be their own hero. Anna Maitland, journalist for the *Burlington County Times*, explains: “Representation can destroy stereotypes and stigmas towards groups of people while inspiring and empowering. Representation matters.”³ Representation is extremely important for those who do not usually get the chance to see powerful characters who are like them. Life imitates art, and that is especially true in a world where people are so engrossed in the media. Representation in fictitious worlds is important to prove to those who see women are inferior that not only are women people, too, but that women are important and matter. Putting women in the role of heroes on screen will destroy the idea that women need to be saved and that they are weak. Representation helps not just destroy old, untrue stereotypes but shows people they can be more than what they think they are. There are real-life women in this world who are strong and heroic. Women are employed as police officers and members of the military—real life superheroes. However, there are still far fewer women in these fields compared to men. Movies with strong female representation can help prove to all females that they are strong and capable, and they can work in those fields if they wish.

Yet many may still argue that representation on screen has no effect on people. If people believe this is true, they should just ask the young girls and women who have been in the audience for the recent movies in which the lead was a female hero. Within the past few years *Wonder Woman* and brand-new *Star Wars* films with female leads were released. When the *Star Wars* franchise came out in the 1970s, the lead was a man named Luke Skywalker. Throughout the sequels that followed, the story was mainly about Luke and his male relatives and friends. Then in 2015, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was released. Actually, all of the *Star Wars* films that have been released since 2015 feature female leads. These films were *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Rogue One*, and *The Last Jedi*. Though Luke Skywalker was still an important name in the films, they all revolved around a female lead: Jyn Erso in *Rogue One* and Rey in the others. Some may say that Princess Leia could be considered the first female lead of the series, yet while she is an extremely important character, it was the new character, Rey, that allowed for genuine change. Rey is strong: she fights just as the men do and does not allow her gender to get in the way.⁴ Girls of all ages flocked to theaters for these films, and they were massive hits. This film helped to show women that whether they are here on Earth or in a galaxy far, far away, they can be strong and not just fight, but defeat, the battles that life puts them through.

³ Anna Maitland, “Pop Culture Representation Matters a lot More Than You Think,” *Burlington County Times*, February 1, 2018, accessed February 2, 2018, <http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/entertainmentlife/20180124/opinion-pop-culture-representation-matters-lot-more-than-you-might-think>.

⁴ J.J. Abrams, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, directed by J.J. Abrams (2015; San Francisco: LucasFilm, 2015), DVD.

The rise in female lead hero movies is something that is becoming more and more popular. For a long time, it seemed as if the only hero movies that would be created were ones in which men were doing all of the saving. This was because people actually believed that no one would want to pay to see a movie where the female was not just the lead, but the hero. This is not the case at all. In 2017, the top films of the year were about women, and in two of those films, the women were superheroes. The two most popular films of 2017 were *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and *Wonder Woman*, yet these are just two films that are part of this trend. The idea that people would not go see superhero movies in which the leads are women is absurd. These movies are showing, with their box office numbers, that female lead movies make an impact and that more of them should be made.⁵ Many question not just the need for female representation among superheroes, but how one is able to determine whether it is effective or not. They see the *Avengers* films and how more and more female characters keep showing up in each new movie. In *Guardians of the Galaxy*, one of the main heroes was a woman named Gamora. In *Ant-Man* the person to train Scott Lang was a woman, Hope Pym, who later becomes The Wasp. For many years, there were hardly any movies in which the one who saved the day was a female. Therefore, it is not necessarily female characters that are lacking from these movies; it is three dimensional female characters who have main leads and are more than just a pretty face.

Just because a movie contains a female character, does not mean it shows positive female representation. The Bechdel test is a tool used to test the strength of a film's feminine representation and there are just three rules involved. First, the movie has to have at least two female characters. Second, the female characters have to have at least one conversation throughout the course of the movie. Third, that conversation has to be about something other than a man.⁶ Those are just three simple rules and if it passes, then a film is showing gender equality. Unfortunately, many superhero films will not pass the third point where the two female characters need to have a conversation about something other than a man. A film not being able to pass the Bechdel test is ridiculous. Women are human beings, and there should not even be a test that measures how often they are in a film and whether or not they appear because they are an actual character with a good storyline pertaining to the movie or just because their entire life depends on the love of the main character.

Wonder Woman was one of the few DC films that passed the Bechdel test. No test like this would ever have to be made to test the male presence in films because even in films such as *Wonder Woman* where the lead and hero is clearly a female, she is made not just to show strength and heroism to the

⁵ Angie Han, "The Three Biggest Films of 2017 Were All About Women," *Mashable*, January 3, 2018, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://mashable.com>.

⁶ Kate Harveston, "A Realistic Look at Women's Representation in Superhero Movies," *Popdust*, July 5, 2017, accessed February 1, 2018, <https://www.popdust.com/a-realistic-look-at-womens-representation-in-superhero-movies-2453826431.html>.

female audience, but also to please the eye of the male viewer. Yet there are jobs that require real life heroes, and law enforcement is one of those fields. Women in law enforcement wear the same uniform that their male counterpart wears and upholds the law just as well. Julie D. O'Reilly, author of *The Wonder Woman Precedent: Female (Super) Heroism on Trial* discusses how "Richard Reynolds suggests in *Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology* that Moulton designed Wonder Woman's physical appearance and costume to appeal to men's sexual domination fantasies."⁷ Female superhero costumes need to be less sexualized, and the characters themselves need to be seen as people, not sexual objects. Women need to be cast in superhero films. They need to be cast as extras, minor characters, sidekicks, and the main heroes themselves. The focus needs to be on the character's story and her strengths rather than her appearance. When girls go to those theaters and see a female character on the screen, they should want to be her because she saved the world from aliens that came to destroy Earth or because she stopped an evil mastermind from taking over. When they see someone on the screen who looks like them taking down villains twice their size, then it shows women that they are good enough to ask for that raise. That little girls in school can stand up to bullies and maybe even that a woman in an abusive relationship will finally gather the strength to leave. Again, seeing more women on screen saving the world can help translate into more women in reality saving the world. Female representation in superhero movies is important because it helps to destroy the stereotypes about females being defined by their beauty and begins to show girls not only that they are beautiful, but they are strong, too.

Superhero films have begun to gain major momentum within the last decade. People take their families and friends to the theaters for the new Marvel or DC movie. Putting a woman on the screen, even though the character she is playing is fictional and the storyline is something some would consider childish, is so powerful. Little girls will come out of those movie theaters thinking that they are unstoppable. Teenage girls will escape their world of awkward stages for just a little while to see a strong woman that they can look up to and hope to be like. A woman of any age will benefit from seeing female superheroes. These films show the world that women are not a group to be overlooked, and soon the generation that is growing up on these films will be adults changing the world and destroying gender stereotypes.

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⁷ Julie D. O'Reilly, "The Wonder Woman Precedent: Female (Super) Heroism on Trial," *Journal of American Culture* 28, no. 3 (2005): 273-283, accessed February 2, 2018, doi: 10.1111/j.1542-734X.2005.00211.x.

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Expanding upon an earlier assignment, the writer of this research essay argues that graphic violence in film is necessary to realistically and honestly depict the narrative of war.

The Battle for Brutality: Graphic Violence in the World War II Combat Film

By Zachary Clouse

Prof. Collins - Story to Screen

In modern society, the topic of violence is a sensitive subject. Almost daily, it seems, news organizations report on violent tragedies that rattle entire communities and send shockwaves across the nation - in some cases, even across the globe. The hyperawareness that stems from this is certainly understandable and justifiably works its way into popular culture and mass media. Of course, it is a result of this that graphic violence - "graphic" meaning "producing by words the effect of a picture; vividly descriptive, life-like" - in popular culture has its opponents ("Graphic"). There are many who feel that the use of graphic violence in visual media like television and film is decidedly gratuitous, even in war movies. The World War II combat film, a long-running subgenre of this category, is certainly not exempt from these attacks. Those vehemently against such depictions generally conclude that the same ideas, like messages related to the chaos of war, the honoring of veterans, and character development in visual media, can successfully be conveyed to the audience through war films with lessened levels of violence. Yet, as one delves deeper into the immensely popular and enduring World War II combat genre, this argument progressively loses traction.

While the World War II combat genre has evolved in many ways over time, the level of violence depicted is a historically dynamic and fundamental component to consider, making it an important film category to analyze. Graphic violence plays a crucial role in these films that should not be overlooked. Often, it serves as a cinematic tool capable of enhancing a film through a focus on realism, unmatched

levels of characterization, and thematic development. These are all elements that not only help structure a film, but also combine to provide the audience with a greater basis/context for the horrific nature of war - a key concept that would, in the long-run, be dangerous to a society that refuses to acknowledge it, even through art. To prove this, I look to provide examples from two works that were seminal for their eras - *The Longest Day* (1962) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) - as well as 2016's *Hacksaw Ridge*, a recent iteration of the World War II combat genre heavily influenced by the groundbreaking Spielberg film nearly two decades its predecessor.

To fully understand how the depiction of graphic violence in the World War II combat genre enhances each film, it is first crucial to understand the evolution of the genre. Notably, the biggest evolutionary marker has been the varying levels of violence throughout its history. For instance, when these World War II films began being released during the height of the conflict (which lasted from late 1941 to 1945 for the United States), ensuring that the public was on-board with the war effort was a key focus (Basinger 4). Essentially, the World War II combat film was initially birthed as a sort of propaganda. Jeanine Basinger, a professor of film studies and author of the 1986 book *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre*, explains, "Originally, the purpose was patriotic and explanatory, to help the audience get behind the war and set aside their doubts and fears" (8). As a result, depicting the true level of carnage in combat was certainly not a priority, as it might have hindered efforts to vindicate the war in the public's eyes.

Yet, even as time distanced society from the conflict, World War II combat films continued to avoid too much violence. In fact, during the 1950s and 1960s, the films often turned into opportunities to praise and champion the war in "epic recreations" that Basinger notes which pushed the war towards "legend" status (8). A running theme was the idolization of combat, and films from this generation often provided audiences with melodramatic leaders and heroes (Hershenson 16). Perhaps the quintessential example from this period is *The Longest Day*, a 1962 piece that focused on the Normandy invasion and included a host of big names like John Wayne and Henry Fonda. The combat scenes in the film reflected just how theatrical the production was. As the landing crafts pour the soldiers onto Omaha beach at Normandy, soldiers rush out while a handful die using the same "chest-grabbing" formula repeated throughout the film - head pointed towards the sky, face contorted in pain, gun purposefully thrown in the air, hand grasping at the chest, and all while the body stiffens and topples over dramatically, without noise or blood (*The Longest Day*). While at the time of release this approach to the historic event may have been considered exceptional film-making, the scene appears outlandish in the eyes of today's savvy audience, who have been exposed to movies like *Saving Private Ryan*, which raised the "realism bar" in its own aggressive depiction of the landing.

A watershed moment for war films occurred only a few years after the release of *The Longest Day*. Disgust with war and combat emerged as resistance to the Vietnam War grew, ultimately reflecting in a variety of media in the late 1960s, including World War II films. As *Forbes* writer Mark Hughes explains, the focus began to revert to individual soldiers who faced not only the physical and psychological influence of combat, but also ethical dilemmas. Hughes continues:

It's widely known that there existed a big difference in society's perceptions of and reactions toward soldiers returning from Vietnam, as compared to soldiers returning from World War II for example. This, combined with overall perceptions of and reactions toward the Vietnam War itself as a conflict, caused a substantial shift away from romanticizing of warfare and soldiers in the more idealized fashion, and a cynicism took hold that led to war films depicting far more moral ambiguity and far less enthusiasm for the adventurism of war. Key to this change was a return to the dominant perspective in post-World War I war films, in which the soldiers were more humanized and events seen from their individual points of view as flawed and fearful, tragic human beings. (2)

In essence, this turning point made these films intense, ugly, and even personal, a trend that Hughes notes has been common in war films ever since the Vietnam War era. Of course, this means that many elements of this are echoed in films like *Saving Private Ryan* and the more recent *Hacksaw Ridge*.

While it is no doubt difficult to fully understand the experience of combat secondhand, the implementation of graphic violence can be used to give the audience a glimpse into the reality of war. Arguably the most seminal work in the World War II combat genre is Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, which serves as a powerful example of the use of graphic violence to promote a greater understanding of the horrors of armed conflict. Contrasted with *The Longest Day*'s Omaha Beach scene previously described, Spielberg's depiction of the events makes the older work seem overwhelmingly gentle. For the first 30 minutes of the film, there is essentially no break in destruction: dismembered human limbs launch through the air past bullet-riddled bodies lying on a blood-stained beach rocked by unrelenting explosive charges and the deafening cries of wounded American soldiers (*Saving Private Ryan*). This, unlike *The Longest Day*, does not look to glorify the historic event - the dying young men screaming for their mothers in *Saving Private Ryan* would never have fit the patriotic, "American might" mold of its half-century old predecessor - but rather presents the landing with more faithfulness to what actually happened. And this is not mere speculation from inexperienced outsiders. After the release of *Saving Private Ryan*, many veterans who were present during the Normandy invasion attested to the film's realism, noting that it is "the most realistic presentation of combat they've seen" (Basinger 1). This rather accurate depiction of battle, verified

by those who personally experienced it, promotes honesty and truth-telling in war films, which are concepts that can only enhance the audience's understanding of what war is really like. Overall, the use of graphic violence provides an unparalleled level of realism, ultimately conveying a clearer sense of the gruesome nature of war to the audience.

Of course, in opposition to those who include the World War II combat film in a broad call for reducing the level of violence in all visual media, it seems crucial to point out what separates historical war films from many over-the-top action films - in other words, the difference between reality and fiction. Film critic Janet Maslin, writing for the *New York Times*, indicates that while a violent science fiction film like *Starship Troopers* can certainly depict levels of graphic violence on-par with that of *Saving Private Ryan*, the "pure fantasy" nature of *Starship Troopers* does not match the fact that the historical context of Spielberg's film (the Normandy invasion and the bloody circumstances of Omaha Beach) actually occurred. *Saving Private Ryan*, she notes, "opens a window onto real men in real turmoil, and leaves us sharing every nuance of their experience" (Maslin). Therefore, in the case of films like *Saving Private Ryan*, the violence is not solely used to fill movie theater seats, as is the case with *Starship Troopers*. Instead, many World War II combat films attest to actual, often horrifically bloody events in history, rather than completely fabricated stories laced with violence for entertainment purposes only.

Perhaps the most important use of graphic violence in World War II combat films is to provide a powerful, deep level of characterization that less intense films in the genre are unable to match. By placing characters in such terrifying and abhorrent life-and-death situations - for instance, an intense, bloody firefight—the audience can often receive a better understanding of a character's morals, values, and other defining traits. There is, arguably, no greater example of this than the film *Hacksaw Ridge*, directed by Mel Gibson. *Hacksaw Ridge* follows the true story of World War II U.S. Army medic Desmond Doss, an eventual Medal of Honor recipient serving in the Pacific theater. Doss is a "conscientious objector" who refuses to touch a weapon because of his religious beliefs and heads into battle against Japanese forces without one. Yet, despite this, he ends up rescuing 75 wounded men from behind enemy lines. The second half of the film is riddled with graphic violence in much the same way as *Saving Private Ryan*, often showing dismembered body parts, blown-out intestines, and crushed skulls amid a barrage of ugly sound effects (*Hacksaw Ridge*). Richard Brody, writing for *The New Yorker*, voices his opinion that the film is "[laced with] a fulsome strain of pornographic violence," implying that it is gratuitous (1). However, he fails to recognize just how this violence, which he claims is unnecessary, actually served a purpose in the viewing of *Hacksaw Ridge*. In fact, it clearly influences his own opinions of Doss in the film, something he notes when he explains that Doss shows "exceptional bravery in the scenes of war" - a character building quality that

neither Brody nor the audience would have been able to grasp without such graphically violent depictions (2). Amidst the atrocities of war and while dodging round after round of enemy bullets and artillery, Doss' continuation (and surpassing) of his duties as a medic serve to develop his character further than perhaps any other cinematic or storytelling tool. Through his unflinching reaction to the graphic violence, he is seen as determined and selfless, and the true strength of his moral and religious convictions are put on display for all to see. While he faces almost certain death, he disregards his own safety for others. Certainly, in terms of film-making, it seems regressive to approach war movie combat scenes with restraint since graphic violence can play such a powerful and integral role in character development.

Graphic violence in the World War II combat film often helps develop and present overarching themes and messages in the film. For instance, a running theme in war films is often the idea that "war is hell." Of course, while directors look to get this message across to the audience, it is certainly difficult to do so without depicting the traumatic episodes that make it so. A film without graphic violence loses out on a crucial method of getting this message across to the audience - after all, it is showing, not telling, that is often more effective. This idea is backed by *Washington Post* film critic Ann Hornaday's response to the first American assault on Japanese positions in *Hacksaw Ridge*: "Once the movie gets to that sequence...it becomes a harrowing testament to terror, cruelty, stamina, and, finally, spiritual devotion, as Desmond and his fellow soldiers try to survive an onslaught of unimaginable intensity" (Hornaday). A censored version of *Hacksaw Ridge* without its intensely graphic combat is not likely to get these same ideas across, as there would be an absence of visual evidence. The audience would not be seeing this "unimaginable intensity," nor experiencing any element of it secondhanded.

In addition, graphic violence also serves to instill in movie-goers a greater appreciation for those who served in the conflict. By providing a glimpse into the true nature of what veterans had to endure, these films help audience members acknowledge the sacrifices and hardships suffered by these former soldiers and facilitate well-deserved recognition for veterans. For instance, Amy Wallace of the *Los Angeles Times* cites a number of examples in which *Saving Private Ryan's* graphic depiction of the Normandy invasion moved many viewers to call or write letters to veterans they knew, thanking them for their service (1). Wallace goes on to explain that the film helped many finally understand why some veterans refuse to talk about their experiences, further developed by the testimonial of Dick Winters, a 101st Airborne veteran who landed at Normandy: "I think they'll get the feel of it...After they've seen it, they'll know why I came home after the war and insisted we buy a farm - for peace and quiet" (qtd. in Wallace 2). In essence, this commitment to realism in the film goes beyond the confines of the screen to forge a connection between different generations. This helps facilitate an understanding of veterans' achievements and the ultimate

cost of freedom.

Though often vehemently opposed, the use of graphic violence in the World War II combat film serves a purpose and can thus be justified. It can help develop the work in a variety of aspects, sometimes even going so far as to transcend the screen and affect viewers in an emotionally moving way. Yet, there may still be a more pressing issue surrounding graphic violence to consider: society has a moral obligation to tell the truth about armed conflict. Films, as a major part of popular culture and one that people have increasingly greater access to, undeniably have an influence on society. Therefore, in depicting combat in war films, glorifying war should be avoided at all costs. Painting it as an “adventure” can be detrimental to viewers, especially impressionable youths, who may be influenced by visual media when making choices about their futures. For instance, someone may decide to join the military having only ever seen celebratory and exciting depictions of it. This is why it is crucial that war films continue on this no-holds-barred trajectory when it comes to violence. Refusing to hold back in graphic depictions of combat, approaches that more modern films like *Saving Private Ryan* and *Hacksaw Ridge* both take, counteracts a glorifying tendency that threatens to take away from open, honest conversation about one of humankind’s most repulsive transgressions - war.

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After consulting a multitude of primary and secondary sources, the author of this expository research paper explains how a topic of local interest, the Underground Railroad in Albany, New York, had significant national impact on America.

Finding Freedom: The Impact of the Underground Railroad in Albany, New York

By Holly Delwiche

Dr. Nolan - Local History

Beginning in the late 18th century and operating until the Civil War, the Underground Railroad was a network of people, places, and aid that connected freedom seekers to safe locations. One of the main locations the Underground Railroad operated was Albany, New York. According to Paul and Mary Liz Stewart, founders of the Albany Underground Railroad History Project, "The Capital Region of New York State was visited by thousands of fugitives seeking freedom in the years prior to the Civil War" ("Albany

Underground Railroad”). In essence, this meant that the city turned into a location with a national impact because Albany was a radiating point or “gateway” connecting freedom seekers to different parts of the country in the East, North, and West. Fugitive slaves entered Albany from places as far south as New Orleans and traveled on across state and even national borders. Additionally, key abolitionists, institutions, and committees instrumental in gaining freedom for black Americans, operated in Albany. Personally, I have been interested in the Underground Railroad in Albany ever since I visited the New York State Museum and observed an exhibit on the topic. Overall, the importance of the Underground Railroad in Albany can be summarized by the influential Underground Railroad conductor Stephen Myers, who stated, “Let the voice of forty thousand colored citizens be heard at the Capitol of the Empire state; yes, and at Washington, until the prayers of two millions and a half be heard that are now held in abject bondage, and that Congress may not turn their petitions away unheard as formerly; and let us see American slavery immediately abolished from our land” (qtd. in Calarco *People of the Underground Railroad* 220). Myers’ words clearly indicate that ambitious and significant efforts were undertaken by Albany Underground Railroad conductors in order to alleviate suffering caused by slavery.

The Underground Railroad in Albany had a national impact as its location in the Hudson Valley made the city a gateway to other locations. In the journal article “The Underground Railroad in the Hudson River Valley: A Succinct Historical Composite,” historian A.J. Williams-Myers establishes, “The Albany station was on the direct route from Washington, D. C., the southern terminus of the underground railroad. At Albany, the underground radiated east into New England, north into Canada, and west towards Utica and beyond” (Williams-Myers 61). Albany connected major parts of the Underground Railroad, and important cities where fugitive slaves could find aid could be accessed from Albany. One attribute that aided Albany as a major gateway was its proximity to major waterways such as the Erie Canal and the Hudson River. In “The Underground Railroad in New York State,” Stephanie Sienkiewicz, a middle school Social Studies teacher, argues that “proximity to Canada, work opportunities, and religious and other social movements, regions of New York State and cities located along the route of the Erie Canal played major roles on the underground railroad and in anti-slavery agitation” (1). In other words, since Albany was a port city, waterways could be used to connect and transport fugitives to new locations. For example, Stephen Myers used his job on Hudson River steamboats to assist fugitive slaves. Clearly, the proximity to water routes helped to establish Albany as a major location for moving freedom seekers to safer places.

