Gleanings: A Journal of First-Year Student Writing

Volume 11

Siena College

2020-2021

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All of the work included in this journal was written by students who were enrolled in Siena's First Year Seminar during the 2020 – 2021 academic year.

This required course prepares students for the intellectual rigors of college life and beyond by building critical thinking and communication skills as well as by fostering creativity and advocacy.

Throughout this two-semester seminar, students are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss the vast amounts of reading and writing that they do both inside and outside the classroom.

Siena College is committed to showcasing the intellectual and engaging work being accomplished on its campus, so *Gleanings* was created as a means of celebrating some of the finest and most provocative first-year student writing completed each year.

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

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In this analysis regarding whether it is better to use fact or fiction to teach children about real world problems, the author considers both sides of the debate, acknowledges the merits of each, and ultimately argues that the melding of the two is the best course of action. In doing so, the author demonstrates a clear understanding of what "they say" in order to successfully support his "I say."

When Fact Meets Fiction

By Andrew Auletta

Prof. D'Souza- Heroes

Teaching children about the realities of the world is certainly a challenging task. Accompanying this challenge is the debate concerning whether to use fiction or nonfiction to teach children about complex problems, events, and figures. Of course, many do recognize that in children's education, stark realism is overbearing and ineffective. At the same time, many would agree that educational resources for children shouldn't be excessively fictionalized to the point where formal learning becomes significantly minimized. Thus, the best approach to teaching children about real world problems is to utilize facets of fiction to illustrate real world problems.

Fiction's use in contextualizing complex realities has been both recognized and scrutinized. In "The Red Angel," G.K. Chesterton identifies the benefits of fairy tales in the face of critics who are skeptical about the appropriateness of fictional horror in fairy tales. Chesterton's argument is that fear is simply a natural aspect of life, and should therefore be embraced, not ignored, especially in education. Fairy tales, Chesterton asserts, show children that "limitless fears have a limit" (Chesterton). One can concede that author G.K. Chesterton has valid points concerning the benefits of fiction in children's education, particularly in his dismissal of critics' arguments that including horror justifies rejecting fairy tales as a whole. However, one can also recognize a need for a sense of increased realism within children's education that Chesterton neglects to discuss--one that goes beyond the strictly fictional problems and characters in fairy tales.

Perhaps one of the most famous franchises to date that successfully accomplishes the merger of fiction and nonfiction is Superman. Superman has been beloved by children around the world for nearly a century. To state the obvious, Superman is a work of fiction. However, the *Adventures of Superman* reflects the real-life milieu and problems of the time periods in which he has existed, giving the Superman stories a sense of true authenticity and realism. Over time, Superman evolved from an optimistic New Dealer beaming with hope in the face of the Great Depression to an ardent Reaganite. His villains are usually historical figures such as Hitler and Stalin (Tye 48) or everyday criminals, rather than demons and goblins. Superman is a fictional character who stands guard over many children's beds at night, much like Roland, Sigurd, and St. George whom Chesterton mentions, though they each serve a different purpose. By defeating realistic villains,

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Superman provides children with comfort concerning problems that are a part of their lives. Sure, a child's imagination can create a plethora of scary characters and situations, but they also experience and are affected by numerous concrete challenges that they don't fully understand. Superman not only puts complex fears into perspective for young children, he also illustrates what Chesterton emphasizes in explaining that these real fears have a limit. Therefore, the *Superman* franchise is a prime example of the effectiveness of combining fiction and non-fiction when educating children about real-world problems.

Today, another media product that demonstrates the effectiveness of a fusion between fiction and non-fiction is Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical *Hamilton*. In fact, the inclusion of the musical in schools' history curricula has demonstrated that *Hamilton* is regarded as a successful educational tool. It is especially important to emphasize that the effectiveness of the musical in educating children lies in its fictionalized aspects, giving increased strength to the arguments of G.K. Chesterton. These fictionalized aspects include the unorthodox use of rap and pop culture to convey the story of Alexander Hamilton, an immigrant who became a founding father. By utilizing these aspects of modern culture, *Hamilton* has bridged the gap between current events and history, providing students with an effective medium to learn about contemporary issues. Educators like Brendan Bell, a U.S. history, government, and economics teacher at Cristo Rey High School, have emphasized their students' connection to music, specifically rap, and their ability to discern the messages within it (Berman). Therefore, *Hamilton*'s use of rap to communicate ideas is a key tenet in its effectiveness as an educational tool. Bell, who mainly teaches children of immigrants, goes on to say how his students can "relate the experience then to the experience now" (qtd. in Berman) by focusing on the perception of immigrants and their opportunities. Miranda further bridges the gap between then and now by casting minority actors/actresses to play the roles of white male and female historical figures. By representing the full extent of diversity in America today in the makeup of his cast, Miranda paints a culturally accurate picture of present-day America that assists everybody in relating to the musical and its messages. Not only can students of immigrants watch the play and see themselves, but the diverse cast further contextualizes the fact that these issues of immigrant opportunity surround us all.

The fictionalized aspects of the play effectively educate children about contemporary issues because the production conveys the historical facts that one typically associates with formal learning from works of nonfiction. Eight-year-old superfan Juliet Forrest is evidence of this, as senior editor of *Time*, Eliza Berman, notes. Not intrigued by the handful of popular TV characters, Juliet Forrest decided she wanted her birthday party centered around *Hamilton*. Her friends didn't assemble around a pinata, but instead waited patiently for the quill in order to sign the "Kids Constitution." She did not even receive the traditional gifts associated with a children's birthday party. As a substitute for Barbie dolls and bracelet makers, the guests brought $10 bills to donate to a children's charity co-founded by Eliza Hamilton in 1806 (Berman). Juliet Forrest is simply one

example of a multitude that demonstrates the educational impact of *Hamilton*. With the musical's record-breaking $111 million in ticket sales over 13 months and many students picking apart its lyrics in classrooms, the impact of *Hamilton* cannot truly be quantified (Berman). It is obvious that *Hamilton* has left its mark on children through its delivery and fictionalization of historical events. Much like Superman, *Hamilton* is able to place complex ideas and real world issues into perspective for young children through the use of fiction, to the point that it has become a sensation and genuine educational tool.

This approach of melding fiction and non-fiction is also utilized in the Pixar short film "Sanjay's Super Team," directed by Sanjay Patel. Mirroring the ability of the *Superman* franchise to put complex problems into perspective for children, Patel conveys a story about the cultural disconnect between him and his parents through a conventional superhero story. Much like Hamilton's use of rap to tell the story of Alexander Hamilton, Patel uses animation to convey both the dynamics of the relationship and aspects of Hinduism. For example, Patel is especially focused on creating accurate depictions of Hindu deities in order to present the wide range of interpretations within Hinduism. Patel says he "thought about all the specific choices" as he wanted to remain "faithful to mythology" (qtd. in Vincent) in creating his characters. Also, the absence of dialogue causes the viewer to focus strictly on the animation, which depicts the stark differences between Sanjay and his father through activities like watching TV and their attitudes about religious worship. "Sanjay's Super Team" provides children with a simple visualization of a realistic cultural divide while also accurately depicting Hinduism. Therefore, "Sanjay's Super Team" is an effective educational tool that teaches children about realistic occurrences and aspects of religion through the attractive fictional world of a superhero story.

For children's education, combining fiction with aspects of non-fiction is the most effective method for teaching children about complicated realities. The *Superman* franchise, reflecting various time periods' problems through its villains and conflicts, provides a compelling framework to convey the point that real life dangers can be resolved. This fictionalized portrayal of real issues is a more effective way to educate children than Chesterton's assertion about relying solely on fairy tales. Similarly, the inclusion of *Hamilton* in educational curricula demonstrates further just how effective stories employing both fiction and non-fiction are. *Sanjay's Super Team* likewise uses fictionalized aspects to convey a realistic story, and therefore illustrates that this approach effectively puts difficult real-world problems and events into perspective for children. Fiction combined with nonfiction allows educators, whether they be teachers, parents, or someone else, to provide children with a concrete understanding of worldly occurrences.

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The author of this research paper adeptly uses strategies and templates from They Say/ I Say to integrate sources. Doing so provides convincing support for her clear claim that Raza Studies should be introduced in schools to achieve more educational diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Viva La Raza

By Sofia Bock

Prof. Barranca- Voice

Each year America becomes more diverse, and so, too, does the student population our education system serves; however, these ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse students have been treated as inferior and oppressed for far too long. Not only have these minority students been sized up and neglected, they have also been forced to try to fit into society's white-washed and westernized standard of normal. One solution to this problem is the introduction of multicultural classes known as raza (race) studies. Raza Studies programs are essential to promoting socially-just pedagogies in schools, which is something we need now more than ever. With the implementation of Raza Studies, minority students would be granted the opportunity to learn about their own culture and traditions, and doing so would allow more representation and equity in the school system. Above all, Raza Studies programs must be introduced in all schools in order to promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity, which would modernize the westernized and outdated curriculum currently in place.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is when the teacher uses the cultural and racial diversity within their classroom as a positive asset for developing lesson plans, field trips, and much more in order to expand everyone's knowledge. It is clear that culturally relevant pedagogies are the key to success for both students and teachers because they create the most beneficial educational experience, whether that be a higher graduation rate, increased self-esteem, or simply creating a family-like environment within the classroom. Gloria Ladson-Billings, an associate professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, emphasizes that "students must experience academic success; students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (160) and culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning. In other words, in order to achieve equitable education for all students, it is necessary to embrace diversity, open-mindedness, flexibility, cultural competence, and so much more. With this, students would succeed immensely through learning about one another's personal experiences. Through the development of culturally relevant pedagogies, students everywhere will feel included in their classroom environments, resulting in more participation in and enthusiasm and dedication for their education, ultimately resulting in a much more diverse and equitable environment.

Raza Studies is not solely a curricular program that prepares students for their future occupations; it allows and encourages them to embrace every part of their being. It is evident that those who had the opportunity to enroll in multicultural classes such as Raza Studies have had great success. In fact, in the documentary *Precious Knowledge,* directed by Arli Palos, it was proven that graduation rates and self-esteem improved among Mexican-American students in Tucson, Arizona who were enrolled in such a program. Moreover, the multicultural classrooms formed more family-like environments where they could truly flourish as both a community and as individuals. Through having mentors, teachers, and peers who looked just like them and shared common experiences, these students were seen as positive assets to their classroom community. This is all due to their teachers' desire to promote an equitable education, social justice, and culturally relevant pedagogies. These Mexican-American students flourished and grew in numerous ways because they were taught their own Mexican heritage and therefore felt as though they had a place in this society as opposed to feeling like outsiders in a white-washed America.

While many argue that Raza Studies courses are incredibly beneficial to students, others may say that implementing such a program brings challenges for the schools as well as the students. For instance, in *Precious Knowledge,* Superintendent of Tucson's school district, Tom Horns, argued that Raza Studies is a "waste of tax dollars, infusing the students with racist ideas, teaching the students to be sexist, racist, and oppressive, as well as teaching these students hate speech and sedition" (0:23:15-0:23:24). In other words, Horns argued that the students placed in Raza Studies classes were put at a further disadvantage by separating them from the rest of their peers, resulting in segregated-like communities, which would then cause conflicts or challenges for them in the future. However, what Horns did not realize was that these courses changed the students' lives, making them feel capable, vital, and important in this world. Raza Studies classes in fact allowed the students to flourish in numerous ways. They learned about their own culture, but they also improved their grades and comprehension skills, thus encouraging them to become first generation college students. The benefits to the students far outweigh any cost Raza Studies programs might entail.

Other detractors view Raza Studies as a hurdle for teachers, claiming that promoting cultural and linguistic diversity may pose significant challenges. Researchers Sanna Higgen and Mike Mosko discuss the challenges that come with having such diverse classrooms, but also point out that the insufficient training teachers are provided in regards to teaching Raza Studies courses is also an important factor. Higgens and Mosko state that "native language deficits can lead to learning difficulties and concentration problems...teaching students of varying language abilities was named as very challenging for teachers" (14). In other words, although it is the teachers' job to promote socially diverse instruction, there can be drawbacks. Although there may be disadvantages, for the overwhelming majority of both students and teachers, these courses are immensely beneficial and open countless doors for each and every individual. Unfortunately,

teachers are simply just not given the proper and sufficient amount of resources and training to take on the challenges that come with having a culturally diverse classroom; however, they would not have gone into this profession if they did not think they could wholeheartedly do it and make a change in these students' lives.

As our school system continues to diversify and there are more Spanish-speaking students, it is essential that teachers must work to change outdated curricula. Ladson-Billings discusses the vitality of having diversity within a classroom as well as how to promote social justice and equity for each and every student. She states that "Education and schooling should equip students with tools not only to learn how to participate in this society, but also to challenge the oppressing structures that limit their lives. Theories of social justice can move us toward tolerance, awareness, respect, meaning, and fulfillment" (Ladson- Billings 37). In other words, teaching for social justice is the only possible solution to create a more inclusive environment for people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions, which is exactly what Raza Studies programs do. Ladson-Billings goes on to say that before the introduction of such programs, "underlying school rules and literacy instruction paid little attention to the values or customs practiced in the homes of native youth; youth from long established Latinx, Asain, and African American families; and immigrants. Often schools sought to extinguish these culturally 'different' beliefs and practices altogether" (41). It is clear that American schools promoted classes designed for the white majority, thereby isolating each and every student who is not white or a native English speaker. However, with the implementation of Raza Studies, these students will flourish in diverse classrooms devoted to acceptance, where they can truly be who they are while the programs themselves counteract the long-lived stereotypes about such students that must die out. Above all, it is clear that change must occur in order to make for a better education system that promotes inclusion for marginalized students.

Our education system and the lives of each and every student and teacher has changed in unimaginable ways due to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. With this has come numerous hurdles for each person to overcome-- one being virtual learning. Education reporter Caroline Alphonso highlights that virtual learning is not only mentally and physically draining due to burnout, but that there is little to no diversity within the virtual classrooms she investigated. Alphonso adds that marginalized students oftentimes go unnoticed and their backgrounds are neglected, posing an immense challenge for not only their academic performance, but their mental health as well. The pandemic brought out another issue, though. She points out that "the issue at York [school district] highlights the challenges school boards face launching virtual classes after the Ontario government let families choose between in-class learning and online instruction. Parents in a Facebook group have raised concerns about the lack of diversity and described classes in which all the students have the surname Chen or Cao. In other instances, half the class are Khans or Wongs" (Alphonso). Due to the pressure of getting students back into the (virtual) classroom after a very long hiatus due to the

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pandemic, several schools such as this one quickly divided students alphabetically, based on their last names, resulting in a lack of diversity within the classroom. Parents were concerned that their children would feel segregated and ostracized by only being with those who had the same last names and ethnicities as themselves. Diversity contributes immensely to students' success, which can not happen when their minds are occupied by wondering why they are being sized up without a second thought. It is essential that school districts take into consideration the feelings of these students who are treated as outcasts. They must prioritize diversity and culturally responsive teaching for each and every individual.

Minority students have faced the burden and hardship of dealing with racism, discrimination, white-washed lessons, and exclusion within their schools. Not only does this damage their mentality and opinions regarding school and their educational careers, but it dehumanizes and degrades them through making them feel inferior, incapable, and unworthy of accomplishing or becoming anything in the future. However, through implementing Raza Studies programs in all schools, these students will finally find their worth and belonging both within and outside of their classrooms. It is essential that teachers and administrators everywhere create more inclusive classrooms and schools in order to show minority students that they are a positive asset within their school community and that they too can change the world in innumerable ways.

Providing multicultural education allows students, especially those in the Spanish speaking minority, the potential to succeed, and therefore benefits both their education and lives beyond the classroom. In fact, by including things such as cultural traditions and the history of their motherlands, the students will inevitably become increasingly engaged in the curriculum. Not only does this prove to them that they are valued and do in fact have a voice and a place in their classrooms as well as in the world, it breaks down stereotypes that have been in place for decades. Through engaging content that involves learning about music, food, and real life experiences, students are succeeding more than ever, promoting equitable education and social justice for all. In learning about things they can truly relate to, and by teaching them things that interest them, they are set on an equal footing to the privileged white students, which then lessens the achievement gap and gives equal opportunities to all students despite their background, race, religion, etc. Raza studies programs are effective and promote student success. Therefore, they should be implemented across the nation's school system.

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After attending a campus-wide talk given by an Environmental Science professor at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester,

this writer took a strong position advocating for a change in environmental policy, which, she argued,

should have started with a change in the then-president's position.

Climate Change Under President Trump

By Christina Coppola

Prof. D'Souza- Heroes

The delicate future of our world depends on the actions we take today. Climate change is rapidly advancing, with only a mere decade left before the damage is irreversible. As the temperature of Earth continues to rise, greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere will be unable to properly trap ultraviolet lights from the sun. In sum, this will generate detrimental issues until we reach a tipping point, leaving the Earth inhabitable to mankind. Despite climate change being corroborated through scientific evidence, the U.S. government has chosen to ignore this palpable issue. In a nonpartisan meeting led by a professor at Siena College, we discussed the desperate need for something to be done, which inevitably involves politics. Some argue that Donald Trump's decisions were consciously made to economically benefit the United States. While I understand that President Trump's intention is to help the United States endure the current strain of economic pressure, I fear for our future. It is unarguable that he has failed to acknowledge how climate change is deteriorating the Earth. As heat waves become progressively more frequent and harsh, life on earth, which includes billions of people, will be affected. As our Commander in Chief and leader of this great nation, it is imperative that President Trump recognize and give merit to the fact that climate change is a growing problem, which is in need of immediate attention. His recognition that a problem does indeed exist will further lend itself to greater discussions and perhaps innovative ideas that could positively impact our world's sustainability. If a problem is not recognized, change cannot take place.

The President exhibits a substantial influence on the environment. A significant obstacle in advancing climate change action is Donald Trump's continuous efforts to undermine climate change and conservation initiatives. Dr. Jean Magun, a professor and the department chair of Environmental Studies and Sciences at Siena College, stated that there have been "seventy-four instances where Trump administrative choices have had a negative impact on the environment" (Magun). In June 2017, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, whose central aim is to globally respond to the climate change threat. He made this decision due to the unfair economic burden it inflicted upon American citizens. However, he has not replaced it with any other actions to benefit the environment. The United States of America is consequently the only major emitter of greenhouse gasses that is not taking part in global initiatives regarding climate change and it is not attempting to make a change at the national level either. This was a detrimental decision that should be

reversed. The termination of the three billion dollar U.S funding limits research and decreases chances of reversing the effects of climate change.

Dr. Magun expressed her concerns regarding environmental management and conservation issues. Climate change regulation is very vulnerable because it is rarely protected by the federal government. President Trump has demonstrated this and has been described as going "off the rails in terms of deregulation" (Magun). This is leading to adverse effects on our environment. Trump's agenda, unfortunately, has easily rolled back the gains made under the Obama Administration in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Magun argues that President Trump does not understand science, and therefore leaves the health of our environment at an alarming risk. This informative discussion left me to ponder the future for all Americans.

If we follow the mindset of the Trump Administration and fail to protect the world we live in today, it will one day become dilapidated. Michael Gilmore, a George Mason University professor, and Sebastian Rios Ochoa, a member of the Maijuna indigenous tribe, formed an everlasting connection that developed from their shared love for and concern about the Peruvian jungle's ecosystem (Wingfield). Gilmore and Ochoa devoted their time to protect the environment. By unifying together, they were able to take action to preserve the ecosystem in an honorable way before it was too late. They focus on culture, respect, and sustenance. When a community respects the ecosystem, they are much more likely to take care of it through actions such as reusing resources. One's culture often acts as a driving force in preserving the environment due to traditional reliance on natural resources. The Maijunas value the rain forest and have an inextricable connection to it. When loggers invaded their land, their actions harmed the Maijuna people. There were "no longer plentiful tapirs, pacas and peccaries to be hunted. Fish, the leading source of protein for the Maijuna, were indiscriminately killed with poison and their numbers plummeted," leading to famine (Wingfield). This emphasizes how dependent the tribe was on natural resources. The lack of regard for their environment disturbed how the Maijunas lived. They understood that without a change, their lifestyle would dramatically change and the future would be uncertain.They knew they not only had to protect their land, but practice sustenance (Wingfield). What the Maijunas realized, President Trump has not. If he recognized climate change and its harmful environmental effects, it would influence others domestically and abroad to make essential changes.

The members of the Maijuna tribe strongly believe that their survival as people and the survival and maintenance of their cultural practices, unique traditions, and traditional ways depend on a healthy, intact, and protected ecosystem. In attending to their needs, Gilmore "learned to combine research with advocacy" in order to "preserve their traditional way of life and the land that supports it" (Wingfield). Innovations such as filtering water using natural resources and a reused drum or a tree-climbing technique that aids in

preserving the land allow the tribe to practice sustenance. Juxtaposed to the Maijunas' understanding that they must take care of their land in order to preserve it and survive, the Trump Administration is more concerned with economics and therefore overlooks the threat that the Earth will become inhabitable to mankind.

Although some American citizens are proactive in making a change to better the health of the environment, we need the President's support. Without widespread change, we will soon feel the far-reaching effects of climate change. If we fail to limit warming temperatures, sea levels will rise, coral bleaching will occur, ice in the arctic will melt, heat waves will become frequent and severe, flooding will increase, animals will lose their habitats, and humans will be deplenished of food sources. Our country must reduce its emissions and demand other countries take part in doing so, as well. Americans should no longer tolerate inaction and must demand support from our President. We must protect the planet we call home.

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For this essay, the author uses a photograph she took as a starting point to explore her view of the natural world, thereby connecting personal experiences to larger societal issues. To develop her argument about how the image relates to the work to globally sustain the value of nature, she incorporated St. Francis's concerns about the dignity of all creatures.

Nature Through the Lens of a Pandemic

By Reagan Delaney

Dr. Nadeau- Words as Action in Society
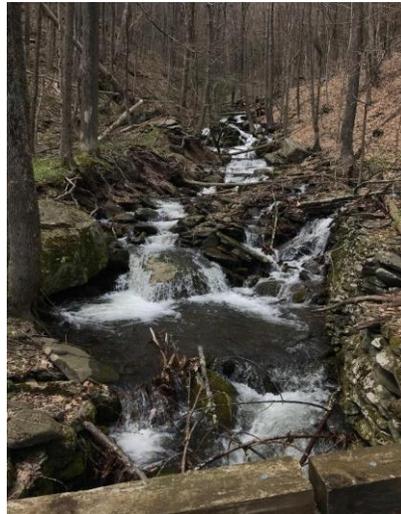
Nature plays a large role in the life of every single human being; we utilize what it gives us and it fuels our lives. As a society, we have recently reevaluated what nature means to us and our relationship with it. We also have to reevaluate how we are going to protect nature in ways we have not done before. We have to look at what it does for us every day, and we must understand why it is vital for us to care about it. Nature is an extremely important part of our lives and our world, and we must work towards taking care of it as we would each other.

Recently, nature has become something much more special to me. The image above, taken on May 2, 2020, shows a waterfall on a trail in the Catskill Mountains that flowed as a result of extremely heavy rainfall. Thinking back on that date, a feeling that is almost nostalgic comes over me. I remember the days of early quarantine, a period of time that seemed to have no structure, no definite days or weeks. Every day was the same for millions of Americans across the country, confined within own four walls. This was one of the first days I had been outside in almost two months because I had been keeping myself isolated from the outside world as recommended. The weather began to warm, and more people started venturing into nature as an escape. When I went on the hike, I took this photograph because being in nature felt different. After barely leaving my house for so long, being outdoors and in fresh air felt like a reward. I felt as though I was stepping into a whole new world, one that I did not know quite how to process, but one that I was learning to accept.

Seeing beyond the prison that my home had become was an experience that will stick with me long after this pandemic is over, as it gave me hope and gave me ambition to persevere through the darkest times.

For many, nature means freedom, and I began to recognize their view. I felt like nothing could hold me back, like I was in control after months when I felt like I could control nothing in my life. Before COVID-19, I had always liked nature and spending time outdoors, but I had never felt quite as serene as I did on this day. My anxiety had been on the rise while being stuck inside; I was growing weary and quarantine was growing tedious. Looking upon the gentle waterfall and gazing out over the mountain's peak allowed me to forget, just for a moment, the complete chaos and sadness filling the world. Nature became a very popular escape during this pandemic, and society's view on it began to change. The pandemic showed everyone that no matter what happens to us as humans, nature remains. Nature is unbothered by our hardships, and if anything, it benefits from them. It will ultimately always reign over us, and we will always be at its mercy. This realization has changed the way I look at nature and my own personal relationship with it. It has become an important part of my life, as I now consider it to be part of my journey through this pandemic. The pandemic has made me care even more for nature; I want to protect it.

As a society, we must care for and protect nature. We rely on what nature gives us every single day, and we forget that. It gives us light through hydroelectric power, keeps us going with fossil fuels for our cars, and charges our bodies with food that it grows. We breathe its air and drink its water. We need it to survive. We choose to ignore how we are damaging it because it is inconvenient for us to change our lifestyles, those that we are comfortable with and have grown accustomed to. We know that burning fossil fuels is extremely harmful to the air and damages the ozone layer, but we continue to do it because it is easier than having an electric car, or biking or walking somewhere. We utilize single use plastics because we find it so much more difficult to fill a reusable water bottle. As humans, for the most part, we do what will make our lives easier, not what is best for our planet, because we are selfish. Helen Macdonald recalls seeing environmental destruction up close and the impact it had on her: "These trees were the ghosts of half-remembered landscapes, and looking at them I realized that living trees could haunt you, too. That drive in Suffolk had changed the meaning of ash trees for me. From now on, each one I saw would mean death, no matter how healthy it might be" (Macdonald). Macdonald grew up looking at these trees with love, and respect for their grandeur. But these trees began to die as a result of globalization because new diseases were arriving from other nations. This shows how human habits and expansion directly affects our environment: these trees nearly ceased to exist. We must think about how we affect our world and end our self-serving habits. With the effects of climate change ever-rising and having great impact across the globe, every person on this planet is threatened. Climate change causes higher average minimum and maximum temperatures, which causes thawing permafrost and rising sea levels. This also causes an increase in heavy precipitation in some areas and a

decrease in others, causing both severe flooding and drought. This devastates the areas it affects and is harmful to wildlife and people. We have to look to the future and think about whether or not we will be able to survive these shifts, and what we can do now to stop them.

People are beginning to drop these selfish tendencies, which is evident from our recent election. Climate change was a large topic of debate between the 2020 presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Trump was a large proponent of the continued use of fossil fuels for our nation, and he also withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, which is a United Nations effort to fight climate change all around the world. Trump pushed these ideals, saying it would be best for the country because it would produce more jobs and therefore it would be better for the economy. This profit-chasing mindset is discussed by Colin Todhunter who highlights that "without addressing the impacts and nature of corporate greed… much of the world's wildlife and biodiversity will remain under serious threat" (Todhunter). Our greed as a nation puts our world at serious risk. Joe Biden is a large proponent of the opposite mindset, which involves switching to clean energy, like using electric-powered cars and trains for transportation. He wants the US to be a net zero carbon emitter by 2050, which would be huge for not just this country, but for the world's fight against climate change. The fact that Joe Biden won the last election shows that US citizens are starting to care more for the future of the planet. People are starting to realize that the fight against climate change is an urgent and pressing issue, and is not just an issue for the next generation. This ties back to how we view nature in general. We need to see it as an extension of us. To destroy it would be like destroying a part of ourselves. We have a duty to protect what cannot protect itself.

Protecting nature ties back to Siena College's Franciscan values. In "The Canticle of the Creatures," St. Francis discusses why we must protect nature. He believes that all things were divinely created, so we can therefore see God's grace in all things. He says, "Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the Stars, in heaven/ You formed them clear and precious and beautiful" (Francis of Assisi). St. Francis saw the moon and stars as our "sisters" and the rest of nature as our siblings as well, meaning we are all family. We are all God's creation. When Siena Saints recognize this, it helps us live up to our Franciscan values of service and environmental consciousness, and pushes us to be better citizens who advocate for the protection of God's creation.

Nature is an extremely important part of every human being's life. It has become something very important to me during this pandemic, and I know that it has become much more important to others as well. This comes as we are in a fight to save nature as we know it by protecting it from the effects of climate change. As we continue to fight for nature on a national level, we must also be willing to change our own personal habits to support the effort. Nature is something that we have to protect and care for, as we would any of God's creatures.

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This writer chose a class-assigned Netflix documentary entitled The Claudia Kishi Club as a springboard for her Diversity Unit essay about the importance of positive representation of Asian-Americans in children's literature. Her argument rests on a clear claim and well-developed supporting evidence.

Claudia and the Importance of Positive Representation in Children's Literature
By Rachael D'Onofrio
Prof. Collins- Narrative: The Inside Story

Awesome, inspiring, unique, creative, stylish, and cool: these are some of the words used to describe Claudia Kishi in the 2020 *Netflix* documentary *The Claudia Kishi Club.* This documentary revolves around Claudia, the only Asian-American main character of *The Baby-Sitters Club* children's book series, and the lasting impact she has had on Asian-American readers. The individuals in this documentary cite Claudia as a significant influence who helped shape their confidence and their identities, which has followed them into their adult lives. Based on the enduring positive effects of Claudia Kishi's character on the confidence of Asian-Americans from youth into adulthood, I argue that it is the duty of children's literature authors to include more positive representation of minority characters in their books. Such representation will foster an early sense of self-confidence and importance in their young Asian-American readers, which will allow them to mature into secure adults.

