The ATU Writer 2024

Edited by Donna R. White

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Andrea Peterka

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

1 September 2022

<div align="center">Depression</div>

As I soared across the country, 30,000 feet in the air, I slept. The familiar cushioning of the airplane seat welcomed my tired muscles, and soon I felt myself drifting away from alert consciousness. Sleeping through flights was common for me; the stress of navigating through airports on my own was an exhausting task, but this fatigue was different. There was an unfamiliar juxtaposition to the weight of it. It was the weight of fully emerging from the comfort zone I had spent the last ten years safely cocooned within. It was the weight of admitting every secret that I had been keeping, not only from the world, but from myself as well. Yet, at the same time, there was a sense of relief. For the better part of a decade, I had kept every muscle tense, ready to flee from the slightest hint of a threat. I was like the watchdog that never rested, ears standing at attention, tail rigid with focus. I was the alarm clock that sat upon your bedside table, counting down every second until it was time to rouse you from your slumber. But now, finally, I was able to let go. I was able to relax—into the seat and into myself—and allow my soul to accept the warmth of healing. Don't get me wrong; this wasn't going to be an easy journey. I was aware of and ready for the challenges that lay ahead of me. I was ready to put in the work, to deal with the pain, to accept every dark corner of myself. I was ready to do whatever it took, so long as it meant coming out whole.

My name is Andrea, and I have depression.

I feel the need to clarify that statement. I *had* depression. I had a *lot* of depression. And I

had it for a *long* time. That's not to say I'm completely cured. Every day, I have to make a conscious effort to not fall back into the patterns that kept me inside my bedroom, a prisoner to my mind, for the past ten years. They say recovery takes at least as long as it took you to become ill, and if that's the case, I still have a long way to go. But one day in late May of last year, I finally decided to take my recovery seriously. After spending two years going in and out of inpatient and outpatient treatment, meeting with my therapist every two weeks like clockwork, trying this drug and that drug and this therapy and that therapy, I made the decision to do something about my life. I can't tell you what prodded me to do so, what made that day any different from any other day, but something inside me finally decided that I had had enough. I was going to get better.

Luckily for me, my therapist had experience with a facility in Washington state. It was one of the best treatment facilities in the country, and it revolutionized the way that mental health was viewed and treated. Before I could let my fear talk me out of it, I called their admissions team and set up a starting date. I bought my ticket, booked a stay at the local Best Western for the night before my first day, and before I could let out the breath I didn't realize I had been holding, I found myself here: on a plane, somewhere over the American Southwest, zooming toward my future.

My first taste of Washington was through the window of my Uber. It was roughly a 40-minute drive from SeaTac Airport to the small town of Edmonds, and after dodging a few questions from my driver about where I was from and what brought me to Edmonds of all places ("Oh, I'm just visiting some old family friends"), I was left alone to gaze out of the window and try not to pass out from nerves. My driver's car was a new one, fancier than mine back home, and it was almost silent as he merged into the carpool lane and raced north toward my

destination. The Port of Seattle slid by, the cranes and downtown skyscrapers seeming entirely too tall. The concrete jungle soon merged into a coniferous one, cedars and hemlocks blending with the warm craftsman homes of the region. It was impossible to tell where one town ended and another began, so densely populated is the coastline of the Puget Sound. It was only when the car slowed and the stop signs became more frequent that I knew we were in Edmonds.

A sleepy and wealthy retirement town, Edmonds looked to me more like the set of a romantic comedy than an actual place where people lived and worked. Dusk was softly settling over the community as we passed crowded flowerbeds set against independent boutiques and eateries. The road slanted downward, and I could see we were headed toward the sound, its dark waters seeming to pull us closer. Before we could run off the edge of the pier and plunge deep into its chilling blackness, the driver turned into a parking lot, and I had to crane my neck to make out the familiar Best Western logo. He unloaded my suitcase, we said our good-byes, and I made my way to the sliding glass doors of the hotel. But at that moment, it was more than a hotel. It was the next step. It was my future. It was happiness. It was health.

My name is Andrea, and I overcame my depression.

Bryanna McCoy

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

27 August 2022

<center>Home Was Never Home</center>

The night grew dark, and the rain that fell on the roof sounded like a group of a thousand people snapping. That was the sound I tried my best to focus on as my parents' screaming grew louder in the background. My head started to pound. My sister and I had no choice but to sit and listen to the cries and feel the heat of my parents' anger burning through the walls. The sting of the tears that pulled into my eyes flooded the pillow that I had been clinging to, making the fabric of the red-striped pillowcase feel cold and wet.

Trying to speak through the lump in my throat, I asked my sister, "Why does it have to be this way?"

She whispered back to me, "Keep it down! Does it look like I have the answer to that?" The anger in her voice made the knot in my stomach grow, and I started to cry again.

As time slowly moved by, the screaming grew louder, and there was more commotion than usual. The sound of glass shattering, sliding throughout the floor, into the walls, made my ears ring. They rang so loudly that I could no longer hear the arguing. I was content in this state because it made me feel safe. I started to close my eyes, hoping that the sound of their fearful, sickening pain would go away. All of a sudden the bunk beds shook; something was wrong.

Jumping from the top bunk in panic, I ran out the door into the hallway, only to see my dad lying on the ground face down. The lighthouse that my sister and I got my mom for

Christmas was in his left hand, and a quiet, sorrowful cry came from underneath him. As I stood at the end of the hallway, it felt as though the hallways grew smaller and tighter as I kept looking toward my dad. My body felt tied back to the bed, and I could no longer move forward. I wanted to go to my dad, but knowing what he had done to my mom, I could not.

Within seconds my mom came out of their room, moving in a scared yet angry way in my direction. She shook as she held a bloody, white dish towel to her nose. Seeing the pain in her face made me run back to the room, warning my sister that mom was coming. In a harsh tone my mom said to me and my sister, "Stay here and do not come out of this room." I sat trying to speak to ask her if she was okay, but it felt like someone had the tightest grip around my waist, making it hard to breathe. She left the room in a hurry and slammed the door on her way out. I looked down at my sister to ask her if everything was okay, but she was shaking out of fear with her knees on her chest, letting out soft, delicate cries. I did the same as my sister, and I cried, hoping my mom would return to the room to tell us everything was okay.

At 10:00 p.m. I heard soft yet deep footsteps that made their way down the hall. Two simple knocks on our door made my heart beat at one hundred miles an hour.

"It's dad. Can I come in?" my dad said in a deep, miserable tone.

"Yes," my sister and I said in unison.

The door opened up slowly and gently. I looked up to see my dad with dark circles under his eyes. I knew why they were there. He came in, slouched over like a dog that just got in trouble for peeing on the floor. "I am sorry, girls," he said. As he stared deeply into my eyes, I knew he genuinely meant it. I did not want to believe him, but how could I not? That was my dad. He walked over to the side of the bed and looked up at me first. I noticed that he could tell I was hurt by what he did, so I tried to hide it the best I could.

"I am sorry, Bug. I didn't mean to scare you. I love you."

His saying this made my eyes burn just as much as they had before. I tried my best to hold the tears back to make him feel like I was not scared, but my eyes burned like they did when I would get soap in them while taking a shower. Reaching over the edge of the top bunk, he hugged me tightly, as tight as a pair of one-size-too-small shoes. In a soft, trembling voice, I said, "I love you too." Crying, I rolled over with the blanket over my head and eventually dozed off to sleep.

Incidents like this from my childhood began to get better as I got older. At heart my parents are loving and kind people. Looking back on their relationship, I see how stress and anger can play a crucial role in how hard it can be to love someone. I thought my whole life that that was how my own romantic relationship would turn out, but it is not. I am in a loving relationship, and I like to think I was put through difficult situations in childhood so I could learn how love really should be: there are hardships, but you work through them no matter what. From what I have learned from my parents, love is never an easy thing, but I am grateful that I was able to be shown how love can also heal the hurtful past.

Cynthea Cowell

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013-TC3

27 January 2022

It's Not Easy Being a Girl

Growing up in small town Sarasota, Florida, with four older brothers and one sister (who should've been a boy) was not always ideal. Every single one of my brothers was ten times bigger than me, meaner, tougher, and just outright boys. There was no playing with Barbie dolls, playing dress-up, getting into mom's makeup, oohing over boys with my sister. It was always mud, dirt, bumps, and bruises. I recall my daily activities as playing fetch with the baseball or football because my oldest brother Eric would knock it out of the backyard, and he'd always make me fetch the ball. When we moved to Paris, Arkansas, nothing changed except my outlook on a girl's world and the boys' world.

Realizing that I wanted to be just like my brothers, I enjoyed backyard football as my all-time favorite sport until I turned thirteen and my life changed forever. As one could imagine, the oldest of the brothers moved out and started their own lives. Therefore, it was just my sister, Christian, and my twin brother Matt and myself. Christian started oohing and awing over boys, so she was out of the question to hang out with, and Matt and I grew a stronger bond. Every weekend after church I, my brother, and ten other guys would all gather in the back yard and play football. Of course, I was the only girl on the team, so that made it more of a challenge. I weighed in at ninety-four pounds while the guys weighed in at 150+. I was a fast runner, and I knew how to play the game, which made everyone want me on their team. I was finally living my dream of being one of the guys.

We were maybe an hour into the game; all of us were hot and out of breath, playing a never-ending game with a score of 7-7. We were kids, so our scoring was a little off. I knew we had to win the game because that's what we do. As my brother threw the pig-skinned ball straight to my head, I had the gut feeling I was done for. Luckily, I caught the ball; my hands were on fire it seemed. With the burning in my chest and the stinging of my hands I had hope. I ran as fast as my little heart desired, just to get struck by a brick wall named Paul. He didn't tackle me like we normally played. He threw me over his big old shoulder and threw me down on the ground.

When I woke up, I was in the hospital. I couldn't feel my left shoulder, and I had a throbbing headache that wouldn't go away. All the guys were there, and my mother, forcefully shaking her head with much anger and disbelief, yet the one thought that came to my mind was "we lost the game." The doctor came in with x-rays and claimed I had a hairline crack in my shoulder, and I suffered a concussion. Paul shook with fear because he did this to me and thought I'd be mad, and we would never be friends again. Doctor Richards explained what my options were and told me it was in my best interest to quit playing with the boys and start taking it easy because I'm too small and could've been severely hurt. Wearing an uncomfortable sling around my neck to hold up my now throbbing arm, and getting scolded by my mother, I just couldn't get my mind off the rest of the game.

The guys claimed they called it quits right after the encounter with me and Paul and immediately called Mom for help. I then came to the realization that football should not be played by a 94-pound little girl and that girls should be girls and boys should be boys. Since then, winter has hit me hard; my shoulder throbs and aches because of the cold weather. But my

mind always wanders back to the game played in the summer days of 2006, and I wonder if my

older brothers would be proud of the tough, mean old woman I am now.

Kaitlyn Neal

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013-TC4

25 August 2022

<div align="center">New Additions and Adapting</div>

It was May of 2019, the beginning of summer. I just finished my first year of high school and was feeling on top of life. I could finally take a breath. I was no longer a freshman, and I stood only a few feet away from a relaxing summer with my pool in sight. Not too far away from the 100-degree heat were my sister Alexis and my brother-in-law James. They only lived six hours away in beautiful San Diego, California, right next to the beach. Over in California the air is cool with a breeze, unlike Arizona where the heat is so hot it turns your car into an oven. Earlier that year my other sister and I planned a trip to go out there and visit while school was out. A month in advance, filled with excitement, I started to think about the outfits that I'd bring along.

When I thought life could not get any better, Alexis called our mom and announced her pregnancy with their first child. In my young mind, life was perfect, and I was going to have the best summer ever. However, there was a big side of this equation that I did not see.

James was stationed in San Diego while serving in the navy. Not too long before they found out they were pregnant, he had unenlisted from the Navy to pursue firefighting. Since he had no stable job and they lived in a small 500-square foot apartment, my mom offered to let them move in with us for the time being. This meant that my summer vacation was most likely going to get cancelled. The plan for this sudden change was that they were going to live in our guest bedroom until they found a fitting home for them and their new addition.

As nine months passed by, I was filled with many emotions; hunger for more space and the anticipation to meet my nephew made those months feel like the longest time of my life. Although we lived in a 3,000-square foot home, fitting six people with active lifestyles in there was not what I planned for my teen years. Plus, I love my sister, but those pregnancy hormones are something I did not like messing with.