One of the main events important to the development of the Underground Railroad in New York State was the Albany Convention of 1838. The convention had a national impact because it established connections between Albany and other locations of the Underground Railroad around the state, while also

leading to the establishment of Vigilance Committees. According to Tom Calarco, a member of the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association and author of numerous books on the Underground Railroad, the Convention “met in Albany from February 28 to March 2, 1838 . . . Among the resolutions passed was one that referred to aiding fugitive slaves” (*Places of the Underground Railroad* 5-6). This was important because the meeting established local sympathy for fugitive slaves, which later led to the creation of Vigilance Committees in Albany and around New York State. According to the Underground Railroad History Project, “Committees of citizens were formed all across the north with the intention of protecting fugitive slaves from re-enslavement . . . Vigilance committees provided legal assistance, food, clothing, money, sometimes employment, temporary shelter and assisted fugitives in making their way toward freedom” (“Albany Underground Railroad”). This was extremely significant because it demonstrates specific aid supplied to freedom seekers on their journey. Overall, the Vigilance Committee in Albany had a national impact because the Committee’s headquarters came to be one of the most important locations of the Underground Railroad in New York State.

Albany had both a state and national impact as a location on the Underground Railroad because of the leaders and institutions that functioned throughout the area. One fundamental reason why the work of Underground Railroad conductors was so important was because it demonstrated the rising issue of sectionalism which was occurring in the United States during this time period. As states debated the merit of slavery, the time period would truly call into question if the United States could remain united. In regard to Underground Railroad conductors across the nation, their success would continue to fuel the rising sentiments of sectionalism. Thus, the Underground Railroad’s gateways, like Albany, had national importance.

Abel Brown was one of the instrumental Underground Railroad Conductors in Albany whose work allowed the Underground RR in Albany to have a national influence. Brown had a profound effect because he helped establish the Underground Railroad between Washington D.C. and Albany. Not only did he help create a route for freedom seekers, but author Nicholas Young also emphasizes that he “was noted as an uncompromising and provocative individual who went to great lengths for the cause of the abolition of slavery. He was very active in assisting fugitives and not at all secretive about it” (Young). In other words, he helped fugitives escape to freedom, but he was also very active in advocating for the rights of African Americans. This was exemplified in his political work to advocate for African Americans. Tom Calarco, the author of six books and more than 30 articles on the Underground Railroad, points out that Brown took lecture tours “into the Adirondacks, visiting with abolitionists . . . on many of his tours he was accompanied by black lecturers like Lewis Washington and James Baker, fugitives from slavery who became active in the

abolition movement" (Calarco *The Search for the Underground Railroad in Upstate New York* 46). Brown's lecture tours demonstrate the national impact he had since he worked with other prominent leaders to advocate for abolishing slavery and advancing the rights of African Americans. In essence, Brown's lecture tours would help make the Abolition Movement more of a national phenomenon, undoubtedly demonstrating their importance.

Another way Brown had a national impact was through publishing *The Tocsin of Liberty*. This Albany-based newspaper debuted on October 15, 1841. As described by Calarco, "From the start, it was fearless in its comments and in its reports of local aid to fugitive slaves. The announcements, boldly contemptuous in tone, were packaged in a series of letters written by Brown" (*The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region* 69). This is of national importance because the announcements were addressed to slaveholders across the nation, and each named the slave owner, the slave, and where they came from. In addition, they provided details about how each slave reached freedom. This approach was unusual and risky; however, it was powerful since the format mirrored advertisements published by slave owners in the South. The importance of this format is grounded in the sectionalism arising during the time period in which the paper was being published. As the advertisements called attention to the aid being offered to fugitive slaves, it was clear that the Underground Railroad was experiencing great success. Due to success stories such as these, the question of unity or sectionalism would become a prominent national issue. Clearly, the newspaper's contribution to the rising issue of sectionalism was of national importance.

The Tocsin of Liberty was also significant because it demonstrated how Albany, as a major stop on the Underground Railroad, was connected to locations throughout the country. Explained by Mary Ellen Snodgrass, author of *The Underground Railroad: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Operations*, in this paper, "Writers for the anti-slavery media offered eyewitness testimony to slave kidnap, flight, and rescue. An account in *The Tocsin of Liberty* detailed the flight of Sarah Smith and her husband and daughter from a New Orleans slave driver and the treatment of Eliza Wilson, a field hand who was lashed and soaked in brine" (Snodgrass 8). The newspaper's account of Smith and Wilson demonstrates just one instance of a story that reached Albany. For freedom seekers, Albany was located on a viable route from slave states in the deep south such as Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. For many who took this route, Albany acted as the final leg in their journey to a new destination. The ability to connect fugitives to new, safe, and permanent locations, made Albany of national importance.

Stephen Myers was one of the most essential and influential Underground Railroad conductors who operated in Albany. Myers was instrumental in both assisting slaves to freedom and advocating for the anti-slavery movement. He and his wife, Harriet Myers, assisted thousands to freedom. As stated by

Calarco, in regard to assisting freedom seekers, “[S]trong documentary evidence exists of the large-scale movement of slaves through Albany in the mid-1850s. An 1856 broadside revealed that during one nine-month period between September 12, 1855 and July 15, 1856, he coordinated the movement of 287 fugitive slaves” (*Places of the Underground Railroad* 9). Essentially, his work in this short period of time demonstrates the prolific impact he had in the Albany area. This is further supported by a primary source document that was recently found in New York City, which, as explained by Paul and Mary Liz Stewart, “recorded the names, dates, and assistance given to those looking for freedom. It also included the new names given to escaped slaves on their journey. The document included the names of fifty people referred to the Albany area” (Stewart). The document and broadside are both significant because they establish that Myers assisted an incredible number of people and thus he helped the Underground RR gain importance and relevance.

In addition to assisting fugitives to freedom, Myers was able to rise as a prominent leader of the Underground Railroad by heading the Albany Vigilance Committee from his home at 198 Lumber Street. In *Abolition and Antislavery: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic* Paul Stewart remarks, “By the 1850s, Myers was the principal agent of the Underground Railroad in Albany . . . Under his leadership the Albany branch of the Underground Railroad was regarded by some as the best-run part of the Underground Railroad in New York State” (487). Clearly, this demonstrates how Myers’ work as a leader helped to establish Albany as a major hub for assisting freedom seekers further northward.

Finally, Myers’ work at state and national Negro Conventions demonstrates the national impact he had. In *Places of the Underground Railroad: A Geographical Guide*, Calarco discusses Myers’ political actions and notes that “his letters show that he was lobbying the New York State legislature to remove the state’s property qualifications for blacks to vote and to defeat a bill there to provide funding to the American Colonization Society” (9). Myers’ work at the state legislature demonstrates that his impact expanded beyond Albany. In essence, he worked to advance African Americans’ place in society throughout the state and the nation. Through political actions of Underground Railroad conductors such as Myers, Albany would have a prominent effect on the rising issue of slavery’s place in the United States.

Another important conductor of the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman. Her network demonstrated how Albany had a national impact as it not only connected fugitives across state and national borders, but it also brought together key leaders as well. First, the path she used to assist freedom seekers demonstrates the importance of the capital region. According to Kate Larson, author of “Racing for Freedom: Harriet Tubman’s Underground Railroad Network through New York,” when she first started helping freedom seekers on their journey, “Tubman’s particular paths to freedom in Canada usually took

her through New York City to Albany” (Larson 8). Albany was a major connecting point from a national center like New York City, to safety in Canada.

Secondly, Tubman also demonstrates why Albany was nationally important because conductors were not just individuals seeking to help other individuals, but anti-slavery leaders connected by a vast network that spanned across the nation, all of whom sought to collectively undermine slavery. Due to shared goals and beliefs, leaders like Tubman and Myers were able to establish crucial links across New York State, with Albany acting as an essential hub. The extent of their network was exemplified by the relationship that existed between Tubman and Brown. One of Tubman’s key contacts in the Albany area was Brown. Demonstrated by Nicholas Maurice Young in the journal article "Even Superheroes Need a Network," Brown “was associated with at least 43 individuals, each of whom were, in some fashion, connected to his efforts as a UGRR conductor” (Young). The fact that Brown had a network of 43 different individuals is crucial to understanding the importance of the capital region. Through Brown, Tubman and others were put in contact with a myriad of others who could be of assistance. Since these connections expanded well beyond Albany, it is clear that Brown helped make Albany a nexus for connecting others to freedom.

Overall, work on the Underground Railroad in Albany had a national impact because Albany’s location as a gateway helped fugitive slaves escape across state and national borders. This is exemplified in *The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region* when Calarco states, “Albany served as the primary gateway for fugitives passing through Northeast and central New York. Thousands of fugitive slaves probably passed through Albany in that 30-year period prior to the Civil War” (188). Furthermore, the Underground Railroad in Albany was of national importance because of key leaders and institutions. Significant and impactful abolitionists campaigned for important legislation, lead lecture tours that highlighted the importance of the movement, and worked for state and national conventions. Overall, the work done by abolitionists in Albany transcended borders in order to advance the rights of African Americans as a whole.

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Exploring the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, this writer argues that the United States failed to adequately consider and support the survivors impacted by emotional and psychological trauma.

Hurricane Katrina: A Disheveled Road to Recovery

By Julia Fleming

Dr. Liptak - Representing Trauma

Millions of people were impacted by the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the mega-hurricane responsible for the absolute destruction of New Orleans in late August 2005. Extreme flooding left thousands in precarious and dangerous positions. Civilians were forced to swim from rooftop to rooftop, desperately awaiting help. Immediate aid from the United States government was the most pressing concern as survivors were rescued from submerged buildings and received food, water, and clean clothes. Days, weeks, and even months after Hurricane Katrina struck land, the rest of the country stood by the "Big Easy," providing supplies that saved thousands of people.

After the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, an extremely traumatic event for the people living in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, the United States government initiated the process of recovery. Bringing civilians to safety became the top priority in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. However, while the federal government managed to rescue thousands of people and provided life-saving supplies to survivors, many innocent civilians were forced to endure Katrina alone. In reality, demand for supplies could not be met, depriving many civilians of even the most basic necessities including food, water, and first aid as survivors faced the inevitable trauma induced by such a catastrophic event. Thousands were left homeless, without employment, and impacted by "Katrina Brain," a condition characterized by faulty memory, which made even the simplest tasks impossible to complete (Boulanger 32). These people were in serious need of emotional support after Hurricane Katrina. However, once physical safety was secured, both the United States government and the American people assumed the position of ignorant bystander. They watched as Katrina victims battled anxiety, stress, depression, and PTSD. Psychologically, survivors were forced to battle Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath on their own. Charities provided supplies, the military provided order, and the government offered financial support. But who provided for the survivors' psychological needs? Who understood that these thousands of people were now victims of trauma? No one did. The United States government failed to support Hurricane Katrina survivors on an emotional level, leaving thousands of people to battle trauma alone and reinforcing the stigma that mental health is less important than physical well-being.

Days after Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, President George W. Bush highlighted three main priorities during the recovery process - none of which included emotional support. Understandably, his first priority was to save lives. Bush proudly described local officials' efforts to evacuate remaining citizens, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployment of medical assistance and search and rescue teams, Coast Guard rescue missions, and the 11,000 guardsmen assisting governors with security ("President Addresses the Nation"). President Bush addressed this first priority with urgency and determination, saving as many lives as possible. Unsurprisingly, his second priority emphasized the importance of sustaining lives by providing food, water, shelter, and medical supplies ("President Addresses the Nation"). While these necessities may keep a person alive, they certainly cannot sustain a person. In reality, sustainability can only be attained if a person is capable of caring for himself or herself. Survivors of Hurricane Katrina were in no condition to sustain themselves mainly because mental health services were unavailable. Because President Bush failed to mention the psychological aspects of sustainability, which prevented any assistance regarding mental health, his second priority was nothing more than a misinterpretation of a word.

Bush's third priority and final chance to acknowledge the emotional distress Hurricane Katrina survivors faced proved to be a disappointment. His final concern outlined the execution of a "comprehensive recovery effort" including the restoration of power lines, the repairing of roads and bridges, and the rebuilding of infrastructure ("President Addresses the Nation"). While reconstruction is certainly a critical aspect of recovery, does it surpass the psychological needs of survivors? The third priority listed in Bush's speech should have focused on minimizing emotional distress, whether that be through reuniting families or providing mental health treatment. In October 2005, just two months after Hurricane Katrina hit, a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) survey revealed that "half of the respondents had a possible need for mental health services and one third clearly needed intervention" (Madrid and Grant 88). This survey clearly illustrates the enormous scope of mental health issues resulting from Hurricane Katrina as well as the federal government's failure to recognize and relieve survivors of their crippling grief, fear, and stress. Oblivious to the emotional turmoil these individuals faced, President Bush believed that with these three priorities, survivors "[could] get [their lives] back in order" ("President Addresses the Nation"). This statement greatly undermines the trauma these individuals endured. One cannot simply get his or her life back in order after losing a loved one, spending three days stranded on a rooftop, or realizing that a once fully developed metropolitan area resembled a "third world country", especially without any mental health assistance (*Engineering Disasters*). Emotional support, although vital to the mental well-being of Americans, was simply not a priority after Hurricane Katrina.

Additionally, the limited number of psychologists available to Hurricane Katrina survivors caused mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD to go untreated. Both patient and clinician were exposed to intense destruction leaving these individuals who would have provided treatment traumatized as well. Unfortunately for therapists, returning to work after Hurricane Katrina meant suppressing their own personal fears and anxieties in order to help patients. This task proved to be overwhelming and nearly impossible. Initially very excited to begin work, clinician Dr. Floyd recognized the intersection between his patients' stories and his own personal experiences, which created a new feeling of discomfort. (Boulanger 33). How could therapists support patients if they were battling the same trauma? How would additional burdens affect a therapist's already precarious mental health? These questions brought forth a new wave of anxiety for many clinicians like Dr. Floyd. According to Dr. Ghislaine Boulanger, therapists who endured trauma "[were] acutely vulnerable to becoming disorganized and to dissociating when they [were] expected to listen to a similar tale of horror" (Boulanger 37). Mental health professionals who returned to work after Hurricane Katrina could not carry the combined weight of personal and patient burden. Many patients survived life-threatening situations, invoking the maximum amount of stress an individual could experience. For example, Wallace Rainey Jr. was working as a pump station operator during Hurricane Katrina. As the station began to flood with water, he had "just the Bible in [his] mind . . . [Rainey] didn't know if [he] would make it through the day" (*Engineering Disasters*). Close encounters with death caused intense trauma for thousands of people, and these citizens unloaded their anxieties onto unready psychologists. Despite their greatest intentions, therapists struggled to separate their fears and anxieties from patients' experiences. Ultimately, listening to these realities triggered a sense of reliving the disaster, preventing recovery and limiting the number of available clinicians.

Furthermore, the instability of therapists is clearly evident in clinician response to patients further along in the recovery process. For instance, one clinician confessed that after discovering that her patient received extra money from FEMA, she was stunned and wanted to ask how and why her patient received these benefits (Boulanger 39). In many cases the line between patient and clinician disappeared after Hurricane Katrina. At the end of the day, these therapists endured their own personal challenges. Sorting out the trauma thousands of civilians faced after Hurricane Katrina was too large a task for unaffected clinicians, let alone the mere 22 of 196 psychiatrists who returned to New Orleans in 2006 (Madrid and Grant 87). Because of the extremely limited number of mental health professionals and their inability to fully invest in sessions, the people of the New Orleans were at a huge disadvantage regarding mental health recovery. Without local therapists, hurricane survivors depended upon out-of-state support and much to

their disappointment, the United States government failed to provide the adequate mental assistance so desperately needed.

Contrary to the average person's inability to fully comprehend the importance of providing emotional and psychological support to victims of Hurricane Katrina, organizations such as the American Red Cross realized this issue and attempted to supply mental services. On top of providing 68 million hot meals and establishing 1,400 shelters, the American Red Cross made a valiant effort to help victims of Hurricane Katrina with the emotional burden they now carried (American Red Cross 2). For instance, the Red Cross Hurricane Recovery Program provided 22,500 survivors with mental health or substance abuse treatment (American Red Cross 2). Unfortunately, while the Hurricane Recovery Program helped thousands of survivors, Hurricane Katrina devastated millions of people. Only a fraction of survivors experienced the benefits of this program. Yet, in order to help hurricane survivors conquer "Katrina Brain" and resume their normal behavior, the Red Cross received grants to further develop sixteen behavioral programs, which served more than 165,000 adults and youth (Bringing 2). Children, in particular, were very susceptible to behavioral change. Approximately 372,000 school-aged children were displaced by Hurricane Katrina, and many developed shy and "out of it personalities" or refused to speak at all (Madrid and Grant 86-87). Stripped of their homes, and in worst case scenarios, stripped of their loved ones, these children were susceptible to dramatic behavioral changes. Unfortunately, Red Cross behavioral programs were unavailable to many such children. For example, six months after Hurricane Katrina, one half of parents in a FEMA trailer camp reported that their children showed new emotional and/or behavioral problems (Madrid and Grant 89). The resources provided by the Red Cross, including its Hurricane Recovery Program and sixteen behavioral programs, were beneficial to many people. However, the Red Cross had its limitations and simply could not help the millions impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

Above all, the most compelling evidence suggesting the government's failure to support Hurricane Katrina victims on emotional and psychological levels is painstakingly evident in the opinions and first-hand accounts of survivors. For instance, according to results gathered in the survey "Before, Now, and After: Katrina Relief" (conducted five months after Hurricane Katrina), personal networks or social ties and relationships were most significant at alleviating personal financial, physical, and professional burdens and were integral in the improvement of psychological health (Forgette et al. 40). In other words, during the first five months after Hurricane Katrina, victims felt that family and friends were most responsible for their physical and mental well-being as opposed to federal government assistance or assistance from relief organizations. Unfortunately, while personal networks proved to be exceptionally helpful in maintaining mental health, many victims were separated from family and friends during evacuations. For example,

while being evacuated from the Louisiana Superdome, a single mother lost track of her nineteen-year-old son. After seven days of no contact and no idea where her son was relocated to, a team of volunteers helped research this woman's relatives. However, no information was found (Madrid and Grant 88). The personal networks so desperately relied upon for mental support were largely dismantled days after Hurricane Katrina. Poor communication and faulty databases caused much frustration and feelings of helplessness by families. Had officials truly understood the importance of relationships in alleviating this psychological burden, the United States government would have made a greater effort to unite families or personal networks.

The federal government also could have done more to keep the rest of the country aware of what was going on in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Mental health professional Ms. Poitevant was alarmed at how quickly outsiders discarded their compassion and empathy for Katrina survivors. While contacting a banking executive from outside the city, Poitevant realized she lost some paperwork and received an extremely rude and harsh reply: "Katrina was no excuse" (Boulanger 41). Katrina was more than an excuse; it was a justification. The people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama lost so much more than a stack of papers. Lives were lost, homes were destroyed, and trauma was endured. Whether it was the President of the United States or a banking executive, society in general failed to provide mental support to victims of Hurricane Katrina thus strengthening the stigma that mental health is inferior to physical well-being.

To this day, Hurricane Katrina maintains the reputation of being the worst natural disaster in American History. Through the chaos of rescuing survivors and the assessment of financial matters, the psychological needs of the survivors were overlooked, reinforcing the stigma that physical health is superior to mental health. Thousands were forced to cope with the trauma of losing a loved one, witnessing the ultimate destruction of one's home, and living in shelters or trailer parks with no employment in sight. From Katrina, we must all learn that psychological needs are top priority. The well-being of an individual is essential to the rebuilding of a community. Hurricanes will continue to wash away houses, tear apart buildings, rip trees from their roots, and disable society. However, while a storm passes, its destruction remains. Society cannot abandon natural disaster victims in any context: physically, emotionally, or psychologically.

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Reflecting upon what they had read, learned, and discussed throughout the year and building upon personal experience, the students in this FYS class were asked to develop and explain their own definition of what it means to be an American. In this final project, the author, a daughter of immigrants, uses vivid recollections and memories juxtaposed with research to explore the double meaning of the term "American," thus offering compelling insight into how a person can create their own individual identity.

From Two Worlds

By Sarah Goh

Dr. Mahar - Americans

W.E.B Du Bois defines double-consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk* as a "two-ness," one as an American and the other as a Black American: "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body."¹ I believe this powerful, beautiful definition extends to all who cannot embody the single identity of American.

I grew up balancing two distinct identities: one as an Asian immigrant and the other as an American. There's a mold that we have to fit into as Americans. As immigrants, we're not allowed to fit that mold. We need to be good, stay out of trouble, and get good grades. Yet what defines being American is the right to care deeply and openly about conflict and controversy and the right to express our voice and have it heard. As immigrants, especially as Asian-Americans, we're to be the model minority. We're not allowed opinions; we're just supposed to exist – to exist between the lines White America drew for us. These competing identities were born into me through my parents. My mother embodied our fight as immigrants and my father, the fight to be American.