For many Asian-Americans growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, Claudia Kishi served as the only source for diverse representation in literature. While one may be led to believe that this problem has improved in the decades since *The Baby-Sitters Club* was first published, the lack of representation in children's literature remains a significant issue today. According to a 2019 report published by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a research library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Education, the percentage of children's books in which the main character is Asian-American was 8.7%, whereas the percentage in which the main characters are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) was 26.95% (Tyner). This number is significantly less than both the percentage of books in which the main characters are White, 41.8%, and the percentage of main characters that are animal/non-human, which totals 29.2% (Tyner). This means that in 2018, BIPOC children were more likely to see an animal represented in literature than someone who looks like them. This lack of representation has devastating effects on child readers. C.B. Lee, in the *Netflix* documentary, reflects upon not seeing herself represented in the media as a child and offers the following sentiment: "When you don't see yourself in media, when you don't see mirrors of yourself, you go on thinking, 'I'm broken,' or 'I'm not normal,' or 'I don't exist'" (*The Claudia Kishi Club* 9:12-9:20). Children use fictional stories as mirrors of the real world, and when they do not see themselves portrayed in these stories, they

begin to wonder what is so wrong with them that they are not included. Representation in the media is a crucial aspect of fostering children's self-esteem.

Beyond developing low self-esteem, when children do not see themselves represented in the media, they may begin to believe that they do not matter as people at all. When they consume media with an absence of characters who look like them, they begin to "perceive the world without [them] in it," C.B. Lee stated (*The Claudia Kishi Club* 9:36-9:40). This results in a warped worldview in which minority children do not recognize their own importance and place in the world. This is why characters like Claudia Kishi are so important — so that children can see themselves represented and consequently foster feelings of self-worth and confidence. By cultivating these positive feelings at an early age, they are more likely to retain these emotions into adulthood and reap the benefits even many years later. Children's novels must promote diversity by representing minorities such as Asian Americans as main characters in order to help all children develop into emotionally intelligent, confident adults who see the value of inclusion.

While it is important to include more diverse characters in children's literature, increasing diversity alone does not remedy the problem; the solution is not simply more representation, but more *positive* representation. Oftentimes, the media misrepresents minorities by perpetuating false or offensive stereotypes, which can have detrimental effects on the self-image of children who see themselves reflected in these characters. Characters who represent people of color are too often depicted as disposable side-characters who exist merely as tokens, barely existing beyond the stereotypes they portray. Asian-Americans characters often fall victim to this poor representation. In the *Netflix* documentary, comic artist Yumi Sakugawa reflects on this when she notes that "For an Asian-American . . . character, to be the cool one is *so* unusual" (*The Claudia Kishi Club* 5:22-5:26). That is why Claudia Kishi was such a revolutionary character: she was bad at math, had a unique fashion sense, rejected conventions, and represented everything that stereotypical Asian-American characters are not supposed to be. This positive, *realistic* representation allows Asian-American children to relate to the character on a deeper level. Gale Galligan, who was an illustrator for *The Baby-Sitters Club* book series states, "Seeing someone like Claudia, who was kind of forging her own path, definitely helped me feel more connected to my own identity - just knowing there's not *one* way to be an Asian person" (*The Claudia Kishi Club* 10:35-10:45). By representing Asian-American characters as more than the personification of a stereotype, but rather as unique, interesting characters with varied interests, authors encourage children to embrace their own individual identities.

Developing confidence and assurance in one's identity as a child benefits a person throughout their entire life, and positive representation in literature is an excellent way to foster this confidence. Long after *The Baby-Sitter's Club* series stopped being published, Claudia Kishi's legacy has left a significantly positive impact on the adults featured in the *Netflix* documentary. They consist of graphic artists, authors, directors,

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illustrators, bloggers, and others who cite Claudia as a source of inspiration for their own creative work, which primarily features Asian-American characters and serves as a tribute to their own identities. By continuing to create content with diverse, inspiring characters, they are both reaping the benefits that positive representations had on their own lives and paying it forward to future generations by providing them with characters they can look up to as well. Therefore, it is crucial for children's authors to include positive representation of characters from diverse populations in their novels for the benefit of their child readers and the adults they will someday become.

For far too long, children's literature has consisted primarily of nondiverse, whitewashed characters. It is essential for children's self-esteem for them to see themselves represented in the media they consume. Furthermore, it is crucial for children to be exposed not only to a diverse group of characters, but to characters who both dispel negative stereotypes and possess unique, individual identities. By serving as a positive role model for young Asian-Americans, Claudia Kishi certainly met these criteria. The lasting positive effects that Claudia has had on the lives of Asian-American readers exemplifies the importance of positive representation in children's literature, as her legacy has benefited the readers long after childhood into their adult lives. In light of the increase in Asian-American hate crimes in recent months stemming from ignorance concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, positive representation is more important than ever. It is crucial for Asian-American youth to see themselves reflected in a positive light to develop a sense of self-worth that allows them to retain their confidence despite the bigotry present in the world today. Additionally, influencing the minds of children to become more accepting and inclusive towards others will help to decrease said bigotry. Therefore, children's authors must include the positive representation of a diverse group of characters to increase the confidence of their young readers, who will consequently evolve into secure, thriving adults.

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In this reflection, the author compellingly relays a personal story that exemplifies the argument Peggy McIntosh

makes in "White Privilege and Male Privilege," a required First Year Seminar text at the same time

he exposes a serious social justice issue. Note: all names in this essay have been changed

to protect the identity of the parties involved.

Saving Corporal Price

By Nico Delucia Gargano

Prof. D'Souza- Heroes

The bar was loud and crowded, creating a lingering haze of obliviousness that seemed to intoxicate the patrons even more than the flowing alcohol. No one else was seeing the scheme that was clearly being played out in front of them. Maybe I was overreacting. "I should just calm down," I thought to myself. Finally, I quelled these thoughts, as I knew I must put a stop to what was going on. I approached the taller, larger man; I could feel my heart pounding through my chest and the adrenaline coursing through me. I looked up at him, right in his eyes, and stated calmly, yet firmly, "You are not taking her with you."

We have all attended classes or trainings about sexual harassment and assault, and many, I am sure, have seen the cheesy videos attempting to portray what to do when you see it happening. It is rightfully ingrained in us from the beginning of adolescence that women cannot give consent when drunk. The omnipresence of men taking advantage of women in an inebriated state makes this lesson necessary. Although this behavior happens constantly, no one ever thinks it is going to happen to them. These situations can seem foreign and far away, and the tools we are provided to handle them may seem unneeded. That is until it is happening right in front of you. When the situations in those cliché training videos become reality, a choice must be made. Are you going to cower and let it happen? Are you going to close your eyes and convince yourself the monster is not there and has nothing to do with you, or will you act? When I saw a strange man attempting to take away a defenseless woman and fellow Marine, I intervened. This situation gave me a candid look at the harsh reality many women have to navigate to keep themselves safe from predators. It simultaneously cast a light on many of the privileges I enjoy as a male.

I had just been promoted to Corporal with two other Marines, Brian Parker and Abigail Price. With this promotion came the requirement to attend a management and leadership class known as Corporals Course. This course pulls together a couple dozen Corporals from various job fields in the Marine Corps to teach them the fundamentals of Marine Corps leadership. Abigail, Brian, and I were all assigned to the class held from November to December 2017. It is tradition for the class to go out to a local bar or restaurant and get a drink with the instructors upon completion. My class was no different. We went out to a bar in Honolulu to celebrate our recent promotions to Corporal, and graduation from our first level of primary military education.

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Until then, I had never thought about the danger that awaits women who want to enjoy an evening out with coworkers because I have never had to worry about such dangers. That would change after this night.

The night started out like any other. My classmates got their drinks and settled into their particular social groups, with the normal mingling. As the sober designated driver, I was able to witness everything that happened in that bar. The evening progressed and inhibitions lowered, and I began to notice an unfamiliar man starting to hover around the various groups of Marines. He took a particular interest in Abigail.

Abigail was always an intensely serious person. Entering the Marine Corps at 23, she was naturally more mature than most of her peers who entered at 18. She was determined and therefore constantly seeking opportunities for advancement, with little concern for making friends. Abigail is a hard worker; she rarely gave herself any breaks from her ambitions or let her guard down. I understand why she wanted to relax and have fun for just one night.

I watched as this stranger worked to isolate Abigail from the rest of the group. I ignored it at first. I didn't yet fully understand what I was seeing--what he was attempting to do. I observed with concern as Abigail became increasingly intoxicated, and this large, intimidating guy continued to take advantage of her vulnerable state by feeding her more drinks. What made me finally realize I had to do something is when Abigail stumbled up to me and told me that she would be leaving with this interloper. I tried explaining to her what a horrible idea that was. However, she was clearly intoxicated, and her judgement was severely impaired. She insisted through slurred speech that it was fine and I needed to calm down. There was no convincing her that she was putting herself in an incredibly dangerous situation. I almost did just calm down and forget about it. I did not want to deal with this. I was going home on Christmas leave in about a week and this situation would have no effect on me; yet, just having those thoughts felt wrong. There was no way I could let her be whisked away and disappear into the city, alone and defenseless, with a man who clearly had vile intentions. Her safety was far more important than me being inconvenienced. I would not be able to live with myself if I allowed this to happen. I would rather her be safe and angry at me, than not angry at me and raped in some Honolulu apartment.

I knew the only way to stop her from leaving with this man was to confront him myself. I was alone in this at first. It is a helpless feeling. It was scary. It was not as easy as the countless training videos made it seem. In the videos, the perpetrator succumbs to the bravado of the do-gooder and backs off immediately. This was not one of those videos. This was real life. Real life is complicated; real life is messy. It is filled with the nuances of the world that create the grey in which we live. Regardless, I put one foot in front of the other until I was finally looking up at this man who towered over me, and explained that he was not taking her home.

I was immediately dismissed. I was once again told to calm down and to leave him and Abigail alone. He was attempting to make me seem like the perverted outsider. I was not going to be able to stop him on my own. I needed backup. I grabbed four other Marines and explained the situation as fast as I could. As a team, we approached him as he was leaving the bar with Abigail and once again assertively told him, "We don't feel comfortable with you leaving with her." Now that he was confronted by five other men, his tone changed. Suddenly, his large stature was not as intimidating and he could not use it to his advantage. As he tried to talk his way out of this situation and explain with increasing anger and desperation why we were wrong, I knew this back and forth would soon turn ugly, and Abigail could barely stand at this point. Three of the Marines stood in front of him as Brian and I escorted Abigail to my car.

I drove her back to the barracks and by the time we got there, she was already passed out. I was relieved to have her safe in my car and finally back at the barracks. At the same time, I felt sick thinking about what would be happening to Abigail if she was in the stranger's car instead of mine. "What if I waited too long or was too slow in assembling my team and we couldn't intervene in time to save Abigail?" I thought to myself. While grappling with these thoughts, Brian and I got Abigail back up to her room where her roommate took over getting her into bed. Although she was in the safe hands of her roommate, Brian and I stayed outside and kept an eye on her room for about an hour to be completely sure no one attempted to follow us onto the base.

Living through this story, and retelling it now, forced me to get in touch with the privileges I have as a male. I have always had a visceral reaction to being told that I have privileges. When I first read "White Privilege and Male Privilege" by Peggy McIntosh, I was overcome with anger and resented her arguments. I do not like being told that I am an oppressor due to my gender or the color of my skin. I will concede, however, that in certain circumstances, men have advantages over women. This situation is a perfect example. Abigail could not even go out and have fun with friends to celebrate a graduation without potentially getting raped by some aggressive and unknown stranger. As a male, I can go out and get a drink without having to be afraid that I may be attacked or kidnapped. I do not have to constantly check my surroundings and make sure I have others looking out for me. I have never gone to a bar, restaurant, or other public venue and felt unsafe because I was being sexually harassed by someone who is bigger and stronger than me.

Too many men are oblivious to the plight of women because it is not something that personally affects them. Peggy McIntosh argues that men work from a base of "unacknowledged privilege and their oppressiveness is unconscious" (72). In addition to acknowledging the manipulative and aggressive behavior of the stranger, it is important to note that all of the other men in the bar were operating from unacknowledged and unconscious oppressiveness, too, though in a more subtle way. They did not see that a woman, who had just as much of a right to be there as they did, was having a completely different experience. They did not

have to think about such dangers for themselves, so why would they think about them at all? I almost succumbed to this oppressiveness when I thought about letting this man take Abigail away. I had a choice to use my privilege to ignore the harsh reality or use it to help someone who does not have the same privileges.

The importance of caring when you do not have to is highlighted in Bryan Stevenson's TED Talk in which he discusses many of the injustices that marginalized groups have faced in this nation's history. As a society, we cannot look at issues that face our fellow citizens and only see them as someone else's challenges that they alone must overcome (Stevenson). That is not the kind of world I want to live in. I also believe that change does not happen overnight. It happens slowly over time, and it starts with each individual deciding to act or think differently. Members of a kind and generous society must care about the issues that affect others just much as the issues that affect them. If everyone put forth just a little effort into creating a safer, kinder world, we can create one. I chose to care about someone else's struggle when I did not have to. My work is not done, however. I am sure there will be other opportunities to help someone in a less advantageous position than mine, and I will help in any way I can. If we create a society where every person acts as if they are alone, we will have lost the caring and benevolent nature that makes us human. Every individual would benefit from striving to do their part in creating a better world.

I never received a thank you from Abigail. I am not completely sure she even remembers that night. That is okay. I did not do what I did for a pat on the back or any other sort of recognition. I did it because it was the right thing to do. I chose to care when no one else did, and I chose to acknowledge and use my own privilege to help Abigail, who did not have the privilege of taking her safety for granted. As a society, we should strive to get to a place where sexual harassment/assault is truly a foreign concept and not a commonplace story to be told.

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Using a variety of sources in this expository research paper, the author explains the significance

of the Stonewall Riots within the context of LGBTQ+ history. Debunking media depictions of the riots,

she argues that the advancements that followed far outweigh any violence that occurred in June 1969.

The Stonewall Riots: How the Criminalized LGBTQ+ Community Initiated Societal Change

By Miranda Gilbert

Prof. Godson-Glynn- Be the Change

When the Stonewall Riots took place in 1969, the gay community was entirely criminalized. Homosexuality was considered an abomination, and public displays of affection between gay individuals were illegal. In order to combat this oppression, protestors at the Stonewall Inn in New York City rioted, and in doing so, were once again labeled as criminals when all they were doing was standing up for their rights. In addition to being considered a criminal act, homosexuality was also deemed a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) until 1973, which further discouraged people from understanding the queer community and assisting in fighting for LGBT rights. However, in spite of this seemingly no-win situation in regard to the public's outlook on and tolerance for homosexuality, gay activists persisted and furthered the Gay Rights Movement by using decidedly non-criminal strategies centered around pride and love to increase the visibility of the community. This is one reason why in the years after Stonewall, the LGBTQ+ community has gathered on the date of the Stonewall Riots to celebrate the advancement of their rights and pride in their identities. Far from being criminals, the Stonewall protesters were actually heroic catalysts for change whose actions were truly necessary and significant. They launched the Gay Rights Movement, which successfully gained for the members of the LGBTQ+ community the rights they enjoy today.

Prior to the Stonewall Riots, homosexuality was illegal in New York City, and gay bars were specifically targeted by police. Even though the police officers claimed they were merely enforcing the law, doing so was inherently unjust and discriminatory towards the LGBTQ+ community. The police harassed gay people simply because they were "engaging in gay behavior in public (holding hands, kissing or dancing with someone of the same sex), [which] was still illegal" ("Stonewall Riots"). The criminalization of homosexual behavior resulted in the oppression of the LGBTQ+ community because it denied gay people their basic human rights. On June 28, 1969, after a raid by the police, the patrons at the Stonewall Inn, a prominent gay bar in New York City, decided to fight back. Reports described the scene: "Fed up with constant police harassment and social discrimination, angry patrons and neighborhood residents hung around outside of the bar rather than disperse, becoming increasingly agitated as the events unfolded and people were aggressively manhandled" ("Stonewall Riots"). In other words, angered by the harassment, the patrons of Stonewall spontaneously

fought back against injustice, essentially beginning the riots that would soon act as a catalyst for the Gay Rights Movement.

The Stonewall Riots resulted in the initiation of the Gay Rights Movement, specifically with the sprouting of new gay rights organizations. It is commonly believed that "though the Stonewall uprising didn't start the gay rights movement, it was a galvanizing force for LGBT political activism, leading to numerous gay rights organizations, including the Gay Liberation Front." ("Stonewall Riots"). The Stonewall Riots marked the escalation of LGBT activism spurred on by new organizations, including the conglomeration of groups known as the Gay Liberation Front, which expanded both nationally and globally in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. Ultimately, the riots acted as a turning point in the movement, as the rights of the LGBTQ+ community began to be fought for and publicized throughout society, eventually leading to the rights the community enjoys today.

As activist groups and conglomerations such as the Gay Rights Liberation Front formed, society's perception about gay rights was challenged. Whereas the LGBTQ+ community had been criminalized before, after the Stonewall Riots and the resulting efforts of the Gay Rights Movement, people were able to learn more about the community, and therefore begin to see gay people as humans deserving of rights. Throughout the early 1970s, just a few years after the Stonewall Riots, gay rights organizations emerged globally. The movement greatly accelerated, with gay rights organizations initially established in New York City and San Francisco spreading to branches formed in cities throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. The Stonewall Riots served as an example for how the gay community can effectively confront injustice and how gay people can continuously fight for their rights and embrace their identities, ultimately allowing for society to humanize, rather than criminalize the gay community, and become more enlightened in the aspect of gay rights. Barry Mann argues that "the riots at the Stonewall Inn in June and early July, 1969...permanently changed the way gays and lesbians cope with and confront societal attitudes and, by extension, the way that society understands and accepts homosexuality" (Mann). To elaborate, the Stonewall Riots served as an expression of the gay community's ability to confront society's negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Queer people amplified their voices and publicly fought against the injustices they faced, particularly regarding their lack of respect and basic human rights. This allowed for a plethora of queer people's stories to be heard and therefore for homosexuality to be better understood throughout society. This humanized homosexuals and assisted the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

The riots themselves differed from the passive gay rights protests that occurred for decades before because they were more aggressive. It was essential to confront society's prejudices in order to challenge the dehumanization of gay people. Through rioting, the LGBTQ+ community was able to emphasize their presence in society and their need for basic human rights, as they were simply fighting for their right to freely love who

they love and to be who they are. As a result of the riots, people became more aware of the LGBTQ+ community and the rights they had been so long denied. Important changes were made to policies and beliefs in the decades after the Stonewall Riots, specifically due to the organizational and individual activism that emerged as a result. A foundational change occurred in terms of people's understanding of homosexuality and therefore gay rights when, "in 1973, after three years of intense lobbying, the American Psychiatric Association deleted homosexuality from its official diagnostic manual of mental disorders" (Mann). Just four years after the Stonewall Riots, the notion that homosexuality was a mental disorder was officially reversed, allowing for a changed attitude toward gay rights. The new official perspective lead to policy changes, which was instrumental in the way that society began to understand and accept homosexuality.

The Stonewall Riots directly led to LGBTQ+ visibility in society and allowed for the community to celebrate and express their sexual identities. Prior to the Stonewall Riots, the LGBTQ+ community was afraid to be visible due to the illegality of homosexuality and the effects that coming out had on people's personal lives. For instance, in the age of McCarthyism and the Lavender Scare, which amounted to a combined belief that communists and homosexuals in the workplace posed a security risk, many people in the queer community were fired from their jobs and shunned by society once they were outed. *Harvard Gazette* staff writer Colleen Walsh explains that "McCarthy's tactics initially garnered widespread support. President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued an executive order in 1953 banning homosexuals from working for the federal government, citing security risk" (Walsh). LGBT individuals feared that their lives would be ruined so they preferred to be socially invisible just so that they would not have to face any unjust consequences for being gay. The significance of the Stonewall Riots is that they empowered the members of the LGBTQ+ community to celebrate and express their sexual identities. In doing so, they launched the idea of gay pride, which provided activist momentum for the Gay Rights Movement. In "Tracing the Internal Queer Revolution," *The Atlantic* staff writer Stephen Kornahber notes that "all the flags and floats this month make it appealing to think of gay pride as a story about that watchword of minority-rights movements: *visibility*" (Kornahber). Kornahber elaborates on gay pride more through a personal account when he says that in "describing the first Pride Parade, Perry Brass recalled one man on a sidewall shouting at passersby, 'If your mother could only see you now… Well she certainly could if she tried hard enough, and it's about time she did'" (qtd. in Kornhaber). The account of Perry Brass depicts the changing expression and celebration of gay identity after Stonewall. Differing from the sense of invisibility that had long been practiced by the gay community, just one year later the community had become visible, and Pride Parades became an annual event to commemorate the Stonewall Riots.

Some people believe that the Stonewall Riots were unnecessarily violent and that the actions of those involved made them worthy of arrest. Accounts of the riots note that violent acts by the protesters and

patrons of the Stonewall did, indeed, occur. In "How the Media Covered the Stonewall Riots," Chad Painter points out that "outside, hundreds of protesters were throwing almost anything they could get their hands on, while others were trying to find a way to set Stonewall on fire with the cops inside" (Painter). Relying on such details, many newspapers at the time and still people today make the claim that the riots themselves were unnecessarily violent. This violence, however, was incited to protest the recurring police harassment of the gay community, and was needed in order to demonstrate how dire it was for gay people to be granted their basic human rights. Also, with this in mind, the notion of protesting police brutality without defying the power of the police is inherently impossible. If the police are stripping marginalized groups of their basic human and political rights, fighting against the system is justified as a means to help them gain the rights and societal support they deserve.

Although the riots were violent, they were in fact necessary for the development of the Gay Rights Movement and the validation of gay rights. The aggressive form of protest allowed queer voices to be heard, which ultimately garnered community support in terms of LGBTQ+ rights. Prior to the riots, gay rights protests did occur, but they did not incite change or gain much public support. According to Colleen Walsh, the timing of the violent protest was vitally important. As she notes, "There had been previous riots in the U.S. involving gays and lesbians fed up with routine harassment, but Stonewall, erupting when it did amid protests over the Vietnam War and civil rights and gender equality, marked a decisive break from the more passive sexual-orientation politics of the day" (Walsh). The Stonewall Riots aligned with other protests occurring in the United States, and as was the case in other movements, violence sparked attention. The events that occurred throughout the riots allowed for the Gay Rights Movement to move into the frontlines of the nation's humanitarian concerns, as many were forced to acknowledge how greatly mistreated the gay community was, which prompted allies to advocate on behalf of gay rights, and ultimately help the gay community gain more rights. The Stonewall Riots, even with its violent aspects, set the stage for today's young generation of LGBTQ+ individuals to be more expressive in their identities and more vocal in the support of the continued expansion of their human rights. The riots essentially allowed for a new type of protest to occur within the Gay Rights Movement, one in which protestors could gain control and effectively fight against injustice. In the beginning of the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, solely speaking up was not enough to gain societal support and acceptance, nor was it enough to earn their basic human rights. Once the gay community began to fight back against the injustices its members faced, real substantial gains were made regarding their rights and societal support. Fighting against oppression is often crucial to gain rights. The Stonewall Riots were simply a response to the violent and unjust treatment that the LGBTQ+ community faced at the hands of the police, as well as society in general. The violence that occurred during the Stonewall Riots was not instigated by the members of the queer community, but was rather a reaction to the continued oppression that they faced in nearly every

aspect of their lives. After decades of oppression and blatant discrimination, the six days of violent protests that occurred in June 1969 was an expression of frustration and anger towards the police and the larger society that had stripped them of their basic human rights and freedom of expression.

In the decades after the riots, political and social support for LGBTQ+ rights grew significantly. Many queer individuals were accepted socially in a plethora of different occupations, including the ones that formerly oppressed them. The article, "Stonewall Rebellion Ignites Modern Lesbian and Gay Rights Movement," elaborates on the ability for queer individuals to come together politically and socially, as it is stated that "between 1970 and 1975, gay and lesbian caucuses were formed among librarians, linguists, psychologists, psychiatrists, historians, sociologists, and public health workers" (Mann). This support that spread across a plethora of occupations was greatly influenced by the Stonewall Riots, as queer people were able to express and take pride in their identities even at work, without the fear of being fired. For instance, Walsh highlights the teaching experiences of Michael Bronski, a Harvard professor specializing in activism and media related to gender and sexuality, a subject that failed to exist before the Feminist and Gay Rights Movements, who says that "today my gay students are incredible, and they have been for 10 years. They are more progressive and radical and on the edge than most people I know... and that's totally changed" (qtd. in Walsh) from his own experiences as a young gay man. The Stonewall Riots allowed for the younger generation of the LGBTQ+ community to be more radicalized in their political ideologies, as the riots serve as evidence that radicalism is greatly effective in facilitating societal and political change. A notable part of the Gay Rights Movement's legacy is that the younger generation of queer individuals are free to embrace their identities, as well as fight on behalf of the entire gay community.

Before the Stonewall Riots, LGBTQ+ individuals were harshly discriminated against and ostracized in many ways, most obviously through the criminalization of LGBTQ+ love and affection. The Stonewall Riots were a reaction to those hardships the gay community faced and their significance indisputably helped create a platform for LGBTQ+ rights. The gay community in general, and gay rights in particular, are often politicized even today, which further demonstrates how important it is for people to be aware of historical events important to the Gay Rights Movement. Gay rights are simply human rights, and it is essential for the gay community's voice to be heard and gay rights to be respected. Gay people deserve the right to love who they love without fear. They should be able to express their identities freely and safely without societal prejudices and oppression. Furthermore, since LGBTQ+ individuals live around the world, knowledge of how the gay community was able to obtain rights in one culture may ultimately assist in accelerating their rights in other cultures. In light of the long lasting positive impact of the Stonewall Riots, the protesters should be deemed as heroes rather than criminals. Their efforts were a catalyst for the Gay Rights Movement, ultimately helping to remove the negative stigma associated with homosexuality through the establishment of Pride Parades to

emphasize identity. The movement, sparked by the Stonewall Riots, allowed for the present members of the LGBTQ+ community to enjoy the rights they have today, such as the right to marry whomever they love as well as the right to express themselves freely without fear.

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Inspired by her own personal experiences and Elaine Welteroth's memoir, this author delves deeply into the complexities of racism and its multifaceted impact on women of color, providing a nuanced analysis that balances the writer's strong voice and supporting evidence.

The Spiteful Cycle from Those Entitled:

The Influence of Intraracial Prejudice on The Mental Well-Being of Women of Color

By Shanna Guzman

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

Racism is deeply embedded within American systems. Various groups of people of color suffer prejudice and discrimination from those who hold institutional power and privilege. As a result of the ongoing racist oppression, people of color have developed preconceived and unconscious opinions about one another within their racial community. They have internalized the societal expectations enforced upon them and have further enforced them onto others within their own community through intraracial prejudice in order to obtain the power taken from them because of racism. Certain implicit biases such as colorism are established as a result of racism, whereby some women of color are given power over other darker-skinned women of color, which mimics the oppression that has been inflicted upon them their whole lives. Due to light-skinned women being favored in society as a result of racism and the hierarchy of color, they often find it difficult to be fully included within the black community. Lighter-skinned women often feel conflicted about their racial identities because their identities are often dictated through intraracial prejudice and racism. This causes them to feel alienated within the black community because they are not dark enough while still facing racial oppression from white people. The paradox that people of color are mimicking racist ideologies against certain women of color has deeply influenced the mental well-being of all women of color who suffer from racial oppression. Racism inflicts certain expectations upon women of color; however, when people of color mimic these racist ideologies through their poor treatment of lighter-skinned women it is both contradicting and paradoxical. This paradox leads to adverse complications including not only condemned isolation, but also the more unfavorable treatment enforced upon darker-skinned women. In the end, intraracial prejudice within the black community and its consequential divide among women of color is covert, enough so that they are prevented from being unified against racial oppression and are still losing their power to their oppressors as a result.

The divide among women of color emanates from intraracial prejudice where these women target one another in an effort to regain the power taken by their oppressors. Intraracial prejudice is so harmful to women of color because it is not often recognized. Chris Bodenner, an author commenting on intraracial prejudice within the black community, examines this when he says, "I cannot understand how black people

are so quick to recognize racism as directed towards them from whites, Latinos, Asians, et al, and miss the very real racism that exists within our race from one another."[1] Racism within the black community is unconscious and the inability of women of color to recognize it is detrimental to their own mental health. Elaine Welteroth, the author of *More Than Enough*, illuminates how women of color are divided because of intraracial prejudice, but they fail to realize that "being part of the black experience is being bonded by the painful and sometimes violent experience of exclusion."[2] This indicates the root of intraracial prejudice: racism. Racism has drastically influenced the mental health of all people of color, enough so that they try to enforce it within their own community to have some power over others. As a result, women of color feel condemned by and isolated from their race because they fail to realize that this intraracial exclusion emanates from the racist oppression they face in the United States.

These women's mental well-being is detrimentally influenced as they often experience condemned isolation within their own racial community. Jean Baker Miller and Irene Stiver, two researchers focusing on women of color, define condemned isolation as "an experience of disconnection that leads one to question not only her capacity, but also her fitness for connection" as a response to racial anxiety.[3] Condemned isolation is the process where one feels excluded and disconnected resulting from confronting their stress and emotions when trying to interact with people within their racial community. Women of color often experience condemned isolation when targeted by other people of color because of their race and its relation to the hierarchy of color within society. Light-skinned and biracial women often suffer from condemned isolation through a larger mental condition called racial imposter syndrome. Millie Hall, a writer for the *No Basic Girls Allowed* magazine, which is dedicated to highlighting voices and stories that are often neglected, classifies this condition as when "people of mixed race are often left with no choice but to choose one of the races within them and attempt to find inclusion and belonging within this chosen racial community."[4] In this circumstance, light-skinned and biracial women are isolated because of their biological connection to white people and close comparison to Eurocentric beauty. Racial imposter syndrome is an example of intraracial prejudice, in which darker-skinned women of color have preconceived notions about lighter-skinned women of color regarding their identity and connection to racial groups. When darker-skinned women are oppressed within their own community, it causes them to search for power by specifically targeting these light-skinned and biracial

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[1]Chris Bodenner, "'The Very Real Racism' Within the Black Community," *The Atlantic*, July 22, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.blackenterprise.com/why-black-women-love-to-hate-on-black-women/.
[2]Elaine Welteroth, *More Than Enough* (New York: Viking, 2019), 157.
[3]Maureen Walker, "When Racism Gets Personal: Toward Relational Healing," *Women & Therapy 31,* no.2-4 (2008): 2, accessed March 18, 2021, https://www.wcwonline.org/vmfiles/93sc.pdf.
[4]Millie Hall, "Racial imposter Syndrome: Finding 'Mixed Race' Belonging Through 'Fake' Racial Identity," *No Basic Girls Allowed*, July 22, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://nobasicgirlsallowed.com/racial-imposter-syndrome-finding-mixed-race-belonging-through-fake-racial-identity/.

women. Hall explains how dark-skinned women attempt to "dictate and reduce their racial identity to fractions of 'half this' and 'quarter that'" for power within their racial group.[5] Light-skinned and biracial women are also adversely influenced by intraracial prejudice, enough so that they question their own heritage and culture. This influences their mental well-being because these women of color start to experience condemned isolation and do not feel connected to the black community, which is a critical component of their racial identity.