As the search went on for their new home, COVID happened, careful actions with a baby took place, and time just seemed to go away. Before we knew it, my nephew had turned one and they still needed a place to build a family in. The whole process happened during the pandemic, and it felt like forever for them to move out; however, I would never change a thing about my experience.

When you find out two adults and a baby are going to share a space with you, it is not exactly thrilling. Oddly enough, I am grateful it happened to me. Throughout this experience, I got to watch my nephew Holton grow up. He has the blondest, curliest hair, and the biggest blue eyes. I witnessed him take his first steps and say his first words, I heard his first giggle, and I connected with him in a prime development of his life. I also got to become closer to my sister and brother-in-law; I learned about their relationship as a couple, got to be there to support them in having a child, and created many memories that we still laugh about to this day. This experience is something I would never have thought I'd love, but now in the present times my family is closer than ever. In case you were wondering, yes, they live on their own now. Back home in Arizona, they live in a beautiful home with not one, but two beautiful babies. It makes me happy every day that I get to call them from a distance and know I have a connection with them always. My love for them, my niece, and my nephew has only grown stronger from this experience in my life. In the end, my summer vacation did get cancelled, but

I got something greater in return. That is my story on how an unexpected change ended up

changing my life in a beautiful way.

Daniela Reyes

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ENGL 1013-031

2 September 2022

<div align="center">The Move</div>

It was a rainy afternoon. I could see the water drip from the car window. The clouds were dark grey, and it seemed as if the sun did not even exist. My mom and I were headed to the store, and I could feel the car rocking side to side from the slippery roads and the wind that was blowing as hard as it can. The weather was a perfect ally to the situation. I felt it in my gut that she was going to ask me the question I had been dreading for months, the question that was going to change my entire life.

"What do you think about staying in Arkansas, and not going back to Texas?" my mom finally asked. The car ride to the store felt eternal, and it was only a five-minute drive. My mind still could not comprehend the question. The question just kept floating in my brain. What was I supposed to say? Was I really ready to change my entire life? "You do not have to decide this now," my mom kept saying, but I could not put my mind at ease. I had to decide. My future depended on that decision. How could I just put it off?

I knew this question was going to come up eventually, but my mind still went blank. I was not ready. We were just supposed to stay for a month, but my mom was looking for a job. That was a huge indicator, but I still made myself delusional. I kept thinking about how strange it was for her to be looking for a job when she already had one back home. We had only come to Arkansas to visit my sister. It was not supposed to be permanent. I did not know why she was trying to find a job. "How could I be so delusional?" I kept whispering to myself.

During the car ride I kept thinking about all the obvious clues that made this question even more difficult. Once we got to the store, every other decision seemed difficult. I could not even answer something as simple as "Do you want anything?" My mom was shopping. How could she shop when I had a life decision that had to be made? I knew what she wanted, but I was not sure about what I wanted.

Throughout the entire time we were at the store, I kept replaying the question in my mind, trying to figure it out. I kept thinking about my family, my friends, and school. I was headed to my junior year, and I had amazing friends that I had known since sixth grade. I was supposed to graduate with them. I thought about my family a lot as well, the people who have been with me my entire life. Was I ready to move on from them?

I could not stop thinking of the good times back home, but at some point, I began to look at the terrible things as well. The bad began to outweigh the good. I did have amazing memories there, but there were a lot of bad ones as well. Things had changed, and although there were many people I would hate to leave behind, I began to think of how good it would be to start from nothing. I knew there was so much I had to uncover, but at that moment, I knew what I had to do. I needed the change, and when we left the store and got into the car, I said to my mom, "I think I do want to stay." I felt a huge relief once I said that, and that is when I knew it was the right decision.

It took me a while to get adjusted to how much change was about to happen. It felt strange, but I had more opportunities. I was given the chance to graduate early and start college at seventeen. Although I do miss my friends and family, I needed the fresh start. Moving to Arkansas was a lot to manage, but it changed me into a better person. I have done so much since I moved here, and I understood that change is inevitable.

Kiara Bradford

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

19 November 2021

Crawfish, Catfish, and Lots of Crying

I thought that my senior year of high school would be a year of relaxation and bliss.

Before the start of twelfth grade, I decided to quit my part-time job as a carhop at a local Sonic

drive-in because I had decided at the time that this was going to be my year of change. The plan

was to join more clubs, to get my GPA up, and to be more social. That all changed when I found

out that my senior trip was going to be well over my budget, so I picked up a job at a locally

known catfish restaurant to make payments on my trip because I thought that the restaurant was

slow paced enough to allow me to accomplish all of my senior goals. However, I soon found out

that unbearable coworkers, racist customers, and crawfish season were the reasons that I was

wrong about this job being easygoing.

The first reason that I was wrong about this job was my unbearable coworkers. While I

got along with most of my coworkers, there were a few that really knew how to push my buttons.

I had one female coworker who had the idea that she could tell others what to do and when to do

it even though she had started only a month before I did and had no management title. Because

she wouldn't do any work herself, most of her entire shift was spent in the manager's office

watching the rest of us do her nightly duties. I had a similar situation with another female

coworker who never did any work but always seemed to bring her baggage into work, whether

that was her boyfriend, her boyfriend's ex-girlfriend, or other ex-boyfriends.

More important than being wrong about this job because my unreliable coworkers ruined

my work experience, my racist interactions with customers made me rethink how badly I wanted this senior trip. I was the only person of color working in our front area most of the time, and my being there seemed to cause some issues when I met the Confederate Brothers in Arms Association. We had a large party room in the back of the restaurant which guests could rent for a large gathering, and when the Brothers rented this room, they showed that they did not like my working there. For example, when the other coworker that was assigned to the party and I got ready to take their orders, she had a line of over fifty people, and I had a line of exactly zero. I kept motioning for the party guests to come to my register, but most of them wouldn't even dare to make eye contact with me. One spoke up, saying that they would be all getting their orders taken from my white coworker. Later when I had their orders to pass out, one of the wives of the Brothers took my trays out of my hands to pass out while the white girl was allowed to do her job. The worst part was at the end of the night while we waited for them to leave so that we could clean the room when the head of the association gave my coworker a one hundred dollar bill for a tip. The tip he gave me was the location of their dirty dishes.

Lastly, racist customers were not the only thing that gave me my breaking point; crawfish season made this job more fast paced than easygoing. When I first started this job, I was told that it was going to be slow until crawfish season, which started in January, and my managers were right. Once the crawfish came in, it was like the number of customers we had was multiplied by at least fifty. We were selling an average of about one hundred pounds of crawfish per week, so I was always on the run to wait on customers. The behind-the-scenes workings of crawfish season were also fast paced. Once we poured crawfish out of the bag to clean them, we would find other critters who were not supposed to be there, like turtles and roaches. Also, more crawfish were being sold than had been cooked, so it was like a crime scene in the cooking area

since people were running frantically and live crawfish were crawling everywhere.

All in all, when it came to working there, the negatives outweighed the positives. Crawfish season made the job fast paced and not easygoing. I had coworkers that didn't like to work and didn't most of the time. Also, the racism I experienced from customers was another reason that I couldn't stand working there.

Colter Parton

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

12 September 2020

<p align="center">The Disappointments of Pokémon Go</p>

Ever since the debut of Pokémon in Japan in 1996, many more installments have been released over the years as part of this video game franchise, but the latest version has become a popular trend. The mobile app titled Pokémon Go allows players to move through the real world and catch Pokémon. Although it has received acclaim, I, being a fan of the older games in the series, find this installment to be quite a disappointment. The removal of link battles and trading, the grinding system, and the new gym gameplay all contribute to my dislike of Pokémon Go.

The first of many complaints about this game is the removal of link trades and battling. In every Pokémon game before this one, a player could link up to another player with the game or another compatible installment. This would allow the players to put their Pokémon battling teams to the test against each other, or they could also trade Pokémon with one another. In Pokémon Go, however, the entire concept of connecting to other players is removed, making it seem as if the person playing the game is the only person playing the game. Without the connection aspect, I quickly became very bored with the game because there was no way I could measure myself against anyone else or obtain Pokémon I was unable to find. The link capabilities are part of what made the Pokémon video game franchise successful to begin with, so the complete removal of this major gameplay element was a massive letdown for me and is one of the main reasons I find this game to be so bad.

The loss of connection with other players is just the beginning of my disappointment in

this game because I don't like that the entire gameplay of Pokémon Go runs on a grinding style. Grinding in video games means doing the same thing repetitively to get further into the game. With tasks such as looking for new wild Pokémon and battling wild Pokémon and computer-controlled opponents, the Pokémon video games have always run on a mild grinding system, but Pokémon Go takes it to a whole new level. With no computer opponents to battle against, the entire concept of the game leaves players walking around until they find a wild Pokémon, and once they track it down and engage it, they can't even battle against it with their own Pokémon. Rather, they can either attempt to capture it or run away from the confrontation. This became annoying for me, especially whenever I'd come across a strong Pokémon that was difficult to capture. A new element which follows the repetitive style of the game is the new way for making Pokémon stronger. With no way to battle wild Pokémon, this system has players actually grinding their Pokémon up into candy and then feeding them to the Pokémon they decided to keep alive, making them stronger, and I was definitely irritated and a little bit disturbed by the element of the repetitive style of play.

As if the loss of connection and the increased grinding style of play aren't bad enough, another reason I don't like Pokémon Go is the new gym system. In older Pokémon games, the entire goal of the game was to collect all eight gym badges by traveling to different towns and defeating the gym leaders there. Pokémon Go, however, threw this popular concept away in favor of gang-territory wars. Players can join one of the three teams: the blue team, Mystic; the yellow team, Instinct; or the red team, Valor. Once they're on a team, they are able to challenge gyms, not for a gym badge, but for control of the gym. The winner of a gym battle gains control of the gym for his team, causing the other two teams to constantly attempt to regain control. Making the gyms about control and not winning is another major problem with this game that I

simply couldn't get past, resulting in my uninstalling the game from my phone.

To sum up, Pokémon Go is a complete failure. The capability for players to connect with one another was completely left out, making the game boring. The grind style of the game has players walking around until something happens and has their Pokémon practicing cannibalism, making the game redundant and somewhat alarming. The new gym system runs not on the idea of winning, but on color-based battles for turf, making the game lack individuality. These factors made me highly dislike Pokémon Go and made it easy for me to quit.

Ray Christian

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

10 October 2022

<center>My Ice</center>

The heat is vicious beneath the burlap that camouflages me as I lie in my Ranger grave. The shallow hole that I had scratched out of the dry sand is just big enough for my body, concealing me just beneath the surface of the desert. A few stray thoughts work their way through the haze of dehydration in my brain. Mostly I dream about water: icy, sparkling, frosty, glimmering water. I can almost hear the ice cubes clinking in a Mason jar, dripping condensation as I lift it to my cracked lips. I barely notice the fine sand that is being driven by the relentless wind through the covering, filling my eyes again. I don't have enough fluid in my body to produce tears.

"Water truck!" The murmured call floats down the nearly invisible line of graves that stretches across the desert. There is hope in the voices that has been missing since our squad exhausted our water supply the night before.

As I lift the edge of my shroud, my raw eyes scan the horizon. Everything is tan: the ground, the air, the sky. In the distance, through shimmering waves of heat, I can barely make out the outline of a tan truck. It is driving away, leaving behind a water buffalo, a huge tank of water to re-supply the ground troops that are scattered throughout the area. Through my binoculars I can see the cooling unit on the tank. The ice in my head rattles excitedly.

"New guy goes." I hear the words with a sinking feeling. Since I am only six months past my seventeenth birthday, I am the youngest and newest member of the squad. That means

that I'm the one that has to hump the two miles or more across the scorching sands to bring back the desperately needed water. I don't know how I am going to make it.

I must carry all of my equipment with me: my monkey suit (the thick charcoal-lined suit that will supposedly protect me from Saddam's home-tested brews); my extra ammo; and, naturally, my machine-gun. I tie all the canteens together with a string so that I can drag them behind me. As I try to prepare the best that I can, I hear the cold splash of icy water in my mind.

