

GLEANINGS

A Journal of First-Year Student Writing
2014-2015



Artist: Mackenzie L. Cox '18

SIENA COLLEGE

All of the work included in this journal was written by students who were enrolled in Siena's First Year Seminar in 2014 - 2015. 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 editorial changes have been made to these works-in-progress, they were kept to a minimum in order to preserve the authentic voices of the student authors as well as the integrity of the assignments.

Gleanings: A Journal of First-Year Student Writing
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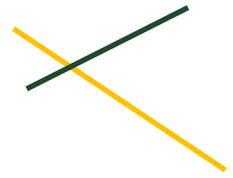
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For this assignment, students were asked to think about the role of women in war and construct an argument about this topic using the readings assigned in the Diversity Unit. In addition to effectively using her sources to develop her points, this writer adroitly plants a naysayer in the final body paragraph, thereby strengthening her own argument.

Women and War

By Caroline L. Bablin
(Prof. M. Woolbright - "War")

War has always been linked to men. It was men, perceived to be the stronger, more cunning, and more aggressive of the two sexes, who went to war while women, seen as peaceful, innocent, and nurturing, stayed at home. Society has created these caricatures of men and women, and only recently have we mildly strayed from them. It is important to realize that women are capable of possessing more than these presumed characteristics and can focus on the job that needs to be done. It is equally important to recognize the benefits that these natural traits can bring to a military setting. By failing to view women differently from how society projects them and being unaccepting of them in our military, we are hindering our military's growth and its strength. Although America's military is currently the strongest and most powerful in the world, this strength could be even greater with the full assimilation of women. If accepted into all roles in the military, women's innate qualities of being nurturing and compassionate, together with their ability to put these qualities aside, will make the military, as a whole, stronger.

There is no doubt that both men and women actually embody some of the traits society habitually has assigned to them. Women generally tend to be more nurturing than men, and this is not at all a negative thing. Women have been shown to be able to connect with others easily. In fact, women's natural instinct to attend to another's need and be supportive has been shown to be an advantage in the military. In *Band of Sisters*, Kirsten Holmstedt recounts Marine Lance Corporal Carrie Blais's meetings with Iraqis when Blais and another Marine, Priscilla Kispetik, seemed to instill less fear within their enemy. The Iraqis were less tense when interacting with the women than with the men. This is seen when Holmstedt says of Blais's and Kispetik's encounters with Iraqis that "the mood of the house changed; the tension eased. They were happy to see the women" (10). Surely, it was easier to finish the required task when the Iraqis were calm rather than nervous and on edge. Despite such occurrences, women are still not received well by their fellow male soldiers in combat situations. Men, according to Peggy McIntosh, who works in the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, have an "unearned advantage" in society, which can also be applied to a military setting (78). Men enjoy the control they have in the military and do not want women to undermine that because, as McIntosh explains, "Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is, in fact, permission to escape or dominate" (78). In other words, men are aware of the beneficial qualities women possess but are wary that their full integration into the military will result in the men's own power being lessened. There is no proof that allowing women more opportunities would create chaos and disorder; it would only allegedly weaken men's power. Yet, even if the acceptance and integration of women did lessen men's power and control, it would still give the military, on the whole, more strength, which is surely something we should strive for.

Although women tend to be more nurturing, they are fully able to put their nurturing tendencies aside and focus on the task at hand, no matter the consequences. Being nurturing and compassionate does not at all mean women are irrational, crazed, or hysterical; they are fully capable of being calm and collected. This composed behavior was evident in the interaction between Blais and the Iraqis. Holmstedt explains that "Blais was happy that her presence calmed her enemy, but she was also there to do a job," which shows that women in the military take their tasks just as seriously as men do and do whatever it takes to complete a mission (10). This is also seen through Robin Brown's experience when her Kiowa Warrior helicopter was shot down. Women are capable of being calm and collected in extremely intense and dangerous situations. Brown was able to land her helicopter safely after it was hit due to her composure and her putting aside all fear. Reflecting back on the event, Brown said that she "was proud [she] had remained calm and rational" (Holmstedt 42).

Although more nurturing, women, like men, are capable of acting rationally. In fact, sometimes it is actually men who break down. For example, when Army Specialist Rachelle Spors was severely injured following the explosion of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), it was her boyfriend, Navy corpsman Aswald Hooker, who froze up. He was, as Holmstedt recounts, "at a loss for what to do. Intellectually, he knew exactly what to do. But his hands and fingers wouldn't move. All he could do was kneel down beside Spors and hold her hand," which goes to show men can break down when women do not (70). Perhaps not all women are able to be composed in tense situations, but many can be. Therefore, women should be given fair and equal opportunities to serve in the military, ultimately making it stronger.

There are those, such as Kathleen Parker, a nationally syndicated columnist, who are against the idea of women being allowed in combat at all. Simply stated, Parker claims women are unequal to men when it comes to combat and that is the way it should stay. Women's biological differences generally do not allow them to perform to the same physical standards as men, and we should not try to come up with separate standards or ones that are gender neutral, according to Parker. This, however, is not true for all women. One such woman is Marine Captain Vernice Armour, whose dedication to her personal strength and fitness resulted in her superiors naming her "Strongest Warrior at Camp Pendleton," an honor that could have been given to a male, but was not (Holmstedt 157). There are women who can and do perform at and even exceed the same standards as men, and therefore women should be given the opportunity to serve their country as they please, especially since it is not just brute physical strength that makes a military strong.

Women have shown that their nurturing qualities do not put them or anyone else at a disadvantage in the military. Instead, their compassion has been shown to be an asset by creating a sense of stability when dealing with the enemy and by helping others cope with pain or stress. Surely, order and support for one another are the preferred characteristics our military wants to exhibit. Moreover, women are indeed capable of putting aside their nurturing characteristics when need be. This ability to focus and think rationally is also something the military automatically looks for in its members, and this can be found in women as in men. The only obstacle that needs to be overcome in order for women to be fully integrated into the military is men's great desire for power and control and their unwillingness to forfeit any of it to women. If women were allowed into all different positions in the military, the military's strength would surely increase. Women's unique traits of being caring, but also composed, would make the military even stronger than it already is.

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The students enrolled in "Voice" were required to write a 6 to 7 page paper on a current social issue that included extensive research and formal academic writing. They were to use their findings and their own beliefs, or their own voices, to convince the reader that their proposed solutions to the problems were viable.

Don't Stop the Music

By Sara K. Barton

(Prof. Barranca - "Voice")

It's no secret that America's economy has been in a state of decline for years now, and it does not appear that it will be recovering any time soon. Unfortunately, this decline has led to budget cuts in many types of funding, including education. A combination of increased standardized testing and lack of funds has led to school boards looking for programs to cut that aren't deemed to be as important as others. Many such school boards believe that cutting music programs will fulfill the need to decrease spending so that the budget can be allocated to the most important areas. Music education, however, is an essential aspect of childhood education for many reasons, and there are plenty of options for schools, other than cutting funding for music, when it comes to budget allocation. Elementary schools should not cut music programs due to budget problems as music is necessary for mental and social development and for the expression of individuality.

Music education involves the teaching and learning of music in a school setting and can include lecture-style learning about history and terms as well as hands-on performance lessons. Before getting into the technical and scientific aspects of music education, the well-known benefits should first be mentioned. For starters, music education encourages creativity among children as they learn to appreciate and perform music. With creativity comes the ability to express oneself, and music is a perfect means for doing so. Even at a young age, children can create their own rhythms, and some even come up with their own tunes and songs. There also exists the ability for children to be themselves on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to fit in. Personal experience shows that not all students are the same when it comes to their talents. Unfortunately, this means that if some children aren't as good at one activity as others, they may feel inferior, which in turn will damage their self-esteem. Music provides another outlet for those children who may not be as athletic or book-smart as others. I know from my own experience that when I was younger, I was not very athletic and was upset by gym classes because I felt incompetent when I compared my performance to some of the other children. The tables turned, however, once I stepped into a music classroom. I was able to play an instrument and be involved in chorus all through elementary school, and I felt confident in my abilities during our music classes. By participating in music programs early on in my school career, I was able to find my niche. The same holds true for numerous other children. When children find something that makes them feel happy and accomplished, this raises their self-esteem.

Though the benefits of a musical education are plentiful, there are still people who oppose the implementation or continuation of music programs in districts that are experiencing budget issues. M. L. Major explores the reasoning of some districts that decided to cut music programs over using other options to balance the budget. When it comes to the decision to cut the arts, Major explains, "[N]ew policy and tighter funding have taken priority over music education" (6). One of the first contributors to such decision-making that Major mentions is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which focuses on standardized testing and causes all levels of education to prioritize subjects such as math, science, English, and history that may be assessed by standardized achievement tests. The Act requires schools to measure and prove that students are making progress each year; therefore, schools must push for students to show continued learning in these subject areas. According to this logic, music is not important enough to be stressed as part of education. School boards feel the need to shift the focus to learning the tested subjects. Since the testing begins at such an early level, music is often cut out at the beginning of one's education. To counteract the tight spending limit, some districts have completely eliminated K-5 music programs, and others have eliminated teaching positions or demanded that teachers work overloaded schedules (Major 6).

Not only are children suffering from the lack of music education, but the teachers are now suffering from district choices, as well. According to Major, the only way for districts to keep music programming is “by making another sacrifice,” which apparently means sacrificing jobs and the wellbeing of teachers to fix budgets (7).

Naturally, with such a stress on needing to learn these tested core subjects, much of the time children are in school is devoted to teaching them. This, of course, leads to a decrease in time spent studying those subjects that are not assessed by standardized testing. National music education statistics show “that schools nationwide have decreased the total minutes given to music education during the day and [they] also have seen declining enrollment in music classes” (Major 6). Since music isn’t seen as an important subject when compared to core subjects, there is supposedly no time for students to learn it. Districts that use this reason for their budgeting decisions are choosing music education as the sacrifice, and in turn, are sacrificing much more than some tunes.

In response to the arguments that there must be more focus on core subjects and therefore more time devoted to studying them, scholars have argued that students who study music actually learn better and remember more than those students who have limited or no music education. Gordon L. Shaw explains and analyzes what is commonly known as the “Mozart Effect.” This term was first used in a British scientific journal entitled *Nature*, where it was revealed that listening to ten minutes of the Mozart Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, or K.448, would cause “a subsequent enhancement in reasoning lasting from 10-15 minutes” (Shaw xi). This study sparked an interest in music’s relation to the brain. Further studies have shown that there is a correlation between learning how to play an instrument and children’s memory. “Benefits of a Classroom-Based Instrumental Music Program on Verbal Memory of Primary School Children: A Longitudinal Study” by Rickard, Vasquez, Murphy, Gill, and Toukhsati describes and explains a study that was done involving the introduction of an instrumental music program and the introduction of a different type of non-musical program while giving the same memory tests to each group, before and after the programs were introduced. The study was conducted with children of primary school age over a period of three years. At the conclusion of the initial process, students who participated in musical training “demonstrated greater improvement than did the Control group on every measure except Verbal Delayed recall” (Rickard et al. 42). In other words, music students generally showed greater memory than those not participating in a music program. The students studying music scored higher on most memory tests than did the other students, showing that music can actually help with learning, instead of distracting from it.

With studies such as these, some say that students perform better simply because the program is something new, but with this particular study, that possibility is set off by the introduction of the juggling program, which is still new, but non-musical. In addition, a study by Schellenberg showed that “music lessons significantly enhanced the general intelligence of six-year olds” (Rickard et al. 37). Students who get music education show score improvements in most subjects, particularly math. Music training enhances spatial-temporal reasoning, a finding which has been expanded upon by many. Spatial-temporal reasoning “allows the child to make and maintain mental images, transform these images, and compare and evaluate them using symmetry relations” (Shaw 273), and this ability is developed, at least according to this particular study, through piano keyboard training. When combined with other methods, the improved spatial-temporal reasoning helps students improve math scores. Therefore, a combination of music and math education can improve math scores over teaching math alone. Since music education actually helps improve memory and reasoning, it makes sense to incorporate it into elementary curricula. With increased memory, students would likely not need to spend as much time studying the core subjects, eliminating the excuse that there is not enough time in the day to study both standardized test subjects and music. Similarly, since music training seems to help improve test scores, it would make sense that if a school district wants its students to improve their scores each year, it should incorporate music training into the curriculum.

Districts may argue that it is acceptable to make cuts to their music programs because they supposedly do not have much value. Of course there are different definitions of value, but from an administrative standpoint, the value of a program seems to revolve around the money it can bring in. Major quotes an upper administrator of one district as saying, "If our music programs weren't very good I think it would be easier to cut them because there wouldn't be that value" (10). To me, he is essentially saying that the only way a program can be valuable is if it is good enough to attract an audience and therefore revenue. If early music programs are cut, later ones will not be good enough to be of value to administrators. Unfortunately, many administrators do not see the true value of music education aside from its worth in cash.

A program has value regardless of how much money it can bring in. With music programs in particular, it is apparent that the benefits to children are widespread. Music can boost self-esteem, promote creativity, and decrease anxiety. There was a study done by psychiatrists at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, and according to it, "[P]laying a musical instrument may help children overcome anxiety, focus attention and control emotions" ("Study Finds Musical Training May Focus Attention and Reduce Anxiety in Children"). Playing an instrument impacted motor and behavior-regulating areas of the brain. In particular, the brains of children with musical backgrounds were impacted "in areas that play a critical role in inhibitory control, as well as aspects of emotion processing" ("Study"). Increased testing puts added stress on children even at the elementary level. If music can help reduce some of this anxiety and make children feel better about themselves, shouldn't music be considered valuable? Why should children have to lose out on the benefits of music education simply because of a lack of monetary value to the district?

Some may argue that it is too difficult to try to maintain music programs in elementary schools due to budgetary constraints. While it may be difficult, it is definitely doable. A graph of one school district in Medina, Ohio exemplifies the way the school board handled the budget. According to the graph, the budget for art, physical education, music teachers, librarians, and counselors decreased a staggering 24.7 percent, second only behind the cut to special education and gifted student teachers ("Should Parents Be Charged"). Meanwhile, the same chart shows that the budget for the school principal and district administration only declined 4.3 percent ("Should Parents be Charged"). These figures don't really add up. If the students can take cuts to their programs that help them in so many ways, it makes no sense that administrators cannot take an even harder hit to create a balance. The way I see it, rather than a district keeping a surplus of overpaid administrators, it can and should release a few to keep a music program.

Even with the potential difficulty of maintaining a program, there are districts in America that are being recognized for being able to do so. One district was recognized for its excellence in music education that resulted from the district's attitude towards music making the difference. The assistant superintendent of the district said that, "Through the dedication of our music faculty, administration and school board our music education programs are thriving" (qtd. in "Waynesboro School"). A music program simply needs support to be successful. This is also backed by Major, who states that "school music program successes exist, and they stem from a supportive administration, high-quality teaching, and adequate funding" (Major 7). The attitude that schools need to take is the same as Waynesboro's staff - that "a quality music education taught by exemplary music educators is an important part of a student's complete education" ("Wayneboro School").

Music education should be considered an essential part of an elementary school's curriculum. The benefits of learning music for a child are extremely significant, from improving test scores to decreasing anxiety. While budgets may not seem to allow for keeping music, there are ways to make music programs work despite financial constraints. Keeping music programs in schools will ultimately help both students and teachers. Therefore, elementary schools should keep music programs, despite budget cuts being made nation-wide.

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This piece is a short response essay that was written after attending an event held on campus. In this case, the student watched a movie sponsored by the First Year Seminar Film Series and then explains how the movie exemplifies the ideas discussed in one of the required class readings.

Bruce Wayne: Enemy-centered to Principle-centered

By Tia M. Brown

(Prof. Redkey - "Leadership")

Batman Begins introduces tragedy at the very beginning of the movie. Bruce Wayne is the child of a millionaire who owns Wayne Enterprises and is one of the most important figures in the city of Gotham. Wayne lives a very entitled life with a butler and two very loving parents. He develops a horrible fear of bats as a young child that he cannot overcome, so when he attends a play featuring bats with his parents, it is natural that he asks his father if they can leave. Unfortunately for him, tragedy strikes at this moment, and the world he once knew changes instantly as Wayne witnesses the murder of his parents by a desperate criminal. From this moment on, Wayne devotes his life to traveling the world in order to study the minds of criminals and to fight injustice. Wayne demonstrates the qualities of an enemy-centered person in the beginning of the film and then transforms to principle-centered as described by Stephen R. Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

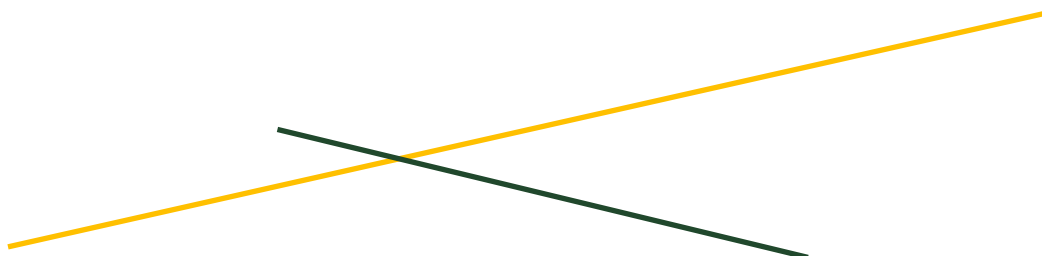
As an adult, Wayne is an enemy-centered person. He is motivated by his hatred for the man who took his parents away from him, so he focuses all of his energy on learning about the criminal mind in order to stop injustice. Instead of focusing on maintaining the empire that his father built, he disappears and travels to central Asia to live among criminals. Wayne's actions follow the description of an enemy-centered person. As described by Covey, if you are an enemy-centered person, "[Y]ou make your decisions based on what will thwart your enemy" (Covey 129). Wayne accepts Ra's al Ghul's training for the League of Shadows because he knows it will teach him how to fight the criminals he encounters. After leaving Asia and returning to Gotham, he uses his training to secretly plan to kill the man who murdered his parents. He is so focused on his enemy that he does not think about how it will affect his life, nor the fact that this would make him a murderer, equal to the murderer of his parents. Wayne also proves to be enemy-centered when he refuses to kill another criminal in Asia. He believes that criminal deserves to suffer in prison as his punishment but wants nothing more than to kill the man who murdered his parents.

Once Wayne takes on the persona of Batman, he transforms from an enemy-centered person to more of a principle-centered person. This process begins when his childhood friend makes a remark about how his actions are ones that his father would not be proud of. This changes Wayne's outlook concerning his decisions in life, and he begins to focus more on the values he had developed as a child. Instead of going after criminals to avenge his parents' death, he begins to go after them in order to improve the city of Gotham. This transformation causes him to stop focusing on one thing—his enemy. Instead, it broadens his focus to what he values, the city he grew up in. It also shows that he is beginning to think with the end in mind. Even though it is not Bruce Wayne's face the city of Gotham sees, he creates Batman based on his principles. He wants Batman to be known as a man of justice and one that criminals should fear. When Wayne's life is over, he wants people to remember Batman as someone the citizens could count on and someone who cared about the well-being of the city. Once the decision is made, Wayne does not falter from his stand against murder. He will not murder any of the criminals he fights, even Ra's al Ghul. Wayne refuses to murder him in the train even though he knows Ra's al Ghul would kill him if given the chance. His transformation is also seen when he takes on the persona of Batman because he is overcoming his fear. It is his childhood fear of bats that he partly blames for the death of his parents. By overcoming his fear and making it a stronger part of himself, it shows his transition from being solely focused on his enemies to using that fear as an advantage when working for good and balancing his life.

Although Bruce Wayne allows his decisions and his life to be centered on his enemy at the beginning of the movie, he transforms to focus more on his principles by the end of the film. He does this by focusing all of his energy that was once on his enemy into his pursuit of justice. By doing this and overcoming his fear of bats, he is able to combine the two and create his alter ego, Batman, so he can begin to bring justice to the city of Gotham. This encompasses Covey's second habit of being a principle-centered person in order to be successful. It also brings to light how revenge will not truly bring anyone justice. There will always be bumps in the road and tragedies to face, but they can be used to motivate people to make positive changes. This is clearly seen when Bruce Wayne developed Batman as his alter ego; we can do the same in our own ways in our own lives.

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In this research essay, the writer provides a substantiated overview of a large environmental issue, hones in on a particular result of the problem, and methodically outlines specific examples. By choosing to include research from around the world, the student underscores the danger and urgency surrounding this global environmental crisis (citations formatted as per CSE [Council of Science Editors] guidelines).

**Heating Up Illness:
Climate Change and its Effects on the Rate of Infectious Disease**

By Kathryn M. Burke
(Prof. L. Woolbright - "The Environment")

In the world today, there are a seemingly infinite number of problems that human beings must overcome. Two of the most important are climate change and infectious disease. Unfortunately, people compartmentalize these problems and never stop to think how they might interact. The reality is that they do interact, and the scientific community is starting to take notice of how climate change and disease are related. With the increasing interest in and awareness of the relationship between disease and climate change, it is difficult to not see a correlation. However, the general population pushes the problem of infectious disease to the backburner because it believes public health initiatives will keep everyone safe. This is not the reality. Climate change is causing an increase in the contraction of infectious disease worldwide, regardless of public health measures. To fully understand the truth in this statement, it is first vital for people to gain an understanding of climate change in general and how it affects the development rate of infectious disease bacteria. The effects of climate change on arthropod, rodent, water-borne, and food-borne vectors of infectious disease will be analyzed in this paper to show that their contraction rates increase regardless of the public health initiatives put into place to counteract the diseases they cause.

To understand how climate change can make a difference in the proliferation of infectious disease, it is first vital to know what climate change is in general. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 1995), climate change can be referred to as any change in climate over a period of time, due to natural fluctuations or as a result of human beings. Record cold winters, summers full of heat flashes, and massive storms have all become commonplace and show this change in climate. All over the world, the causes of these changes in climate are agreed upon by scientists. Increased greenhouse gas emissions have caused carbon dioxide and methane to build up in the atmosphere (IPCC 1995). The organization projects levels to reach 500 part per million by the end of the twenty-first century, which is well over the given maximum livable value of 385 part per million. Furthermore, the mean temperature of the atmosphere has risen between 0.3 and 0.6 degrees Celsius, as shown by the increasing number of warmest years on record (IPCC 1995). Sea levels have also changed quite drastically, rising about 10-25 centimeters in the past one hundred years (IPCC 1995). Finally, there has been an increase in the intensity of the hydrological cycle. This means that the atmosphere has more water vapor; however, the rate of precipitation and the areas of the world that receive it have changed (IPCC 1995). Therefore, more severe weather in the form of storms, heat waves, and droughts is occurring. Overall, it is quite clear that these changes to the earth's atmosphere have caused many surprises, yet it seems that people have overlooked the direct effect that these changes have had on the rate of infectious disease.

Now that climate change is fully understood, how these effects impact the developmental rate of infectious disease bacteria will be examined. According to Mirski et al (2011), since 1975 there have been the reported findings of more than thirty new diseases, from Ebola to new strains of Hantavirus, and scientists also note that there have been old diseases making a comeback as well. Interestingly enough, the idea of climate change, or global warming, was introduced in 1980. This correlation is impossible to ignore, and Mirski et al (2011) say the most important environmental factors that affect pathogens are temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide levels. Temperature increases create environments more suitable for pathogen growth.

Increased humidity creates an increase in water vapor, which impacts the development of infectious disease, and increased levels of carbon dioxide stimulate microbial pathogen growth (Mirski et al 2011). It is important to note that these elements that proliferate pathogen development are the results of climate change, and scientists are also starting to get the hint. From 1990 to the present day, there has been a rising interest in the relationship between climate change and infectious disease interactions (Altizer et al 2013). The research done shows quite clearly that the interest in the climate change and disease link has almost doubled during this time period. The scientific community has become increasingly aware that there is a correlation, and the evidence of temperature, carbon dioxide, and humidity increases are there to prove it. Therefore, it seems clear that climate change causes an increase in the bacterial pathogens which trigger infectious disease, creating a general increase in infectious disease worldwide.

Climate change doesn't just impact the bacteria themselves; it also affects the vectors that cause infectious disease. The best studied vector is the arthropod. Semenza and Menne (2009) define an arthropod-borne disease as one that is contracted due to the bite of an infected arthropod species such as a mosquito or tick. They argue that insects are cold-blooded, and therefore, they become quite susceptible to the fluctuations brought on by climate change. Warmer weather increases the rate of survival of these arthropods by dictating their habitat and distribution throughout the world, as well as their abundance in those areas (Semenza and Menne 2009). Essentially, the article states that arthropods thrive in areas that have warm, humid climates. As global warming begins to heat up the planet, and the weather patterns change so that there is more precipitation in the air, the hunting grounds of these vectors will grow. Arthropods will thrive in areas that previously had not been common for them. Furthermore their season will extend, as cold winters do not eradicate these bugs (Semenza and Menne 2009). This means that it will become more common to receive bug bites later in the fall as well as earlier in the spring. Finally, humidity and increased rainfall create prime breeding conditions for arthropods (Semenza and Menne 2009). This means that over time, due to wetter weather, there will be an increase in the population of infectious arthropods. Therefore, the proliferation of arthropod bites will increase causing the contraction of infectious disease to rise due to a change in the weather patterns caused by climate change.

Even though climate change blatantly affects arthropod-borne diseases, many people believe infectious disease caused by bugs is not a relevant issue. The main reason people ignore the problem is because of the arthropod control methods that public health initiatives claim to have in place. In the developed world, there is the use of insecticides, insect repellent, screens on windows, and even bed nettings (Khasnis and Nettleman 2005). However, Khasnis and Nettleman (2005) say that our methods will not last forever and that even now the mosquitoes and other insects are becoming resistant to drugs and pesticides. One of the best examples of arthropod disease increase is shown through a very famous illness, malaria. In Africa alone, there are 300 to 500 million cases a year causing 1.5 to 2.7 million deaths, which should be enough to cause people to believe this type of disease is still an issue regardless of public health initiatives (Baer and Springer 2009). Unfortunately for those who claim public health will save them, malaria is not a disease only in Africa anymore. Houston recently experienced an outbreak, and the disease has been seen in northern parts of America as well, namely New York, New Jersey, and Michigan (Baer and Singer 2009). This shows a previously unseen range of infected arthropods, which is causing problems even in America, where public health is strong. Therefore, arthropod disease contraction is increasing around the globe due to a climate that is changing their distribution and survival. Unfortunately, public health measures are not solving this problem, and infectious diseases continue to increase worldwide.

Another vector that increases its potential for disease contraction rates due to the effects of climate change is rodents. Rodents moving across Europe caused the black plague, one of the worst epidemics in history. Semenza and Menne (2009) discuss how rodents can act as a primary host for disease as well as a host for arthropods, making them quite deadly. This means they can bite humans, infecting them directly, or can carry other vectors like arthropods, which will bite humans. The authors of the article say that rodent populations are affected by the weather. Rodents prefer warm, wet winters and springs, which increase rodent population because such weather is better for their survival and because it increases their food supply (Semenza and Menne 2009). Also, if the weather becomes harsher, rodents may be driven indoors to look for water and shelter, therefore increasing the potential for contact with humans (Semenza and Menne 2009). Both of these factors increase as climate change becomes more of a problem. In many areas, global warming causes extended mild winters and springs with lots of rain. Therefore, it is likely that the number of rats in the coming years will increase. The tricky thing about global warming is that it can also cause abnormally harsh weather; however, this will move the rodent population inside (Semenza and Menne 2009). Thus, rodent populations will increase due to climate change, as will the interaction between rodents and humans, thereby creating a higher chance of people contracting an infectious disease.

Although the number of incidents of rodent-borne disease will increase due to climate change, many individuals think that public health initiatives will stop rats in their tracks. The main argument is that better sanitation methods help to create a safe environment and stop the increasing human contact with rodents (Khasnis and Nettleman 2005). The problem with this view is that while the rodent population is increasing due to climate change, so is the human population. Thus, no matter how many sanitation methods a society puts into place, human beings continue to take up more space, increasing their interaction with rodents. A view of this increased interaction has been seen in a recent rise of Hantavirus in the country of Belgium and across Europe as well. The rodents implicated in this increase of disease are the bank voles, which are responsible for Hantavirus, and have in recent years been known to display cyclic population peaks (Clement et al 2009). The increase in the bank vole population is due to their survival during mild winters as well as higher temperatures in the fall, which allow their food supply to remain strong (Clement et al 2009). Therefore, because of changing climate in Belgium, the rodents are surviving and coming into closer contact with humans. This change in infection rates is seen by an increase from only 3 Hantavirus cases in 1985 to 372 cases by 2005 (Clement et al). The article goes on to say that this is considered to be an epidemic in Belgium, and the authors predict that since climate change is becoming more of a threat, it is likely that Hantavirus will become commonplace in Belgium and surrounding countries. This evidence supports the idea that rodent populations are increasing due to climate change, causing an increase in the contraction of diseases such as Hantavirus. Regardless of the public health sanitation methods that countries claim to have in place, the overall contraction of infectious disease across the globe continues to increase.