In addition to experiencing condemned isolation from the black community, lighter-skinned women of color experience this sense of exclusion from white people, as well. Racism is built on the hierarchy of color, which systematically favors white people and those with lighter skin over people with darker skin. As a result of the hierarchy of color, society enforces certain expectations in regard to physical appearance and their connection to Eurocentric ideas about beauty. Although lighter-skinned women of color are often favored by society as compared to darker-skinned women of color, they also face racial oppression based on Eurocentric beauty standards because of their full racial identity and biological connection to the black community. Sara, a client working on a study regarding women and therapy conducted by Miller and Stiver, is a biracial teenager who has a complicated relationship with her white mother. Based on her clinical postscripts and actual dilemmas described during her therapy sessions, Sara feels her mother disapproves of her natural hair. Researchers conclude that this emanates from Sara's mother feeling "the cultural pressure to produce a beautiful little girl, that is, one who fits the aesthetic prescriptions of a racist, patriarchal culture."[6] When Eurocentric beauty standards are enforced upon light-skinned and biracial women of color, they start to enforce these standards on other women of color. Sara, along with many other light-skinned and biracial women of color, are adversely influenced by the cultural pressures and societal expectations, which drastically affects their mental health and initiates their self-loathing. Sara's mother's need to instill these cultural pressures, denounces her daughter's full racial identity and causes her to do the same to other women. Therefore, these expectations inflicted upon lighter-skinned women by white people results in the intraracial prejudice they enforce upon darker-skinned women of color within their racial group.

The constant exposure to Eurocentric beauty standards and expectations along with little diversity of women of color within the media causes people of color to start to enforce intraracial prejudice and oppress darker-skinned women. In *More Than Enough*, Elaine Welteroth, a biracial former fashion editor for *Teen Vogue*, wrote an article about natural hair, which received backlash from the black community due to its lack of representation of darker-skinned women. Welteroth's models for the piece were light-skinned and the readers even questioned if they were of black descent. Welteroth explains that "the argument of the story

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[5] Hall, "Racial imposter Syndrome."
[6] Walker, "When Racism Gets Personal," 2.

became less about her and more about why *Teen Vogue* would publish a story about Senegalese twists and not show any dark-skinned Black women on the page."[7] The media does not depict proper representations of darker-skinned women of color due to the prevalence of colorism within society. On account of this little representation, darker-skinned women of color are held to the Eurocentric beauty standards that are widely displayed. When Welteroth only depicted lighter-skinned women of color to promote natural hair, she unconsciously bolstered the Eurocentric beauty standards presented in lighter-skinned women while condemning the beauty of darker-skinned women of color. This causes people of color to correlate lighter skin color with the concept of beauty, oppressing darker-skinned women. Bodenner explains, "While being black requires us to respect our culture and heritage, it's difficult not to be influenced by a culture, our culture, where black women are often not accepted as being intelligent, desirable, and beautiful by black men."[8] Black women are often mistreated and insulted within their racial community because they do not meet the expectations derived from white Eurocentric beauty. These women of color are expected to respect the culture that emanates from racism. Black men are more likely to enforce colorism within the black community, as they are the ones who most often hold women to such stereotypical beauty standards. They tend to favor light-skinned women of color for marriage and intimacy because of light-skinned women's biological connection to white people and their close comparison to Eurocentric beauty standards. In "Why Black People Discriminate Among Ourselves," Kaitlyn Greenridge points out that "the white man who crosses the line and leaves an heir is doing a favor for some black man who would marry the most debased woman, whose only stock in trade is her color, in preference for the most royal queen in ebony."[9] Greenridge explains how black men commend colorism similar to how racist white people endorse racism, enough so that they would prefer a woman in close reference to the royal queen of ebony, Queen Charlotte, who is a light-skinned black woman. When favoring lighter-skinned women of color, black men are mimicking society's racist ideologies regarding the hierarchy of color. These men are implicitly biased against darker-skinned women because of how deeply embedded skin color stratification, in the efforts of colorism and the hierarchy of color, is within the society. Margaret Hunter categorizes beauty as "a tool of white supremacy and a tool of patriarchy by elevating whites in importance and status."[10] The societal concept of beauty emphasizes the hierarchy of color and the idea of Eurocentric appearances being the basis for it. As a result, black men mistreat darker-skinned black women because of their internalized feelings stemming from racism, adversely affecting these women and their mental health. When darker-skinned women like Joanne Nchimbi, a thirteen- year-old African female

[7]Welteroth, *More Than Enough*, 157.
[8]Bodenner, "'The Very Real Racism' Within the Black Community."
[9]Kaitlyn Greenridge, "Why Black People Discriminate Among Ourselves: The Toxic Legacy of Colorism," *The Guardian*, August 20, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.blackenterprise.com/why-black-women-love-to-hate-on-black-women/.
[10] Margaret Hunter, "'If You're Light You're Alright': Light Skin Color as Social Capital for Women of Color," *Gender and Society*, no.2 (2002): 178, accessed March 18, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3081860.

who presented her own TED Talk, hear phrases like "you are pretty for a black girl," it denounces their racial identity in terms of beauty even though it is said as a compliment.[11] When women of color, both light-skinned and dark-skinned, have physical characteristics that do not coincide with Eurocentric beauty standards, they are criticized by not only white people, but each other. This leads to internalized racism and even condemned isolation, where, as Nchimbi puts it, the emphasis is put on "the need to fit in. The need to change yourself and just feel like you're one of a group and to not just prove it to yourself, but to prove it to society."[12] The struggle with racial identity has a profound influence on one's mental health. This struggle results in condemned isolation and internalized racism, and consequently, Greenridge states, "darker-skinned black women report more physiological deterioration and self-report worse health than lighter-skinned women."[13] This indicates that the differences in self-rating among women of color depicts their mental well-being. The high levels of self-report coincide with the self-hatred and internalized racism experienced when pressured by societal expectations. Darker-skinned women report more physiological deterioration and report worse health because they often suffer from intraracial prejudice and racism, enough so that their mental well-being is sacrificed. This is detrimental to darker skinned women of color in the black community because they are able to recognize their mental health problems, but not what is at the root of them. Therefore, when women of color's racial identities are jeopardized by people within their own racial community, they start to unconsciously target one another to make sure that these standards are applied to everyone else as well.

Colorism is an example of intraracial prejudice resulting from societal standards and is often enforced by certain women of color. When women of color experience racism and are constantly reminded of society's standards of beauty, it often causes internalized racism. Internalized racism is the personal acceptance of racism and oppression, enough so that these women of color believe that these societal expectations are valid and so they start to loathe their own racial identity. Subsequently, they begin to apply these expectations to other women of color, causing them to implement their own intraracial prejudice within their community. For instance, Gabby Douglas, an African American all-around Olympic champion gymnast, received backlash about her hair during the 2016 Olympics. Critics called her natural hair "unkempt and unsightly," thereby applying Eurocentric beauty standards to her physical appearance.[14] Carolyn Brown, the author of "Why Black Women Love to Hate on Black Women," concludes that the "criticisms about her hair came from the black community-mostly black women. In a society where black women are made to feel they are not good enough, does

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[11]Joanne Nchimbi, "Racial Identity," YouTube video, 2:10, posted by TedX Talks, July 8, 2019,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zMTPcfbFiU_.
[12]Nchimbi, "Racial Identity," 2:10.
[13] Greenridge, "Why Black People Discriminate Among Ourselves."
[14] Carolyn Brown, "Why Black Women Love to Hate on Black Women," Black Enterprise, August 20, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.blackenterprise.com/why-black-women-love-to-hate-on-black-women/.

Douglas really need the extra burden?"[15] Brown acknowledges the constant fight women of color already have in society regarding their appearance and yet it was women of color who were behind the backlash regarding Douglas's natural hair. When referencing this backlash, Brown explains how intraracial prejudice can emanate from internalized racism and the "internal self-hatred that goes beyond entertainers that actually happens in families."[16] When women of color accept racism and oppression, they start to enforce the expectations inflicted upon them onto others. This act of intraracial prejudice stems from deep internal self-hatred and the idea that women of color are supposed to hate their blackness due to the prejudice they face from other racial groups. In addition to internalized racism influencing their self-esteem and prompting self-hatred, darker-skinned women of color do not receive equal education and health opportunities. The hierarchy of color allows for skin color to statistically depict one's education, in which Hunter concludes, "For every additional gradation of lightness, education attainment increases by one-third of a year."[17] According to the study, the lightest skinned woman was given an entire additional year of schooling compared to a darker-skinned woman with similar background. This actually bolsters the cycle of racial oppression enforced by both white people and other people of color because women who have been failed by the education system are too uneducated to recognize it.

The formation of intraracial prejudice within the black community helps construct the full cycle of systemic racial oppression within society. Racism has been embedded in the way people of color see themselves and others. They adapt racist ideologies in order to obtain the power taken from them because of racism, enough so that they start holding themselves and others within their racial community to societal expectations regarding the hierarchy of color. Although the hierarchy of color and systemic racism are generally recognized within society, their presence within the black community has caused a divide among women of color that is too often ignored. It has influenced lighter-skinned women and their mental well-being so that they enforce the racist ideologies that often favor them within the black community. This is a result of the exclusion and loss of belonging that they endure themselves within the black community. Ultimately, intraracial prejudice is a covert way for the black community to continue to face multiple layers of racial oppression, and they are not able to overcome it when there is a divide among women of color and their mental well-being is constantly being debased.

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Profoundly impacted by attending Bettie Mae Fikes's talk, the author of this event response paper argues that we must not be shielded from traumatic stories about injustice because such stories fuel the listener's desire to bring about racial equality.

The Moans That Won't (and Shouldn't) Quit

By Marisa Herr

Dr. Liptak- Trauma in Literature and Film

Oftentimes those of us with more privilege think of outright, aggressive acts of racism as something of the past. Bettie Mae Fikes is one of many unfortunate victims who reminds us that thinking this way is a dangerous trap that we must not fall into. Having been a young girl in the 1960s who suffered through some of the ugliest times in Selma, Alabama, Bettie Mae Fikes has relayed her stories time and time again, and was able to share with the students of Siena College how these traumatic events have made her stronger. In this way, Fikes inspired my classmates and me and left us with a better understanding of how necessary it is to keep stories of injustice alive. As gruesome as they are, these stories are needed in order to propel the cause by letting their bitter truth enrage us and thus fuel our fight to one day live in a society that recognizes every race equally.

Fikes demonstrated the importance of relaying her stories of racially-charged abuse that she and others faced and raised our awareness the most through what she called "the moans" (Fikes). She explained that as a child, her great-great-grandmother talked non-stop about her experiences during slavery, and always concluded by telling her to "just live on" (Fikes). For Fikes, the moans that she would hear in her head came in the form of her grandmother's voice, capturing what I interpreted as the longing for social justice for black people that would ultimately drive her to become involved in the cause. Perhaps these moans came in the form of her conscience whispering, or rather singing, in her ear, serving as a constant motivation for her to continue despite how difficult the battle would prove to be in terms of physical and mental trauma. Fikes admitted that back then, she hadn't understood why her grandmother never stopped recalling those dreadful memories, and that it wasn't until she got older and began her own fight that she understood. She eventually realized that she "had to have gone through things to be able to understand the moans," and that this is why the "younger generation doesn't [understand them] as much" (Fikes), considering many of us in today's generation haven't had to endure being brutally beaten for wanting to be treated fairly. In this way, Fikes explained these struggles by creating a parallel between us as a young audience and her as a child. While hearing her grandmother's stories understandably grew old to her after a while, she mentions this detail in order to show how she once didn't quite understand why her grandmother felt the need to relay them again and again either, but that she now knows it has all the significance in the world. This is because Fikes herself

(as well as the others of her generation who took part in the Movement) wouldn't have been so determined to fight against racial injustice if the reality of it had not been so hammered into her mind by the stories having been repeated so many times, creating a forever-burning rage within her that fueled her will to fight. She hopes to see us have that same breakthrough she had so we, too, understand why it's necessary that stories of injustice are kept alive. In this way, we're being called on to never lose sight of the importance of staying constantly aware of the injustices around us in order to keep us furiously passionate and strengthen our will to fight back against those very flaws in our society.

Fikes was also able to use gospel music as a way of calling attention to racial injustice and raising overall awareness. Today she is well-known for her singing voice as she is a part of a gospel choir that focuses on themes based on her experiences during the Civil Rights Movement. She admitted that she never saw herself as a great singer (which came as a surprise after hearing her voice), but that there was something about singing that allowed her to release her frustrations. A line from one of the songs that her choir routinely sang that stood out to me in particular was "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around." As Fikes recalled, this was sung by several freedom riders as their bus drove towards a mob of angry white people who were prepared to attack. Although the freedom riders were plagued by fear for their lives as they headed towards possible death, much of this fear was able to be restrained by the songs they'd sing during times like these when their courage *had* to be high. That is to say, music allowed them to stand taller than their fears as this was the only way they'd believe in themselves enough to resist backing down (or *turning around*) and so they'd therefore have a chance of coming out of the fight victorious. However, even if you're not necessarily in a life-or-death situation like this, Fikes's repeated message of how important it is to "keep a song in your heart" is nonetheless always applicable. Doing so puts a person in the right mindset to fight for their cause, overpower the oppressor, or to stay true to their beliefs that change is possible even when feeling as if the odds are against them—a feeling experienced by many freedom fighters who felt outnumbered by whites who aimed to shut them down. Having a song in your heart not only keeps spirits high, but also brings forth the driving motivation to continue fighting for what is right regardless of how hard it gets. By doing so, one is taking the advice of Fikes and committing to "just live on" despite it all. In a way, she created something beautiful out of something so tragic by turning the resilience of freedom fighters into a message of hope for those who experience the endless obstacles that come with fighting for a social cause that they believe in despite resistance. Yet this type of victory is only possible when one is willing to commit to keeping their eyes open to witness every injustice so as to be painstakingly reminded of why they must fight so hard.

While some may feel that exposing the younger generation to horrors like the killings and violence that took place during the Civil Rights Movement may not be appropriate, I find that it is actually quite necessary to give them the most accurate understanding of why their participation in current fights for justice

is needed. For example, Fikes told us that when she was 14, she didn't understand how hard it was going to be to endure all the trauma she would eventually be faced with. However, it was the exposure to the cruelest of acts of racial abuse at a young age that enabled supporters of the Movement like her to bring about so much progress in regards to black rights. Fikes even said that the march that occurred in Selma for voting rights for blacks was started by children—even though parents take credit—because jails were so packed with black children who were disobeying segregation rules in school, that parents had to have a meeting to discuss the situation, which eventually led to the events that took place during those few weeks. Thus, being robbed of their innocence by being exposed at such a young age to the horrendous reality consisting of blatant abuse and even murder at that time fueled the resistance and resulted in the eventual overthrow of Jim Crow laws. In this way, hearing this message from Fikes reminded me of how I see the younger generation today getting more involved in social and political matters. The last presidential election had such high voter turnout in part due to the participation of younger people who had been eligible to vote in the past but hadn't bothered to. This is exactly Fikes's point—with exposure to injustice at a younger age, more awareness is developed, and witnessing injustice, however brutal, is the only way to bring about fundamental change.

After hearing about the trauma Fikes had to endure, I better recognize how crucial it is to keep stories like hers alive in order to bring about social progress. The fact that our society has made so much progress in that black people are not mistreated nearly as much as they were in the 1960s—though clearly a tremendous amount of change is still needed—goes to show how not letting your struggles overtake you can benefit society as a whole. Despite the unsettling details of historical abuse endured by black people, it is necessary that every one of these details be shared as they keep our flame of rage alive and show us precisely why further social change needs to occur; we cannot afford to repeat the past. Perhaps most importantly, we must not let the message about how vital consistent awareness is be tossed aside, as this is the very reason why being and *staying* enraged is so important. Change only occurs when we're all committed to keeping our eyes open and educating ourselves about the events going on in the world in order to maintain that song in our hearts that reminds us why we're fighting.

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Using well-chosen, specific examples, this writer explores comedy as social commentary, arguing that Jon Stewart best exemplifies comedians' ability to meld comedy and politics in order to educate and entertain at the same time.

Jon Stewart: Comedy as Social Commentary

By Joshua Hume

Dr. Stein- Out of Bounds

In reference to the popular American holiday, Jon Stewart commented, "I celebrated Thanksgiving in an old-fashioned way. I invited everyone in my neighborhood to my house, we had an enormous feast, and then I killed them and took their land" (as cited in McGlynn, 2011). Stewart's joke embodies the present state of comedy, which has become synonymous with social commentary. In one punchline, Stewart was able to deliver a quick gag, making the audience simultaneously laugh and think about how their ancestors acquired their homeland in the first place. Jokes like Stewart's are becoming more and more prevalent, with programs like the *Daily Show With Trevor Noah*, *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*, and *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* all rising to immense popularity. No longer is comedy strictly juvenile fart jokes and cheap laughs, and no longer are political and social commentary strictly serious matters meant for grown men in suits with no sense of humor. Comedians are now able to combine the two genres, comedy and politics, and create an entertaining yet thought provoking medium of entertainment. This allows viewers to enjoy themselves while also becoming more educated about important political topics.

There are a plethora of serious political issues that impact people's lives in a deeply meaningful way. New issues are popping up every week, in addition to the many social injustices already taking place. After a long day of work, the question is whether people would rather listen to a very serious, formal press conference addressing the impending dilemma the United States is about to be thrust into, or watch the same subject matter presented in a quick-witted, slapstick production. Increasingly, people choose the latter. This is important because according to new studies, comedy has the ability to engage viewers with social issues more effectively than traditional news methods. Executive Director of the Center for Media and Social Impact, Caty Borum Chattoo, explained, "If it's too 'message-y', it won't work; social justice leaders need to allow comedians 'real creative freedom' to be entertaining for it to be effective" (as cited in Patton, 2020, para. 4). Clearly, entertainment is a key factor in keeping viewers engaged with the issue. In general, people do not like being preached to and will therefore be less likely to care about the issue if it is presented that way. Moreover, it's possible the current social commentary-comedy scene is only the tip of the iceberg because Borum Chattoo goes on to say that "We don't fully know what it looks like to examine social justice issues with really funny comedy" (as cited in Sangillo, 2017). Celebrities like Jon Stewart, Eddie Murphy, and George Carlin have been combining social issues and comedy for years, and the craft is still evolving. With stand-up comedy

specials on Netflix such as *Nannette* with Hannah Gadsby, *The Age of Spin* with Dave Chapelle, and *Homecoming King* with Hassan Minaj, the genre is reaching a new age of viewers. While the previous generation of comedians laid the groundwork for the medium on cable television, a younger generation of comedians is taking their talents to streaming platforms. Services like Netflix and Hulu are becoming more essential to younger viewers, meaning that social commentary has found a new generation of followers.

One of the most influential celebrities who uses comedy as social commentary is Jon Stewart. After years of bouncing around on television shows, Stewart got his first big break in 1999 with *The Daily Show*. A former stand-up comedian, he combined his quick-witted humor with the news of the day, providing comedic relief to viewers while also relaying important events. Stewart was never afraid to tackle serious issues, including the alleged 2006 rape case and surrounding controversy involving several Duke University lacrosse players. To demonstrate how effectively Stewart addressed social issues in a comedic way, Matthew E. Popkin (2012) pointed out that "it would be inappropriate for a comedy show to make light of the serious and sensitive topic of rape allegations. Instead, Stewart mock[ed] the actual news networks and their commentary shows in their reporting and handling of the issue" (p.1). News networks would transition from the weather segment to the sports segment, and then talk about the rape allegations. Stewart felt that the issue was much bigger than sports, and associating it with football, basketball, and other games was blatantly disrespectful. This exemplifies that even with the most sensitive or controversial topics, Stewart could successfully shine a light on the importance of an issue while also engaging the audience. In another instance, Stewart and the rest of his cast tackled the subject of Islamophobia after 9/11. In the segment Stewart wrote, "Even Stevphen-Islam vs. Christianity," Steve Carrell portrays a Christian man, while Stephen Colbert plays a Muslim man (https://www.cc.com/video/hsf2pw/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-even-stevphen-islam-vs-christianity). The two argue over which is the superior religion, calling each other stupid and insulting the other religion. In the end, they come to the conclusion that they are not so different after all, and that we should all allow people to practice their religion. Unfortunately, the topic that they agree on is trusting Jon Stewart with their money because, well, he's Jewish. This skit perfectly exemplifies the climate after 9/11 when tensions were high and there was widespread Islamophobia. Stewart was one of the first celebrities who used their platform to discuss this taboo topic. Moreover, the humor takes a stab at all religions, and therefore takes note of the intolerance they have for one another. The skit embodies his run on *The Daily Show*, perfectly blending controversy, real-world issues, and comedy. It allows viewers to laugh at the joke, while also examining their own set of beliefs. Although the tone is playful, it can lead viewers to engage in conversations about the bigger issues, such as the injustices happening around them. Without the laughs, the audience may never feel comfortable discussing such a sensitive and taboo topic.

Comedy being used with social commentary is still on the rise. Although it's been around as long as comedy itself, it's now reaching a new, younger audience, with Netflix and other streaming services enhancing its success. With one of the comedic pioneers now retired, Jon Stewart has handed the *Daily Show* over to Trevor Noah, who has continued the success of his predecessor's show by following in his footsteps and delivering social commentary in an entertaining manner. Considering the way this decade has kicked off with bleak news of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustices, it seems like everybody could use more comedic social commentary. Now would be the perfect time for comedians to use their talents to continue to educate the public while also making them crack a smile every once in a while.

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In this Heritage Unit essay, the author substantiates a bold claim that western culture has come to define and understand gender and sexuality as a result of Biblical depictions and dictates.

The Impact of the Portrayal of God

By Meghan Johnsson

Dr. Pojmann- Gender and Sexuality

When you picture God, what do you see? Do you imagine an older, white, masculine figure? I would assume that most Americans, like my agnostic self, would immediately picture God in this manner. The general, stereotypical portrayal of God is a powerful, masculine being who commands followers to abide by His rules. One consequence of such conceptions of God is the emphasis on the distinction between men and women, which unintentionally exposes the toxicity of such a binary system. We have repeatedly seen the idealistic masculine traits valued in religion, which translates to men acting as if they are God-like, lording their status over women. The Christian Bible promotes ideas that have ultimately favored the man over the woman. This obvious male hierarchy points to the idea that the masculine is ideal, and all else falls under the category of other. The way humans have interpreted the masculine image of God, and Christianity in general, creates an unhealthy, binary structure that historically has placed the man at the top of the hierarchy.

The subconscious masculine-centric perspective that is fundamental to Christianity translates to society's praise of masculine qualities and disapproval of feminine ones. Because so many people live their lives according to Biblical dictates and the Bible identifies God as a strong, masculine figure, people tend to value masculinity at the expense of femininity. Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, argues that when masculinity is at the forefront of life, especially when one lives their life according to the Bible, everything else becomes irrelevant and labeled as other. According to Butler, "women are also a 'difference'... to the always-already-masculine line subject" (18). This idealization of masculinity negates anything non-masculine and thus views contrasting ideas as lesser or unimportant. It is not only women who fall into the category of other; non-heterosexual males, men who do not portray stereotypical masculine traits, and non-white people often fit into this disregarded category, as well. Historically, people Butler described as belonging to the "other" category and therefore not the ideal masculine, straight, white male, which happens to be the common portrayal of God, are regarded as weak or fragile because of their lack of masculinity. Moreover, there are specific verses in the Bible that contribute to the idealization of masculinity. For instance, in Genesis, it is stated when describing the creation of womankind, "He [God] took one of his [Adam's] ribs and closed up its place with flesh" (Gen. 2.21). This displays the male-centric view of how humans were created, showing that the woman's very existence depended on the man. The Bible also states, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner" (Gen. 2.18). This further exemplifies how the woman,

according to Christianity, comes secondary to man. Labeling the woman in this instance as a helper devalues the characteristics of the woman and categorizes her as a tool that is useful to the man at his convenience. Although the interpretation of the Bible varies from Christian to Christian, the words are too often taken literally and thus promote the idealization of men as superior to all others and masculinity as preferable to femininity.

Furthermore, Christianity has promoted binary ideas with strict boundaries; the only recognized genders are woman and man and categorizing gender as binary has resulted in heterosexuality becoming the standard. Butler argues that sexuality has been standardized to mean that "gender is the effect of a regulatory practice that seeks to render gender identity uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality" (31). This dangerous assumption of heterosexuality, as well as the constant uniformity of identities because of it, leads to the pressure to conform to standards and guilt associated with non-straight feelings and actions. This correlates with the traditional religious beliefs that homosexuality is a sin and that marriage is strictly between a man and a woman. The disavowal of gender fluidity limits the possibilities and full potential of everyone to live their truth when it comes to gender and sexuality. Thus, accepting gender fludity is to completely separate gender and sex. Butler further explains that "when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free floating artifice, with consequences that man and masculine might as easily signify a female body as a male one, and a woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (6). To discard the binary way of thinking seems radical and illogical to some. This is because religion has normalized traditional ideas about gender and sexuality in our minds. The language used in the Bible correlating gender and sex contributes to the traditional binary system. Genesis states, "This one shall be called woman" (Gen. 2.23). Clearly, there is a strict correlation between gender and sex, with the assumption that the female God has created is a woman. For devout Christians, this makes it impossible to comprehend, let alone accept, gender fluidity. The resulting pressure to conform to the birth-assigned gender and sex limits the capacity for self-discovery and potential when it comes to gender identity and sexuality. The binary system, the designation of sex and gender at birth, and the assumption of heterosexuality that Christianity has contributed to places unnecessary restrictions on people who might flourish without such strict rules.

Although many people find Christianity a helpful tool to unlock inner peace and wellbeing, some people's interpretation of religion is unhealthy as it is used as an excuse for misogyny and toxic masculinity. The portrayal of God as a strong, muscular, powerful figure with masculine qualities combined with the Bible's depiction of the creation of woman is the perfect recipe for the cultivation of an unhealthy hierarchy that prioritizes masculinity and men and promotes the binary structure. Men often feel pressure to be strong and manly for the approval of God. Tara Westover's memoir, *Educated,* outlines how the obsession with winning the approval of God can turn unhealthy. For instance, Gene Westover was appalled by the costumes at Tara's

dance recital. She recalls that "he said Caroline's class was one of Satan's deceptions" (Westover 80). When he subsequently prohibits his daughter from the free expression associated with dancing, Gene demonstrates the underlying misogyny of forbidding her to express her mind and body through dance. Gene also emphasized the necessity of obeying God and acting as a true believer when he said that "by calling it 'dance,' [Satan] had convinced good Mormons to accept the sight of their daughters jumping about like whores in the Lord's house" (Westover 81). This misogynistic, offensive language is combined with a religious view in that he was calling Tara a whore for disobeying God by dancing. Even if Tara was going against her family's traditional religious beliefs by dancing, the derogatory terminology used by Gene and likeminded individuals often leads to women being relegated to lower status and this limits their potential for self-expression. Moreover, Tara's brother, Shawn, was influenced by his father's misogyny in the language he, too, used with her and most of the insults he hurled at Tara expressed what he saw as Tara's disobedience to God. For example, after one of Shawn's many abusive episodes directed at Tara, he yelled, "Now the [b***h] cries. Why? Because someone sees you for the [b***h] you are?" After his demeaning lecture, he accuses her of hypocrisy by stating, "You pretend to be saintly and churchish" (Westover 116). Here, Shawn displays his masculine power and superior status over Tara by physically and emotionally abusing her. Shawn used his religion as an excuse to punish Tara for what he saw as a lack of devotion to God. Westover's experiences and family structure may be extreme, but it is not uncommon for women to be called derogatory names on the basis of religion, or for the men in family units to assert dominance over them.

The portrayal of masculine as the ideal is not a new concept. In George Mosse's book, *The Image of Man*, he analyzes the toxicity of men who sought the approval of God by competing in duels in early European history. Specifically, he reports, "Calling for a judgment from God was embedded in a ritual of confrontation that stripped away uncontrolled violence and cruder symbols of domination" (Mosse 17-18). The assertion of dominance over other men was viewed as a demonstration of one's strong commitment to God. The belief that the commendation from God would be gained through violence is yet another example of how the interpretation of Christianity can be so unhealthy. Mosse goes on to assert that "the duel was fought for the sake of male honor" (Mosse 18). Not only were duels fought to show one's favor from God, but this idealization of masculinity for the sake of approval exemplifies the danger in how Christianity has been interpreted. Violence has become a defining masculine trait. Although violence is not condoned by most modern Christians, masculinity is still valued, particularly when it emphasizes male dominance. This toxic masculinity is a symptom of the unhealthy interpretation of Christianity, and leads to a social hierarchy where masculinity is deemed superior despite it being identified with negative traits.

Rewriting the Bible and other holy books that exhibit similar values is not possible due to the sacredness of the texts and the likely public outcry such an effort would entail. However, there are things that

people can do to counteract the negative effects of prioritizing masculinity and the binary structure of gender. First, since religious texts are open to interpretation, people should be encouraged to critically assess them, particularly when it comes to what the Bible has to say about gender, masculine concepts, and the binary structure. Also, it should be acknowledged that the negative consequences of religion does not diminish the positive, healthy aspects that religion offers. With this expanded viewpoint, the coexistence of Christianity and a non-binary, equality-focused structure is possible. In addition, focusing on the impact language used with an underlying religious tone has on hierarchical structure is important. Refraining from using derogatory terms to describe women who are not deemed holy would help diminish the idea that men are superior to women. Also, painting God as a non-binary conscience rather than a stereotypically masculine man would aid in addressing heteronormativity. The pressure to conform to an assigned gender and sex because of religious beliefs would be vastly limited if God was not associated with a gender and sex. There is no benefit to including gender and sex within religion, specifically Christianity, because of the toxicity of masculinity and the damage caused by the hierarchical binary structure with the portrayal of God as a man.