When I start out toward the tank as quickly as my depleted body allows, it doesn't look that far away. The sugary-fine sand spills over the tops of my boots with every step. My uniform that I am so proud to wear is crusted with salt from my sweat. My helmet is a huge weight on my head, seeming to push me deeper into the powder. Everything on me is coated with the infernal sand. I appear a natural part of this desolate land. But inside my head the ice is chattering encouragement.

The wicked Arabian sun tortures me as I slowly make my way toward the promise of salvation wavering in the distance. With distracted interest, I am aware that I can't feel my tongue. As I reach up to inspect it, I notice my hand. It is gray with dust and shriveled from lack of water. It looks like my grandpa's hand. With these gritty, alien fingers, I touch the object that should be my tongue. It feels like the thick wad of cotton that comes in a bottle of aspirin. I stuff it back in my dry mouth where I seem to remember it belongs.

The merciless sun is my constant and only companion. The fiery orb bears down on me as I force my legs to keep carrying me across the endless sand. The tank is closer now, isn't it? Surely it is; I've been walking for hours in the late afternoon sun, my own shadow as the only shade in sight.

The ice clinks loudly as I finally get closer to the tank of water. My body doesn't seem to

hear it. My exhausted legs crumple under me. My eyes and mouth fill with sand again and again. I am beyond caring.

I WILL MAKE IT! I am a paratrooper! I am a member of the 82nd Airborne, the elite fighting force of the United States Army! This desert will not defeat me! The ice in my mind taunts me as I drag my rebellious body through the burning sand.

I made it! I grasp at the blistering steel of the truck, pulling myself up to the spigot on the tank. My mental ice is shivering in anticipation as I open my parched, blistered lips. My grandpa's hand grips the valve. It turns. Out gushes water: beautiful, sparkling, scintillating, pressurized.

It scalds my face, my mouth, and my eyes.

As I once again fall to my knees, I consider crying, but I have no tears. The rattling ice in my head has melted to slivers. It can barely be heard.

Somehow I manage to sip enough of the near-boiling water to revive my body a little. I fill the canteens, knowing that the survival of the rest of the squad depends on me. As I look over the barren landscape, I see nothing except the eternal sand and sun. The camouflage on the graves is doing its job well. I can only follow the almost-imperceptible footprints that the wind has left me for direction. I drag the now-full canteens back across the desert.

I'm not sure how I got here, but I am back in my hole under my covering. The blessed dark has fallen. My enemy, the sun, has withdrawn for a few hours. I am trying to dig. If I can just bury my canteens deep enough, the water will cool a little. I did not let my buddies down. Now I can rest.

"Saddle up! We're moving out!" The words explode around me like a grenade. The ice is no more.

Amelia Roche

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

27 September 2022

<div style="text-align:center">Emily Young, Millennial Machine</div>

At the center of Russellville lies its charming historic downtown. The streets are lined with patterned brick crosswalks, beautiful landscaping, and original architecture dating from the town's founding in 1870 to the mid-1900s. Among the various shops located there, you will discover four different businesses with one thing in common: they are all owned by one woman, Emily Young. Emily moved here in 1997 with her father, a Russellville native, and her mother. Growing up, she always felt that this was her home and lovingly calls it her hometown. She discovered her passion for the local community through music. "I would go to any and all shows that local bands (and some touring) would put on. Whether at the local coffee shop, downtown alleyway, church building, or park—I would typically be there," she said. "Seeing such talented groups of people from right here in the area I grew up in really showed me that Russellville is more than meets the eye."

Logo for Brainstorm Agency

In 2010, after graduating from Russellville High School, Emily applied to The University of Arkansas in Morrilton to pursue a career in design. "I had graduated with a degree in Graphic Design and the opportunities in Russellville were sparse, and since I wasn't interested in relocating, I decided to open my own design firm," she explained to me. Thus The Brainstorm Agency was born. It is a company specializing in customized logo and web solutions for small businesses.

When two local bookstores closed a year later, Emily felt there was a huge void left in the community. She got together with her mom, and they decided to fill that void with Dog Ear Books. There you'll find a pleasant indie bookstore experience with award-winning displays and a wide variety of books and gifts for anyone.

Right next door is the companion store Retro Roasts, a locally-themed coffee shop that makes delicious drinks made with custom in-house roasted coffee beans and features a selection of local art and used books to browse. Just across Mainstreet, you'll find The Garage Arcade. It offers a unique retro-themed experience filled with classic and modern games for gamers of all ages and types.

Emily and her wife, Nik,
in front of The Garage Arcade

Her passion for her work is obvious, but Emily didn't always envision her life this way. "I feel it's important to note that I never really dreamt of any of these things. I always wanted to be a designer or artist in some way. But now I've become the owner/operator of a design agency, bookstore, arcade, and coffee shop—all of which I couldn't imagine life without." When I asked her what her biggest joy as a business owner was, she replied, "Seeing all of these spaces that I created in my brain become these special havens for the communities and the employees. It's amazing it worked out, and I'm grateful it did."

Halloween display at
Dog Ear Books

Even with the pressure and demands of multiple ventures, Emily's main focus has

steadily remained on one thing: community. She has used her platform as a

business owner to bring people together. Her three retail shops host free public

events throughout the year. Families can enjoy children's storytime with

Curious George, the summer reading program, an annual downtown Waldo

search, and upcoming STEM classes. The shops also run a book club, karaoke,

poetry and open mic night, adult-only nights, vintage horror movie nights,

gaming tournaments, and so much more. People come from all over the

county, and sometimes further, to experience the fun-filled things available.

Display for annual Where's Waldo Search

Emily has also been a member of the Main Street Board of Directors

for the last 5 years, where she has been a large part of the effort to revitalize downtown's

economy and develop it as a cultural center. In addition to the restoration of downtown

Russellville, the Board coordinates free events such as the seasonal Art Walk, Movies in the

Park, Juneteenth, and the annual Downtown Fall Festival and Chili Festival to bring together

local residents and attract visitors statewide.

I asked Emily to tell me about her favorite part of working on the board. "My favorite

event is probably the Summer Music Series," Emily told me. "Oftentimes people think since

we're in Arkansas that country is the only way to go for events like that, and it just isn't the case.

A mixture of genres and styles makes the events what they are. I even got to book a local 3-piece

punk rock group to play at it. Most of the audience was underwhelmed, but for those people who

were into it? That's exactly why I booked them. We are a robust community and sometimes

making sure those few 'oddballs' are included can make all the difference."

With all she has accomplished in her 37 years, Emily has also thrown her hat into the

political arena. She recently announced her candidacy for Ward 2

on the Russellville City Council. "I've always known at some

point I'd run for public office because I've always had an interest

in the political process," she told me. When asked what she

thought she could bring to the town, she responded, "This city has

great parts to it, but I think it can be better—as most places can be.

I enjoy seeing how other cities and communities are finding

innovative ways of dealing with city issues and community

Emily Young's Ward
2 campaign photo

Juneteenth performance by
Synergy at the Train Depot
Stage

problems. The main areas I feel I could contribute to the

city are bringing these ideas to the table, to people who

know how these things work, and having a discussion on

how to make it work for Russellville." Some areas she

has already mentioned wanting to improve include

accessibility for disabled people and increasing

community outreach and engagement in the local

political process.

I asked Emily if there was anything she considered special about running. She replied,

"As with a few other areas in my life, growing up, I never saw someone like me in these

positions. Business owner, City Council Member, board member, etc. So if I can be that for

someone and show them that, 'Hey, you can do this, too,' maybe it will lead them on a path they

otherwise wouldn't have even considered. I've had countless people come up to me expressing

their thanks to just see a gay woman so public and involved in the community. And I don't even

have to do anything special- just exist!"

Emily Young for City Council campaign art

Yangsook Ahn

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

14 September 2022

<p style="text-align:center">Korean Food and American Food</p>

Food is a part of every country's culture. For example, people in both Korea and America cook and serve traditional foods on their national holidays. Koreans eat *ddukguk*, rice cake soup, on New Year's Day to celebrate the beginning of a new year. Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving Day. Although observing national holidays is a similarity between their food cultures, Korean food culture differs from American food culture in terms of utensils and appliances, ingredients and cooking methods, and serving and dining manners.

The first difference is in utensils and appliances. Koreans' eating utensils are a spoon and chopsticks. Koreans mainly use chopsticks and ladles to cook side dishes and soups; also, scissors are used to cut meats and other vegetables, like *kimchi*. Korean food is based on rice; therefore, a rice cooker is an important appliance. Another important appliance in Korean food culture is a *kimchi* refrigerator. Koreans eat many fermented foods, like *kimchi*, soybean paste, and red chili paste. For this reason, almost every Korean household has a *kimchi* refrigerator, which is designed specifically to meet the storage requirements of *kimchi* and facilitate different fermentation processes.

While Koreans use a spoon and chopsticks, Americans use a fork and a knife as main eating utensils. Americans use various cooking utensils like a spatula, tongs, spoon, whisk, peeler, and measuring cups. In addition, the main appliance for American food is an oven since American food is based on bread. A fryer, toaster, and blender are also important equipment to

prepare American foods.

Besides different utensils and appliances used, some other differences can be found in ingredients and cooking methods. Seafood, like fish, crab, clam, and seaweed, are common ingredients in Korea because Korea is a peninsula, therefore surrounded by seas. Korean dishes tend to smell since many fermented seasonings like *gochujang* (red chili paste), *doenjang* (soybean paste), soy sauce, fish sauce, and garlic are used. Korean foods are usually made by boiling, steaming, and stir-frying.

On the other hand, meats like chicken, pork, and beef are often used for American foods because America is a vast continent, containing many areas where these animals are raised. Americans use salt, pepper, dried herbs, and spices to cook meats. Diverse dipping sauces and dressings are also developed for cooking meats and fresh vegetables. Americans usually cook by grilling, frying, and roasting.

The way to use ingredients and the cooking methods are different between Korean and American food culture; moreover, serving and dining manners are also quite different. A normal Korean meal consists of rice, soup, and many communal side dishes, called *banchan*. Korean food is usually served in a bowl. *Banchan*, side dishes, are located in the middle of the table, and side dishes can be shared with others. In terms of table manners, a spoon is used for eating rice and soup, and chopsticks are used for eating side dishes. Koreans think that picking up food with the hands is rude. Another custom is that only after the eldest eats can others start to eat.

In contrast, regular American meals consist of a main dish, one or two side dishes, and breads. American food is served on a plate. Americans tend to put the food on their own plate before they start eating. Picking bread up with the hand is common in America. Americans hold a knife in the right hand and a fork in the left hand. After a few bite-sized pieces of food are cut,

the knife is placed on the side of the plate with the blade facing the food. Americans don't bring

a knife to their lips directly. A knife is used only for cutting.

In conclusion, Korean and American food cultures are different in many ways. Not only

are the tools and equipment they use for eating and cooking different, but the cooking styles and

main ingredients are also different from each other. Furthermore, the cultures have their own

styles of serving and table manners.

Joseph Smith

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

8 November 2022

<div align="center">NASCAR Safety</div>

The National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing, also known as NASCAR, has vastly evolved from its humble beginnings. Stock car racing started from moonshiners racing on the weekends and making liquor runs during the week. Then Bill France, Sr., had a vision for the sport of racing and organized NASCAR. With the advancement of technology, stock cars became faster and deadlier. This technology used on stock cars increased horsepower and torque; consequently, this increase changed racing forever because the safety regulations were changed to include a restrictor plate, HANS device, and a new safety barrier.

The fastest speed ever recorded on a NASCAR circuit topped 212 miles per hour by Bill Elliott in 1987 at Talladega during qualifying. When race day came, on lap twenty-two, Bobby Allison took flight in his Buick because when a stock car travels over two hundred miles an hour, air flows underneath the car, causing the tires to come off the ground. NASCAR officials stepped in and implemented the restrictor plate in the 1992 season for Talladega and Daytona. A restrictor plate bolts underneath the carburetor on the engine, restricting the flow of gas into the engine. The restrictor plate decreases the horsepower of a stock car from about 750 to about 400 horsepower. The restrictor plate also decreases the top speed of the car by thirty miles an hour. NASCAR solved the problem of being too fast, but they created another problem.