The only daughter and youngest of three, my mother started life in the dirt and grime of Old Chinatown, Singapore. With the entire extended family, my mother grew up in a community where each immediate family was squeezed into just one room. My mother, her two brothers, and her parents lived in one room with thin curtains stretched as an attempt at privacy. Meat could only be afforded on holidays, and my mother only received one new dress each year.

My mother's story is only complete when coupled with my grandmother's. My grandmother lost the use of her right arm to polio at a young age. Yet, my mother recalls her never complaining nor completing a task only half as well as others. My grandmother was ahead of her time, a feminist I would say. My mother says two men were pursuing my grandmother in the 1950s, one an owner of a laundry business and another a security guard and part-time funeral home drummer. My grandmother's family was not keen on the lack of income of my drumming grandfather, but nevertheless, he became my grandfather. My grandmother chose her marriage; she went against society and chose, as cliché as it sounds, love over money. In the 1950s, that choice was a powerful move.

¹ W. E. B. Du Bois, "'The Veil' and 'Double-Consciousness,'" X-Roads, University of Virginia, September 1, 2009, accessed January 13, 2018, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug03/souls/defpg.html>.

My mother recalls that my grandfather was a funny man, one who would burst out laughing while disciplining her and sneak her extra money to buy jello. Yet, funny, loving men still have their flaws, and my grandfather became a gambler who smoked and drank like a man refusing life and inviting chaos. My mother remembers holding on to the fabric of my grandmother's clothes as they walked through the back alleys of Chinatown where owners profited off the drunk and addicted. There my grandfather sat at a gambling table, cards laid out and money ready to bet. With her one good arm and my mother clinging to her, my grandmother walked up to the gambling table and flipped it over. Grabbing my grandfather, she dragged him home.

My grandmother knew the importance of education. In Singapore, the path to success starts young and even elementary schools have their rankings. Most families enrolled their children in good elementary schools through networking, a family friend knows of someone in the school or an older relative went there. However, for those who lacked resources, the other option was to queue up in a horrifically long line for registration. My grandmother stood in line for a day and a half, waiting overnight to give my mother a chance at a good elementary school. Most parents from Old Chinatown didn't even try to register for fear of their child failing out. "She was ridiculed by her relatives for putting me in a good school," my mother said, "because people our kind of poor weren't supposed to try."² My grandmother believed in my mother and registered her at a top elementary school even though my mother knew very little English, which is the official language of Singapore, and was a grade behind.

In order to grasp the physical and mental exhaustion my mother endured as well as her persistence, the rigor of Singapore's education system must be explained. Ranked the world's best education system in 2015, Singapore has consistently been a top performer in global education.³ Formerly a British colony, Singapore gained independence in 1965 and a new government, headed by the People's Action Party, was formed under Lee Kuan Yew.⁴ Though independent, as Singaporean professor and education policy expert Saravanan Gopinathan states in his article on the evolution of Singapore's education system, "Post-war Singapore faced daunting political, social and education changes. . . it had to rebuild a war shattered economy and it had to lay the grounds for social cohesion and Singapore centred [sic] citizenship. The colonial education system was completely incapable of doing this."⁵ Singapore needed a new education system to rely on.

Gopinathan states there were three goals for reshaping Singapore's education system: its continuation, enhanced efficiency, and an emphasis on ability.⁶ As an island that lacks natural resources, the Singapore government exerted full effort into education for its citizens in order to rebuild its economy, resulting in human

² Sau-Mui Chan-Goh, interviewed by Sarah Goh, Seattle, WA. March 1, 2018.

³ Joanna Tan, "Why Singapore Comes Top of the Class in Education," *The National*, September 7, 2016, accessed March 8, 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/asia/why-singapore-comes-top-of-the-class-in-education-1.229409>.

⁴ "Singapore," in *Columbia Chronologies of Asian History and Culture*, ed. John S. Bowman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 501-505.

⁵ Saravanan Gopinathan, "Fourth Way in Action? The Evolution of Singapore's Education System," *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 11, no. 1 (2011): 65-70, accessed March 8, 2018, doi: 10.1007%2Fs10671-011-9117-6.

⁶ Gopinathan, "Fourth Way in Action," 66.

capital as its primary resource. However, to transition to an industrialized economy, Singapore emphasized skills in the STEM fields to maintain an efficient education system. Instead of implementing a liberal arts-dominated education system, Singapore focused its efforts in STEM, thus making the education system more efficient. Only in 1987, after my mother graduated secondary school, did Singapore make an attempt to focus on the diversity of students' abilities such as linguistic or interpersonal intelligence.⁷ Yet, despite these changes, even today, Singaporean students undergo severe amounts of stress due to regular testing and national annual exams beginning at the age of seven. Parents spend hundreds of dollars and use all networking resources available to them to give their child a head start.⁸ My mother had none of these resources; what she lacked in money and connections, she replaced with an unrelenting drive to succeed.

My mother struggled with learning English since only the Chinese dialect of Cantonese was spoken at home. A grade behind since she was too poor to go to Kindergarten, my mother was ranked last right from the beginning. Along with academic struggles, her father died of liver cancer when my mother was in fourth grade. His death threw my mother's family into further poverty, resulting in my grandmother cleaning pools and raking gardens, trying to scrape together enough money to support her children.

Starting out last in her class at a top school for Singapore's elite, my mother was ranked sixth in her class by the time she reached sixth grade. When time came to apply for secondary school, my mother said, "My teacher wanted me to put down mediocre schools because she thought I wouldn't be accepted and would then have to go to a very low ranked school."⁹ My grandmother stepped in and ignored the advice of my mother's teachers, pushing my mother to apply to only top-schools. She refused to let my mother settle for mediocrity. My mother scored in the top percentages on her entrance exam and ended up going to the number one ranked school in Singapore, carrying my grandmother's confidence with her. When asked about my grandmother, my mother said, "She was a woman of great character, pride, and resilience. Her love for us went beyond."¹⁰

During my mother's secondary school years, when all of her very wealthy friends were going through school with hundreds of dollars spent on tutoring and practice exams, my mother borrowed money to take exams, with only one chance to succeed and struggled on her own. "I graduated doing only very mediocrely in secondary school," she said.¹¹ After graduating secondary school, she excelled in nursing school. Only when I was in high school did I find a certificate awarding my mother the gold medal for graduating number one in her nursing class. She was later selected to care for the late Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, who was hailed as the founder of Singapore. My mother went on to get her bachelor's degree from the University of Washington when my parents moved to Seattle in the 1990s, again ranking in the top of her graduating class. "I

⁷ Gopinathan, "Fourth Way in Action," 66.

⁸ Tan, "Why Singapore Comes Top of the Class in Education."

⁹ Chan-Goh.

¹⁰ Chan-Goh.

¹¹ Chan-Goh.

am a lifelong learner,” she says.¹² She later received her master’s degree in nursing, qualifying her as a nurse practitioner, and is today going back to school for her doctorate.

From a whole different world, my dad grew up an adventurer. Born in Singapore, in a small town called Orchard Road, he was left alone to explore. His mother had nine kids and no time to worry about my dad. Middle-class wealth took away some financial stress as a student in Singapore. My dad was a son of an immigrant, his father, my grandfather, left China with a good amount of money. My grandfather’s father, the head of the village in Hainan Island, China, was a well-respected land owner. Although he was not able to bring with him all of his father’s wealth, my grandfather arrived in Singapore in 1939 with enough money to still qualify as middle class. With skills learned from his father, he opened a dental clinic in Singapore. Tong Ah dentist, it was called.¹³

With a steady stream of income, my dad had the privilege of not needing to worry about paying for school. With eight siblings and little parental guidance, he was left to explore the streets with a bag of marbles in one hand and a comic book in the other. Known to be smart but lazy, he never seemed to get the work ethic down. Instead of studying for exams, my dad would be playing rugby or running away from angry bookstore owners. This resulted in his enrollment in a below-average secondary school.

Right out of school, my dad wanted to travel; however, Singapore requires two years of national service in the military for all male citizens. After two years of learning how to wake up to military alarms, my dad left Singapore to travel the world. He got a job as an engineer technician making ball bearings for a Japanese company. In 1981, he worked in Japan, traveling from Tokyo to Kyoto to Chigasaki. After working for a Japanese company, he then headed back to Singapore where he met my mother at their local church. They dated for seven years and finally got married in 1990, setting off for America to further both their educations. Here, he received his second engineering degree from Montana Tech.¹⁴

In predominantly white Montana, my dad’s ideas about white people changed. He started to meet different kinds of people, some kind and compassionate and others not so much, but all with white skin. His idea of white skin equaling goodness was wiped away as he continued to meet the good and the bad of Montana Tech. Because of this, my dad understood how I felt at a young age, being an Asian-American. He understood that feeling of inferiority I felt being of constant comparison to white skin plastered all over the media through advertisements depicting blonde hair and blue eyes and Disney-featured white teenagers.

Elementary school was an innocent time when I was shielded from the acknowledgment of differences. In second-grade my elementary romance began with Gavin, who had shaggy brown hair and a talent for Yugioh; he and I hit it off in after-school daycare. In fifth grade, I developed a crush on blue-eyed Brian, which evolved

¹² Chan-Goh.

¹³ David Goh, interview by Sarah Goh, Seattle, WA. January 7, 2018.

¹⁴ Goh.

from heart-shaped valentines and kickball. I saw no difference between these boys and me in terms of nationality or race. It was not until sixth grade that I started to become painfully aware of my skin. My middle school self was convinced that I couldn't have a crush on blonde Daniel because I was Asian. Pictures from *Hannah Montana* or *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody* came to mind when I thought about romance. And my dad understood.

He understood the struggle to try to be white, having experienced the pressure to assimilate himself. "Sarah, white people are just like us and even worse. There's a lot of crappy white people out there," he would say in his Singaporean accent.¹⁵ He would tell me about how, in Singapore, white people were hailed to be great. White people were everywhere, he said, and if there were more white people involved in a company, it meant that company was better. Montana Tech changed that for him. Being the only Asian in town, he started to understand America better. College in Butte, Montana removed the idea that white people were somehow better because of the paleness of their skin. When I asked my father what made him feel especially American, he said, "The vast land in America, it's so beautiful. The space makes me feel very American."¹⁶ Being an American didn't mean being white anymore. Being American meant accepting differences and free speech and appreciating the wondrous mountains that stack across Montana.

Despite my dad's change of heart, America meant whiteness to me for years. Whiteness was represented in Giant Thanksgivings and Fourth of July fun. Halloween and peanut butter jelly sandwiches for lunch. Mashed potatoes and green beans. Whiteness wasn't a culture to assimilate into, rather an endless list of actions that were unattainable. I had small Thanksgivings with my parents and an occasional family friend. I never went to school with a paper bagged PB&J, rather a plastic tupperware of sauteed noodles from last night's Chinese dinner. The smell would bother some of my classmates and weird stares soon brought me to begging my parents to buy me frozen mac & cheese for lunch. I tried to be like the white kids. I shopped at Hollister and Aeropostale, copying my best friend's style. I wore excessive plaid and tried to only hang out with my white friends. I grew embarrassed of my parents and their accents. I grew to not like Chinese class or the Asian-American friends that came with it. I was embarrassed of my culture. I was embarrassed of my identity.

And yet, despite all this, I have always known that I was special. When my mom was in her late thirties and had difficulty conceiving a child, the doctors started to tell my parents to try other means of having children. They decided to try adopting. Thousands of dollars were spent on the adoption process. They flew back and forth to China, seeing different babies and filling out legal form after legal form. They finally settled on a little baby girl. Everything was set and all the forms were in order when my parents were informed that they would have to lie. The baby's mother was out of the picture, and in order for my parents to fly the baby girl back, they would have to lie, saying another woman was her mother.

¹⁵ Goh.

¹⁶ Goh.

I have never met any other people as ethical as my parents. They couldn't lie. At this very moment, about ten thousand dollars had been spent on the adoption process. The baby girl was wrapped up and held by my dad. The forms were all ready to sign. Yet, they couldn't. My parents are Christian. Neither were raised in Christian families, but rather found their faith in God through their experiences.

This experience definitely strengthened their faith in God. The adoption case was dropped, and my parents went back to Singapore in 1998. They prayed. They prayed and prayed and prayed some more. A year later, my mom was pregnant. She was thirty-nine. Doctors were seen and warnings were given. "Your child has a high chance of down-syndrome" one would say; "there is a high-risk of the baby being mentally challenged," another would say. All of them recommended tests so my parents could prepare if their child was mentally challenged. Yet, my parents did not take a single test. They trusted in God. Nine months later, I was born.

I was their miracle child. Their only daughter. Our family friends would pat my head as a child and tell me how special I was. And that's why I cannot mess up. I don't have time to fight. I don't have time to be American and sneak into friends' basements for stashes of beer and Jack Daniels. I can't risk sneaking out at 3 am to drive to the beach, hollering out the car window going eighty miles down the freeway. But I also don't have time to protest the injustice that exists so clearly in the pressures for immigrant families to assimilate. Society teaches that we have to care about sneaking out and experiencing the regular teenage life in order to properly assimilate. We must be the perfect immigrant, with good grades, especially in math. But we must also be the typical American, with enough freedom to go out and experience the consequences of the dumb decisions that American teens make. We must put up with a total lack of understanding for why we can't stay out late and disobey our parents as well as the condescendingly racist comments like, "you're pretty for an Asian." And wouldn't it be oh so horrible if we actually didn't want to be American? The audacity of us to not want to assimilate, to not want to be white. What a tragedy.

This idea of a perfect immigrant, especially a perfect Asian immigrant, ties into the idea of the model minority, the obedient or ideal minority. In Ellen Wu's *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority*, the history of the model minority and why Americans expect assimilation from Asian immigrants is uncovered. Today we see Asians as people who do not protest, who remain quiet, who appreciate the American dream that's been given to us and who ultimately put our heads down and work hard. This is the image that America created for us based on its own historical necessities.¹⁷

During World War II, the American government came to the conclusion that racism was halting progress in the fight for democracy against the Axis powers. For example, conversation sparked when leaders realized that the Chinese Exclusion Act could potentially harm America's trans-Pacific alliance with China in the war against Japan. As a result, the American government began to positively portray Asian-Americans, hoping to

¹⁷ Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 242-258.

shine a light on how well America received diversity. The ideas of job-stealing immigrants, yellow-skinned Orientals, and the (now defunct) Chinese Exclusion Acts, were quickly hidden beneath stereotypes of hard-working, obedient, or respectable Asians. And leaders of Asian communities continued emphasizing these stereotypes to perpetuate the positive image of Asian-Americans that still persists today.

When the civil rights movement got underway in the 1950s and 1960s, these stereotypes were used in a divisive way. Asian-Americans were upheld as the model minority so people could point at African-Americans and accuse them of being too outspoken and not hard working enough. They would point out that Asian-American success occurred because of their hard work and obedience. However, Asians were not silent; there were many protests and movements that were ignored and Asians who did not fit the model minority mold were hidden.¹⁸ The model minority stereotype was used to further oppress African-Americans and to this day is used to limit Asians to a very silent, complicit box. With the creation of the model minority, my own identity became limited to this box. Growing up, I have been searching for ways from the two worlds I was born into to eliminate this box.

My upbringing in America in an immigrant family has provided me the tools to dismantle that box. My mother taught me the meaning of hard work. When I came back from school in Kindergarten, crying over how the other students made fun of my English, she went out and bought a box of phonics. I still remember those bright cards with vowels and emphasized letters. She sat with me for days, teaching me letter by letter, even though she herself was still learning the dialects of American English. I received the title of “best reader” the next month. She instilled an unrelenting work ethic in me, making sure I practiced diligently everything from basketball to my standardized test problems. She was there when I cried out of stress and yelled out of frustration at the letters and numbers that floated in front of me and when I sat at the end of the basketball bench. She was there for the worst of me and would give me a quiet smile at the best of me. She built the work ethic in me and her overwhelming love came with it. If I were asked to describe her, I would imitate her description of my grandmother: “She’s a woman of great character,” I would say, “of pride and resilience. Her love for me goes beyond.”

My dad taught me to explore. He taught me to not be afraid of differences. From summer camps of rock climbing to classes in chess, from kayaking to science camps and robotics in between, he would push me to search. From an education at a conservative Christian school, where I learned about Abraham and Moses, to attending a liberal independent high school, where I was exposed to the ideas of Thoreau and Malcolm X, I explored all things. He helped me redefine what being an American meant. Coming to terms with being an Asian-American took a while. Not until the end of high school, after all these experiences and more did I finally understand what it meant to be an American. I didn’t need to be a wild teenager. I didn’t need to eat spaghetti

¹⁸ Wu, *The Color of Success*, 242-258.

or bland potatoes and drink disgusting beer in someone's basement to feel American. But I was also allowed to care. I was allowed to have the freedom to want to change society. I was allowed to protest and carry signs with "Anything you can do, I can do bleeding," written in bright red. Allowed to care about how when I was thirteen, society made me feel embarrassed to have slightly darker skin and different lunches. I am allowed to not want to assimilate. I am allowed to not want to be white.

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Drawing from her personal experience as a swimmer, this author develops and substantiates a bold argument about what the U.S. Olympic Swim Team ought to do in order to maintain dominance.

Ultra Short Race Pace Training: America's Ticket to Gold

By Shannon Leary

Dr. Haas - Sports: They're Not Just Games

Training swimmers for a meet requires carefully crafted practices that follow a specific training method. The quantity method of training focuses on reaching a maximum amount of yardage every training session with the expectation of increasing one's endurance. Successful swimmers who have trained according to the quantity method, such as Michael Phelps and Mark Spitz, are the reason most coaches currently train their swimmers according to the quantity method rather than the Ultra Short Race Pace Training (USRPT) method. USRPT forces swimmers to practice in short, high-speed intervals. This allows swimmers to train at race speed and concentrate on technique while developing the proper amount of endurance for the exact distance of their race. USRPT is being used in other parts of the world such as Great Britain and Australia, who both had excellent performances in the 2016 Olympic Games. If more swim coaches in the United States use USRPT, there will be a revolution in the way athletes train in the sport of swimming, for times that were previously not thought possible will be attained. This will help the United States to maintain its dominance in the swimming events at the Olympics.

Competitive swimming has been around since the middle of the 19th century, and training originated with a focus strictly on technique. However, a shift occurred in the method of training in the late 1920s. According to Milt Nelms, a highly respected stroke analyst, "After photographing world-class swimmers underwater to study their stroke mechanics, Japanese coaches augmented that focus on technique by instituting an intense conditioning program, one that included daily swims of up to 5 miles."¹ The Japanese method proved successful when the men won nineteen of the thirty possible swimming medals in the 1932 and 1936 Olympics. Almost four decades later, the obsession with volume-based practices spiked again when Indiana coach and trained scientist, James Counsilman's star swimmer, Mark Spitz, dominated the 1972 Olympics. Although swim training was originally centered around technique, the quantity method became incredibly popular when swimmers who tried this approach, such as Mark Spitz, showed that it produced successful results. The quantity method continues to be the most popular training method especially with the current success of Michael Phelps. Michael Phelps is the most successful and decorated Olympian of all time with a total of twenty-eight Olympic medals, twenty-three of them gold. Since the quantity method is the most credible and respected method of training, coaches are reluctant to use USRPT because they are afraid of straying from the most popular method that has a long history of proven success, despite the fact that USRPT is more in line with the original training method of focusing on technique.

¹ Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin, *Golden Girl: How Natalie Coughlin Fought Back, Challenged Conventional Wisdom, and Became America's Olympic Champion* (New York City: Rodale Press, 2006), 118.

While the quantity method has garnered a respectable reputation, there are a handful of coaches who have strayed from the quantity-is-better idea and train their swimmers with a focus on quality and technique. David Salo used USRPT and produced successful swimmers, including Amanda Beard, Aaron Peirsol, and Jason Lezak. Although this is not a new method of training in swimming, it is considered new to most people because not many people have competitively trained with a sole focus on quality since before 1930. Nelms notes that Salo should have created a revolution in swimming with his method of training. According to Nelms, the reason he has not is because “he won’t talk about what he does. But it’s also because people aren’t open to changing the paradigm. Any science that flies in the face of the culture is rejected.”² Swimming is slow to change because its culture is conservative. Nelms also points out that “there tends to be this incestuous thing - athletes become coaches, who turn out the next wave of athletes, and everybody protects one another’s interests.”³ If people in the swim world continue to train future generations this way, there will not be much room left for improvement. Innovative ways of training need to be implemented in order to discover how fast one can really swim. Coaches need to train their swimmers using USRPT so that their swimmers can achieve even better times and qualify for high level meets such as the Olympics.

The quantity method of training in swimming calls for an extensive amount of yardage every day. The theory behind this is to acquire the endurance needed to complete one’s race. However, there are many drawbacks that coaches fail to realize when using the quantity method of training with their swimmers. Particularly, a lack of concentration occurs during a quantity practice. While swimming hundreds of yards, one is not focusing on their stroke technique. Instead, they are focusing on finishing to the wall in a fast time in order to get enough rest before the time interval is up. Without a high level of focus in practice, the technique of a swimmer will decline and bad habits will develop, causing them to transfer these bad habits into races, resulting in slower times. USRPT allows for one to engage in technique drills. These drills are left out of quantity training practices because they require slower intervals which takes up more time of the practice, leading to the completion of less yardage. However, Terry Heggy, the head coach of Team Sopris Masters in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, argues in his article, “Divide and Conquer: Break Your Swim Down to Make the Most of Practice”: “[T]echnique drills are fabulous for learning to perform strokes correctly.”⁴ Learning the proper technique is more important than training with an improper technique for a long distance. If one’s technique is not correct, it will ultimately slow them down, instead of propelling them through the water. Using USRPT, swimmers are able to perfect their technique, which ultimately improves their speed in a race.