Water-borne diseases are also susceptible to increases in contraction due to the effects of climate change. Semenza and Menne (2009) state that there are two ways humans can be exposed to water pathogens: drinking water and the recreational use of water. Climate change affects water-borne pathogens in many ways, but there are two that stick out the most. The first is that increases in water vapor from an intensified hydrological cycle will result in intense rain events. This can result in an increase of run-off, which will increase pathogens and toxins floating around in coastal waters (Semenza and Menne 2009). Essentially, water will become contaminated with bacteria that are not advisable to consume because they inhibit human health. Another important concept is the runoff moving into coastal waters. These places are generally the ones that human beings use for recreational fun, such as the beach. Therefore, the water that people love to have fun in can make them sick. The other major issue according to Semenza and Menne (2009) is that extended periods of warm weather have increased the temperature of water bodies. They say this increase in temperature is generally favorable to disease, affecting microorganisms and their reproduction cycles. Therefore, due to climate change, the temperature of all bodies of water will raise and will result in the increase of pathogens already present in the water that individuals drink and use for recreation. In this way, the climate will cause an increase in contaminated water on a planet that already does not have enough to truly survive. Therefore, the number of cases of water-borne diseases will escalate.

The belief in the public health system seems to say that water is sanitized, and therefore, society does not need to worry about instances of water borne-disease contraction increasing. The problem is, however, that water is a basic necessity to all of human life, and unfortunately there is not enough of it. In the world today, 1.1 billion people are not able to reach safe water; and 2.4 billion do not have the ability to properly sanitize it (Khasnis and Nettleman 2005). Climate change is the main cause of many of these problems. The hydrological cycle changes due to the climate, and another result is that the instance of drought becomes more common. This leads to desperation for water. When desperation comes into play, it doesn't matter how clean the water supply is, for an individual must drink it in order to survive. This breakdown was seen in cases during the cholera outbreak in the early 1990's in both Bangladesh and Peru. Cholera is a disease spread by a waterborne pathogen and causes watery diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration. In 1992 in Bangladesh, 100,000 cases were reported and 1,500 of these cases resulted in mortality (Baer and Singer 2009). A similar event occurred in Peru in 1991, and it was startling because it was the first time that cholera was seen there since the dawn of the twentieth century (Baer and Singer 2009). The cause of this outbreak had a direct relationship to climate change. Baer and Singer (2009) claim that extreme flooding occurred in those years, followed by an extended period of no rain. This led coastal waters to become contaminated, and also caused individuals to drink muddy water because it was all that could be found. Therefore, regardless of better water sanitation, the effects of climate change are too powerful and manage to cause an increase in the contraction of water-borne diseases, increasing the contraction of infectious disease worldwide.

Finally, food-borne infectious diseases are not immune to the effects of climate change. Semenza and Menne (2009) state that high temperatures increase the replication of food-borne pathogens. Furthermore, longer growing seasons leave room for mistakes to be made in handling the food properly. Therefore, due to warmer peak temperatures, the food that already has pathogens will likely accumulate more, and the food that does not may be handled in such a way that it becomes infected. Also, according to Weber (2010), the number of pests that invade crop yields also increases due to global warming. This means that crops are susceptible to a number of different diseases because the animals which invade the crops during their longer growing season will increase. Finally, human food sources are susceptible to all the same issues as water-borne pathogens (Weber 2010). This is because animals drink the same water as humans, and if they are infected, people will be, too. Also, crops need water to grow, and if the water used is contaminated with bacteria, the effects will be spread to humans (Weber 2010). For these reasons, food-borne illness is quite dynamic due to the many different pathways by which an individual can become ill and is likely to increase due to climate change.

Even with all the ways food can become contaminated by food borne pathogens, public health organizations still claim that they can stop the vectors that spread infectious disease. The best way individuals know how to do this is through pesticides and stopping the pests from attacking crops (Khasnis and Nettleman 2005). Unfortunately, pesticides themselves can make human beings sick, and they also contribute to pollution of the atmosphere. This means that by using pesticides, people are contributing to the adverse effects of climate change. One of the best examples of food-borne illness is salmonella. Many cases have been seen in the United States, and there has recently been a spike in Australia. Zhang et al (2012) showed that due to increases in temperature, the contraction of the salmonella-causing pathogens increased. The results showed that in 2012, salmonella cases increased by 9 - 48% as compared to 2000. Furthermore, projection models showed that by 2050 in temperate Australia the rate of contraction would increase by 31 - 87%, and in subtropical regions it would increase by 87 - 143% (Zhang et al 2012). Based on these findings, it seems evident that regardless of the public health initiatives to fight against crop pests, the rate of infectious disease caused by food-borne pathogens is increasing, and therefore, the world-wide rate of infectious disease contraction increases as well.

In spite of the many public health initiatives societies put into place to counteract infectious disease, climate change still manages to cause an increase in disease contraction worldwide. We see this through a basic understanding of what global warming is, and how its specific effects cause changes to pathogen development in general. Furthermore, scientists have analyzed the way that climate change affects arthropod, rodent, water-borne, and food-borne vectors even though there are specific public health measures believed to stop these effects. Human society has reached a critical juncture in its history. Climate change has caused numerous problems for the world, but one of the biggest for human beings is the way in which it increases disease. How does this problem stop? First, scientists must continue to research because the correlation between these two problems still needs to be better understood. Then, it is critical to realize the cause of the problem. Climate change is partly to blame for causing an increase in infectious disease, so the best way to counteract the problem is to stop contributing to the changes. Disease is a major issue in the world today, and it is also a problem that could cause an end to the human race. For this reason, individuals must become educated about disease and how it is affected by the ways humans harm the environment. Without the proper knowledge, society becomes vulnerable to the infinite number of diseases both new and old that could severely harm the human species.

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The writer of this research essay explored a topic of personal interest and uses a wide variety of sources to support her claims in this thesis-driven analysis.

Head Trauma from Playing Football and the Liability of the NFL

By Cheryl A. Clemens
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Among the most common types of injuries are those sustained in sports. These occur in every sport, at every level, all over the world. However, among the most widely acknowledged injuries are those resulting from playing American football, and the most serious of these affect the brain. In recent years, as medical reports have begun to come out detailing the extent of football-related head injuries, people – both players and spectators alike – have begun to blame the National Football League, or NFL, for these injuries and hold it responsible. Since the brain injuries that professional football players have were sustained during their football careers, people believe that the NFL has a responsibility to its former players to compensate them for their injuries. In the past, there was little knowledge of the long-term effects of a head injury. However, it has always been acknowledged that in a physical game such as football, the risk of serious injury is high. As studies have found that a head injury can permanently disable someone, the NFL has made a significant effort in terms of rules, regulations, and equipment to make the game as safe as possible. For many years, the NFL has been constantly studying ways to improve safety and has been implementing changes to protect players as it gains new information. As such, the NFL cannot be held responsible for its players' long-term brain injuries as players all signed contracts knowing that in a physical game like football, the risk of serious injury of any kind is high.

While head injuries are by no means uncommon in any walk-of-life, when a person continually sustains head injuries, concern for permanent brain damage increases. This is due to a condition called second impact syndrome. This occurs when people who have head injuries, such as concussions, hit their head again while their brain is still trying to recover, thus reinjuring it before it has completely healed. It refers specifically to the catastrophic events that may occur as a result of this subsequent injury (Pelletier). This secondary hit causes the brain to bleed and swell even more, which increases the potential risks associated with a concussion. In sports such as football, this occurs when players return to the game either not realizing that they have a head injury or before their concussion completely heals. This then prolongs the recovery period and increases the chance that the concussion will lead to long-term and permanent brain trauma or dysfunction (Pelletier). Now that the actual effects of brain injuries have begun to be determined, preventing these types of injuries has been a main topic of conversation. However, preventing second impact syndrome is sometimes difficult as each person heals differently. What may be, on average, enough time to heal from a concussion, may not be enough time for some people to fully heal; therefore, many put their neurological health at risk by returning to play before they really should (Pelletier). This uncertainty and the risk involved affects the way that football leagues run their organizations. It also affects the way that parents view their children playing football, affects current players, and affects the players who played before this new knowledge was discovered.

In the past, there was no real concern about head injuries. Since there was no visible sign of injury, no injury was acknowledged. Players would take serious hits to the head and would even intentionally lead with their head because it is a harder surface that makes a more effective tackle, and so they would play while concussed (Reeves). This risky behavior that can be attributed to a lack of knowledge on the topic of neurology caused many players to sustain serious brain injuries while playing in the NFL. The field of neuroscience went unexplored for a long period of time due to the lack of technological resources for actually studying the brain. However, as technology has advanced and the proper resources have become available, new findings regarding how brains actually work and what affects them are constantly being discovered. The scientific research that shows the actual effects of head injuries from playing football did not begin to be conducted until 1971 when The National Football Head and Neck Injury Registry started documenting hospitalization, surgeries, fractures, dislocations, paralysis, and death from football-related head injuries at both the professional and collegiate level (Viano and Halstead). Upon beginning this research and conducting follow up tests on those players who were included in the statistics, it became clear just how extensive and permanent the repercussions of head injuries are. This research, however, involved a slow process as every finding was a groundbreaking one. What this meant was that the players who played before 1971 and those who played for the next few decades were continually putting their long-term health at risk by playing football. While the players from 1971 onward knew that the effects of being hit in the head were being investigated, they did not know the extent of the repercussions for playing football. Had they, and the rest of the sports world, known differently, they may have elected to not play football, especially at the very physical professional level.

Because the NFL was the one to inform the players of the repercussions as the information came out, its officials obviously knew the dangers before the players and coaches did. The question, however, becomes whether those officials intentionally withheld vital safety information from the players and coaches simply to preserve the ethicality of the NFL's practices, thus making it a negligent organization. Many people believe that the NFL leadership did know important information and simply waited until absolutely necessary to tell the players. Due to this very common belief and the problems that many players, both current and former, have encountered, over three thousand professional players are trying to sue the NFL and hold it responsible for the life-altering injuries they sustained while playing football (Dart). If the NFL leadership intentionally withheld this information for its own personal gain and therefore knowingly jeopardized the health of many dozens of men without any effort to protect them, then it is liable and needs to provide a form of workers' compensation for its players. While many people may think that the NFL has done little to protect its players until it has become absolutely necessary, this is not true.

Throughout football history, the helmets that players wear have been consistently improved as new information and technology became available. For example, when football first began in the late 1800s, no helmets were even used in the game, as there was no observed need to protect players' heads from injuries. It was not until 1920 that helmets were introduced in the game of football, though they were not actually required until 1943 ("Evolution of the Rules"). These early helmets also offered very little to no protection from head injuries, for they were simply made out of leather with a small amount of padding sewn inside. By the early 1970s, when concern about head injuries from football was just beginning to arise, the NFL had already significantly invested in the study of better helmets. As a result, they had already evolved to be made out of rigid plastic and contain about 1.3 centimeters of foam for cushioning. In total, these helmets weighed approximately 0.65 kilograms (Viano and Halstead). Since this was right at the beginning of the investigation into neurological impacts, the amount invested in helmet research spiked significantly in the 1970s so that new helmet designs and technology were constantly being tested, improved, and finally implemented each season. Due to the intensified and continued focus on improving helmets, they now have 5.7 centimeters of foam for cushioning along with air pockets, all encased inside the rigid plastic shell and weighing in at a total of 2.27 kilograms (Viano and Halstead).

Throughout their testing process, these helmets must meet the standards of the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment to ensure that they will hold up and continually protect players. At the moment, funding is going towards developing one-time use helmets rather than durable ones so that the impact on each player's head during each game can be measured based on the wear of the helmet. Researchers can then use this information to aid in neurological research and determine if they need to check a player for a concussion that they otherwise would not have identified (Viano and Halstead).

Since the NFL continually made updates to the helmets its players were wearing, even prior to scientific research showing that head injuries were extremely harmful, the claim cannot accurately be made that it was negligent and withholding information from its players. As helmets were required and were constantly updated, players obviously knew that hits to the head were harmful; they just did not know the extent of the harm since there was no real scientific research to show this. However, the NFL did adapt the equipment to try to protect the players as best it could with the knowledge available at the time.

In addition to continually adapting equipment to make the game safer and reduce the impact on players' heads, the NFL acted quickly regarding rules and regulations to make the game safer. As aforementioned, research on the impact of head injuries in the game of football began in 1971. However, within eight years of that research, the NFL had already banned the practice of spearing, the tackling technique that causes the most head injuries in football ("Evolution of the Rules"). Spearing is defined as the "intentional head-down contact with the top or crown of the helmet" (Pelletier). In other words, it is illegal for a player to lead into a tackle with his head. When this occurs, the player is directly hitting his head, neck, and/or face, and possibly that of another player, which causes a sudden force to be transmitted to one or both heads. This then jars the brain and causes it to hit against the inside of the skull until it bruises and bleeds, at which point the player is considered to be concussed (Pelletier). Within eight years, researchers were able to determine, due to neurological research and game studying, that this was definitely the primary cause of injuries, and therefore the NFL forbade the practice. However, despite these rules, even in the twenty-first century with all that is now known about brain injuries, players still opt to lead with their heads and take a penalty if they are caught doing so. While many believe that the NFL must take responsibility for these players' injuries, the organization cannot control how players decide to conduct themselves (Clark). Therefore, if players are intentionally breaking rules that jeopardize their own safety, the NFL cannot be held responsible.

A few classic examples of players making choices that violate NFL playing policies, involving Steve Young, Stan Humphries, and Mike Webster, have proven very influential. Steve Young is quite famously a former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers. During the first quarter of a 1997 game, Young was kneed in the chest. The impact from this hit caused his helmet to come off and his head to hit against the ground with a substantial amount of force. Following this hit, Young was removed from the game and advised on the sidelines by the coaches and physicians that he may have a brain injury and should not return to the game. However at the time, the NFL allowed its players to have the final say in whether or not they continued to play, a practice which is no longer allowed, so Young ultimately made his own decision. It was his choice not to listen to the coaches and physicians but rather to return to the game in the fourth quarter and lead his team to victory, despite his on-setting concussion. Young therefore defied the safety measures put in place by the NFL and therefore may have knowingly put himself at risk for second impact syndrome (Collins).



Stan Humphries, in contrast, opted to make a career decision in favor of his health. After sustaining three concussions in two months as a San Diego Chargers quarterback, Humphries decided to retire from football, for he deemed the risk to be too high. This realization was the result of the hit that gave him his third concussion. He took a hit right under the chin—a hit that left him temporarily paralyzed. Out of fear of what else could happen to him while playing the sport he loved, he pulled out of his contract, taking only his guaranteed money and that which he had already earned (Collins).

An even greater example of the danger of football comes from the death of Mike Webster in 2002. Webster played center in the NFL from 1974 until 1990. He played through the decades of uncertainty regarding head injuries and despite the regulations against a player leading into a tackle with his head, Webster made this his signature move. At the age of fifty, however, Webster died of heart failure. Upon examining his body, in what is regarded as the autopsy that changed football, doctors found that Webster was a fifty-year-old man living in a body that was aged well beyond his years due to failing neurological health. In his brain, researchers found the first hard evidence that football can cause permanent brain trauma through the presence of a disease called Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, or CTE, a disease that causes dementia, Alzheimer's, and depression (Breslow). Until the death of Webster in 2002, there was no solid evidence regarding the long-term effects of brain injury resulting from football because it was still a developing topic. However, by studying Webster's brain, researchers were able to make major breakthroughs in the field of neurology.

So, considering this period of uncertainty, should the NFL be held responsible for players like Mike Webster who did not heed any of the rule changes or warnings? At the time, no one truly knew what the exact dangers of football were, and there is a significant amount of ambiguity in the field of neuroscience still to this day. After all, it took thirty-one years of research on football-related head injuries until it could finally be determined that the neurological effects of the game can be permanent. Therefore, the league really cannot be held responsible when it could not possibly have known enough information to understand the full dangers associated with playing the game. When these players signed on to play football, they knew that it was a physical game. They knew that if they were hit wrong, they could be paralyzed, they could die, or they might never be able to walk right again, just to name a few potential risks. However, these players still decided that they wanted to take the risk. Whether they abided by the rules of the NFL, blatantly ignored them, or stepped away from the game, the players still knew what was going on and made their decisions accordingly. In these three thousand law suits, which would cost billions of dollars and bankrupt the NFL, the players are claiming that the NFL had information that it did not share with them and as a result of the organization's negligence, owe them a form of workers' compensation (Dart). However, the NFL has continually made great strides towards improving the safety of the game. Through their continual helmet development, implementation of anti-spearing rules, and their funding of neurological research, the NFL has consistently been playing its part in keeping players as safe as possible. In addition, the league has added sideline physicians to check all players for concussions following questionable hits (Collins) and has steadily, since the 1970s, begun to increase the regulations that restrict the tackle zone simply to the middle of the body in a kind of rugby-style tackling approach (Reeves). Therefore, regardless of what people claim the NFL knew versus what its players knew, the league still took every step possible to make the game safer. Based on the changes in rules and the improvements in helmet design that the league was making, the players knew that head injuries were dangerous. Even if they did not know specifics as to how dangerous they could be due to a lack of conclusive evidence, they were still aware.

The NFL should not be held responsible for these players' injuries because in a game that is as physical as football, injury is almost a given. At some point in every player's career, he will get hurt. While head injuries may be the most severe and alter the lives of players the most, these players knew when they signed their contracts that injury was a common part of the game. The NFL cannot be held responsible because no one knew the repercussions to the full extent. If a player gets hurt, he still receives several millions of dollars as a part of his contract, even if he can never play again. Players are guaranteed this money as a type of insurance to cover them if they are injured. If the NFL employed the standard workers' compensation rules, they would suffer a severe financial hardship, maybe even to the point of bankruptcy, and a large source of the country's entertainment and culture would be lost (Dart). Since football is such a large part of American sports culture, many believe that the game is creating a culture of violence and that the league should have to take responsibility for the injuries to its players (Straham). However, many other sports have a high rate of head injuries as well. Sports such as boxing, hockey, lacrosse, and soccer, which is the most popular sport among children, all have a level of risk involved. While this debate over the NFL's negligence and what it owes to players has raised all of these arguments, it has also helped to make these other sports safer at all levels. The research involved has impacted the equipment and regulations not just the NFL, but many common sports for children, as well (Jeffrey).

Since the NFL has continually been making efforts to make the game of football safer, it is not liable for its players' injuries. It has been shown that the league has implemented policies, procedures, and equipment changes as new information has become available. In fact, it can also be said that the NFL's understanding of the science of neurology and its subsequent efforts to make the game safer have had a positive effect on safety in all sports at all levels.

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For their first major writing assignment, the students were asked to declare and analyze a distinct commonality or contrast pertaining to the course theme and selected texts from the Heritage Unit. The writer of the essay interestingly compares the various ways heritage is perceived, valued, and preserved in a philosophical dialogue, a contemporary short story, and a modern mainstream film.

Carving Imprints: An Exploration of Heritage

By Erin B. Colligan

(Prof. Liptak – Crossing Borders in Literature and Film)

Heritage often defines one's history and determines accepted behaviors and values within a culture. Some individuals are "hard-wired" to preserve and broaden the heritage they inherit and learn from it, while others question or even reinvent their heritage. The theme of heritage, and the complex back-and-forth of developing or rejecting it, is present in many forms, such as ancient and modern texts as well as film. Three such works that explore the theme of heritage are Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave," Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use," and Martin Scorsese's film *Hugo*. Each of the main characters in these three works attempts to understand his or her heritage more completely but through differing means. The prisoner in "The Allegory of the Cave" tries to extend his understanding of the world around him by leaving the comfort of his own heritage. Dee, in "Everyday Use," incorrectly believes that she understands her familial history completely, when she ironically does not, whereas Hugo from the film *Hugo* attempts to preserve and broaden his heritage so that his family will have a legacy. While their circumstances are different, each character sees the value in going on a quest to fully understand their respective visions of heritage in order to reinvent or preserve their roots.

In "The Allegory of the Cave," the freed prisoner is forced to venture outside of his own history and heritage contained within the cave. For these prisoners, the cave is all they have ever known, but one day a prisoner experiences the outside world for the first time and observes, "Once one has seen it, however, one must infer that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything, that in the visible realm it produces both light and its source, and that in the intelligible realm it controls and provides truth and understanding; and that anyone who is to act sensibly in private or public must see it" (Plato 211). When the prisoner views the sun outside of the cave and concludes that it provides the seasons and years and, therefore, controls everything, this discovery leads to better understanding and new knowledge. The prisoner is forced to enter into the unknown and gains valuable insight about the tangible, real, and pure forms of civilization that he has only viewed from a blurred vision and that has been far from reality. In discovering this "blinding light" of knowledge, the prisoner is able to come to a better understanding of the world beyond the vague shadows he has known all of his life and, in turn, expands, or even reinvents his roots.

The prisoner's perspective is further revealed: "For when you are used to it, you will see infinitely better than the people there and know precisely what each image is, and also what it is an image of, because you have seen the truth about fine, just, and good things" (Plato 214). Once the prisoner experiences the outside world, he realizes that the shadows he observes contain meaning and have a purpose and that all his past knowledge and preconceived notions from down below in the cave were all an illusion. The prisoner, seeing that so many more exciting things are taking place outside of the cave, wants to share his experience. He has a more optimistic outlook and a sense of control because of this broadening of knowledge; thus, he aims to revamp his prior notions.

The prisoner decides to go back down to the cave to tell his fellow prisoners about what he sees and what he has learned. But the other prisoners want nothing to do with the unfamiliar; they are comfortable believing in what they know and are not going to challenge all they have experienced in their lives thus far. In regards to heritage, sometimes people are scared to venture out, challenge, or even be optimistic about the unknown possibilities of their world, or what they could further learn or change. In sum, Plato's prisoner broadens his learned borders as an effect of the knowledge he had gained and thus challenges his previous conceptions about life inside and outside of the cave.

Another character who also strives to reinvent her heritage, but in an entirely different manner, is Dee, the young African-American woman in "Everyday Use." Dee, whose adopted African name is Wangero, ironically believes she understands her heritage. However, she is sorely mistaken in her assumptions and proves that she does not understand her familial history, nor does she understand how her own family defines and values its heritage. Dee's unnamed mother and her sister Maggie live together in their small impoverished home. Dee's mother never had the opportunity to have an education, but she sacrificed much to provide Dee with what she herself didn't have. Dee's mother explains, "[W]e raised money, the church and me, to send her [Dee] to Augusta to school" (Walker 316). Once Dee receives her education and gains confidence, she begins to alienate herself from the family and goes about her life, creating her "own new heritage." Along with Dee's more forward and ambitious attitude, she uses her education as a way to stand above her family, unlike Plato's prisoner, who chooses to share his knowledge.

For example, Dee believes that her American name was chosen by those who oppressed her and therefore feels compelled to change it to Wangero. This name better resembles her "African roots," in Dee's opinion. She fails to understand the history of her birth name; Dee is named in honor of her grandmother, her great-grandmother and her aunt. Her misunderstandings of her own heritage and her desire to separate herself from her family are shown in other ways throughout the short story, too. When Dee comes inside the house to eat dinner, she suddenly notices the texture of the benches, which she had never discerned before. In other words, she takes an interest in the "look" of things and not in their genuine historic, cultural, or family significance. Dee fails to recognize and appreciate these "everyday use" items for what they truly are. The butter churner and dasher are objects that catch Dee's eye solely for their aesthetic purpose in the house; she views these items as objects to be photographed and displayed rather than as passed-down family objects of "everyday use." Dee soon finds two quilts that her Grandma Dee and Big Dee had quilted from scraps of Grandma Dee's old dresses. The quilts would one day be passed down to Maggie, who recognizes and appreciates their sentimental purpose in their familial heritage and history. In an attempt to get through to Dee during the fight over the quilts, Dee's mom exclaims, "'She can always make more...Maggie knows how to quilt'" (Walker 320). Dee doesn't even notice her mother pointing out that it is her sister, and not Dee, who has taken an interest in learning to quilt and who preserves their family's true history and traditions.

It is evident here that Dee has disconnected herself from the established, shared family heritage present in her mother and sister's bond, and in her attempt to further understand her family through the use of her education and new self-identity, she has ironically alienated herself from her family's life. Therefore, Dee does not recognize and appreciate her family's genuine roots and hard work embodied in their possessions. She has indeed attempted to play some kind of active role in the preservation of her family's heritage, but this role is sudden and disingenuous. The true understanding of Dee's family story is and has been out of her control for a long time because she resisted, as well as challenged, aspects of her heritage.

Contrary to Dee and her vision of heritage, Hugo, the main character in Scorsese's film *Hugo*, strives to preserve his familial history and heritage after the loss of his father. This preservation becomes Hugo's mission in order to ensure the continuation of not only the remembrance of his father, but also to form a familial legacy and heritage of his own. Unlike Dee in "Everyday Use," Hugo genuinely hopes to take what is left behind of his heritage and extend his knowledge to form a heritage of his own that will carry on into the future. Hugo's father was a master clockworker and enjoyed fixing gadgets. Hugo learned from him and marveled at his father's sense of wonder and curiosity in fixing things. Shortly after the death of his father, Hugo has practically no one and nothing besides the memories of his father. He experiences a flashback of an important time with his father and his prized automaton and recalls his father explaining the automaton to him: "He's a wind up figure, like a music box. This is the most complicated one I've ever seen by far. See this one, this one can write" (*Hugo*). This flashback puts Hugo on a mysterious mission to not only fix the automaton, but to further experience and learn all about his father's wonderings in order to prolong his dad's existence, memory, and importance in Hugo's lonely life.

Hugo ultimately fixes the automaton with the help of his friend Isabelle's heart-shaped key, and the automaton produces a message that Hugo's father left for him. With this revelation, Hugo and Isabelle set out to find out more about Georges Méliès, a long-forgotten film maker. In pursuing Méliès and his work, Hugo strives to form an interest and a purpose in the filmmaker's life and ultimately is able to restore hope in the artist while forming his own purpose. Hugo tells Isabelle, "Machines never come with extra parts, you know . . . So I figured, if the entire world was one big machine, I couldn't be an extra part. I had to be here for some reason" (*Hugo*). This metaphor helps explain Hugo's realization that even though his father is gone, Hugo must be the one to carry on the creative spirit, and, unlike Dee, he evidently does so through his active role in familial preservation. Throughout all of Hugo's discoveries, he is now able to reevaluate what is important in his life as well as give it meaning. The future continuation of his father's life is evident and long-lived in Hugo's values, hobbies, talents, and overall outlook on life. This is the broadening of Hugo's heritage; this is his legacy.

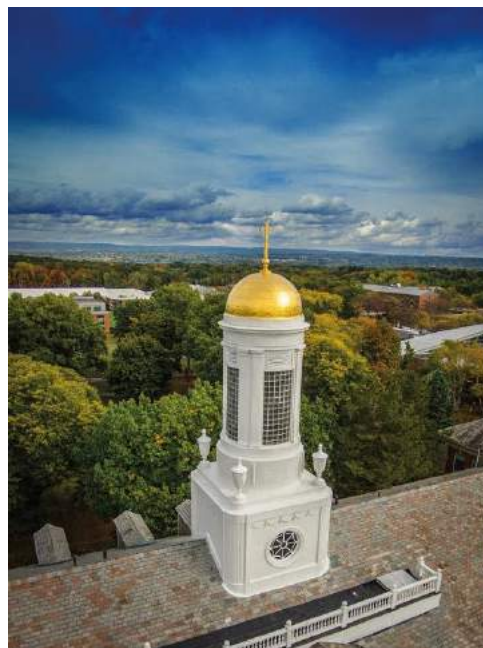
Heritage means something different to each person. Each character in the texts above grows up in different circumstances; however, each chooses to be active in the reinvention or preservation of their respective heritages. The prisoner in the cave broadens his knowledge by the use of venturing out and therefore gains a sense of reality, making new meaning of his roots. Dee resists, questions, and attempts to revamp her heritage even though she ironically misunderstands its genuine importance, and Hugo preserves his heritage throughout his journey of discovery and the formation of his family legacy that will carry into his future. Many strive to better understand where they came from and why it's important in their ever-changing paths of life. Some cross metaphorical borders and actual borders in order to signify a purpose for themselves, some choose to follow their historical and familial norms, and some use their agency to carve their own unique imprint.