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On the Water, Women Find Their Value in the World

By Clare Kelly

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

Campaigns to empower women to join sports have gained popularity in recent years. This is due to the increase in women's equality movements worldwide. Although there has been much progress in this area, it is important to get young girls more specifically involved in rowing because rowing allows women to form deeper connections with the natural world, which subsequently betters their own mental health. The rowing experience is beneficial for both the well-being of women and nature as women develop a better appreciation for the environment through their time on the water. The connection formed through rowing allows young female rowers to realize the beauty in nature and because of that, they can recognize it in themselves. They realize on the water that societal expectations are not what matters, and they translate that into their own lives. Simply put, more women should get involved in rowing.

Through the sport of rowing, women appreciate the simplistic elements of nature that are often overlooked. Water, for example, creates a calming effect. Each morning these women experience the birth of a new day as they watch the sun rise over the water at the beginning of their practice. This seemingly simple moment leaves them in awe of the strength and beauty of nature. Therefore, women who row are likely to value nature more than women who do not because they are always seeing its most exquisite moments. Women use the water for their own benefit in rowing and this creates a greater appreciation for nature. This allows women to reflect on the value of nature in their own lives as they contemplate its beauty. For this reason women can better understand and appreciate their own natural beauty. They additionally understand nature's importance in relation to the greater world. In *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson argues that "The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded by the environment" (5). Carson is explaining that for most of the earth's history humans and the environment have had a symbiotic relationship. However, over time humans lost this connection with nature as they began to build a world that isolated them from it. Through rowing, women have been able to regain this long lost connection. Since women rowers appreciate the natural environment of a body of water and its surroundings, they feel empathy with the earth, and are therefore more inclined to advocate for its conservation. Due to this stronger connection, women rowers are more likely to refrain from harming the environment in the future.

They additionally become more appreciative of the simple moments that nature has to offer, such as fog rising off glass-like water. Being able to experience these kinds of peaceful moments is therapeutic. These moments allow women to become more focused on their purpose in sports and other areas of their life.

The experiences of female rowers are not isolated but rather allow them to become close to their teammates. Female rowers develop an intricate form of teamwork that reflects how different parts of nature work together. Just as different parts of nature interact to create a beautiful world, women rowers work with each other to synchronize each stroke. Rowing benefits women's social relationships because it creates a team environment where women need to work together to attain their goals. This in turn benefits women's mental health because it emphasizes the importance of women supporting each other. Women are not only able to appreciate what they accomplish as part of a team in rowing, but they understand the value of nature in these accomplishments. Unlike other team sports, women in rowing act organically. Their movements need to be synchronized, powerful, and methodical. These movements are aligned with the water, in order to use the water to their benefit for added speed. In other sports women do not interact as deeply with natural elements. These rowers work to be one with each other and with nature. They are one, and every woman plays a vital role in the movement of the boat. In "The Death of Nature," Carolyn Merchant states, "From the obscure origins of our species, human beings have lived in daily, immediate, organic relation with the natural order for their sustenance" (269). Merchant further shares, "An organically oriented mentality in which female principles played an important role was undermined and replaced by a mechanically oriented mentality that either eliminated or used female principles in an exploitative manner" (270). Merchant is saying that humans have lost their connection to the natural world. Female rowers have reformed this organic relationship with nature and with each other. In rowing, women are interdependent because they all must be in sync and putting forth their best effort to reach their goals. This encourages them to create an environment with the best possible outcome. They are empowered by the examples of successful interaction they see in nature when they are on the water. If it gets windy the water begins to change its form. When women are rowing, they see how one element of nature changes and how another part is affected. They understand how their actions in the boat must be in sync or they will throw off the delicate balance they need to be successful. Women take these lessons from nature and integrate them into their sport and their lives.

Rowers would not be able to perform their sport without the water nature provides. Women who row know that the water is never the same. Often it can be windy, which creates wavy, choppy water. Other times, it can be smooth and easy to make each stroke. Women rowers recognize the immense power of nature and they learn to respect its different states. According to Annie Dillard, the author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, "The world is wilder than that in all directions, more dangerous and bitter, more extravagant and bright" (274). The essence of Dillard's argument is that too many people take nature for granted and do not really understand its

significance. She is right in saying that people must actively go outside of their comfort zone and experience nature in all different areas of the world. She is subtly saying that people could experience more joy in the simplicity of nature than the busy routine of their everyday life. In the constantly changing environment on the water, women who row understand the importance of using what already exists to solve their problems. They use what they have to create the best possible outcome, allowing them to become increasingly resourceful, which creates perseverance and better mental health than other sports are capable of providing. Women understand that each day in the boat will be different and they therefore focus internally, as they cannot control what nature does; they can only control their response to it. This allows women in outdoor sports to develop a stronger mindset than those who are constantly exposed to the same elements inside and the perseverance women gain through rowing sets the stage for greater success in life. They can face challenges in their professional, educational, and personal lives with a much better mindset than those who have not been exposed to the changing reality of an outdoor sport. They are ready to accept change because they constantly see changes in rowing. Additionally, when women see negative or photoshopped images in the media, they are less likely to compare themselves to such women. They cannot control how other women look and they understand that they need to focus on themselves to be successful in their everyday lives. They learn acceptance of nature, themselves, and others. They fully understand how important it is to find beauty and strength in themselves.

Some may think that participating in rowing is not necessary to foster a relationship with the environment. They would argue that people who are sitting outside form the same type of connection when experiencing nature. However, this fails to take into account how much women in rowing interact with water, other natural elements, and each other. Without water there would be nothing to row on, without the sun there would be no clear direction to row in, and without the wind, there would be no way to develop such extreme perseverance. Rowers find it impossible to dismiss nature. Some people do not respect the relationship between female rowers and nature only because they have not experienced the intricate relationship with nature that female rowers have. Others might argue that other activities allow women to connect with nature. They would explain that someone who plays soccer, for example, experiences nature in the same way and reaps the benefits. This is not the case. Soccer players simply exist in the same space as nature. They do not work with the natural world, like rowers do, to play their sport. By interacting with natural elements women in rowing form deeper relationships with the environment they are in than people who play other outdoor sports would.

Women who participate in outdoor sports, such as rowing, reap greater benefits than those who do not. They have a better state of well-being, which allows them to be more successful in their lives as a whole. Additionally, they are more well-rounded and aware of the importance of environmentalism. They focus more

efforts on sustainability because they understand nature's importance in their sport and appreciate its value to the world as a whole. Women learn from nature and understand how it represents their own lives. They learn to understand their own beauty and how society overlooks it. This is similarly represented in nature, as many people in today's world forget to stop and take in nature's beauty, too. Women need to be able to form this kind of connection to foster relationships with themselves, with others, and with nature. For this necessary to occur, more women should become involved in rowing.

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This winter reading response essay skillfully compares two cult leaders, Jim Jones and David Koresh, and identifies the similar strategies they used to develop a mass following. The analysis of specific examples provides convincing support for her argument.

How Jim Jones and David Koresh Used a Prophecy to Brainwash Church Followers

By Madison Kenney

Prof. Simonds- True Crime

When one thinks about a prominent cult leader with a mass following, the infamous case of Jim Jones and Jonestown likely comes to mind. Jim Jones, the master manipulator, managed to gain a cult following during his time as the church leader of Peoples Temple, but the question of how he was able to become so renowned even after death, remains. Much like Jim Jones, David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians, was able to successfully recruit members and take advantage of their vulnerabilities. Jones and Koresh are eerily similar in that they both preyed on fear to manipulate followers into doing practically anything they wanted. Two corrupt religious leaders, Jones and Koresh, were able to gain a cult following by using manipulation and fear to their advantage so that they could better control the minds of vulnerable followers and thereby gained notoriety.

Cult leaders often target powerless individuals who yearn for a sense of belonging so that they may recruit followers who are willing to completely devote themselves to the leader's cause. Cult leaders, such as Jim Jones and David Koresh, used many manipulative brainwashing techniques to achieve their ultimate goal: power over their followers. These two men deceived people into thinking that nothing can be true outside of the cult's core belief system. For a cult to captivate an individual, the cult leader almost always enchants followers by claiming to be a powerful leader who people should follow and admire. Jeff Guinn, the author of *The Road to Jonestown: Jim Jones and Peoples Temple*, explains that for Jones, this involved how he realized he was the chosen one: "Jones would claim that 'a little old lady' dressed in white called him over and said, 'I perceive that you are a prophet. . . . You shall be heard all around the world, and tonight you shall begin your ministry" (Guinn 141). Jim Jones was so cunning that he had hundreds of people convinced that he possessed the power to heal and was a true prophet of God. He did this with various supposed healings, in which he would use chicken parts to persuade an audience that he could, in fact, cure cancer (Guinn 139). With an intrigued audience in awe of Jones's special healing powers, he was able to keep the gimmick going right up until the very end when the cult members drank cyanide in Jonestown. Jones's undeniable ability to manipulate allowed him to gain power over his mass following. By performing various staged healings and convincing people of faith that he was a prophet, Jones successfully drew people in by the hundreds. Jones's numerous deception and manipulation tactics convinced church followers that they should be devoting their

lives to him as a prophet of God. Jim Jones's use of gimmicks prove that individuals can be controlled with ease if they are in a vulnerable state of mind and are willing to follow commands. When individuals believe that there is a powerful leader worth following, they will go so far as to devote their entire lives to the cult and its belief system.

Jim Jones kept his followers in the church cult by promising to fulfill all of their basic needs, such as health and educational needs, as long as they remained devout. He wanted his followers, especially those with no support from home and those with a lack of access to healthcare, to feel a sense of stability and security through Peoples Temple. Jim Jones would frequently provide his followers with a home cooked meal, leaving them feeling satisfied and taken care of, as if they were his own family members attending a traditional Sunday dinner. Jeff Guinn points out that "to some, who'd survived ghetto life or stretches of living hand-to-mouth on the street, the food provided was better than any they'd previously had" (Guinn 416). This is just one example that describes Jones's efforts to keep followers reliant on his cult, but he went even so far as to send ambitious students to community college in Santa Rosa, with their education entirely paid for by Peoples Temple (Guinn 404). Jim Jones provided for his followers and thus convinced them that the Peoples Temple had everything they needed. Brainwashed church followers therefore felt compelled to remain loyal, no matter the circumstance. Blind devotion meant complete willingness to obey Jim Jones, giving him more power and authority over members of Peoples Temple.

Like Jim Jones, David Koresh was able to convince his followers that he, too, was a prophet, and that the world was coming to an end. Koresh had a similar preaching style to Jim Jones, and mirrored Jones's tactics of engaging followers through hours long sermons that included singing and dancing, which is generally common among cults (Pearson et al.). Michael Hinds, the author of the article "Koresh Charmed Cult Members With Persuasion," writes, "Koresh is said to have dazzled his recruits with Bible lectures that could last 17 hours, and it was the certainty of his message and doomsday prophecies that attracted fundamentalists" (Hinds). David Koresh's long-lasting sermons allowed for complete control over his followers' minds, keeping them all engaged and listening to his plans for doomsday and what would happen when the world finally came to an end. Church followers were not permitted to leave while Koresh was preaching these hours-long sermons and thus, by the end, they were mentally exhausted and thoroughly brainwashed. Religious people searching for a modern leader to follow found themselves at the hands of Jim Jones and David Koresh, who knew exactly how to please followers and maintain their loyalty and attention. Such people of faith often search for a leader to follow, so that they may practice their religion in a more modern way with interactive sermons and church activities to keep members involved in a close-knit community. These individuals seek to surround themselves with those who share the same beliefs and are also willing to devote their time to like-

minded people. Similar to Jim Jones, David Koresh was also aiming to maintain loyalty from his cult followers and he did this by becoming their religious role model whom they admired and therefore followed.

Jones and Koresh sought out religious individuals who would be willing to listen to a prophet. A prophet of God is believed to be a messenger who relays God's teachings to people, thus making the religion relevant in modern day society. However, Jones's and Koresh's claims to be prophets were not the only tactics used to draw in a crowd. Jim Jones introduced the threat of nuclear war, which he claimed was relayed to him by God himself. The nuclear war he warned his followers about was a modern doomsday prophecy that he claimed would kill all of his followers unless they moved away with him to California. Jeff Guinn explains that "Jones began telling Temple associate pastors about a terrible prophetic vision. Jones claimed to his subordinates that it had been revealed to him America would soon be under nuclear attack" (240). Jim Jones not only used his alleged prophetic vision to convince loyal followers to leave Indiana and relocate to California, but he also used this fear tactic to make himself seem like a savior. This manipulation tactic made his followers more dependent on Jones, considering they were being asked to leave everything familiar behind to start a new life across the country. Jones's followers felt that they owed him complete devotion since he had convinced them all that he was a prophet of God, and Jones took advantage of this to better grasp control over his followers' lives.

David Koresh acted in a very similar manner. An ex-follower, Joann Vaega, relayed stories about how Koresh convinced his followers that "the end of the world was coming," and that they were "the chosen people to survive because David [Koresh] was the son of God" (qtd. in Pearson et al.). Koresh's claims projected fear into susceptible followers, but in proclaiming himself the son of God, he was simultaneously calming those fears so long as they followed him. Because only he could save them, this further glorified David Koresh and his abilities in the eyes of his devout followers. Both Jim Jones and David Koresh used this manipulative tactic to control their followers who believed that only these two men could save them from an inevitable fate. The parallels between the fear tactics of Koresh and Jones are undoubtedly similar, and both kept their followers entranced. They used manipulation and fear to gain a sense of trust from their followers, allowing for connection and devotion on a deeper level.

It is evident that people join cults because of the leaders' manipulative tactics that target fears, and their false claims to be prophets. Jim Jones's outlandish abilities and claims to be a prophet with visions of the future got people interested. Once they went to see the act for themselves, they were mesmerized by what they experienced, similar to an audience being entranced by a magician's ability to perform tricks that seem impossible. Between Jim Jones's staged healings and David Koresh's claims to be a direct descendant of God, religious people searching for someone admirable to follow as a way of worshipping God Himself, found themselves entranced by these powerful cult leaders. David Koresh similarly gained a cult following by

claiming to be a prophet, and he used this claim to target devout religious followers who would certainly be interested in hearing what he had to say about doomsday. People wanted to feel as if they were a part of a unified group, and wanted to be surrounded by individuals who were like-minded and shared similar beliefs. It is this strong desire to belong that allowed Jones and Koresh to use deception and manipulation to take over the lives of vulnerable individuals. These individuals who were entranced by cult leaders Jim Jones and David Koresh ultimately developed a warped perception of reality and this meant that it was far too late to turn away from the entrapment that is a cult following.

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This writer explores the relationship between changing ourselves and changing the world. Using contemporary storytellers as role models, she offers a nuanced use of the sources to argue that critical examination of personal and national identity politics can help us develop a unity of values in order to bring about a more just world.

Our Leadership is Sorely Lacking

By Sally King

Prof. Godson-Glynn- Be the Change

We are living in an era that is defined by a combination of crises. This is exemplified by a deeply divisive political climate, a health crisis unprecedented in the modern era, economic turmoil, poverty and food instability ravaging disenfranchised communities, police violence, and protests in the streets. As many of us strive to become educated about what is happening around us and dive deeper into history, we are inclined to wonder what we can do to make this world more humane. After analyzing the stories of social justice activists, it is clear that those who regularly examine and question their own backgrounds and values are most likely to hold themselves accountable in a manner that empowers positive change. While some may say that internal and external change are unrelated topics, careful examination of changemakers, whether historical figures or contemporary activists, demonstrates a resounding truth: personal and societal transformation are almost always co-existent. Changemakers understand the connections between strong leadership qualities, a sense of positive values, and recognition of the merit and importance of storytelling. If all human history can be characterized by conflict between humanity's best instincts and its worst ones, then each of us is called to play a role in ensuring that the moral arc of the universe bends toward justice. If we are to be agents of positive change -- in ourselves, our communities, and in our world -- we must approach complex issues with a critical eye and a hopeful heart and recover not unity of thought, but unity of values that align on the side of justice.

Strong leadership, common values, and recognition of the merit of storytelling all relate to one another. Several of our challenges today can be traced back to the breakdown of common values among those in leadership positions. Truly virtuous leaders focus on values that are humane and just, and tap into those values in a way that empowers and inspires others to rally around a common cause. These leaders understand how unity of values can transcend a moment and create a movement. Good leaders also recognize that the simple act of sharing one's story can be a life-changing experience, both for the storyteller and the listener. Three pieces of writing that demonstrate each of these elements are Ta-Nehisi Coates's "The Case for Reparations," Guy Raz's "Why Can't We Talk About An Injustice: An Interview with Bryan Stevenson," and Tara Westover's *Educated.*

Strong leadership qualities such as integrity, compassion, honesty, courage, and humility are integral to positive changemaking. In "The Case for Reparations" Ta-Nehisi Coates reminds us that we must demand

these qualities in our leaders and help build a coalition of like-minded changemakers. His piece explores leadership in an internal context, as Coates tells the stories of people who have fought for justice, but it also explores leadership in the broader American historical context. In fact, his article could be considered a reflection on American leadership and responsibility. Coates discusses the personal leadership journey of Clyde Ross, a Black World War II veteran who organized a grassroots movement against racist housing practices. Like many homeowners of color in Chicago, Ross had purchased his home on contract, a highly discriminatory practice that was one of the only ways disenfranchised populations could enter the housing market. Coates describes the manipulation that eager buyers like Ross endured when he writes:

> Contract sellers used every tool at their disposal to pilfer from their clients. They scared white residents into selling low. They lied about properties' compliance with building codes, then left the buyer responsible when city inspectors arrived. They presented themselves as real-estate brokers, when in fact they were the owners. They guided their clients to lawyers who were in on the scheme (Coates).

Ross and his fellow community members' determination and resilience led to a non-violent fight for equal rights. In Coates's words:

> . . . fight Clyde Ross did. In 1968 he joined the newly formed Contract Buyers League—a collection of black homeowners on Chicago's South and West Sides, all of whom had been locked into the same system of predation. There was Howell Collins, whose contract called for him to pay $25,500 for a house that a speculator had bought for $14,500. There was Ruth Wells, who'd managed to pay out half her contract, expecting a mortgage, only to suddenly see an insurance bill materialize out of thin air—a requirement the seller had added without Wells's knowledge. The Contract Buyers League fought back (Coates).

Ross and the Contract Buyers League, which grew to include over 500 members, went out into high income white suburbs to inform residents about the contract lending trade. The group then brought a charge against the contract sellers, making strong demands for reparations. The group used this tactic to highlight how basic moral values had been disregarded, and they charged those in power with crimes against their community. This nonviolent but determined and strategic form of protest against injustice is a model for all of us. We would do well to learn from the example of the Contract Buyers League, and to learn from the humility and resilience of grassroots leaders like Ross.

Coates juxtaposes Ross's story with that of the narrative surrounding the American dream. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said in an interview with NBC, "I believe we ought to do all we can and seek to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps" (0:16:40-0:16:52). While some people find that they can pull themselves up by their

bootstraps, others face very significant barriers in their attempts to do so. Upward mobility has historically

been much more difficult for those who are marginalized. In his piece, Coates emphasizes America's status as

the most powerful nation in the world and argues that this status demands great humility -- as the saying

goes, with great power comes great responsibility. The story of the Contract Buyers League and their fight for

reparations suggests we are in a constant battle to fully live up to our founding ideals. We must be able to

approach both evils and triumphs with the values of honesty and humility if racism is to be eradicated. Coates

argues that "the idea of reparations is frightening not simply because we might lack the ability to pay. The idea

of reparations threatens something much deeper—America's heritage, history, and standing in the world"

(16). Surely, we can honor the countless great Americans who fought to make this country a freer society

while still holding ourselves accountable for errors and sins. If we approach these issues openly, we will be

respected for it. Coates notes that an America that is willing to have courageous, difficult conversations in the

name of more humane treatment and more compassion is a better, kinder America. In discussing reparations,

he states:

> Perhaps no number can fully capture the multi-century plunder of black people in America.
> Perhaps the number is so large that it can't be imagined, let alone calculated and dispensed.
> But I believe that wrestling publicly with these questions matters as much as—if not more
> than—the specific answers that might be produced. An America that asks what it owes its
> most vulnerable citizens is improved and humane. An America that looks away is ignoring not
> just the sins of the past but the sins of the present and the certain sins of the future. More
> important than any single check cut to any African American, the payment of reparations
> would represent America's maturation out of the childhood myth of its innocence into a
> wisdom worthy of its founders (Coates).

A wisdom worthy of our founders: this is what is always possible, but only probable when we confront our

national sins with integrity, courage, humility, honesty, and compassion. Strong positive values help keep both

a person and a country honorable. If we want unity, we must act on at least several near universally accepted

ideals: expanding freedom and liberty rather than restricting it, opening our arms to our brothers and sisters

rather than crossing them, treating others with simple respect and goodness, aiming to create a more just

society, and leaving better circumstances for our children than the ones we grew up with.

How can we achieve this humility and honesty? Author and activist Bryan Stevenson argues that

because we live in a deeply complex world, it is necessary to acknowledge and candidly discuss both our

strengths and weaknesses, so that we do not ignore the problems in our personal and public histories. In an

NPR interview, Stevenson contends that "we actually have never developed a political tradition that values

remedy, that values apology, that values humility... While we are good at cheering our triumphs, we are not

always good at talking about the sins or the cruelties." He emphasizes that "this country will be a healthier place, a stronger place, when we actually embrace the humility that is required when you're trying to do complex things" (Stevenson). In saying that humility is *required* to do these things, Stevenson understands that humility and by extension, honesty, is a necessity if we are to achieve any form of reconciliation both with our past and with each other. We must own our history--all of it, the good and the bad. Stevenson notes that frank ownership of right and wrong is something that we are sorely lacking in many ways right now. He says:

> I believe that our identity is at risk. That when we actually don't care about these difficult things, the positive and wonderful things are nonetheless implicated. We love innovation. We love technology. We love creativity. We love entertainment, but ultimately, those realities are shadowed by suffering, abuse, degradation, marginalization. And for me, it becomes necessary to integrate the two (Stevenson).

A key point implied here is that both an honest and open-minded examination and personal and national identity are hallmarks of any truly successful movement for change. An ability to approach issues without prejudice and assess situations honestly and with pure intent are skills in our best interest to cultivate. It is not only expedient to approach external issues this way but also to examine our identity narratives, both personal and public, with humility and honesty.

A final key idea that Stevenson expresses is that every human being has an innate sense of worth, not necessarily based on their skills or talents (although those things have value) but instead simply comes from each person's humanity. He states, "our humanity depends on everyone's humanity. Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done... And because of that, there's this basic human dignity that must be respected by law" (Stevenson). This mindset is so full of the grace, empathy, and redemptive possibility that is sorely lacking in today's typical public discourse. He goes on to say, "Ultimately, you judge the character of a society, not by how they treat their rich and powerful and the privileged, but how they treat the poor, the condemned, the incarcerated because it's in that nexus that we actually begin to understand truly profound things about who we are" (Stevenson). Stevenson's words are who we can be at our best. They are who we strive to be--who we need to be. And that change can only come when we shift our identity narratives from self-serving ones to open-hearted ones.

The simple gesture of sharing one's story can be a life-saving act, both for the person sharing and the people listening. Sharing one's story can, and often does, inspire others to act. To recognize parts of yourself in another person can be very affirming, especially if that someone is a virtuous leader. Sharing stories lifts a weight off our shoulders, providing us freedom and liberation. Sharing these stories also blurs the line between the teller and the listener, empowering and encouraging each along the way. In *Educated* Tara Westover details her journey toward finding her values and intrinsic worth through expressing her story and

truth. In the process, she not only betters herself; she strives to improve the world around her. Testifying in this way is an act of great courage in part because to share their story, they must have enough self-worth to listen to their own internal voice above external ones. Westover says, "My life was narrated for me by others. Their voices were forceful, emphatic, absolute. It had never occurred to me that my voice might be as strong as theirs" (197) until she began her journey towards self-discovery by going off to college. In many ways, Westover's education emboldens her because it encourages her to engage in the type of critical thinking that allows her to develop a voice of her own. As her courses challenge her previously conceived notions of truth, she realizes that no one, including her domineering father, truly has all the answers. Her courage grows as she realizes:

> Everything I had worked for, all my years of study, had been to purchase for myself this one privilege: to see and experience more truths than those given to me by my father, and to use those truths to construct my own mind. I had come to believe that the ability to evaluate many ideas, many histories, many points of view, was at the heart of what it means to self-create. If I yielded now, I would lose more than an argument. I would lose custody of my own mind (304).

Like Coates and Steveson, Westover argues there is great value in owning one's story. She highlights the idea that coming to terms with one's identity narrative is a form of liberation. For Westover, this connection materializes in a classroom lecture. She recalls, "The lecturer . . . said positive liberty is self-mastery -- the rule of the self, by the self. To have positive liberty, he explained, is to take control of one's own mind; to be liberated from irrational fears and beliefs, from addictions, superstitions and all other forms of self-coercion" (256). The quiet confidence of owning one's truth also leads to a clearer way of thinking. People tend to act irrationally and erratically when they are deeply fearful. Owning one's story can prevent this kind of fear. In the context of sharing one's story, fear only holds us back. The truth shall set us free. In Westover's case it frees her from the metaphorical and intellectual chains of her upbringing and helps her see the world in a new light. This gift is available to all of us, but only if we choose it.

In this day and age, it is important to highlight the importance of evaluating all factors independently of ego and fear, and then constructing a point of view based on a rational thought process, not one dictated by those force-feeding us a certain perspective. This is of course relevant to Westover's story, but it is also relevant to all of us. We ought to foster the crucial skills of introspection and critical thinking. As Ta-Nehisi Coates and Bryan Stevenson suggest, we sometimes turn to others to remind us how we should be thinking, rather than doing the critical thinking ourselves. Strong leadership requires putting the work in and holding ourselves and others respectfully accountable.

When we acknowledge the connection between personal and public transformation, we realize that all three elements of positive changemaking -- strong leadership, common values, and recognition of the merit of storytelling -- are within our reach. A final crucial element of creating positive change is understanding and believing that we have this power, and an openness when we are called to serve something much bigger than ourselves. Congressman John Lewis, a legend of the nonviolence and Civil Rights movements, believed in a concept he called "The Spirit of History." Lewis stated:

> This force is on the side of what is good, of what is right and just. It is the essence of the moral force of the universe, and at certain points in life, in the flow of human existence and circumstances, this force, this spirit finds you or selects you, it chases you down, and you have no choice; you must allow yourself to be used, to be guided by this force and to carry out what must be done (64).

Transformative leaders come from everywhere. Some become icons and reach great levels of fame, but some lead in more subtle, perhaps less glamorous ways. These people are all around us—people who embrace good-hearted ideals in their personal and public journeys and share their identity narratives as a means of inviting others to join them. This is what we should all strive for—a service-driven life, dedicated to lifting others up. It is difficult in dark times to recognize all the light around us and within us. But the best place to start is with the people in our families, communities, and workplaces, who are ready and willing to serve the Spirit of History.

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For this reflection piece, the author deeply considers the ways in which she is similar to St. Francis and the leper
with whom he came into contact, offering some original insights for the reader to consider how
they can personally address social inequality in their own lives.

Often the Saint, Rarely the Leper: A Look into How to Overcome Inequality

By Lillian Kronau

Dr. Stein- Out of Bounds

The standard way of thinking about equality has it that everyone deserves it, but not everyone is willing to accept their part in the perpetuation of inequality in society. Common sense seems to dictate that everyone must play a part in achieving equal opportunity for all whether in regards to race, gender, religion, or economic status. However, the harsh reality is that not many people can place their most vulnerable selves in a position to combat issues of injustice within society. Until you put yourself in someone else's shoes, which for many of us is impossible, primarily due to the fact that we are separate people living separate lives, you will never truly understand what they're going through. The best thing we can do, then, is to develop empathy because it forces people to realize how they play a role in broadening or diminishing equality.

While many people are quick to point to current leaders like Barack Obama and Malala Yousafzai when they identify those who try to address issues of civil rights, we can also look to past leaders, like St. Francis, who serves as a role model for demonstrating what justice looks like. In recounting the story of St. Francis's life, Thomas of Celano notes one particular event that stands out: "he met a leper one day. Made stronger than himself, he came up and kissed him" (35). St. Francis put himself at the same level as a leper and made the leper feel equal to him. In doing so, he was able to empathize completely with the leper, which created this sense of equality. This action resonated with me for several days after first reading about it because I began to look at myself and of all the ways in which I am similar to both St.Francis and the leper.

I am an upper middle class white woman with strong ties to my Christian faith. When I am viewed or treated as inferior to or less capable than men, I am like the leper, who was constantly viewed as subordinate in society. When I am given opportunities without any added effort expended, I am like St.Francis, who, despite still facing turbulent times such as deep hostility from his father, had it much easier than the leper. When I am attacked for my beliefs in God, I am like St. Francis, who was ridiculed and harassed for his strong ties to his faith. When I feel as though my faith is the right thing to base my life upon, I am once again like St. Francis whose faith was steadfast. When I walk streets freely without fear, I am St. Francis, who unlike the leper, could walk the streets with less anxiety about what reprisals he would encounter. When I can afford health insurance and a good quality of life, I am St. Francis, who despite renouncing his family's wealth, lived a better quality of life than the leper. When making friends is easy due to my commonalities to my peers, I am

St. Francis, who was able to fellowship with brothers who shared his beliefs and interests. In reflecting on my experiences, I can put myself in both the leper's and St. Francis's shoes.