Coaches who have switched to using USRPT are seeing successful results. Teri McKeever was criticized for the way she trained Natalie Coughlin. Yet, Coughlin went on to be the first female to win a gold medal in the

² Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin, *Golden Girl*, 120.

³ Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin, *Golden Girl*, 121.

⁴ Terry Heggy, “Divide and Conquer: Break Your Swim Down to Make the Most of Practice,” U.S. Masters Swimming, December 4, 2017, accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.usms.org/articles/articledisplay.php?aid=3391>.

100-meter backstroke event at two consecutive Olympic Games. Another well-known and successful swimmer who trains according to USRPT is Katie Ledecky. She is currently one of the most prominent swimmers in the world and most importantly, she is a distance swimmer. Ledecky holds the world record in the 400, 800, and 1500-meter freestyle events. These three events are considered the distance events, yet Ledecky does not train for them using the quantity method. According to Dave Sheinin, an established sports writer for *The Washington Post*, Ledecky trains “55,000 to 70,000, but harder and faster — quality over quantity.”⁵ Connor Jaeger, a 2016 Olympic silver medalist in the 1500 freestyle, makes an important point about training for competition events. Jaeger asserts, “Your physiological system that helps you sprint is going to be hurt the more distance training you do. It’s not that one is being neglected; it’s actually being counteracted.”⁶ When training according to the quantity method, a swimmer completes an excessive amount of yardage with the expectation that their endurance will increase. However, training that much is harmful because it does not prepare a swimmer for the races they compete in at meets. Events at swim meets are not long and only require a swimmer to train for that exact distance. It is more efficient to train for the exact yardage of a swimmer’s race so that they build the endurance and speed needed to specifically complete their specialty event. Training for quantity is overtaxing a swimmer’s body and has even led to injuries in many cases.⁷

Although the 1500 is the longest event offered, one must still sprint the entire length in order to do well. Ledecky holds the world record in the 400 and 1500-meter freestyle events, which are very different distances. However, she still only trains using USRPT. Ledecky focuses on her technique the entire race, particularly her flip turns, so she minimizes the amount of time wasted on technical errors that most distance swimmers make. Since Ledecky uses USRPT, she is able to perfect her turns as well as her stroke in practice. This gives her the upper hand in races because she does not break her technique during a distance event. Most distance swimmers who train with the quantity method get sloppy towards the middle of the race according to Frank Nugent, Thomas Comyns, and Giles Warrington, professors of sports science at the University of Limerick. In their article, “Quality Versus Quantity Debate in Swimming: Perceptions and Training Practices of Expert Swimming Coaches,” they explained that “when you swim at a fast pace the first thing that goes is your technique, your technique falls apart because you are unable to maintain that technique.”⁸ Ledecky, however, maintains her technique throughout the entire race because of her quality training that concentrates on technique throughout the whole

⁵ Dave Sheinin, “How Katie Ledecky Became Better at Swimming Than Anyone is at Anything,” *The Washington Post*, June 24, 2016, accessed March 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/olympics/how-katie-ledecky-became-better-at-swimming-than-anyone-is-at-anything/2016/06/23/01933534-2f31-11e6-9b37-42985f6a265c_story.html?utm_term=.56f0cc6ce42c.

⁶ Dave Sheinin, “How Katie Ledecky Became Better at Swimming Than Anyone is at Anything,” *The Washington Post*, June 24, 2016, accessed March 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/olympics/how-katie-ledecky-became-better-at-swimming-than-anyone-is-at-anything/2016/06/23/01933534-2f31-11e6-9b37-42985f6a265c_story.html?utm_term=.56f0cc6ce42c.

⁷ Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin, *Golden Girl: How Natalie Coughlin Fought Back, Challenged Conventional Wisdom, and Became America's Olympic Champion* (New York City: Rodale Press, 2006), 62.

⁸ Frank Nugent, Thomas Comyns, and Giles Warrington, “Quality Versus Quantity Debate in Swimming: Perceptions and Training Practices of Expert Swimming Coaches,” *Journal of Human Kinetics* 57, no. 1 (2017): 151, accessed March 23, 2018, doi:10.1515/hukin-2017-0056.

training session. This allows her to swim at a high speed for a longer duration of time, which ultimately has led her to becoming the fastest female freestyle swimmer in the world.

USRPT has additional physical benefits such as helping swimmers gain a comfort in the water which, in turn, leads to more comfort when competing. An article by Swim Smooth, a website run by professional coaches that focuses on stroke and technique analysis, argues that “before jumping into the water you need to simply take 5 or 6 deep breaths focusing on a steady exhalation to help you relax. Even dedicate the first 5 minutes of your warm-up to just playing around in the water, e.g. floppy swimming, dolphin dives and swimming underwater.”⁹ This is an important step to finding a comfort zone in the water. A swimmer’s body needs to understand how to naturally move with the water and feel complete safety while swimming in it. This technique is similar to Teri McKeever’s USRPT approach. While training swimmers such as Natalie Coughlin at the University of California, Berkeley, McKeever had her swimmers take five bobs under water before pushing off the wall for their next set. She used this technique instead of a time interval. McKeever additionally used a technique called alligator breathing in which swimmers would have to hold their breath for an extensive amount of time while swimming. When they were finally allowed to take a breath, they would breathe at the wall taking in water as well as air. According to McKeever, this teaches a swimmer “to read where the water is on your face and to learn when you can and can’t take a breath in a race.”¹⁰ These innovative drills and ways of training teach a swimmer to be comfortable in the water. When a swimmer is comfortable in the water, they can focus on their technique without any distractions. Techniques such as these are an essential part of the USRPT practice, helping swimmers to compete comfortably during races with a high focus.

The United States is a powerhouse during the swimming events at the Olympics. The U.S. owns the most Olympic swimming medals of all time with a total of 520. This is about one third of all Olympic swimming medals ever awarded. The next closest country is Australia with 186 medals.¹¹ Although the United States is obviously dominating swimming at the Olympics, there is still room for improvement. America’s two biggest rivals are Australia and Great Britain. Two of Australia’s top teams, Cherrybrook Carlile and Carlile Swimming Club, use USRPT. Great Britain’s team is also a known user of USRPT. At the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Mack Horton from Australia won the men’s 400 meter freestyle while the United States did not even place in the top three. Additionally, in the women’s 200 meter individual medley, Siobhan-Marie O’Connor from Great Britain placed second while Maya DiRado from the United States placed third.¹² This proves that there is still room for the United States to improve in both men’s and women’s events. If more swimmers from the United States train

⁹ Swim Smooth, “Mindset Tips for Intermediate Swimmers,” 2009, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://www.swimsmooth.com/mindset.html>.

¹⁰ Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin, *Golden Girl*, 114.

¹¹ Rachel Lutz, “U.S. Swimmers Dominate All-Time Medal Tally,” *NBC News*, August 4, 2016, accessed March 20, 2018, www.nbcolympics.com/news/us-swimmers-dominate-all-time-medal-tally.

¹² Slominski Pawel and Aleksandra Nowacka, “Swimming – The Structure and Volume of Training Loads in the Four- Year Training Cycle of an Elite Olympic Athlete,” *Polish Journal of Sport and Tourism* 24, no. 3 (2017): 167, accessed March 26, 2018, doi:10.1515/pjst-2017-0017.

using USRPT as Australia and Great Britain are doing, then the United States has the potential to maintain its dominance and even sweep every event.

Swimming is a sport that is slow to adopting new methods of training because of such confidence that the quantity method of training works as shown by Michael Phelps. However, a different method of training is starting to take shape in the swimming world. Ultra Short Race Pace Training, which involves a high concentration on technique and drills, has recently proven successful for athletes such as Natalie Coughlin, Katie Ledecky, and Aaron Peirsol. By training according to USRPT, swimmers will be able to break time boundaries that seemed impossible before. Training will no doubt be different for each and every swimmer. However, USRPT should at least be tried during every swimmer's career because it has shown successful results with swimmers who have competed at the Olympics. If more coaches train their swimmers with USRPT, the United States will continue to dominate the swimming world.

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In this research paper, the ardent writer addresses how women have reacted to the election of Donald Trump.

Making Herstory: Women Turn from Hopeless to Hopeful

By Madison Lemke

Dr. Haas - Women: Their Voices, Their Values, Their Vision

The election of 2016 was disheartening to many women who were hoping for an encouraging future. Hope was seemingly lost when a vulgar voice was elected to be the leader to the land of the free. An outcry for equality escaped into the poll booths and fled from sight, or so it seemed. Though it was a discouraging loss, hopeful women have rallied in response to Donald Trump's hopeless agenda. As a result of crude and concerning statements made by Trump, women have been compelled to use their voice to promote equality. Women have had to constantly advocate for justice throughout history, and since Trump has been a loud voice promoting gender inequality, women have had to elevate their efforts to achieve equality. His demeaning disregard for women has propelled countless women to turn hate into togetherness and compassion. In essence, Trump has unintentionally given women a new sense of purpose.

The months that led up to the 2016 presidential election were difficult for many to fathom because of the potential of having such a hateful person lead the United States. Trump's announcement to run for office in the summer of 2015 felt like a prank orchestrated by Ashton Kutcher for the hidden camera show *Punk'd*. Unfortunately, this was reality. His ideas, which would, if put into action, build barriers to equality were terrifyingly real to women, who were, unsurprisingly, the ones picking up on Trump's distasteful words. Women are familiar with cleaning up the pieces when it comes to the wreckage men continuously create. They have had to do this time and time again throughout history. It has been discouraging to continue on this path, but women have proven that change is possible even though it has been frustratingly strenuous.

In an interview with Senator Barbara Boxer, Chelsea Handler's reaction appropriately represented how many women felt after hearing the results of the election. Handler and Boxer were understandably frustrated about the news. Although discouraged, Boxer has been a comforting voice to those who felt voiceless. She has encouraged them to feel the hurt caused by Trump, but also use that hurt to motivate themselves and others to create a unified movement to counter Trump. Boxer said, "Well my heart's on the floor and I think the first thing to do when something like this happens is admit that."¹ She went on to inspire the discouraged when she said, "We need to move forward and that's it. That's what life is about. That's what we are taught, that it's not where you are when you're high and great it's when you fall down."² Her ability to move forward in an encouraging manner after Hillary Clinton's loss exhibited the stamina and resilience that women often display. Many women have taken the advice of Senator Boxer and have looked to the future with great anticipation.

¹ Chelsea Handler, "The Day After with Sen. Barbara Boxer," YouTube video, 2:00, posted by Chelsea, November 10, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv0TXDcswm4>.

² Handler, "The Day After with Sen. Barbara Boxer," 2:30.

The day after Trump's inauguration, women across the country were compelled to protest and, as a result, the Women's March was born. Millions of people rallied together in the middle of January because of what Trump's presidency represented. The Women's March was significant in regards to what was motivating it: compassion for others and equality for all. It also demonstrated the strength to keep going even though Trump was sitting in the White House. The impactful march was not the only protest that women started because of the new president. It was the springboard hopeful women used to create a nationwide movement to express their concern regarding gender inequality. Without Trump's presidency, the movement would not have occurred because the issues have not been so blatantly obvious. The need for change is clear because Trump is both the face of the United States and the face of oppression. Trump being both does not go hand and hand - at least it should not. Many women believe that the face of oppression should not be the face of the country, so in order to better the portrait, women have started fighting for themselves and generations to come.

Many women have taken the advice of Senator Boxer and instead of remaining discouraged about the results of the election, they have become persistent in their pursuit of equality. Since the Women's March of 2017, the movement has continued into 2018. Although there have been different priorities from 2017 to 2018 regarding women's rights, the focal point is the same: gender equality. Columnist Courtney Cooperman explained this in "Women's March 2018: From Aspiration to Action" when she said, "The first Women's March was an amalgamation of priorities and principles, articulated in chants and colorful bubble letters, that its attendees were dedicated to defending."³ Cooperman went on to show how that would differ from 2018's Women's March when she explained that "the dominant messaging was far more action-oriented."⁴ The continued lack of respect for women Trump has shown has only encouraged women to keep promoting positive change. Women are taking even more charge than last year and Trump has been the one ultimately responsible for that passionate persistence.

Trump not only provided women the initiative to start a nationwide march, but he is also one of the main causes for the resurfacing of the MeToo hashtag. When the audio of Trump explicitly belittling women became public, it was terrifying because he would soon thereafter become the voice of America. Trump's vulgar view of women is shared by other men as well; this led to the realization of a significant problem. A swarm of women came forward to tell their stories about how they had been sexually assaulted, showing how widespread the degradation of women is in America. Arguably, if it were not for the disturbing tape, the empowering MeToo Movement would not have resurfaced. The MeToo Movement was created in 2006 by Tarana Burke, yet it did not catch the media's attention until Alyssa Milano tweeted asking her followers to respond if they were sexually assaulted with the hashtag MeToo in 2017. When women saw the overflow of similar stories experienced by

³ Courtney Cooperman, "Women's March 2018: From aspiration to action," UWire Text, January 26, 2018, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://uwire.com/?s=UWIRE+Text&x=26&y=14&=Go>.

⁴ Cooperman, "Women's March 2018: From Aspiration to Action."

complete strangers, it angered and unified them into starting a nationwide protest. This groundbreaking era has made women feel less alone and that has led the younger generation, in particular, to become empowered to fight against sexism. It is not a coincidence that with Trump in office, impactful women's movements and protests have occurred. If Hillary Clinton had won the presidency, gender inequality would still be experienced by many, but because of Trump's outspoken tendencies, these issues have been widely talked about. The dialogue about the inequality women routinely face has spurred people to action. This will prove significant to the course of history and women's rights because of the increasing support and encouragement women's protests have received. Women have shown that they cannot and will not be silent regarding such substantial issues.

Hillary Clinton's loss to Trump felt personal to women across the world. Her presidency promised more representation for not only women, but women's issues. After the results were in, Clinton was understandably let down. However, the strength that Clinton exhibited after her loss ignited a light of hope in an anonymous fan who felt compelled to write to her saying, "On nights when you feel alone, I am with you. When people doubt you or dismiss you, I am with you. I fought every day for you. So never stop fighting."⁵ This sentiment is widely shared among women. Standing together and uplifting one another has been what women constantly have had to do. Many times, women have been each other's sanctuary in a world that has only sought to oppress and exclude them. This woman, like so many others, had hope, but did not know what to do with that. In her book, Clinton advised women to channel that energy into something more powerful than hopeless hate. A word that has resonated with women since the election has been "enlist." Clinton encouraged this when she explained,

My new mantra celebrated all that energy and activism, but I thought its most important word was the last one: *enlist*. Unless people stay engaged and find ways to translate protests into political power, we aren't going to stop Trump's agenda or win future elections. To do that, we need to invest in political infrastructure: rebuilding the Democratic Party, training new candidates and staffers, improving our data and social media operations, beating back efforts to restrict voting rights, and more.⁶

Women have been empowering each other now more than ever because that is the only source of comfort one can rely on. By summoning energy that is more productive than the kind Trump has been exhausting, power will be supplied in a more equal and useful way.

Although there are women who are providing a more hopeful future, women who supported Trump have counteracted that promising change. It has been difficult for women to understand why their fellow sisters would vote against their fundamental rights. It was a seemingly easy choice to support a future that would bring equality, yet there were women who did not feel the urgent need for such groundbreaking steps forward. Many factors played a part in the decision for women to rally behind Trump. As journalist Sarah Jaffee explains, it is

⁵ Hillary Clinton, *What Happened* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 140.

⁶ Clinton, *What Happened?*, 451.

important to note that in 2016 the “turnout among women was only 1 percentage point higher than it had been in 2012.”⁷ The sad reality that women did not overwhelmingly express support for a candidate who promoted positive change for women made those who do desire equality to feel confused and betrayed. The reality is that the women who supported Trump ignored the potential negative consequence of his loud opinions about gender roles because they are so common: if Trump’s opinions about women are, in essence, what one has always heard, then those opinions - no matter how loud or degrading - are not going to bother them. Jaffe explained that, “[t]he assumption that candidate Trump’s lewdness and sexist comments would be off-putting even to women who typically vote for Republicans went badly awry for the Clinton campaign - perhaps because of just how normal that sexism still feels to many women.”⁸ Change cannot be accomplished when stuck in the past. Women who have been opposed to Trump have been trying to get that point across. Although there were women for whom Trump’s ideas resonated, there are other women who have been fighting for their misguided sisters. The women who have been advocating for equality have tried to help the women who have betrayed them. These women are trying to help their fellow sisters by running for office.

Trump’s presidency sparked a willingness in women to participate in politics. As a result of his inappropriate words and behavior, women have felt compelled to run for office. This would not have been done without Trump because it was only after he was in office that women have felt the intense need to express their political views. Women would not have felt compelled to run for office and protect others if it were not for the treacherous words that have been constantly spewing out of Trump’s mouth. Danny Hayes, an associate professor of political science at George Washington University and former journalist, took note of women taking charge in politics when he wrote:

This year’s congressional elections are likely to feature a record number of female candidates. As of this week, the Center for American Women and Politics had identified 390 women who have filed or are likely to file as U.S. House candidates and 49 women likely to run for the U.S. Senate. Among House candidates, the vast majority — 82 percent — are not incumbents. If those numbers hold up, it would constitute the largest pool of female congressional candidates in history.⁹

Female representation in government has historically been very limited, which is why women’s rights are still under attack. The rights of women have been at stake, yet it was not entirely realized until Trump brought this to light. Many women, like Chelsea Handler, have decided to put their lives on hold in order to move equality for women forward. Handler selflessly quit her job as a host for her television show, *Chelsea*, in order to be a full-

⁷ Sarah Jaffe, “Why Did a Majority of White Women Vote for Trump?,” *New Labor Forum* 27, no. 1 (2017): 18–26, accessed April 17, 2018, doi: 10.1177/1095796017744550.

⁸ Jaffe, “Why Did a Majority of White Women Vote for Trump?,” 20.

⁹ Danny Hayes, “A Year After the Women’s March, a Record Number of Women are Running for Office,” *The Washington Post*, January 19, 2018, accessed February 2, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/01/19/a-year-after-the-womens-march-a-record-number-of-women-are-running-for-office-will-they-win/?utm_term=.f7a5518cd611.

time women's rights advocate. In an interview with MSNBC's Joy Reid, Handler passionately spoke about her plans with Emily's List.¹⁰ She explained how the organization was created to help progressive pro-choice women run for office in the United States. It was notably clear during the interview why a vast number of women have been running for office: it is a reaction to Trump. This has been promising to witness because as women run for office, there will be new ideas and opinions discussed which could ultimately lead to change in policies. Also, this will encourage young girls to want to run for office in the future. This enables young girls to follow in the footsteps of the other powerful women currently campaigning. Researchers Mack Mariani, Bryan W. Marshall, and A. Lanethea Mathews-Schultz explained the impact on young girls who see women in politics when they conducted a study that concluded that "girls are more likely to envision themselves as politically active when and where they see women run viable campaigns for high-profile political offices."¹¹ Trump played a big part in this hopeful representation of women because he compelled women to not only speak up against him, but to take actions to better expand their representation in the political system.

Trump has targeted every type of woman, yet it has not been a matter of spewing that same hatred in response. It is not appropriate to allow his sexist innuendos to continue. The only way to respond in a productive manner is to do everything possible to educate, advocate, and enlist. Those three actions have guided women for centuries and will continue to do so as they resist Trump. Despite Trump's dismay, the fire and fury within women has brought the statement "the future is female" to life.

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¹⁰ Joy Reid, "Chelsea Handler Leaves Show to Get Women Elected," YouTube video, 7:11, posted by MSNBC, January 29, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzQj2f0JMAw>.

¹¹ Mack Mariani, Bryan W. Marshall, and A. Lanethea Mathews-Schultz, "See Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and Sarah Palin Run? Party, Ideology, and the Influence of Female Role Models on Young Women," *Political Research Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (2015): 718, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24637811>.

Determined to prove that inequity is still a defining characteristic of public education in the United States, the author of this expository research essay develops strong connections among poverty, racial inequality, and education policy while cautioning that the academic achievement gap will continue to widen unless recognition leads to reform.

Inequity in the United States Public Education System

By Jessica Sharron

Prof. Godson-Glynn - Stories of Struggle: Race and Inequality in American Life

The 1954 Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* was perceived by many as a step toward educational justice; with the unanimous verdict against segregation in schools, it seemed the public education system was finally going to be equal in the United States. Over sixty years later, however, it is apparent that major race-based inequities still exist. Growing up in poverty, children of color start school behind their more affluent peers because of hardships and circumstances they must deal with at a young age. The education system furthers this marginalization of children of poverty because they commonly attend public schools that are inadequately funded. Students in these classrooms do not have the same opportunities as those in higher socioeconomic status (SES) schools. Although sixty-four years have passed since the *Brown v. Board* decision, today's unequal spending mirrors the "separate but equal" mentality that plagued society during the era of Jim Crow. Because students of color are disproportionately affected by poverty, the cycle of intentional systemic racism in the United States is perpetuated in our public education system, yet it is disguised in ways that make it easy to ignore.

To fully comprehend why a quality education is so important for students of poverty, we need to understand the effects poverty may have on a child. There are numerous reasons why lower socioeconomic status students desperately need a valuable education on par with that of their affluent peers. Children living in poverty often come from chaotic backgrounds, with caregivers having multiple jobs that may leave them unable to be present at home or in the community. As expert educator Eric Jensen writes in his book, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, to grow up emotionally healthy, children need three things: a reliable caregiver, predictable environments and at least ten to twenty hours of reciprocal activity a week (15). Jensen states, "Children raised in poverty are much less likely to have these crucial needs met than their more affluent peers are and, as a result, are subject to some grave consequences" (16). Without actively involved parents, students tend to not be invested in education, matching their parent's nonchalant attitude about success in school. Without having an active motivating presence in their life, children aren't likely to develop a drive to succeed. While it's not necessarily the caregiver's fault they don't have the ability to be as present as more affluent caregivers, this can still be detrimental to student's development. For many children of poverty, it is the school districts that must provide their students with something to contrast the chaos at home.