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While examining their own food heritages, the students in this FYS class read and discussed Eric Schlosser's indictment of the current "Fast-Food Nation" and contrasted that to humans' long history as subsistence farmers. Their class field trip was an excursion to a local family farm that mainly uses traditional techniques to raise and grow virtually all of its meat, vegetables, and fruits. For this assignment, the students were asked to describe what they saw, what they thought of it, and how it related to the class discussions. Please note that students were required to use CSE author-year citation format.

Food for the Right Reason

By Chad M. Dashnaw

(Prof. L. Woolbright - "The Environment")

Before attending the field trip to Mr. Smassanow's family farm, the question I was most interested in was, "Who is the workforce of day-to-day operations on the farm?". During the field trip, I was a little surprised by the answer to my question. The farm has no paid employees; instead, the farm runs as a co-op. The roughly twenty-five acre land produces food for not only Mr. Smassanow's family, but for five other local families, too. Each family puts a small amount of money into the operations of the farm, but largely the families collaborate and work on the farm for their share of food. This style of labor rejects the conventional boss-and-employee relationship and in its place, harbors a loyal and friendly relationship. Mr. Smassanow said that the families in the co-op are not his employees but people who share his interests, and through years of working side-by-side, they have become his close friends. The co-op is not interested in becoming rich by maximizing the farm's production but instead focuses on supplying itself with homegrown, healthy foods by working together. Comparing this type of workforce used by the small-scale family food production system to that of the fast food industry's, as discussed in the book *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser (2001), results in several major differences pertaining to techniques for production, the use of chemicals and fertilizers, and the use of polyculture or monoculture.

The moderately-sized family farm was a remarkable contrast to how most of the nation produces food today. Instead of incorporating factory style techniques into the food production process to maximize yield, the family farm mainly used physical labor to manage its crops and animals. According to *Fast Food Nation*, "The labor practices of the fast food industry have their origins in the assembly line systems adopted by American manufacturers in the early twentieth century" (Schlosser 2001, p. 68). In large food production systems, workers are a small component of a huge process, and it is easy for them to be underpaid and easily replaced because machines largely take over many of the factory jobs. At a potato factory Schlosser (2001) recalls, "Inside the building, a maze of red conveyer belts crisscrosses in and out of machines that wash, sort, peel, slice, blanch, blow-dry, fry, and flash-freeze potatoes" (p. 111). The use of machines and assembly line methods result in workers being essentially removed from the actual production of the food, and consequently, they lose accountability for the product. In these industries, it rarely is the case when a worker starts with the raw materials and ends with the final goods.

In contrast, at the family farm Mr. Smassanow and his wife are the main caretakers of the animals and plants. Instead of using machines and industrial procedures, Mr. Smassanow physically feeds and nurtures his animals and plants and harvests his crops. During the field trip, he talked about the use of machines and said, "I use my tractor sometimes. It makes things easier and faster, but I would rather walk. I like to see what's happening to my plants, and I don't want to miss anything by being on the tractor." The painstaking perception and care Mr. Smassanow puts into everyday work stems from the fact that he is producing his own product. He is invested in the product because his hard work literally feeds his family and friends. Since the work force at the family farm is devoted to the project, more care is used and a better product is produced.



Large-scale food producing industries incorporate substantial technological advances into their systems in an attempt to improve their yields, reduce their costs, and outsell their neighbors. *Fast Food Nation* states that these industries rely heavily on “chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides” (Schlosser 2001, p. 119).

When asked about the use of chemicals on the family farm Mr. Smassanow, simply said, “When you take care of your body, eat good meals, and sleep eight hours a night, you don’t get sick. My plants are healthy and don’t need pesticide.” Looking at his plants, you could see traces of where insects had been nibbling on the leaves, yet the plants were flourishing and producing well. Since he had taken care of the land and allowed the plants to grow naturally, his crops could survive natural issues such as insects and disease. Large factories tend to overwork their land stripping away essential nutrients and as a result, cover their nutrient-starved plants with chemicals to prevent them from succumbing to disease. Mr. Smassanow did state that it is sometimes necessary to combat a disease or insect that is harming his crops but that there is always an organic solution. For example he mentioned how some marigolds can act as a pest control. Additionally, Mr. Smassanow stated that he does not need chemical fertilizers because he uses his animals’ waste to fertilize the land and uses the waste from his crops to feed his animals resulting in a continuous cycle of energy and nourishment. Also, Mr. Smassanow owns bees and uses them as a means of naturally pollinating his crops and stimulating healthy production.

Another difference between the small-scale farm and fast food industry is that the co-op is careful about what its animals ingest. *Fast Food Nation* mentions that the ConAgra Beef Company uses grain which “fattens the cattle quickly, aided by the anabolic steroids implanted in their ear” (Schlosser 2001, p. 150). The family farm makes sure that its animals are mostly grass fed because the natural diet adds energy and nutrition to the meat when the animals are butchered. Mr. Smassanow recalled an event when one of his pigs came down with a fever, and he had to give the animal a medicated shot. He was aware that the medication would be long-gone from the animal’s system when butchered, yet he still informed every family that was a part of the co-op because a chemical was introduced to the pig’s system. The co-op supported his actions because it cares about the health of its animals. In the long run, the animals’ health impacts the members’ own health when those animals are consumed. Large industries fail to care about the health of their products because their main concern is how much product they can produce to obtain the greatest income possible. The co-op is not interested in how much money it can make but rather how to produce the healthiest product. This is because the product is the co-op members’ food source.

The industries in *Fast Food Nation* tend to capitalize on a single crop to maximize their yield and income. In contrast, the family farm uses polyculture, growing a variety of vegetables and fruits and raising several different animals. The co-op farm produces apples, peaches, cherries, blueberries, grapes, pears, raspberries, corn, tomatoes, beets, lettuce, kale, eggplant, basil, green beans, peppers, and brussels sprouts as well as raises cattle, pigs, chickens, geese, and turkey among other plants and animals. The farm emphasizes multiple products because “variety is the spice of life,” according to Mr. Smassanow. Everything produced on the farm is consumed by the co-op; thus, the members of the co-op produce a multitude of vegetables, fruits and meats for a balanced and healthy diet. Also, the farm understands that a single crop absorbs specific nutrients from the land, so the co-op switches which crops it grows and where each year. This nurtures the land and increases the water and air capacity of the soil allowing for a better and healthier harvest. Since the workers on the family farm are producing their own food, they avoid monoculture because a diet consisting of a single crop would be tedious and unethical. Also, the production of a single crop overburdens the land and exhausts the soil of its nutrients. Consequently, the agriculture practiced by the co-op is healthier for both the families it feeds and the land.



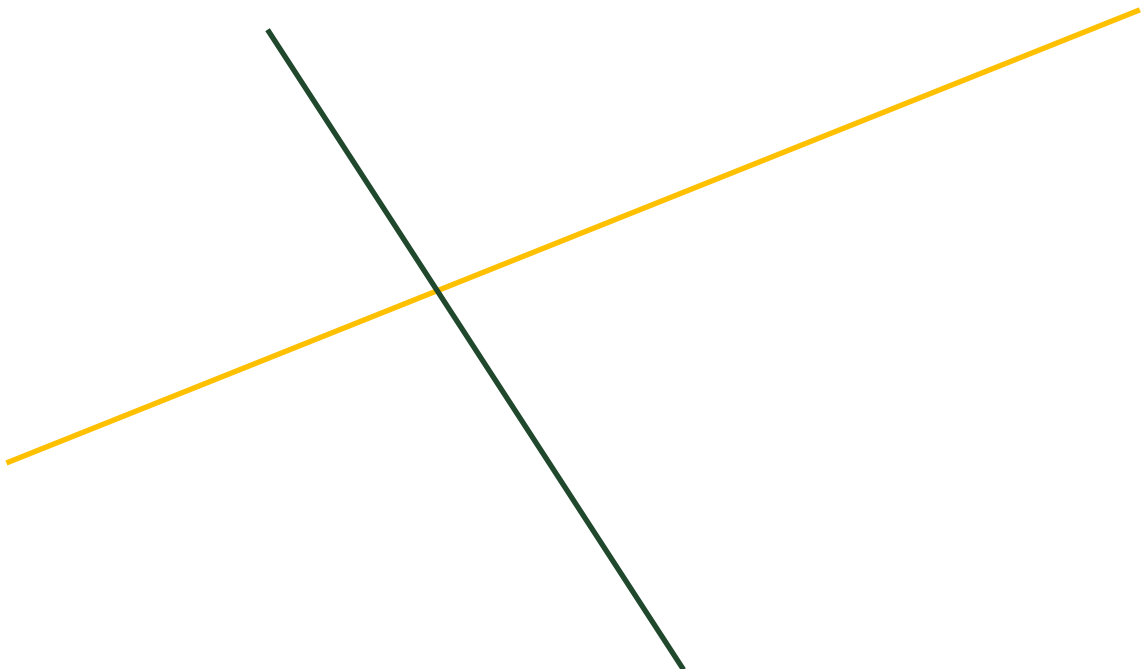


Mr. Smassanow

The family farm field trip allowed me, as a part of a generation that has grown up in the midst of the fast food industry, to understand how the traditional subsistence agriculture provides a unique and healthy approach to food production. I was very interested in how the co-op worked and how the families cooperated to provide for each other. The natural and organic methods used in the farm's production processes were resourceful and worked well with the co-op's desire to achieve healthy products. It was hard to imagine the cheap, industrial methods used by major corporations mentioned in *Fast Food Nation* while walking around Mr. Smassanow's farm tasting the vegetables and fruits directly from the homegrown plants. I was struck by how I could no longer think of the fast food system as a normal way to produce food. An industry created to produce food for people should not be concerned about wealth. I would much rather eat food produced from a farm where the workers are not exploited employees but instead are friends working together to produce food for each other and their families. The interests of the co-op and bonds that tie its members together harbor a healthy and nourishing environment perfect for raising animals and growing plants for healthy food production.

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After taking a class trip to a local medium-security prison, the writer of this informal response expresses genuine feelings of empathy, understanding, and appreciation that resulted from this impressionable experience.

My Experience with Hudson Link

By Zachary T. Farina

(Prof. Rody-Wright - "Incarceration")

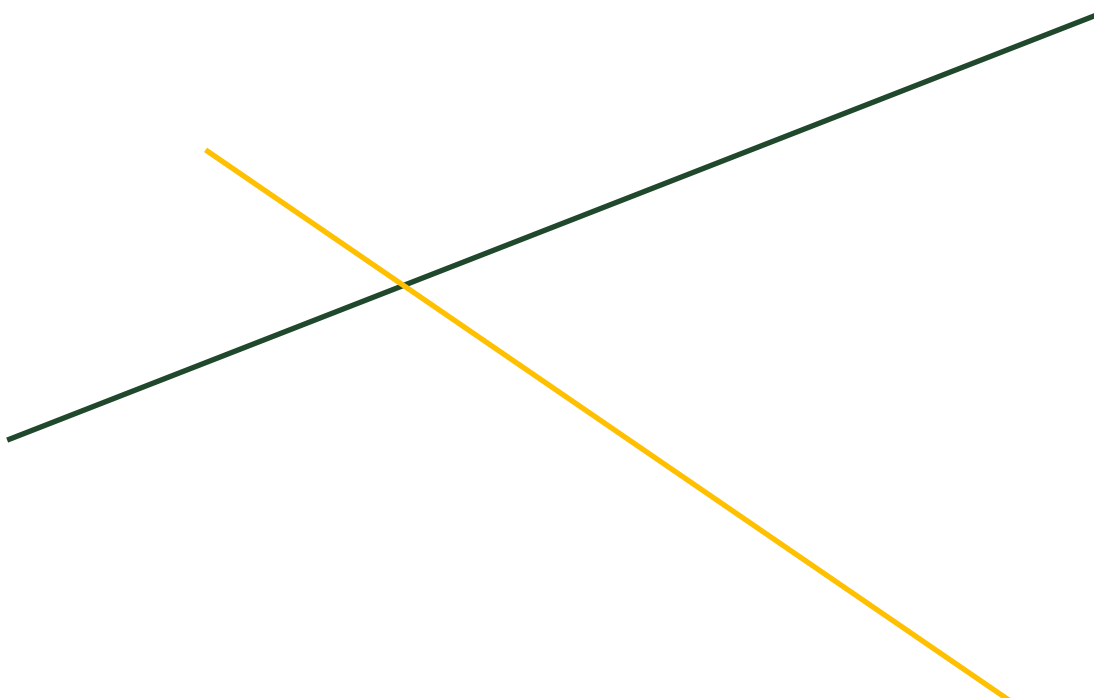
When I first found out that my class would be visiting Greene County Correctional Facility, a medium security prison in Coxsackie, New York, many nervous, yet natural thoughts raced through my mind. This might not be safe! These people are so different from us! One of the students might get hurt! My FYS section was scheduled to meet and speak with our Siena counterparts who were studying inside of Greene County Correctional Facility and view a documentary on the Hudson Link program with them. Hudson Link partners with local colleges in various prisons throughout New York and offers inmates the opportunity to earn college credits while being incarcerated. Despite my initial reaction, this first-hand experience with the inmates was nothing short of enlightening. There is no better way to conceptualize and empathize with the lives of inmates than by experiencing it, and I could not be more grateful for having had this opportunity.

Prior to the trip, classroom discussions and readings revolved around the lives of people before, during, and after incarceration. These experiences in class gave us the ability to better conceptualize the demanding life of prisoners. We discussed how some inmates spend hours in isolation with no human contact and how many families are torn apart by incarceration. Also, in many prisons there is a thick tension among inmates and staff members, which creates an unhealthy environment for both groups. These are the things many people overlook when thinking about incarceration, which is unfortunate considering the fact that inmates are people, whether they are criminals or not, and deserve to be treated as such. Recognizing and addressing these issues in class before the trip made the experience more enjoyable and opened my mind to new ideas and thoughts on a subject I was personally unfamiliar with.

The facility itself was exactly what one would expect a prison to look like, and the level of security was exceedingly intense. There were three sign-in books, a large metal detector, an invisible ink hand stamp as well as about a dozen correction officers barking orders to make sure each stage of the visit was safe and running according to the schedule. As if that was not enough security, the class then had to walk through a barbed wire "tunnel" to get into the actual visitors' center where the inmate students were also assembling for our discussion. It was silent at first. Both sides of the student audience were nervous, so the documentary on the program definitely helped break the ice. During some scenes of the documentary, sniffles and light crying could be heard throughout the room. The student inmates had clearly been through a lot of adversity, which had created an immense amount of despair in their lives. This was upsetting to see because many inmates were not much older than the Siena students on our side of the room. However, the documentary was what made all of us comfortable and encouraged a lot of independent, critical thought. The most surprising part of my experience at Greene County Correctional Facility was how respectful and passionate the student inmates were towards their studies. Many of them had to wake up as early as four-thirty in the morning to work jobs, such as in the mess hall, then go to class and later do homework, all while keeping up with the adverse lifestyle of an inmate. The surprising part about all of this was that they were fairly content. One memory that stuck with me throughout this experience was when one of the student inmates, with a shaky voice, said to the students from the college, "You guys are my heroes... You are the ones who got it right the first time, and I admire you all for that." Nobody had ever said anything so genuine to me before, and never once did I expect it to come from a prisoner inside of a medium security American prison.

Each one of these men knew and recognized their mistakes; they did not try to make excuses for the things they have done. Instead, they were trying to learn by becoming a student through Hudson Link, which is no easy task. Our Siena counterparts in the prison had to take tests and prerequisite classes in addition to earning a certain number of credits to even be considered for the program. Once all of the prerequisites have been fulfilled, there is an intense screening and interview process that is also required for admittance into the extremely competitive program. They know that this program is a second chance, and each student inmate at this correctional facility is one-hundred percent determined to get it right this time. Many of them even plan to continue their college education once released, giving them the opportunity to experience what it is like to be on a “real” college campus. I have to admit that I unfairly stereotyped these students before meeting them; however, each one had something worth saying in regards to their dreams and aspirations.

One “take-away” from the trip to Greene County Correctional Facility was that programs like Hudson Link are life-changing. Sean Pica, the Executive Director of Hudson Link, as well as all of the members of his staff have experience and knowledge regarding prisoners and prison life far beyond that of any politician, concerned tax-payer, or individual who doubts the importance of this program. More people should see this program in action because I know they would have the same eye-opening experience that I did, and more programs like Hudson Link would be implemented across New York and eventually the entire country. There are thousands of young inmates who deserve programs like Hudson Link so that they can prove they are not merely people who broke the law, but human beings with the emotional drive to succeed in life. I gained a great deal of knowledge from this trip and from our Siena counterparts studying inside Greene County Correctional Facility. Through them, whether they are aware or not, my understanding of and appreciation for the necessity of higher education opportunities in prison has increased enormously.



For the research paper, students could choose to discuss some aspect(s) of the incarceration experience, the post-incarceration experience, or the factors that might pre-dispose one to become incarcerated. This writer explores why alternatives to incarceration for lower-level crimes make good sense economically, socially, and politically.

Alternatives to Incarceration

By Nicholas J. Grammatica

(Prof. Rody-Wright - "Incarceration")

The American judicial system has been critiqued for being too cruel, sporadic, and ineffective. Most people who commit crimes are well-aware of the consequences of their actions, yet this knowledge does not deter them from committing the crime. The majority of people who are convicted and put in a penal institution have been victims of their upbringing and of the community in which they were raised. What a person is exposed to at an early age has a direct impact on his/her future. New York is among those states that have taken the lead in creating programs that offer alternatives to incarceration, including community service, drug court, and rehabilitation programs. These alternative programs were created to stop the mass incarceration of Americans and benefit not only the individual person, but also society, as a whole, in the long run.

Many Americans get frustrated that they have to pay an immense amount of money in taxes that goes to funding the inmates who are in prison. In 2012, New York's total cost for all prisons was \$3.6 billion dollars. This breaks down to \$60,076 per inmate annually. Unfortunately, it seems like these numbers are only going up in the future, unless the government puts prison alternative programs into action as soon as possible. If the judicial system were able to look at a low-risk offender and say that prison is not the right route for this person because it will not benefit him or her, then the judge could place that person into a rehabilitation program, drug court, or a community accountability program that will actually reform and heal the person instead of having him or her sit in prison. Nonprofit organizations like the Center for Alternative Sentencing and the Center for Employment Opportunities worked with the justice system for over ten years to offer community-based alternatives, including drug treatment and job training. These programs focus on helping the person reform and become stable for society. Unlike prison, community-based alternatives and job training allow the person to gain skills and network with people who can help him get to where he needs to be. It also opens opportunity for growth and a possible career in the future. All of these alternatives lower the number of inmates in prison, which leads to less money needed from taxes. In 1996, the majority of black males aged 20 through 35 was in custody rather than paid employment. Alternatives allow for more jobs to be created, which will, in turn, raise the GDP of the economy and make society better off.

Current prison systems throughout America are designed to incarcerate and contain individuals who pose a high risk to society. Yet, more and more, we see that young, poor, first-time offenders who are a low risk end up being put in prisons with the most violent people in the country. It is well-known what goes on behind bars, and according to Joseph Sillane, "[P]risoner survival requires constant displays of toughness and masculinity by preying on the weak." Putting civilized people in a chaotic environment, like prison, for a long time will not deter them from committing future crimes.

After being in prison for a while, one becomes institutionalized and begins to learn the ways of prison. Individuals also network in prison, which allows them to expand their knowledge of criminal activity. In short, prison is effective for punishing individuals who have no hope to change, but it is not an effective means for rehabilitation. A first-time offender who is charged with theft typically does not belong in a state prison; in there, he will only learn to become a sneakier, more successful thief. What such a person needs is to be held accountable for his actions, and the justice system should figure out a fair punishment that satisfies the victim's needs rather than simply giving up on the offender. As Sergeant Shane Ptak, a police officer for the Ferndale Police Department in Michigan, put it, "With the way the trend in the penal system is going, the prison-overcrowding problem is only going to worsen, and the recidivism rate is only going to continue to rise, along with the crime rate." This statement, coming from a police officer, should make the reader realize that how we handle those who commit crimes is a serious problem that needs attention.

The opportunity to have an alternative to prison is a privilege and usually a one-time chance. Such a person is being given an opportunity to turn his or her life around. The programs offered vary, depending on the individual and the crime he or she has committed. For low-risk offenders, there are community work programs and the community accountability board. The Work Projects program, similar in concept to Youth-Build, is offered to both adult and juvenile offenders. Defendants are referred to this program by the Court to complete manual labor as a sanction for an offense, instead of paying fines or serving time behind bars. These programs work with public agencies to assist with cleaning up litter, clearing weeds, maintaining and improving landscapes, in addition to other tasks to preserve and enhance the community.

The Community Accountability Board, or CAB, is in action in Albany County. Its focus is to restore the damages done to the victim and the community. This program is predominantly used for persons who vandalized a store, stole food, or committed another non-violent crime. Together, the community, the offender, and the victim establish an agreement regarding what the repercussions will be. The activities include community service work, as well as additional tasks designed to educate the offender on the impact of her actions, such as working at the store the offender vandalized. Drug addicts who get caught using or possessing small amounts of drugs without intent to sell often get referred to drug courts as another alternative to incarceration. The mission of these courts is to declare what kind of treatment the individual needs in order to break his or her addiction and restore the person back to normal health. Other benefits include having fewer drug users on the streets and in jails, creating more participating members of society, and using tax dollars more wisely.

In 2010, the first year following the reform of the Rockefeller drug laws, Greg Berman explains, courts in "New York State sent nearly 1,400 more drug-addicted offenders to treatment - an increase of 77% from the year before. The new study reveals that the increase in treatment referrals after 2009 saved taxpayers \$5,144 per offender." This program is a win-win situation for both the community and the drug addicts. The Community Accountability Board teaches its participants how one bad choice will affect the rest of their lives and how to handle their problems like responsible adults. Meanwhile, advocates point out that "Youth-Build and other work programs give over 2.3 million low-income children who do not have a job or education an opportunity to learn construction skills through building and repairing public housing projects." This organization teaches young people leadership skills and craftsmen skills to use in the real world and in developing a career.

During my first year seminar class we discussed the Franciscan values that St. Francis lived by. One of such values is social justice. St. Francis was, at one time, a prisoner of war, and, as such, he really understood the detrimental impact prison has on a person. He wouldn't want others to be subjected to such an environment. He would be an enthusiastic supporter of alternatives to incarceration and would understand that people make mistakes in life and that in certain situations, people deserve to have a second chance at life.



The mass incarceration of the American people, the billions of dollars being spent annually, and the social toll on our society are the main problems with America's current penal system. Instead of over-funding prisons across the nation, our government could use that money to fund programs that offer alternatives to prison. This approach would be successful because these types of programs for low-risk, nonviolent offenders would benefit the offender and the community rather than having the offender sit in prison. The offender would be held accountable for his or her actions and would become an asset to society. She or he can own up to the wrong-doings and pay back, with time and money, to those whom he or she harmed. If an addict is prosecuted on drug charges, instead of putting that person in prison, he or she can be given help. It will take time and persistence to show society that this reform is the better way to handle offenders. People need to put the stigma of committing a non-violent crime behind them and try to help the offender by treating them as equal. Taxpayers will benefit due to less inmates being in jail, more participating members of society will raise the economy's GDP per capita, and society will become more unified.

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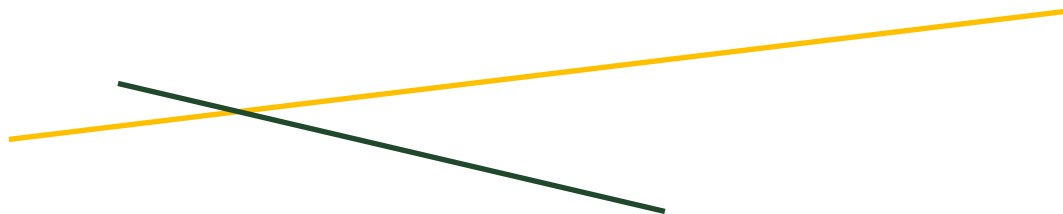
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The students in this section were assigned to explore a social justice issue through film and build a substantive argument in the form of a research essay. This writer used two documentary films along with a fictional one and a plethora of secondary sources to shape her impassioned critique of the United States' immigration policies.

America's Shame: Central American Child Migrants

By Pamela Harrison

(Prof. Liptak – "Crossing Borders in Literature and Film")

The United States has long been a refuge for people from around the globe who flee violence and suffering. This has continued in recent decades as Latin American migrants have sought economic opportunity. However, the established patterns of migration changed drastically in the past two years as children from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador have traveled to America alone. They are not seeking jobs but are rather trying to escape danger. A hostile political environment toward immigrants has politicized the desperation of children and has distracted national attention from handling the arrivals properly. The plight of child immigrants and the difficulties they encounter in the U.S has been explored in a number of films and documentaries. The documentary *Which Way Home* follows a group of Honduran children as they travel to America alone, *Wetback* profiles the migrant journey and the Americans opposed to their arrival, and *Sin Nombre*, a Mexican film, gives a heartbreaking but realistic fictional take on the immigration crisis. A lack of awareness about the danger immigrants face at home and on their journey contributes to public support for dehumanizing and harsh policies that betray America's immigrant tradition.

In 2014, the U.S Border Patrol was overwhelmed by the arrival of 68,541 unaccompanied minors, 75% of them from Central America, who had taken the desperate decision to flee their home countries by themselves. This was a massive increase, as roughly 20,000 children had crossed the border in 2013 (Tobia 1). From fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2013, the number of child immigrants increased 330% from El Salvador, 416% from Guatemala, and a staggering 593% from Honduras (Gordon 1). Violence and poverty, two problems that have been endemic in Central America, have not receded. Gang violence in particular has ravaged countries like El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Currently, Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world, El Salvador has the second highest and Guatemala is not far behind at number five (Gordon 1). Most violent crimes are perpetrated by gangs (Gordon 1). No one is safe from the violence and disturbingly, children are being specifically targeted, recruited by gangs at increasingly younger ages. Children as young as seven years old are being approached in their schools, community centers, and churches by gang members. The children who refuse to join these gangs are often abducted, raped, or violently murdered. One example of such violence is the death of David de la O, an eleven year old El Salvadorian boy who went missing walking home from school. His dismembered body was later found buried in a field. He was in fourth grade, and murdered after refusing to join a gang (Martínez 1). Another migrant, 16-year-old Helen Yovanna Mata left Honduras after receiving a note from notorious gang MS-18 that read, "We're not kidding. You now have seven days [to leave]. We don't want to hurt you, but you have to believe us. Death" ("Under-age").

Accompanying this unchecked wave of violence against children is widespread poverty. Leonardo Lopez, an immigration expert featured in the 2005 American documentary *Wetback*, tied migration to poverty saying, "Immigration is the result of an economic system that fails to provide opportunities to its people" (*Wetback*). These two factors have made life for children in Central America extremely dangerous and difficult. In response, families across the region have decided to send their children to the United States on a journey that is extremely perilous. The children who leave understand the significance of their departure. The award winning 2009 documentary *Which Way Home*, deals specifically with child migrants. It follows the journey of two Honduran boys, Fito and Kevin and two Mexican boys, Jairo and Yuricos, as they try to reach America over a number of months. In *Which Way Home*, fourteen year old, Yuricosaid that, "I plan on making it to the U.S to be born again. I want to make a better life for myself" (*Which Way Home*). Another child, Kevin, expressed a similar sentiment saying, "I want to change to be someone else. I want my mother and I to get ahead" (*Which Way Home*).

The decision to flee is just the first step in a journey that is riddled with dangers from beginning to end. Firstly, Central American migrants simply have far more ground to cover than Mexican migrants. Children from El Salvador, for example, have to cross three borders before they even step foot in Mexico. Secondly, children are especially vulnerable targets of a system of exploitation that has grown all over Mexico where gangs and police target immigrant. In this system, Central Americans are targeted more viciously than Mexican immigrants. Most migrants who are abused, assaulted, or die, do so in Mexico, which has been described as, “a cemetery without crosses” and as “a vertical border of thorns” (*Webtback*). In 2003, 3,000 Central Americans left their communities each day but less than 300 of them would actually reach the U.S (*Webtback*). Sadly, the journey the immigrants must undertake has only gotten more dangerous since 2003.