The implementation of the restrictor plate changed racing because the use of the restrictor plates makes every car almost equal. The restrictor plate takes the control out of the driver's

hands. Drivers now have to work harder than ever before to pass and stay ahead in the pack. This causes cars to bunch up and create packs, which creates more wrecks. When cars bunch up into a pack, the engines must work harder to maintain power. When they reach their maximum capacity, they lose engine power, causing the car to fall back in position. Passing becomes a challenge of pushing the engine to its limits without exceeding its capability because when a car loses its power and capability, drivers lose control and cause wrecks. Despite the fact that restrictor plate races show to have more wrecks than non-restrictor plate races, NASCAR calls the restrictor plate a necessary evil. Without the plate, cars become too dangerous. In 2000, Rusty Wallace took a test car that did not have a restrictor plate to Talladega and described the car as a loose cannon. Without the restrictor plate, Wallace had no control over the car.

Technology has advanced past the need for a restrictor plate. Because the Daytona 500 creates a tension which causes all drivers to want to win the biggest race of the year, drivers began to gain speed again and find ways to create more horsepower while still having the restrictor plate installed on the cars. Then when Dale Earnhardt, Sr., wrecked on the final lap and lost his life in 2001, NASCAR once again changed the rules for drivers when they mandated that all cars must implement a head and neck support device, the HANS device. This helps limit the head and neck injuries which Earnhardt suffered from his fatal crash because the HANS device limits the forward motion of the head and neck, putting the forehead in compression. When Earnhardt died, the forty-three drivers on the track had the HANS device available to them, but NASCAR had not made it mandatory to use one. Earnhardt believed in the old-school ways and did not wear the HANS device. NASCAR made the HANS device mandatory in October of 2001, and since the implementation of the HANS device rule, the number of fatal wrecks has decreased.

After Earnhardt's death, other safety devices have come to NASCAR's attention. NASCAR addressed the need for a wall softer than concrete to reduce the impact from the highspeed cars because concrete walls have too much kinetic energy for the car to be stopped all at once. Since stopping distance and velocity determine the force of impact on the driver, NASCAR implemented SAFER Barriers, or Steel and Foam Energy Reduction Barriers. This soft wall absorbs some of the energy from high-speed impacts and dissipates the energy on a longer portion of the wall. The SAFER Barrier reduces the impact the car and driver take directly.

The advancement of technology cannot be hindered, and neither will the need for speed. The increase of speed brought with it the increase of safety regulations in modifications done to the cars themselves, in required equipment for the drivers, and in changes in the barrier wall. The first of several major safety precautions implemented that changed racing forever was the restrictor plate. As a result, wrecks became catastrophic, and that brought the HANS device into consideration. The Steel and Foam Energy Reduction Barriers were also implemented to reduce the impact to the wall. All three of these safety devices happen to be the child of increased speed. Stock cars had no need for restrictor plates until they reached speeds of two hundred miles an hour. The HANS device and SAFER Barriers were not necessary until the force of impact and top steed increased in stock cars. Consequently, NASCAR regulations have changed stock car racing forever as an effect of high-speed racing.

Talia Ross

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

3 October 2022

<center>Pot Enthusiast</center>

Clay has been harnessed from the earth to form tools and art for centuries. Some of the earliest artifacts found of human civilizations are pieces of pottery. From the dinner plate accidentally dropped while doing dishes to the homely porcelain figurines atop a grandmother's shelf, every ceramic item was designed and created by an artist. However, there is a lot that clay has to go through before it can be utilized as a tool or displayed as artwork. After it undergoes a pre-firing stage of formation, it must be fired within a kiln, decorated in the post-firing stage, and then once again entered into the kiln for a final firing before a customer ever lays eyes on a piece of pottery.

A sculptor begins a pottery piece with soft, malleable clay in the pre-firing stage. There are seemingly unlimited types of clay to work with, characterized by the ratio of clay minerals to metal oxides to organic matter within it. These characteristics determine the color, consistency, temperature at which the clay must be fired, and look of the final result of the pottery piece. Often the artist will choose to work with earthenware clay, one of the earliest-used and most common types of clay found. This type is usually red, orange, yellow, tan, or gray; is soft or even sticky to work with; and fires at the lowest temperatures. Terracotta, or baked earth, is a commonly seen type of earthenware clay in items from flowerpots to ancient busts. The potter, once armed with his clay of choice, then has endless options of what to turn it into. It can be rolled into a flat slab and cut into tiles, molded into a figure by hand, spun on the pottery wheel to form dishes, or made into anything the artist's imagination could possibly conceive. Artists

should be careful to cover their work in something airtight if they will be away from it for any long duration, as exposure to air dries the clay and makes it unable to be manipulated. Some pieces, however, are intentionally left to dry slightly so that the clay can be intricately carved by small, precise tools. Once in the form an artist is satisfied with, the piece must be left to completely dry out, sometimes for days, often weeks. This is absolutely imperative to the piece's survival through the next stages of its life. During this process, the piece will lighten in color and become brittle and powdery.

After artists are sure the clay has properly dried, they take the piece into the second stage, being fired for the first time within the kiln. A kiln is basically an intensely hot oven with racks inside to bake pottery. It can be made from many things, not just bought, although modern kilns offer the most control and most-consistent outcomes. There are several things that artists must keep in mind if they intend for the piece to make it out of the kiln intact, as there is not much room for error when superheating clay basically into stone. They first must make sure the kiln reaches the optimal temperature for the clay used; earthenware's baking temperature ranges from 1745 degrees Fahrenheit to 2012 degrees Fahrenheit. Artists next must ensure the piece endures the heat as long as needed, usually several hours. In theory, this would produce a solid piece that is prepared for the following stage. However, it is always a gamble when a potter entrusts a piece to the kiln. If there are any air bubbles trapped within the clay, that air will expand at the furious temperatures and potentially crack or even break apart a piece. If the potter does not let the piece dry absolutely and completely, the moisture within has no escape through the clay body once it is turned to gas at intense heat and will cause the piece to explode. If the artist loads the kiln with multiple pieces, a broken or exploding piece is likely to ruin the pieces around it as well. There may also be instances where an artist does everything right and just because mixing all four elements in such a volatile manner is very finicky, the piece comes out destroyed.

If a piece survives being fired the first time, the potter can now use glazes, slip, and oxides to decorate it, the third phase of the creation. There are just as many potential glazes as there are potential clays. Each contains three base ingredients: silica, which creates glass; alumina, which stiffens the glaze to cling to the clay; and flux, which allows the glaze to melt at low temperatures. Other than that, an artist can manipulate a glaze's chemistry to result in endless colors. Although glazes appear like thick paint before fired, that color is almost never true to the result. Some glazes also have special characteristics, such as if a glaze is applied as one color, then the fired result is one color in outward peaks of the piece and another entirely in low crevices. Other glazes contain tiny pieces of glass of a different color, so the fired result has little dots and speckles. It should also be taken into consideration if the piece will come in contact with food or drink as some glazes are safe and others are toxic to consume anything off of. Another method to decorate a piece is to use slip, which is a mixture of clay and water to make it a smooth liquid. An artist may then pipe, pour, or dab this icing-like substance on the piece to form patterns and textures. Yet another option an artist has is to use oxides; these are combinations of different elements and oxygen that yield different colors as a powder. Oxides are often the colorants used in glazes as well. A cobalt oxide will show deep blue, an iron oxide will appear a reddish brown, and a copper oxide will yield a green, to name a few. Oxides' colors are usually more earthy than vibrant. They are often applied in washes, diluted with water to just tint pieces. The artist can mix various components of each on one piece to achieve any desired effect.

For the fourth and last stage of forming a work in ceramics, the artist has to refire it, solidifying the decorations. While the chances of the clay itself exploding or breaking after surviving the first fire are slim to none, there are now new risks for the piece. Some glazes fire at much higher temperatures than others, and the artist must be careful to never mix a low-fire

glaze and a high-fire glaze on one piece. If the glaze gets too hot, it will run off the piece; if it is

fired too low, it will be dry and rough. While there are different finishes to each glaze, some

shiny and glossy and some matte, they turn out right only with their specific temperature and

baking time, not unlike desserts. Although glazes resemble paint, they are much more complex.

In the kiln, their ingredients fuse in high heat to form a layer of glass around a piece. To avoid

this molten glass fusing to the kiln itself or other pieces, the potter must place pieces thoughtfully

spaced apart and on small stilts. If the glaze has been applied too thickly, it may appear as a drip

or leave small craters from bubbles forming on the final piece. If it is applied too thinly, the

finished piece will have faded spots with the clay body showing through. If everything is done

correctly, however, the artist will acquire a beautiful piece of handiwork that can stand the tests

of time.

Whether a sculptor, an admirer of three-dimensional art, or simply someone who

appreciates durable dinnerware, most people have experienced the results of the metamorphosis

of earthen mud into something entirely new. Even if one does not possess the interest or means

to create pottery, the process is one to be admired. It takes not only natural artistic skill and

talent but also knowledge and precise minding of an involved process to be a potter. To make

glazes and clay, an artist must know chemistry. To make interesting pieces that evoke feeling

and emotion, artists must be very creative. For work to survive such an intense crafting process,

the artists must be not only careful but also lucky. Therefore, when people come into contact

with a simple ceramic bowl or an astounding sculpted masterpiece, they should ponder how

much effort, time, passion, and luck went into that piece.

Eric Smith

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

15 November 2020

<center>The Three Voices of the Electric Guitar</center>

The electric guitar has been an integral part of popular music since its inception in the early part of the twentieth century. The immense palette of colors available to guitarists makes the electric guitar obviously stand out from the other musical instruments. However, a fairly obvious fact about the electric guitar is hiding in plain sight, a fact known to players but not immediately apparent to the general public until it is brought to their attention: the guitar is only half of a complete instrument. Without electronic amplification there would be no jarring, emotional delight to the ear that stirs the collective soul of today's audience. Thus far in the evolution of sound reinforcement, there are three distinct types of amplifiers: the tube amp, the solid-state or transistor amp, and the modern digital processor.

The vacuum tube, or valve, is a component of an antiquated technology. Along with large, heavy output transformers and point-to-point wiring, the tube amp is a remnant of the days when Americans would gather around their bulky mahogany Art Deco radios and listen to FDR's fireside chats. Suspenders, rumble seats, fedoras, and whitewall tires were some of the other common cultural iconography in those halcyon days before the atomic bomb. The tube amp tone has a roundness to it, a warm, creamy sound that even with the volume turned up is never sharp or piercing. The guitar players that swear by tube amps are legion, and the men that designed and manufactured them have become household names; Leo Fender and Jim Marshall are two examples. The positive attributes of the tube amps are many, but there are drawbacks as well:

they are heavy and can get very hot; to get the best performance and tone, they must be matched with the right speakers; and tubes wear out quickly and must be replaced often. Something new was needed.

The solid-state transistor, or transtube, as some call it, is essentially a small electric circuit that serves the same purpose as a vacuum tube. Invented during the waning days of World War II, it was initially put to good use as a proximity fuse in artillery shells. When fired at a moving airplane, the projectiles didn't need to hit the target directly. The little transistor inside the nose of the shell would detect the magnetic field of the aircraft, which would activate the tiny electronic circuitry and detonate the explosives within. They were used with great success against the Japanese kamikaze attacks in the Pacific Theater during World War II; however, Japan would later exact economic revenge by flooding the American market with cheap transistor radios in the 1960s. When transistors were first used in guitar amps, their advantages were obvious: light weight, cool operation, and twice the output of the old tube technology. They had a razor-edged sound that many guitar players welcomed; some, however, did not, and the search for the ultimate tone proceeded unabated.

The arrival of the silicon chip in the 1980s ushered in the digital revolution. For better or worse, the modern world has embraced the computer in the hope that it will fulfill the communicative promise of its creators. For psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, the jury is still out, as there seems to be much evidence that cyber-society is isolationist and narcissistic and that the gulf between the haves and the have-nots is growing wider by the day. Guitar players, however, seem to be doing what they can to level the proverbial and literal playing field by embracing digital technology. There are computer programs and processors that can analyze and recreate the tonal quality of the great artists' performances. Neophyte guitarists

may not have the manual dexterity or compositional facility of the masters, but they can now have the tone and timbre of their heroes. Almost any player will readily agree that is half the battle. Of course, the musical geniuses of today are using the new technology too and are pushing the performance envelope as far as it will go. The recording industry especially has benefitted from the new technology.