In addition, children of poverty may lack access to activities that enhance their schooling. Affluent students are often involved in their school communities through after-school activities, but children raised in

poverty may attend public schools that do not have the resources to provide programs in athletics and the arts. These activities are extremely important to a child's development because they give students valuable skills to further their education. Being part of a sports or academic team can teach children the value of working together and discipline. Participating in arts programs can expand a child's creativity and public speaking skills (Jensen 16). Access to these activities enhances a child's education, which is why funding for these programs is imperative.

Less affluent students tend to be more susceptible to depression and to "acting out" than their more affluent peers. Lower SES students may experience chronic stress from a very young age, often at a time in life when they do not know how to cope. As Jensen explains, "This kind of stress exerts a devastating, insidious influence on children's physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive functioning - areas that affect brain development, academic success, and social competence" (22). Stressors can include a whole range of things that affluent peers likely have less experience with, such as: unsafe living situations/neighborhoods, exposure to higher rates of violence, familial issues like divorce, and the burdens of financial strain (Jensen 24). These students have been immersed in these stressful situations for the majority of their lives, being forced to grow up at a much younger age than higher SES students. These constant stressors can have a detrimental effect on a student's academic performance if they go unchecked. While schools do not have the ability to fix problems at home, with proper funding there is potential for school districts to alleviate some of the stress placed on the students. It is crucial that schools have experienced counselors who have expertise in helping children cope with trauma available to students every day. In addition, teachers in less affluent schools need training in order to create a safe space for students to feel the comfort that might be missing at home.

Students living in poverty also may have more physical health problems than their affluent peers. It is often hard for parents to provide nutritious meal options for their children. It is not uncommon that children growing up in poverty either skip meals or eat quickly prepared, processed foods due to parents/caregivers working multiple jobs, limiting the time they have to prepare meals. In addition, nutritious food is expensive and requires knowledge about food preparation to cook. Poor nutrition contributes to poor health overall, leading to increased absences and less time to focus on education. This is another reason why school funding is important: many students rely on the meals provided by educational institutions. A lack of nutritious school breakfasts and lunches can be detrimental to a student's health, leading to an increase in absences and an inability to perform academically (Jensen 43).

When discussing poverty and education in the United States, it is important to note that children of color are disproportionately affected by the inequities that limit academic success that result from inadequate funding. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, White and Asian families have the highest percentage of parents with some sort of degree: 61 percent and 72 percent, respectively. Hispanic families have

the highest percentage of parents without a high school degree (26 percent), with Black parents (10 percent) and Native American parents (11 percent) in second and third (NCES). These details are important to note because it can be hard to break the cycle of poverty, especially with a lack of resources and opportunities. The National Center for Educational Statistics also tracked the percentage of children living in poverty in 2015. White and Asian students had fairly low percentages of poverty - ten and eleven percent, respectively. Meanwhile, the NCES found that Black, Hispanic and Native American students had higher levels of poverty, exceeding 30 percent in all three demographics (NCES). From these statistics, one can conclude that more students of color experience the burden of inadequate funding on their education than white students. These students are as capable of achieving academic success as affluent White students, but they are at a distinct disadvantage because the system is rigged against them.

This system of disadvantage is perpetuated even further because lower SES students of color are not spread equally among schools; instead, they usually end up grouped within the same disadvantaged institutions. Janie Boschma and Ronald Brownstein discuss this trend in an article for *The Atlantic*, writing that “nationwide about three-fourths of both African American and Hispanic young people (compared to about one-third of white students) attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as low income” (Boschma and Brownstein). Schools with high percentages of students from low income families tend to get less funding than affluent schools, in part because of the way schools receive funding through property taxes. In “Disparities Within: Unequal Spending and Achievement in an Urban School District,” Sociologists Dennis Condron and Vincent Roscigno note that the wealthiest districts spend as much as three times per student more than the poorest school districts (Condron and Roscigno 18). The more funding a school has, the more opportunity its students have to prosper. Funding can buy updated textbooks, allow for options in electives and specialized classes, pay for experienced teachers, provide after school activities that focus on physical health and the arts, and ensure small class sizes. Segregating students of color into school districts with less money puts them at a systemic disadvantage in comparison to their affluent white peers, further proving that this inequity is not natural and is, instead, intentionally created by school officials and others in power.

While numerous federal and state initiatives have been enacted to try to level the playing field, many question how useful these programs actually are. One program that has been credited with combating problems associated with high levels of poverty concentrated in specific areas is Title I, which was passed in 1965 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Later, it was revamped as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The purpose of Title I is to provide schools that enroll high percentages of low SES students with extra funding to purchase resources and implement programs to bring their students up to state standards. Schools with a higher percentage of students qualified for reduced lunch have to create programs that specifically target students that are falling behind and attempt to bring them up to a higher level (“Improving Basic Programs”). As the

Department of Education's website states, "Schools enrolling at least 40 percent of children from low-income families are eligible to use Title I funds for schoolwide programs designed to upgrade their entire educational programs to improve achievement for all students" ("Improving Basic Programs"). This means that as long as districts enroll enough SES students, they have the ability to allocate the funds to whatever programs they decide are the most important.

However, these programs do not always work the way they are intended to. Heavily funded urban areas have huge school districts that represent a wide array of races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups. Students of color are often segregated in individual schools within these large cities. Therefore, programs like Title I often get manipulated by school districts to benefit the white, affluent schools. As Condrón and Roscigno put it: "While federal allocations (e.g., Title I) and related distributional dynamics rely on specific policy formulas, local school boards often exercise discretion in the allocation of local funds" (Condrón and Roscigno 20-21). For example, elected school board officials will act in the interest of their most politically active constituents, who tend to be affluent members of the community (Condrón and Roscigno 21). The voices of lower SES citizens and people of color are often overshadowed by white, more affluent constituents, so many of the decisions about the allocation of school funds won't be done in the interest of less affluent students. In addition, to get funding, a school may have to write up a detailed plan. Many low SES schools are too disorganized and have too many internal problems to have the ability to write up detailed proposals (Condrón and Roscigno 21). While federal funding is a good start, it can be easily manipulated and misappropriated and, thus, is not as helpful to low SES students as it could be.

Studies have proven that school districts intentionally spend less on students of color/students of low economic backgrounds. Condrón and Roscigno did a case study of 89 public elementary schools in the same district in Columbus, Ohio. The schools had a racial makeup of 57% Black students, 39% White students, and 4% who identified as another race, and the researchers found that the schools with a lower proportion of poor students spent \$790 more per child than the lower socioeconomic schools in the district (Condrón and Roscigno 23-25). Even though the schools were in the same district, receiving that same federal and local funding, the more affluent and white schools receive more funding. In addition to an unfair funding system, this study proves that large school districts often intentionally put students of color at a disadvantage and investing more resources into the white, more affluent students.

In addition, the study also noted that affluent schools got more local funding and that these schools had better test scores in the categories of reading, math, science and citizenship (Condrón and Roscigno 23). Although in the same city and school district, schools that had more resources produced better academic results than the schools with less funding, proving the significance of equal spending in the education system. All schools in the district have similar curriculum and requirements for the students; the only thing that differs is the

amount of money spent. Without having necessary resources that funding can provide, students are placed at a disadvantage simply because of their socioeconomic status.

Education is the foundation of every child's life. If some children start off with poor, crumbling foundations and others start with strong and supported foundations, not all students will be able to build up from that base equally. In a system where education is not equal, all children do not have the same opportunities to succeed. The United States public education system puts the needs of white, affluent students ahead of the needs of those students who are disadvantaged by low socioeconomic status. Our education system contributes to the systemic racism and privilege that has existed in our country since its birth, putting people of color at a disadvantage from the start. Moreover, it is disguised in such a way that many people aren't even aware there's a system in place. The more people become aware of these inequalities and start to demand an equal chance at education for all youth in the United States, the higher the chance that education will become a tool all children can use to achieve success.

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Inspired to learn more about mass incarceration after watching Ava DuVernay's documentary, [13th](#), the author of this expository research essay argues that the late-twentieth century's "tough on crime" policies, which have imprisoned generations of black Americans, have resulted in a cycle of injustice that is virtually impossible to escape.

Mass Incarceration: 21st Century Chains

By Matthew Woods

Prof. Godson-Glynn - Stories of Struggle: Race and Inequality in American Life

There are over two million people in the United States legal system, including those in prison, jail, and juvenile detention centers, as well as those awaiting trial or out on bail. The United States represents only 4.4 percent of the world's population but houses around 22 percent of the world's prisoners (*13th*). This phenomenon is known as mass incarceration, a term used by historians and sociologists to describe the substantial increase in the number of incarcerated people in American prisons over the last forty years. More specifically, it refers to the large number of African Americans in and out of jails and prisons since the 1960s, when lawmakers started to "get tough" on crime. Mass incarceration serves as a contemporary replacement for the Jim Crow laws that oppressed blacks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It affects generations of black prisoners and their families as they struggle with the direct and indirect consequences of imprisonment, including physical and mental health issues, poverty, and the academic achievement gap. As legal expert Michelle Alexander notes in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, "Only when we view the cage from a distance can we disengage from the maze of rationalizations that are offered for each wire and see how the entire apparatus operates to keep African Americans perpetually trapped" (185). Mass incarceration is being used as another method of oppression against blacks in the United States as it affects both those inside the prison system and those outside the prison system. Small reforms have been made, but society cannot stop fighting for the review and modification of such unjust practices and policies that ruin people's lives.

In the decades after the Civil Rights Era, "[T]he politics of fear and anger fueled 'tough on crime' policies - including mandatory minimum sentences, extraordinarily harsh and racially disparate penalties for even minor drug offenses, and the explosion in life sentences without parole" (Equal Justice Initiative). The laws Congress put in place to combat crime caused the country's prison and jail population to rise. Mandatory sentences for those who committed nonviolent crimes frequently were longer than sentences for criminals who committed murder or rape. Why did this trend begin? America started to "get tough on crime" back in 1968, when President Nixon blamed crime rates on the leniency of the criminal justice system. Nixon stated that the "solution to the crime problem is not the quadrupling of funds for any governmental war on poverty, but more convictions" (qtd. in Curley). This gave the legal system the green light to prosecute more individuals, and the American prison boom began.

In the late 1970s, states moved toward a determinate sentencing structure where sentences were predetermined, and judges did not have much say in certain court cases. Multiple states created sentencing commissions that set strict guidelines for minimum and maximum sentences for prisoners. Also established was a scale for sentencing based on the severity of the offense and the history of the criminal (Curley). Since everything was already set up by the government concerning sentencing and convictions in the judicial system, there was no way for defense lawyers to come up with plea deals or fight the case for a shorter sentence since minimum and maximum rules were already set. This fueled the prison boom in America because many of those arrested gave up on their cases and took whatever the judge gave them. Most of the time the sentencing did not match the crime that was committed, but since minimum sentencing was established, nothing could be done thanks to Nixon.

Illegal drugs were a major problem for America in the 1980s, and President Ronald Reagan followed Nixon's policies by announcing the War on Drugs in 1982. Caitlin Curley, from *GenFKD*, states: "Drug abuse became an extremely publicized issue. Policies of deterrence, rather than prevention, were applied to drug crimes. Federal funds were pulled from drug treatment and prevention and put toward policing and punishment. By 1985, 78 percent of the funds allocated to the drug problem went to law enforcement while only 22 percent went to treatment and prevention" (Curley). Drugs may have been a big problem in America, but taking money from drug treatment and prevention resources and putting it towards law enforcement was not a good idea. It just made American prisons overcrowded.

Since drugs were rumored to be found in predominantly black communities, the mass incarceration of minorities became a problem as law enforcement singled out blacks. Then, in 1992, President Bill Clinton was elected. Although he was a Democrat, he supported the "tough on crime" attitude the American government had endorsed and said, "The simplest and most direct way to restore order in our cities is to put more police on the streets" (qtd. in Curley). Clinton and his policies led to blacks getting arrested, prosecuted and thrown in prison for long periods of time for both violent and non-violent crimes. These "tough on crime" policies, enforced by politicians, media hype, and the resulting public opinion, contributed to high rates of mass incarceration (Curley). The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 established more federal aid for local law enforcement, offered grants to states willing to adopt truth in sentencing laws, set more mandatory minimum penalties, and restricted the federal appeals process for death row inmates (Curley). This 1994 law resulted in the strictest "tough on crime" policies in America. It pushed states to use new sentencing laws with the incentive of more funding: states could obtain more money just by implementing these new policies. One of the most important and unfair rulings from this act is the restriction of the federal appeals process for death row inmates. Prisoners sentenced to death could not even fight for their lives because the state and federal governments would not allow it.

Another law that was put into place by the Clinton Administration and contributed to the overcrowding of prisons is the three strikes law. The three strikes law is when an individual with two felony charges gets another one, having three in total (three strikes), and is sentenced to life in prison (Curley). One of the major controversies concerning this law is that it covers all felony charges whether they are violent or nonviolent crimes. People are getting life in prison for nonviolent crimes when there are other ways to have convicted felons pay their debts to society while learning right from wrong. Such rehabilitating methods include community service, drug courts, rehabilitation, parole, probation, and mental health treatment (Curley). Additionally, the three strikes law led to the problem of children in prison. There are about 53,000 confined youth in the United States, and the number is only increasing (Equal Justice Initiative). The children are the future of this country, yet America paints this picture that as soon as they make one mistake or get that felony stamp, the system will give up on them. More has to be done to give the youth a second chance at life instead of just throwing them in prison until they die. The life of an ex-convict does not go back to normal after their release from prison - in fact, as discussed later, it may only get worse.

In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander compares mass incarceration to a new version of Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system that denied African Americans their rights from the 1870s through the mid-1960s, and Alexander uses the term “colorblindness” to explain how the reality of prejudice and racial discrimination do not exist. For example, police can stop and frisk every young black man in a poor neighborhood as long as they say they are doing it for reasons other than race, and the courts and politicians can ignore the fact that more blacks are targeted by law enforcement. Alexander claims, “Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind . . . We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it” (2).

Alexander talks about the many issues America has when it comes to handling the problems of racism, police brutality, the unfair legal system, prison overcrowding, and what it means to be black in America. She writes:

Arguably the most important parallel between mass incarceration and Jim Crow is that both have served to define the meaning and significance of race in America. Indeed, a primary function of any racial caste system is to define the meaning of race in its time. Slavery defined what it meant to be black (a slave), and Jim Crow defined what it meant to be black (a second-class citizen). Today mass incarceration defines the meaning of blackness in America: black people, especially black men, are criminals. That is what it means to be black. (197)

How America views its African American citizens has not changed much since the Civil War. Blacks have always been treated as second class citizens, but now they are cast as criminals in the eyes of those who do not know what it is like to be black in America.

Alexander goes on to argue, "Today's lynching is a felony charge. Today's lynching is incarceration. Today's lynch mobs are professionals. They have a badge; they have a law degree. A felony is a modern way of saying, 'I'm going to hang you up and burn you.' Once you get that F, you're on fire" (164). Referring to the police brutality and mass incarceration happening in America, Alexander makes correlations to the Ku Klux Klan lynchings of the past. She compares a felony charge to being hanged and burned because felons in the United States have most of their rights stripped from them. Felons cannot vote for a minimum of 12 years after their release, they find it extremely difficult to get good jobs to support themselves, and they cannot apply for certain housing and government programs. Further, according to the Equal Justice Initiative, "Many poor people . . . must make the untenable choice of pleading guilty and being released (burdened by fines, court costs, and other collateral consequences of a criminal conviction that they cannot afford) or remaining in jail indefinitely waiting for a lawyer" (Equal Justice Initiative). This relates to Alexander's overall argument about race because people of color are singled out the most. Commonly, they cannot defend themselves against charges and legal fees and end up staying in a prison cell waiting months to years for their trials to begin. Some of these people are innocent and spend time incarcerated for no reason.

The case of Kalief Browder illustrates this point. Browder was an African American teen from Bronx, New York. In 2010, at age sixteen, he was accused of stealing a bookbag with some expensive items inside. Browder was imprisoned on Rikers Island for three years with time spent in solitary confinement. An inhumane way to treat a person, solitary confinement is a form of imprisonment in which an inmate is isolated from any human contact, often with the exception of prison staff, for 22–24 hours a day, for a duration ranging from days to decades. This method of imprisonment breaks down a prisoner mentally, increases instability, and is considered a method of torture in other countries (13th). Solitary confinement is dangerous and can impact one's sanity. When a person is not in the right state of mind, they can lash out and do things they will regret and may eventually do something that will result in an additional or longer prison sentence.

Again, Kalief Browder was accused of a crime and spent three years on Rikers Island waiting for a trial. He pled not guilty but still had to wait years for his trial to start. Like Browder, many people arrested are unable to pay bail or their bond, so they spend a long time in cells just waiting to be set free. Browder was released when the prosecutor lacked the evidence to prove he was guilty. Two years after his release from prison, Browder died by suicide, hanging himself from an air conditioning unit outside his bedroom window in his mother's home. His supporters say his death was the result of mental and physical abuse sustained in prison (13th), and his case has been retold by many activists who call for the reform of the New York City criminal

justice system. While a person is in jail or prison, their physical and mental health worsens every day due to long hours of solitude, prison conditions, and abuse to the body and mind. Many believe that such experiences led to Browder's death. In "Mass Incarceration, Public Health, and Widening Inequality in the U.S. A," Wang and Wildeman assert that inmates usually go into prison without any medical conditions that seriously harm their well-being, but they end up coming out with series chronic medical and mental health conditions that are not adequately addressed while in and out of prison (Wang and Wildeman).

In addition to poor quality healthcare, those who have been incarcerated are restricted from many things upon their release, such as housing, financial welfare, and food stamps: "Having even a minor criminal record, including a misdemeanor or an arrest without conviction, can create an array of lifelong barriers that affect employment and business opportunities; deny access to student loans, housing, and food assistance; and restrict the right to vote" (Equal Justice Initiative). Being incarcerated can ruin people's lives due to the many things they are not able to receive, even after they pay their debt to society. It is very difficult to get a job when you are an ex-convict. On top of that, if you cannot get a job, you cannot apply for housing and food assistance. Without other options, crime might become the only path of survival. Our system increases, rather than decreases, recidivism. The hardest thing ex-convicts must face outside of prison is re-entry into the world. Over 70 million people have criminal records indexed by the FBI, and they cannot get jobs to support themselves, which may lead them down a negative path and to prison again (Wang and Wildeman).

Mass incarceration disproportionately affects African American children with parents in prison. According to an article in *The Washington Post*, "By the age of 14, approximately 25 percent of African-American children have experienced a parent, in most cases a father - being imprisoned for some period of time . . . The comparable share for white children is 4 percent; an African-American child is six times as likely as a white child to have or have an incarcerated parent" (Strauss). These staggering and disproportionate statistics show how grave the problem of mass incarceration is for black families. Moreover, "The evidence is overwhelming that the unjustified incarceration of African-American fathers (and increasingly, mothers as well) is an important cause of the lowered performance of their children and of the racial achievement gap" (Strauss). Mass incarceration is tearing apart families and children become less successful than they could be due to a lack of motivation and not having the support of both parents to keep them going. Research shows that the incarceration of a parent results in children being less successful in terms of academics and raises the likelihood of them dropping out of school and perhaps even being homeless (Strauss). It is like a never-ending cycle of problems that contribute to the mass incarceration of people of color. Without a parent, African American children are more likely to fail to thrive, become "problem children," and have health and economic issues (Strauss). Clearly, mass incarceration greatly affects multiple generations and their chances of success.

Recently, some have argued that mass incarceration is no longer an issue because of an increase in white arrests and convictions. Over the last fifteen years, racial disparities in the American prison system have been declining, according to reports by the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System. Cited in a *Washington Post* article: "From 2000 to 2009, for example, there was a 22 percent drop in arrests of black people for violent crime; for whites, the decrease was 11 percent" (Hager). The writer goes on to assert that "The narrowing of that gap since the mid-1990s—right around the passage of the 1994 crime bill, which is often blamed for the spike in black incarceration—has been nearly as sharp. And in 2000, something else happened: White people started getting locked up for drug crimes more often" (Hager). Yet while arrests for drug crimes in black communities are declining, mass incarceration still affects blacks at a disproportionate rate. Michelle Alexander argues that "African Americans are not significantly more likely to use or sell prohibited drugs than whites, but they are made criminals at drastically higher rates for precisely the same conduct" (197). Statistically speaking, today African Americans continue to be criminalized at high rates for drug offenses, and as Alexander asserts, the effects are lasting: "Black people have been made criminals by the War on Drugs to a degree that dwarfs its effect on other racial and ethnic groups, especially whites. And the process of making them criminals has produced racial stigma" (197). This stigma will linger, even if incarceration rates begin to decrease. Ever since Reagan announced the war on drugs back in the 1980s, law enforcement has targeted black communities where drugs were known to be. In today's society, that stigma is still in the minds of many, and blacks continue to be unjustly targeted.

Sadly, mass incarceration is still being used a method of oppression against blacks in the United States. Obviously, it affects both blacks inside the system and those outside of prisons, but it truly impacts all Americans. If we are to be a country where everyone is considered equal, mass incarceration must be addressed. In recent years, Ava Duvernay's documentary, *13th*, and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, both insightfully exposed how biased the justice system is, but people still deny and ignore the problems. There are so many sources that explain the ins and outs of the prison system and how unbearable and unfair it can be to African Americans. It is up to the people of this country to become informed, rise up, and spark a change for the future.