I can see how at times I am at a disadvantage compared to others due to my religion or gender; however, more often than not I am at an advantage for many reasons I used to think were out of my control. I chose not to empathize with those less fortunate, and instead coasted through life based on my advantages. I chose to ignore the inequalities that are still present. I chose to ignore the leper; however, I also wasn't fully choosing St. Francis. I realized that St. Francis's ability to empathize with the leper demonstrates how we can increase equality today: those who are advantaged must empathize with the modern day lepers and accept them as equals. Further, people with advantages should advocate for those who do not have them.

Acknowledging how a privileged person contributes to the perpetuation of bias is the first step. The second is to use one's advantages to advocate for others. The third is to practice fairness by accepting that we are all created the same. St. Francis would agree as Thomas of Celano tells us that "he fixed this in his heart: to the best of his ability…first practicing before teaching the gospel counsel" (36). Before I can preach about equality and a level playing field for all, I must practice empathy in my own life, and not just accept the injustices I used to let slip by simply because it was easier.

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In this well-researched paper using a plethora of academic sources, the author examines women's incarceration experience, arguing that not only is their treatment inhumane and therefore unjust, but it is also ineffective as it leads to increased recidivism.

Injustice Within Women's Incarceration:

The Inhumane Treatment of Women in American Correctional Institutions

By Isabella LaCroix

Prof. Rody-Wright- Incarceration

The reality of the operations inside a women's correctional institution is often shielded from the public and, instead, the experience is glamorized by shows like *Orange is the New Black*.[1] Many people are unaware of the social justice issues occurring in these institutions, including their unwillingness to provide sanitary products, sexual abuse, and the inability of incarcerated people to communicate with others outside of the institution. Because correctional institutions do not utilize the tools necessary to reform incarcerated women, 68.1% of women recidivate after five years of living free, suggesting that these institutions exist to serve as a temporary way of keeping crime off the streets.[2] The physical and mental mistreatment of women in correctional facilities further exacerbates the adversity these women previously faced in the free world and which they bring with them to prison, creating a negative environment that inhibits the rehabilitation of these women. By withholding products and services from women behind bars, correctional institutions undermine the ability of these women to reform. It is essential that these women are treated properly in order to improve their mental headspace, motivating them toward rehabilitation instead of prompting them to believe they are unworthy, which is what the lack of these provisions creates.

In women's correctional institutions, the products for personal hygiene, aside from soap and toothpaste, are very scarce and women are, in fact, often deprived of feminine hygiene products. According to previously incarcerated Kimberly Haven, "Thirty-eight states have no laws requiring the provision of menstrual products to incarcerated people," so quite frequently, these women go without adequate products.[3] Acquiring such items is a difficult task, as it is sometimes at the will of the guard or requires all of one's commissary, making women unable to get other essential products like shampoo.[4] As a result, imprisoned women are forced to substitute pads or tampons with provisions from their cells, like the padding of their mattresses,

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[1] Leigh Cuen, "Here's What Relationships Are Really Like Inside a Women's Prison," Mic, Bustle Media Group, June 16, 2016, accessed April 19, 2021, https://www.mic.com/articles/146276/here-s-what-relationships-are-really-like-inside-a-women-s-prison.

[2] "Fact Sheet on Justice Involved Women in 2016," National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women, 2016, accessed April 8, 2021, https://cjinvolvedwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Fact-Sheet.pdf.

[3] Kimberly Haven, "Why I'm Fighting for Menstrual Equity in Prison," American Civil Liberties Union, November 8, 2019, accessed March 9, 2021, https://www.aclu.org/news/prisoners-rights/why-im-fighting-for-menstrual-equity-in-prison/.

[4] Haven, "Why I'm Fighting for Menstrual Equity in Prison."

which can lead to health issues like infection, Toxic Shock Syndrome, or, in severe cases, the need for a hysterectomy.[5] Not only is it a health risk to use such makeshift items, they are inadequate to stop menstrual flow. When that happens, the women will likely be targeted because a period stain demonstrates weakness. They are also embarrassed and cancel visits from their attorneys or families because period staining makes them feel vulnerable. They do not want their families to see the inhumane conditions they live in and to inflict another reason for them to worry.[6] Due to the unwillingness of institutions to spare money for menstrual products, the health, confidence, and willingness to communicate with others is destroyed for these women. The failure of these institutions to provide feminine hygiene products places an enormous strain on the progress of these women toward a life of freedom because it forces them to make decisions about their health that may be deadly, fight with other incarcerated women over products, or miss out on an important meeting with an attorney that may affect their sentence. Women cannot control menstruation, and it is abhorrent to use the withholding of these products as a weapon against them, especially when they may die from this inhumane deprivation.

While pregnant incarcerated women do not have to worry about menstruation, they do worry, instead, about the progress of their pregnancies. As reported by researcher Ginette Ferszt, "it is estimated that approximately 6% of women in local jails, 4-5% in state prisons and 3% in federal prisons are pregnant at the time of their arrest."[7] Because pregnant women make up such a small percentage of these institution's populations, their needs, along with those of the baby, are often not met. Ferszt explains that "inadequate prenatal care, poor nutrition, lack of adequate exercise, fresh air and sanitary conditions…negatively affect the pregnancy as well as the newborn."[8] Proper conditions are essential to the birth of a healthy child. When women are unable to access prenatal care, viable foods such as fruits and vegetables, or fresh air, for instance, the child is at an increased risk for health problems such as premature birth. When it is time for the baby to be born, women are shackled and brought to the hospital, accompanied by guards. In some states, the mother is always shackled—before, during, and after birth—despite having committed non-violent offences in most cases. Nurses and other medical professionals are unable to provide adequate care to these mothers and their babies because of these restraints, resulting in possible injury or death. Shackling does not fully allow the physicians to help the mother move to a better delivery position or assess the conditions of the mother, increasing the likelihood that they miss complications like hypertension.[9] Because the restraint rules and other safety precautions are usually dictated by the institution, injuries that occur could be prevented with a change

[5] Haven, "Why I'm Fighting for Menstrual Equity in Prison."
[6] Haven, "Why I'm Fighting for Menstrual Equity in Prison."
[7] Ginette G. Ferszt, "Who Will Speak for Me? Advocating for Pregnant Women in Prison," *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice* 12, no. 4 (2011): 254, accessed March 9, 2021, doi: 10.1177/1527154411424615.
[8] Ferszt, "Who Will Speak for Me?," 254.
[9] Ferszt, "Who Will Speak for Me?," 225.

in policy that provides a safer means of delivery.[10] Institutions that are unwilling to implement safer policies for both the mother and the child initiate the start of a rough life for the child due to shackling during birth and the deprivation of essential conditions for the baby to thrive, such as clean air, sanitary living conditions, prenatal care, and nutrition for the mother. Babies born in correctional facilities are often malnourished, as mothers are not provided enough essential vitamins or foods for the child to grow. Institutions are also providing a disservice to their incarcerated mothers by chaining them up like animals during labor and delivery, which can lead to, or further worsen, previous mental health issues, like post traumatic stress disorder or anxiety, or physical health issues, such as hip dislocation. Neglecting the needs of pregnant mothers and their children further places them at a higher risk for various health problems, which could be avoided by policy changes for a safer pregnancy and delivery.

After a woman behind bars gives birth, one may wonder where the child ends up. In most cases, the child is given to an immediate family member; in a special instance, one may be eligible to have their child with them in a prison nursery if she is detained in one of the 11 states that has such programs.[11] The relatively few prison nursery programs that do exist usually allow children to stay 12-18 months, depending on the state, and mothers are typically permitted to stay with their babies in an individual room where they play and form bonds.[12] While some may believe that raising a child in a setting with people who have committed crimes predisposes them to a life of crime and inhibits their growth, this is not the case. Seham Elmalak, Esq. notes that "longitudinal studies have shown that infants and children who...are able to develop 'organized and secure' attachment to a primary caregiver are less likely to experience social and emotional maladjustments later in life."[13] Therefore, children who begin life in these institutions are at an advantage over children who cannot live with their incarcerated mothers because they are better adjusted than children without mothers, despite being in these institutions. Not only does this benefit the child; the mother is also likely to have improved mental health, exhibit better conduct, and have a reduced likelihood to recidivate.[14] By not providing more nurseries to incarcerated women with infants, these institutions are allowing the mothers' mental health to decline, as they may deal with depression and worry about where their children are. It also may lead them back to prison because they already do not have a relationship with their children to motivate their rehabilitation from crime. One may argue that these nurseries are costly, but it is more costly when a woman is sent back to prison in addition to the added costs involved with the possible incarceration of her

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[10] Ferszt, "Who Will Speak for Me?," 225.
[11] Seham Elmalak, "Babies Behind Bars: An Evaluation of Prison Nurseries in American Female Prisons and Their Potential Constitutional Challenges," *Pace L. Rev.* 35, no. 3 (2014): 1087, accessed March 13, 2021, https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.siena.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edshol&AN=edshol.hein.journals.pace35.38&site=eds-live.
[12] Elmalak, "Babies Behind Bars," 1087.
[13] Elmalak, "Babies Behind Bars," 1090.
[14] Elmalak, "Babies Behind Bars," 1091-1092.

children at some later point due to the lack of care and guidance from their mother. Institutions that do not implement these programs indirectly cause problems for the child, which in turn, negatively affects the mother's capacity for individual reform.

Family is an important part of these women's lives, as most have children outside the cement walls. It is reported that 77% of mothers in state prisons are the primary caregivers to minor children.[15] Children of imprisoned mothers are more likely to develop depression, anxiety, substance abuse issues, and childhood delinquency.[16] Mothers behind bars are therefore constantly worried about how this separation is affecting their child, causing them to endure depression, guilt, and other negative feelings. However, these effects can quickly be reversed. According to journalist Alex Friedmann, who looked at research studies published in *Western Criminology Review,* "correctional practices that 'facilitate and strengthen family connections during incarceration' can 'reduce the strain of parental separation, reduce recidivism rates, and increase the likelihood of successful re-entry.'"[17] Despite this positive impact, communication between mothers and their children is limited to letters, visitation, and talking on the phone.[18] While it may seem like there are plenty of ways for incarcerated women to speak with their families, it is important to note that these methods are only allowed on a very limited basis, spanning weeks or months between each letter, visitation, or phone call. Moreover, each of these methods presents its own problems: incarcerated women may be illiterate, facilities may only allow postcards, visitation may be difficult and/or uncomfortable for the visitor, and phone calls are too expensive for women and their families to afford.[19] Because institutions are very strict about the forms and frequency of communication these incarcerated people may engage in, women in these facilities are less likely to communicate with their families. This may cause the women to commit more crimes in prison, as they do not have anyone motivating them to avoid fights, for example. Since financial resources are too scarce to provide women with classes or technology like Zoom or email, many women have little to no contact with those outside of prison and recidivism increases, as these women are not able to experience the care of their family to deter them from crime. Depriving women of communicating with their families deteriorates their mental state due to worrying about their children and does not give them another reason to change their attitude toward crime for the better, as they start to lose the connection with their families over time.

To fill the void of not having family inside the institution, women typically befriend other incarcerated women and build relationships that resemble the characteristics of mother, sister, and daughter bonds,

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[15] Elmalak, "Babies Behind Bars," 1086.

[16] Katherine P. Luke, "Mitigating the Ill Effects of Maternal Incarceration on Women in Prison and Their Children," *Child Welfare* 81, no. 6 (2002): 933, accessed April 13, 2021, https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.siena.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=8538372&site=eds-live.

[17] Alex Friedmann, "Lowering Recidivism through Family Communication," *Prison Legal News* 25, no. 4 (2014): 24, accessed April 12, 2021, www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2014/apr/15/lowering-recidivism-through-family-communication/.

[18] Friedmann, "Lowering Recidivism through Family Communication," 24.

[19] Friedmann, "Lowering Recidivism through Family Communication," 24.

referred to as "surrogate families" by researchers Katheryn Fraser and Ann Looper.[20] While Fraser and Looper express that incarcerated women believe that these relationships provide support and offer "relief from institutional stress," because they are all in the same situation and can relate to each other, this could not be further from the truth.[21] In fact, these women tend to find themselves in abusive relationships that resemble the relationships they endured outside the institutions, most of which got them arrested in the first place.[22] These women may subconsciously find people that are abusive like their friends or partners outside of the prison, as that is what they know; their past abusive relationships possibly caused these women to turn to the use of drugs or violence to cope with the trauma they experienced.[23] Fraser and Loper note that "women who participate in surrogate families show greater emotional distress, poor adjustment problems, more severe institutional infractions, and higher rates of victimization than women who do not participate in surrogate families."[24] When women develop sexual relationships with other incarcerated females, these relationships may become violent because women sometimes beat their partners.[25] Imprisoned females may even be raped by their partners, yet it is not reported due to the possibility of being moved to solitary confinement.[26] Surrogate families in prisons are not a good substitute for maintaining actual familial relationships through frequent communication. The relationships between women in these institutions are often toxic and abusive, creating an environment in the institution that induces violence and prohibits women from creating stable relationships that promote a life without crime.

Although actions, such as kissing or having sex, is illegal in these institutions, women still participate in them. As a result, guards will often berate incarcerated women with slurs and degrade their feelings.[27] The women who do not engage in sexual relationships with other imprisoned women often express their homophobic feelings through violence, and the guards allow this to happen.[28] Incarcerated women in these relationships may not be actively following the law, but they still should not be demeaned verbally by the guards who have a differing opinion on the nature of their relationships; this can lead to severe self-hatred, embarrassment, and a decrease in self-confidence. Guards set the precedent for this verbal abuse, which, in turn, encourages incarcerated women to torment other women in homosexual relationships, leading to violent targeting. Because they do not enforce the laws that prohibit the intimate relationships between incarcerated women, guards do not typically remove women from possible harmful relationships, whether

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[20] Katheryn L. Fraser, and Ann B. Loper, "Personality Features of Female Offenders in Prison Family Relationships," *Corrections Compendium* 35, no. 4 (2010): 1, accessed April 12, 2021, ProQuest (879807298).
[21] Fraser, and Loper, "Personality Features of Female Offenders in Prison Family Relationships," 2.
[22] Fraser, and Loper, "Personality Features of Female Offenders in Prison Family Relationships," 2.
[23] Fraser, and Loper, "Personality Features of Female Offenders in Prison Family Relationships," 2.
[24] Fraser, and Loper, "Personality Features of Female Offenders in Prison Family Relationships," 2.
[25] Cuen, "Here's What Relationships Are Really Like."
[26] Cuen, "Here's What Relationships Are Really Like."
[27] Cuen, "Here's What Relationships Are Really Like."
[28] Cuen, "Here's What Relationships Are Really Like."

emotionally or physically abusive, which permits further targeting by guards or other incarcerated women. When denied the ability to communicate regularly with their families, women resort to such surrogate relationships, which tend to lead to abuse, and is only made worse by the guards' behavior.

Not only do the guards berate female inmates, they also take advantage of them. Despite the fact that the law establishes a line separating the guards and the incarcerated women, this line can become blurred. Non-consensual sexual relationships can emerge between these parties, most of which occur to assert the power of the guard over the woman behind bars. While a guard's job is to reprimand the incarcerated person and an incarcerated person's duty is to obey, this can sometimes be taken very far out of context. Guards may feel that the only way to assert dominance over some of these women is by forcing the woman behind bars to have sex with them, often without consent. In a case where a male lieutenant raped a young, incarcerated Dominican female, the prosecutor claimed that, "'This is a case about power and abuse,'" and too often men abuse such authority by taking advantage of a woman in a vulnerable position.[29] In this situation, the victim did not even speak English, prohibiting her from exposing the situation and calling for help.[30] Rape often occurs in these institutions but is rarely talked about. One incarcerated person in Mark Fleisher and Jessie Krienert's book, *The Myth of Prison Rape: Sexual Culture in American Prisons*, claims that when it comes to rape, "'Nothing reported; nothing said about it. It's too embarrassing.'"[31] When women do come forward to talk about such experiences, prison officials tend not to believe them, excuse the assault since they are criminals, or they will transfer the incarcerated person to solitary confinement.[32] As a result, women behind bars refrain from reporting it because they know their experience will not be believed by officers and they fear being punished.[33] Many incarcerated women have already experienced sexual abuse before entering prison, possibly resulting in mental health issues like depression or self-hatred. When incarcerated women are then sexually abused by guards, their past trauma could resurface. Having to relive or endure these scenarios in prison at the hands of the guards who are supposed to protect them from other threats in prison further damages what little self-love imprisoned females may have left; some may even commit suicide because they cannot deal with such trauma. These women could also become impregnated or given sexually transmitted infections. Guards can still be predators even when they are on the right side of the law. Thus, it is essential that officials take sexual assault claims seriously so these women can receive help to overcome this trauma, as

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[29] Quoted in Alan Feuer, "Ex-Lieutenant at Brooklyn Federal Jail is Convicted of Raping a Female Inmate," *New York Times,* January 20, 2018, accessed April 12, 2021, ProQuest (1989165496).
[30] Feuer, "Ex-Lieutenant at Brooklyn Federal Jail is Convicted of Raping a Female Inmate."
[31] Quoted in Mark S. Fleisher, and Jessie L. Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape: Sexual Culture in American Prisons* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 121, PDF eBook.
[32] Fleisher and. Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 121.
[33] Fleisher and. Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 121.

neglecting these claims allows their mental and physical health to deteriorate and prohibits them from fully rehabilitating.

To deter sexual relationships between guards and incarcerated people and to protect incarcerated people from sexual assault, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed. PREA "provide[s] for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in federal, state, and local institutions and… provide[s] information, resources, recommendations and funding to protect individuals from prison rape."[34] Despite the passing of this Act, many people, including guards, consider relationships between women behind bars and guards as consensual since both parties willingly engage in these sexual acts. However, because guards maintain power over incarcerated women in an institutional setting, sexual acts cannot be regarded as consensual. It is actually sexual assault because of the position the guards hold. Many incarcerated women use PREA to their advantage by exchanging sex for items that they might not be provided in prison, such as additional food or menstrual products.[35] If a guard tries to end the sexual relationship, the incarcerated woman may threaten to expose him or her, all in an effort to continue receiving necessities.[36] Although sex can be used by women behind bars to gain material goods, some just want to fulfill their sexual desires with a guard. These illicit relationships, whether for material gain or pleasure, not only harm the reputation of the staff member if caught and exposed, but also damage the operations of the entire staff because when other imprisoned women learn of these actions, they are less likely to trust staff, resulting in increased anger and misconduct.[37] Staff members who are aware of the illicit relationships will often leave their posts so they are not affected by this misconduct.[38] This leaves the women behind bars with inappropriate guards who may try to push sexual acts onto other women without the presence of other guards to deter them from these actions.When guards disregard the rules against sexual activity with incarcerated people, as described by PREA, they not only risk their job but also the safety of the incarcerated they are supposed to protect. Their actions promote distrust between incarcerated women and the staff and among imprisoned women, leading to violence and misconduct that reverses the rehabilitation these women are supposed to receive in these institutions.

Although these women are in the correctional system for committing a crime, they are still human beings who deserve a chance to correct their mistakes. Correctional institutions are meant to rehabilitate women toward a life without crime; however, this cannot be done in a setting that treats them like a caged animal when they are shackled while giving birth, or forced to participate in certain activites against their will,

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[34] "Prison Rape Elimination Act," National PREA Resource Center, accessed April 13, 2021, https://www. prearesourcecenter.org/about/prison-rape-elimination-act.

[35] Fleisher and Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 121.

[36] Fleisher and Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 122.

[37] Fleisher and Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 122.

[38] Fleisher and Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape*, 123.

such as sex. By not providing these women adequate hygiene and medical care, appropriate monitoring by guards, or resources to help them effectively communicate with their families and others outside prison, the correctional system does not encourage women to rehabilitate themselves. Rather, the lack of these resources induces these women to turn back to a life of crime, as they are deprived of their self confidence when they are sexually assaulted, chained up while giving birth, or forced to remain in the same clothes stained by period blood for days. The goal of these instiutions should be to rehabilitate incarcerated women so that they can leave prison and successfully reenter society without added baggage that will only lead to recidivism.When institutions begin to provide basic rights such as access to feminine hygiene products, more frequent and accessible means of communication, protection against sexual assault, and safer delivery practices while giving birth, women in these facilities will have the resources needed to improve themselves as they move toward a free life. Until then, these women will remain in prison with the mindset that got them incarcerated in the first place.

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The author of this research paper developed his own original argument, which was then supported with carefully chosen sources, thus effectively balancing the "they say" and "I Say" elements of his analysis

Music in Cinematography: Music's Emotional and Beneficial Manipulation of Film Audiences

By Jonathan Limey

Dr. Haas- Music: The Soundtrack of Our Lives

The works of great composers, like John Williams, are often perceived as boring by the general audience. However, these orchestral pieces without lyrics written for films are directly correlated with the film's success. The composer brings out a series of emotions that connects the audience to the characters and story, all through the use of the music. Not only do these composers deserve recognition for their work, but their work deserves as much respect as other types of music. Music can save a film, or ruin it, because it tells whatever story the composer wants regardless of the film's plot. When used expertly, film scores enhance the story being portrayed, making it more interesting. Movie producers and directors should recognize the importance of music in storytelling to allow the film industry to continue to grow and tell impactful stories and to allow orchestral music to reach a widespread audience. Audience members must share this realization to allow themselves to truly enjoy the films and their music.

Music is so scientifically complicated that it has the ability to predict and manipulate emotions and one's perception of time. Music, when connected to pleasure, even causes reactions in the pleasure center of the listener's brain in the same way as sex, drugs, and food. This is due to the many reactions the human brain has to music. Dr. Dave Miranda said, regarding the neurological reactions to music, that "certain musical characteristics are well-known to be more evocative of either positive emotions (e.g., major mode, fast tempo) or negative emotions (e.g., minor mode, slow tempo)... As such, ambiguous mixing of musical characteristics that have both positive and negative connotations (e.g., minor mode and fast tempo) can yield mixed feelings."[1] Therefore, different musical characteristics, like tempo or key, are used to evoke emotional responses in the listener. When listening to a piece of music, the listener allows themself to follow the melody and the song along its journey, which is very similar to following different characters' journeys in a given film. The song conveys emotions that tie directly into the chemical reactions of the person. Dr. Miranda's research concludes people who suffer from negative emotions, due to depression or similar illnesses, could be helped by music and its emotional complexities. Music can directly influence a person into becoming emotionally healthier in the long term, but there is also a chance that it does the opposite. Music manipulates the feelings

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[1]Dave Miranda, "The Emotional Bond between Neuroticism and Music," *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain* 30, no. 2 (2020): 55, accessed March 20, 2021, doi:10.1037/pmu0000250.

and overall emotional stability of the listener. With that, it will help or harm their emotional health in both the short and long term. An audience member's appreciation of the music in the film can only grow with this knowledge. The composer must choose the correct musical characteristics for a piece while making sure not to harm the listeners emotionally. Audiences would be more awed by a film's music if they were aware of the composer's brilliance.

For an audience to enjoy a film, they must get invested in the characters and the story being told. Music acts as the bridge between the two worlds, allowing people to emotionally go on the journey with the characters, which is an experience they only have because of music. This is thanks to music's ability to connect to each person individually, which allows their own authentic emotional response to develop. Beyond that, though, psychologist Shahram Heshmat pointed out that "Music doesn't only evoke emotions at the individual level, but also at the interpersonal and intergroup level. Listeners mirror their reactions to what the music expresses, such as sadness from sad music, or cheer from happy music. Similarly, ambient music affects shoppers' and diners' moods."[2] As Dr. Heshmat explained, music predictably affects the emotional state of a person. The use of ambient music in grocery stores or elevators are both situations where those who run the establishment are trying to keep people patient and calm. This is the point of the music-- to predictably create emotional peace. The music manipulates the listeners into this specific reaction. The music in films does the same thing, but has such a manipulative effect on the audience that it will affect their perspective of time. The old saying "time flies when you are having fun" is often said to explain how time seems like a blur when an activity involves joy. Music causes this same effect, making time seem to pass faster when said music is enjoyable. However, the inverse is also true. Music that is sad or intense will sometimes make time feel like it slows down and that it is drawn out. This is all applicable for the audience when watching a film. The music manipulates their emotions and perception of time, drawing them into the story. It is these experiences that allow them to fully immerse themselves in the film. However, it is only with an understanding of the scientific complicities behind the music that someone can truly appreciate the film. That appreciation is what allows them to fully enjoy it.

The psychological complexities of music involve a huge learning curve for composers and artists to overcome. For effective and popular music, they would need to understand how their songs would affect the listener's emotions and therefore what their reactions would be. John Williams has mastered those complexities and utilized them in his orchestral pieces for many films. Throughout the *Star Wars* original trilogy, Williams's "Han Solo and the Princess" was used as a musical representation of the characters' love for

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[2]Shahram Heshmat, "Music, Emotion, and Well-Being," Psychology Today, Sussex Publishers, August 25, 2019, accessed April 18, 2020, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/science-choice/201908/music-emotion-and-well-being#:~:text=Music%20has%20the%20ability%20to,alter%20mood%20or%20relieve%20stress.

one another. This lyric-less orchestral piece is played throughout the film, specifically at points when Princess Leia and Han Solo are emotionally connecting. This originally acts as foreshadowing when they first interact, and then turns into more of a literal representation as their relationship develops. The piece involves a swell, which is not only used to enhance the emotion in the scene, but represents the rush of passion. This piece and many others are also acting as ambiance. The music affects the audience's emotions, and helps them get to the point where they are not only emotionally invested in the characters but happy for them and their happiness. "Han Solo and the Princess" acts as a guide for the audience, helping them follow the emotional journey that the two experience as well as pointing out the specific moments that are important for the development of their story. The piece itself acts as a perfect representation of how music enhances an audience member's experience of the film.

Another important lyric-less orchestral piece by John Williams is the main theme of *Jaws*. Throughout the movie, there is the looming threat of a shark attack. This threat is especially emphasized when the theme is played. It uses a minor second to create musical dissonance, not only sounding unsettling, but frightening as it quickly gets connected to the threat of the shark. Author Thomas Maremaa's analysis of this movie's music notes that "in one scene, where Richard Dreyfuss, as Hooper, is underwater inspecting a sunken boat just before a head rolls out of it, you expect the shark to [appear] and attack Dreyfuss. The music tricks you into that because the shark motif is played very softly, but then suddenly—this head pops out and you jump out of your seat. 'The trick is,' says Williams, 'one thing is advertised, another thing delivered.'"[3] John Williams employed his understanding of the psychological effects of music to enhance the film. The theme for *Jaws* is utilized only to show when the shark is going to attack, which allowed Williams to manipulate the audience to associate the theme with fear and anticipation. In the scene described, the music was played, but the associated action of the shark attacking did not happen. This creates an emotional reaction for the audience member; they are and so they are described as being pulled out of their seats. The trick allows Williams to create an even better story where the audience will expect one thing and that may or may not come true, but either way, they still care. This trick also creates immediate tension and then relief, which has an added effect. Williams makes these couple seconds of tension and anticipation where the audience members do not know if the shark ate Dreyfuss feel like forever. This is due to music's ability to manipulate the audience's perception of time, which only enhances the film watching experience.

Like the theme from *Jaws,* John Williams utilized "The Imperial March" in *Star Wars* to convey emotion and therefore understanding. The march laid the groundwork for villain themes in many ways for its use of symbolism through its instruments. The strings in many moments sing in a sorrowful manner,

[3]Thomas Maremaa, "The Sound of Movie Music," *The New York Times*, March 28, 1976, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/03/28/archives/the-sound-of-movie-music-audiences-have-changedthey-want-the-music.html.

representing Darth Vader's victims or the life he left behind as Anakin Skywalker. The trumpets not only convey the melody, but represent the traditional use of trumpets to musically present a king into a room. The piece is used repeatedly throughout the *Star Wars* films to introduce Darth Vader and his actions on the screen. The fact that it is a march also represents the very military-like role he plays in the movie. Darth Vader is in many ways a military general at war, only following orders from those in higher command. Maremaa further explains that "in the original trilogy, this theme follows the villainous Darth Vader; in the prequels, it presages the dark fate of Anakin Skywalker. (Spoiler for the few strangers to 'Star Wars': Anakin and Vader are the same person.) The music is always a cue to the audience that evil is afoot."[4] The piece is introduced in the films to represent evil, both in its development in Skywalker and the actions of Darth Vader. In the prequels, the piece acts as a way to understand what is going on in Skywalker's mind when he is having those evil intentions. The original trilogy utilizes "The Imperial March" similarly to the *Jaws* theme--to alert the audience when evil is present. The piece instills fear into the audience, letting them see the emotional torment in Darth Vader and consequently either sympathize or be scared. It adds to the complexity of the film and its story, but more importantly, it allows the viewer to feel more connected to the story and its evil characters.

At the end of *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* there is a celebration scene where the main characters are gifted with awards and it is full of joyful music, which is crucial to the scene. "The Throne Room" is a lyric-less orchestral piece of music written by John Williams for this final scene. The moment is full of happiness, with smiles and celebrations in a very dramatic and official fashion. There is another version of this scene called *Star Wars Minus Williams - Throne Room,* which is the previously mentioned scene without the music written by Williams. This version of the scene's audio-only includes footsteps, coughing, a laugh from Luke, Chewbacca screaming, and group clapping. For two minutes the scene drags on, oscillating between comedic and unnerving. It is almost complete silence, which leaves the audience feeling not only bored, but confused. The video gives a second or two to give the original context, and once the music ends, it is startling. The viewer is immediately left just hanging, feeling as if they were without a guide. Chewbacca's screams originally fulfilled the viewer with a sense of victory and celebration, but now are harsh and obnoxious. Luke and Leia both look extremely uncomfortable and nervous, while Han looks lecherously at Leia, which originally was conveyed as more caring. The video even ends with "Episode IV is in Progress,"[5] implying that the movie would have been incomplete without the music. The music in the scene changes everything. Not only does it make the movie more enjoyable, but it makes certain actions and moments more

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[4]Thomas Maremaa, "The Sound of Movie Music," *The New York Times*, March 28, 1976, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/03/28/archives/the-sound-of-movie-music-audiences-have-changedthey-want-the-music.html.
[5]"Star Wars Minus Williams - Throne Room," Youtube, 2:14, Posted by Auralnauts, September 10, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj-GZJhfBmI.

understandable in regards to the development of the story. It acts as the necessary guide for the audience, giving them emotional context. The music is crucial to the film's success because it is crucial to the audience's entertainment and engagement. Understanding how the music is guiding them through the film and how it sets the mood for scenes allows the audience to appreciate and therefore enjoy the film more. A film is successfully complete when it has audience appreciation as well as music and the former can not come without the latter.