All three types of amps have contributed to a thriving and evolving art form in ways that are both immemorial and ephemeral. The tube amp will always be associated with the originators of the electric guitar sound, while the solid-state or transistor amp will most likely go down in history as a mass-marketing success story. Countless would-be rock stars started out with a Peavey transtube amp and dreams. The latest incarnation of sound enhancement is taking the art form in directions that will be apparent only when the process is concluded, something which will probably never happen. As long as there are such things as electric guitars, and as long as musicians play them, they will need a device to enhance and multiply their sonic messages.

Ibrahim Alharbi

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

18 October 2021

<div align="center">The Wajeb</div>

Weddings can be very expensive in any place. In Saudi Arabia, the average wedding can cost $50,000. This amount of money may seem ordinary for some weddings in other countries like the United States or England. However, if the Saudi currency is compared with the dollar or euro, it is clear that weddings in Saudi Arabia are very expensive for a middle-class Saudi person. In fact, it has been said that young Saudi men are finding it hard to get wives these days because of high dowries demanded by girls and that this situation is a new social problem for this conservative kingdom. Because of the difficulties that can coincide with weddings, relatives in many Saudi tribes believe that their duty is to support anyone from the same tribe who wants to get married. According to the elderly in many tribes, this kind of support began fifty years ago, and it has continued until it became one of the crucial traditions in many tribes. The Arabic word for this kind of procedure is *wajeb*, which means the duty in which every member in a tribe participates to help either the groom or the bride financially. Tribe members support the bride and groom not only on the wedding day but also before and after the wedding.

Firstly, the period that precedes the wedding has its own procedures in which only close relatives subsidize the groom and the bride in different ways. Since the groom has to pay a dowry, his brothers usually give him part of it. Moreover, his cousins may take him to buy items needed for his wedding, such as his *thoob* and *besht*, traditional clothes for men in Saudi Arabia. The bride also gets support from the relatives before the wedding. If her dowry was not enough

for her expenses, her sisters or her aunts might help her to buy her gown. Furthermore, she might receive valuable gifts, such as jewelry, clothes, and perfumes.

Secondly, the foremost *wajeb* for all relatives, close or not, can be seen on the wedding day. For example, on that morning, the groom's brothers or cousins take him to a salon to prepare him before he goes to the hall reserved for the wedding. Moreover, since he is responsible for most of the wedding expenses, the close relatives usually participate in paying a considerable part of the dinner, the hall, and the band. Other relatives who are not that close also support him financially because every adult who has a job contributes to the wedding expense. Although everyone has to pay less than thirty dollars, the collected amount can make a huge difference on the groom's budget. Additionally, the bride can get financial support in different ways. In many cases in Saudi weddings, brides tend to be the responsible for decorating the hall. Since this procedure costs a lot of money, the close relatives pay part of the price. Furthermore, every female relative who is not very close also gives a small amount of money to the bride. Therefore, she can get a considerable amount when she puts the money together. This would really help her with any costs she needs to cover.

Finally, the supporting does not stop after the wedding day; both groom and bride continue to receive support from their relatives after the wedding. There are two different ways the *wajeb* can be used for the groom. He receives some help for furniture, TV, refrigerator, and oven for his house or apartment. He also may get a reservation in a hotel and a rental car for three days, but this depends on the budget of the tribe. On the other hand, the bride gets some financial support in different ways. For instance, when the relatives visit her in her home for the first time, they give her some gifts like china or anything else she might need. They also have a party for her after her honeymoon.

The financial difficulties that both groom and bride may face can be taken care of by the *wajeb*, which shows the support they need from their relatives. Additionally, it shows how the members of one tribe unite with each other because they believe it is the relatives' duty to sustain each other through the wedding process. They also believe that it is a shame if people do not give help to their relatives, with the only exception being an unemployed person who is not able to give financial help. The *wajeb* can be given at three different times: on the wedding day, before the wedding, and after the wedding. People in Saudi Arabia appreciate this tradition for its advantages of making marriage affordable.

Ivy Fielder

Instructor's Name

Comp I

15 October 2022

<div align="center">Anorexia Nervosa: A Misunderstood Disorder</div>

Anorexia nervosa, more commonly known as just anorexia, is a mental disorder that can affect anyone. Richard Morton detailed the first recorded diagnosis of anorexia, which he referred to as "a nervous consumption," in 1689 in his book *Phthisiologia.* Morton describes two cases, one in a female and one in a male. in the chapter "Of a Nervous Consumption" (qtd. in O'Toole). Unlike depression or anxiety, the general population is grossly misinformed about the symptoms, causes, treatments, and effects of anorexia. For example, when I announced my decision to research this topic, Ashton Ealy, a fellow student, asked, "Is that even a real thing?" referring to eating disorders as a whole.

The Symptoms and Diagnosis of Anorexia

Anorexia is characterized by a myriad of physical symptoms, both visible and invisible, as well as behavioral symptoms. It also has very specific requirements for an official diagnosis. For example, physical symptoms of anorexia beyond rapid weight loss include thinning hair, brittle nails, fatigue, and the growth of fine body hair known as lanugo. Even further, there are also physical symptoms not visible to other people such as dehydration, constipation, and stomach pain. Behavioral symptoms of anorexia tend to include a withdrawal from social situations for fear of food being involved, irritability/mood changes due to hunger, and an altered body image ("Anorexia Nervosa"). As stated by Jon Grant, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience, and Katharine Phillips, director of The BDD and Body Image Program

at Butler Hospital in Providence, this altering of one's body image is known as body dysmorphia. It is characterized by obsession over insecurities to the point that it affects one's everyday life, and the person begins to believe that they are much larger than they truly are (Grant and Phillips). However, just because these traits appear in someone, that does not necessarily mean that they can be properly diagnosed with anorexia due to the specific requirements. According to a writer for Gale Health and Wellness Reports, the official diagnosis requirements include a body weight of at least fifteen percent less below normal for age and height, obsessing over the shape and weight of one's body, an overwhelming fear of gaining weight, and the refusal to admit that being underweight is detrimental to one's health (Petrusso). With such extreme symptoms and diagnosis requirements, along with the undeniable human need for proper nutrition to be able to not just survive, but thrive, we cannot help but wonder what would cause someone to starve themselves to be happy.

The Possible Causes of Anorexia Nervosa

Just like any mental disorder, such as anxiety, there is not a truly logical reason as to why a person would obsessively worry or partake in self-destructive behaviors, in this instance, starving themselves purposely. While many people are aware that diseases like breast cancer and diabetes are passed down genetically, we usually attribute the development of an eating disorder to the environment a person grows up in. For example, it is a common stereotype that all ballet dancers, gymnasts, models, and even bodybuilders must have some sort of eating disorder ("Anorexia Nervosa"). However, there may also be a genetic aspect when it comes to talking about the causes of anorexia. New research shows that while there is a genetic component to the emergence of anorexia, it does not guarantee that someone is going to develop anorexia at some point in their life. The presence of these genes simply shows that, according to James Greenblatt,

Chief Medical Officer at Walden Behavioral Care in Waltham, Massachusetts, "A host of other factors, including hormonal changes, nutrition patterns, and stress can trigger the expression or, more likely, the 'misexpression' of these genes'' (Greenblatt). Of course, there is still a cultural aspect to the disease, and while it may not be the main cause of the disorder, constantly seeing other people's disordered eating habits and talking about how being skinny instantly makes one beautiful certainly does not help an ill individual recover. For example, there are whole blogs and accounts on the internet dedicated to sharing "thinspiration" or "thinspo," on which people boast about how little they have eaten that day (Petrusso). This romanticization of unhealthy eating habits and extreme, unnecessary weight loss can not only slow the recovery process of those struggling with anorexia but can also damage the mindsets of healthy people.

The Treatment of Anorexia

The first step in recovering from any mental illness is for people to admit that they are not healthy. This tends to be particularly difficult for people with anorexia because, in their denial of one of their basic needs, they are deluding themselves into believing they can be healthy without food. After the person admits that they have a problem, the next step, as reported by the National Eating Disorder Association, should be completed with a psychotherapist so they can "assist the individual in discovering the function of their eating disorder so they can understand why it is in their life and how it no longer serves them." The next stage is known as the preparation stage. This stage is when the individual focuses on establishing healthy coping mechanisms such as proper boundary setting and ways to deal with negative emotions. This is typically when a plan of action for recovery is developed by the treatment team, which normally consists of a physician, nutritionist, and therapist. Stage four, known as the action stage, begins when the individual begins to implement the plan of action created in the third stage and is

willing to face the challenges and fears that come with recovery. Trust in their support system and treatment team is crucial during this stage to avoid backsliding into bad habits. Then comes the maintenance stage. Just like an addiction or any other mental disorder, anorexia is not something that just goes away like a virus. The maintenance stage typically begins after the individual has sustained the action stage for at least six months. This stage involves revisiting old triggers in a safe environment. Doing this allows the person to begin approaching life more purposely and consciously ("Stages of Recovery").

Conclusion

Understanding what anorexia is allows us to notice warning signs in those around us and provides us with the proper knowledge to attempt to help them. Of course, no one can help someone that will not admit that they have a problem, so we need to be careful not to allow someone else's mental health to negatively affect our own. Setting boundaries when helping other people in any situation is crucial to protect our own peace and happiness.

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Trajan Davis

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ENGL 1013

24 September 2022

<div align="center">The Evolution of NBA Players</div>

Comparing NBA players from different eras is nearly impossible because players have evolved so much in recent years. Players have much more advanced play styles, efficiencies, and athleticism than they used to, and the game is played a completely different way now. This is due to better training techniques and technology being available to players. The game is also much more analytics-based than it was since more advanced statistics are now tracked, compared to the earlier times when they were not.

One of the major ways that NBA players have evolved is the rise of "position-less" players. Players are normally just classified as guards, wings, and big men. Guards are the players that will mostly handle the ball for the offense. Wings tend to be more off-ball players, who can space the floor out by spreading out along the three-point line and defend each player against the opposing team on defense. Big men are normally the tallest players on the court, who should rebound the ball best on the team, score the ball inside "pick and rolls" (where a player "screens" an opposing defender and cuts to the basket, hopefully leading to an easy score), and defend the rim. This modern age of basketball encourages players who are agile, well-rounded offensively, and interchangeable on defense. Since today's game is much more fast-paced and spaced out, it forces players to be able to "switch" on to other players quickly on defense. Andrew Lisa describes this kind of player as someone who can efficiently play and defend each position on the court.

Up until about 2015, players were assigned to roles by position. While there were a few outliers, there were far fewer "do-it-all-players." The modern era of the game is ruled by players such as Giannis Antetokounmpo, LeBron James, Kevin Durant, and many more. These are players who, by size, would normally be considered big men or wings, but can handle the ball and run the offense like a guard. This change is even starting to apply to big men, too. To add extra spacing on the court, big men who can

shoot the basketball efficiently are quickly becoming a premium to have on teams. Most traditional big men would play close to the basket in the "post" and attempt to score a close basket against a defender, such as players like Shaquille O'Neal and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Due to today's game being much faster and spaced, the NBA has seen far fewer big men play like this. Modern day elite big men like Joel Embiid and Nikola Jokic are able to shoot the ball from the outside, and they even have guard-like qualities. This evolution has led to a much more efficient style of play and makes offenses with "new-aged" big men nearly unstoppable.

These changes have even led to the rise of "small ball," where teams will arrange a lineup of only guards and wings instead of having a big man on the court like normal. The logic behind these smaller lineups is that teams will give up some size in order to be able to play at an even faster pace than the modern game already is, according to Horace Grant, former NBA champion. On offense, generally all five players can shoot the ball, so they run a "5-out" offense. In this offense, all five players spot-up around the three-point line and provide the ultimate court spacing. The Golden State Warriors popularized this style of basketball in 2015 when they won the NBA championship. Grant claims, "gone are the days of coaches preaching, 'you can't teach size,' and instead cue coaches like Steve Kerr, claiming, 'Small ball is the way everyone's going.'"

Another evolution of NBA players is their efficiency. The game is played much differently now due to the rise of analytics. These more advanced statistics were not tracked twenty or more years ago but are tracked now. One major change is the shot selection of players. In the 1980s and 90s, players mostly focused on trying to score close to the basket or shoot mid-ranged jump shots. Modern day statistics have shown that the mid-ranged shot is much less efficient, so this has become a lost art of the game. Players now have much more efficient play styles. Players are tracked by statistics such as PER (player efficiency rating) and EFG (effective field goal percentage). In the 1998 playoffs, the highest scoring team scored 100 points on 47% shooting from the field and averaged 75 shots a game. In contrast, in the 2022 playoffs, the highest scoring team scored 113 points on 44% shooting from the field and averaged 92 shots a game. This shows that modern teams shoot the ball and score much more on similar efficiencies.