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For this unit essay, the writer was required to compare and contrast the sentiments of two incarcerated poets with two characters from other texts who also experienced incarceration of some kind. Focusing on the notion of control, the author considers how people develop various strategies to combat their feelings of being overwhelmed by their surroundings and includes an apt personal experience to extend her analysis.

Dull Yellow Walls

By Madison Bratone

Prof. Rody-Wright - Incarceration

At some point in a person's life, he/she may feel trapped with no way out. Some people make the best of the situation and even try to control it in some way. Others allow the trapped feeling to completely consume them, and they become hopeless. Is there always a way to exert some form of control in every situation? Should defeat be an option? These questions are answered in two poems: "The Tour" by an unknown author in *Incarceration Nation* and "Disguised as a Poem" by Elmo Chattman, Jr. In both of these poems, an incarcerated individual takes control of his or her captive environment. "The Tour" relates to the stories told in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Anne Frank was forced to hide in an old attic for two years but mentally escaped her situation by writing and focusing on the small positive things. "Disguised as a Poem" parallels the experience of a young girl from the novel *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana De Rosnay. Through the analysis of Anne Frank, *Sarah's Key* and the two poems, it is clear that in every situation, people who are physically confined use their minds to escape, giving them some control over their situation while people who are physically free often become imprisoned by their thoughts and therefore must use their physical freedom to control their situations.

It is extremely difficult for someone who is incarcerated to control his or her environment because imprisonment takes over one's mind and overwhelms it with negative thoughts. A prime example of this can be found in "The Tour." In this poem, the author struggles to control his environment because he is locked inside an institution with no way to escape. All he knows is his small cell and the confines of the prison. The author describes the plain white walls of the institution, the restricted opportunity for expression, and abusive events going on inside. He seems defeated and submissive to this environment because there is not much he can physically do. Yet, he finds a way to express a minimal amount of control in his captive environment through writing about his memories. He writes about "yanking the rope/down... [to a] folded stairway/like the one leading to/grandma's musty old attic" (Hartnett 76). The author envisions a mental escape from his physical environment by allowing his mind to travel to other places through his poetry.

In comparison to the author of "The Tour," Anne Frank and her family were forced to live in a cramped attic for over two years. She was not able to leave that space because of the very real fear of being taken to a concentration camp. This is a similar situation to the author of "The Tour" because the two were not able to physically leave their environments, so they used their minds as a means of escape. Anne Frank remained positive through this terrifying situation. Her positivity is often shown in her journals, such as when she wrote,

"[t]he sun is shining, the sky is a deep blue, there is a lovely breeze" (505). Anne Frank was not able to physically step outside and embrace nature. However, she did so mentally as much as she could, and this comforted her. Frank did not want to fill her mind with thoughts of the concentration camps but instead with the things she enjoyed, like nature. This is similar to the author of "The Tour" who imagines being in his grandmother's house instead of inside his abusive environment. Both are thinking of things they enjoy as a means of comfort and as a way to escape their physical confinement.

While incarcerated, individuals daydream to remind themselves of the good things that they cannot experience while locked up. This is a similar escape mechanism to what Frank and the author of "The Tour" used. The physically confined individuals mentally free themselves through their thoughts. After Elmo Chattman describes the horrors of the prison in his poem "Disguised as a Poem," he goes on to write, "For three hours/ we joust/ we orbit around each other wrestling with/ words/ we make love with words/ we grow close/ We meet in a place called poetry/ one woman/ and a few captured men/ We speak of poems/ and grasp at them like straws/ until it is time to go" (Tannenbaum 202). Chattman is describing a class that he takes in prison, and this three hours of writing poetry is his mental escape. He comforts himself in his mind because he never wants to feel defeated. Using poetry to control his situation is comparable to the other authors because they all used their minds to remain free in a sense. Mental escape is one way many people exert small amounts of control over their environment.

A young girl from *Sarah's Key* also found a way to mentally escape from an inhumane situation. As families were being ripped apart and she was hearing the screams of women and children all around her, the author wrote, "[h]er mother looked back at her daughter with a tiny, brave smile. She seemed to say, you see, darling, we'll be alright, the police said so. You'll be coming to join us in a few days. Don't worry, my sweet" (Rosnay 73). The girl was kept in a separate area from her mother, so she imagined her mom was telling her everything will be ok. Although her mother did not actually say this, the girl was so overwhelmed by the world she was physically in, she created a new one in her head, where her mother could be with her. This is a similar situation to Chattman. In many captive environments, especially incarceration, there are not many ways to exert control. However, one's mind can be used as an escape mechanism.

Earlier this year I was in an environment that I felt I had absolutely no control over, the Stony Brook Hospital Emergency Room. As my siblings and I sat in the dull yellow room awaiting the doctor to give us any information about my dad, I felt completely helpless. At that moment there was absolutely nothing I could do but sit and wait until information arrived. I felt completely imprisoned - mentally by my own thoughts, and physically by the waiting room since I was not allowed to see my dad. Rather than being kept in a place, I was being kept from going into the hospital room, which is where I really wanted to be. Quickly I started to panic and became extremely overwhelmed. I decided since I was doing myself no good by sitting in that dull yellow room, I

would go outside and breathe in the cool winter air. My older brother met me outside, and we tossed around a football in the parking lot. After deciding to step away from the situation for a short time, my thoughts became more organized, and I felt in control of my own mind. I learned that if I slow down and think about how I can improve my situation, I will at least be able to control myself. Personally, nature helps me relax and by escaping the direct cause of the stress, I was able to organize my thoughts. My thoughts were completely jumbled, so I used my physical freedom to leave the room I was in to escape my mind. In every situation now, if I am feeling overwhelmed, I go outside and organize my thoughts so I can remain in control of my mind.

Exerting control in situations that seem uncontrollable is extremely important for one's mental health. The feeling of being trapped is terribly overwhelming, so finding a way to manage that situation will benefit a person greatly. It is shown through many examples that despite the circumstance, there is a way to control every situation. Defeat should never be an option. Imprisoned people find many different ways to exert control over their environments. It is shown throughout the texts that finding a comforting escape, such as poetry or daydreaming, helps incarcerated individuals handle their emotions. People who are physically confined, use their minds to escape, and people who are mentally confined, use their physical freedom to escape the mental imprisonment.

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In this critical reflection essay about diversity, the writer artfully uses five different texts in her call for action against apathetic attitudes and deeply-rooted biases.

What Happens When We Accept a Lack of Diversity?

By Nora Collins

Prof. Krisandra - On the Move

I, like many other people in this part of the country and world, attended a very homogeneous high school. There was little to no variation in terms of the racial, cultural, or economic backgrounds of students, meaning that an overwhelming majority of us came from the white middle class. My high school and many others seem to be microcosms for their larger communities; if a school has little to no diversity, then this probably reflects the level of difference in the greater surrounding area. Because of this, a lack of diversity slowly becomes the norm in many communities and, therefore, isn't usually questioned or changed, just accepted. Starting from a young age, this idea of uniformity seeps into people's minds and eventually becomes ingrained. While a lack of diversity doesn't have to be entirely detrimental, it does close people's minds to the perspectives, cultures, and lives of other people. When we simply accept a lack of diversity, people tend to get stuck in their mindsets and are unable to acknowledge bias. With this, people are not able to understand or change the way systemic discrimination functions in our society.

Oftentimes in a non-diverse community, people are naive to their own privilege. They cannot outwardly see examples of people in their lives who do not benefit from white privilege, male privilege, or heterosexual privilege, so therefore they assume that these things must not exist. At other times, those favored in society cannot imagine a life without these privileges since they have lived with them for so long. Since they have never experienced a life without entitlements, they remain blissfully unaware that others do not get to live with the same comfort and ease. Many people, for example, take necessities such as food, shelter, education, and healthcare for granted. Failure to recognize the plight of those who do not have access to these things exacerbates the problem and makes a solution improbable. The "favored" will either continue to deny their privilege or remain unaware of its existence. Such people stay in their bubbles, so to speak, and never bother to learn about what "the other" may experience.

Peggy McIntosh, in her essay entitled "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to see Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," extensively discusses the idea of privilege and how it permeates our society. She speaks to the issue of people remaining unaware of privilege when she states that "[she] had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts [her] at an advantage" (71). She goes on to list forty-six unearned "special circumstances and conditions" that she gets to enjoy strictly because she is white (73). These include the ability to "go shopping alone most of the time, fairly well assured that [she] will not be followed or harassed by store detectives" (73). She also acknowledges that if pulled over by the police, she can

be certain that her race is not a contributing factor (74). Fortunately, McIntosh was able to eventually recognize her privilege and the systems of privilege that exist in the United States, but this is certainly not the case with everyone. We are much less likely to see the world from McIntosh's perspective if we never venture outside our sheltered communities and mindsets.

When we cannot or will not confront the privileges that McIntosh points out, it is also likely that we will not be able to confront our biases. A bias, for reference, is a prejudice for or against a particular group which sways opinions about that group. Everyone has these implicit biases, even those living in the most diverse areas. Those living in the most sheltered communities, however, are the least likely to ever have to face their biases head on. *The Hate U Give*, a novel written by Angie Thomas, is an account that illustrates many of the things that can happen when people do not see or admit to biases. The most shocking instance of this can be noted in the death of Khalil, a young black man in the book. He is shot by a white police officer while unarmed and in the company of his friend Starr, who defends his innocence when she states, "He didn't do anything . . . We didn't do anything. Khalil didn't even have a gun" (34). The police officer feels threatened by Khalil, even though he poses no danger, and it is the officer's bias that costs Khalil his life. Starr, the narrator, reflects upon the many times that she has indirectly witnessed similar incidents: "I've seen it happen over and over again: a black person gets killed just for being black, and all hell breaks loose" (34). She is keenly aware that Khalil's murder certainly would not have taken place had he been white. Unfortunately, this cruelty exists outside of the fictional world of *The Hate U Give* and is a harsh reality for young black men such as Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin, who were targeted because of their race.

The death of Khalil in the novel and others like him in real life is made even more tragic by the false assumption that they somehow deserved their fate. This point is illuminated in the book through the character of Hailey, who is one of Starr's closest friends. She claims that Starr should get over Khalil's death because "he was probably gonna end up dead anyway" and that "he was a drug dealer and a gangbanger" (341). She even goes so far as to say that the police officer probably "did everyone a favor" by killing Khalil (341). Hailey is unable to acknowledge that the statements she makes are rooted in bias, likely because she is exposed to very little diversity in her mostly white, mostly wealthy school and neighborhood. The sad reality is that many people are like Hailey today; we've all heard people make racial slurs, stereotype others, and degrade individuals. Perhaps if these people were exposed to more difference in their lives, they would be less inclined to make assumptions about others or speak degradingly about people from diverse backgrounds.

The idea of bias present in the fictional *The Hate U Give* can also be seen very clearly in the work "Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space," the personal narrative of author Brent Staples. Staples' piece comes from his own perspective as a black man who has noted people's reactions to him as he minds his business in public. The author describes his experiences of being stereotyped on the streets, solely based on his appearance,

and says that simply by being black, he has the “ability to alter public space in ugly ways” (383). This became evident to Staples when a young woman who he encountered on the streets of Chicago clutched her purse, “picked up her pace,” and ran away from him (383). He goes on to tell of hearing the *thunk thunk thunk thunk* of car doors being locked as he crosses the street, being mistaken for a burglar, and entering a jewelry store only to have the proprietor emerge warily with an enormous Doberman Pinscher (384-385). Sadly, Staples’ experiences are certainly not uncommon.

We see the harmful effects of bias all the time in public places; people tend to be automatically wary of black men and assume the worst. This can be true of other minorities as well. In fact, there is an episode of a popular television show entitled *What Would You Do?* that points out this bias quite well. In it, a white man, a black man, and a white woman, all actors, pretend to steal a bike from a bike rack. Passersby seldom question the white man, go out of their way to help the white woman, but immediately and aggressively question and confront the black man. Although these people are all participating in the same act, bystanders’ automatic biases are shown in the case of the black man (“Bike Theft”). The color of his skin makes onlookers question and fear his intentions. This TV show, like the writings of McIntosh, Thomas, and Staples, serves to remind us what happens when we accept a lack of diversity in our lives.

Clearly, there is work to be done in regards to embracing diversity. If we simply accept that diversity doesn’t exist in our particular community, we are in danger of remaining stuck in our ideas about privilege and bias. Author and activist Verna Myers, in her TED Talk entitled *How to Overcome our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them*, refuses to let racist and bigoted behavior continue because people refuse to acknowledge their biases. Her talk focuses mostly on black men, but it can be extended to refer to all types of people who are marginalized. She opens up and relates to her audience by asking, “You know that part of us that still crosses the street, locks the doors, clutches the purses, when we see young black men? That part. I mean, I know we’re not shooting people down in the street, but I’m saying that the same stereotypes and prejudices that fuel . . . tragic incidents are in us” (Myers). She goes on to discuss biases that she has and is willing to acknowledge. For example, she admits that she was less than confident in the female pilot when she experienced turbulence on her flight. Being willing to point out our own prejudices, she believes, is key to embracing diversity. These natural biases that she speaks of are inside us all and refusing to note them has proven time and time again to be dangerous.

Being aware of our biases and privileges certainly will not entirely solve issues of discrimination in our country. It is, however, the first step. In order to make this first step, though, we must stop being so comfortable with homogenous lifestyles and open our minds to the oppression that other people around us face. Our current president seems to want us to accept a homogeneous community. His comments on immigration, race, and gender create a very real and disturbing problem in society today. We cannot allow our personal biases to

continue to divide our world. We must open our minds and hearts to people of different races, religions, genders, and sexual orientations. Of course, this cannot happen in a day. We can start, however, by providing diversity training in schools and the workplace. We can promote and attend multicultural events and seek out opportunities to actually interact with people who do not look and think exactly like we do. These steps may help to pop the homogenous bubble we live in. If we do this, we will better be able to understand the differences of people around us and reduce some of the terrible acts of discrimination that we see occurring all too often today.

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Encouraged to make connections between what they are learning and the wider world, first year students are required to attend and reflect on events outside of class. After participating in a food festival, this student readily saw how classroom discussions about “voice,” “expression,” and “diversity” were present and shared at the event, thereby enhancing her educational and cultural experiences.

The Siena International FoodFest

By Abigail Donohue

Prof. Barranca - Voice

Tables of delicious food lined the walls, and bunches of students wrapped through the halls of the Sarazen Student Union for the Siena International FoodFest that was held on September 16th. A variety of food and beverages from over 40 countries was served by students, and live performances representing various cultures took place during the event. I chose to attend this event primarily because I wanted to try new foods. I arrived to the FoodFest 30 minutes late, so unfortunately I missed the crêpes as well as the cannolis. Although I was disappointed about missing dessert, I did get the opportunity to enjoy a variety of dishes, including fish n’ chips, poutine, and kielbasa. I learned that different countries incorporate different spices and flavors into their dishes. The International FoodFest opened my eyes to what others are eating around the world, and I would definitely attend this event again. By students teaching other students what people around the world eat, the Siena International FoodFest expresses students’ voices through a community of truth.

The International FoodFest was a fantastic learning experience that brought together many people within the Siena community. Author and educator Parker J. Palmer is an advocate of “the community of truth,” which is an educational method where each person discussing a particular subject adds their input to the conversation. Since not one particular person is teaching the subject, each person involved contributes their ideas, hence enhancing everyone’s knowledge. Palmer explains that “[t]he community of truth, far from being linear and static and hierarchical, is circular, interactive, and dynamic” (3). Such a statement describes how the FoodFest operated. Together, the students serving the food worked with the students eating the food to create an interactive learning environment. Those who served the food had also created signs that listed what each food was and where it was from. The students attending the event walked around the tables as they read about the different foods from around the world. Therefore, the knowledge about international foods flowed from student to student, adding to each person’s cultural knowledge. This process produced not only an interactive learning environment, but a circular and dynamic learning space for all those present.

Even though the main aspect of the FoodFest was the food, there were many live performances throughout the night as well. For example, I watched a traditional Indian dance. The young woman dancing was expressing her voice as she displayed her culture through her dance and her outfit. Dancing and singing are ways that people from different cultures around the world express who they are, and this cultural diversity should be explored and appreciated since it benefits everyone. Palmer proclaims that “We invite *diversity* into our

community... because diverse viewpoints are demanded by the manifold mysteries of great things” (5). Palmer believes that by learning about the diverse lives of others, we can learn many great things and involve ourselves in many incredible opportunities that we might have missed out on otherwise. I am certain that by educating ourselves about other people’s cultures, we open many new doors to the world around us and leave ourselves with so much more to explore.

College students tend to not miss opportunities for free food. There was, therefore, a large number of students that attended the FoodFest. However, it was not just the free food that drew in attendees; I was actually quite interested to hear about what other people around the world eat. With such a large variety of foods, there was something for everyone at the International FoodFest. No one was eating the same plate of food, and as we discussed what we were eating, we were ultimately teaching one another. As Palmer explains, “The things of the world call to us, and we are drawn to them—each of us to different things, as each is drawn to different friends” (4). The foods I chose are what I was drawn to. I then used my new knowledge about the cultures voiced through this food to teach others.

The Siena International FoodFest generated one considerable community of truth. Each person chose different foods, gathered different opinions, and experienced cultures they might not have before. No matter who I spoke to at the Siena International FoodFest, I was always learning something new. Not one person had the same thing to tell me, and I left the FoodFest with a greater sense of the cultures of the world. I felt motivated to further my experiences with different cultures and learn more about the beautifully diverse planet we all live on. The voices expressed through the different foods and performances taught about the diversity of cultures to one Siena student at a time.

Work Cited

Palmer, Parker. “The Community of Truth.” *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. Jossey-Bass, 1999.

The students in this class were asked to write a letter to an author of a text read and discussed in the Diversity Unit. Below is a powerful student response to the author of an op-ed piece on "white privilege."

A Response to Tal Fortgang

By Angela Dziuba

Dr. Liptak – Representing Trauma

Dear Mr. Fortgang,

When reading your op-ed piece in which you challenge the common phrase, "check your privilege," I found myself in a difficult position. The title itself - "Why I'll Never Apologize for My White Privilege" - is provocative enough, but as a relatively privileged white person myself, I can understand where you are coming from. The idea that nobody should be made to feel guilty for who they are is so universal that it can resonate with anyone, and as a grandchild of holocaust survivors, I can particularly appreciate your family's narrative. However, your argument uses these common truths to defend your misguided opinion. It is important to recognize that your blindness to privilege in American society is a disservice to yourself and to our nation as a whole.

Anyone living in today's politically and socially charged climate can understand the risk in publicly sharing their opinions, especially if they are less than politically correct. While you may be considered brave by some for explaining your convictions, I cannot defend your attempt to hide behind your grandparents' adversity. You concisely describe their lives, pointing to the lack of privilege that destroyed the life they knew and delivered them to the hardships of the holocaust. Reading this, I couldn't help but think about my own grandparents fleeing their homes in Ukraine only to be tortured and nearly worked to death in a labor camp. I thought about how they escaped into Germany, and then to Venezuela, working so hard to eventually reach America where my father's life began. However, unlike you, I cannot disrespect my family by claiming their lack of privilege as my own. You explain, "That's the problem with calling someone out for the 'privilege' which you assume has defined their narrative. You don't know what their struggles have been" (Fortgang). Your point is clear - you believe that one should not be judged solely based on their appearance. While this notion is true, it should only apply to the individuals who have faced the adversity themselves. It cannot be applied to their grandson who has never experienced the traumas of being displaced, living in a labor camp, and emigrating to save his life. Your grandparents and parents made great sacrifices for you so that you would never have to struggle in the ways that they did. Your family's sacrifices are what gave you the privileges of being a white man in America, the privileges you now pretend to not have in a nation defined by its treatment of minorities.

The deep-rooted issue of race in America has led to intense conflicts regarding privilege and meritocracy. During our nation's earliest years, Native Americans were constantly persecuted for the color of their skin and their "uncivilized" culture by the Europeans who stole their land. Centuries later, Asian immigrants responding to the gold rush in newly-settled California were often rejected and abused by their white counterparts who were participating in the westward expansion movement. Even today, many groups continue to face discrimination in our country, but none more than those of African descent. Black Americans today continue to feel the cultural impacts of centuries of slavery and the subsequent struggle for equality. Whether or not one chooses to defend these actions against racial groups, they cannot deny that the color of one's skin greatly impacts how they are treated in America. Your frequent denial of this fact is what I am most confused by. You seem to act as though race is not an issue in our nation, as if one's complexion doesn't instantly set them

up to be treated a certain way. While I understand that you may wish to appear colorblind and thus a true champion for equality among the races, I must remind you that your wishful thinking is not yet a reality in America.

Your blindness toward your privilege is not only misguided, but irresponsible. You do have privilege as a white man in America. You aren't fearful of being profiled as a criminal or assumed to be the recipient of a government handout as many black Americans are. Additionally, as a man, you don't consider yourself a potential victim of sexual assault on your campus. Pretending that you don't have privilege means that you are pretending that these events don't happen. When your grandparents emigrated to the United States, they did not have to fear being persecuted for the color of their skin. While they were certainly a minority because of their Jewish faith, they were afforded many of the opportunities that multi-generational American racial groups were still denied. Your argument that one's race and sex should not be considered in assessing their privilege, while understandable, is detrimental to the current social climate in America.