John Williams, and other film composers, put a lot of time and effort into developing and conveying the meaning of their pieces. Each piece is specifically made for the symbolic and emotional impact it will have on a film's audience. The music is inherently vital to the films and their success because, without it, they would seem incomplete. The inverse is also true. Orchestra music is a dying genre, and formal concerts are no longer as popular as they once were. Films act as a platform for these lyric-less pieces, exposing people to rich, meaningful music they do not otherwise usually listen to. Films are thus single-handedly saving orchestras. More filmmakers need to recognize how music and films help each other. They should employ composers who follow Williams's example and create pieces of music that take the audience on an emotional journey intertwined with the story being told. That is an integral part of being able to enjoy a movie. Audience members would also appreciate the films more when understanding the music and its complexities. With a greater understanding of the symbolism, emotions, and even the psychological impact of the music, the audience can develop a greater appreciation for the difficulty composers face in creating those experiences. This would allow them to enjoy their favorite films and appreciate the lyric-less music more.

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Rejecting the concept of good and evil characters in Frankenstein as well as other narratives, this author determines that such assessments are arbitrary and unrealistic because they fail to recognize the morally grey area most people occupy. Her analysis convincingly draws out connections between literary texts and real life.

Good Versus Evil, but Only in Fiction

By Sarah Lindecke

Prof. Collins- Narrative: The Inside Story

As with most stories from the past, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* shares messages that still hold true in today's world. Gris Grimly's graphic novel adaptation does not leave out such messages for the sake of making a more pleasant or digestible story. From the plot and its morally grey characters, readers can begin to more deeply understand the complexities of good and evil. Each person sees the world through a different lens and through our differences, we come up with ideas of good and evil that may be contradictory, deciding some actions fall into one category even when other people or cultures may accept the opposite. Sometimes evil is even created in an effort to depict who/what is good. Mary Shelley exposes these nuances via *Frankenstein*, asserting that there is no definitive good or evil but rather shades and variations of both. She brings fluidity into the literary scene where often the most popular stories tell a single narrative about good overcoming evil despite the real world's inability to fall into such narrow characterizations.

Gris Grimly's graphic novel adaptation of *Frankenstein* respects the original text by incorporating much of the ambiance and taking into account the themes Mary Shelley created in her original work. Good and evil are driving factors of the plot that readers are encouraged to contemplate in deciding which character in the story is most justified in their actions and therefore pure, and who acts out of pure sinister instinct. Even in saying that people are forced to decide which characters they see as a lesser evil or a more rational good, space is created for simplistic and shallow patterns of good versus evil stories to continue without much thought to why this format is often used. This arbitrary desire to place characters in one category, good or evil, undermines what Mary Shelley was actually saying about the world through her characters. She aims to express her understanding that good and evil are not directly tied to a person or action, in most cases, but are rather concepts through which humans interpret their world. Take, for example, the Creature created by Victor Frankenstein. He is molded from bones and flesh and given life. The Creature is abandoned and forced to learn only through observation how to act as a human. The Creature observes the young man going out to chop wood for his family and after seeing the good it does for the family, he decides to help out by borrowing the family's axe and leaving a large stack of wood for them. Over time he comes to understand how to be human, but by the end of the book has murdered at least two people. Some would argue nothing he does is evil and laud him as a good character because he is only minimally aware and able to control his impulses as a

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Creature very new to the world. Thinking in such a way almost says that he is justified in murdering people because he has the mental comprehension skills of a child, which may be true, yet he shows major growth when he chooses to help out the family in the cabin by bringing them wood and food. At the cabin he makes progress, but his mentality is still extremely underdeveloped because his anger and confusion have not yet found a constructive outlet. As a result of this he burns down the cabin and kills William. Many more events and encounters throughout the novel could be used to justify the categorization of the Creature as good or evil, but technically neither stance is right or wrong. It is all relative and Mary Shelly likely wanted to create characters that could be juxtaposed and said to be one type of character or the other without either position being objectively true. Shelley's plot reflects how we as humans relate to others. Sure there are some we decide ultimately have done enough wrong to be forever attached to those actions and judgements but most people, like Shelley's characters, act in ways that straddle the line between truly being good or evil. In a single day someone can be both selfish and selfless so when we look at the judgements made about people or characters, it becomes difficult to really pin someone down as wholly aligned with good or evil.

Looking at Victor Frankenstein, there are many people who say he is the hero for allowing two years to pass "for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body" (Grimly 42). He is a genius and his creation is one that brought new discoveries into the world, but he is also a character who arguably breaks the natural law and wreaks havoc on his family. Throughout the story his pride and selfishness indicates that he understands his responsibility for many of the bad occurrences that come after the Creature is brought to life, yet he chooses not to pursue him until the end. He waits until the toll on his family has become massive before acting on his concern that the Creature is a problem plaguing all the people he loved. Even knowing all of this about him, Victor Frankenstein is still said to be a character aligned with good because his intentions were purely set on scientific discovery and he is conscious of his error when deciding not to create a bride for the Creature. He asks, "Had I a right . . . to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations?" (Grimly 137) before deciding he can not go through with creating a bride for the Creature. His decision not to create the second creature tells readers he is aware of the dangers and immorality of continuing and thus many forgive him. Yet, can it really be said that he becomes a good character by deciding not to commit the same crime again? Neither character from *Frankenstein* or any other plane of existence, from fiction to reality, is wholly good or evil. Everyone is guilty of wrongs that most would agree in the real world should not be justified for any reason, yet within the realm of fiction we are particularly drawn to categorizing characters as good or evil. Even though we want to define characters in such terms, it is often impossible.

The lessons from *Frankenstein* have been retold in so many stories. As demonstrated with Victor Frankenstein and the Creature, there is a constant debate and discussion about the role of evil and how it affects people. When you think of most literary sources, there appears to be a distinct line between good and

evil, where the battle is between a protagonist and an antagonist. In Mary Shelley's story this distinction is not as clear, but some still choose to represent the story as one highlighting good versus evil. As author Anthony Larson explains, such categorization is harmful in that it reduces "oneself to the limits and laws of reason, one establishes a morality based on what is profitable" (79). People will arbitrarily create categories that hinge on the ideas that some courses of action are more sustainable and worth pursuing. Thus, when it comes to *Frankenstein*, they will split characters and even ideas into different classifications that are meant to make it less complex and therefore easier to understand. Reducing stories to straight forward battles between good and evil, and a struggle between two characters representing those characteristics, presses a narrative that is simply not found in the real world. Evil is nothing, Larson argues, "but simply a mistaken way of seeing and acting in the world that separates one from the plane of becoming" (93). This sentiment reflects the notion that we desire to pit two fates against each other and push morality and goodness to the forefront of our protagonists. Making stories follow the patterns of good versus evil is not new, but *Frankenstein* is a novel that has been dragged into this categorization even when it can be seen that Mary Shelley was not trying to produce such a story. She was trying to show the dualities and overlapping nature of good and evil. They are not two entities that lie on separate ends of a line but rather a spectrum of activities that are all relative based on each person's experiences. Reducing all behaviors into two categories unnecessarily limits the stories that can be told. Mary Shelley took firm hold of both good and evil, mixing them within her characters so they could be definitively aligned with neither. It is also quite problematic to reduce actions and humans to good or evil because doing so creates labels that remain fixed when the human mind and the convictions we hold are rather fluid.

Many stories are structured between one protagonist or group versus an antagonist who is out to destroy them based solely on a long held grudge or belief there has been some crime committed against them. However, in recent years there have been more stories published with morally grey characters who are no doubt bad people but are presented as the protagonists. Mia Corvere is the protagonist in *The Nevernight Chronicles* by Jay Kristoff and while her story is followed in the trilogy, she is a terrible person by almost every standard. She murders and acts almost entirely with selfish intent and has one goal, revenge. Mia Corvere is the protagonist but she's not a good person; instead, her character lies somewhere between a manifestation of true good and pure evil. She kills without remorse, yet she also forms close bonds not as a means to an end, but for companionship. With morally grey characters, like those in *Frankenstein,* the lines are blurred, helping to solidify the idea that there is no true way to define a character as simply good or evil. Although there are still plenty of stories being published that classify the characters as good or evil, the lines are less solidified than they once were. Creating stories that live in morally grey terms blurs the lines, and I think it helps people who consume these stories see that people are not just one thing. We are all complicated creatures who need

to be taught and are subject to desires for the less savory aspects of life at times. While some human behaviors can be classified as evil, those same behaviors can change based on the environment one finds themselves in.

The lessons and characters of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* are ones people today are still not done discussing or debating. Her characters are great examples of the morally grey as they walk the line between good and evil. People are concerned with character alignments, but breaking such norms is what sets *Frankenstein* apart from many works of both present and past. The revolutionary text is one that models true human complexity and conveys to readers that the way they classify characters as well as real people is based on judgements. Good and evil exist, but only as concepts. We are not defined solely by one or the other and Mary Shelley's story and Gris Grimly's images illustrates this.

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In this analysis, the author substantiates her claims about implicit gender bias in the medical field

with current research, and develops her argument by clearly connecting examples and evidence.

Medical Misogyny:

The Lack of Research and Attention on Women's Health Issues Leading to

Ignored Symptoms, Misdiagnoses, and Unjust Death

By Mairead O'Donnell

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

Due to the lack of research on various types of women's medical issues, many women think of their illnesses as mysterious and intimidating because they feel that they are not in control of their health. Many physicians tend to ignore women's symptoms because there is not enough research that includes women. Millions of women are under-diagnosed or misdiagnosed, which often leads to women suffering unjustly or even losing their lives. Women who fear that they might be misdiagnosed or feel that their concerns are not being considered by their doctors feel frustrated, unimportant, and that they are just another statistic. Medical professionals often dismiss women's health concerns as overdramatic or psychosomatic and this is due, in part, to the fact that clinical studies primarily use male biology as the standard medical model. These issues that contribute to medical misogyny are global problems caused by deeply ingrained sexism in the medical field. The long reign of sexism contributes to the idea that openly discussing women's health issues is taboo. It is ironic that women's bodies are widely sexualized, yet discussing bodily issues related to women's health is deemed inappropriate or unacceptable. The taboo nature of women's bodies and health has led to the exclusion of women from textbooks, trials, and research in the medical field. The struggles that women face when seeking medical help need to be eradicated by conducting more clinical research on females, diversifying medical staff, and instituting mandated training to reduce implicit biases among doctors of all specialties. Women are also able to address these medical issues on their own by finding a second professional opinion, generating more conversation about women's medical issues to make the topic less taboo, and ensuring that their voices are clearly heard by medical professionals. While it is the responsibility of physicians to create a comfortable atmosphere that validates and accepts all patients' concerns, the physicians' thoughts and actions are often out of female patients' control. Therefore, women must prioritize their health and if they feel that they are not receiving the medical attention that they deserve, they should listen to their bodies and advocate for themselves in every way possible to remain healthy and happy.

While inaccurate research negatively impacts women's health, so does the idea that women's health is taboo. Talking about women's health can often be awkward or uncomfortable, especially because women

are expected to be pure, chaste, and obedient to men. These unrealistic expectations have led to the discomfort and taboo nature of women's biology and medical issues. This concept seems odd as "we [the general public] see half naked men and women day in and day out" as Cassie Dionne, Pelvic Health Physiotherapist, explains, "but the minute we talk about female reproductive parts in a legitimate medical context, it is deemed inappropriate, considered too frank, not something we should talk about in public."[1] Routinely sexualizing women for their bodies, but believing that biological conversations about their bodies are inappropriate is unfair. Not only is the idea hypocritical, it also makes women feel ashamed to talk about their bodies, especially when they believe there is a problem with their health. People of all genders need to generate more conversation about health, especially women's health, which is ignored far too often. Once more conversation is generated, women will feel more comfortable speaking about their bodies and health issues without fear of being judged or deemed inappropriate. Women's health is often considered taboo because of deeply ingrained sexism which suggests that women should be pure, chaste, and submissive to men. This connects to the medical field because it makes women less likely to speak up about their health problems for fear of being classified as over-dramatic, leading to more missed illnesses that could have been diagnosed. While it might not seem like it, the sexualization of women by men causes women to suffer more health problems, whether it be a direct or indirect cause.

Women are often deemed over-dramatic when they express their apprehension about their health and often feel that their concerns are invalidated, even if the problem is serious. Their concerns are frequently ignored. Women are told that they are healthy and that there is no need to worry, even when there is an underlying issue. While it may seem that many of these doctors ignore these women's concerns because they think that the women are being overly emotional or paranoid, many doctors often believe that the woman is genuinely healthy and that there is nothing wrong. One might question how a physician who went through a long, demanding medical education process along with additional rigorous training, could genuinely believe that their patient is fine when there is clearly something wrong. This is due to the type of education that the physicians receive. Much of the information provided to those training to become physicians is plagued with biases because the research does not include adequate statistics or information about women. Medical textbooks often contain such biases. For example, in Barbara Sadick's article about women dying more often from heart attacks than men, she interviewed Sharonne N. Hayes, cardiologist and founder of the Mayo Clinic Women's Heart Clinic, who stated, "More recently trained physicians may understand more about women and heart disease than older ones," as she noted that during her training, "textbooks, research and clinical practices were designed for and by men. When the same treatments were applied to women, they didn't

[1] Cassie Dionne, "It's Time to Talk About Women's Health," YouTube video, 1:10-1:30, posted by TEDx Talks, April 23, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E3pA-A6EyQ.

work."[2] As a person in the field herself, Hayes argues that the insufficient representation of women in medical studies and practices negatively impacts the overall health of women in general. Many of the same treatments recommended for all people regardless of gender simply do not work adequately for both men and women equally. This potentially fatal issue is due to the assumption that male and female bodies function the same.

Men are often the standard model in textbooks and in the medical field in general. Male and female anatomy and biological functions have many similarities, but they also have numerous differences that are not recognized or researched nearly enough. Without sufficient female representation in reputable sources like textbooks, many women suffer and die from problems that could be prevented. These sources are the foundation that physicians base their diagnoses and treatments on, so having accurate information about both sexes is crucial. Another reputable source that often contaminates the medical field with biases is clinical research. Male models dominate preclinical and clinical research as the gender that is studied. The only instance where more female models are used is in reproductive studies. In "Various Aspects of Sex and Gender Bias in Biomedical Research," Jana Plevkova and her colleagues explain that "male-only models are very common in many research areas and their use is always adopted by a new-coming generation of scientists even without questioning why this is a male-only sample. The answer would be probably similar to 'because we have done it this way for 40 years and it works well.'"[3] The idea that many of the scientists and clinicians do not even question the fact that the ratio of male to female models in these studies is disproportionate supports the importance of eradicating the traditional, misogynistic tendencies in the medical field. The clinical research data is crucial because it is widely used to address symptoms and other health issues and to compose diagnoses and treatment plans. If the sample's ratios are disproportionate, the data will be skewed and therefore inaccurate because what may work for the male models in the clinical research will not always work for the female patient. Women deserve sufficient research on their health, and they should be able to trust that their physicians have been taught about women's health.

Despite the beliefs that using male models has worked for so long and that there is no point in changing it, the differences presented by the female body, largely due to hormones, need to be represented in these studies to see how females react to a certain substance or treatment. Some skeptics might suggest that the reason women are not used as frequently as men in clinical studies is because women's menstrual cycles and hormone levels often skew results, so using men is easier and more efficient. Rather than supporting their argument about keeping the research the same, their counterclaims actually support the argument in favor of having more female representation in clinical trials and research. If different stages of

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[2] Barbara Sadick, "Women Die from Heart Attacks More Often Than Men. Here's Why – and What Doctors are Doing About it," *Time Magazine,* April 1, 2019, accessed March 19, 2021, https://time.com/5499872/women-heart-disease/.

[3] Jana Plevkova et al., "Various Aspects of Sex and Gender Bias in Biomedical Research," *Physiological Research* 69, no. 3 (2020): S368, accessed May 8, 2021, https://www.biomed.cas.cz/physiolres/pdf/2020/69_S367.pdf.

women's menstrual and hormone cycles produce different reactions in the body, physicians need comprehensive data on each point of women's cycles while also taking hormonal abnormalities into account. The idea that women should not be included as much as men because of a bodily function that they have no control over is blatant discrimination. Women should not have to fear that a treatment might not work for them simply because of their gender. In a survey of over 2,400 women who suffer from chronic pain, "83 percent said that they felt they had experienced gender discrimination from their health care providers." Similarly, a study at the University of Pennsylvania discovered that when waiting to receive pain medication, women waited 16 minutes longer than men because the women's pain was assumed to be psychosomatic or due to emotional strain rather than actual physical discomfort.[4] Perspectives on inclusivity and diversity in medicine need to change for both physicians and the general public.

Rather than simply acknowledging the flaws in the medical field, women need real change to occur. Emily Paulson, a medical doctor, suggests that physicians should encourage discussion of gender or other bias during team huddles, conduct better data collection and analysis, and seek out and participate in training opportunities.[5] By encouraging the discussion of gender and intersecting identities, physicians would be better able to recognize their own biases when interacting with patients, in hopes of eradicating such biases all together. Similar to the clinical research, other data collection and analysis needs to be amended and accurately presented, with diverse samples and data. In addition to these solutions, training opportunities to recognize possible implicit biases are crucial. Many physicians may not know that they have biases against certain groups so recognizing, addressing, and eradicating these biases allows for a more comfortable and accepting atmosphere for patients to discuss their health concerns.

While it may be difficult to dismantle various negative aspects of the medical field, there are many things that women are able to do for themselves to better their health. Physicians at Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology suggest that all men and women are able to combat the exclusivity of clinical research by demanding that their "policymakers ensure that women are included in all phases of medical research and that sex differences are studied and evaluated at all levels as is currently required by law...And when they seek care, they can ask their doctors if the recommended prevention strategies, diagnostic tests, and medical treatments are based on research that included women."[6] Speaking directly to one's physician about the data behind their diagnoses, treatment plans, and knowledge in general

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[4] Camille Noe Pagan, "When Doctors Downplay Women's Health Concerns," *The New York Times,* May 3, 2018, accessed July 21, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/well/live/when-doctors-downplay-womens-health-concerns.html.
[5] Emily Paulsen, "Recognizing, Addressing Unintended Gender Bias in Patient Care," Duke Health Referring Physicians, Duke University Health System, January 14, 2020, accessed May 10, 2021, https://physicians.dukehealth.org/articles/recognizing-addressing-unintended-gender-bias-patient-care.
[6] Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health & Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, 2014, accessed May 8, 2021, https://www.brighamandwomens.org/assets/bwh/womens-health/pdfs/connorsreportfinal.pdf.

is a very proactive way of approaching any issues regarding their health. An even more basic approach to advocate for one's health is for women to trust their instinct and ask for second opinions about their health concerns. Each individual knows themselves best so when something feels wrong, there is often a good chance that there is an issue. Even if there is nothing to worry about, it is always beneficial to reconfirm it.

Women should not be the only ones advocating for women's health. It is the duty of the physicians to do the best they can to address their patients' concerns, examine and run tests for potential problems, diagnose, and treat them. This is their duty regardless of their patient's gender, race, religion, or ethnicity. While a patient acknowledges that the physicians are trying their best, they are often left unsatisfied when their needs or concerns are not met. This dissatisfaction is often not due to the doctors being sexist or racist, but rather because of the implicit biases in research that negatively affect women, which physicians use for diagnosing and treating patients. The research behind the information that these physicians rely on needs to be inclusive of both men and women to ensure that there is no data bias. Changing the ways of the entire medical field is a demanding task, so until it starts to change, women need to advocate for themselves. They deserve to be heard and treated properly. The goal is that women will feel free to express their concerns and feel validated, in the medical field and eventually in every aspect of their lives.

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In this expository research paper, the author interweaves a plethora of both scholarly and popular sources to explain the cultural and economic significance of Coca-Cola.

Coca-Cola in Pop Culture

By Juliusz Paluchowski

Prof. Simonds- Pop Culture of the 21st Century

One of America's biggest exports is its culture of food and drink, most notably Coca-Cola. This beverage, while trivial by nature of being carbonated flavored water, has a much more significant role as it represents the essence of American culture and capitalism. The company has embedded itself in every corner of American life, be it through sponsorships and advertising, market saturation, or masterful branding. Furthermore, it has contributed to globalization, colonizing with its products while moulding its offering to local cultures. Today, Coca-Cola is an important part of popular culture, working as a cultural pulse and selling a lifestyle in addition to sugary drinks. By way of selling these products, it is responsible for countless jobs and economic growth, which likely would not have happened without this cultural link.

No other brand is steeped in as much historical lore as Coca-Cola. Created in 1886 by John Pemberton, a morphine addict, Coca-Cola served as a substitute to the dangerous drug, and instead contained cocaine extract (Yafai). It also did not contain alcohol, unlike Pemberton's previous drinks, which appealed to supporters of the late nineteenth century Temperance Movement (Yafai). Later, when cocaine was removed from the formula, the drink was advertised as an all-purpose remedy for ailments like heartburn, nausea, headaches, and indigestion. Within the few years after Coke was invented, it became a cultural phenomenon, selling at drugstore fountains and catering to laws and common beliefs of the time, like prohibition and the purported health benefits of carbonated beverages ("Themes for Coca-Cola Advertising"). The health benefits of Coke were being advertised as late as 1961, when it was claimed in a commercial that the drink can "keep you thin," because its sugar gives a needed boost of energy throughout the day (Sangroncito). Once there was a consensus that there are no health benefits to drinking Coke, it was marketed simply as a fun and refreshing drink. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century, when the Coca-Cola recipe, trademark, and bottling rights were sold to Atlanta entrepreneur Asa Candler, that the beverage became a widespread presence across America (Mooney 37). Candler then sold the company in 1919 to the banker Ernest Woodruff, who listed the company publicly. Within ten years of the sale, the beverage was sold in 27 countries, further expanding the cultural reach of Coca-Cola (Mooney 37). Today, the biggest threat to the company is increasing awareness of the soda's adverse health effects when consumed. One standard half liter bottle of Coca-Cola contains 55 grams of sugar, three times the daily recommended intake limit, as well as artificial caramel color (Gertner and Rifkin 163). Despite ongoing health concerns, the company continues to saturate global markets

in an effort to make Coke as easy to purchase as possible, with the goal of growing the product's footprint, using pop culture as the medium through which to do so.

Coca-Cola has become ubiquitous because of its American roots. In 1959, 73 years after the beverage was first created, *The New Yorker* covered the omnipresence of the drink in an article titled "The Universal Drink" (Kahn). By this point, Coca-Cola had already spread itself to all corners of the world, having been consumed by everyone from Egyptian monks to Dutch princesses (Kahn). It was, and still is in many ways, associated with the American culture and lifestyle. According to E.J. Kahn, author of "The Universal Drink," Coca-Cola was to residents of countries outside the United States "a fluid that, like gasoline, is indispensable to, and symbolic of, the American way of life" (Kahn). Americans, meanwhile, would come to link the beverage with good times in their lives, likely due to its sweet and craveable nature, but also the context of its enjoyment - often accompanying a tasty meal with family, friends, or a significant other. Even while serving in World War II, soldiers would reminisce about the drink, linking it to better times in their lives (Kahn). The company was in on this nostalgia. At military bases and even aboard navy ships, bottling plants were constructed shortly after the start of the war for the purpose of allowing soldiers to purchase Coke, just like back home. The people working at these factories were seen as just as indispensable as ship and tank engineers because they helped maintain the servicemen's morale (Kahn). Clearly, Americans felt an attachment to the drink. In the Southern United States, for example, the word coke often refers to all carbonated drinks, not just Coca-Cola, which shows the brand's place in language and culture (Abadi). Today, Coke's legacy and pop culture influence is visible everywhere, from vintage plaques and murals that dot the landscapes of American cities, to the millions of vending machines that vary in age and showcase the various eras of the drink's advertising, all while bearing the same script logo (Bhasin). Further examples of Coca-Cola's contributions to pop culture include the fact that it helped popularize the modern image of Santa Claus in a series of advertisements started in the 1930s portraying Saint Nicholas as a big, jolly, and bearded Coke drinker (Mooney 38). Previously, Santa did not have this one standard image, but rather had numerous depictions that gave him a range of moods and appearances ("Five Things You Never Knew About Santa Claus and Coca-Cola"). The company's marketing today takes advantage of the fact that Coca-Cola has impacted pop culture, and this helps the company grow despite its already massive size.

One example of the company using its cultural influence as a way to increase sales is the Share a Coke campaign. Initially launched in Australia in 2011, it operated on the premise of printing popular first names on Coca-Cola bottles (Tarver). Consumers would hunt for a bottle of Coke with their name on it, and often voluntarily posted pictures of their special find on social media, playing into word of mouth advertising and underscoring the significance of names across cultures. The campaign varied by country, with Coke bottles featuring names from the regions they were sold in, highlighting the strength of Coca-Cola's global brand.

Other inscriptions included more universal labels like mom, teacher, or my sunshine, which encouraged giving the drink as a gift and showed its cultural significance, making it more than just sugar water, but an experience (Tarver). Song lyrics, part of the entertainment pillar of pop culture, were also printed on bottles. For more than six months in 2016, the most liked post on *Instagram* was an ad featuring the singer Selena Gomez drinking Coke from a bottle that had her own song lyrics inscribed on its label (@selenagomez). Coca-Cola has consistently made sure that people believe its product is more than just a drink--that it is a beacon of joy as a lifestyle brand, too, by using slogans like "Taste the Feeling" and "Open Happiness" ("History of Coca-Cola Advertising Slogans"). This combination of direct advertising, slogans, and partnerships has ensured that Coke is a mainstay of American culture with tremendous market power.

By embedding itself in pop culture, Coca-Cola has been able to reach across borders and into other cultures. Blessings by Buddhist priests have accompanied the openings of bottling plants in Thailand, and blessings by Catholic bishops have done the same in Argentina (Khan). The drink is made in local variations around the world, like cream soda-flavored Inca Kola in Peru, Apple Coke in Japan, and Lime Coke in Romania (Shetler). Most interestingly, in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, Coca-Cola is seen as a sacred liquid used in religious ceremonies, and is more popular there than in the rest of the world. The Tzotzil indigenous people, whose spirituality blends Christianity and pre-conquest Mayan traditions, believe Coke can heal the sick and that burping, which usually occurs after one consumes Coca-Cola, expels evil spirits from within (Tyler). On average, each resident of the region drinks 2.2 liters of the beverage a day, in part due to it being cheaper and more widely available than water (Tyler). This is because Coca-Cola bottling plants use municipal water sources and cause shortages. Yet, local governments are not eager to curb the company's usage due to its tax revenue (Tyler). In San Juan Chamula, a town in Chiapas, the brand's advertising can be seen on most street corners, and in a way shows colonialism repeating itself in the form of cultural imperialism. This represents a heightened form of globalization where a product becomes part of local culture and lifestyle instead of just a new commodity, like in its country of origin (Tyler).

Although people around the world enjoy the drink, Coca-Cola has not been without opposition. Communist regimes disapproved of the beverage, as it represented capitalism. In the USSR, Coca-Cola was an example of consumerism instilling desire in people for an unnecessary product (Standage 258). Marshal Georgy Zhukov did not want to be seen in public enjoying the product during the Cold War due to its uniquely strong connection to American culture. Even if he drank it from an unbranded glass, observers would know he was enjoying the capitalist beverage from its brown hue (Standage 256). Upon his request, the company created a clear version of Coke, and the drink was then allowed to be imported. Mass bottling could then begin under the condition that the government owned the means of production, in communist fashion. When word spread in America that this deal was proposed to Coca-Cola by the Soviets, practically subsidizing the

Soviet Union's anti-Americanism, the company backed out of trade in the country and the USSR was once again left Cokeless (Standage 259). Alliance with the brand represented a conflict of interest in Italy, too. In the summer of 1950, a truckload of Coca-Cola appeared in the Vatican. The brand gained loyalty among churchgoers, and new enemies among communists. Catholics explained that Coke was only there due to the influx of tourists, but the Italian Communist Party saw a partnership between the soda company and the church and thus became increasingly both anti-Coca-Cola and anti-Catholic (Kahn). In France, many groups in addition to the French Communists, including wine growers and editors of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, opposed Coca-Cola's entry into the French market. When reporting on the event, the newspaper proclaimed, "The moral landscape of France is at stake!" (qtd. in Kahn). Here, the fears of Coca-Cola's American roots replacing French culture were visible. Winegrowers feared Coke would bring the decline of the wine industry in France (Kahn). The French Communist Party coined the term "cocacolonization," defined as the export of this part of American culture abroad (Standage 257). There was concern that the company would harm French efforts to recover following World War II, even claiming that the Coke distribution system would also function as an espionage network (Kuisel 101). Today, the only two countries where Coke is not sold are ones controlled by a communist government-- Cuba and North Korea (Hebblethwaite). Coca-Cola's embodiment of capitalism and consumerist culture is inarguable. Regardless of those who oppose it, wherever there is a free market economy, Coke is produced, sold and advertised there.