This also can be attributed to the rise of three-point shooting. Players like Stephen Curry have revolutionized the three-point shot to levels where it dominates the game now. In 2000, only 17% of field goal attempts were three-pointers, whereas now that number has reached 40% (Sperber). Players who are not at least respectable from outside the arc are pushed out of the league quickly, whereas it was acceptable to not be a serviceable three-point shooter in past eras.

Lastly, players have evolved athletically. Players are just bigger, faster, stronger, and taller now. According to Andrew Lisa, the average size of a player in 1969 was 6'5" and 205 pounds. Today's average player is 6'7" and 220 pounds. Players' vertical jumps and speeds have also increased. This can be credited to the major innovation in training technologies recently, so much so that Lisa calls the slam dunk contest a "national pastime." Another indication that players are much more athletic is the increased pace of the game. The NBA tracks a statistic of pace (the number of possessions by each team in a game), and right now the league average is about 100. In 1997, the league average pace was only 90. This sudden drastic change of pace, combined with increased efficiency, shows that players now have the speed and stamina to play a much faster game.

Players now look and play the game much differently than they traditionally did. Whether it is the much more efficient play styles, "position-less" players, increase in league-wide athleticism, or rise in pace, it is certain that players now top the players of the past in almost every category. This also can be attributed to the major rise of technology that is available to players now. Players of the past deserve to be credited for their accolades and for being pioneers for the NBA, but modern players just triumph over them.

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Composition 1

6 March 2022

<p style="text-align:center">High Rollers</p>

The opportunity to engage in gambling has been presented to many people from the time they were children. From simple games to dares, the thrill of the possible risk someone could experience excites them. Gambling could include casinos, lottery tickets, video game loot boxes, any kind of roulette game, surprise boxes/toys, card games, and board games. As technology has developed and the urge to create capital has grown over recent years, the debate over gambling has become more apparent. With media pushing views onto people in the form of movies, books, and news stories, the dispute between the continuation of gambling and the termination of it becomes increasingly louder. However, gambling should be legalized and continue in various states as well as be introduced to others as it promotes healthy mental health and contributes to economic expansion.

The emotional state of an individual can make or break various things such as relationships, jobs, and even their own safety. With access to gambling, people are given the chance to experience something different and possibly engage in new emotions that can influence their lives in a positive way. Those who accept gambling often see it as a form of stress relief and positive entertainment. Patrick Basham and John Luik explain that those who choose to gamble are doing so of their own free will to experience a safe place for leisure and the possibility of wealth. Casinos and other gambling sites house systems of social support and companionship that can influence self-image. Basham and Luik claim that almost all players

assume that they will lose but are happy to take the chance for the pleasure of playing and possibility of coming out ahead. Games of chance promote better emotional health such as a feeling of control, self-confidence, autonomy, resilience, and many more benefits of the mood (Basham and Luik 1). By participating in gambling, an individual's mood is influenced by the environment and playing the games/betting. People who choose to participate are also aware that they have a chance of losing money and choose to participate anyway.

Those who do not approve of gambling may argue that gambling is always addictive, but Peggy Sue Loroz, a consumer psychologist who focuses on marketing, states that informants are not lured into gambling or tricked, but rather they exhibit control and understand the terms of why they are gambling (11). Loroz also argues that "gambling provides a fantasy outlet for participants as they suspend reality during play—escaping from the routine of everyday life and indulging in dreams of instant wealth. Games, in general, provide an outlet for humans to shift temporarily into a world of make-believe and ignore real-life consequences that must ordinarily be addressed" (3). She states, "these social aspects allow seniors to escape from worlds that may seem limiting and lonely to some and reestablish contact with the rest of society" (17) The gambling environment allows for a release from typical society, which can be a form of stress relief as well as help reconnect members to society.

However, some argue that gambling can lead to an addiction and the individual is not truly able to make wise decisions with their money. While this argument may seem reasonable, statistics show "that around 3–4% of the adult population in Western countries experience moderate to serious problems associated with gambling" (Delfabbro 1). This is a very low percentage, and everything comes with a risk. When people drive cars, eat food, or do anything at all, there is always a possibility for something to go wrong, which can also happen with

gambling. Thus, while addictions can happen, they are very unlikely and mostly exaggerated in movies and social media. Additionally, Matthew Browne found that when harm is present, which is rarely, it is almost always when gambling and other activities (e.g. drinking, drugs) resulted in bankruptcy or loss of relationships (Browne 1). This evidence shows gambling is not the only factor that can lead to these negative results, but stereotypes have led to these beliefs. Bad decisions with money are influenced by a variety of things and cannot be blamed entirely on gambling. For those with addiction, there are various organizations, groups, and rehabilitation programs available to help overcome the addiction. One of these organizations is the National Council on Problem Gambling, which is open twenty-four hours a day and is always willing to help those who reach out or are referred.

The existence of gambling allows the government to run lotteries, casinos, and a variety of other businesses within the industry to create jobs so money can continue flowing through the economic system. Katherine Marshall, a labor and household surveys analysist, found that "employment in the gambling industry rose from 11,000 in 1992 to 40,000 in 2006" (1). During 2006, she also found that employment in this industry increased by 200% compared to other industries only growing by 8% (3). This increase can be explained partly by marketing, which pulled more people into casinos and into lotteries, and partly by the advancement of technology, which increased both the opportunities for gambling and the variety of games available. As more people are employed, more money is put into the hands of consumers so they can spend it on merchandise, clothes, and other items that put the funds back into the cycle of the economy. The rate of unemployment can also decrease by allowing casinos to stay open as they offer many jobs for bartenders, hosts, waiters/waitresses, and others. Additionally, casinos benefit from "the consumer surplus captured by gamblers" (Whaples 1) that allows for the government that owns

them to distribute the funds in a variety of areas such as for libraries, schools, or roads. This is only in terms of casinos and lotteries, but even raffles or other ways of gambling allow for small businesses and individuals to continue the circulation of money. Retailers/companies who support gambling and/or are around the venues of casinos, horse races, and other gambling environments experience positive spillovers in per capita income with an average cumulative increase of approximately $1700 (Geisler 122). The presence of these locations allows for the success of those around them as well.

However, those against gambling defend their stance by explaining that gamblers risk losing money instead of profiting like intended. This is not always the case, however. As stated before, gamblers must wager knowing the risks beforehand and should not spend money they do not have or are not comfortable losing. Gambling should not only be used for funds but for the entertainment it provides. People gamble for a variety of reasons, but "understanding motives for gambling and the association of these motives with problematic gambling can inform campaigns aimed at the prevention of problem gambling and can influence the treatment approach used by clinicians working with problem gambling clients" (Francis 5). Not everyone gambles for the same reasons; some are simply paying a fee for entertainment similar to seeing a movie while others are using gambling as a possibility to get ahead. Gamblers going in and losing some of their money allows researchers to be more knowledgeable and create better treatments for those who have issues with gambling.

In the end, gambling is a social activity that expands the economy and promotes healthy living, so it must be legalized and pursued. The benefits that come with the continuation of gambling outweigh the few cons that may present themselves. As technology continues to advance; mental health awareness increases; COVID, war, and a variety of other things begin to

affect people; the need for stress relieving activities becomes higher. Gambling must be

continued to preserve and better the world we are in today.

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Daniel Meek

Instructor's Name

Comp 1

15 September 2022

<div align="center">The Physical Gaydar: Flagging and Its History</div>

The ever elusive gaydar: every straight person says they have one, even if it is

malfunctioning. Most queer people would say they can spot a gay person a mile away, especially

the flamboyant kind. What if there were a quantitative and almost conclusive way to tell

someone is gay? There is, and that is through flagging. Flagging is the concept of subtly

communicating to those around us something about us that may not otherwise be obvious. It has

been used for ages. Sometimes flagging is not even intentional. Whether it is something small

like a black ring on the middle finger or wearing a rainbow flag as a cape, flagging is a tried and

true method to spot someone who is queer. Flagging can be expressed in physical items but also

through language. In order to understand flagging, we must understand the background of

flagging itself.

First, we must get rid of any preconceived notions of gay people we have and throw out

the idea that any straight person has a gaydar; for heterosexual individuals, their gaydar is

actually just preconceived bias. Stereotypes in the media are plentiful: the gay best friend high

school trope in cult classics is the easiest to spot, though other tropes include the butch lesbian

who is one of the guys. Many of us grew up with gay villains like Him from *Power Puff Girls*,

who is basically a drag queen. Likewise, Ursula, the Sea Witch from *The Little Mermaid*, is

obviously based on the stereotypical old drag queen. Effeminate male villains and mean

masculine women—these are all stereotypes and have led to many genuine flagging signals, though in this case possibly not the best ones.

Modern flagging is one of the easiest languages to decode. Modern femme lesbians use large earrings as a flag; in fact, earrings made of random curious trinkets are actually a staple of modern queer woman culture. There are also certain nail styles that are considered flagging. A woman with acrylic nails with the first two fingernails cut short is almost certainly a lesbian. Hair styles and coloring are also big staples of queer culture, especially in the genderqueer or femme spaces. A lot of "women loving women" (wlw), or sapphics, actually choose to have brightly colored short hair. Obviously these flags are not totally exclusive to the gay community, but they are common threads in spotting someone who identifies as gay.

Modern queer men are typically easier to spot than women. Some gay men use African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which is not actually gay culture, but rather stolen culture. Many terms such as *slay*, *queen*, and *beat face* are actually AAVE. Not all queer male slang terms are stolen, but many that originated from *RuPaul's Drag Race* were appropriated by the queer community.

Gay men are easy to spot, though they do not always flag in the way that their ancestors flagged. Painted nails are a common tip off, along with meticulously done hair styles. They tend to refer to themselves using an animal classification of men, ranging from the most masculine *bear* through *otter* and *fox* along with the nickname *twink*, which applies to slender younger men.

Lesser known queer identities also have flags: for example, the black ring on the middle finger is a flag of someone being asexual. Some ways to tell someone is trans include the obvious pronoun pins (she/her, he/him, they/them), but some slang is also involved, for example *chest binder*, *passing*, or the older version of passing which was called *looking-real*. A lot of

queer people are invested in punk, goth, or grunge culture; grunge elements include the use of Doc Martens and Demonias, along with other boots. One flag that spans across almost all young queer circles is nails with the color of their flag.

Historical queer flagging is more comprehensive, however. It includes everything from the rise and fall of Polari (British queer slang) to the reclamation of slurs. Flagging used to have to be low-profile since sodomy was essentially punishable by death before the 1950s and only legalized by 2003, but it is not underground so much anymore. Queer people are increasingly visible nowadays due to the 2015 Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which declared that same-sex bans on marriage were unconstitutional. This decision was in fact only possible through the historic efforts of those involved with the Stonewall uprising in 1969.

One of the many ways that people were able identify other gay people historically were secret codes. One such code was "a friend of Dorothy's." This was a subtle way to ask, and if the other person did not know the code, they would not know the "Dorothy" the speaker was talking about. The real identity of Dorothy was not specified, as it was a common name. Colloquially, "Dorothy" is said to be a name that refers to popular writer Dorothy Parker, an ally and activist for gays, or to Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* (Necessary).

Bandanas have been a fashion statement for decades. Whether girls wear them in their hair or men use them at work, they are a fashion statement, but they are also a part of one of the most notorious queer codes of all time. The Hanky Code was first coined and created by Alan Selby in 1970 (Cornier). These hankies are basically ciphers. The meanings behind how and where they are worn might include what a gay person is looking for in a partner. The sides have meaning as well; for example, they can indicate whether someone is a passive personality or a more dominant or aggressive one. Hankies can be worn in back pockets, around biceps, or

nowadays made into other clothes or accessories. Notable examples of this latter trend are bandana skirts, belts, and bracelets, though these are typically created for femme queer men or queer women, who adopted the code even though it was originally used by gay men. This trend's modernization is partly the result of the code becoming a bit more widely used and accepted, though overall use of this code has faded in the last twenty years or so.