While there exists a highly developed people smuggling system run by *coyotes* or human smugglers, most children are too poor to pay for their guidance and therefore travel with other children and without supervision. Once the children reach Mexico, they take advantage of a system of hundreds of cargo trains to cross most of the country. Migrants of all ages sit atop the trains, which can carry up to 2,500 people at one time, for extremely long periods of time as they travel between Mexican cities (*Webtback*). The train system is called *La Bestia* or The Beast, and is arguably the most dangerous part of the migrant journey. All three previously mentioned films documented the role of *La Bestia* in the immigrant journey. In *Which Way Home* one Mexican volunteer who works by the trains warned the children that, “Mexico is the passage of death for you all! The train can be your friend. It can also be your

worst enemy and kill you” (*Which Way Home*). This warning did not stop Jairo, Yurico, Kevin, and Fito from playing games, jumping on and off the trains and from car to car on top of the trains. While the boys were unharmed, thousands of migrants have fallen off the train because they were asleep or lost their balance, and subsequently lost limbs or died under the wheels of the trains. However, danger is not limited to the train’s wheels.

Gangs across Mexico have specialized in exploiting migrants. The easiest place to do this is on top of the cargo trains, where the migrants are trapped. Gang members often board the trains to extort fees, rape, or attack migrants with machetes. This is featured in a gripping scene in the movie, *Sin Nombre*, in which Sayra, a 16 year old Honduran migrant is almost raped by a gang member before making a lucky escape. Unfortunately, the migrants cannot seek protection from the Mexican police force because that too is dangerous. The Mexican authorities have been accused of committing 75% of crimes against Central American migrants (*Webtback*). Additionally, American pressure on Mexico to crack down on immigration has egged on a corrupt police force that patrols the train routes waiting to steal from and beat the migrants. In *Which Way Home*, Fito and Yurico, aged 13 and 14 respectively, were caught, beaten, robbed, and while Yurico was abandoned, Fito was deported back to Honduras. Deportations from Mexico represent a significant threat to immigrants and it often takes them two or three tries to reach the border with the United States (Tobia 2). When the lucky few actually arrive in America, their ordeal is not over.

While immigrants encounter hostile forces in Mexico, they face similar, but not life threatening dangers when they finally arrive in America. The arrival of many Hispanic immigrants is an extremely controversial issue. Surges in immigration have prompted some intense domestic reactions. Vigilante groups, comprised of local men, have popped up along the U.S -Mexico border. These groups are armed and patrol the border, rounding up thousands of immigrants and calling U.S Border Patrol to arrest them. One such group, located in Tombstone, Arizona, was featured in the documentary *Webtback*. The group, known as the Arizona Minutemen project, is comprised of sixty men, and is described by their leader, Chris Simcox, as, “a neighborhood watch” (*Webtback*). They are completely opposed to immigration and demonstrated disgust with current migrational trends.

One member of the Minutemen Project claimed that immigration “is turning this country into Mexico” and went on to say that now, “they’re all voting and doing whatever they want” (*Wetback*). Chris Simcox described migrants as, “child molesters, rapists, and thug gangsters” and accused the federal government of sending a message that, “a couple thousand American lives are expendable casualties” if immigration allow for cheap labor (*Wetback*). Such completely inaccurate and fear driven statements may seem extreme, but similar ideology has been driving more Americans to support harsh immigration policies. One example of this was the reaction of residents of Murrieta California, where last July a crowd of angry protesters turned around buses of immigrants who were being transferred to less crowded detention centers. The protestors held American flags and screamed “Deport! Deport!” until the buses were turned back. One protester expressed the wish that, “America would be America again because it's not”, referring to the arrival of Hispanics (Martinez and Yan 2). Another protester directly referenced the child migrants saying that, “They're going to take over our schools. What's going to happen to the kids that were born and raised here?” (Martinez and Yan 2). What was common between the vigilante groups and the everyday Americans who took part in the Murrieta protest was an intense fear of “otherness”. They also lacked compassion towards the migrants and seemed to not understand what they had gone through on their journey or why so many children were fleeing.

Sin Nombre, a Mexican fictional film, explains how children suffer in order to reach the U.S. The movie unflinchingly shows Mexican gang life and meticulously details the threats migrants face on their journey. It shows the violent realities of a journey that are sometimes too dangerous for documentary crews to film; a journey that renowned film critic Roger Ebert described as, “forged in hell” (Robert 1). After being exposed to the suffering migrant children endure, it is harder to be so unfeeling or suspicious of immigrants. Roger Ebert had a similar reaction, arguing that when encountering an immigrant, “We should not be too quick with our easy assumptions” and that, “That person may have put his life on the line for weeks or months to come here” (Robert 1). However, eye opening films such as *Sin Nombre* rarely receive much attention in the U.S, leaving the general U.S public uneducated and wary. Sadly, such fear and ignorance determines many of our national policies towards immigrants.

While the immigration system in the U.S is supposed to handle each child with care, it was and continues to be woefully unprepared and overwhelmed by the magnitude of the crisis. Therefore, it has failed to provide basic humanitarian and legal services to thousands of minors. Traditionally, Central American children are placed in the care of the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, commonly known as the ORR. The ORR's standard procedure is to place the children into shelters and then reunite them with their family while they wait for their deportation trial. However, there are many problems with how this procedure is carried out.

Firstly, while Border Patrol is not allowed to hold individuals for more than 72 hours, the ORR detention centers do not have similar restrictions. In 2011, the average time of stay in one of these shelters was 72 days or 10 weeks and thankfully, the average stay dropped to 45 days or 6 weeks in 2013 (Gordon 2). There were 53 detention centers in 2011, which housed 6,560 children. In 2013, with the increasing numbers of arrivals, the number of shelters increased to 80, holding nearly 25,000 children (Gordon 2). The whereabouts of these shelters is kept secret, journalists are not allowed to enter, and the charities that serve the children are forbidden to comment on any aspect of life inside. It took a Freedom of Information petition for journalists to learn the very basic and limited information listed above. Additionally, many of the centers are far away from metropolitan areas, making legal assistance hard to obtain (Gordon 2). Any system that is so secretive and isolated cannot be a healthy environment in which children are forced to stay for weeks and months. This was proven in *Which Way Home* when fourteen year old Kevin was sent to one of these centers and detained for two months. While in the center he had to stay inside and was only let out for three hours on Sunday to play soccer. Kevin felt, “trapped, locked up and sad” and said he, “never thought the U.S would be like this” (*Which Way Home*). The detention took an obvious toll on his psyche; he stopped eating, instead opting to “throw the food out and remain hungry” (*Which Way Home*). Kevin only wanted to be reunited with his mother and at the end of his stay was deported back to Honduras.

Kevin was sent home after his deportation hearing, which every child must go through. While waiting for their hearing, children live with family, are placed in foster care, or remain in a shelter. The federal government has repeatedly proven its commitment to carrying out mass deportations. In 2013, the Obama administration deported 370,000 people (“Under-age”). Even though each deportation costs upwards of \$23,480 dollars, past figures reveal a real threat that America is willing and capable of deporting every child that has been detained so far (Fitz, Martinez, and Wijewardena 5). The only way a child can be spared from deportation is if a judge accepts some kind of asylum plea.

An asylum seeker is defined as someone who flees their country because of persecution based on “race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (Martínez 2). Asylum claims are difficult to gain and children are ineligible for other forms of legal protection like work permits because of their age. Frustratingly, many children are denied legal representation, something all of the children *should* have access to. One nonprofit assisting migrant children, KIND, estimated that when they began their legal work, some 75% of children had no legal assistance (Gordon 2). Such a statistic is unacceptable in a country world renowned for an impressive justice system where defendants are innocent until proven guilty and all are given a chance to defend themselves. Making the legal process even more unfair, deportation hearings are often held in the state where a child was arrested, even though that child may have been moved many states away to be reunited with family. Children who miss their hearing on account of geographical complications are immediately sentenced to deportation (Tobia 1). This is just once instance where the system is designed to fail children whose lives may depend on one court hearing. Exasperatingly, many of the children who face barriers such as a lack of counsel actually have legitimate asylum claims but are unable to prove that because of the unacceptable failings of the legal system.

The Vera Institute, which conducts research on the justice system in the United States found that in one study, 40% of the minors they interviewed were, “eligible for a form of legal relief from removal such as asylum, special immigrant juvenile status, or visas for victims of crime or trafficking” (Ogla and Miller 4). Corroborating the findings of the Vera Institute, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees interviewed 400 unaccompanied children and found that 58% of the children, “had suffered, been threatened, or feared serious harm” that could, “warrant international protection” (Resnick 1). However, even when a child does have a legitimate claim and is given legal representation, the process of receiving asylum is complicated and extremely long. The average time for an asylum claim to work its way through the system is 516 days. However, in metropolitan areas like Phoenix, Los Angeles, and New York City, where many minors live, the wait is 1,022, 890 and 861 days, respectively (Tobia 2).

Sadly, a fair deportation process is something the American government and people are unwilling to seriously consider or invest in. To date, federal aid has failed to provide legal counsel to all children, the recent immigration changes proposed by President Obama completely fail to address the children’s precarious status, and President Obama even stated that he expects the vast majority of children to be deported. The violence the children face at home has barely made national news, and in many parts of the country, it seems like such messages would fall on deaf ears. America’s response, which has been lax and uncompassionate, goes against the long tradition of being a place of refuge for all. Is the writing on the Statue of Liberty, “give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses” no longer relevant? Without a significant change, America is slowly turning its back on hundreds of years as a place of hope and opportunity. Therefore, because of a lack of political will to find a solution outside of mass deportations and because of hostile public opinion, thousands of children just like Kevin are going to be sent back to communities in which food is scarce and the life of a child is incredibly cheap.

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The assignment for this essay was to answer the question: What is the Western intellectual heritage of war? Students were asked to pick one idea to argue using references from the major texts read in this unit.

The Myth of War

By Kaela P. Mahoney

(Prof. M. Woolbright - "War")

War is a part of life that we humans have never been able to escape. It is timeless, unstoppable, and atrocious, a combination which makes for a rather disturbing history of horrific violence. That horrific violence is the core of what makes up war correspondent Chris Hedges' sensory war: the tangible war that consists of savage action and emotion. Mankind, for all its goodness, will never know lasting peace because human nature will not allow it to happen. As a result, people over the centuries have evolved believing in certain truths about war, beliefs that keep our heads above water and keep us from drowning in the guilt and pain that comes from involving ourselves in violence. These beliefs make up the mythic war, the war that venerates our heroes and upholds glory and honor as the epitome of victory. Some may argue that the attention society gives these beliefs is poor judgment on our part because these beliefs distract from the realities of war and take away from the truth of war's horror. The myth *does* distract from the realities of war, and it *does* take away from war's horror, but that's precisely the point. The myth is necessary for society to be able to take part in and propagate the culture of war that plagues our world because without it, we could not go to war to attain whatever is our goal.

We allow ourselves to be blinded by the myth of war because we value the spoils of victory more than we value the maintenance of our morality. Man is inherently flawed, and as much as some of us may wish it, there will never be peace. There is too much to be gained from waging and winning wars for humans to lay down their arms, whether that gain is power or wealth or peace of mind. We like to win, we like to be the best, and most importantly, we like the myth. The myth is everything good and pure that can be obtained from a conflict. The myth is the honor and the glory found in sacrificing oneself for the good of the nation; it is defending freedom and fighting for higher ideals. I do believe there is truth to these things, and I do believe they are worth fighting for. However, I also believe that sometimes we choose not to see anything else, and that is our mistake.

It is common for leaders to speak little of anything but the myth when war is the topic. When faced with an approaching battle, King Henry V of William Shakespeare's *Henry V* gives a rallying speech based almost exclusively on the myth. The English troops are totally demoralized by their poor health and dwindling numbers. King Henry encourages his men, telling them that anyone who "outlives this day, and comes safe home/ will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd" and that "gentlemen in England now-a-bed/ shall think themselves accur'd they were not [there]" (Shakespeare). King Henry speaks of glory and how his soldiers will be venerated for fighting in this battle. He tells them they are lucky to be facing this battle and that when they return home after their victory, everyone who was not there will envy them because of the honor they will receive. King Henry uses the myth as a tactic to rouse the soldiers, to get them to fight, to forget their fear and the very real prospect of their deaths. This strategy employed by King Henry is not foreign to leaders of the modern age. Presidents and Prime Ministers promote and proclaim the myth until their voices are raw so that people will fight for them abroad and also support them at home. We listen to what they say about sacrifice and the greater good, so we do what they ask – we send our sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers all over the world so that they can fight for what is right.

The blame, however, cannot be solely placed on the shoulders of our world leaders; it is equally shared by those who believe the myth. We are not innocents being led astray. We *want* to believe the myth. We want to see whatever good we can in an inevitable, terrible evil in order to alleviate the guilt that plagues us – guilt that comes from our knowledge of the truth of war, which is that it wreaks havoc upon the human race like nothing else. The violence and trauma that are such an integral part of war have devastating effects upon those who are touched by it, including the most important people in our lives, our friends and our families.

Those who participate in the fighting bear the brunt of these negative effects. This is because in the course of battle, soldiers often lose what separates us from all the other creatures of this world: the combination of rational thought and compassion that is so precious to us. In battle, we become like animals, reduced to a primal state where either we fight or we die. The warriors in *The Iliad* are no exception; Homer compares them to “hungry...wolves that rend and bolt raw flesh... [that] gorge on the kill till all their jaws drip red with blood” (417). This is a vivid depiction of the savagery that occurs in war. Like the wolves, those involved in battle are consumed by the vicious atmosphere—they must be, or their chances of survival decline exponentially. The butchery of other humans is not an easy thing for thoughtful, conscious beings to think about. To those of us who have never been to war, the animalism and trauma that overpowers our troops is frightening. We do not like to think about it because we are saddened by it, and we are guilty and ashamed for having sent them to a place of such danger. That is why we believe in the myth. If we did not, we could not send the ones we love to a slaughter. If we saw nothing of value in the myth, we would not even begin to consider paying the high price that the violence demands. It is only then, for the first time in our long history, war could quite possibly have a chance at being a thing of the past.

However, we live in a world where it is unrealistic not to take any stock in the myth. The ideals of freedom and liberty are real and true and important, and it is necessary that we fight for them. Likewise, our warriors should be praised for doing what they can to keep us safe and for surviving the horrors of war. But it is vital that we take everything with a grain of salt. The myth is so rooted in our culture that sometimes all we can see is the good that comes from war and not the ugly; sometimes we purposefully avoid seeing the ugly so that we can go to war and win what we want without feeling guilty about it. The myth keeps our conscience clean and even though we know better, we use it time and time again to justify the evils we commit.

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This essay is a reflection of western heritage as it relates to sports. It is an original, thesis-driven analysis that uses the readings assigned throughout the Heritage Unit as evidence to prove that violence is, in fact, a positive aspect of sports due to the core life values that are instilled as an athlete learns to respond appropriately to the physicality of contact sports.

Be Good. Then be Better.

By Lauren E. McGrath

(Prof. Haas - "Sports")

As someone who has played the role of fan, athlete, and referee, I was quite upset when I heard my hometown proposed a policy to stop keeping score at local sport games. The idea was brought forward after local league officials concluded that too much pressure was put on winning and not enough on having fun. They claimed that because the focus was on winning, it was causing unsportsmanlike conduct and was teaching children poor values. Children are supposed to acquire valuable life lessons from sports, such as cooperation, team work, and leadership. With the increased pressure on winning, these values were supposedly pushed to the side due to violence and unfair play. Winning is certainly not everything, but rough play is part of the game. If a player can learn to refrain from violence in an environment that is inevitably physical, violence itself starts to contribute to the good values sports are supposed to teach. The manner in which a player reacts to violence that takes place on the field is the true test of a player's character.

Many can agree that sports serve as a way to teach children important life lessons. In regulation 6145.2 of the official statement regarding the Philosophy and Purpose of Catholic School Athletic Programs in the Diocese of Belleville, it is asserted that "[p]laying sports can teach youth self-discipline, respect, responsibility and perseverance, and generate moments of pride, satisfaction and joy, regardless of the wins and losses a team may experience" ("Athletics"). This is all very true and important. Sports are a great way to build relationships and serve as a way for a young person to feel a part of something important. Participating on an athletic team allows the player to experience being a part of a community. A team member has the opportunity to work with others who are trying to accomplish the same goal. A team wins together, loses together, and experiences all the same emotions that come along with the game. This all contributes to teaching children how to actively participate in a community. When children are young, participating on a sports team is the perfect way to instill core values in them while also focusing on having fun.

As children get older and play at more advanced levels, the focus shifts. In the article, "Bounty System – What Did You Expect," written by Chris Carey, one of the *Huffington Post's* established blog writers, Carey says that "[i]n college the emphasis goes from developing the character of the individual to winning at any price" (Carey). This is undoubtedly true and not only applies to college, but also high school and premiere levels, as well. Our society does not like an outcome without a winner, so more pressure is put on victory as one advances in the level of competition of a sport. When the emphasis shifts from having fun to winning, violence is messaged to athletes. As Carey reflects on his own athletic experience, he recalls coaches saying, "We are going to kill these guys," "No one left standing," "Take that guy out of the game," "Knock his lights out," and "Winner take all." This is an inevitable aspect of the game. Since it is unavoidable, people should focus more on the way players react to unnecessary violence in sports, rather than focusing on how to stop it.

As athletes get older and are exposed to violent contact sports, coaches, officials, and parents can only hope that they have taught and trained their athlete well enough to rise above unsportsmanlike conduct because the way a player reacts to violence that takes place on the field is the true test of a player's character. Influential figures in a player's life have to trust that they did their job while the athlete was young and that the values of respect, leadership, and responsibility still run through the player's veins. If athletes are trained correctly, they will not stoop down to an opponent's level and conduct themselves in a violent manner. They will rise above. They will not retaliate after getting hit with a cheap shot, and they will play fairly because doing whatever it takes to them means hustling more and distributing the ball faster. People should not be worried about violence ruining an athlete's character but look at violence as building character.

When an athlete resists fouling an opponent and instead chooses to reach down and offer a hand to help them up, this is when violence is, in fact, building character. If an athlete is able to do this in an environment that is inevitably violent, then it is the greatest lesson sports can teach.

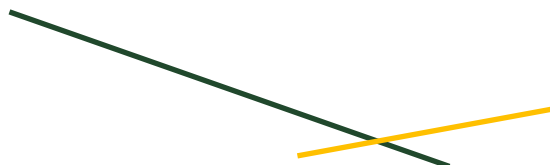
If one player has it in himself or herself to act in this manner, then others do, too. In the story of the life of St. Clare, the message relayed is that everyone is capable of emulating the same characteristics and values of a saint. While acknowledging that refraining from foul play does not qualify one to be a saint, this story does show that the positive actions of one person can contribute to the positive actions of another. If one athlete can act as St. Francis did and rise above to do what is right, then surely others will follow. St. Clare is proof of this because she chose to follow in St. Francis's footsteps, and as Margaret Carney says in her story, Clare was "brave enough to step out of the pre-destined mold created by society" (Carney). The pre-destined mold in sports is that play becomes more violent as athletes get older. However, if one player can conduct herself or himself in a non-violent manner, then many are sure to do the same, just as Clare chose to emulate St. Francis. This becomes the point where violence itself starts to contribute to the good values that sports are supposed to teach. Violence begins to teach athletes self-control, restraint, and forgiveness. If violent play were not a factor linked with contact sports, then sports may never have the opportunity to teach athletes these types of key values.

Everyone has the choice to participate in sports. In fact, many people often choose not to, but this choice denies them the opportunity to acquire specific life lessons that go hand-in-hand with contact sports. Lessons such as responsibility, perseverance, and self-discipline, along with all the values the Philosophy and Purpose of Catholic School Athletic Programs in the Diocese of Belleville mentions, can be learned through sports. All sports have the potential to instill core values in participants, but only contact sports have the ability to contribute to one's core values through the unique way of physicality. Those who choose to play a traditionally violent contact sport are at an advantage pertaining to lessons taught through sports in general and are at an even greater advantage than those whose choose not to participate in sports at all.

Children benefit from being involved with traditionally violent sports. While people in my home town may have had good intensions when trying to enact a no-score policy to prevent winning from being the sole purpose of the game, the benefits that come along with rough, competitive play were overlooked. There is no denying that sports get violent as players mature, but the choice of resorting to violence or rising above and playing fair is there for the players' taking. When a player decides to rise above and refrain from foul play or retaliation, this is violence teaching players the greatest lesson. It has taught them self-control, forgiveness, restraint, and that doing whatever it takes does not mean cheap shots and unsportsmanlike conduct.

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For the Diversity Unit, students in this section looked at how notions about masculinity, femininity, and sexuality may be shaped by a variety of religious, cultural, and popular traditions as well as influenced by politics and globalization. Using at least three of the texts and/or films covered in class, the students were asked to make an argument about how diverse contexts contribute to or challenge ideas about traditional gender expressions and roles and/or the sexual needs of men and women. This writer explores how ideas about what is natural influence a person's and a society's acceptance of diversity.

Promoting Normality Means Opposing Diversity

By Jazmin A. Melendez

(Prof. Pojmann - "Masculinity, Femininity, and Sexuality")

When many people hear the term diversity, they automatically think about a group of individuals with varying ethnicities. However, the term diversity encompasses much more, including, but not limited to, backgrounds, expressions of sexuality, interests, lifestyles, experiences, political beliefs, education, and opinions. Within every society there is a certain degree of diversity, including any combination of the aforementioned qualities. The book, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*, by Joanne Meyerowitz, discusses transsexuality in America during the 1950s and 1960s, mainly through a detailed account of the life of Christine Jorgensen, a former GI who underwent a sex change after experiencing 26 years of life as a man. The film *Normal* is a work of fiction that follows the life of a man who, much like Christine Jorgensen, opted for a sex-change operation much later in life, after getting married and raising two children. The article "What It's Really Like to be a Submissive and a Feminist" by Rachel Kramer Bussel, explains the life of a woman who enjoys being a submissive in her romantic relationship, despite also being a feminist. Another book, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* by Lillian Faderman, describes lesbian relationships in the United States during the late 19th century. What all of these texts have in common is that they examine the lifestyles of a diverse group of individuals who represent the minority of the population and whose lives many people do not agree with. If more people became proactive in trying to understand the lives of these otherwise marginalized members of society, instead of conveying critical sentiments, social progress in the name of accepting all types of peoples would provide the development of a harmonious environment. Societal ideas about what is natural can cause individuals to be critical and unaccepting of diversity, which hinders the development of a harmonious environment.

In order to understand this claim, *natural* must first be defined. Though I personally believe that there is no one definition of normal because everyone's lifestyle is what they consider normal for themselves, society has engrained within all of us that a normal relationship involves a heterosexual, cisgendered couple whose sexual interactions involve intercourse in its most basic form and must be kept a secret. When a relationship lacks one of these specifications, it is immediately and negatively judged. This negative reaction is also an indication of how people criticizing such individuals feel negatively about diversity. All texts and films analyzed within the context of this paper will support the idea that individuals who promote a single, rigid concept of normality will also be against diversity.

Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers opens with a discussion of the term "romantic-friendship," which is described as the relationship that existed between two women in the late 19th century wherein the women, "slept on the same pillow and had a common purse, and adopted each other's relations." Though it is not directly stated at first, this romantic friendship is occurring between two lesbian women. The relationship between a cisgendered man and woman, given they were indeed romantically involved, would not be described as a romantic-friendship. In that context, it sounds preposterous. When I introduce people to my boyfriend, I say, "This is my boyfriend," or "We are dating," not "We are in a romantic-friendship." This term not only ostracizes same-sex love, separating it from supposedly normal heterosexual relationships, but it also is degrading, for it tells homosexual couples that their relationships are illegitimate and that the diversity their differences create is unimportant. Later in the book, when speaking about the physicality involved in this relationship, Faderman explains that "[it] never crossed the boundary to the genitally sexual," though she does acknowledge that in some cases the "romantic-friendships" were sexual.

When contemplating the physical romance of a heterosexual couple, their sexual involvement would not typically be in question, with the exception of a couple who is deciding to remain abstinent for personal reasons. Other than this one deviation, it is usually assumed that a straight couple would be physically involved. This refusal to believe that a homosexual couple would be sexually intimate not only illustrates a lack of tolerance for diversity but shows that individuals cannot even imagine that people following different lifestyles could have anything in common with them, which can also be seen in opinions regarding transsexual individuals.

The book *How Sex Changed* not only discusses Christine Jorgensen's sex-change operation and its implications but also the increasing awareness of transsexuality during the 1960s, mainly in America, as well as the problems transsexual individuals faced. Meyerowitz states, "Self identified transsexuals distinguished themselves from other 'deviants' and saw themselves as members of a distinct social group." The fact that transsexuals would be compared to deviants because they felt a need to take measures to distinguish themselves from that group of people demonstrates that they were labeled as different from cisgendered people, and this difference carried a negative connotation. As transsexuality became a more publicly understood phenomenon, it moved away from being a social issue and toward more of a legal matter. "From the 1960s on," Meyerowitz explains, "a few transsexuals asked the courts to define sex legally and to grant them the right to change their legal gender status." I know several transsexual individuals, some who have undergone the surgery and some who have not. The majority of these individuals have had great difficulty trying to get their names and genders changed on official documents, such as their birth certificates, social security cards, and school records. Since these individuals are not considered normal, others have a difficult time accepting and respecting the diversity they represent, and this affects whether or not they are allowed to have the same basic rights and freedoms as cisgendered people. Some of the conflicts faced by transsexuals in this article are brought to life in the film, *Normal*.

The film *Normal* does a decent job of portraying the life of a husband and father of two children who decides to have a sex-change operation in his late adult life, though it is heavily dramatized. When Roy, a man who is struggling with his identity and sexuality, first tells his wife, Irma, about his discomfort with his own body, she is angry with him and considers getting divorced. However, she very quickly reconsiders and decides to stay with him out of love. While people often make sacrifices for those whom they truly love, this is an extreme sacrifice and is likely not representative of the reaction many people in this situation would have. I am not just making this claim based on how I think I would feel if placed in this situation; Irma told Roy that she was not attracted to women and would not feel comfortable getting intimate with him after his surgery. If both of these statements were true for a real life couple, they would probably not stay together, no matter how much they loved each other. When an individual has strong convictions about his or her beliefs, she or he is not as easily swayed as Irma was in the film.

Roy was able to keep his job, even though he was moved to a different position. Employers are careful to maintain the image of their company and would not do anything to jeopardize that, including employing a transgender individual, which is a lifestyle considered unnatural and strange by many individuals. Additionally, there is one occasion in the movie when Roy is physically harmed by his coworkers after he begins his transition. In reality, hundreds of transgender people all over the world are beaten and killed every year. Because the majority of cisgendered people have the preconceived notion that a certain lifestyle is natural and correct, they often disapprove of any deviation from that lifestyle, which is linked to a more general disapproval of diversity. This negative attitude toward diversity is also seen in regards to BDSM (Bondage and Discipline, Sadism and Masochism).

“BDSM [is] a catchall term which includes bondage/ domination, dominance/ submission, and sadism/ masochism,” according to Rachel Kramer Bussell. In the article, “What It’s Really Like to be a Submissive and a Feminist,” Bussell gives an anonymous woman’s account of the dominant/ submissive (d/s) relationship she has with her romantic partner. The title is important to consider when evaluating the purpose of the article. Anyone without a thorough understanding of the terms “submissive” and “feminist” would have difficulty understanding such a dichotomy, which makes a statement about the general public’s opinion regarding diversity. Since being a submissive is associated with giving up all power and subjugation to complete dominance, and feminism is associated with independence and strength, it would not make sense for the two to be represented by one person. Society would say that it is wrong for someone to have such different, and opposing, characteristics. It is considered normal for a woman to take on a submissive role, but not to take on a leadership role while empowering other women. Since most individuals do not believe that women should step outside of their submissive roles, they do not agree with such an expression of diverse characteristics.

People argue that lifestyles such as homosexuality, transsexuality, and BDSM are detrimental to a society because they break down the familial structure that society has worked so hard to promote since its formation and furthered by favoring the family represented in shows such as *The Brady Bunch*. Though this blended family is not necessarily ideal, it contains important elements: heterosexual, cisgendered parents whose private sex life is just that-private. Structure is beneficial within larger society and individual relationships, romantic or otherwise. Just as for normal, there are multiple definitions for structure. Who is to say that the structure of a heterosexual relationship is better and more functional than a homosexual relationship? All relationships follow a diverse set of structures, and it is critical to keep in mind that diversity does not mean everything is entirely different; individuals with different backgrounds, expressions of sexuality, interests, lifestyles, experiences, political beliefs, education, and opinions will likely have something in common. By remaining open-minded, we cannot merely be tolerant. We must be accepting of the lifestyles of other individuals, even if we do not necessarily agree with them, for this would promote a more diverse, respectful world.