Coca-Cola, while iconic, does not reign over the soda market without serious competition. Pepsi holds a steady place in pop culture, too. Unlike Coca-Cola, which has maintained the same serifed logo since its inception, Pepsi has changed its brand identity numerous times throughout its slightly shorter life (Kramer). The mere variation of its brand is enough to give it publicity. Its logo is now a globe, which ironically may be more fitting for Coca-Cola's worldwide presence. When both companies were growing, Pepsi made a point to promote itself as the Coca-Cola alternative for the young "Pepsi Generation," framing its competitor as an outworn drink of the past. In 1964, Pepsi aired a commercial that took advantage of its less established presence, in which the slogan "For those who think young" debuted (Hemoo Ibrahim Abdulsalam). Coca-Cola did not take this aggressive competition lightly. In response, Coke, the drink with historical backing, sought to maintain its timelessness. Yet, in the 1980s, Coca-Cola switched tactics and tried to rebrand itself. America's loyalty to Coca-Cola was put to the test when New Coke, which was a varied formulation of the original Coke from 1886, debuted in 1985 (Little). Coca-Cola still had majority market share, but it had been falling for the past decade (Little). Pepsi had been gaining sales due to a taste test campaign it was winning. In TV ads and other forms of media, participants in the Pepsi Challenge would blindly sip both soft drinks. The majority picked Pepsi as better tasting. Scientifically, this was because of the higher sugar content and thus sweeter taste of Pepsi, which registers as better tasting if only a few sips are taken (Little). Coke decided to create a

new formula to perform better in such taste tests. However, it did not succeed in the national market, with Coke drinkers disappointed with the new formula, and complaining that their children will never know the real taste of Coca-Cola (@ben_a_adams). On July 11, 1985, 79 days after New Coke's introduction, the Coca-Cola Company announced the classic flavor would be brought back. This news was so crucial that ABC News interrupted the airing of *General Hospital*, a very popular soap opera, to share it. Arkansas Senator David Pryor called the reintroduction a "meaningful moment in American history" (Pendergrast 358). The product was so embedded in the collective consciousness of Americans that any change to it would result in backlash, as shown in this cautionary tale. New Coke's failure marked the turning point in the so-called Cola Wars, where the two brands closely competed (Maggiore). This faceoff, in which consumers took part, shows another facet of the companies' triviality, comparable to today's debate about whether milk should be poured after or before cereal. Pepsi and Coke products are almost identical; it is their marketing that truly differentiates them to customers. Coke's marketing, which is more effective, is the primary reason for its success over Pepsi.

Pepsi's strength in pop culture comes from sponsorships and celebrity endorsements, especially within the entertainment industry. Both it and Coca-Cola spend millions of dollars to sponsor major events and secure endorsements from public personalities. In his *Pitchfork* article titled "How Pepsi Used Pop Music to Build an Empire," Jeremy Larson examines the strategy the company uses to sell its flagship beverage to the audiences of pop singers, particularly against the backdrop of its larger rival, Coca-Cola. Larson states, "For nearly 60 years, Pepsi's mission has been to tie its soda inextricably to modern music and the aspiration of youth culture" (Larson). This approach is more upfront, and short-term: Pepsi can remain a part of concerts, festivals, and major sporting events, for instance, but must pay substantially for the attention. The two companies mirror each other's efforts to stay relevant through cultural entertainment. For example, Pepsi sponsors the Super Bowl, a popular American event (Larson). However, Coca-Cola has funded the Olympics, a global affair, for almost a century ("365 Days to Tokyo"). While Pepsi secured Michael Jackson in 1983 as a spokesperson in ads, Coca-Cola got actor Bill Cosby (Larson). Pepsi created an entire song called "Joy of Pepsi" for Britney Spears to sing in a commercial in 2001 (Larson). Thirty years earlier, Coca-Cola did something similar. It brought together people of many ethnic backgrounds for an ad set on a mountaintop in Italy, and had the group sing a rendition of the song "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony)," replacing the title line with, "I'd like to buy the world a Coke and keep it company" (Mooney 38). The commercial further perpetuated the idea of Coca-Cola as a cultural brand and globalizing force, powered by consumerism.

When Coca-Cola backed out of its deal with the USSR, Pepsi was ready to replace its rival in the Soviet Bloc. In *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, Tom Standage explains, "Since it was not tainted by anticommunist propaganda, Pepsi was better able to expand behind the Iron Curtain" (Standage 260). However, even this example of what appears to be brilliant international trade still worked against Pepsi.

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When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, those who only knew Pepsi as the default cola brand found Coca-Cola and other capitalist products beyond the fallen wall, and would deem them exotic and superior to those they were used to. Standage continues, saying that "drinking Coca-Cola became a symbol of freedom. By the mid-1990s, Coca-Cola had overtaken Pepsi as the most popular cola in the former Soviet-bloc countries (Standage 260-261). Once again, Coca-Cola found economic success in representing American culture.

Still today, Pepsi lags behind Coca-Cola globally, both in sales and brand reputation. In 2019, Pepsi exited the Indonesian market of 270 million people due to Coke's success in the country (Rahman and Boediwardhana). And in 2017, on the other side of the ocean, a major marketing blunder occurred when a Pepsi commercial featuring model Kendall Jenner was aired in what many considered poor taste. In it, a civil rights protest is taking place, and police are separated from activists. Jenner is shown handing a can of Pepsi to a police officer, who takes a sip of the drink. Suddenly, cheers of unity break out in the crowd and the protest turns into a celebration (Yash Yadav). This advertisement is an example of Pepsi portraying itself as a vessel of joy and happiness instead of a soft drink, just like Coca-Cola does. In this case, though, the advertisement trivialized the serious issues regarding inequality, especially against the backdrop of recent incidents of police brutality. Had Coca-Cola produced the spot, backlash would likely have been greater due to Coke's higher brand strength (Tillman). This further led to a more positive perception of Coca-Cola in comparison to Pepsi (Tillman).

Coca-Cola's success is due in large part to its place in pop culture, which was gained through powerful advertising and marketing that allowed it to capitalize on American cultural moments, from events to media to holidays. In the United States, it is a brand with history and one that conjures joyful memories for most people, and around the world, it is a symbol of America and globalism. Because of its link to pop culture, Coca-Cola is responsible for innumerable jobs and economic growth. In all markets, it sells a lifestyle, promoting happiness in a bottle. At its core, it is just a sugar filled beverage, once advertised as healthy, but now visibly a detriment to public health. As a corporation, the Coca-Cola Company supplies three percent of all human liquid intake, and its growth could not have happened without its eponymous drink becoming part of American culture (Standage 265). Coca-Cola's success is due to its effective marketing, which has crowned Coke the poster child of consumerism. It lives on in celebrity contracts, advertisements, and refrigerators around the world.

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This thematic essay presents an argumentative thesis about the garden of Eden that uses both class-assigned texts and First Year Seminar required readings to support her argument, demonstrating how the summer reading text, Educated, integrates with other Heritage Unit texts. The author takes a strong position and uses the sources well to support it.

Eden: Paradise or Purgatory?

By Lindsay Perrillo

Prof. Collins- Story and Screen

The word Eden' has a favorable connotation to it. When one thinks of Eden, they imagine a paradise where everything one would need is provided for them and where everyone is happy. However, this utopian perception of Eden is a fallacious one. The one requisite God had for Adam and Eve was that "'. . . of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die,'" (Gen. 2.17) compelling Adam and Eve to stay in an almost vegitative state. They cannot learn, they cannot grow. They can only exist in their repressive, albeit beautiful environment. They may have all their physical needs of food, water, and shelter met, but they can never truly be happy. For how can one feel genuine happiness without sadness to base it on? How can one have prosperity without struggles? Eden is not a utopia, but a purgatory imitating life. Gaining knowledge and learning from one's experiences are necessary for the development of an individual, and such growth is essential for living.

Many stories explore the idea of people escaping an Eden -- a place where they had been living an unconscious life, knowing nothing but Eden and what their captors want them to know. In Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," prisoners are stuck in a cave where they can't move and can only see shadows of what is real. Once a prisoner is forced out of the cave, he is overwhelmed and blinded by the light of the world, but he, at least, is in reality now. He steps out of his unconscious existence in the cave and begins consciously living. While it is hard at first to adjust to an entirely new reality, when he does, he becomes enlightened. He can genuinely understand good and bad and can feel emotions. While discussing how one would perceive reality after escaping the cave, Plato expresses that "in the knowable realm, the last thing to be seen is the form of the good, and it is seen only with toil and trouble" (211). He further explains that to understand what is good, "one must infer that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything" (211). In this he implies that from the bad, grows the good. Plato suggests that one can't be happy without sadness; one can't achieve goals without first struggling to get them. Life is just a series of being in caves and escaping them. People are constantly learning and changing, challenging the status quo that they've become comfortable with, because that's what growing--and therefore life-- is. Eden can be likened to the cave from this allegory, but unlike the cave, Eden is under the guise of being a paradise.

Another text that illuminates the flaws of living in Eden is Tara Westover's memoir *Educated.* Westover's extremist father keeps her in a metaphorical Eden of his own design, telling her what to believe and how to act, similar to God commanding Adam and Eve. This indoctrination forces Westover to play a passive role in her life, as she lets her father determine everything for her. It is only when she leaves Eden and disobeys her father that she starts living consciously. When she goes to college, she is left to forge her own values and worldviews, and thus she enters reality. Westover writes, "My life was narrated for me by others. Their voices were forceful, empathetic, absolute. It had never occurred to me that my voice might be as strong as theirs," (197) which truly illuminates what it is like to live unconsciously just like in the Bible's Eden or Plato's cave. In all of these situations, you don't have control of your life; you are playing out what has been written for you by your captor. You yourself don't know anything; you haven't been given the chance to. You don't know your full potential. You just sit in Eden, trapped by your ignorance. Westover values going off to college, which is shown when she writes, "You could call this selfhood many things. Transformation. Metamorphosis. Falsity. Betrayal. I call it an Education" (329). She attributes her growth and ability to fully escape her previous life to her education. She leaves behind the sixteen-year-old-girl shell of herself, the manifestation of her self doubt. Her education allows her to leave Eden and become conscious, to live. If Westover had never had the opportunity to live her life on her own terms, she would still be trapped as a puppet working in accordance with her father's will; she would exist in a life that was not her own where nothing could have changed or challenged her, and it would be to her detriment.

The film *Room* also dissects the concept of Eden and of leaving the cave through the eyes of a child. Jack grew up in the same room his entire life. While the audience can infer that he and his mother are being held captive and the room is not a good or happy place, he does not. The room is all he has ever known. It is his world, his Eden. He lives there doing the same things in the same few square feet of space, just existing, living unconsciously. His mother tries to teach him new things, but he can't experience these things and make them real in his mind; they are not a part of his reality. When he and his mother escape the room, Jack doesn't like it at first and wishes to go back to what he knew. Just like the prisoners of the cave, being in a completely different reality is overwhelming at first. However, Jack eventually recognizes it as a good experience, saying, "Ma and I have decided that because we don't know what we like, we get to try everything. There are so many things out here. And sometimes, it's scary, but that's okay" (1:47:23 - 1:48:02). Since he has left the room, he is able to experience countless things he hadn't even known existed or believed only existed on TV. All the things his mom had tried to tell him about only became a part of his reality when he was able to experience them himself. He is finally able to meet a real dog and to perceive trees with his own eyes. Jack accepts that the world, his new reality, is very different, so it can be overwhelming. But he appreciates that he gets to experience the world and live consciously. He is happy to have expanded beyond his Eden, the isolating world

that once confined him. His growth is no longer stifled and there are no limits to what he can learn and experience. His life has begun.

   At one point or another, everyone must choose whether or not to stay within their own sheltered world where their status quo is never challenged. I personally faced such a decision not long ago. Leaving my extremely small town and my mom, who I have been extremely close to my entire life, suddenly became a scary thought as the date to move to college loomed closer. Once I moved in, adjusting to my new life was one of the most emotionally draining experiences I've ever had. It was overwhelming, and like Jack, I wished to go back to what I had known, but like Westover, I knew that I had to experience the world for myself. I've already learned so many things at college that I wouldn't have been able to learn at home. Even though it was really hard, I knew it was important to force myself to be uncomfortable and experience new things because it would help me grow and expand my reality. This hesitation to dive into a new reality is common. Nostalgia and desire for what is known stunts so many people into plateauing, never realizing their true potential or the expansiveness of the world. This is why the idealization of Eden is harmful.

 All of these Edens have inhabitants who start out as stagnant, unconscious, and passive prisoners. While they are alive and their basic human needs are met, they are not growing or really living. As they emerge from these environments, they begin to create their own realities from the knowledge they gain from new experiences--the knowledge that comes from active and conscious living. Outside Eden, they might run into problems they wouldn't have if they had stayed in Eden, but life is supposed to have problems and bad experiences; they are essential to one's growth and future happiness. To live is to encounter new things, good or bad, and to grow and learn from them.

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The author explores the impact of a long and continuing legacy of trauma in the LGBTQ community from the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s to the Covid-19 pandemic of today.

HIV/AIDS and the Legacy of Trauma

By William Siebert

Dr. Liptak- Trauma in Literature and Film

In the 1980s, the LGBTQ community was on the brink of a renaissance. As queer folks were outcasted from a society that did not understand them, more and more people gathered together and communities formed. The Stonewall riots of 1969 had inspired collective action unseen by previous generations of LGBTQ folk. The cultural shift after Stonewall formed hardened communities that had overcome decades of violence and intolerance with the collective imperative to maintain themselves. These vibrant underground cultures of LGBTQ folk were misunderstood by the masses. What laid ahead, however, was far grimmer. Society's neglect of LGBTQ people has left a legacy of opposition and lasting homophobic and transphobic sentiment, and generational trauma that resulted from the HIV/AIDS crisis in the queer community, which has all reshaped the way queer groups interact. The HIV/AIDS crisis swept away the once-optimistic outlook of LGBTQ communities and forced them to fight against a system that neglected them during one of the darkest periods in LGBTQ history. In the face of neglect and intolerance from the outside world, the LGBTQ community experienced generations of trauma and loss from the HIV/AIDS crisis, and collectivized to create action as a result.

The gap between older and younger generations of LGBTQ people reflects the loss of older queer people due to the AIDS crisis as well as homophobic and transphobic attacks. HIV/AIDS first came to the public eye in the 1980s and soon became a global epidemic. Due to a lack of information regarding safe sex, the disease began affecting younger communities in particular. As the disease spread through the 1980s into the 1990s, information regarding prevention and treatment of the virus was scarce. The collective opposition to homosexuality and secretive conditions it implied led to many being uninformed about ways to prevent transmission. This disparity led to a disproportionate rate of transmission in LGBTQ communities. Research has shown that "globally, men who have sex with men (MSM) are about 28 times more likely to be living with HIV than men in the general population" (Danil 381). As a result of this disparity, HIV was seen as solely an issue of the LGBTQ community. This stigma was so significant, in fact, that the first term coined for HIV was GRID, or gay-related immunodeficiency syndrome (Danil 378). As a result, the societal perception of HIV interlocked almost exclusively with LGBTQ groups. A discussion about the stigma formed by HIV/AIDS concludes that "an enacted stigma associated with being gay and living with HIV/AIDS was interwoven throughout their narratives" (Bower et al. 238). Many felt a need to hide their condition to preserve their safety as it essentially

rendered them social pariahs in an already-intolerant society. Stigma against LGBTQ communities greatly intensified by HIV shaped a culture that was intolerant of LGBTQ people and saw them as the cause of HIV/AIDS becoming an epidemic. Often, finding resources functioned by word of mouth, and due to the stigma that HIV/AIDS formed, many did not feel comfortable seeking help. What followed the formation of these conditions was a rampant epidemic that forever damaged a generation of people and had repercussions on younger generations, too.

Lasting trauma and cultural shifts formed by HIV/AIDS have left survivors struggling in the face of modern events. Particularly in recent times, the COVID-19 pandemic has been evocative of conditions during the HIV/AIDS crisis, making older generations of LGBTQ people concerned and putting survivors of the disease at risk. The collective response to HIV/AIDS amongst the community is echoed in the response of many to COVID-19. Journalists investigating the commonalities have found that "for many LGBT people, a rage felt long ago has returned: fury at the government over its haphazard initial response, suspicion about abatement or promises of a vaccine, and anxiety about how much worse this could get for the marginalized" (Morgan and Yuan). While many during the pandemic have felt a disdain for the government over its incompetence in handling COVID-19, the reaction from survivors of the HIV/AIDS crisis is a familiar one. It is a reminder of the trauma they faced losing loved ones, fighting a system that chose to ignore them, and coping with the overwhelming pressure and stigma forced upon them. Ella Ben Hagai and other researchers concerned about public health issues have surveyed queer people from different generations to understand the effects of the HIV/AIDS crisis then and now. When discussing interlocking forms of oppression, Hagai and her co-researchers point out that "for some participants, living through the AIDS epidemic was associated with a call for action to join organizations to help others in their community who were suffering. For people who were currently living with HIV, the trauma of the diagnosis was important in facilitating care for others" (Hagai et al. 985). This exemplifies generational trauma as a collective call to action. Many who survived the HIV/AIDS crisis have taken positions of care for younger generations, and as a result, those "who gave back through work in care professions were relatively healthy and had stable housing. Their generativity and work helping others allowed them to regain and sustain their strength and a sense of meaning after experiences with traumatic stress" (Hagai et al. 985). For many survivors of trauma, assisting others is an important method of coping. The dedication of older generations to take care of younger generations of LGBTQ people is indicative of trauma as a binding force: being in a position of support allows them to be guides, mentors, and caretakers. Researchers have argued that "To have a history is to have certain social privilege" (Bower et al. 241). HIV/AIDS threatened to destroy one of the first documented generations of queer folk, the generation that would go on to help define the modern state of the LGBTQ community. The HIV/AIDS crisis charged many to take this care to the next level by organizing to ensure the well-being of future generations. If it were not for the effort of the older

generations, the collective memory of queer struggle— along with the culture this struggle formed— would be gone.

As society has become more tolerant of the LGBTQ community, some may say the stigma of queerness has been absolved. LGBTQ youth now have more access than ever to services that provide assistance, including those related to therapy and healthcare. In addition, same-sex unions are legal in the United States. Research has shown that "the current social climate is more embracing of sexual minorities compared to earlier decades" (Hagai et al. 987). The passing of time and the publicized struggle of LGBTQ communities has resulted in more tolerance and semblances of justice and equity. However, intolerance still persists for LGBTQ people. Despite decades of collective action, societal stigma towards LGBTQ people continues in the medical field. Medical researchers argue that "despite changes over time, LGBTQ health disparities are linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of human and civil rights" (Aleshire et al. 174). While society has slowly become more tolerant and accepting of LGBTQ people, the attitude reflected during the peak of the HIV/AIDS crisis still resides in many of the systems that failed to assist queer people in their time of need. The continuation of this stigma is indicative of systemic intolerance that further marginalizes LGBTQ people who face disenfranchisement. This disparity is not only reflected in healthcare, but in other systems that are essential for one's well-being. For example, the struggle of LGBTQ youth continues to put many at risk, and while conditions have improved for some, LGBTQ people still experience inequity when it comes to basic needs. Studies have shown that "between 240,000 and 400,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth experience at least one episode of homelessness each year in the United States" (Ream 8). The disproportionate statistics of homelessness in LGBTQ populations are representative of a culture that still tolerates the subjugation of sexual minorities. Despite a perceived shift in attitudes towards LGBTQ people in recent years, greater tolerance of queer identities has not entirely resulted in the resolution of disparities based on one's sexual orientation or gender.

While conditions for the LGBTQ community have improved as years have passed, the HIV/AIDS crisis has left a harrowing legacy of trauma and struggle. Generations of struggle have shaped a culture of LGBTQ folk that must look out for each other's well-being in the face of neglect from society. Decades of community action, policy change and social justice work have led to a somewhat better future for queer youth. However, the ongoing impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis still impacts younger generations, and still perpetuates a systemic intolerance of queerness. For survivors of the HIV/AIDS crisis, the fight for justice still continues, and LGBTQ youth still face intolerance from the systems that are intended to help those in need. The resilience of LGBTQ communities through decades of trauma has radically reframed the landscape of queer culture, and the self-reliance required by these communities to survive resulted in collective action and support.

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Synthesizing what she learned from the fall semester's course readings, and reflecting on the importance of examining both personal and public history, this writer asserts that she wants to be on the right side of history by embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We Are Living in a Time that My Children Will Learn About in School

By Madeleine Sloan

Prof. Godson-Glynn- Be the Change

History operates in a cycle, and unfortunately, that is not always for the better. Problems that long ago are still problems today, even if they look a little different. The Black Lives Matter protests look almost identical to the civil rights protests of the 1960s. Author James Baldwin once said that history is not just in the past but is happening around us every moment of every day. If people continue to dismiss injustices, such as the racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia that we see today, nothing is ever going to change and the cycle will never end. In "Why Black, Indigenous and Other People of Color Experience Greater Harm During the Pandemic," Mahader Tamene et al. argue that black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) have been disproportionately abused as a result of these historical patterns. In "Build Cultural Proficiency to Ensure Equity," Delores and Randall Lindsey also highlight these patterns of discrimination and injustice, and descirbe how they are present throughout school systems across America. The lack of cultural diversity and proficiency in schools is part of the cycle, resulting in BIPOC communities still not receiving equitable education and resources. In order to fix these injustices and make the world a better place, the collective human race needs to acknowledge these historical patterns and work together to make the change, no matter how hard it may seem. As Dr. Seuss's The Lorax says, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not" (16:31-16:40). We need to care about one another, and we can change the world if we work together.

In 2020, history has repeated itself in multiple ways, particularly when it comes to race issues. Not only has the global COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected BIPOC communities, but police brutality and racism have become very public issues. Tamene et al. write about how these communities have been simultaneously affected by both of these issues. They note that "communities of color are left to choose between the risk of acquiring COVID-19 and the risk of experiencing police violence" (Tamene et al. 5). However, this is not new. BIPOC have always been disproportionately affected by health crises, including the influenza pandemic of 1918. Black lives were disregarded because too many other people simply did not believe that they mattered. This has been shown time and time again during public health crises. The influenza pandemic, AIDS epidemic, and even the Flint, Michigan water crisis have all disproportionately affected BIPOC communities, purely because they are minority communities. In Flint, Michigan, seven years after the

beginning of the water crisis in 2014, many black households still do not have access to clean water. Both black and Latinx people are dying from COVID-19 at 2.5 times the rate of the white mortality rate ("BIPOC Communities and COVID-19"). Any public health issue experienced by a white population is harder on BIPOC communities because of the lack of funding and resources given to these communities where so many have been disenfranchised by systemic racism. Now more than ever it is essential to know that BIPOC lives matter, and that is the first step in moving away from the broken cycle and creating a more equitable community for everyone.

Unfortunately, too many people today still do not care about those who have been disenfranchised by the system, and you can see this by the way the disenfranchised are treated. The mistreatment has led to increased attention on police brutality, which has caused the Black Lives Matter movement to grow exponentially within the past six months alone. There have been protests across the country and the world. We are living in a time when human rights are being ripped away from so many people who live in the so-called land of the free. People are locked in cages at the border, black people are being killed and brutalized by those who are supposed to serve and protect them, and people are dying because our country's leaders did not take COVID-19 seriously. Every single one of these issues could have been prevented. Hundreds of thousands of lives could have been saved this year if this was a country that valued every life the same way it has historically valued white lives.

We must come together to address the issues BIPOC communities face. As Tamene et al. say, "The work of dismantling this system requires collective power. The responsibility to upend it lies with all of us" (2). Even though these problems disproportionately affect BIPOC, they are not their problems alone. They are humanity's problem. If more people had paid attention to the lessons of the past, then we would not be mourning for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other victims of violence at the hands of police officers. We would not be mourning the lives of BIPOC who have died at far higher rates from the COVID-19 pandemic. If we were educated and worked together, we could be celebrating, and enjoying life for everything it has to offer. However, in times like these, happy endings truly are the stuff of fairytales.

As James Baldwin suggested, a lack of education is a large part of the problem. Children of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds are learning a white-washed history of this country. When we learn about the traumas of BIPOC communities, we learn about the Civil Rights Movement and the Trail of Tears, but many cannot fathom that white supremacy is still a prevalent issue today. However, Lindsey and Lindsey argue that cultural proficiency--"acknowledging barriers that exist for students and being able to see their cultures as asset-based" (51)-- is a way to start making the change towards a better world. If students of all races, cultures, and identities are given equitable educational opportunities, there would be a greater understanding of the history that informs how people behave today. By giving all students in all neighborhoods equitable and

inclusive education, they will grow both academically and as socially responsible people. The stigmas around BIPOC would begin to disappear, and that would be a big step toward creating a truly equitable society.

I was not taught about different cultures as much as I should have been. I had to teach myself and undo the different stereotypes and prejudices I had developed. Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to do that, either because they were never taught how or because the process is so uncomfortable. People accept what they were taught in school as the only truth, which is why it can be so hard to see that history is repeating itself in such an awful way. People have accepted the world for what it is- and they think it is normal. While it may be the norm we are used to, that does not make it right, and that is a concept people need to understand. We must work to change both the reality and the perception that the reality is normal.

BIPOC communities have suffered so much this year alone. They have had to fight police brutality, systemic racism, and the pandemic at higher rates than anyone else, and all at once. However, this is not the first time any of these issues came up. We can see in our history and heritage that old patterns resurface in new ways. People can learn about history and heritage all they want, but until they decide to stop the cycle, change will not happen. While I will never have to face many of the same traumas and injustices as BIPOC, I can educate and make the change in myself and then work with others to make the world a better place, not just for myself, but for those who have been abused for hundreds of years. We are living in a time that my children will learn about when they are in school. This will be history, and it is important to me, and hopefully everyone, that we are on the right side of history--the side that fought back and rallied for change. History does not start or end with us, but it will be with us for generations to come.

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For this Heritage Unit Essay, the author effectively integrates the First Year Seminar Franciscan texts with the summer reading book and a class-assigned text to argue that morality plays a significant role in effective leadership.

Lead by Example

by Victoria Spadaro

Prof. Godson-Glynn- Be the Change

If you had to define the word leader, how would you do so? So many people define themselves as leaders, but how many of them actually put the needs of others before their own? In "Why Can't We Talk About an Injustice?" activist Bryan Stevenson claims that leaders empower and inspire future generations to take action. Thomas of Celano and Margaret Carney show that St. Francis and St. Clare share those traits of effective leadership. Another example is Tara Westover, whose powerful and captivating memoir *Educated* tells her story of breaking away from her family to find a new way of life from a new perspective. Everyone has the opportunity to be a leader, but it is only those who are willing to step out of their comfort zones and do something extraordinary who will actually be the change they want to see in the world. Some may say a good leader is one who takes charge, but there are many people who have the ability to lead and only do so to benefit themselves and others who are privileged. A true leader recognizes their moral obligation to embrace truth and reconciliation, uses their voice to bring attention to injustice, and empowers future generations to continue the movement they have sparked.

A good leader immediately takes action even if they are fearful of the consequences, but they also recognize that action and strategy must be united with a desire to recognize truth and reconciliation. In the National Public Radio interview, "Why Can't We Talk About An Injustice?" Bryan Stevenson elaborates on the important elements of being a great leader. Unfortunately, in this country we created a system where if you are of lower status, you will be treated as less than. Bryan Stevenson states that "wealth, not culpability, shapes outcomes. And yet, we seem to be very comfortable. The politics of fear and anger has made us believe that these are problems that are not our problems"(Stevenson). He highlights the point that many see an issue right in front of them, but are afraid to take a stand against the many injustices of our world. Stevenson, a remarkable social justice warrior, notices this and is a voice for those who do not have one. While Stevenson encourages speaking out, oftentimes these important messages are silenced by those who benefit from the status quo. In order for us to truly make a difference, we have to be able to look deep within ourselves and admit where we personally, and as a society, went wrong. We like to mask the truth with materialistic and artificial things, instead of facing the problem head on. Many are beginning to lose faith in humanity because of this very issue and we have to make a change before it is too late. Stevenson says we get

distracted because "we love innovation. We love technology. We love creativity. We love entertainment, but ultimately, those realities are shadowed by suffering, abuse, degradation and marginalization" (Stevenson). Although people notice that society is taking a turn for the worse, there are very few who recognize that it is our job to fix it; this is because they often think someone else will. We cannot all live peacefully until everyone lives freely. Being a leader is not always easy and comes with challenges, but, like Stevenson, we must face the truth and work to eradicate injustice.

Stevenson and many others have faced some pretty harsh critics while trying to create a chain reaction for a movement, yet they have encountered some supporters as well. Stevenson recalls a man who approached him, questioning if he knew exactly what he was doing. At first Stevenson was confused by this question, but the man responded by saying, "You're beating the drum for justice" (8) while showing him all his war wounds from previous movements for social justice, which he referred to as medals of honor. This man had a major impact on Stevenson by offering support for his mission for justice. This type of interaction is what drives a leader to spark change and empower others because young leaders also need role models to look up to in troubling times.

A religious figure who acted as a role model and helped shape many people's core values was St. Francis of Assisi. His story is remarkable because of the courage he had to step outside his comfort zone. In *The Francis Trilogy*, Thomas of Celano recounts how Francis decided to change his way of life by abandoning his wealth and selfish attitude and instead turning his attention to the poor, but this did not come without criticism and hate. Thomas of Celano explains that "it is difficult to leave familiar things behind, and things once instilled in the spirit are not easily weakened" (25). It is extremely hard to leave everything we have ever known behind, but once we leave the situation and trust in the Lord, there will be no room for weakness. Although Francis struggled immensely throughout his journey with God, he kept his faith, demonstrating the perseverance that is important when it comes to leadership. In fact, he was even persecuted by his own father because, as Thomas of Celano describes, "when he had learned that Francis was living in that place in such a way, he was touched inwardly with sorrow of heart and deeply disturbed by the sudden turn of events" (30). Thomas of Celano emphasizes the hardships Francis ran into as he continued to follow a path that was out of the ordinary. His father was greatly disappointed as he watched his son transform into a man of peace and grace, yet Francis stepped into the shoes of the marginalized instead of dismissing people thought of as lower status. In doing so, Thomas of Celano depicts how Francis gave away his money and worldly possessions and "in a wonderful way, in an instant, he turned completely to the work of God. Feeling the heavy weight of carrying the money for an hour and reckoning all its benefits to be like so much sand, he hurried to get rid of it" (29). All the money in the world could not satisfy Francis whose mission was to follow the word of the Lord. In order to do that, he needed to empathize with those who were considered unworthy by the rest of society.

When he left his old lifestyle behind, Francis was then able to ignore those who spoke negatively about his mission and become a role model for others to do so, as well; this proves his effective leadership skills.