Another part of queer flagging is the carabiner code that was created for lesbians. It originated sometime in the 1960s although some lesbians say it has been around since carabiners were created. (A carabiner is a coupling link with a safety closure, used by rock climbers and often worn connected to the belt.) This flagging technique was highlighted and popularized in the 2006 memoir *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel (Cauterucci). This aspect of flagging is usually identified with butch or stud lesbians. A lot of butch flagging tends to be with tools, work boots, carabiners, short nails, and short hair.

"The Gay Ear" is an example of flagging where a myth turned into accepted culture. This idea started because of the misconception that gay men wear one earring in the right ear, supposedly a way to signal to other gay men that they are available. This is in fact a debunked myth, but the use of this myth grew into many people believing that this is a true way of flagging (Editors). Some would agree that general acceptance of what was originally a debunked myth does make the gay ear a good way to flag. Many modern queer men will use this flag subtly, though it grew to notoriety in 1990 when an article about this flag was published in the *New York Times*.

Flower Language has been used since 1819, where it originated in France. This subtle language has been used for lovers and romance since its beginning. Each flower has its own individual meanings, and many of them can represent love and adoration. Through the years

some flowers have been significant to the queer community. Flowers used by lesbians have included violets, lavender, and heads of cauliflower. Violets are the most notable ones, since the time of Sappho, as women would make chains of them and give them to their paramours. Another flower commonly used to flag that is associated with the queer community is the green carnation. This flower became popular at the time of the famous Oscar Wilde trial, when he was put on trial for sodomy (Chris). The green carnation used to be worn as a boutonniere as a subtle signal. Many men would wear it to different queer districts or gentlemen's clubs to identify themselves.

The history and intent of flagging is incredibly long and complex. There are flags for almost every part of the spectrum of queer people. These flags are important both historically, and as a form of social cohesion. Flagging and being able to spot other queer people is a concept that has been around since love's beginning. Each flag has its own extensive history. Every generation builds off the one before it, but the concept of flagging continues to help in spotting others with the same interests.

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Factory Farms

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Large factory farms take up over sixty five percent of the world's agricultural land although they only account for one percent of the world's farms. One of the biggest concerns in the world today is feeding our growing population. Factory farms have replaced family farms to help solve this problem. Merriam-Webster defines factory farming as "a large industrialized farm" (n.d.). The industrial food industry contains a handful of companies that produce most of the population's food. This may seem like a good thing, but the farms hurt the environment, producing poor quality food and putting family-owned farms out of business. A lot of controversy about whether we should continue to let the companies fund these factory farms and produce our food has been brought up in recent years.

Factory farming has kept the world feeding our growing population for many years now. According to Anna Kramer, "There really are 10 companies that control most of the food and drinks you'll find in the grocery store" (2014). These companies produce about ninety percent of the world's food. This makes the prices of the food more stable and more affordable for communities. Factory farms make it more efficient to process the food while also making it more available to consumers. In addition, factory farms can be established on almost any kind of landscape, making it easier for areas with little food to grow their own. Being able to put these big farms in rural communities has helped bring more food to the people around the world.

Factory farms have not always been here to feed the world. Before them there were family farms. In the early 1900s just a few acres of land owned by a family made up many of the farms in the United States. Families would raise and grow all the food to feed themselves throughout the year. Farmers would grow many different crops and raise all types of livestock to

support the families' needs. The crops grown would help feed the livestock, which was what farmers would sell to make a profit. At the beginning of the 20th century, farming relied on manual labor and would use animals like horses and oxen to help complete tasks around the farms. The time that it took to grow crops and livestock in the 1900s was significantly longer than today. In the 1930s a drought caused livestock and crop values to plummet.

In the late 1930s the decline in family farms started in the United States. Families could no longer afford to keep farms running due to low incomes. As more farms started going up for sale, big livestock and crop companies started to buy up the land. Companies would continue to do this, growing and finding new ways to maximize efficiency and production. In the 1960s these large farms run by companies became known as factory farms. As these farms began to become more common around the United States, more food was becoming available to rural areas that did not have it before.

In the early 1930s large poultry farms began to become more common as chicken became more popular in the United States. According to the National Chicken Council, "In 1923 Cecile Long Steele is credited with pioneering the poultry industry . . . Within two years she was raising 10,000 meat-type chickens" (2011). Around this same time companies like Tyson started to buy family farms to build hatcheries and processing plants. By the early 1950s broiler chickens in large poultry houses had surpassed farm chickens as the main source of chickens in the United States. By the 1990s the poultry industry had reached the state when the first shipment of American chicken was shipped internationally.

Today over 3,500 poultry farms around the world have a contract with Tyson. According to the Tyson website, Tyson "produce[s] 1 in 5 pounds of all chicken, beef, and pork in the U.S." (2024). Roughly two million family farms operate in the United States today, compared to the

6.8 million family farms that operated in the 1930s and 1940s. With advancements in technology, companies like Tyson have been able to put factory farms anywhere that there can be water access. This has brought more affordable food to rural communities that did not have a steady supply of it before.

With the population of the world and the United States growing every year, scientists have been trying to find the solution to world hunger. With factory farms producing a large amount of the world's food, we have been able to keep feeding the world's population. With a lower number of family farms, people have lost their jobs but have higher quality food. Tyson and a few other companies control most of the world's food and the quality of food that the consumers buy.

Effects of Factory Farming

Ninety-nine percent of all livestock in the United States are raised on factory farms. Tyson and a few other companies produce most of the world's food with large factory farms. These companies can produce large amounts of food in a shorter period of time, and they can also be built in almost any kind of landscape. While these companies have been able to feed the population with factory farms, the farms have effects that can harm the consumer and the environment. The factory farms that grow livestock harm the environment, produce poor quality foods, and put family farms out of business.

In the mid to late 1900s the demand for more meat around the world started to increase rapidly. To help fight this problem, major companies like Cargill, Tyson, and Nestle built factory farms to produce large amounts of meat. As the population began to increase, more factory farms began to be built all over the world. Companies like this have helped fight world hunger and feed communities all around the world. Ten countries have adopted the method of factory farming in

recent years. Countries can get food in rural areas for an affordable price and larger quantities of meat.

Factory farms release air polluting gases that cause harmful effects on the environment. These chicken farms put enormous amounts of methane into the atmosphere. According to Kate Good in her article "5 Ways Factory Farming Is Killing the Environment," "Over 37 percent of methane emissions result from factory farming" (2021a). The methane that these farms release into the air is causing global warming along with all the other gases released by poultry like carbon dioxide and ammonia. Not only does factory farming cause air pollution by releasing harmful gases into the atmosphere, but it also takes away homes from wildlife. Over two hundred and sixty million acers of forest have been cut down in the United States alone for factory farms. Forests and trees must be cleared to be able to grow crops to make feed for the animals on factory farms. Cutting down the forest harms the natural homes of wildlife native to the areas while also killing plants native to the forest.

Not only are these farms bad for the atmosphere and the land, but they also produce low-grade products. With companies producing large amounts of meat at an alarming rate, a decrease in the quality of meat being fed to the consumer occurs. The quality of food produced by factory farms keeps worsening as the demand for meat grows. The antibodies in meat affect humans as well as the environment. Because the antibodies given to the animals do not fully break down, they get released into the environment. "Modern Industrial Foods and Their Effects on the Human Body," an article written by Harry Hong, states that "The use of antibiotics in the food industry is responsible for drug-resistant bacteria emerging on farms and then reaching the general population through the environment, human or animal carriers, and the food consumers eat" (2016). With animals being produced so quickly, there is not

enough time for medicines given to animals to be broken down before slaughter. This can cause long-term effects on human health and environmental health. With hundreds of animals being confined to one small area, diseases like E. coli and Salmonella can pop up. These can spread to the meat, affecting the consumers buying the meat.

Not only can the industrial food industry harm the planet and human bodies, but it can also hurt the economy and ability to maintain family farms. Factory farms have pushed family farms out of business and hurt the economy when doing so. Large factory farms are causing family farms to fall behind when it comes to production rates and technology. Writing about the Kalbach family, a farming family in Iowa, Chris McGreal says, "Barb and Jim are the last family still working the land, after their neighbors were picked off by waves of collapsing commodity prices and the rise of factory farming" (2019). In local areas of Arkansas, the few dairy farms left are at threat of being put out of business. Due to fuel prices, the milk processors have trouble affording fuel to pick up the milk. Factory farms affect families that have farmed and cared for the land over many years by pushing them out of business. As factory farms keep growing, the need for new and expensive equipment grows. This affects family farms because the prices of the equipment needed cannot be afforded. With major food companies controlling the markets, family farms find it hard to upgrade to new equipment.

As a higher demand for meat began to arise in the 1930s, companies began building factory farms to help meet these demands. After years of factory farms, they have begun to have effects on the environment by destroying air quality and forests. With farms producing large amounts of meat, poor-quality food can have effects on human health. Factory farms have pushed family farms out of business for years now, leaving families without jobs. Many things

need to change if we want to be able to keep feeding our growing population while also keeping it and our planet healthy.

How to Fight Factory Farming

Animal waste being produced by factory farms contaminates around one million acres of fresh lake and pond water each year. Factory farming has been harming the environment for decades with no change in sight. Livestock produce harmful gases that cause pockets of gas to form in areas where they are located; gases released from livestock have raised global warming emissions since they started. Not only is the waste being produced by animals harming the atmosphere, but it also contaminates freshwater lakes near the farms. Factory farms require large amounts of feed for livestock, so millions of acres of forest all around the world have been cleared to make room to grow crops for the feed. Farms that are half the size of factory farms produce only forty percent of the harmful waste as larger farms. Not only do smaller farms produce less waste, but they also produce fewer gases that harm the atmosphere. Factory farms have been polluting and harming the environment for many years now.

Factory farms release harmful gases that pollute the air in the areas where they are located; these gases are harmful to people and animals living in the area. Factory farms can cause pockets of methane in areas where these farms are located; methane in the atmosphere of these areas tends to be twenty percent higher than normal. Ammonia, another harmful gas, is released by these farms, particularly by chicken farms. Humans exposed to excessive amounts of ammonia from chicken manure may experience eye irritation, dizziness, and nausea. Children having to grow up in areas with factory farms can develop health issues. According to Kate Good in her article "How Factory Farming Creates Air Pollution,"

"children raised in communities near factory farms are more likely to develop asthma or bronchitis" (2021b). Farms with smaller numbers of chickens or other livestock will not cause pockets of gas to form, thus allowing the gases to distribute evenly through the atmosphere.

Not only do things like methane and ammonia release into the air, but when farmers use manure as fertilizer, the nutrient can also be absorbed by groundwater or other sources of fresh water. Ammonia absorbed by the fresh water contaminates lakes or other forms of water sources, causing the water to become toxic to fish inhabiting them. Large swine farms store manure in large pits or lagoons that either overflow into rivers or burst and contaminate freshwater sources. With smaller numbers of animals on a single farm, there would be no need for these lagoons since animal feces would not build up. Pathogens harmful to humans can be spread to fresh water; these pathogens can be picked up if the water comes in contact with skin. Nutrients in fertilizer might not always be absorbed by the soil, causing it to be absorbed by water and thus contaminating drinking water.

According to an article at FoodPrint.org, "As many as one million Californians, for example, mostly living in the farming communities of the Central Valley, have dangerous levels of unregulated chemicals linked to cancer in their drinking water" ("How Industrial Agriculture Affects Our Water," 2018). This is caused by manure from livestock and the fertilizer on fields. Smaller farms produce less livestock feces, allowing the feces to degrade naturally.

Water and air are not the only natural resources being destroyed by factory farming, however; forests and homes for wildlife are cut down and replaced with factory farms. Clearing trees in the Amazon to make room for crops to be grown to feed livestock on large factory farms is the leading cause of deforestation. Not only does deforestation for crops

happen in the Amazon, but it happens in America also. Livestock on factory farms require enormous amounts of feed; therefore, forests must be cleared out to make room for crops to grow the feed. Forests help fight back against greenhouse gases; without the forests, the gases emitted by the livestock are even more harmful to the environment. Crops are not only used for livestock feed but also to help grow feed for the population's food as well. Farmers growing these crops harm the land by not giving it time to recover after harvest; they will repeat the process of growing crops repeatedly. Because smaller farms do not need as much feed for their livestock since there are fewer animals in one place, there is plenty of land for grazing. In areas where deforestation for crops has occurred, floods happen more often with no trees to help the ground retain water. Smaller farms can raise animals around the forest with no need for cutting down trees. Taylor Meek states that, "Every year around 1.2 million acres of land are cleared for soy production in tropical climates" (2021). Deforestation puts wildlife and plants native to areas in danger of dying or even going extinct. Wildlife living in the forests lose their homes, causing them to need to find somewhere else to live and pushing them into human communities. Plants growing in forests destroyed for factory farming die in some areas; these plants are often endangered because they have trouble growing in other parts of the world.