Your denial of your own privilege is incredibly irresponsible as a young person in America. However, I can understand the underlying ideas of your argument. It is true that we strive as a society to see people not for their race, gender, or any other social identity category, but for who they are as individuals. Additionally, we should never make assumptions purely based on a person's outward appearance and nobody should ever be made to feel guilty for who they are. While all of these ideals could level the playing field of American social life, they are not true in our current reality. In your blindness toward your privilege, you fail to acknowledge the many issues your generation is attempting to tackle. Ultimately, I encourage you to try your hand at self-reflection, but also, rather than only thinking of yourself and your own narrative, try to consider the narratives of many others in America. This is not to say that you should keep your opinion to yourself, but rather you should be engaging in the greater conversation. You are an intelligent person and your voice should not be silenced. However, I think it is very important to be on the right side of history, and that comes down to attempting to improve our nation as a whole. I believe that with empathy and compassion, you will be able to see the error in your thinking and reconsider your position on privilege.

Respectfully,
Angela Dziuba

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In honor of the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, all of the first year students read Gris Grimly's graphic novel adaptation over the summer of 2017. In the first writing assignment of the year, the author of this short analysis stakes a clear claim in regard to the nature versus nurture debate.

From Creature to Monster

By Madeleine Graziano

Dr. Liptak - Representing Trauma

In *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein*, the graphic novel adaptation of Mary Shelley's original text, the dynamic and parasitic relationship between the Creature and Victor Frankenstein proves how incredibly dangerous it is to rely solely on others for your own eternal happiness. I believe that in constructing the Creature, Victor's role as a parent is inherently established; thus, when he rejects all responsibility associated with the Creature, he is directly transforming the Creature into a Monster. While many will argue that the Creature is intrinsically predisposed to violence, I believe that through systematic and repetitive abuse, rejection, and neglect, the unhappy Creature becomes violent, obsessive, and malevolent. When Victor creates the Creature, as a parent, he assumes direct responsibility for its happiness, social and moral beliefs, and behavioral tendencies.

In recent discussions of behavioral development, one controversial issue that has been raised pertains to whether a child's behavior and mannerisms are the result of biologically predetermined factors or learned and adapted tendencies. On the one hand, some argue that behaviors are inherited much like hair color and height. On the other hand, others argue that experiences and additional environmental factors, instead, form our thought processes. My own view is that parents are responsible for nurturing, advising, and guiding their children in order for them to truly achieve happiness, and this debate is addressed through the relationship between the Creator and the Creature in *Frankenstein*.

As the Creator, Victor's hubris consumes and blinds him throughout the creative process; thus, his shock and revolt as the Creature is first awakened are not entirely unexpected. However, the neglect that follows Victor's initial horror is unparalleled and unwarranted. In rejecting his role as parent, he is denying his Creature the opportunity for proper emotional and moral development and, in turn, abolishing any of the necessary foundational virtuous basis that would allow the Creature to understand or achieve true happiness. Victor is wholly responsible for instilling, or failing to instill, such values and is, thus, directly accountable for the Creature's unhappiness and resulting violence. The formation of the Creature's behavior is seen when he addresses Victor and dejectedly confesses: "My spirits were elevated by the enchanting appearance of nature; the past was blotted from my memory, the present was tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope, and anticipations of joy . . . I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling; but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death" (Shelley 100). The Creature is essentially saying that due to his creator's absence, he has established that the only way to overcome pain and achieve even a semblance of repose is to die. In revealing this morbid thought process, the creature is exemplifying the

impact that nurture, or lack thereof, has on someone. The Creature can never be truly virtuous as Victor's inability to accept responsibility has led to a lack of emotional and moral understanding in his creation. In having no parental figure to nurture him, the Creature draws his own skewed conclusions about his happiness and the world around him.

Consequently, the Creature cannot understand what happiness is beyond an intangible ideal that is devoid of pain and suffering. The Creature's physical appearance and learned hatred for others in society lead him to pressure Victor into creating someone just as ghastly and easily rejected. His need for companionship is so great that he deems a female companion to be the panacea to all the pain and suffering he has endured in his short existence. He vows to disappear from his creator's life and withdraw from society entirely if Victor completes the task of constructing a female with the same grisly appearance and proportions. The Creature pleads and argues that "the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes . . . I shall feel the affection of a sensitive being and become linked in the chain of existence and events from which I am now excluded" (Shelley 117). This thirst and desperation for companionship is unhealthy and consumes the Creature, pushing him to commit even more heinous crimes after his request is denied. The Creature's claim that a mate will ameliorate his deep-seated unhappiness rests upon the questionable assumption that this companion would be emotionally and physically attracted to him. Victor's lack of parenting means there is an extreme dearth of social knowledge in his Creature. Therefore, the Creature can never experience true happiness, for he has not been conditioned to be emotionally cognizant. In his search for happiness, he is simply lusting after an unknown ideal of which he has no true grasp.

As the Creature's creator, Victor is inherently assigned to the role of protector and moral compass. Yet, through his denial of that role, the Creature is deprived of the necessary knowledge and lessons that a parental figure passes on to their children. I believe that this deprivation of nurture by his creator directly leads to the Creature's inability to ever candidly experience, understand, or seek happiness through the proper channels.

Work Cited

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Illustrated by Gris Grimly, Balzer & Bray, 2015.

After a field trip to the New York State Museum, students were asked to write about a display or collection of objects that tells a powerful story. This writer, who selected the 9/11 exhibit titled “The World Trade Center: Rescue, Recovery, Response,” poetically describes how the physical artifacts of the display reveal emotional and impactful personal narratives.

The Tragedy of Engine 6

By Amber Lacombe

Prof. Collins - Narrative: The Inside Story

September 11, 2001 is a date that lives on in the minds of many American - a date that has gone down in the history books. But history books are merely objects that record numbers and tell the number of lives lost, not the individual stories of those lives. The New York State Museum does not tell of 9/11 like a history book, however, and has exhibits providing the personal stories of the people in the World Trade Center and the first responders. There is an exhibit telling the story of Engine 6 and its team, which is a story of heroism but also one of tragedy.

The piece in this exhibit that draws the most attention is Engine 6 itself. It sits in the museum surrounded by a timeline of that terrible day, its back end crushed by debris, its front scorched and battered by fire. As seen in my photo below, on the front bumper of the fire truck there sits a memorial, an array of old, dusty vases filled with dried-up flowers and small, drooping and decrepit American flags. A plaque tells what happened to the engine and how it became so terribly damaged: “Engine 6 was stationed [...] under a pedestrian bridge [...] With the fall of Tower One, the bridge collapsed on top of the engine, which was damaged further by fire in the front” (*The World Trade Center*). As seen in my photo below, there’s something haunting about the image of Engine 6, crushed and burned and missing its windows. There’s a lingering energy in those empty windows, like the lost lives of the firefighters calling out to be remembered and heard.



There were five men in Engine Company 6: Lieutenant Thomas O’Hagan, Firefighter Thomas P. Holohan, Firefighter Paul Beyer, Firefighter William “Billy” Johnston, and Firefighter Billy Green. Of these five, only Billy

Green survived that day. Engine Company 6 was one of the first fire companies to respond to the terrorist attack, arriving before the fall of the North Tower and before the second plane crashed into the South Tower. They rushed into the North Tower to evacuate it and put out the fires, dragging hoses behind them, and on the 14th floor they heard of another plane hitting the South Tower. When Company 6 reached the 37th floor, the building began to shake, and an order was yelled over the radio for them to evacuate the building. Billy Green was able to make it to the lobby of the building with other firefighters, but none from his company. They were lost in the chaos and confusion. Billy managed to escape the North Tower before it collapsed and ran and took shelter from the debris. He was safe, but the other members of Company 6 were not so lucky. They lost their lives under the crushing force of the North Tower's collapse (*The World Trade Center*).



Shown in my photo above is a helmet donated to the museum by Company 6. It was altered to represent the 343 firefighters that were lost that day. It is not said who the helmet belonged - if it belonged to Billy Green himself, or one of the other members of Company 6, whose lives were among the 343 lost. If Billy hadn't been so lucky, all of Company 6 would have been lost, and the number on the helmet would have been 344.

The loss of four men I'd never known and will never know pained me that day in the museum. These had been living, *breathing* people—human beings just like me, people with lives and aspirations, friends and family . . . And now they were gone, no longer living and breathing because of an act that was only meant to destroy lives and create terror. There was a pang in my chest and tears stinging in my eyes as I read over the plaques describing the life of each man in Company 6. I read how Lieutenant Thomas O'Hagan had such a deep love for his family and how he had enjoyed cooking. I read how Thomas P. Holohan had been studying for a test to become a Firefighter Lieutenant, and how he'd just recently built a house for his wife and three children. Paul Beyer had enjoyed flying model airplanes and horseback riding and had been in the process of building a house for his family. It had been

Billy Johnston's dream to be a firefighter. He had loved soccer and his friends and had maintained friendships from elementary school.

All of these men had deeply loved and enjoyed life, and they bravely sacrificed it to save the lives of others, acts that were not in vain. Now they are memorialized in the New York State Museum in front of Engine 6 - in front of the long-dead flowers and faded American flags, in front of the gaping, empty windows of the engine itself. Those windows were not always empty, and even now they don't seem to be, like the spirits of the firefighters still linger on in that dark, burnt-out void.

Work Cited

The World Trade Center: Rescue, Recovery, Response. Ongoing Exhibit. New York State Museum, Albany.

Genuinely impacted by what she learned about Francis and Clare, this student uses details about their lives in the 13th century while making connections to 1980s popular culture to bolster her own interesting argument about the selflessness of living one's own authentic life.

Aspects of Authentic Lifestyles

By Antonina Morino

Dr. Richardson - The 80s: Big Hair and Big Business

What does living an authentic life mean to you? Is it the idea of fame and wealth? Is it being a huge success in the profession you want to pursue? Is it following and adopting the societal norms that are presented, or is it challenging these norms that are expected of you? In order for you to live a genuine life, you as an individual, must defy these rigid aspects of society. You should desire to change where societal norms place you by trying to make a difference in the world. Most importantly, you shouldn't live your life abiding by what others dictate to you; rather, you need to protest these models of living and focus on the idea of individualism. This will ultimately allow you to achieve happiness which will further your ability to influence other people's lives for the better.

Francis, a Roman Catholic friar, was born into a wealthy family in the city of Assisi. Francis's parents, both corrupting role models, cultivated Francis's arrogance when he was young. With a significant amount of pressure from his father, Francis began to echo the actions and beliefs of his parents and became somewhat vain. However, when visited by God, Francis began to adopt a very different outlook on life, and the ideas and material objects he once cherished meant nothing to him from that moment on. After struggling to pursue this new way of life, Francis finally built up enough courage and forced himself to sell all of his possessions. Instead of going down a path full of vanity, Francis decided he wanted to follow a God-driven life. Francis had his whole life set and he could have had any material thing he wanted, but he knew that was not the life he wanted to live. He understood deep down that the life he had been placed in was not the life he was meant to chase after.

Once Francis's father learned about the new life his son was choosing to lead, he was extremely upset. He persecuted Francis and even imprisoned him in their home. However, with the assistance of his mother, Francis was set free. Thomas of Celano wrote that "God's servant showed himself deaf to all of them, and neither broken nor changed by any wrong to himself he gave thanks to God for all of them" ("The Life of St. Francis" 31). The opinions of others did not shake Francis's determination and when presented to the Bishop of Assisi, he made the bold move to throw off his clothes, symbolizing his turn toward the life of God he was intent upon. Instead of losing sight of what he wanted to accomplish, Francis actually thanked God for presenting him with the people who tried bringing him down. These people only confirmed for him the new path he was on and, therefore, made him a stronger individual than he had been before. The Bishop, unlike those who doubted Francis, saw that his actions were prompted by God himself and allowed Francis to become his helper, thus approving of Francis's new way of life. Although Francis was previously being steered in the wrong direction by

his parents, his desire to live this authentic lifestyle was much stronger than his parents' influence. Instead of mirroring the lifestyle his parents had chosen to live, he protested their model and continue to stay true to his beliefs and values as an individual. Once his ideal life became clear, he was able to break away from the rigid societal norms thrown his way and never again let his parents dictate what his life should be like. From then on, Francis was able to live his authentic life.

Francis challenged the social norms of his time as well as the expectations of his family. That is the first step you should pursue. In addition to challenging the societal norms that are presented to you, you must also desire to *change* these values by attempting to make a difference in the world. This is represented in what Clare of Assisi did throughout the majority of her life. Clare belonged to a class that had always known the privileges of hereditary rights. She was to marry for advantage and was expected to strengthen the family name through the land acquired through matrimony. Because Francis and Clare were a part of different social classes, they initially saw each other as enemies when they were young. Years later, Clare was able to see Francis as a changed man who lived a God-driven life and was envious of his freedom from social norms. She was expected to be the mother of a noble family and raise her kids as God-fearing Christians. This future life wasn't what she wanted, and Clare knew she would never be happy until she could live the life she so much desired. Her passion was so strong that she succeeded in meeting with Francis without her family knowing. During this time period, unmarried women did not converse with men unless they were chaperoned, yet Clare stood in a circle of brothers and accepted their welcoming words. She chose a new life - one that defied expectations and would allow her to make a difference. This single moment affected history dramatically, and the first Franciscan woman was ready to get to work.

Clare spent the rest of her life doing the Franciscan work of service with humility. This type of work and her perseverance was what ultimately brought her happiness. Sr. Margaret Carney explains that "Francis and Clare made a commitment to change the way that people related to each other, and they replaced the labels of social class with the beautiful words brother/sister" (Carney 37). This perfectly sums up what Clare accomplished throughout her life. In order for her to live an authentic life, she had to alter her course by pursuing what she felt would make her happy at the end of the day. She not only wanted, but was able, to change these social labels that plagued society. Both individuals wanted to allow others to see how beneficial their life choices were and wanted people to change how they related to other people. Their ultimate goal was to diminish the rigid social classes that existed at the time, and they desperately wanted people to view themselves as brothers and sisters. This concept is truly encompassing and transforming because it represents the idea of unity and equality. Clare, like Francis, made a true difference in the world and was able to give meaning to the fulfilling life she lived.

One last significant concept when discussing the aspects of living an authentic life involves the idea of individualism. In the book *Look Out for Number One*, Robert Ringer states that it is in your best interest to spend

time doing things that give you overall pleasure: "In doing so, the individual benefits by finding happiness, but society also benefits because there will be less unhappy people that may be a burden to society" (Ringer 19). The main idea of the book is that putting yourself first will lead you to a simple, uncomplicated life. Although we may lose sight of this objective, we must make it our goal to stay as happy as possible by partaking in activities that make us the happiest. You have but one life to live, and you shouldn't let the opinions of others influence the choices you make. Putting yourself first is in no way selfish; you should always keep your best interest at heart, which extends this idea of individualism. Although Francis and Clare can be seen as individuals following their own personal interests, both of them devoted their lives to helping others by putting others' happiness above their own. This kind of selfishness is, indeed, selfless, for it made them happily fulfilled.

Francis and Clare displayed significant determination when trying to defy the rigid social expectations of their time. This can be seen when Francis abandons all of his materialistic objects to live a life devoted to God and others. This can also be seen when Clare opted to do Franciscan service rather than follow the life expected of her. One influential person that demonstrated specific qualities that went against the societal norms throughout the 1980's in regards to living an authentic life was the singer Prince. Similar to Ringer's ideology, Prince never let outside opinions influence his behavior. He neither identified as male or female, which was quite rare during the time period because this idea was heavily opposed and looked down upon. He never let the media's scrutiny stop him from encouraging this new mindset regarding sexuality and always stuck to his beliefs, never giving up on what he thought was right. This allowed him to pursue true happiness. The fact that he was widely-known made it even harder for him to express who he truly was, but that in no means stopped him from going against the norms that were set in place. He never tried to be someone he wasn't and always stayed true to his character. In his song "Purple Rain," Prince sings, "I know times are changing, It's time we all reach out for something new." These lyrics show that he wants people to stop restraining themselves because life is always going to change, no matter what. People need to experience things they have never tried, and they should be open to new ideas even if they seem barbaric at first. If you fear change, nothing will ever get accomplished. Prince's beliefs allowed him to live this genuine life because unlike others, he used his platform to demonstrate new ideas that were often looked down upon in the 80s. The true representation of himself was all he needed to live a life full of happiness and that is exactly what he accomplished.

Living an authentic life may not always be the easiest decision to make. Individuals seeking this lifestyle must not only be willing to challenge the rigid societal norms, but they must also be willing to change social values, therefore making a difference in the world. Saint Francis, Saint Clare, Robert Ringer, and Prince are just a few who illustrate these concepts and help us gain more knowledge about leading an authentic life.

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For her social justice unit essay, this writer looks at an aspect of sports not often considered and passionately argues that not only should a coach seek to develop every player on their team because it is their job, but also because it is the socially just thing to do.

Lack of Attention for Athletes Who Need It Most

By Megan O'Neill

Dr. Haas - Sports: They're Not Just Games

Social injustices are experienced all throughout society, and sports are no exception. Often, when attending a sporting event, people see athletes on the sidelines who look out of place or are acting out - either way, with no attention given to them by the coach. From an outsider's perspective, it can seem that by ignoring the ones acting out, coaches are only doing the right thing for the athlete and their team. What many coaches fail to acknowledge, however, are the mental battles these athletes are facing. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is a common mental disorder, the symptoms of which are often associated with disobedience and troublesome behavior. By focusing their attention on the more engaged players and ignoring the players who need it the most, such as those with ADD, coaches are failing to do their jobs. By refocusing their efforts, coaches will actually be doing their job, which is to allow every athlete the same opportunity to play. Coaches need to know that athletes with ADD can make a positive difference for their team and allowing them to do so is socially just.

In sports, a certain lack of knowledge and ability can be directly tied to improper coaching. Many coaches tend to focus on the athletes who already know what they should be doing or on certain and specific physical shortcomings. When an athlete is having difficulty with a minute aspect of, for example, their foul shot, a coach will spend an endless amount of time working with them on it. This should not be any different for an athlete facing mental struggles, and in all likelihood, coaches are going to come across such players. Health experts at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention completed a study in 2015, finding that "the number of diagnoses of attention deficit disorder (ADHD or ADD) in the United States skyrocketed 43 percent between 2003 and 2011, bringing the total number of American children with ADHD [or ADD] to nearly 6 million."¹

Coaches must be willing to coach all players on their team despite the challenges athletes with ADD might pose. Someone with ADD demonstrates symptoms like absent-mindedness, difficulty focusing, and forgetfulness. Coaches rarely take a step back and ask themselves if their athletes could be battling something mental and, therefore, fail to act. Too often, coaches take the easy route and only want to coach those who already know the game, while writing off the rest. The philosopher Plato argued more than two millennia ago that "[i]t is the task of the enlightened not only to ascend learning and to see the good but to be willing to descend again . . . and to share their troubles and their honors."² In sports, the coach is the enlightened one; it is their job to coach both those struggling with ADD and those who are not. Coaching is not supposed to be an easy job, but by only focusing on the athletes who already know the game, coaches are essentially performing

¹ "ADHD, By the Numbers," ADDitude, New Hope Media, March 22, 2018, Accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.additudemag.com/the-statistics-of-adhd/>.

² Plato, "Book 7: The Allegory of the Cave," in *The Republic*, 212.

only the smallest part of their task. Coaches need to fulfill their responsibilities and train all players, despite the level at which they perform or the mental disorders and disabilities, like ADD, that they may have.

Coaches play a major role in the development of their athletes. Athletes look up to their coaches and may often turn to them in times of need. Athletes with ADD are typically unable to make this connection, partly due to their coach's unwillingness to train equitably. In sports, athletes also form bonds with their teammates; those with ADD, however, are often shunned. It only takes one person to stop such an injustice, and that person should be the coach. Saint Francis devoted himself to those neglected and not given equal opportunity. Saint Bonaventure explains that Francis, wanting to follow the example set by Jesus Christ, "clothed himself with . . . a sense of humility and a feeling of intimate devotion. Formerly, he used to be horrified not only by close dealing with lepers, but by their very sight . . . but now he rendered humble service to the lepers with human concern and devoted kindness."³ All it takes is one person to make a difference. In the leper's life, it was Saint Francis; for an athlete with ADD, it should be the coach. When working with the ADD athlete, coaches and players often become frustrated to the point where seeing that athlete makes them upset. As a leader and role model for their team, it is a coach's responsibility to work with their athletes struggling with ADD. It is, by no means, an easy task; it is, however, their job. By focusing on working with someone with ADD and making the sport enjoyable for them, too, the coach allows that player to have an easier time focusing and recalling information, thus helping to improve them both personally and athletically. At the same time, it also provides them with relationships and the connections they will need to succeed in life. This is the wider social impact a coach can ultimately have.

Exclusion is an injustice faced by many with mental disorders and disabilities. In today's society, people often assume the worst of others, and for those with ADD, that means being viewed as ones who are incapable of coexisting with the "normal" part of society. Athletes with ADD are, more often than not, misunderstood and viewed as a disruption to the team. If the coach started working with such an athlete, this would allow the team to see that athlete's potential, and the team would certainly be better as a whole. Saint Francis once entered a city fraught with conflict, as its community feared a wolf stalking the gates of the city. At the end of the day, the wolf was merely alone and desperately in search of food. Saint Francis was the one to step forward, to understand the needs of the wolf, and to share what he learned with the people, creating a compromise between the two. Franciscan scholars explain that the people were amazed and began to rejoice "as much out of devotion for the saint as for the novelty of the miracle and, even more, for the peace between people and the wolf."⁴ This is the example that should be followed. If coaches overcame their frustrations and intolerance for athletes with ADD and, instead, embraced them, these athletes would better be able to integrate into the team,

³ St. Bonaventure, "Saint Francis and the Leper," in *The Life of Saint Francis* (Charlotte: TAN Books & Publishing, Inc., 2009), 189-190.