Difficult times and hard moments in life, like those St. Francis faced, build character, and this was also true for St. Clare, whose incredible journey is another successful story of leadership when it comes to fighting for freedom and change. Similar to Francis, Clare left her family to find her true identity. Margaret Carney says that Clare was "a woman brave enough to step out of the pre-destined mold created by society and her family legacy"(33). Carney celebrates Clare's walk with God and her mission to live a life of freedom and meaning. Women are often seen as inferior to men, and although Clare was of a higher social status than Francis, she still dealt with the typical stereotype of a woman, such as being trapped in traditional gender roles and being expected to behave in certain ways. Carney writes, "She longed for radical freedom. She intuited a path of peace, of simply economic structures in which women would care for their own destiny, a life that took the words of Jesus in the Gospel as sacred daily instructions, a life that did not choose between Martha and Mary" (30-31). Throughout her life, she felt as if something was missing and therefore took matters into her own hands to find her true destiny. Similar to Francis, Clare had to face several challenges, including the dramatic escape from her home in Assisi. In joining Francis as the first female Franciscan, Clare established a new role for women in that society. Carney explains that " this Way of Life which Clare has authored, this fruit of a lifetime of sacrifice and discernment, will be forever enshrined as a valid life for any woman who seeks to follow her way "(36). Clare's strong passion to immortalize her Rule meant that other women could similarly stay true to their faith. She still serves as a role model for people who feel they need to take matters into their own hands to follow their destiny as well as for those who want to make a difference in their communities. St. Clare is considered today as one of the most influential women to have ever challenged traditional gender roles while grasping a strong sense of faith in God and herself.

When a way of life is harmful to us, we must follow the example of St. Clare to make changes ourselves in order to carve out a new future. Tara Westover did just that. She shows us the exact meaning of taking action despite a complicated family situation. Everything about Westover's life was chosen for her from a very young age, until one day she made the courageous decision to establish a life of her own. Westover claims, "My life was narrated for me by others. Their forces were forceful, empathetic, absolute. It never occurred to me that my voice might be as strong as theirs" (197). Although she does not deny that she struggled to be her own person for several years, when she is thrown into the real world, she realizes that the voice within her is just as powerful as the ones trying to silence her. Even though she ultimately makes the decision to not return to her family's lifestyle, she is often tempted to do so because that is all that is familiar to her. However, deep down, she knows she made the right choice. Making the right decisions in the face of adversity ties directly to leadership because this allows people to build confidence in themselves rather than

being easily influenced by and therefore following others' unethical ways. Westover writes, "If I yielded now, I would lose more than an argument. I would lose custody of my own mind" (304). She reaffirms her decision by stating that she is ready to think for herself and not be trapped by her family's perspective or way of life. Westover's sister has similar experiences but turns against Tara as she is unable to recognize the truth. She fears the consequences that could follow if the truth is acknowledged. Westover states, "I imagined what a relief it must have been for her, to realize she could trade her reality-- the one she shared with me--for his. How grateful she must have felt to pay such a modest price for her betrayal. I could not judge her for her choice, but in that moment I knew I could not choose it for myself" (304). As difficult as it was, Westover celebrates the fact that she was finally going to choose herself over her family. Her leadership skills shine through this memoir and they empower people to follow in her footsteps. Similar to St. Francis and St. Clare, she teaches others to not be afraid to start off on their own when searching for a new way of life.

Although having leadership skills may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concerns about the many injustices taking place. We as a community have to find the courage to be brave and fight for what we believe will benefit humanity as a whole. In order to do this, we must become the leaders that the next generation will be able to look up to. Bryan Stevenson, St. Francis, St. Clare, and Tara Westover all display the true meaning of what it means to be a great leader. Our country needs to be able to come together as one and fight for those who are struggling to fight for themselves. Leadership is not about creating a successful life for yourself, but rather setting an example for those around you to help others. It can be difficult to take the first step, but eventually others will begin to follow. Ultimately, it comes down to one simple question: how would you like to be remembered? Being a leader means you encourage others to embrace their own ability to spark meaningful change like these individuals were all able to do; it is now time for us to be the change.

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This analysis, supported by solid research, adeptly introduces and overcomes the naysayer, thus resulting in a convincing argument connecting legalized prostitution to increases in human trafficking.

Fighting for Freedom: The Impact of Legalizing Prostitution on Human Trafficking

By Greta R. Stjade

Dr. Stein- Out of Bounds

In 2016, 4.8 million people were victims of forced sexual exploitation (International Labour Organization, 2017, p. 39). Millions of people are lured into forced sex work in every corner of the globe, leaving them mentally and physically traumatized. Yet, this dark aspect of globalization is often ignored. Even when governments attempt to reduce human trafficking across their borders through public awareness and by prosecuting traffickers, the impact of domestic policies on human trafficking is often overlooked. One such domestic policy, that is also very controversial, is the legalization of prostitution. Although there are some who argue that legalizing prostitution is a way to reduce organized crime rampant in the sex industry, prostitution should not be legalized because it expands the overall market for sex, which, in turn, increases the rates of sex trafficking. In addition, the legalization policy's ineffectiveness, the profitable nature of the industry, and the legal hurdles associated with the criminalization of prostitution, play a role. In the end, though, the criminalization of prostitution can potentially reduce sex trafficking and, consequently, help millions of exploited sex workers worldwide regain their freedom.

In order to understand the importance of reducing the rates of sex trafficking, we must realize that sex trafficking is a global issue that is generally a result of systematic inequalities, particularly in regards to income. Most often traffickers target groups that lack legitimate economic opportunities, offering them jobs they could not otherwise get and eventually luring them into prostitution (Wagenaar, 2017, p. 8). It is also quite common for residents of low-income areas to migrate to other more affluent regions and countries, only to end up as victims of sex trafficking due to limited employment prospects. This is why, generally, richer countries and regions tend to experience higher rates of human trafficking. Thus, human trafficking is, indeed, a global issue because it is the outcome of forces beyond one country's control. The fact that the supply countries often ignore their contribution to human trafficking only aggravates the problem. One such example is Albania: a hub for trafficking (Wagenaar, 2017, p. 8). While international organizations still consider it a major source of organized human trafficking, the Albanian government no longer perceives it as one and chooses to ignore this issue for political and religious reasons (Wagenaar, 2017, p. 8). In this country prostitution is considered an uncomfortable and sinful topic that is best ignored completely (Wagenaar, 2017, p. 8). Such attitudes, when coupled with rising inequality, only fuel human trafficking around the world

because they refuse to work with other countries to address sex trafficking. However, due to it being a global issue, collaboration is particularly important.

Even though it is widely agreed that this kind of sexual exploitation has to be stopped, there is a lot of disagreement over the types of policies that could potentially achieve this goal, especially when it comes to the legalization of prostitution. Those who call for the legalization of prostitution assert that many women voluntarily choose prostitution as their occupation. They insist that criminalization increases not only the existing stigma against prostitutes, but also exploitation due to the lack of good working conditions and protection for prostitutes. Consequently, they argue that the legalization of prostitution increases the preference for legal prostitutes over trafficked ones; this is referred to as the substitution effect (Cho, Dreher, and Neumayer, 2012). According to Cho et al. (2012), the main idea behind the substitution effect is that brothels would want to recruit more legal residents who voluntarily sell sex, since employing illegally residing prostitutes, who are often victims of human trafficking, would endanger their newly achieved legal status (p. 69). Conversely, those who believe that prostitution should be criminalized in order to decrease human trafficking usually insist that prostitution is demeaning and rarely voluntary. They argue that it should be criminalized to protect women's rights by stopping forced sex work, thus reducing human trafficking. They insist that the legalization of prostitution only expands the overall market for sex, as it increases not only the demand for prostitution due to previously deterred clients entering the market but also the supply due to previously deterred pimps offering such services; this is called the scale effect (Cho et al., 2012, p. 69). Undoubtedly, if this is the case, the rate of human trafficking only increases. Ultimately, the legalization of prostitution involves both the scale effect and the substitution effect. However, people, including policy makers, often disagree about the balance of these opposing effects resulting from the legalization of prostitution; this leads to the disagreement over the type of legalization policy needed.

This topic remains controversial despite the data implying that the legalization of prostitution leads to increased rates of sex trafficking. Cho et al. (2012) conducted a cross-sectional empirical analysis of about 150 countries which shows that countries where prostitution is legal experience a larger reported incidence of human trafficking. In fact, the study, which arranged countries in categories of trafficking inflows, found that

> When prostitution is legal the probability to be in this second highest category is more than 12.8% points higher. For comparison, the probability of being in the lowest category of receiving no reported inflow of human trafficking is 5.3% points lower in countries with legal prostitution (Cho et al., 2012, p. 72).

In addition, if prostitution is legalized in a particular country, research has shown that "the probability that it will score *High* or *Very high* on the trafficking index increases by 68 percent" (Jakobsson and Kotsadam, 2013, p. 97). There is no doubt that the scale effect dominates the substitution effect. This can only suggest that the

expansion of the prostitution market has a greater impact on the rates of sex trafficking than the fact that these entrepreneurs can now operate openly. In addition, another study of 39 countries highlighted that other factors, such as immigrant share, religion, and GDP do not influence the results much (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2013, p. 97). Clearly, the rates of sex trafficking are mostly affected by the legalization policy.

It is important to note that this relationship between the rates of trafficking and the prostitution laws is not just a coincidence; various case studies of multiple countries have proven that this truly is a causal relationship. Sweden and Germany are good examples of this. In Sweden, buying sex has been illegal since 1999. As a result, studies indicate that "the number of women involved in street prostitution has declined between 30 and 50 percent and the number of buyers decreased by as much as 75–80 percent between the year the law was passed and 2006" (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2013, p. 99). This significant decrease in both demand and supply in only seven years confirms that the scale effect dominates the substitution effect in this case. Thus, it is easy to conclude that human trafficking has proportionately and significantly decreased in Sweden. In contrast, Germany fully legalized prostitution in 2002. It has reported an increase in the number of trafficked prostitutes over the years (Cho et al., 2012, p. 75). If compared to Sweden, Germany has about 60 times more prostitutes and 62 times more human trafficking victims than Sweden while having a population less than 10 times larger (Cho et al., 2012, p. 75). It is easy to see the relatively large impact of the scale effect compared to the substitution effect. Thus, these results confirm that the criminalization of prostitution reduces the rates of human trafficking more effectively than legalization.

However, these two effects are not the only reasons for the positive correlation between the legal status of prostitution and increased human trafficking. One cannot ignore the fact that the legalization policy is actually quite ineffective and difficult to implement. It is worth noting again that the task of implementing local policies to potentially reduce human trafficking is inherently very challenging, as this phenomenon is the outcome of forces beyond local authorities' control. Nevertheless, some authorities choose to decriminalize prostitution in order to fight human trafficking. The general idea behind legalization is the expectation that the facilitated monitoring of the regulated prostitution sector allows the police to focus on sex trafficking outside this regulated sector. In reality, however, the capacity of the police to fight sex trafficking significantly decreases due to the need to monitor the regulated sector. Although police work is facilitated due to the government officials being able to monitor and openly converse with these entrepreneurs, the police still need to constantly monitor the regulated sector as well. Huisman and Kleemans (2014) suggest that the decreased capacity of the police, caused by this need to monitor the regulated sector, then prevents the police from focusing on the investigation of sex trafficking in the illegal sector (pp. 223-225). Furthermore, the legalization of prostitution often involves ineffective cooperation among the authorities. According to Huisman and Kleemans (2014), certain institutions refrain from executing monitoring tasks (p. 222). For instance, many

times the police refuse to do simple tasks like ensuring the brothels' compliance with licensing conditions (Huisman & Kleemans, 2014, p. 222). Cooperation is also difficult from both a legal and a practical point due to a variety of reasons, such as privacy laws that hinder the flow of information among the authorities (Huisman & Kleemans, 2014, p. 225). All this highlights the flaws involved in the legalization of prostitution. Even though it seems like fighting human trafficking might be easier if prostitution is legalized, this policy actually creates additional problems that impede police work. Consequently, less can be done to reduce sex trafficking.

Furthermore, it is important to realize that the legalization policy does not easily drive out organized crime, particularly in regards to human trafficking. There are numerous reasons for this. First, the unattractive nature of sex work guarantees an insufficient supply of legally residing prostitutes, which usually cannot match the increasing demand after the legalization of prostitution. Second, trafficked prostitutes remain attractive to pimps as an easy source of income; they are quite easy to exploit due to their naivety and desperation. This is exactly why prostitutes in the licensed sector are often victims of exploitative pimps (Huisman & Kleemans, 2014, p. 221). Huisman and Kleemans' (2014) study of the legal prostitution market in the Netherlands suggests that labor relations showed no significant improvement after the legalization of prostitution (p. 217). They state, "towards the Tax Administration, prostitutes and owners stubbornly maintain that prostitutes are self-employed, but at the same time the involvement of owners in the prostitutes' activities takes on such forms, that these are, in fact, employer-employee relationships" (Huisman & Kleemans, 2014, p. 217). Such employer-employee relationships are known to be abusive. But, as long as it remains easy for the pimps to control these women, they will continue to exploit them as both legal prostitutes and trafficked sex workers. All this implies that it is impossible to eradicate the illegitimate sector of prostitution.

Traffickers thrive in regions where prostitution is legal and are thwarted in areas where it is illegal. Jakobsson and Kotsadam (2013) state that "Swedish police investigations using taped phone conversations show that traffickers have problems due to the Swedish law which criminalizes buying sex" (p. 101). Usually, these are economic problems as street prostitution stops being an option, costly discretion is needed, and more local contacts have to be obtained (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2013, p. 101). One can, therefore, conclude that the criminalization of prostitution creates costly barriers to entry, successfully reducing human trafficking. Legalizing prostitution would only make it more affordable for the traffickers to exploit victims, as there would not be as many legal hurdles to be overcome. In this sense, trafficking is way more appealing when the act of selling sex is encouraged, allowing the traffickers the luxury of not having to be so discrete.

It is clear that the legalization of prostitution does not decrease, but rather increases human trafficking. Multiple case studies show that it expands the overall market for sex and facilitates the exploitation of victims. As evidence suggests, the passing of legislation that legalizes prostitution only robs women of their freedom by increasing the rates of sex trafficking. So, in order to fight for the human rights of these women,

governments worldwide should consider the impact of prostitution policy on human trafficking and choose to criminalize it.

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In explaining the experience of returning to society, community and family upon release from incarceration,

this author's research paper provides a clearly articulated thesis that is well supported and clearly organized.

Inequities in Employment: The Challenges to Reentry

By Alexandria Tsamis

Prof. Rody-Wright- Incarceration

When people go to prison, they normally aren't locked away for life. Ninety-five percent of incarcerated individuals will be released from jail at some point.[1] What happens when these people come home from prison? While some may believe that formerly incarcerated individuals are able to reintegrate quickly into society, this notion is false. There are many barriers to reentry, especially in regards to finding employment. Formerly incarcerated people have the odds stacked against them when looking for work because they are chained down by a lack of connections, a criminal record, and parole restrictions. Although some organizations do exist to assist formerly incarcerated people in finding employment, they are not present everywhere. When people are employed in a community, they have a stake in that community. Thus, expanding employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated people would allow them the chance to successfully reenter society because they have interests in their community. Having a personal claim and second chance would discourage people from recidivating. Reentry programs that focus on employment need to become more widespread in order to allow people returning home to become assets to their communities.

Personal connections are key to securing a good job. Knowing someone who works for a company allows applicants to have a foot already in the door, making them more likely than other applicants to get the job. This puts formerly incarcerated individuals at a disadvantage. It's hard to make and maintain professional connections in prison, so many people reenter society looking for anyone who will hire them. In addition, many formerly incarcerated people are not prepared before they enter the workforce. Some prisons may have job training courses for general population people who are about to be released, but these programs are not common. Once they are released from prison, formerly incarcerated people are forced to use the limited resources they have to secure work—a task that is easier said than done.

In some places, there are reentry organizations whose purpose is to help with this process. One of these programs is the Fortune Society, a nonprofit reentry organization based in New York City. Founded by David Rothenberg, a Broadway publicist, the organization has been helping formerly incarcerated people get back on their feet for over fifty years. While the Fortune Society has helped many people over its time in operation, the number is small compared to the number of formerly incarcerated people who need assistance

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[1] Timothy Hughes and Doris James Wilson, "Reentry Trends in the U.S," Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice- Office of Justice Programs, April 5, 2021, accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.bjs.gov/content/reentry/reentry.cfm.

finding jobs. The Fortune Society only helps those living in New York City, so as a reentry program, it would be more successful if it opened more branches in cities and towns throughout the country. In terms of employment, the Fortune Society provides a variety of services to help people find jobs. These programs include mock interviews, job training, and career education programs.[2] Giving people the opportunity to practice their skills before filling out an application or going in for an interview gives them a better shot at getting the job. As explained by journalist Adam Gopnik, employers always ask about criminal records, so "weekly workshops at Fortune prepare clients for job interviews, and, particularly, help them address the obvious question: Where have you been for the past four or five (or thirty) years?"[3] This question is critical to an applicant's success during an interview. If a person doesn't answer correctly, the company is unlikely to hire the person because of their former incarceration. If the question is answered correctly; however, then the applicant may have a chance at getting the position. Learning how to soften the ugly truth is one of the skills taught at the Fortune Society. A member of the Fortune Society explains that when responding to questions about prior convictions, applicants are told to respond with an adaptation of the response, "'When I was younger and behaving stupidly, an unfortunate situation occurred and someone got badly hurt. This led to my becoming involved in the criminal-justice system. But I studied hard and attended several programs while I was in jail. That person I was is not who I am now.'"[4] This answer allows employers to see that the applicant is hardworking and willing to change, qualities that they will be looking for in a future employee. Such a skill is widely needed among formerly incarcerated people, but is not widely taught to them.

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is a larger reentry organization that works to help people find jobs. Even as a more expansive organization, however, CEO only serves a little over 8,000 people per year compared to the 600,000 who come home annually.[5] CEO is a nonprofit organization that provides people who are coming home with four main services: job-readiness training, transitional employment, job coaching and placement, and retention services.[6] Each of these programs allow participants the opportunity to become financially stable, thereby decreasing the chance of recidivism. In the words of CEO employees, the job-readiness training program is a weeklong class in which individuals learn "crucial workplace practices and explore the connections between thoughts, feelings, and actions."[7] By doing this, the participants are able to learn what behavior will allow them to succeed in the workforce and what habits they may need to change.

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[2] Adam Gopnik, "Coming Home," *The New Yorker*, Nov 16, 2020, accessed March 15, 2021, http://ezproxy.siena.edu:2048/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.siena.edu/magazines/coming-home/docview/2462121892/se-2?accountid=13858.
[3] Gopnik, "Coming Home."
[4] Gopnik, "Coming Home."
[5] The Center for Employment Opportunities, Center for Employment Opportunities, 2021, accessed April 14, 2021, https://ceoworks.org/.
[6] The Center for Employment Opportunities
[7] The Center for Employment Opportunities.

Additionally, this program provides participants with assistance in gathering employment documents and determining what aid programs they may be eligible for.[8] CEO is also unique in that it provides participants with transitional work after they return home from prison. CEO staff explain that these are paid positions in which participants work as part of a crew to "provide services for CEO partners that include state and local governments and community-based organizations."[9] The organization goes on to describe how participants work on these crews four days a week for two to four months, after which they are able to secure "unsubsidized employment."[10] The first few months after a person returns home are key to determining if they will recidivate. By providing people with temporary paid employment and job-training services, CEO participants are able to accumulate money, become financially stable, and get back on their feet. For most people trying to reenter society, however, these resources and job opportunities are unavailable, and they are therefore likely to continue to struggle in the job-search process.

In the places where they are present, programs such as the Fortune Society and the Center for Employment Opportunities have been largely successful in helping formerly incarcerated people find employment. In the long run, however, these programs are largely ineffective because they are so limited. Of the two programs, the Center for Employment Opportunities has the largest network, and it only spans across 12 of America's 50 states.[11] According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. has over 29,000 cities and towns.[12] Of these, CEO is only present in 31.[13] Because of the limited range of these programs, many formerly incarcerated people continue to struggle when trying to find employment. Therefore, in order to be truly successful, programs such as these need to be implemented throughout the country, not just in select areas.

While reentry programs can provide people with opportunities to find jobs, parole restrictions can make it hard to keep them. If a person is eligible for parole, it means that after a certain amount of their sentence has been served, they may have the opportunity to serve the rest of their sentence outside of prison. Instead of being locked in a cell, people on parole go back to their communities, but periodically check in with their parole officer who supervises and monitors the progress of the formerly incarcerated person in an effort to make sure they do not recidivate. While advocates of the current parole system argue that it is meant to help individuals reacclimate to society with the supervision and guidance of a parole officer, this mission is not always practiced. Parole restrictions can make it very difficult for people to adjust back into everyday life, especially when it comes to employment. Depending on their stage in the process, a person

[8] The Center for Employment Opportunities.
[9] The Center for Employment Opportunities.
[10] The Center for Employment Opportunities.
[11] The Center for Employment Opportunities.
[12] Michael Ratcliffe, "Understanding 'Place' in Census Bureau Data Products," United States Census Bureau, May 24, 2012, accessed July 9, 2021, https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/data/developers/understandingplace.pdf.
[13] The Center for Employment Opportunities.

returning to society may have to check in with their parole or probation officer a few times a week. Going to the office and waiting in line takes time, time that people could use working or looking for jobs. Additionally, these appointments often take place during the work day, making it necessary for people with jobs to take time off. If a person is unable to continuously receive time off from work, they may have to choose between making their parole meeting or maintaining their employment status. This puts the person in an unfavorable situation, as they could choose to go to their meeting and lose their job or go to work and risk violating their parole. To add to the problem, employment is often one of the terms of parole,[14] so if employment isn't found within a certain period of time, the individual may be violating those terms. As explained by Kathryn D. Morgan, a professor of criminal justice, the "violation of parole conditions may result in the revocation of parole and a return to prison to serve the remainder of the sentence."[15] In other words, people who are trying to better their lives after prison may end up back in prison as a result of restrictive parole terms. Parole restrictions make it difficult for people to find and keep jobs without violating their parole, which is why reform of the current parole system is so vitally needed.

One possible solution to the problems of parole in regards to employment was brought to light because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Zoom, FaceTime, and Skype became the primary modes of communication between people on parole and parole officers during quarantine, and they are still being used as lockdown restrictions are lifted. Continuing to use these methods in the future could have a positive impact on a person's ability to get and keep a job. According to Jesse Capece, a social work professor, using these video communication applications and extending the parole office's operating hours would allow "those people on probation who are employed or have job interviews to attend probation meetings at times that do not conflict with their pursuit and maintenance of employment."[16] If this idea is approved, then more people on parole will be able to secure and keep jobs, and recidivism rates will decrease.

The legislature of Pennsylvania proposed a second potential solution to these parole problems. In 2019, a parole reform bill was introduced to the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives. The bill was a bipartisan effort and it was supported by activist groups like the REFORM Alliance. According to the journalists at PR Newswire, if passed in its original form, the bill would make several significant changes to the state's parole and probation system, such as ensuring "that people under supervision would not be re-incarcerated for testing positive for marijuana, associating with someone with a criminal history or traveling outside their

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[14] Kathryn D. Morgan, "Probation and Parole: Reentry," in *Hispanics in the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Ethnicity, Ideology, and Social Control*, ed. Martin G. Urbina and Sofia Espinoza Álvarez (Springfield, Illinois : Charles C. Thomas, LTD, 2018), 234.
[15] Morgan, *Hispanics in the U.S. Criminal Justice System*, 223.
[16] Jesse Capece, "The Effects of Probation Stipulations on Perceptions of Employability Among People on Probation in Rhode Island," *Advances in Social Work* 20, no. 3 (2020): 589, accessed March 15, 2021, doi.org/10.18060/23895.

jurisdiction (unless it can be proven they were trying to escape supervision)."[17] These laxed restrictions would make it easier for people to find and maintain employment opportunities. If a person is able to travel outside of their legal jurisdiction, they are able to look in more areas for potential jobs. This increase in opportunities makes it more likely for a person to obtain a job. As of right now, the bill is still sitting in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and the amendments made to it removed many of these significant changes.[18] This lack of progress means that parole terms are continuing to restrict the available employment opportunities for people on parole, and change is necessary for formerly incarcerated people to successfully obtain employment.

It is very hard to find a job after being convicted of a felony. Employers are 63% less likely to hire people with criminal records,[19] and people are constantly discriminated against if they have a criminal record. In an effort to combat this discrimination, the ban the box movement was created, which would make it easier for system impacted individuals to find employment. The movement calls for governments to ban employers from using a box to ask about past felony convictions on employment applications. If employers see that an applicant has a criminal record, many will immediately disregard the application. In the words of researcher Monica Solinas-Saunders and criminal justice professor Melissa Stacer, the movement's efforts would prevent "employers from requesting information about the applicant's past involvement in criminal activities—either directly during an interview with the applicant or through a criminal background check—prior to determining that the applicant is qualified for the position or prior to making a conditional job offer."[20] According to Mayor Lydia Krewson, in places like St. Louis, Missouri, ban the box ordinances have helped give people returning to society a chance to become "fully contributing members of their communities."[21] To ensure that policies are being followed, employers found violating the ordinance risk penalties ranging from warnings to the revocation of their business operating license.[22] Preventing employers from being able to discriminate based on a person's past allows formerly incarcerated individuals to be given the same opportunities as everyone else, creating a fairer application process. Similar to the reentry programs, however, ban the box policies are only present in some of America's large cities. In smaller cities and towns, employers are still permitted to ask

[17] "REFORM Alliance & Pennsylvania State Representatives Unveil Bipartisan Legislation To Reform State Probation & Parole System," PR Newswire, Cision, April 2, 2019, accessed March 10, 2021, https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.siena.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1728F0A9B7AF62E8.
[18] Committee on Judiciary, House of Representatives, "House Bill No. 1555, Printers No. 3006," Pennsylvania General Assembly, The General Assembly of Pennsylvania, December 9, 2019, https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=2019&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=1555&pn=3006.
[19] Monica Solinas-Saunders and Melissa J. Stacer, "Fighting Labor Market Discrimination with Ban the Box (BTB): Are There Racial Implications?" *Sociology Compass* 11, no. 11 (2017): 5, doi:10.1111/soc4.12535.
[20] Solinas-Saunders and Stacer, "Fighting Labor Market Discrimination with Ban the Box (BTB)," 4.
[21] Lydia Krewson, "About the 'Ban the Box' Ordinance," The City of St. Louis, 2021, accessed March 9, 2021, https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/civil-rights-enforcement/ban-the-box-ordinance-71074.cfm.
[22] Krewson, "About the 'Ban the Box' Ordinance."

applicants about their conviction status. In order for the movement to truly be successful in stopping discriminatory practices, ban the box policies need to be introduced throughout the country.

Many employers run background checks for legal reasons. Companies are liable for their employees during the workday, so they commonly reject people with criminal records based on the fear that they will recidivate in their place of employment. While this would make sense for an occupation related to the crime committed, it still does not excuse the fact that these practices are prejudicial. For example, it sounds reasonable to limit the employment of people in schools if they have previously been convicted of sex crimes. However, according to researchers Darren Wheelock, Christopher Uggen, and Heather Hlavka, "in reality...a large number of [system impacted people] are banned from professions that have no relation to the crimes for which they were convicted."[23] These practices greatly inhibit a formerly incarcerated person's ability to find a job, and this may, in turn, impact their recidivism rate. People go to prison as punishment, and when they are allowed to return home, it is a sign that they have paid for their crime. Continuing to judge individuals solely on one dark moment from their past after they have served their time is unjust, as it doesn't allow employers to see all the good that those people have also done. The ban the box movement was created to combat these issues, but it will be unsuccessful unless the policy is adopted by more of America's cities and towns.

Despite its benefits, ban the box is not a perfect solution. Critics of the movement are correct in pointing out the racial implications that coincide with ban the box policies. Because employers are no longer permitted to disregard people who have been convicted of felonies pre-interview, they find other ways to narrow the pool of applicants. One of these methods is racial profiling. Instead of reading through a person's application and resume to see how qualified they are, employers call in people based on their name. If a person has a name associated with black cultural norms, they aren't as likely to be called in for an interview as a person with a name associated primarily with white people. In the words of sociologist Devah Pager, because of these practices, "'a white applicant with a criminal record [is] just as likely to receive a callback as a black applicant without any criminal history.'"[24] This, however, does not necessarily indicate a problem with ban the box policies. Instead, it sheds light on the deep systemic racism that resides within all of America's institutions. The racial discrimination that happens to follow these policies can only be solved through anti-racist policies, not by removing ban the box legislation. Despite the fact that ban the box policies should be updated to address systemic racism, in the areas where they have been implemented, ban the box policies have been successful in preventing employers from discriminating based on a criminal record, which is their intended purpose. In order to truly prevent discrimination based on prior convictions, however, anti-racist ban the box

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[23] Quoted in Solinas-Saunders and Stacer, "Fighting Labor Market Discrimination with Ban the Box (BTB)," 4.
[24] Quoted in Solinas-Saunders and Stacer, "Fighting Labor Market Discrimination with Ban the Box (BTB)," 5.

policies need to be introduced in all of America's cities and towns. Without this widespread expansion, prejudiced practices will continue to be prominent against formerly incarcerated applicants.

Widespread change needs to occur to make the reentry process easier for formerly incarcerated people. Being taken from their families and stripped of their rights is punishment enough, so placing obstacles in the way of formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reacclimating to society is unnecessarily cruel. Employment is necessary if a person doesn't want to return to prison. Policies like ban the box, parole reforms, and an expansion of reentry organizations are some ways to make life easier for people trying to return to their communities. These policies have been implemented in several of America's most prominent cities, but in order to truly be successful, they need to be introduced to all of America's cities and towns, regardless of their size. By making these changes, recidivism rates would decrease, and formerly incarcerated people would have the opportunity to turn their lives around. All people make mistakes, some worse than others. Instead of being forever punished for their past lapses in judgement, formerly incarcerated people should have the same opportunities for employment as everyone else once they have served their time.

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