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The student was inspired to write this short narrative after learning of the personal benefits one may gain from writing memoir as taught by Marion Roach Smith. It was during the class's First Year Seminar field trip that the students explored the beneficial value of narrative not only for the reader, but for the writer as well. Here, the writer reflects on a devastating tragedy that he initially struggled with, but one he learned to overcome for the benefit of others.

December 31, 2012

By Mitchel J. Miculcy

(Prof. Collins - "Narrative")

They say that the death of a loved one may change a person for the better, but I never would have thought that suicide would be considered one of those deaths. Yet, here I am, a better person, exactly two years after my beloved childhood friend, Michael Santangelo, took his own life. It is really a morbid concept to discuss and may be argued that it is in bad taste to say, but I am certain that the good that I have done for others is without doubt a result of what I learned on December 31, 2012. My young, naive sixteen year old perspective of life was tarnished and replaced by a new and mature point of view that I carry with me to this day. Friends are given comfort and a sense of understanding from me because of the lessons that I have learned from Michael's passing. The bonds that I have created, the inspiration and happiness that I have given people would have never happened if the events on New Year's Eve 2012 did not occur.

It was ironic. Everyone knows that New Year's Eve is centered around the concepts of endings and new beginnings. But as I sat at my kitchen table peacefully eating chips with my family, this thought of self-improvement never came to mind. Late in the evening, hours before the Times Square ball dropped, I was enjoying myself. My mother prepared a plethora of overly fattening snacks to devour as my two siblings, my grandfather, and I watched "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve" on television. I was never very attached to the performances on the TV or the traditions aligned with this holiday. But some concept about my immediate family huddled around the TV, eating junk food till twelve in the morning always excited me. I have always loved spending time with my family, and rare times like these, when we actually had something to do, were the greatest. I would not be able to say that I wasn't excited for the night to come. I was already in my pajamas, comfortably rocking back and forth in the wooden chair that my mother always scolded me for ruining. Everything that night seemed to be going quite all right. I was happy.

As we all know even the tiniest little things have the ability to completely alter the aura of emotions in a room. This "little" thing that I describe happened to be what came after I heard the heartbeat-like buzz that my phone produced when I received a text message from Alex, a good buddy of mine. These next specific details will remain with me for the entirety of my life. I can't imagine going through the rest of my own existence without remembering reading Alex's unforgivingly abrupt message, "Mike Santangelo is dead."




Due to the shock that immediately set in, my initial reaction to this has always been relatively blurry to me. My memory is very selective regarding the following few moments. The funny thing about my memory in that hour is that I remember the most peculiar things. I ran into an empty room in my house to escape my family and pressed my phone against my ear to call Alex. All I could hear was the steady rhythm of the phone's rings interspersed with the drum-like pounding of my own heart. While in this everlasting purgatory, morbid thoughts rushed through my mind. I began to process every single possible scenario with the assumption that Alex's message was completely accurate. As the rings of the phone continued, and my heartbeat grew heavier, I remember quickly deducing that my dear friend Michael must have died in a car crash. Or in any possible way that a boy so young and innocent could die. As everyone says, Michael was always happy and smiling. The thought that he would willingly take his own life did not even come to mind . . . There was no way.

The surprise of the means of Michael's passing was so immense. This is said over and over for so many different people, but Michael was truly a joyous person for the majority of his life. His death was so bewildering to me. As time passed, and the shock of it all slowly faded away, I began to reflect upon his death. I lost myself in confusion. I had so many unanswered questions. As means of coping with this lack of understanding, I found myself spending an incredible amount of time day after day just scrolling through his Facebook page, reading all of the messages that friends shared with him. These posts were made in remembrance of him. I recall reading thoughtful statements made about Michael's passing from complete strangers. Each post had its own sense of uniqueness, yet there was a common theme amongst many of them. The majority of these statements included the person's alleged astonishment about Michael's passing. To this day, I still feel the sting of reading, "You were such an amazing and funny guy. I can't believe that you were fine two days ago and now you're gone," from one of our grieving schoolmates. There were many statements made regarding his smile and uncanny ability to light up a room.

As I read these posts, I had an epiphany. I did not know Michael's motive for suicide, but what I understood from this reality was that if such a horrible sadness had the ability to kill Michael, it could affect nearly anyone. I realized that every single person that I held close to my heart could have been more like Michael than I previously imagined. At this moment, I knew what I must do and who I must be. There is only so much one can do to help others while standing on the sidelines. I vowed to myself to take a step beyond the comfortable friendship that I had with my friends and become a person to trust. In Michael's name, I have become a man of understanding who cares for the people I love.

In the two years that followed Michael's passing, I can confidently admit that I became this person that Michael would have been proud to call a friend. Each and every day I work to ensure the happiness of others through developing a more significant relationship with them. I would love to be able to say that all of this good done for others would have happened regardless—that I could have become such a model for my peers by any other means. But I know that my new life perspective was given birth by my coming to terms with the death of Michael Santangelo on December 31, 2012.



*The most painful
goodbyes are the
ones that are
never said and
never explained.*



The assignment asked students to relate the natural world and the environment that surrounds us to the world of sports. This writer selected sources that were discussed in class along with general knowledge about major sports organizations and uses this information to portray his own personal view about a sports organization's unearned reputation.

Keeping Earth in the Fastlane: NASCAR's Reputation and the Environment

By Taylor F. O'Connor

(Prof. Haas - "Sports")

Environmental impacts are one of the major problems people face concerning modern day sports. Sporting events are a significant cause of air pollution, light pollution and sound pollution, and waste. The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) is often criticized for being environmentally unfriendly, and this criticism makes the sport of auto racing even less appealing to those who do not know much about it. NASCAR, as a sports organization, however, is not the most harmful to our environment. Organizations such as Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL) are much more environmentally unfriendly than NASCAR based on the number of games these sports generate in a single season and the number of people who attend those games. The assumption that NASCAR is the most environmentally detrimental organization plagues not only the organization itself, but the sport of auto racing in general, as many people often link this sport to the few environmental impacts that it has while overlooking those more heavily felt impacts associated with other sports.

NASCAR has one of the longest seasons in sports, consisting of 36 races held over a ten-month span. In the Sprint Cup series, the sport's highest level of competition, racers compete once a week at different tracks across the country. Although it has the longest season, NASCAR has the fewest number of events. The NFL season consists of 32 different teams playing 16 games each. That totals to 256 separate football games being held in a single season, which is more than seven times the number of events NASCAR has. The NHL consists of 30 separate teams playing 82 games each, totaling 1,230 different games being played in a single season, a quantity about 34 times the number of events NASCAR hosts. Major League Baseball consists of 30 teams each participating in 162 games each. This totals to an astonishing 2,430 separate games played throughout the course of the season, which is more than 65 times the number of races that NASCAR holds in a single season. All sporting events cause pollution, but NASCAR is responsible for the fewest number of events of all the major sports played today. With so few number of events, NASCAR does not deserve the reputation of being the most environmentally unfriendly sports organization.

One of the most serious environmental impacts that sports generates is air pollution since it is responsible for affecting an athlete's performance during events. As journalist John Vidal points out, poor air quality can lead to athletes experiencing chest pains, sore throats, and shortness of breath (Vidal 2). Poor air quality also leads to inflamed air passages, greatly affecting athletes who have asthma. Air pollution is toxic for athletes and is often generated from the sports they play. Air pollution in sports is created mostly from cars bringing people to attend the events. One might think that NASCAR creates the most significant amount of air pollution since the sport actually consists of racing cars for a long period of time. One could add that even more air pollution comes from fans and spectators who come to watch the races every Sunday. Although all of this does create air pollution, it does not come close to the amount that sports such as the NFL, MLB, and NHL create. Thousands of fans attend every NASCAR race, but thousands of fans also attend every game that these other sports organizations sponsor. These sports hold a much greater number of events throughout the season than NASCAR does, leading to a greater number of people who drive to these events and resulting in an even greater amount of air pollution. If more people go to more games, there will be a much higher amount of traffic and more air pollution generated. This is even great enough to overshadow the fact that NASCAR is a sport that consists of racing cars.

Only 43 NASCAR drivers race in a single week, a number that is easily outweighed by the additional amount of traffic these other sports produce. One may even argue that these cars are worse for the air than the cars that fans use, since NASCAR uses leaded gas. This, as seen in "Putting the Earth in Play," prepared by Environmental Health Perspectives, is also not true. NASCAR has created alternatives to lead-based fuels, such as Sunoco's 260 GTX racing fuel that has already been implemented in the sport ("Health Perspectives"). NASCAR, however, is still criticized as being the most harmful to the environment in the form of air pollution, making the auto racing industry look bad in people's eyes. However, the fact that NASCAR does not consist of as many events as these other sports, resulting in much less air pollution, proves that NASCAR is not the most environmentally unfriendly sport in this regard.

Noise and light pollution are also significant by-products of sporting events. Noise and light pollution are similar in that they can cause negative health effects on humans, such as loss of sleep and stress. Sporting events generate a large amount of noise from crowds and cheering fans, and a massive amount of light is used to light stadiums, ballparks, and racetracks. NASCAR, it is believed, generates much of this pollution as cars that are used for racing are very loud, and lights are used to brighten the track at night. Once again, however, NASCAR cannot compare to the amount of light and noise pollution these other sports organizations produce. NASCAR holds no more than 15 night races a season-races where light fixtures are used to illuminate the track. The NFL holds night games every Sunday, Monday, and Thursday nights throughout the 17-week season, producing a large amount of light pollution at least three times a week. The NHL and MLB hold events after dark even more frequently than the NFL, again outweighing the negative effects of NASCAR. The same can be said about noise pollution. Although auto racing is loud, these other sports are also loud, and their games occur much more frequently. The Seattle Seahawks is a football team known for its home games producing an incredible amount of noise from the crowd, and that team plays at home eight times every season. Even though that is only one team, other teams in the NFL, MLB and NHL also produce a large amount of noise from their fans. NASCAR is criticized as being a sport responsible for light and noise pollution and is plagued for it, when in actuality, the organization cannot compare to the amount of pollution that these other sports organizations produce.

Waste, such as garbage, is also an outcome of sports. Sporting events produce thousands of tons of garbage every year, which is harmful to the environment. As Thomas Grove, from *The Huffington Post*, pointed out, trash produced from sporting events can eventually lead to soiled water supplies and contaminated drinking water (Grove 2-3). Rainwater, which runs off from landfills where this waste is put, has the power to mix with water supplies and contaminate them. NASCAR is believed to produce a large amount of waste when compared to other sports. Used car parts and garbage produced by fans come to mind when one thinks about auto racing. This, again, pales in comparison to organizations such as the MLB, NFL, and NHL. Although NASCAR generates a lot of waste due to the thousands of fans attending its events, these other sports organizations produce the same waste, but on a much larger scale due to the number of events they hold. Plastic cups, paper plates, and many other environmentally hazardous objects are thrown away at every event, including NASCAR-sponsored ones. Due to the fact that other sports host many more events, though, this amount of waste is amplified to a much larger extent. NASCAR, again, cannot compare. The sport of auto racing is criticized for being very environmentally unfriendly when, due to the number of events these other sports hold, it is not nearly as bad as it is believed to be.



NASCAR is often thought of as a sports organization that is very environmentally unfriendly, more so than other major sports organizations. Due to the fact that NASCAR does not hold nearly the number of events as these other sports organizations, however, it should not be thought of in this way. The MLB, NHL and NFL all produce much more air pollution, noise and light pollution, and waste than NASCAR does. NASCAR faces the criticism of being not eco-friendly, plaguing the entire auto racing industry as a whole, when, in reality, it cannot compare to the total environmental damage caused by these other major sports organizations.

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Students were asked to choose a sports-related movie and develop a thesis-driven analysis of it using class sources. In his ardent defense of boxing, this writer highlights the hope and perseverance often inspired by those involved with this highly-physical sport.

Boxing: The Physical Embodiment of Life's Struggle

By Gerard Cassidy Palladino

(Prof. Haas - "Sports")

Boxing is a popular sport in the modern era. Many people believe it is still popular because society wants to see violence. However, this is not the reason people still watch boxing. People watch boxing because it is one of the few areas where they can observe true perseverance. For people who are suffering, the sheer perseverance that is found in boxing can be inspirational, while those who do not struggle in life will never understand why people continue to watch and partake in such a visceral sport. In essence, the reason people watch and participate in boxing is because boxing is the physical embodiment of a struggle only paralleled by the struggles of life itself.

Boxing is unlike any other sport. Of course there are rules and regulations, a victor and a loser, but the perseverance found in boxing is unique, as there are few other sports where people can observe the sheer magnitude of human willpower and endurance as one opponent faces off against another. Greg Bishop, a sports reporter for the *New York Times*, explains this when he says that "[p]art of the reason I watch boxing is for the excitement that accompanies the violence. But it is less about blood lust than about willpower. About enduring. Boxing is unlike any other sport in that way" (Bishop). It is evident that boxing, although it is a sport, is more than just a game. It is two individuals pitted against each other in what very well could be a life or death struggle. Bishop explains further that "[i]t is more individualized than football: two people with nowhere to go. Spectators cannot understand what that feels like, but when they watch, they can at least attempt to" (Bishop). Although not all who watch boxing today can relate to or even understand the struggle that is portrayed in boxing, many people can, and there have been times when people could relate to the desperate struggle of a boxing match even more than they do today.

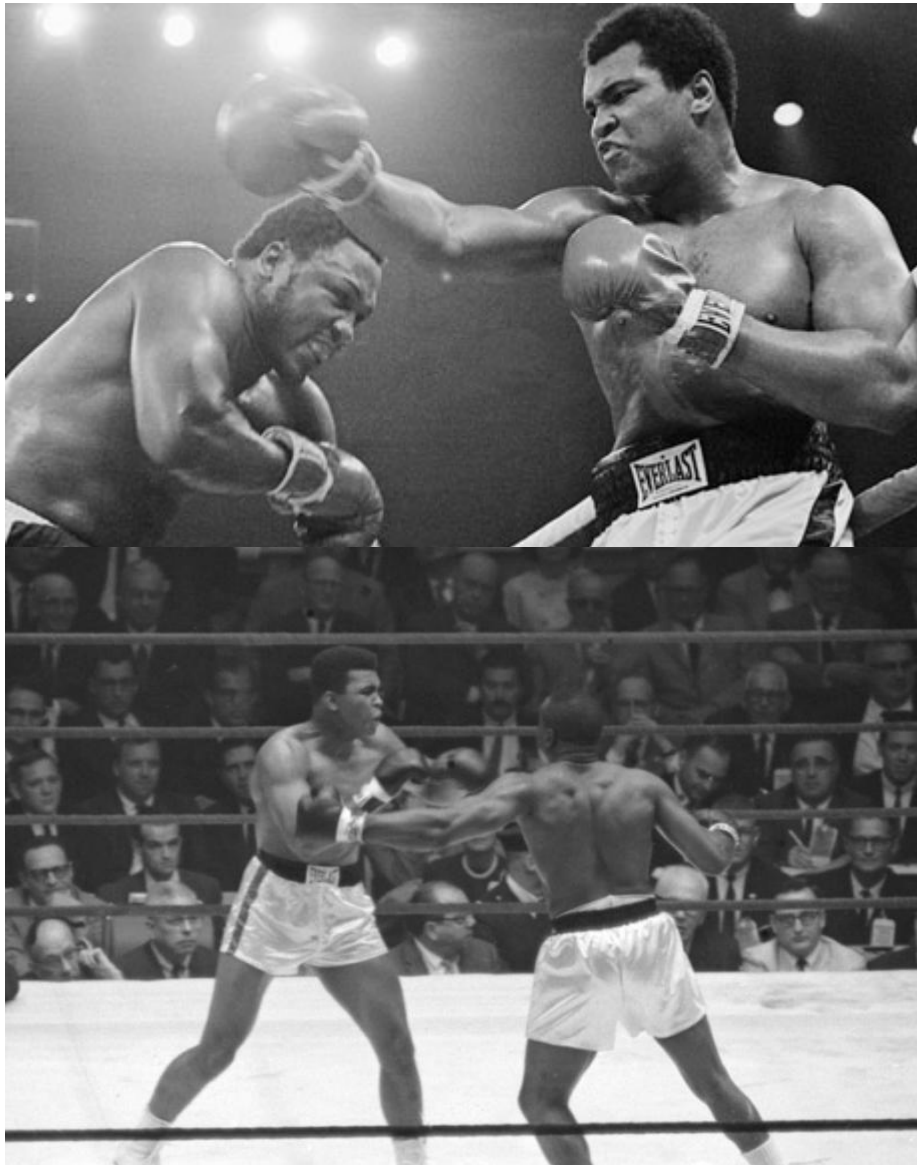
The struggle people relate to in boxing is made evident by the film *Ali*, a biographical movie about the life and career of Muhammad Ali. Fans supported Ali not just because he was a good boxer but also because of what he represented. Ali stood for freedom and was depicted as a monumental figure in the Civil Rights Movement in the film. Every time Ali stepped into the ring, he was fighting not only to win a boxing match, but fighting for freedom and to prove his worth to his fellow Americans, despite his skin color and his religion. Ali was struggling with many personal things in his life, such as being discriminated against for his race and religion. His friend and mentor Malcolm X was assassinated, he went through several divorces, and he resisted being drafted into the Vietnam War. All these struggles were embodied in his fights, and people rallied around him because of that. Boxing was the physical embodiment of the struggle that Ali and millions of people were going through, and this is why people supported Ali so strongly. Ali's perseverance in the face of defeat, even after his first and devastating loss to Joe Frazier, gave people hope. It gave people hope that they, too, could persevere against struggles in their own lives just as Ali persevered inside and outside of the ring in order to overcome the struggles in his own life. In his article, Bishop quoted Joyce Carol Oates, who "once described boxing as a metaphor for life, with its 'beauty, vulnerability, despair, incalculable and often self-destructive courage'" (qtd. in Bishop). Oates' metaphor further strengthens the idea that the enormous struggle inherent in boxing can only be paralleled by the trials and tribulations of life itself. This is especially true for those who face more challenges in their lives than others. For instance, during *The Rumble in the Jungle*, the championship fight between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali held in Zaire, the people of Zaire hailed Ali. They chanted "Boma ye, Ali!" which means "Kill him, Ali!" everywhere he went (*Ali*). The people of Zaire respected Ali's fight against racism and the war in Vietnam. They supported him, not Foreman, and looked to him as a hero because he gave the people hope, despite the struggles they faced in their lives in the third world conditions in which they lived.

The Rumble in the Jungle was the physical embodiment of the struggles Ali faced in his life, the struggles the people of Zaire faced in theirs, and the struggles some people faced in America.

People do not watch and partake in boxing in order to satiate some deep appetite for violence but rather to experience sheer human willpower and perseverance. Boxing is one of the few sports in which such things can be found. Those who do not face such struggles in their lives cannot understand boxing and what it means to the fans and the fighters. As Bishop asserts, no one can explain to an outsider "why boxer's box" (Bishop). However, many people today, and many more during times when more struggles dominated society, look to boxing to find inspiration and hope and to see someone persevere in the face of a struggle such as theirs. Boxing is the physical embodiment of a struggle rivaled only by the struggle of life itself, and people enjoy it not for its violence, but for its hope. That was the importance of Muhammad Ali, and it is still the significance of boxing as a whole.

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Climate change was the main focus for the Nature Unit in this First Year Seminar Class centered on the environment. The assignment for the unit essay was to develop and argue a thesis on man's relationship with nature, using at least some of the readings discussed in class. This writer's thesis, that our ability to change the very nature of the planet, represents a novelty in the evolution of our species and leads to a philosophical and thoughtful argument. The essay also features an extensive bibliography (please note that Council of Science Editors [CSE] author-year format citation is used).

The Second Sphere

By Stephen M. Pendergast

(Prof. L. Woolbright - "The Environment")

Introduction

It is my belief that nature can be divided up into two spheres. The first sphere is the classic predator-prey relationship. We were once a part of this sphere, back in the days of the hunter-gatherer. We were still a part of it during our time as farmers. However, we have far moved from the safety of the first sphere. The second sphere of nature is characterized by the godlike aspects of nature. We used to worship these forces as entities. Storms, fires, oceans, winds, and climate are all examples of these abiotic aspects. The first sphere depends on the second sphere. Pine forests require the fires to ensure hardwoods will not claim them, and their seedlings need the heat to seed. Rainforests require the hurricanes and tropical storms that control the native populations of animals. We exited the first sphere when we caged in nature. I can, relatively safely, walk through whatever woods I find around me and not be attacked by any predators. That wasn't enough, though. Domination of the first sphere left us hungry for more conquests against nature. Climate change, a human phenomenon, is our grand entrance into the godlike realm. We started to change the temperature of our very globe. The ice caps that are credited with shaping our world are melting. We're causing extreme storms, floods, and weather patterns. We've done something no other species has ever done. We've entered the second sphere. I believe that humanity has effectively exited the first sphere and has ascended into the second sphere through climate change. There are three inescapable truths about that entrance: one, climate change is our entrance into the second sphere; two, it will be detrimental to us and the world; and three, there's no hope to end climate change because we want to dominate the second sphere.

Climate change is our entrance into the second sphere.

It has now been twenty-some years since the discovery of climate change, and it's time we assign the blame to ourselves. Not we as individuals or groups of individuals, but we as a collective whole - a race. We have, currently, developed technology so significant that we can alter the atmosphere. We have come far from worshiping the elemental forces of nature, though in that progress, we seemed to have developed a severe lacking of an ancient connectivity. Effectively, we have driven mythology out while comfortably inside our industrial world. Of course, the loss is foremost felt by the world we've driven into submission. We are, currently, just beginning to feel the losses we've so long ignored. But, that is no matter. The modern man is a marvel of science. Progress, that drug we have feasted on for so long, has driven us apathetically towards doom. And, just like methamphetamine addicts, we seem to feel that we don't have a problem. We're sitting in a burning room and saying, "I'm fine." The fire, in this case, wasn't caused by some second sphere phenomena; it was lit by a match after we doused the room in gasoline. We've effectively ignored scientific consensus and demanded alternative explanations.



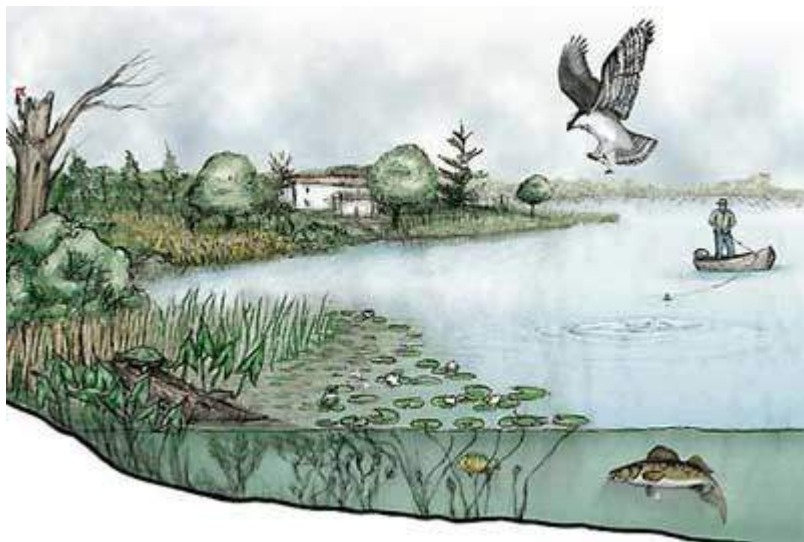
Lenar Whitney, a congressional hopeful, addressed the potential voters in Louisiana, explaining that her campaign was founded on three principles. The first pillar was that global warming is a hoax. The second was that Democrats were stirring up fear of global warming to keep power. The third was that we shouldn't let fear of fossil fuels stop us from living the American dream (Whitney 2014). I was, of course, exuberant that someone, who clearly never looked at scientific data before in her life, disproved global warming by holding a thermometer and stating confidently that, because it got cold, global warming did not exist. I wanted so desperately to believe her. However, I could not. Whitney claimed that we'd actually experienced the coldest year in history (Whitney 2014). She had no scientific data to support her claim, nor did she give any indication as to the span of the history to which she was referring. With a heavy heart, I say she was sorely mistaken. Scientists much more qualified than either myself or Whitney claim the exact opposite (McKibben 2010). Unfortunately, Whitney's statement highlights what I believe to be an accepted opinion: we did not cause climate change.

In reality, it has become increasingly obvious that we have caused climate change. We have conveniently forgotten about how interconnected our lives are with the lives of billions of other life forms on this planet. The most dominant force in forgetting our interconnectedness is, by far, our industrialization. Humans can now tread on almost every inch of the earth, and before we leave a footprint, we have already made our mark. We've begun to leave our marks on the environment, damaging even the most remote parts of the planet (McKibben 1989). While we're comfortable in our gas-heated houses, the arctic is also feeling the warmth of our cozy homes, and the incomprehensibly massive sheets of ice that have stood for an eternity are being slain (Orlowski et al. 2012). The root cause of global warming has been cited as an increase of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 1995) clearly asserted that the increase of greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, have grown because of human activity. Dr. James Hansen (1988) asserted that "the greenhouse effect is already large enough to begin to affect the probability of extreme events." I draw a clear conclusion that, according to scientific data, we have increased the number of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Likewise, the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere is already large enough to change the climate. Most importantly, however, we put it up there. We have started to do the unthinkable. We entered the second sphere.

We know what is happening to our world. Yet, oil companies are still launching campaigns to invalidate climate change (McKibben 2010). However, we know better. We have literature, data, statistics, essays, movies, and many other forms of media all telling of the damages due to climate change. We, conveniently, can now even walk around outside to start to see the changes. It's time to stop denying it, stop displacing blame, and stop blocking out the truth. The second sphere is comprised of climate, amongst other godlike forces, and we are causing those forces to change. Our changing of global abiotic forces is our grand entrance into the second sphere.

Our entrance to the second sphere will be detrimental to life on the planet.

In simple terms, we've not only begun to change the natural world, but we've begun to create an environment that will kill off the species within it. By entering the second sphere, we've entered into a realm where we are responsible for the extinction of entire species. At first, it was a simple means of over-hunting that killed off animals, such as the passenger pigeon (Leopold 1949). However, with climate change, we've created a weapon that we can wield on nearly all species simultaneously. There is a belief among scientists that global warming is dangerous for all life on our planet (Hansen et al. 2008). The simple understanding is that every organism is adapted to an atmosphere with about 280 parts per million carbon dioxide. It is also generally believed that, if we can, lowering our atmospheric carbon to 380 parts per million will avoid the worst of the inevitable changes (Hansen et al. 2008). As Hansen and others (2008) said, the creatures on this earth have adapted for an atmosphere that no longer exists. Already, phytoplankton, which is the foundation of the marine food chain, has been reduced by forty percent due to warming oceans (McKibben 2010). Fish and shrimp populations are so low that we have had to stop harvesting them. Forests are dying off as trees cannot grow fast enough to keep up with the climatic change (McKibben 1989).



It is estimated that entire ecosystems will collapse. More than half the species on the planet - notably the polar alpine species as they will literally be pushed off the globe - and migratory species will cease to exist (Hansen 2008). In a nutshell, climate change is destroying our world. Our grand entrance to these abiotic, godlike aspects of nature is, and will continue to be, the cause of mass ecological destruction. Of course, we do have about a fifty percent chance of survival, according to Hansen and others (2008).

However, I tend to agree with McKibben (1989, p. 114) when he stated that "our ability to survive... [in the past]...is no proof of our ability to survive what's coming." We don't know what is going to happen. Our food supply could decrease. We are already seeing a loss of food in the oceans due to warming and lack of phytoplankton, but we could also be facing a farming epidemic spreading to our pastures, and from there, to our dairy, poultry, and beef industries (McKibben 1989). Even if we were somehow able to stabilize our way of life in the climate-changed world, then we'd have to deal with the immediate subsequent problem: our increased population. With growing populations, we could "double energy efficiency but also double the number of energy users," and, simply, we'd wind up facing the same problem (McKibben 1989, p. 123). However, if trends continue as they are, we are facing the possible mass extinction of mankind. The two most serious problems that our species would face are famine and drought caused by the rising seas, lack of fresh water, and decimated crops. Flooding will cause hundreds of millions of people to be displaced. Rains will be heavier in some places, and droughts will plague others. Forest fires will become stronger and the coastline will become unstable. Diseases will rise and epidemics will occur (Hansen 2008). Quite simply, people will die, and this should concern us (Tidwell 2009). Whether or not we can, as a species, survive is unclear. However, it is apparent that climate change will decimate life on this planet.