⁴ "Blessed Francis Leads a Wolf to Become Very Tame," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellman, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 2001), 484.

relieving any exasperations or annoyance that would negatively affect their performance. When those with ADD are motivated to focus on something, they are often very good at it. A coach's attention allows these athletes to really focus and enjoy their sport. Their contributions, in turn, can then benefit a team's performance and overall well-being.

An athlete with ADD is just as important to his or her team as any other player and deserves the equal opportunity to prove this. It is a coach's job to treat all players equally. They simply cannot just focus on physical development while ignoring athletes' mental struggles. If coaches gain a better understanding about an athlete's ADD, they will be more able to reach them in the manner in which they deserve. It is the coach's job to make a difference in the athlete's life, especially when they are aware of the player's struggles. If coaches provide athletes with ADD the fair opportunity to play and build relationships, the coach will not only be benefitting the athlete, but the entire team dynamic, as well. No one deserves the injustice of being the neglected player, no matter the level of play.

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For this Nature Unit essay, students were required to make connections among three of the assigned readings which all pertained to the nature of relationships. After recounting the history of the relationship between man and nature, this author argues that it is not too late to restore it to a mutually beneficial one.

Harkening to Our Past

By Paul A. Ruger

Dr. Shideler - Relationships

Since ancient times when the Israelites roamed the desert, humans have had a certain respect for and fear of both God and nature as told in Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind*. This can also be seen in "The Canticle of the Creatures," where Saint Francis of Assisi argued that nature was a manifestation of God's glory and grace, and thus, like God, also deserved respect. By respecting nature, which was given to us by God, one honored Him. In recent centuries, however, the relationship between man and nature has been degraded to dominance by man, as outlined in *The Death of Nature* by Carolyn Merchant. Though it may seem that the relationship between man and nature has been completely dissolved, this is not so. Rather, the potential still exists for faithful humans to offer nature the same respect and care they show God.

While today "wilderness" is colloquially associated with vast forests or barren wastelands, the term can actually be traced back through history and found to have a different, broader meaning: an uninhabited and inhospitable region. Roderick Nash, professor emeritus of environmental studies at the University of California, explains this in *Wilderness and the American Mind* via the history of Judea, in which the Israelites, having left Egypt, spent 40 years in the desert, or as the Bible calls it, the wilderness. In addition, because the Israelites spent their time in the desert fearing God and recognizing His seeming reluctance to dwell among them, they came to view the wilderness as an environment of evil, a view which pervaded throughout the subsequent centuries. This view is corroborated in the New Testament. In Matthew 4:1 it is stated: "Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the Devil." The association of the desert with evil, therefore, persisted. As Nash explains, "The identification of the arid wasteland with God's curse led to the conviction that wilderness was the environment of evil, a kind of hell" (15). This idea was carried forward and applied to nature as a whole until recent times.

The association of fear with the wilderness did not remain narrowly applicable to only the desert, though. As humanity progressed into the common era, wilderness came to be understood simply as nature. As such, man's relationship with nature for most of the first millennium and well into the second was one of fear; while humans were happy with the sustenance nature offered, they were skeptical of the deep recesses of nature for fear of temptation or evil forces. However, if one could enter this wilderness and return unscathed, they would be held in a high regard as one who has conquered evil. And so, man's relationship with nature was, in effect, a fearful one as it was viewed not of God, but of Satan, the source of evil.

While many people feared nature, St. Francis challenged them instead to see that nature was actually of God and, therefore, inherently good. He taught that nature was provided for us so that we might better relate to God and see the evidence of God's grace and mercy when we see nature for what it truly is, a gift from God. After all, it was nature that provided humans the vital resources needed for life. In fact, St. Francis went so far as to say that by appreciating and respecting what nature offered, we are, in effect, praising God Himself.

St. Francis made his views evident not only in his deeds but in his words, particularly in "The Canticle of the Creatures," in which he uses terms such as "Sir Brother Sun," "Sister Moon," and "Sister Water." By praising God through nature, as in "Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind," St. Francis challenged the established norm of his time by calling people to cease viewing nature as evil and instead see it as coming from God, and thus worthy of their respect (St. Francis). In other words, Francis offered Christians of his day a more tangible way to praise God through their respect of nature, something they previously had no great desire to do. He explains some of nature's praiseworthy aspects in "The Canticle of the Creatures," when he states, "Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, / who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste" (St. Francis). Not only is St. Francis acknowledging that water was made by God, but he shows how water follows God's example. By making the argument that nature was worthy of respect, and that by respecting nature, God was praised, St. Francis helped to create a more positive perception of nature.

In the period after St. Francis, nature did come to receive respect and was recognized fully for its vitalness to our lives. For a while, humans and nature coexisted peacefully, so much so that nature was even personified as a nurturing motherly figure that had the ability to be both pleasant and discordant. As Carolyn Merchant, an ecofeminist philosopher, states in *The Death of Nature*, the relationship that existed between humans and nature was a balanced and respectful one and as such, it acted as a "cultural constraint restricting the types of socially and morally sanctioned human activities allowable with respect to the earth" (270). In other words, humans did not seek to degrade nature because they regarded it as an equal. Humans of that time often attributed the cause of a natural disaster as punishment for a crime against nature and not desiring this wrath, seldom provoked nature.

However, as technology progressed through the ages, man's relationship with nature changed drastically. With the development of machines, humans became more distanced from and dominant over nature. As Merchant puts it, "[T]he removal of animistic, organic assumptions about the cosmos constituted the death of nature" (277). No longer was nature viewed in a personified way. Rather, the whole of nature was a resource to be harvested. As soon as the personified and Godly element was removed, humans felt no guilt in degrading nature to fully realize its resources. The view of nature had changed significantly: humans began fearing nature, then came to respect it, and now have thrown both aside for the mentality of human dominance over nature.

However, contrary to many modern environmentalists' views, it is not too late. Nature is not irrevocably destroyed yet. Although humans are, indeed, degrading nature to new extremes daily, nature is renewable and can, if treated properly, recover from the abuse she has received. Our mutually beneficial relationship can be restored. This can only be accomplished if we set aside the ideology of our ancestors who initially supported the growth of the mechanical order and recall the views of our respectful ancestors, such as St. Francis. As humans, we should analyze our actions and take measures to not only undo the damage we have done, but to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring in the future by once again adopting a respectful view of nature.

Man's relationship with God and nature has changed greatly since the original dread of the wilderness set in place by the Biblical account of the Israelites. Once humans found the means to dominate nature, they no longer feared it, all the while relying on it for life. St. Francis proposed that nature be recognized as inherently good, but soon after this view was adopted, the relationship between man and nature shifted to one of man's dominance, with humans selfishly using the natural world merely as a source for the furtherance of their own goals. However, our goal once again needs to be mutual harmony, and though this outcome seems impossible, it is not. Through a change of ways and an attitude of commitment and appreciation, harmony can once again be returned to this broken relationship.

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In exploring the concept of diversity, this writer uses personal narrative to reflect on the differences between her home and her host towns as well as the significant change in perspective brought on by her foreign exchange experience.

How a Japanese Farmers' Market Changed a Texas Girl

By Sophia Ann Torres

Prof. Collins - Narrative: The Inside Story

Being from Texas I have heard all the jokes: "Do you ride your horse to school?", "Texas might as well be its own nationality.", and "Do you have cows herding in your front lawn?". That last one is actually true for some people in my town. However, what most people do not know is that the place I come from, a town named Southlake, is the farthest away from any Texas stereotype that could be earned. The Texas I come from is filled with brand new buildings and mansions occupied by upper class, Christian, football-loving families. Growing up in Southlake certainly had its perks: big tailgates before my high school team dominated any team they played, fancy restaurants where my friends and I spent way too much time, and new boutiques with all the hottest trends. Unfortunately, being from Southlake also comes with its own stereotype that I did not realize until I got the privilege of traveling abroad to Japan.

Southlake, to its surrounding towns, is notorious for having spoiled kids who get everything they want, PTO moms with fresh spray tans and platinum blonde hair, and workaholic husbands and dads. The motto for the town I come from might as well be "everything is about me." Natives from Southlake do not mean to be selfish, but it is in their blood. Every family competes every day to be the richest and best looking. Although I grew up in Southlake, I never thought of myself as spoiled like the children of other families. My family was different because both my parents worked, and my sister and I grew up with strict rules and led very sheltered lives. Most kids in Southlake did what they pleased and had no one to tell them differently. Not once did it ever occur to me that I was just like everyone else, nor did it cross my mind that I was spoiled. After all, I wanted the iPhone 6 plus but only got the iPhone 6.

Nonetheless, my whole perspective changed the summer I joined an exchange program named Southlake Sister Cities. This program is all about bringing cultures from the outside into the bubble that is Southlake, Texas and popping the bubble for those who are invited to go to Japan. Southlake's sister city is a suburban town, similar to Southlake, called Tome, and my town sent a small group of students to be hosted by a Japanese family there. In turn, we would do the same for a Japanese student group. Not only did I get the privilege to apply for the exchange program for the summer of 2016, but that same summer I got chosen, along with nine other kids, to fly across the ocean to Japan. When I first heard the news that I was selected, my immediate thought was that going to Japan was going to be a fun vacation. Little did I know that I was about to receive the biggest culture shock I could ever imagine.

After flying for fifteen hours and busing from Tokyo to Tome for three hours, the first thing I noticed when my left foot hit the foreign soil is that my 5'6" body towered over literally everyone in the room that was not from my group. I had heard all about the Japanese culture and how everyone is super welcoming and loving towards outsiders, so I strolled into my host family's house expecting a warm welcome, only to be smacked with a towel by my host grandma for having my shoes on inside the house. Host grandma stood about 5'3" but had the attitude of a 6'7" linebacker. With her grey-turning-blue hair and her tiny oval glasses perched on her nose, she was the perfect amount of feisty mixed with sweetness. After kicking off my shoes and apologizing to host grandma to get her to stop hitting me with the towel, I peered inside the kitchen to see my host sister, Chiko, helping her mother with dinner. I could not remember the last time I had helped my family with dinner. That was just a small difference I noticed during my stay. As an honorary member of this Japanese family, I was expected to help with chores, meals, and even help host grandma in the garden whenever she needed me. I was encouraged to pray in front of Buddha each day and participate in family conversations at dinner. As the days went on, I learned two things: grandma was always head of the house and everyone in the family helps everyone with everything, something that did not happen in Southlake.

One morning a few days into my stay, host mom woke me at five in the morning, two hours before the city-wide alarm clock went off, and told me she was taking me to a local farmers' market. I thought that we were just going to be getting a few fruits and veggies and calling it a day, but I was pleasantly surprised to see that I was wrong. As soon as our bright pink, four-door Toyota was seated in its parking spot, my host mom's friend came barreling over to greet us with the warmest of welcomes as well as warm, buttery breakfast muffins. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming. It was quite a shock because although I knew the Japanese culture to be friendly, it was something else to see so many people coming together to help one another. In Southlake, friendliness is measured by the occasional smile and wave; however, my experience at the farmers' market in Japan took friendliness to the next level. As we walked around each booth for our produce, we were given free samples and knick-knacks. And when I took a second to look around at the hustle and bustle that is the Tome farmers' market, I noticed that everyone was willing to give a helping hand, even if they were not working. People would bend over backwards for people they had never met before if it looked like someone was in need. I witnessed a young teenage girl, all of 100 pounds, helping this woman who had dropped all of her umes (traditional Japanese pears), and she was carrying this huge box filled with them. It was a scene straight out of a movie.

The first few weeks after returning home from my trip abroad, I began to notice the significant differences between Southlake and Tome. I witnessed an old lady at the grocery store drop all of her apples from her bag and people just walked right by her, not even giving her a second glance. As I walked to my car after helping her, I could not help but think, "Would I had helped her two weeks ago?", and I am almost certain I

would not have. In light of being submerged into a culture I had never experienced before, I learned so much about not only my culture, but also myself. That opportunity made me realize that life outside of Southlake, Texas exists and that it is quite different. I learned that the culture I have been experiencing in Southlake is very self-centered. It is all about how much more can one person gain over the other. Southlake teaches its citizens that the only way to be successful is by being the person with the most money. From Southlake, I gained a very selfish attitude, but in going to Tome, I gained the experience of family and how important it is to have people you feel close with. Traveling to Japan broadened my definition of family to mean not only blood relatives, but everyone I care about. My trip also made me see that although where I was brought up is a very nice place, it never taught me selfless skills like being helpful and putting others first. Visiting Tome opened my eyes to my own culture and its faults. I am proud to say that my friends and family describe me as a caring and pretty thoughtful person most of the time, but I do not think I would be able to say the same thing if I did not receive the eye-opening experience of my time in Tome, Japan.

The students were asked to write an essay relating the class readings on globalization to the overarching theme of heritage. The writer of this essay artfully uses the recommended templates provided in the course's required writing manual, They Say / I Say, while persuasively arguing for multilingualism.

Preserving Linguistic Diversity to Save Humanity

By Daniel Whinnery

Dr. Nadeau - Global Education and Migration

If humankind is to advance as a species, which is to say, survive for several more generations, it needs to possess a greater understanding and concern for the many different languages that are spoken across planet Earth. With the rise of globalization, the common thought is that we, as humans, should all speak one lingua franca, which usually means English. While this is inherently a good thing for international communications, the unintended consequence of the growth of English is the slow decline of other languages, which, in turn, leads to the decline of other cultures. Thus, by cultivating the learning of other languages, humankind can prevent the death of other cultures as well as gain insight into geopolitical affairs and scientific dilemmas.

While learning other languages is admirable in its own right, one should be mindful of their own cultural identity and language so that their culture does not become supplanted by another. Take, for instance, India under British occupation. Relatively early during British rule of India, there were Indians who realized they had to act as interpreters and intermediaries between the British and the rest of the Indian population, and their goal was to be a "vehicle for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population" (Zins 3). This is reminiscent of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave." Following this example, the Indians who decided they should learn English are the people who have exited Plato's cave and have seen the sun. Having seen "the light," they decide to return into the cave to tell the rest of the people inside what the sun and the world outside the cave is like, only to be met with ridicule. In India under British rule, this ridicule came in the form of Hindu traditionalists, who chastised the reformers who were willing to learn English because they felt that those reformers were denouncing their own culture in favor of their colonizer's (Zins). These traditionalists feared that by adopting British customs, historical Indian culture would die, and thus their history would die along with it. This begs the question of whether or not it is right to show others the "truth" by teaching them another language. For India, the answer is that it does not matter; language is just a tool used to convey different ideas, regardless of the implications of using one language over another. Thus, some Indians used English to communicate with their British rulers but still used their native languages to speak to other Indians. Following the end of British occupation, Indian writers wrote in English about the plights of the newly independent India, making their struggles known to the world in terms of socio-political matters, while at the same time expressing their cultural heritage through their literature. Thus, the Indian people found a way for multiple languages to coexist in their society despite the social and political backlash. This begs the question of how language and linguistic diversity plays into politics and international relations.

As obvious as this may sound, language has an important role in politics, both national and international. Returning to the example of India, the national government currently uses English as a lingua franca so that different cultural groups within India can communicate using a language that does not show preference for one group over another. Valida Karimova claims that learning a foreign language is important for young people because it helps broaden their knowledge base and thus expands their education further by cultivating thinking and understanding (Karimova 2). She writes that currently English is the most widespread lingua franca on Earth, but some young people who are learning it are only concerned with the vocabulary, and not the grammar or idioms. While this certainly helps bolster the number of English speakers around the world, it does very little to immerse the learner into how English works as a language. This limited exposure to the English language also does not reflect the true culture of English speaking countries, nor does it really demonstrate how English speakers think.

Karimova also refers to French linguist Jan Van Die, who said that the development of language and the development of human thought were formed parallel to one another (Karimova). Thus, the disregard of English grammar, particularly by young learners, leads to the decreased value of the English language as well as to a decrease in the development of our thought processes. By only bothering to learn vocabulary as opposed to grammar, and thus hindering the development of thought processes, young language learners face the threat of poorer performance in school, as well as a poorer grasp on communicating with people of other cultures. Karimova concludes by saying that learning a foreign language helps young people to understand the values of different cultures, to critically think about what they are saying, both in terms of content and in grammar, and also to communicate with people from around the world, thus uniting everyone through language (Kaimova). Ultimately, thus preventing the death of both languages and cultures.

Language plays an important role in international science and research as well, for each language has different viewpoints and ways of thinking that derive from its grammar as well as how words are structured. A small example of how language plays a role in science is that scientists agreed to use Latin nomenclature for newly discovered organisms because Latin showed no particular bias towards any one nation. Also, English teacher Patricia Ryan claims that a multilingual community is inherently good for scientific research and problem solving. She says that by only using English as a lingua franca, people who do not know English as a first language convert to the English language's way of thinking as opposed to their own. She uses the example that in English, there is a distinction between an animal's front legs and an animal's back legs, whereas other languages have no such distinction (Ryan). This, in turn, relates to Parker Palmer's "Community of Truth," where there is no clear hierarchy between expert and learner (Palmer 3). Each language adds a different perspective on a given topic and contributes its own input towards a particular subject or problem, just as in Palmer's "Community of Truth." Therefore, the people researching that subject or solving that problem have new insights about how to progress in their work through the sharing of languages. New scientific breakthroughs and multilingual problem-solving can only be good

for humanity, for we can develop new technology to combat disease or travel further into space or perhaps even negotiate deals and treaties that can resolve international conflicts as peacefully as possible. However, by choosing to use only one language as a lingua franca, other languages fall into decline and their viewpoints are lost as collateral damage. Therefore, incorporating more languages into these fields will not only allow those languages to provide various perspectives but will also keep those languages alive and in use.

The understanding of Earth's many languages and the prevention of them being lost are important for humanity's survival because they allow for multiple viewpoints to be expressed in any given context, be it geopolitical or scientific. While a lingua franca does help international communications, that lingua franca should not be the only language spoken because it limits humans to only one way of thinking. Thus, by welcoming multiple languages into everyday use, not only are we keeping these languages alive, but we are also taking the first step towards working together as a united human race to solve the greatest problems that face us as a species.

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For their final project, the students in one of the honors sections of FYS were required to submit a traditional paper as well as a creative piece. The author of poetry below explains:

"Through my poetry, I hope to capture the essence of American life, from the parts that we may take for granted, to the messy and complicated aspects of having a complex identity. From sharing a bus with strangers, to being a part of a family so deeply entrenched in the traditional American dream, to finally acknowledging that one's identity is never really truly one's own, this anthology serves somewhat as a timeline of my own understanding of what it really means to be an American as well as a Muslim. I have chosen poetry as a means of expression for this project, in the hopes that words really do have the power to create worlds of meaning."

An Anthology of (American?) Identity

By Faiha Zaidi

Dr. Mahar - Americans

On sharing a bus with strangers

The bus glides through the rolling highways,
People awash in the glow of warm mediocrity.
Cows, pasture, cows, cars, and more pasture.
Music filters from the ears of another to my seat by the window.

Hours pass, and
the chance meeting of eyes is avoided so fiercely-
As if one look could break an unspoken covenant.

But when the night falls
Slivers of orange and purple and blue pierce through the windows.
We share in the beauty of this transformed world, entering a new bond-
One tacit and unexplored,
Existing here, and now.
The reflections of the city skyline alight the window.
Voices fall, heads crane, eyes meet.
The darkness of the night gives an urgency to our shared ride,
Everyone with a place to go, a home to return to;
These 20 some odd lives intersecting for but this moment in time.

And when we leave, we shall not remember one another.
We shall not recall the moments of beauty shared, what it felt like to sit next to strangers who so suddenly became not so strange.

How easy it is to forget the journey.

The Dream

The movement of time is so beautiful
Different worlds from different times are balanced [suspended] in the framework of life
In one plane
My parents are young
Struggling to make ends meet
Marking circles around the planet
Crossing rivers and roads to find a new home
In another plane, there is my sister
Learning about the world

Forging a place for herself in the dark
Leading the way with a lantern for the rest to follow behind
In another, my brother suffers
Tortured by the bounds of his mind
Stricken by a fear of not being able to shake the world
We are all the same
We all struggle the same, feel the same,
Hurt and laugh and persevere the same.
We are all fighting our own wars.
We may not be together,
We may be apart for so long.
Yet each of our spheres intersects in the boundless reaches of time.

In this plane,
The here and the now,
I contemplate the millions of seconds that have led me to this precise moment in time,
Seeing the different spheres of time imprinted behind my eyelids.

What am I?
But an intersection of time and space,
Of all the spheres that have been, and have ever yet to be...

In the Dark Places and in the Light

To only find solace in one's own identity
Is to see the rainbow, but not the
Rolling valleys and meadows beyond it.
It is to relish in fairy songs and tunes,
But not hear the symphony of instruments that give it life.
I am Muslim, yes
But to say I am just that is sorely imprecise.
On the path to accepting "Muslim,"
I met so many others along the way;
The Maori Tribe,
With their hakas and chants,
Taught me "Tika Tonu," the idea that what is right is always right.
The answer to your problem- any problem-
Is right here inside of you.
Toni Morrison,
With her words forever inhabiting time and space,
Has shown me the stitch that unravels fears caul-
The tiny, tiny bead of hope
That may one day heal our wounds,
And wed our souls.
Malala,
With her bloodied fist and aching bones
Has given me breath,
And with breath, fight.
No bullets or chains or stones can ever rank more powerful than words.

I met the Maori, I met Toni, I met Malala, I met Martin, I met Malcolm.
I met you, and somehow I met myself.

And now, I sit in the meadows. Warm sun on my face,
I do not let a single note beyond the treble clef escape my ear.