It used to be that mass extinction was a power belonging to the second sphere. The dinosaurs, as we all know, are extinct. It is a commonly held belief that a natural disaster, or string of natural disasters, led to their demise. However, that power was always held within the second sphere. Now, as McKibben (2010) and Hansen (2008) pointed out, we hold that power. We, currently, are doing exactly what the second sphere did: mass extermination. We entered the second sphere and are using our power to destroy our world.

We will not end climate change because we want to dominate the second sphere.

Hope is possibly the greatest drug that humanity can indulge in. It gives us a why. With a why, we can live through any means (Nietzsche 1889). Hope is what we are being fed through the climate change policies. If we act now we *can* get the carbon dioxide count down to 350 parts per million (Hansen 2008). We had the ability to save our planet, yet we're still flushed and bloated on apathy. It has reached a point, a tipping point if you will, where we have gone too far to stop it. In order to truly end the most devastating parts of climate change, we needed to act about four years ago. We did not. McKibben (2010) also claims that if we acted *now*, we could end the worst of climate change. We do not act. We still cling to hopes that climate change does not matter, will be fixed, or does not exist. Just today, I talked briefly with one of my friends about climate change. She said with conviction that climate change does not exist. It is a myth. Lenar Whitney is running a campaign on the basis that climate change is a falsehood and oil use throughout America should be protected. We have such an apathetic view of our environment that there is no way we can possibly save it.

Our apathy began with thinkers such as Descartes (1637, p. 35) who advocated for “render[ing] ourselves, as it were, masters and possessors of nature.” People, in droves, took up his idea and happily created tools to abuse the world. The Industrial Revolution at the start of the 1700s gave us a mechanistic view of nature (Merchant 1993), and this can be traced back to Descartes (1637), who asserted time and time again that control over the natural world was needed in order to ensure ease of living, good health, and long life. We want to dominate the world because we are lazy. We desire a tame wilderness because it's a deep-rooted instinct to fight nature. However, the crux of our nature philosophy shifted. Instead of fearing it, we decided to dominate it. It is when we removed our organic conceptions about nature, when we stopped looking towards the world as a living being, that we killed it in our minds (Merchant 1993). Of course, with technology as advanced as it is now, we have literally killed it off (McKibben 1989). I agree with both Merchant (1993) and McKibben (1989) regarding our domination and killing of the first sphere, but I would like to take their ideas further. If the trend of domination continues, and I see no reason that it will end soon, then our next conquest is the second sphere. It makes sense that we would logically move from total domination of the first to total domination of the second. An artificial world is seemingly imminent, and with it, the end of all nature on earth.



There is money to be made in the fossil fuel industry. Money is, ultimately, our way of carving out resources in the world. The fossil fuel companies have lots of money. They are practically our drug dealers, and we just can't seem to obtain enough of the liquid gold they pour into our veins. Of course, that high comes with a price. The price is the planet as we know it and the possible extinction of its species (McKibben 1989). In that light, there are some who would say that those money-hungry corporate leaders, who knew well and good what damages fossil fuels do, should be tried for crimes against humanity (Hansen 2008). I would tend to agree with that. And this comes from a simple fact: our entrance into the second sphere through climate change is destroying our world.

In order to truly save the world, we in the developed world need to cut our fossil fuel consumption. McKibben (1989) believed that it wasn't just enough to go green. He stated that we need to actually limit fossil fuels. He went so far as to claim that “if industrial civilization is ending nature, it is not utter silliness to talk about ending - or, at least, transforming - industrial civilization,” (McKibben 1989, p. 158). Either we change - dramatically - or the earth dies (McKibben 1989). However, I don't think it's possible. We have ingrained within us this idea of the American Dream. I know that the American Dream focuses on self-satisfaction, big life, big parties, big houses, big cars, lots of friends, and lots and lots of money. The American Dream, then, simplifies to two main materials: money and oil. During his presidency, George W. Bush claimed that “the American way of life is not up for negotiation,” (McKibben 1989 p. xxiv). I feel that has been our claim for quite some time. McKibben (1989) also felt that this has been humanity's claim. He said that we, as a species, probably will be able to survive the global climate catastrophe. We, probably, can support our current (and rising) numbers with advances in science and new industrial tools. Or, maybe, we can just change ourselves so we don't sacrifice the integrity of our planet (McKibben 1989). Nature, according to McKibben (1989), already died. Whole species have died and will continue to die. People will die. Yet, even with the models and predictions of doom and gloom, we aren't doing anything. Perhaps, apathy should be the defining term of my generation. The small steps we've taken are not enough, and every day we discuss how we can change the effects, is another day that more and more carbon dioxide is thrown into the air. But we aren't even discussing. We, as a society, have decided that pure nature is worthless; we have decided that we should dominate the second sphere, and we have decided that the dominated world is worth living in. The definitive consequences of this are, simply, we cannot stop climate change. We missed it. We had our chance. We have to live with our consequences and usher in the age of the artificial and the dominated.

Conclusion

We entered the second sphere, we dominated nature, we harmed and marred our environment, we made it detrimental, and we will face the consequences. With the developed world so well-adjusted to our way of life, it will be impossible to end the detrimental changes that will occur. I wish I could claim that we can still save ourselves, but I see no point. The time for action long since passed. As for entering the second sphere, I think it will be our downfall. Natural disasters will only grow fiercer, hunger more rampant, and thirst an epidemic. Diseases will rise and plagues will be brutal. The only hope we have is in the full domination of the second sphere. We would need a completely controlled world. An artificial nature. Of course, if we do that, then we've already lost. Another possibility is that the second sphere might just damn us back to the first and that's where we'd stay until the rage we created dissipates with the falling carbon. It seems we are at war with nature, and I hate to see us go up against her. I fear we'd lose, or, rather, that we already have lost.



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This event paper was written during the Social Justice Unit in response to an informative and emotional on-campus presentation by Holocaust survivor, Esther Bauer.

The Power of Personal Narrative: Esther Bauer's Story of Survival

By Amanda J. Pra Sisto

(Prof. Collins - "Exploring Narrative")

During a recent campus event at which I was sitting only fifteen feet away from guest speaker Esther Bauer in the student center, I felt almost as though she and I were engaged in casual conversation. She had a pleasant smile, and she had spoken only a few words before I was completely drawn in. She even made a joke related to the Jonas Brothers that produced laughter from the audience, myself included. It felt almost as though Bauer and I were not so different from each other. That is, if one could ignore the fact that at nine years old, I was studying textbook versions of the Holocaust. When *Bauer* was nine years old, she was living through it.

Bauer was a very young child when Hitler came to power. Because she belonged to a Jewish family, she and her parents faced excessive discrimination from members of the Nazi Party. New laws were implemented throughout Germany, including the forbidding of Jewish teachers to teach, of Jewish students to attend public schools, and even of Jews to walk through certain parks. Bauer's family was forced to move to an apartment designated for Jews where there was no hot water and no central heating. They were forbidden from partaking in religious rituals and ceremonies, and noncompliance would result in severe punishment or execution. It is one thing to read informational textbook summaries or even view documentaries about the Nuremberg Laws and other anti-Jewish legislation, but it was a whole different, eye-opening experience to hear Bauer recall how she was prohibited from partaking in regular activities, such as swimming or attending concerts, simply because she was Jewish. The resentment was evident in her voice as she told the captivated audience about the childhood that was taken from her.

Bauer was deprived of her possessions and her loved ones. Even the man to whom she was newly married was relocated. When members of the Nazi Party promised her a reunion with him, they instead sent her to Auschwitz concentration camp. There, she was presented with unsanitary and extremely difficult living and working arrangements. She was starved, forced to work, and physically abused. She never saw her husband again. Bauer knew that any day could be her last, as those around her continued to disappear into the gas chambers, never to return. She professed to the audience that not once did the idea of suicide seem desirable to her, but rather she was determined to fight for her life through the entire ordeal. After being moved to another concentration camp, Bauer and the other prisoners were ultimately liberated, and she was able to move to America.

The brutal mistreatment that Bauer was subjected to solely because of her religious background is abominable and entirely unacceptable. The Nazis believed that their race was superior to all others and that individuals who did not fit their ideal image should be persecuted. Jews, including Bauer, were dehumanized and put through unimaginable neglect. This is the ultimate example of social injustice.

A 91-year-old Holocaust survivor vividly recalling almost every unspeakable detail of her experiences is more powerful than any textbook could possibly be. General recaps of history cannot possibly begin to convey the emotions that are present within a personal narrative as strong as Bauer's. Bauer stated, "The first twenty years, I could not speak about it. The next twenty years, people did not want to hear about it" (Bauer). She has only been sharing her story for roughly the past twenty years, but the impact it leaves is in no way diminished. Social injustice and prejudice continue to plague today's world, and Bauer's main message to her listeners is that incidents like the Holocaust can never be allowed to happen again. "Hate makes you sick and ugly," she says (Bauer). Hatred darkens the world, and no one, especially innocent people like Esther Bauer, deserves to be the victim of it.

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This author offers ideas about and solutions to some of the problems that the world of education is facing today in this thesis-driven research project. He uses personal narrative and references to studies done by educational scholars to reveal what he believes education should and could be like with the right conditions.

I, Not Robot

By Joseph K. Pugh

(Prof. Collins - "Narrative")

Although it may seem like public schools provide students with a nurturing environment to learn, many schools across the country are actually stifling young people's creativity. In the classroom today, the relationship between the teachers and the students is driving the creative element out of the classroom and replacing it with pre-coded information that the students must memorize. Teachers are just dumping significant amounts of knowledge obtained from somewhere in their educational journey right into the minds of students. Cramming the information in seems to be the method of choice for the students, the purpose of which is only to spit it back out on command. The outcome of this style of education is mindless and robotic students. Education today has created robots. Students have become pre-coded by the teachers in order to follow the identical path that every other student must follow. No real emphasis has been placed on learning. Memorization of superficial knowledge has become the new method of education, and actual learning has taken the back seat. There is an escape from this mechanical and unresponsive society, but in order for change to happen, the creative element must be reintroduced into the classroom. That is the only way to break the code.

All across the country, public schools are committing a crime, a crime not worth involving the police in, but a crime nevertheless. This crime is harming the intellectual futures of millions of thriving young minds. Creative ideas that students come up with on their own are being forced right out of their heads. Instead, they are being replaced with filtered information. The school systems now use public education as a robotic scheme to force students down the same identical path, one in which students are fed information, not led to it. W.B. Yeats, an Irish poet, said it best: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire" (Moore). The education process begins with a spark, and if the conditions are right, that spark will turn into a blazing fire.

The danger Yeats referred to in his metaphor is real in many instances in today's society. Students are no longer treated as students; they are treated as receptacles. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher and an education specialist, likes to call this type of education the banking concept of education. In the eyes of Paulo Freire, students are comparable to the common ATM machine. They sit, store, and then release, only to repeat the same cycle over and over. The creativity is squeezed out with every last withdrawal. Freire comments on this idea by arguing, "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes the deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat" (1). Communication is dead. Conversations that invite new and innovative ideas are shut down. At the front of the classroom stands the teacher. Sitting before the teacher are the students. They are patiently waiting. They are waiting for the teacher to release the desired information so they can store it away and let it sit, never allowing for the information to set in because it is only there temporarily.

I sit beside my fellow classmates and watch as our teacher prowls back and forth, lecturing. There were some days in high school when I thought of myself as this used ATM machine. I felt like some of my teachers used me as a depository where they stored all of the information they were told to throw at us so that we could learn their way. Throughout high school, the only thing I really learned was how to memorize information for the Regents exam at the end of the year. I found myself in a college-level physics class, mindlessly staring back at the teacher, afraid to ask a question because of the lecture she just gave another student for inquiring about the information that was middle school-level material. He should have known that she emptied that information into our heads last week. I never opened my mouth unless spoken to. I was afraid, afraid maybe of being wrong, or maybe of looking like a fool in front of my much more intelligent friends. I don't know which it was, probably both.

With this teacher, I felt like I went to the class, did my time, and left, hoping that I didn't make a fool out of myself. I can't help but wonder what physics would have been like if I had a more engaging teacher. Instead, I filed into my assigned seat in the front of the room and let my mind soak up the information. Not only was there no dialogue within the classroom, but we weren't even allowed to ask questions, unless we wanted to be ridiculed. The worst was the sarcastic look I would get when I would ask a question, making me feel like I was as small as an ant. So I chose my battles, this one not being one of them. I let the teacher have this one.

Across the country teachers are creating clones who are afraid to be themselves. Living out their everyday lives thinking that they have to be or act a certain way because their parents or their teachers told them that's the way it was going to be. At an age when they should be worried about their crush or having fun after school, they are concerned with what they want to do in twenty years. These kids are terrified. Carleton Kendrick, an alumni interviewer for the admissions process at Harvard, claims that the hundreds of incoming Harvard applicants he interviews are more interested in their bulked resumes than enjoying what they do in life and in the classroom. These kids are scared to break away from what the adults have molded them to be. Kendrick claims that in one interview, he conversed with a student who had scored two perfect scores on his SATs and loved challenging the ideas of others in his literature class. When Kendrick proposed the question, "Do you ever test your teacher's opinions?", Peter, the student said, "Sure, I used to disagree lots of times. I mean, there's no absolute right answer when it comes to knowing whether an author was using her own life or not as the basis for the main character, right? But every time I'd disagree with this teacher or our textbook's opinion, I'd end up getting marked down for it. So I learned it's better to tell teachers what they want to hear so you'll get a better grade" (Kendrick 1). Shouldn't education be the communication of ideas between the teachers and the students, a dialogue in order to create new and original ideas? Why is it that students are afraid to speak their minds and challenge the ideas of others? If the students are following in the footsteps of the adults, the world will become filled with individuals who are all the same, creating no diversity.

It all starts with one individual or one school who takes the plunge into the creative end of the pool and comes up treading water. Parker Palmer, an education specialist and activist who concentrates on the issues going on in the world of education, strongly claims that in order to break away from this detached way of teaching where the method of learning comes from higher beings, there must be a community of learning. "The community of truth" is what Palmer chooses to call this innovative style of teaching and learning. In the community of truth, there is no sole individual who is powering the learning; instead, it is a gathering of individuals and ideas, guided by thoughts on a specific topic. Learning becomes free and open. It is not closed off to only one idea because there is never just one answer. Palmer goes on to explain that in "[t]he community of truth [...] education is more than delivering propositions about objects to passive auditors. In the community of truth, knowing and teaching and learning look less like General Motors and more like a town meeting" (Palmer 113). A town meeting creates an environment that welcomes the free flow of ideas. People are allowed to let their ideas flow, and these ideas are heard by the officials. Every person is treated the same and there is really no order to these meetings. And that's why they are successful. If learning was conducted like a meeting rather than a banking procedure, who knows what types of ideas might come from education. The educational environment becomes much freer, and with freedom, comes a great deal of creativity. Then the students are not tied down to thinking in one way. Students are encouraged to ask questions and challenge the ideas presented because, as Palmer asserts, "The community can never offer us ultimate certainty - not because its process is flawed but because certainty is beyond the grasp of finite hearts and minds" (Palmer 115). Parker Palmer claims that this community can rescue individuals from the depths of the so-called truth. In this community, creativity is welcomed "because we understand the inadequacy of our concepts to embrace the vastness of great things" (Palmer 118).



Educational structure and form are essential in the learning process. One of the most effective methods of teaching in the upper levels of education today is the incorporation of seminar education. Many colleges and universities all over the United States offer First Year Seminar for their students. In this seminar-style of learning, the classroom is broken down into a very small number of students who learn from a professor who specializes in the topic along with all the other members of the class. The class size ranges from twelve to fifteen students, and with such a small learning environment, it now becomes essential for the students to elaborate and explain their ideas because that is the only way the class will become enjoyable and beneficial. Learning in an interactive environment, the students can truly begin to enjoy their education. This gets the ball rolling. When students begin to enjoy their learning, they begin to see a point or a purpose in going to class and their grades improve. The environment is crucial. With the proper learning conditions that introduce fun into the classroom, students enjoy their schooling. And when there is joy in something, there is no looking back. The positives are unmatched.

Harvard University displays a four minute video on their main website describing the positive effects that the seminar-style of education presents. There is a collaboration of student and faculty interviews where the viewers can see firsthand how well-rounded and how confident the students in the seminar classes are. Ali Asani, professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures, says that the First Year Seminar class is the most rewarding class he teaches because of the diversity of ideas the students offer over the course of the school year ("Freshman"). Asani goes on to say that in the First Year Seminar, "[T]eaching and learning are a collaborative adventure" ("Freshman"). Because the class size is so small, the students are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas. Without freedom of expression, these classes would go nowhere.

One of the students from the video said that in her seminar class, she was "exploring education in a learning-for-learning-sake environment" ("Freshman"). She was there to learn. She wasn't there to pass a test or to please her teachers or parents. She was there to learn. And learn she did. With all of this newfound confidence and experience in the classroom, the students have the opportunity to become much better-rounded, and the confidence they gain with these prestigious professors carries over into other classes. Seminar education allows for students not only to challenge one another, but also to challenge the ideas of the professors and take ownership of the material being taught. Professor Asani ends the video by saying, "Students are learning from me, and I am learning from them" ("Freshman"). This type of education provides students with a dynamic style of learning that they may not find in their other classes. Seminar education offers so much more than the learning of the subject at hand. It allows the students to happily walk away from these classes feeling like they not only have the knowledge, but also the skills to conquer any other classes at their school. Giving students this confidence, this skill of being able to express their ideas, allows for students to be themselves. They aren't formed by the ideas of those around them. They have their own ideas.

Class styles that follow the seminar education style are limited in high schools today. In college, the level of discussion and learning is much higher, and this can be credited to the use of seminar education. What if students were to come into college with the skills and knowledge gained in a seminar-style class? When I was in high school, the only classes that used this seminar method of learning were the college credit classes. All my other classes were usually lecture-based. They were very unengaging. Being exposed to these college-level skills, I was at an advantage. But what happens to the students who aren't lucky enough to take those college courses in high school? Are they supposed to sit around and wait until college to learn what others are learning in high school? It is essential for high schools to start incorporating this style of learning into the curricula. College learning is much more rigorous, but students could be much more prepared for it if in high school they were treated like they were in college and not like ATM machines. Some students just sit there in class – unengaged, and almost unwelcomed by teachers. If only these students had the voice to speak up and stand out.

Dialogue and communication among the teacher and the students is essential. When a student feels comfortable in an environment, freedom of expression is more likely to occur. Paulo Freire conveys that the solution to the banking concept of education is “problem-posing” education. Similar to Parker Palmer, Paulo Freire believes that the students and the teachers should be challenged together, forming new and creative ideas that stem from an interactive learning environment. “Problem-posing” education puts an end to the power struggle found in the classroom because now there is no one individual running the class (6). Now the class is run by the ideas, not a power-filled individual whom the students fear.

In the eyes of Paulo Freire, “Through the dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-students with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in the dialogues with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (7). The creativity that sparks from this dialogical learning allows for students to open new doors, doors that open along the educational path. These doors may be job interviews. These doors may be college discussions. These doors may be opportunities for research. Whatever size, shape, or color these doors are, if the students are equipped with the skills provided when learning occurs, they will be able to open any door.

These doors will slowly close if the world of education stays on its current path. Many of the students who are coming out of the high schools all over the country today are pre-coded, robotic individuals who no longer think for themselves. Carleton Kendrick reveals that what Harvard sees the most is the “Miss America-like, rehearsed response---‘Harvard is the best environment available for me to pursue my pre-medical studies’” (1). These responses have become so unoriginal that it is almost uncomfortable. We seem to be losing our students because of the robotic method of education. If the learning for these students stays stagnant and dead, there is no hope. Kendrick reveals that “these frightened, pressured high-achievers have trouble finding their own voice. Instead, I hear them speak in the boilerplate, programmed, success-oriented words of their parents, teachers and college coaches” (1). These individuals are lost. They need to find themselves, and they do that when schools incorporate the seminar-style of education. We can see at colleges across the country that the students who come out of these seminar classes are far more advanced in critical thinking and discussion, which prove to be imperative skills needed in the real world. This new, different, non-linear style of education can save these students from the depths.

When students are trapped in the depths of education, their creative element is absent. Being creative is no easy task. Every day a creative mind is filled with coded information is another day when hope is lost. Education should be about the process of generating new and useful ideas in order for an individual to benefit society. Sir Ken Robinson, an educational specialist from the United Kingdom, is an advocate for the allowance of individual thought and ideas, even if it goes against the common grain of society. In his infamous Ted Talk “How To Escape Education’s Death Valley,” Robinson reveals that it is important to teach students in an environment that allows growth. If the conditions are right, learning can truly flow through the minds of the students. When a student is learning with the right conditions to flourish, education becomes not a regurgitated process; it becomes organic growth.

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For the Heritage unit, students read a variety of sources concerning the ways that human culture predisposes us to our interactions with our environment. The assignment for the unit essay was to explore current human/environment interactions in the light of these cultural influences. This writer chose to address fundamental human nature in this thought-provoking essay. Students were required to use CSE name-year citation format.

Our Inevitable Fate

By Matthew I. Rebel

(Prof. L. Woolbright - "The Environment")

Just give up. Our human culture has been doomed from the start, not by our large brains, not by our opposable thumbs, and not by our cars, but by our simple inability to follow the rules of nature to which every other living organism conforms. Today, many environmentalists are quick to blame the modern human for our environmental issues, and they offer desperate suggestions for how they may be corrected. It is, however, my belief that this environmental destruction was an inevitable consequence of human nature and cannot be stopped. This is a difficult fate to accept. Accordingly, many would call attention to recent efforts for sustainability, such as solar panels and electric cars, and while I concede that these are beneficial, their effects are limited by our human culture and thus are thoroughly insufficient. In this essay, I will discuss the simple rules of nature that we alone have broken, the historical consequences of these broken rules, the means by which our inevitable end is swiftly approaching, and the futility of any efforts to stop it. Human culture makes us unable to resist bypassing the basic rules of nature, and as a result, the human race will inevitably be decimated by the consequences of our violations.

To understand our inevitable fate as humans, we must first identify the laws of nature that sustain our planet and our singularly human tendency not to conform to those laws. The first of these laws is that every species on the earth has a defined habitat to which they are constrained. To illustrate this point, consider that while there are numerous species of rabbit across the globe, each is constrained to its own environment, like the snowshoe rabbit, whose thick white coat would stand out and cause the rabbit to overheat outside of its tundra habitat. In contrast, we humans cover the entire world and can travel it as we please.

The second law of nature is that all species' populations are self-limiting. This is because organisms that cannot be fed by the limited resources of their confined habitat starve. This is seen in *Thinking Like a Mountain*, wherein the deer of the titular mountain, freed from the wolves that limited their population, quickly overtax their food supply and starve to death in a far greater number than if they had been pulled down by predators (Leopold 1949).

The third rule of nature is that all species accept losses, a fact that can be seen in the ability of many lizards to detach their tails as a last-ditch effort to escape a predator, or the willingness of a fleeing bison herd to knock over one of their young to distract pursuing wolves so that the rest of the herd can escape (Foster and Smith [Date Unknown]). In stark contrast, we humans, such as those in the Lake Township area of Huron County, cannot accept even small compromises for the greater good. Residents there rejected plans to build wind turbines in order to avoid the possibility of a reduction to their property values (Curry 2013).

The fourth, and most crucial law of nature is that all the species of the earth are controlled by their environment, not the other way around. This differing connection to the environment is also shown within *Thinking Like a Mountain*, in which the narrator kills the wolves to better his hunting. Meanwhile, the deer are affected by this environmental change, which causes them to overproduce and then experience a famine as a result of the human-created environment (Leopold 1949). Every organism on earth follows these four laws, except humans, and just like any rules, there are consequences for not following them.

Many seem to place the blame for our dangerously growing environmental problems on recent generations alone, and I must admit that with our cars, factories, and countless electronics, recent generations have likely done the most harm. However, as history will attest, the actions of these generations are mere perpetuations of inviable trends in human behaviors, behaviors which will bring about the end of us all. Even as supposedly harmless hunter-gatherers, we began to damage our environment early, around 10,000 to 50,000 years ago to be exact, when we caused the extinction of 80% of Africa's large animals (Benton 2012). Simultaneously, humans managed to decimate the fauna of Australia as well as the population of any species unlucky enough to weigh one hundred kilograms or more, all as mere tribespeople. Around this time, tribal humans are believed, according to White (1967), to have developed the fire drive method of hunting, which, through copious use, created the world's first grasslands (Lowdermilk 1940).

We did not remain tribal people, however. We soon found our way to the Nile and set to work adapting our environment. As a result, its lower banks have been an environmentally non-functioning human artifact for over six thousand years (Benton 2012). Continuing on, we began to build our first civilizations around this time in a region of the Middle East known as the Fertile Crescent, but we wouldn't allow it to hold that title for long. Our effect on this region can be seen in LowderMilk's (1940) *The Eleventh Commandment*, in which Lowdermilk, a soil scientist, stated that the Fertile Crescent could at one point support a population of fifty million people comfortably but today can barely support a population one-tenth that number. Lowdermilk further expressed that the death of fertile lands and the cultures they have supported were a common theme that he saw scrawled across numerous regions, including northern China, the trans-Jordan region, and the Negro and Sani region, which formerly supported a population of one hundred thousand, and now hardly supports two - thousand.

As we reach more modern times, it's noted that while we see smog as a uniquely 21st century problem, London, England had a smog problem over seven hundred years ago in 1285 (Lowdermilk 1940). As time continued its ever-present march forward, Ireland provided an example of environmental manipulation as well as an example of the consequences of disobedience to nature's laws. The widespread starvation of the Irish during the potato famine of the mid-1800s occurred because they chose to change their environment by replacing many indigenous crops with potatoes because of its perceived superiority as a crop. Despite, or rather, because of, this perception, it was during this period that over 1 million Irishmen left the country after potato blight destroyed the nation's potato crop, leaving scarcely little to eat (The Great Famine of ... 2006). The aforementioned crop replacements essentially put the Irishmen's hopes for food in a single basket, and so when disease came, the other indigenous vegetables that would have survived and fed the populous, simply didn't exist. They had removed the safety net of diversity that nature had put in place and fell hard without it (The Great Famine of ... 2006). There are countless examples of the harm we have done as we violate nature's laws. This harm has consequences, and we haven't long before those consequences bring about the end of the human culture that created them.

Today, driven by inevitable human nature, we continue to break nature's laws in more extreme fashions than ever before and thus assure our already predetermined demise in three ways. The first is by disease. The European Black Plague of the mid 1300s was able to spread from Asia to Italy and then throughout Europe because of the people's disobedience to nature's law, which requires that every group of organisms stays within its habitat (Black Death Accessed 2014 Oct 20). The Italian people interacted outside of their habitat with Asia, where the disease originated, by way of sea-trade, and thus exposed themselves to the pathogen (Black Death Accessed 2014 Oct 20). Presently, we seem to be on the precipice of another such plague with the recent Ebola outbreak. With air travel, we are in a state of constant disregard for nature's law of segregation of groups, and as a result, the virus is already more widespread than the Black Plague ever was. Should this virus get out of control as the Black Plague did, our high population density, due to our man-made cities and suburbs, another violation of nature's laws against modifying the environment, would likely result in worldwide deaths far beyond the one-third of Europeans who were killed by the Black Plague (Black Death Accessed 2014 Oct 20).

Furthermore, in an attempt to make ourselves safer, we have modified our environment by popularizing antibiotics to the point that they are in most of the food we eat. This attempt to protect ourselves from disease may prove far from safe, as we begin to notice antibiotic resistant bacteria in the animals we have been treating and eating. One such example involves *Escherichia coli* (E coli), which has killed hundreds of people (Schlosser 2001). *E. coli*, however, has a rather limited vector of infection compared to a much more insidious and older threat, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, better known as tuberculosis. This fatal bacterial lung infection is currently treated with antibiotics. However, should a popular strain of antibiotic resistant tuberculosis develop, it could spread like wildfire (Black Death Accessed 2014 Oct 20).

The next means of our inevitable destruction is by mass starvation. Humans today have modified our food supply and are in clear violation of natural laws. We have altered and controlled the DNA of crops. In America, for example, our corporate food system makes heavy use of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, such as the Roundup-Ready soybeans seen in *Food, Inc.* (2009) These GMOs are dangerous because while the average crop of soybeans would be genetically diverse and thus able to regularly survive infection of any sort, at least in part, GMOs are genetically identical to one another (*Food Inc.* 2009). Because of this, if ever a pathogen developed that targeted a desired gene, such as food yield, and was bred into multiple genetically modified organisms, then a majority of the nation's harvest would be afflicted and rendered inedible. This could create a food shortage, which if severe enough, could spark nuclear war over food resources or widespread death through famine. We could also see famine result from a combination of other factors, such as the declining bee population, destruction of water resources, and the gradual destruction of soil fertility world-wide.

The final way in which I see our specie's end swiftly approaching is through global warming. There are still many among the American population who do not perceive global warming as a threat, believing that a few extra degrees won't kill anyone. To these people, I would respond that it would, in fact, kill everyone. I say this because even an average temperature increase of a single degree will eliminate fresh water resources from one-third of the world's surface, thus an increase of a few degrees would be catastrophic (Curry 2013). Furthermore, it's believed that the warming of our planet due to our factories and cars, both modifications of our environment and thus violations of nature's laws, would, after only two or three degrees, dramatically affect plants, for they would begin to die off, thus removing less carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This, in turn, would further raise the temperature, creating an unending cycle that would result in the human race dying of either starvation or asphyxiation (Curry 2013). The final way in which the heat from global warming could kill us is that we humans could simply overheat. In the inevitable event of a temperature increase of two to three degrees, the temperature would regularly exceed 105 degrees Fahrenheit at 100% humidity (Curry 2013). If one considers, for perspective, that 70,000 people were killed in the European heat wave of 2003, during which the temperature was a mere 95 degrees, the danger of this final situation is clear (Curry 2013). These possibilities are not abstractions or even unlikely. In fact, James Hansen, one of the world's leading climatologists predicts that unless we can achieve full decarbonizing by the year 2030, global CO₂ levels will reach sixteen times those of 1950, guaranteeing catastrophic climate change (Curry 2013). Furthermore, recent data suggest that we have already begun a number of positive-feedback loops of environmental damage, specifically in reference to the melting of the polar ice caps and permafrost (Curry 2013). Despite all of this, there are many, such as Bill McKibben, one of many authors in *The Global Warming Reader* (2012), who believe there are solutions to our environmental problems.



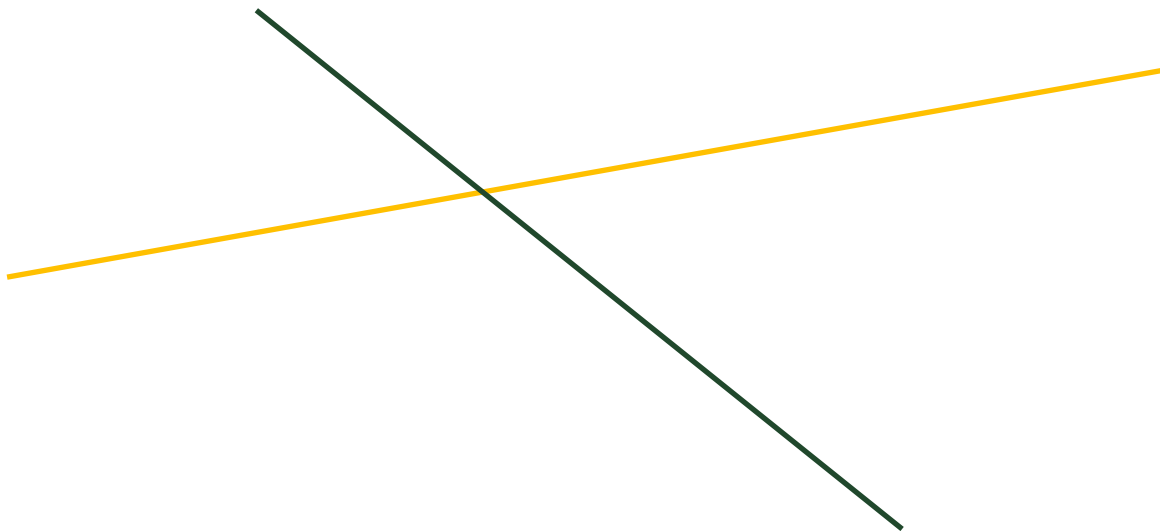
Those who still grasp the hope that our future as a species can yet be saved from the harm we have created with our disobedience to nature's laws are unfortunately grasping at straws. Many so-called solutions regarding how we can escape the consequences of our environmental wrong-doings are typically technological or cultural in nature, and each comes with significant problems. In terms of technological solutions, we humans have had recent noticeable success with water, wind, and solar power innovations. However, our culture's slow acceptance of these technologies, with only 500,000 homes and business powered by solar energy in a country of well over 300 million people, means that their implementation is nowhere near quick enough to prevent our coming fate (Global Warming our Future... 2013). Even large solutions aren't viable because many, such as creating a sulfur screen in space, are not only riddled with potential side effects, but are so expensive that no country would ever put itself far enough into debt to carry out even one of these plans. In terms of radical cultural solutions, such as population control, like that suggested in *The Eleventh Commandment*, it needs only be asked how a culture unwilling to allow clean energy windmills in its towns for fear they would be aesthetically displeasing and could potentially lower property values, will somehow accept the idea of being told that their people's right to bear children is being revoked (Lowdermilk 1940). What's more, any developed democratic nation would quickly dismiss the idea of population control as fascist, and undeveloped nations' cultures rely on having lots of children to work farms and bring income into their families. This is a clear exemplification of our violation of the natural principle that organisms understand acceptable loss because we do not accept loss. In this way, our fate is sealed.

The world is governed by natural rules that order every living being into a giant interconnected system, which is absolutely self-sustaining. However, we, as human beings, were not satisfied with that system, so we did what no other creatures on Earth could do - we began to break those laws as part of our culture. However, even we who named ourselves twice-wise as a species could not understand that the environment does not function properly in the face of our disobedience, and we will invariably have to face the consequences. This would not be the first time we experience the consequences of our disobedient actions as our history shows, but according to the present trends referenced here, it may be the last. Whether it is by way of disease, war, famine, drought, or any other multitude of mechanisms, our fate as a species has been sealed by human culture and our tendency to violate nature's laws. We are not entirely to blame, however. The truth is, our chances were rigged from the start.



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For this Heritage Unit essay assignment, students were to come up with a new way of looking at voice and develop an original argument using two sources from class.

Interpreter Needed

By Elizabeth Smith

(Prof. Barranca - "Voice")

¡Hola! Bonjour! Guten Tag! Ciao! Shalom! Most people understand one or more of these greetings because many people use them in casual conversation. These six phrases come from six very different languages, and we English speakers only understand them because they have been translated. Without an interpreter or translator, we would not be able to understand other people from around the world who speak unfamiliar languages. And even though many people speak English, they may speak it differently, and this includes broken, or limited, English. When an individual speaks limited English, another person must help her convey her ideas to others by acting as her voice. As an interpreter, the job is not only to act as someone else's voice but also to encourage him to embrace his own voice. Those who are silenced because of their limited English often must have someone else act as their interpreter in order for their voice to be heard.

The relationship between interpreters and those for whom they speak is prominent throughout history and is illustrated beautifully in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*. This novel explains the everyday lives and experiences of white employers and their black maids in 1960's Mississippi. Skeeter, one of the main characters, offers to help the maids with getting their voices heard. The maids are thought to be uneducated because of the way they speak, and one of them, Aibileen, says: "If I say I don't want a do it anymore, then everything I been writing and still have to write ain't gone get to be said" (225). As the novel progresses, we, the readers, understand the depth and clarity of Aibileen's thoughts but through different means. The broken English she uses gets her stereotyped as unintelligent, and by stereotyping the maids, the people of Jackson silence their voices. This does not allow the white employers to understand how smart the black maids actually are. Minny, another maid, even questions Skeeter's intentions when Skeeter offers her help: "What makes you think colored people need your help? Why you even care about this? You *white*" (191). To Minny and the other maids, having their voices heard, especially by a white woman, is very odd. Although the maids have their own voices, Skeeter's is thought to be stronger because they live in a white-dominated society and Skeeter is white. Therefore, Minny and the other maids need Skeeter to represent them in order for their voices to be heard by this society. One may be wondering why the maids don't just speak up, but I believe that they, having been taught to hold their tongue all their lives, are afraid to voice their opinions. Because of their forced silence, Skeeter must step in and help the maids so that their voices can be heard.

Similar to the maids' situation, Amy Tan's mother in "Mother Tongue" needs her daughter to act as her voice. In this story, Tan explores the struggles her mother goes through while trying to communicate to others. Tan's mother speaks in broken English with a heavy Chinese accent, and Tan often finds herself in the middle of her mother and the person with whom her mother is trying to communicate. I support Tan's decision to act as her mother's interpreter, even though she originally was helping her mother because of her own embarrassment. Tan admitted, "When I was growing up, my mother's 'limited' English limited my perspective of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say" (175). Tan was not the only one to believe her mother was less intelligent because of her verbal skills. She had to step in when Mrs. Tan was being treated poorly and being taken advantage of by her doctors because Mrs. Tan could not effectively communicate with them. Mrs. Tan needed someone more eloquent, her daughter, to speak for her. Once Tan finally steps in to help her mother, the doctors act as if they have committed a sin against the lovely and well-spoken daughter. Although this is an outrage, we see just how important it is to have an interpreter for those with limited English.

Aibileen and Mrs. Tan both benefited from the aid of their interpreters, and in turn, were encouraged to find and strengthen their voices. Although Aibileen and Mrs. Tan could not express their thoughts clearly in spoken English, they found other ways to express their voices - through writing and reading. Aibileen explains to Skeeter that she "can get my point across a lot better writing [my thoughts] down" (175). I applaud Aibileen for finding a different way to voice her opinion and tell Skeeter her ideas. Here, we see that Aibileen has found her own way to communicate her thoughts in order to get them across to Skeeter. This same idea applies to Tan's mother. Tan explains, "You should know that my mother's expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands. She reads the *Forbes* report, listens to *Wall Street Week*, converses daily with her stockbroker, reads all of Shirley MacLaine's books with ease - all kinds of things I can't begin to understand" (175). Tan's mother finds a voice through all these other activities, not just through speaking.

Critics might be wondering why Aibileen and Mrs. Tan don't just speak up and say what they want to say. On the one hand, I agree that the maids should stand up for themselves and that Mrs. Tan should be the one who speaks to the professionals, but on the other hand, I must argue that even if these women spoke up, sadly they would have never been heard. Unfortunately, some people who hear another person speaking broken English tune them out, thinking that they are not worth their time. This barrier requires an interpreter to represent those who have language difficulties. Many would agree with me that English is the hardest language to understand and speak. People from other cultures have a difficult time learning English, therefore making it difficult to understand them when they speak English. Aibileen and Mrs. Tan can understand English perfectly well; they just have trouble expressing their thoughts when they are speaking. Therefore, Aibileen and Mrs. Tan must have an interpreter in order for their spoken voices heard.

One of the greatest moments in someone's life is when she finally finds her voice. The use of an interpreter can give an individual the confidence he needs to find his voice and use it. Skeeter was able to help Aibileen find her voice through the interviews about her life and work. Aibileen was empowered by Skeeter to speak her mind, therefore giving her the confidence she needed to speak up. After Hilly claims that no one would ever read anything Aibileen writes, Aibileen retorts, "I don't know. I been told I'm a pretty good writer" (519). Aibileen has been granted the power to speak her mind, thanks to Skeeter, her interpreter. Similarly, When Amy Tan wrote her first book, she asked her mother read it, and Mrs. Tan said it was "so easy to read" (46). Mrs. Tan was able to find her voice and tell her daughter exactly what she wanted to say because by becoming her mother's interpreter, Tan gave her mother the voice she was lacking. Although Mrs. Tan did not speak perfect English, she was making progress. I believe that her daughter gave her something to work towards while being her voice, inspiring Mrs. Tan to improve her communication skills. In both situations, Aibileen and Mrs. Tan were given a voice through an interpreter and, in turn, the encouragement from their interpreters to find their own voices and speak out.

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For the Heritage Unit at the beginning of the fall semester, this First Year Seminar class studied the changes in our food system from subsistence agriculture to our current fast-food dominated culture. Students were asked to develop a thesis about our food system and to argue it, using class sources, and CSE citations.

To the Slaughterhouse We Go

By Padmaja Sundaram

(Prof. L. Woolbright - "The Environment")

Ever since the publication of Upton Sinclair's (1906, reissued 2006) novel, *The Jungle*, the meatpacking industry has been associated with vivid images of cattle being tortured and slaughtered and turned into slabs of meat covered in blood and bacteria. Even today, investigative journalists, such as Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation* (2001), and Robert Kenner, director of *Food Inc.* (2008), strive to raise awareness about the meatpacking industry's corrupt ways, trying to stop the abuse of its animals and consumers. However, while we are so concerned with the processing of cattle and other animals, we don't realize that we, too, are the victims of the meatpacking regime and that there is also a dire need to save ourselves. Modern society is being bred, herded, knocked unconscious, and slaughtered by the food industry, a cycle that will continue until we choose to escape.



Our story begins in the feeding lots, where both we and our bovine counterparts are fattened in an environment more focused on efficiency than the actual tenants, causing us to stray from our native diets and to harm our health. Cattle raisers make use of small plots of land, crowding up to one hundred thousand cows into these feedlots. They then provide an unlimited supply of feed, giving cattle constant access to the long concrete troughs that surround the lot. This feed is a mixture of corn, grain, and occasionally, carcasses and feces, despite grass and plants being cattle's native food. Schlosser explains, "The grain and cheap corn fattens the cattle quickly, aided by the anabolic steroids implanted in their ear" (Schlosser 2001). Overall, there is a prevailing attitude of bigger, better, and faster, and doing so at any cost. Human feed lots, the fast food chains we frequent, are driven by the same mentality. Fast food chains lured their first customers with promises of hamburgers and hotdogs that were cost and time efficient, answering a demand that started with the growing car culture. Like the cattle feed, this food was easily accessible and cheap, and soon this cheaply produced food became ingrained in our society's diet, much like the cheaply produced corn became part of the cows'. However, just as cattle were never meant to eat grain or corn, we were never meant to eat much of what we eat today. We are not built to consume such high concentrations of sugar, oils, and fats, like those found in today's packaged food and fast food chains' offerings. Nor are we supposed to be eating such chemical-laden foods that contain artificial flavors that mirror natural ones, or products that are freeze-dried by air cooled ammonia gas (Schlosser 2001). In the same way that the cattle's health is being destroyed with an unnatural diet, allowing for the growth of bacteria, we are spoiling our diets and allowing for epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and other health issues. In a sense, we, too, are fattening up. Despite this, foods once alien to us have become commonplace, and we now spend our lives at these "feedlots," leading to a lifetime of purchases and "cradle to the grave" consumption (Schlosser 2001). Unless we leave these feedlots, companies will continue to capitalize on our suffering, producing fatter cattle faster, and enticing addicted customers to come back for more.

The day then comes that it is time for us to be taken to the slaughterhouse. We are herded into its entrance, unaware of the dangers that lay behind the wall. The path on which the cattle walk has hairpin turns that prevent cows from seeing what is actually there. They see wooden fences that lead to a cattle pen, making it seem like they are merely headed to another corral, not to the place of their deaths (Schlosser 2001). Similarly, as we sit down at a fast food restaurant, we are equally unaware of the impending death that may be present in the hamburger or hot dog we hold. *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) is a deadly pathogen caused by the unsanitary conditions of the food produced and given to cattle; those who contract it could suffer from kidney failure, anemia, internal bleeding, the destruction of vital organs, and death (Schlosser 2001). This pathogen is everywhere in our food system, especially in the products that are served in fast food chains. However, outbreaks and recalls are swept away, and the public is sadly unaware of just how deadly processed products can be and how often we experience their effects. In 1994, Wendy's was able to recall 250,000 pounds of ground beef without officially notifying state health officials, even after several months of the food being shipped and even served to its customers. When Wendy's later issued a press release, the company stated that only 8,000 pounds had been recalled because of incomplete testing (Schlosser 2001). As consumers, one would think we had the right to know about events like this - to be aware the next time we visit Wendy's that there is a possibility that our food is undercooked or poorly processed. Yet we don't, and the government is not protecting our right to this awareness. According to Schlosser (2001), the federal government does not have the authority to recall contaminated meat or impose fines on companies. It can merely suggest that a company withdraw its contaminated shipment. Furthermore, companies are allowed to aid in the press release of recalls, allowing them to downplay a recall's severity. Press releases are not even required to identify the specific recipients of the product (Schlosser 2001). In other words, consumers will never know when a recall happens, if it's happening, why it happened, where it happened, what pathogens could have been present in the burger they ate yesterday, or if there could be pathogens in the one they are eating right now. In the same way that the slaughterhouses manipulate the architecture of the paths and buildings to keep the cattle calm and unconcerned, food corporations are manipulating the government and media to hide the true reality of their low-quality products. Just as the cattle naively think they are approaching another corral, we continue to think that the government is protecting us and that the food we eat is safely made. The cattle continue to meander forward, and we casually take another bite, all of us unaware of our impending doom.

You stroll down the pathway and suddenly, you feel a sharp prick. Everything turns black. Above the herd there is a knocker, who, as he welcomes the herd in, is in charge of shooting each cow in the head with a captive bolt stunner, knocking them unconscious. As soon as the steer falls, workers grab it, shackle it to a chain, and send it onward. Similarly, by the time we have noticed the injustices that have been done to us, the companies will have already taken away our voices and ability to take action, thus rendering us similarly unconscious. Both slaughterhouses and fast food chains are notorious for their mistreatment of workers. Slaughterhouses are often filled with immigrant workers, who arrived with hopes of a respectable job in America and the ability to make a good living (Schlosser 2001). However, their dreams are crushed as they are often manipulated, underpaid, overworked, and often sustain major injuries in the slaughterhouses (Schlosser 2001). Fast food chains treat their workers in a similarly inhumane way. A jury in Washington State found that Taco Bell managers had systematically coerced members to work off the clock and clean restaurants on their own time by having official shifts start only when the store was busy (Schlosser 2001). Despite this treatment, workers are unable to speak out and stop this abuse, even with the creation of labor unions and laws protecting workers' rights. If the McDonald's corporation ever suspects a union drive, it holds rap sessions where high-priced attorneys end disputes and persuade workers to settle. In one case, when a group of McDonald's employees admitted to joining a union, managers forced them to take lie detector tests, interrogated them about union activities, and threatened them with dismissal if they refused to comply (Schlosser 2001). Using their power and wealth, corporations are able to muffle their workers' cries.

Even if labor unions were successful in being established, their demands will never be answered as the government is infiltrated by these corporations. As discussed in the documentary *Food Inc.* (2008), ex-lobbyists and owners of big corporations, such as Tyson and Monsanto, are now running the FDA and other such regulatory agencies. Due to their widespread power and influence, corporations are silencing us and our efforts to get rid of them. At this point, there is nothing we can do. Like the cattle, bound and chained, we lay unconscious, left with no voice and nowhere to go.

Finally, the death blow comes. A long knife severs our carotid artery, slowly creating a pool of blood beneath us (Schlosser 2001). Our life is over. To many, this is actually the case. The victims of the outbreaks of *e. coli* and *salmonella*, such as five year old Kevin in the film *Food Inc.*, literally were killed by the corporations, their poorly manufactured foods poisoning some consumers and ending their lives (2008). But corporations also manage to metaphorically murder countless others. For example, Monsanto, one of the largest owners of genetically modified seeds, has the power to destroy the lives of farmers who stand in its way. If, by any chance, a nearby family farm were to grow one of their genetically modified seeds, even if the wind had deposited that seed there, monopolistic owners could sue them for patent infringement, which Monsanto and other corporations often do. Some farmers try to stand up against these corporations, but due to the heavy costs involved in paying for legal fees, new seeds, expensive machinery, and producing products that rival big producers, most cases collapse. The farms that they put their lives into are now gone, and they are left in debt with no way to support their families. Like the cattle hanging on the chains, their lifeline has been severed, and they now hang there utterly helpless, and utterly dead.

And so it continues- we are skinned and diced, boiled in vats, treated with chemicals, and finally packaged and shipped off, each of our parts sold for the benefit of the slaughterhouse. Sadly, this system doesn't end with us. We are slaughtered, our children's generation will be slaughtered, and the generation after that will be, too - bred, herded, stunned, and slaughtered in the same way. But we hope they will realize the one thing that we didn't: the power over the system is ours. Just as a slaughterhouse cannot operate without cattle, our food system cannot operate without us. The moment we decide not to be in those feedlots, to escape by reverting back to a natural and humane system of farming or refuse to be herded in, and realize the dangers of the system earlier on, we can save our lives. Not the government, not interests groups, but us. If we can fuel the industry, we can bring it down. It is time to slaughter the system, and not let it slaughter us.

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Offering powerful examples of cyber warfare to influence the reader, the author of this research essay persuasively argues that additional funding is needed for our country to succeed in its efforts to thwart cyber attacks, preserve national security, and protect the American people.

The Rise of Cyber Warfare

By Samantha A. Tighe

(Prof. M. Woolbright – “War”)

It is undeniable that we have become absurdly reliant on technology. Almost everything we do or come into contact with throughout our everyday lives is somehow linked to it. Likewise, war is also something that we, as Americans, are extremely familiar with. It is the merging of technology and war that has started what has the potential to be a new and extremely deadly epidemic - cyber warfare. Though cyber warfare has been presenting itself more in recent years, it has mostly managed, thus far, to stay out of the public eye. However, cyber warfare is a much larger threat to our safety than previously recognized. As a country, we must minimize the threat of cyber warfare by reconstructing our military budget and allowing for more funds to go towards combating cyber warfare and cyber-attacks.

The very foundation of our everyday lives has been built on platforms of technology. Aside from the obvious trends of smartphones and other technological gadgets, much of our government's infrastructure is reliant on technology, specifically computer programs. Many believe that cyber-attacks are one of the greatest threats to our national security, and in “Is Cyber-Warfare a Genuine Threat?” Alex Hudson claims, “Most of our infrastructures rely on computer technology to function properly - from railways to electricity companies and national defense systems so failure or malicious attacks on them matters more than just not being able to read an e-mail” (Hudson 2). This quotation reiterates the magnitude of cyber threats and attacks by emphasizing how reliant we are on technology-based infrastructures. Our reliance on technology is also seen in an article published in *The Economist*, “Here's How Cyber-Warfare Started And Where It's Going.” Here, the author reiterates that there is a “[s]obering message about the vulnerability of the systems – train lines, water-treatment plants, electricity grids . . . These industrial control systems are increasingly hooked up to the internet, allowing remote access” (2). The vulnerability of these systems, due to our reliance on technology is what fuels the threat of a cyber-attack, and it is clear just how much of our everyday lives could be affected by a cyber-attack or a cyber-war. For these reasons, it is necessary to provide more funding in order to successfully protect us from the threats of such attacks.

Having now established how substantial the threats of cyber warfare and cyber-attacks are, it is extremely unsettling to learn just how easy cyber-attacks are to carry out. Though we may not hear about them very often, cyber-attacks are happening. *The Economist* mentions an incident where “[a] 14-year-old in Poland derailed four trains in 2008,” while “another teenager took down communications at a Massachusetts airport” (“Here's How Cyber-Warfare Started” 3). These altercations are especially nerve-racking because when we think of a cyber-attacker, or cyber terrorist, we usually think of someone above the age of 14. It is startling that children of this age are able to hack into and control such things as the derailing a train or the altering communications at a major airport. If teenagers are able to cause such havoc, it is unimaginable what a trained hacker is capable of, especially one with criminal intent.

Another volatile aspect of cyber warfare is that it acts in the secrecy of the cyber world. As Alex Hudson points out, “There are things out there right now that the public does not really know about - technologies that can be embedded in systems that will run but you will never see” (Hudson 2). Cyber attackers have the upper-hand in that the damage done by cyber warfare is one that the public can very rarely see. With the rise of cyber warfare has come the introduction of the zombie computer. These zombie computers are taken over by hackers but still run so that their owners have no idea that their computer has been overtaken. Phillip Pool mentions zombie computers in his article, “War of the Cyber World: The Law of Cyber Warfare.” He says, “States or non-state parties can employ zombie computers all over the world to carry out a specific attack, leaving the country little opportunity to discover who was operating behind the mask of the zombie computers around the globe” (Pool 6).

Larger powers have started to use the silent controls of these zombie computers and because these zombie computers are nearly impossible to detect, it is virtually impossible to protect us from them. In order for our government to shield us from such attacks, we must begin to fund programs that can decipher ways to prevent us from being susceptible to these and other systems.

After news of zombie computers and threats like it, the U.S. government began to take steps in the right direction. Upon the release of the fiscal 2015 budget, the projected budget for military cyber spending has gone up to about \$5 billion, a \$4 million increase from 2014 (Paganini). The Department of Defense has acknowledged that it must continue to improve American cyber capabilities in order to adequately address any terrorism or cyber-attacks carried out against us. Bob Hale, comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, suggests that this increase in funding “ensures we maintain ready, modern, and capable defense forces to address any threats we might face, including threats from terrorism and cyber-attacks” (Paganini). Our ability to keep our systems and approaches current and ready is a vital part of protecting ourselves against cyber-attacks, as cyber warfare is always advancing.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that would indicate cyber warfare to be a threat, some sources still think otherwise. In, “Cyber Warfare Hype and Fear,” the author claims that cyber warfare, as a whole, is not as large of a threat as we believe and states most cyber-attacks are “purely criminal . . . [and are] more often the work of states” (1). Essentially, the writer is suggesting that our only threat of a cyber-attack comes from within our own country. The most recent attacks on the United States have all come from within the country, which has led the author to believe this is as far as the threat goes. I would have to disagree with this. Though I do feel that cyber-attacks are a threat from within our own country, I do not feel that this should minimize the enormity of the threat from other countries, and especially from terrorist groups, which the author dismisses completely. I do not limit the impending threat of a cyber-attack to one country in particular; I feel that this threat is as substantial coming from within America as it is coming from outside of America. Either way, my understanding of the situation is still that we must try not to focus so much on where the threats are coming from but rather on how we will protect ourselves from these threats. The author goes on to state, “Almost all (roughly 98%) of the vulnerabilities in commonly used computer programs that hackers exploit are in software created in America” (“Cyber Warfare Hype and Fear” 2). This quotation is shocking to me because when we think of America, we think of a powerful defense system. If America is producing computer programs that are responsible for 98% of countries’ vulnerabilities, this shows how we are truly in dire need of more adequate and advanced cyber warfare defense mechanisms. Again, in order to do this, it is critical that we begin to fund defending ourselves against cyber warfare.

It is clear that cyber warfare presents itself as a significant threat and something that, as Americans, we must begin to take precautions against. It is inevitable with our kinds of advancements in technology that something such as war, which has been a part of our history for centuries, would not find its way into the cyber world. Unfortunately, it is hard to believe anyone could have predicted just how catastrophic its effects could be. We have grown to an extent where, again, much of what we do relies heavily on technology and other aspects of the cyber world. Now that people are threatening these technologies within our own country, we must take a step back and really begin to evaluate our online lives. Unfortunately, the threat of “traditional” war has not subsided, which means that we still need to be adequately funding and defending ourselves from the threats of physical war. But because of the advancements being made in cyber warfare and the ever-growing threats that it entails, it is time for us as a country to accept cyber warfare for what it is - the future. Considering where we are right now, again, it would be unintelligent to suggest transferring all current military funding to cyber warfare, as this would leave us especially vulnerable to other attacks. However, we are now forced into a position where we must completely reconstruct and redistribute our military budget and begin funding cyber warfare separately. In doing this, it assures that we are adequately protected from cyber-attacks as well as physical or “traditional” attacks. If we do not take these threats seriously and begin to reconstruct our military budget, the repercussions could be disastrous.

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In the following research essay, this writer methodically documents how the increased use of technology has resulted in a dearth of privacy, compelling us to be more wary of technological activities and interactions.

How Much Privacy Do We Have?

By Logan D. Touse

(Fr. Tamburello - "Technology")

Imagine a scenario where every text message you send is being read by someone other than the intended recipient. Every e-mail you send is also seen by an outside party. Your phone calls are traced and listened in on, your every move is watched, and people can even analyze your thought process as you write. Scenarios like these sound like a totalitarian society that gives the people no privacy at all. Surely there is no way the United States, the greatest democracy in the world, could be doing that, right? Well, the harsh reality is that the United States government has access to all of the things listed above . . . and more. The ever-increasing evolution of technology in the digital age has led to a question, "How much privacy do we really have?". This paper will show that we have little to no privacy and that it will only continue to lessen as time moves forward. Our government's intervention into the private lives of its citizens is uncalled for and is something that needs to be fixed. If not, our country and the people who live in it will lose the freedoms that our ancestors fought for.

Before the internet, cell phones, and cameras were invented, people had all the privacy in the world. In today's age, however, with the evolution of technology, there is no true privacy. Our every move can be traced and all private information we have can be exposed. The government and organizations have the ability to track our every move and have been freely doing so for the last decade. One of the biggest advances in the digital age has been the creation of the internet. On the internet you can do anything, such as find answers to questions, connect with friends, write documents, complete research, and more. Although the internet involves sharing information, people usually trust that their information is as private as it needs to be. What people don't know is how non-private the internet really is.

Something that almost everyone uses on the internet is Google. Most people use it to search for information since it is the biggest and most popular search engine in the world. The thing about Google that people don't realize is that it keeps track of all of your searches. Google studies and analyzes all searches in an effort to tailor future search results to people's preferences (Smith 1). That doesn't seem too bad, but the fact that Google knows and remembers all your searches can be a bit frightening. The notion that random workers at Google can track you and learn all about your interests or hobbies is what makes this disconcerting.

Google is not only known for its search engine though. There are many other things that people use Google for, such as acquiring an actual Google account, which contains a person's G-mail and Google Drive. The Google Drive basically allows you to complete and save any type of file or document that you've created. It's a pretty convenient system since everything is all together in one place, and you don't have to go sifting through your computer for documents. It all seems beneficial until you realize that Google analyzes every one of your emails. Google reads through them for information to help give the company a better understanding of you and what you like (Smith 1). So not only is Google keeping track of your search history, but it also sees all of your supposedly "private" e-mails.

Another fun fact about Google is that it has complete access to any file you put on your Google Drive, so they all can be read by people at Google (Smith 1). This seems very invasive, and you would think that Google might want to hide it. However, the company is actually pretty open about it. This comes straight from its own terms and agreements: "When you upload or otherwise submit content to our services, you give Google a worldwide license to use, host, store, reproduce, modify, create derivative works, communicate, publish, publicly perform, publicly display, and distribute such content" (Smith 1). When you sign up and trust Google, you are basically giving it the right to completely invade all of your privacy that you have on the internet without even realizing it.

When people use the internet, they are usually not smart about it, especially when it comes to social media. People of all ages are saying and doing stupid things and posting them for the entire world. Good thing there is a delete button for all of it, right? Well, the information you delete on the internet really doesn't ever get terminated. In the book *The New Digital Age* by Jared Cohen and Eric Schmidt, the authors talk about how nothing really ever gets deleted. "The option to 'delete' data is largely an illusion—lost files, deleted e-mails, and erased text messages can be recovered with minimal effort" (Schmidt and Cohen 55). They go on to talk about how the data on computer systems is hardly ever erased and that when you think you are deleting something, all that ever happens is that it is erased from the internal directory (Schmidt and Cohen 55). So that file, picture, tweet, or post that you thought you deleted can always be recovered. This, yet again, shows that we aren't even allowed to make something private or get rid of it when we make a mistake or simply do not want it anymore.

Another interesting topic discussed in the book, *The New Digital Age*, is one pertaining to privacy and Wi-Fi hotspots. In today's digital society, you'd be hard pressed to find someone that doesn't have a smartphone. To access the internet on a smartphone, you can either pay extra and use the mobile phone company's data or connect to a Wi-Fi hotspot. As you would likely guess, people usually search for and use available Wi-Fi hotspots so that they can access the internet for free. The thing about a Wi-Fi hotspot is that someone owns that hotspot, and the owner has access to anyone using the network: "The owner of a Wi-Fi hotspot can listen to any unencrypted conversations of the users connected to the hot spot" (Schmidt and Cohen 72). Not only can the owner listen to conversations and see text messages, s/he can also insert false information into the conversation (Schmidt and Cohen 72). This shows that even something as harmless as a Wi-Fi hotspot grants minimal privacy.

The lack of privacy with the internet is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to confidentially issues. The possible invasion of privacy associated with the mobile phone is absolutely absurd. A lot of this information was brought to light by a former National Security Agency (NSA) agent, Edward Snowden. Snowden is most famously known for stealing and then leaking top secret government documents to multiple press reporters. He is called a "traitor" and is one of the most wanted men in America. However, to date, he is safely hidden away in Russia. Even though his location is unknown to many, NBC news was able to conduct a secure and private interview with Snowden that was broadcast to the world. In this interview, Snowden revealed some things about mobile phones and how much information the NSA can access on them.

In the interview Snowden says, "The NSA, or any other highly funded intelligence agency can literally OWN your cell phone" (Snowden). This quotation is exactly what it sounds like. For starters, the NSA can turn on any phone it wants to, even if it is originally shut off. It has the ability to take data off it, see pictures, read texts, and anything else. The NSA even has the ability to get inside the mind of a person. Its own system allows the organization to not only see text messages but also see the person typing and formulating a thought. Viewing a person backspace or write out ideas before actually sending the message puts the NSA spy into the head of the person and allows it to analyze and understand the thoughts of this person being monitored (Snowden). Seeing what you are about to type allows me to think along with you and seamlessly understand your thought processes. So not only is the government invading our actual information that we send out, but it also has a system of getting into our heads and our own personal thought processes.

The NSA says it uses this purely for targeting possible threats, but it is still a tremendous invasion of privacy (Snowden). The device we use most in today's society is the least private thing we own. Snowden even said in a Christmas message video, "The methods of spying seen in George Orwell's 1984 book is nothing compared to what we see today" ("Raw"). That quotation should frighten American citizens because anyone who is familiar with 1984 knows that the futuristic society in that novel had no privacy and was a totalitarian state. So according to Snowden, we are already experiencing that same lack of privacy. The only difference is that we don't understand just how little privacy we have.

The interesting thing about cell phone surveillance is that it hasn't just been happening in today's society. Governments have owned and used cell phone surveillance equipment for the past two decades (Pell and Soghoian 5). Although the equipment used then was not nearly as intelligent and powerful as the stuff used today, it still shows the intent that the government has and feels it needs to constantly monitor its people. Today, the government uses a device called the International Mobile Subscriber Identity Catcher, otherwise known as IMSI (Pell and Soghoian 11). How the IMSI works is that it has a way of impersonating the carrier's network so that calls and text messages are transmitted through IMSI without being noticed. Features of the IMSI catcher include: identifying and locating nearby phones, intercepting outgoing calls and text messages, and blocking any message or call without the owner's knowledge of it (Pell and Soghoian 12). Thus, this is an extremely invasive technology that the government created and regularly uses.

Another major point regarding the lack of privacy in today's world pertains to the creation and insertion of surveillance cameras everywhere around the country. These devices were made and put places in an attempt to protect the American people from harmful threats. Surveillance cameras weren't really noticed or even a big deal until the terrorist attacks happened on September 11, 2001. Since that fateful day, there have been an estimated 30 million more surveillance cameras installed around the country (Linn 1). That statistic is only from 2011, so you can be sure that there have been even more installed in the past four years. Also since 9/11, the federal spending on homeland security has exceeded \$790 billion dollars (Proctor 1). The estimated video surveillance market in 2015 is \$37.5 billion dollars (Proctor 1). All of these statistics lead up to the same conclusion that the 9/11 attacks heavily influenced the implementation of surveillance cameras throughout the country.

Part of the reason that there were so many cameras installed is because the American people were okay with the government watching their every move. After such a devastating surprise attack, Americans were willing to give up their right to privacy if it meant that they were kept safe. It is also the reason that many people today still approve of the government being so invasive. The American people have shown a trust in the government and have basically told it, "Spy on me if you want, but only if you keep me safe."

Since 9/11, though, there have been no major terrorist attacks and the increase in cameras and spending on surveillance continues to rise (Linn 1). You could argue that the Boston Marathon bombing could be categorized as a major terrorist attack, but it does not compare to the casualties suffered during the attacks on 9/11. With more spending, newer technology is available which results in it being easier to trace every person's moves. People are still okay with this because they feel protected, but some critics question how effective surveillance cameras are when it comes to preventing terrorism or threats.

Those who are skeptical about the effectiveness of surveillance cameras really do offer important points, such as the fact that the cameras are rarely used to actually nab would-be terrorists (Linn 1). The critics also point out that surveillance cameras nowadays are used more for tracking criminals and their activities. Lastly, it is very hard to identify a possible threat and actually contain the threat just from using surveillance cameras.

Ben Wizner, who is Director of the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) Speech, Privacy & Technology Project, went on to say that surveillance cameras are great for catching terrorists like the ones at the Boston Marathon, but they do absolutely nothing to prevent terrorist activity: "Cameras are ineffective at the prevention and deterrence of serious crime. They can be very effective at solving crime" (Proctor 1). This is an interesting point because the reason the public accepts surveillance cameras is because it feels they will prevent terrorism and protect them, but in reality the cameras doesn't necessarily do that. So yet again, the government has created and expanded a method of spying that is intended to benefit society but that can also be clearly seen as an invasion of privacy.



All of the information stated above goes to show that people in today's society have virtually no privacy. The digital age and evolution of technology has made it easier and easier to track humans and access any information about them. Even with that said, privacy isn't an area of great concern. It's not something discussed in detail because many people don't realize how extreme it is, or they tolerate the invasion of privacy because they feel it protects them. Regardless of what you think about technology and the issue of privacy, something that can't be argued is that privacy is extremely limited in today's society, and it will only get worse as the digital age moves forward. Snowden says it best when he states, "A child born today will grow up with no conception of privacy at all. They'll never know what it means to have a private moment to themselves" ("Raw").

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For this assignment, students were asked to refer to a required class reading when determining if the main character in How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia is a proactive or reactive person. The writer of this essay stakes a clear position and supports her claim with solid evidence from both sources.

Proactivity Leads to Success

By Madisen K. Wicker

(Prof. Redkey - "Leadership")

Proactivity and reactivity are two ways of living that significantly impact a person's behavior and his or her outlook on life. Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, describes how proactivity leads to happiness and greater health and defines proactivity as not merely taking initiative, but recognizing that "as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives" (Covey 78). Each stimulus leads to a response, and how an individual responds defines whether he or she is proactive or reactive in that situation. We often see trends in responses to situations. If one responds negatively to a stimulus, he or she tends to be a more reactive person. Covey defines reactive people as those who are easily affected by their physical and social environment (Covey 79). They also tend to "build their emotional lives around others" (Covey 79). However, a proactive person will attempt to see the positive side of the situation. Proactive people also differ from reactive people in that they take the initiative to better their lives. In Mohsin Hamid's novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, the unnamed main character demonstrates this behavior in several situations, proving to the audience that he is a proactive character.

Hamid emphasizes the main character's proactive behavior in each chapter of the novel. First, by recognizing the fact that he had to leave his hometown to achieve his goal, the main character proves his proactivity. He recognizes that "moving to the city is the first step to getting filthy rich in rising Asia," and he is aware that his lifestyle in the small village would never allow him to become filthy rich. (Hamid 15) Covey states, "[W]e have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen" (Covey 78). In other words, if we do not take advantage of the opportunities that will better our lives, then we will never reach our goals. In this situation, the main character does not show signs of reactivity. He moves in a positive direction by relocating to a place where he will find many more opportunities. A reactive person would respond to this stimulus differently; he or she would not take the initiative to change the circumstances.

The main character also exhibits a proactive lifestyle when he acknowledges that he is not going to accomplish anything unless he takes the initiative to do so on his own. He understands that he cannot rely on others to improve his life. Thanks to the opportunities that are available because of his move to the city, the main character is eventually able to open his own business. In Hamid's chapter titled "Work for Yourself," the main character begins the process of opening his own water bottling company. He starts out slowly, operating out of a "two-room rented accommodation [he] once shared with [his] father" (Hamid 98). In this situation, he is proactive because he remains determined to achieve his overall goal of becoming rich. Because of the main character's motivation, he demonstrates the four main qualities of a proactive person, as described by Covey. These include self-awareness, imagination, conscience, and independent will. The main character is also value-driven, another characteristic of a proactive person (Covey 79). These qualities are presented as the main character slowly, but steadily, builds his business into an empire where he packages and delivers bottled water on his path to becoming filthy rich. He also willingly takes risks. For example, he recognizes that he is jeopardizing everything by "leaving [his safety net] with no savings and no guarantee, should [his] business fail" (Hamid 115). He does, however, understand that he has "begun to recognize his dream of a home of his own for what it is an illusion, unless financed in full by cold, hard cash" (Hamid 115). The main character achieves his goals because he willingly puts in the required effort. This is proactive behavior because he knows what he has to do and he is not going to sit back and adjourn from making progress toward his goal. He sees that he is taking a huge risk by putting everything he has into his business, but he also knows that a rewarding lifestyle will result from his dedication and hard work.

The main character also proves his proactivity when he comes to the realization that his happiness is being compromised in his marriage. He begins to realize this when he and his wife are lying in bed one night and he feels his wife's love slipping out of his grasp. The chapter closes with Hamid explaining that "it does not occur to [him] that [his] wife's love might be slipping from [his] grasp, or that, once it is gone, [he] will miss it" (Hamid 136). By ending the chapter in this way, Hamid shows that the main character's life is about to drastically change. The realization that alterations need to be made is a crucial part of being a proactive individual. Covey states that "highly proactive people recognize their responsibility" (Covey 78). Once they do so, then the next step is taking initiative. The main character begins to do this by settling the issues with his marriage and his son before moving on to the rest of his life. His wife handles the situation in her own way as "she has been overheard by the cleaning girl saying that she will co-habit with [the main character] only until [their] child reaches adulthood, a situation now just a couple of years off" (Hamid 167). The main character exhibits proactivity in this situation by acting as a caring human being and delicately handling the situation with his wife. If he were to simply leave his wife without settling the details, the main character would be expressing reactive behavior.

After all is settled with his marriage, he takes the next step that is necessary to be considered proactive, which is to act. Throughout the novel, the main character is aware that he is in love with the pretty girl. There are several obstacles that prevent him from being with her, however. By allowing the pretty girl – with whom he is in love – to slip out of his grip, he displays reactive behavior. Although he presents reactive behavior in a few minor situations, he is overall more proactive than reactive. Covey explains that individuals, depending on the moment at which they are presented with a given situation, can exhibit both proactive behavior and reactive behavior. In the end, though, the main character balances his reactive behavior with proactive behavior after he breaks off his marriage to his wife and takes action by investigating what he can do to be a part of the pretty girl's life. Hamid explains that "[a]n examination of [her account] records [at the bank] reveals that the pretty girl, while not swimming in cash, has a decent buffer set aside for a rainy day, and that the revenues of her boutique fluctuate but manage on average to stay ahead of expenses" (Hamid 172). Although he is at risk of bankruptcy, he steps into the pretty girl's life for the sake of his own happiness. This is the point when the pretty girl experiences a robbery of everything she has left. Later in the novel, the main character becomes ill and starts to look more aged. He runs into the pretty girl and they go out for tea. The main character and "the pretty girl discuss what ex-lovers meeting again after half a lifetime usually discuss" (Hamid 205). After this encounter, he does not let the pretty girl go again. At this point, the main character will be with the pretty girl until her death. He validates his proactivity again in this situation as he encounters his reward for realizing that his marriage was not working and for taking the necessary steps to develop a different lifestyle. His reaction to the situation with his ex-wife aligns with Covey's definition of proactivity, as well. Covey states that proactive people's "behavior is a product of their own conscious choice, based on values, rather than a product of their conditions, based on feeling" (Covey 78). The main character is stuck in a difficult situation in his marriage, but he decides to move on because of his feelings (including those for the pretty girl) rather than the fact that his life is becoming more challenging. If he were to leave his wife solely because his life is spiraling downward, he would be demonstrating reactive behavior. He chooses not to allow the difficult aspects of his life to overpower him and deals with the situation appropriately rather than balking at responsibility.

This writer focuses on the misogynistic nature of war throughout Western history and provides persuasive textual evidence from the Bible, a classic literary text, a modern short story, and a scholarly article about St. Clare to support her argument. The writer concludes with a strong example of pervasive sexism in today's society, thereby demonstrating her ability to apply classroom readings and discussions to real-world experiences.

The Misogyny of War

By Elizabeth Wickham

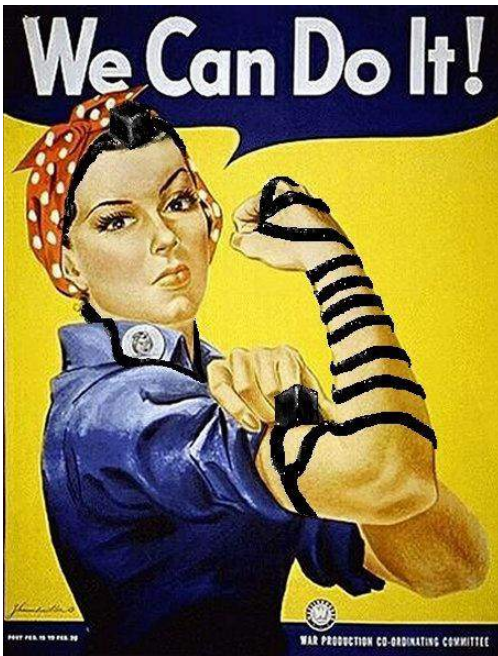
(Dr. M. Woolbright – War)

Throughout all of history, women in Western society have been in an endless struggle. Women have been seen as second-class citizens to their male counterparts in all realms of society. This inequality is often brought to light in Western literature, such as in the book of Genesis, “Clare of Assisi: Bringing Her Story to Light” by Margaret Carney, Homer’s *The Iliad*, and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien. What we learn about Western heritage from these texts is that war is completely misogynistic; women have always either been excluded from war because it is seen as a man’s issue or objectified to benefit the male soldiers.

Misogyny in Western heritage is often rooted in Judeo-Christian tradition. The book of Genesis is used as justification for the mistreatment of women. When God punishes women for Eve’s transgression in the Garden of Eden, He declares, “Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you” (3.16). Religious conservatives may argue that it is God’s will for women to be submissive to men because it is stated clearly in the book of Genesis. This claim rests upon the questionable assumption that the Bible is really God’s word. We must remember that the Bible was written by men who were able to insert their own personal views disguised as the holy word, so there is no way to really know if God wants women to be submissive. We have to acknowledge that those claims were made by men to benefit men. The belief presented in Genesis that women are lesser than men is often the core of Western misogyny that presents itself in many ways, especially when it comes to war.

Our Western heritage often dictates that women are too weak or fragile to play a role in war. The story of St. Clare of Assisi as documented by Margaret Carney in “Clare of Assisi: Bringing Her Story to Light” sheds light on the treatment of women in medieval war-torn society. Carney introduces the topic of war by stating that St. Francis and St. Clare were bitter enemies in this class war. Francis, part of the merchant class, was up in arms against the aristocracy, of which a very young Clare was a member. During a battle in the streets, sixteen-year-old Francis had the opportunity to slaughter six-year-old Clare and her mother, yet he spares them and encourages them to quickly escape (29). Many people assume that he spares them due to the goodness in his heart. However, if Clare had been a little boy, would she have been left alone? I would argue that a young boy would not have been spared because, after all, a little boy would have grown up to be a fierce enemy of Francis and the merchant class. Acknowledging that a little girl would never have been a soldier in this time, I argue that Clare was not spared because of benevolence but rather because of the misogynistic view that women are too fragile to belong in war.

In addition, women are often treated as objects in the realm of war. Homer’s *The Iliad* explores the objectification of women in war. The Trojan War began because a woman, Helen, was offered as a prize to Paris of Troy, even though she was already married. The theme of women as prizes for men is consistent throughout *The Iliad*. In a rage, Achilles proclaims, “That’s the pain that wounds me, suffering such humiliation. That girl – the sons of Achaea picked her as my prize, and I’d sacked a walled city, won her with my spear” (16; 63-65). Achilles is furious because the award he describes, a young woman named Briseis, was “stolen” by Agamemnon. The idea that women are prizes that can be “stolen” is a dangerous one. When women are bounties of war and are viewed as objects, it makes it much easier for men to treat them horrifically.



The exclusion of women in war is not unique to just ancient times. The idea that war is purely a man's realm is seen in more contemporary times, as shown by *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. The hyper-masculinity that has always been associated with war is prevalent in his stories of the Vietnam War. For example, the phrase "stainless steel balls" is equated with bravery in Tim O'Brien's book (64). This phrase implies that bravery, especially in war, is a uniquely masculine trait, due to the phrase's association of courage with robust male anatomy. This implication leads to the common belief that war is a man's domain. After all, Western heritage makes clear that women belong in the home, not in battle. As Margaret Carney states, "Each woman's obligation is to preserve herself 'pure as the driven snow' no matter what her husband is up to, to govern the children and to take care of the household in his absence" (28). This archaic mindset has discouraged women from participating in war for far too long, yet it is still prevalent in society today.

Upon careful analysis, one can easily see how misogyny that presents itself in war infiltrates our daily lives. When examining the objectification of women in war, modern American football serves as a fair representation of war. The NFL presents Western society's ideal image of masculinity and femininity. NFL players are paid massive sums of money to be violent; the more violent a player is on the field, the higher his salary will be. In contrast, women in the NFL are portrayed as sexual objects. NFL cheerleaders are a far cry from high school and college cheerleaders. These women dance provocatively in very little clothing for one purpose: to please men. NFL cheerleaders are used as sexual objects to keep men watching, even when their favorite team is losing. An examination of gender roles in the NFL draws clear parallels to gender roles in war: men are to be the violent warriors, while women are to be the sexual objects.

The struggle for women's equality in Western society has been constant throughout all of history. The Western misogyny that is encouraged by Judeo-Christian tradition and the book of Genesis is extremely prevalent in war. The objectification of women in war is clearly shown in Homer's *The Iliad* and the NFL as a representation of war. Women are often excluded from war because it is seen as a man's world, as validated by "Clare of Assisi: Bringing Her Story to Light" by Margaret Carney and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. As a society, we have made positive strides to open war up to women. In 2013, the ban on women in combat roles in the US military was lifted. However, there is still significant work to be done. Naysayers need to stop viewing women as weak, fragile individuals and need to start recognizing the positive contributions that women can make as equals in the realm of war.

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After attending her First Year Seminar field trip, a writing workshop led by the published memoirist Marion Roach Smith, this author was inspired to write her own personal narrative. In it, she uses description, repetition, and symbolism to recall a moment in her life that had a profound and lasting impact.

The Cold Soup of Guilt

By Mary E. Zick

(Prof. Collins – Narrative)

The soup was cold. My older sister, Patty, was spooning it out of the big pot into only four bowls. My mom is usually the one who does that, but my mom wasn't there. My grandpa was pouring the milk into four glasses. My dad usually does that, but my dad wasn't there. We all sat there at the cluttered kitchen counter in the four chairs to eat the soup. Normally, we eat dinner in the dining room, where there is enough room for my parents and us four children. We only eat at the kitchen counter when my dad is away and after my mom has cleaned it, and even then, we have to pull up another chair for my little sister to sit in. But at that moment, that chair was against the wall, not in use. My little sister wasn't home. We didn't know if she was coming home.

Earlier that day, the vulnerability of life painfully was revealed to me. Before the minute that changed everything, I thought I understood that life is precious and can be lost easily. I knew this in words and from stories, but I didn't truly understand it until my adorable five-year-old sister unexpectedly began to have a seizure while lying on the couch in the family room. In a span of a minute, the occupants in our calm family room changed dramatically. My mom went from routinely preparing soup for dinner to screaming hysterically for my father to call 911 while she used a towel to remove the vomit from my little sister's mouth so she could breathe. My younger brother shifted from casually watching the television on the couch to standing, confused and crying. I changed from doing my tedious algebra homework to standing in the corner in shock that my parents were panicking and that my little sister might be dying before my eyes in our family room. I didn't know what to do. Finally, I couldn't stand the helplessness that surrounded me, and I fled the room with my sobbing brother in tow.

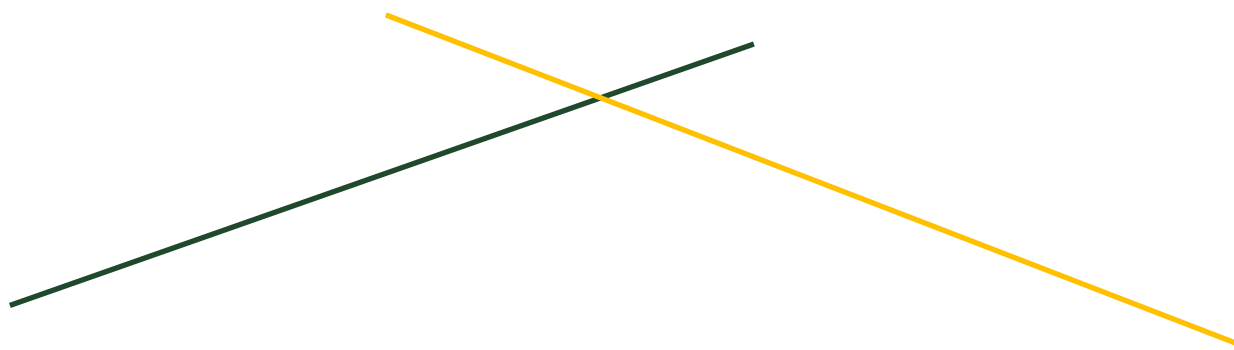
I led him upstairs into my bedroom away from everyone else. We sat on the carpeted floor and held onto each other, crying. We were somewhat comforted by the contact and the knowledge that we were both feeling the same panic and helplessness. We stayed in that position even when we heard the sirens of the ambulances coming and leaving, taking our parents and our dying little sister away. Eventually, we separated, and I took out a pair of rosary beads. We knelt by my bed and repeatedly said the rosary, praying that our little sister wasn't dying, praying that everything would be okay, praying that they would be coming home soon with everyone healthy and happy, praying that everything would go back to the way it was before, and praying that this had never happened.

In the midst of my brother and me saying the rosary, our older sister popped her head in the door and stared at us, not saying anything. I invited her to join us in praying, but she just made a comment about how that wouldn't help and went into her room, shutting her bedroom door behind her. My brother looked up at me, worry clear in his eyes. I assured him that Patty was fine and praying would help our little sister be okay, but I didn't really believe what I was saying. Patty's remark had shaken some of my confidence that God would fix everything. I was really relying on God to make everything better; otherwise I was afraid that my guilt would consume me. I felt like I was responsible for my little sister's seizure or at least partially responsible for it.

I had yelled at her. I had shouted at my little sister to turn down the volume of the television because I was trying to do my algebra homework. Why had I yelled at her? Why did I feel the need to do my homework in that room? I could have done my homework in another room or at another time when she wasn't watching television. But I didn't. And I had yelled at her because of that. She had lain down on the couch and tried to take a nap because I had yelled at her to turn down the volume. She had a seizure while taking a nap on the couch soon after I yelled at her. The rational part of me realizes that my yelling at her most likely didn't cause her seizure, but overall I'm not so sure. A part of me can't help but blame myself for causing her seizure, or at least for aiding in causing her seizure. However, the worst is that the last thing I did to my little sister, the person I'm supposed to care for and love above all others, was to yell at her. I had yelled, "Turn down the T.V.! I'm trying to do my homework!" and, when she had protested, I had shouted, "I don't care! Just turn it down!" That was the last thing I had told her; I had told her that I cared more about my homework than her.

In my bedroom, I couldn't help but think that I'm such a horrible big sister. My little sister and I had never really gotten along that well. She's eight years younger than I, and almost everything about us is opposite. She's tall for her age, while I am short. She's tan, while I'm as pale as a ghost. Her favorite color is pink, while mine is blue. I love to read and play sports, while she would rather watch television. However, it's our similarities that really drove us apart. She and I are extremely stubborn and know-it-alls. Thus, we get into arguments about who is right, and we won't back down. Then someone tries to break up the fight by telling me that I'm older than she is, so I should know better than to be arguing with her. While they're telling me this, my little sister usually gives me one of her evil smirks. That's when it gets ugly and grudges form. Furthermore, my little sister regularly tells me that Patty is her favorite sister and I'm her least favorite sibling. Nevertheless, I knew that I should have tried harder to act nicer to her. I knew that I shouldn't have yelled at her about something so insignificant as the volume of the television. Looking back on it, the television's volume probably wasn't even that high. My yelling at her shouldn't be my little sister's last memory of me. It shouldn't be my last interaction with her alive. It shouldn't have happened. While kneeling on my bedroom floor with my younger brother, I resolved to always try to settle arguments peacefully so I would never have to feel this guilt again.

My sister is completely fine now and doesn't remember the ordeal at all. Everyone in my family acts like it never happened so that they can forget. But I can't forget. I can still hear my mother's wailing, still see my little sister lying on the couch not moving, still see the tears dripping down my brother's face, still feel the overwhelming guilt, and still taste that cold vegetable soup.





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