To keep the environment healthy, America needs to go back to an agricultural society in which families grow their own food. Before the late 1920s America's economy was fueled by agriculture: most families grew vegetables and raised livestock to feed themselves. If families in areas with land could easily grow vegetables and raise livestock on a small-scale, they could save money on food. Home-raised livestock produce better, higher quality meat with more flavor. Animals not being pushed to grow as fast can graze

off the land, eating naturally grown feed. Family farms give the land time to rest after letting animals graze and growing crops; giving the land time to rest decreases the chances of droughts and flooding. With more families producing their own food, the need for factory farms would decrease.

Higher quality food for the population starts with more families starting to produce their own food. Not only would this make higher quality food for the population but also a better environment for the country. Factory farms harm the environment by spreading harmful gases into the air, polluting freshwater sources, and playing a significant role in deforestation. With the help of families going back to agricultural roots, the environment and food produced would be of higher quality for consumers.

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Has Technology Made Life Better?

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Has Technology Made Life Better?

Technology and society have grown together for millions of years and, in turn, have built upon each other, one constantly impacting the other. Technology has become so ingrained into daily life that, like Bill Gates, a co-founder of Microsoft, once said, "The advance of technology is based on making it fit in so that you do not really even notice it, so it's part of everyday life" (*Top 10 Bill Gates quotes*, n.d.). This statement rings true to this day, and even though technology has become almost essential for the people of today, there remains an unanswered question: has it made life better or worse in the grand scheme of things? While there are points for both sides of the question, overall, technology has improved life's quality, quantity, and longevity.

The first aspect technology has improved is the quality of life. One example of how quality has been enhanced is the connectivity with the world and its people. In 2020 there were 4.699 billion internet users in the world, with that number increasing every year (Ritchie, et al., 2015). That means that there are 4.699 billion people in the world who have access to the internet, and of those 4.699 billion people, there were 2.375 billion monthly active users on social media (Ritchie, et al., 2015). That means that 2.375 billion monthly active users can connect anywhere and with anyone globally. Internet access is not just for social interaction, though; the world wide web granted to us by technology also allows for information to be shared in seconds, from small-scale local news to large-scale national headlines. This capability of sending information at blazing speeds improves the quality of life by making it so that speaking to people at a long distance across the globe is quick and easy, and so is gathering information relatively quickly.

This rapid sharing of information has also led to new advances in life-saving technology, improving the quantity of life. For instance, in 2021, 330 lives were saved thanks to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) polar-orbiting and geostationary satellites, which are part of a global network known as Cosmicheskaya Sistyema Poiska Avariynich Sudov-Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking (COSPAS-SARSAT) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2022). These satellites and organizations are credited with being a part of over 48,000 rescues worldwide since its start in 1982 (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2022). Using another example, simple advances in vehicle safety technology have saved thousands of lives ranging from just under 4,540 lives saved in 1980 to 27,621 lives saved in 2012 (Kahane, 2015). Within these small scopes, technology has consistently managed to save thousands of lives every year, and with advances in these fields of tech, it can save much more. By utilizing technology for safety, medical treatment, search-and-rescue, and much more, many people can be and have been saved. As the quality of life improves, so does its longevity.

Consequently, the longevity of life has been improved as technological advances continue. Such advances and the use of medical technology since 1980 have increased the life expectancy of the average U.S. citizen by five years (Advanced Medical Technology Association, 2015). The human life expectancy improvement has been due to several factors of which medical technology plays a huge part. Medical technology improves life's longevity by helping treat illness and injury as well as helping catch the signs of illness much earlier. By using technology for research, medical professionals can find a method of treating or curing an ailment at a much higher rate, as well as be capable of implementing a solution such as the mass production of a vaccine that prevents debilitating or even deadly diseases. In addition to treating an ailment, catching the early signs of it is just as important, if not more. Through the use of

technology like colonoscopy/sigmoidoscopy screening tests, 560,000 patients were able to prevent developing colorectal cancer (Advanced Medical Technology Saves Lives, 2015). The longevity of life can continue to extend far beyond what it is now as life-changing technology continues to be implemented and is used as a tool of the future.

Finally, it is equally essential to consider the other side of the argument. Technology has indeed harmed the quality of life by impeding the need, use, and maintenance of in-person social connections, leading to a social disconnect among some people. In addition, technology has negatively impacted the quality and longevity of life. Instead of saving and extending lives, technology has sometimes shortened them, such as when the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, claiming roughly 105,000 innocent lives (The Manhattan Engineer District, 1946). However, it was not technology that was responsible for these adverse events. Technology does not think; it does not feel; it does not have will or intent. Technology is a tool created by humans and used by them; thus, when used correctly, it can make life much better.

In conclusion, although technology can and has been used for a harmful purpose, when used for a better purpose, it can vastly change its impact on life. Technology has improved our quality of life through the power of the internet and social media. In addition, the quantity of life has been improved through different forms of technology, such as satellites and various vehicle safety technologies. Furthermore, through the proper use of technology, the longevity of life can be extended beyond our current limitations with the advancement of medical technologies. It is through these improvements in life that, overall, technology has made life better for all.

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Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

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Abstract

The legalization of recreational marijuana has been a controversial topic for decades. Opposers argue that if marijuana, or weed, becomes available for any person over 21 years of age, the US will be negatively affected. Avery (2022) states that currently, only 21 states have passed the law that allows consumers to use the drug in a recreational manner. I stand with the legalization of marijuana due to numerous studies showing how it benefits the economy of the United States. Furthermore, it is alarming how marijuana remains illegal in many states but legal drugs such as tobacco and alcoholic that can lead to death are still available for purchase. To top it off, marijuana has many health benefits that should be taken into consideration.

Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

The use of the drug marijuana, often referred to as weed or cannabis, has been a popular hobby that began in the 1900s. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2021) defines marijuana as a "greenish-gray mixture of the dried flowers of *Cannabis sativa*" that can be consumed in different ways, depending on the user's liking. Although it is a natural drug that rarely leads to overdose, it is considered illegal under federal law. Furthermore, recreational use is prohibited in many states because of the alleged negative impact it has on a person's health and on society as a whole (Wilkinson, 2013). However, many official studies have shown the opposite.

There are numerous reasons why I am in favor of legalizing the recreational use of marijuana. Even though legalizing it may encourage young adults to buy, they are currently illegally purchasing and/or selling this extremely prevalent drug, which in turn increases the crime rate. If opponents are worried about people using the drug in inappropriate locations, such as a jobsite, certain laws exist that prevent this from happening. If recreational use continues to stay illegal in most states, the number of marijuana-related arrests will continue to increase. Also, selling such product in a legal manner is beneficial to the economy of the United States. Lastly, having access to marijuana without the requirement to have a medical card would make purchase an easier process for anyone who is denied a card.

As of 2022, only 21 states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana (Avery, 2022). Some of these states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, and Maine. Avery (2022) states that 37 states allow medical use. If a person possesses, purchases, and/or uses weed—another term for marijuana—in a state where it is illegal (Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Wyoming, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, North and South Carolina) or

where the use is limited to a medical reason, they will be arrested (*Where Cannabis*, 2022).
Because recreational use is illegal in more than half of the US, people often purchase the product
through illegal drug dealers or "plugs." The location where the dealer is met can be exceedingly
dangerous, and fights can break out because the interaction requires an exchange of money for
product. Even though legal recreational weed may increase the purchase of the drug, it will be
done safely through legal cannabis dispensaries. Consequently, it will lower crimes affiliated
with the illegal sale of marijuana.

Although I have strong opinions about legalizing recreational use, I agree there should be
restrictions when being on a jobsite, while driving, and on how much product one can possess.
Marijuana is proven to relax the nervous system, which in return slows down reaction time
(Watkins, 2022). For this reason, I firmly believe consumers should not perform demanding
activities while under the influence of marijuana and that the existing laws against such action
should be respected. In fact, one can get a DUI—driving under the influence of drugs and/or
alcohol—if they are operating a vehicle while having marijuana in their system (McCurley,
2022). Most companies prohibit marijuana use on the jobsite and provide random drug tests to
ensure their workers are fit for the job (*Marijuana on the Jobsite*, 2022). With that being said,
opponents of recreational marijuana should not worry whether a doctor is going to be under the
influence of the drug while performing a surgery or whether a kindergarten teacher will show up
to class high. Laws will stay in place to ensure these situations do not happen.

Those who oppose the recreational use of this common drug argue that it will encourage
more people, especially young adults, to consume marijuana, causing them to become addicted.
Even though they have some truth in their arguments since marijuana contains
tetrahydrocannabinol, an addictive chemical that gives off the feeling of being high, any other

legal drug, such as tobacco or even alcohol, is addictive as well (Harris, 2020). The difference

between weed and other drugs is that weed has medicinal properties as it is used to improve the

health of an individual. BBC News (2014) claims that the 44th President of the United States,

Barack Obama, stated, "I don't think [marijuana] is more dangerous than alcohol," referring to

marijuana. His statement, along with the 140,000 reported deaths every year due to excessive

drinking, further proves the absurdity of maintaining recreational marijuana use illegal while

alcoholic beverages can easily be purchased (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

Another reason why I favor the legalization of recreational use of marijuana is because it

improves the economy of the US. The number of marijuana consumers increases per year. For

example, Julia (2022) claims that there were about 47 million consumers in the year 2020. Now,

in 2022, this number has gone up to 52 million (Julia, 2022). I believe this number will only

continue to increase, which will positively affect the economy if recreational use becomes legal

in all states. Marijuana is taxable, meaning anyone who decides to sell the product has to pay a

tax due to the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 (Blake, 2021). Although some may be against taxation,

the money gathered will go back to the communities. Ekins and Bishop-Henchman (2016) state,

"Business income from marijuana production would initially raise almost $5.5 billion in federal

revenues and an additional $1.5 billion in state and local revenues," meaning that the economy

will be benefited. Not only does marijuana production positively affect tax revenue, but it also

provides more jobs for people (Krishna, 2022). Because marijuana is a plant, people could work

on farms, growing and cultivating the drug; also, dispensaries would need to hire people to

manage the sale.

When taking a look at the number of arrests due to marijuana in the United States, I was

surprised by how high the percentage was compared to other illegal drugs. According to the

American Civil Liberties Union, the percentage was 52% (*Marijuana Arrests by the Numbers*, n.d.). That is more than half of the drug arrests in America. How is it possible to have a higher percentage when other drugs, such as cocaine or meth, are extremely dangerous and can even lead to death? If more states legalized recreational use, fewer arrests would occur, which would decrease the number of state prison inmates for marijuana possession, now at 8,400 (Robinson, 2005).

Besides lowering the number of inmates, legalizing recreational use allows people to obtain marijuana without having a medical card. The difference between recreational use and medical use of marijuana is that medical marijuana is purchased with a card that is provided by a doctor for numerous health and mental problems including ADHD, arthritis, chronic pain, seizures, PTSD, and more (WayofLeaf, 2020). Receiving a medical marijuana card requires the user to go through a series of steps in order to obtain it. Not only is it a tedious process that varies from state to state, but it is only legal in 37 states (Avery, 2022). By making it legal to purchase weed without a card, people would not have to go through the trouble of setting up a doctor's appointment, maybe faking a disease, waiting weeks to get their product, and risking the denial of the card. Marijuana Doctors (*What Can Prevent You*, 2018) explain that a medical card can be denied if the user does not provide the correct information that is being asked or if the medical condition is not approved. Additionally, people who suffer from social anxiety would be afraid of judgment from the doctor and/or peers and could not easily get the drugs they need.

Concrete evidence supports the controversial opinion that legalization of recreational marijuana is beneficial to the lifestyle of people in the US. If recreational marijuana remains illegal in most states, consumers can be exposed to dangerous situations when purchasing the product, crime rates will increase, the economy of the US will not benefit from taxable weed, and

some individuals will risk the denial of their medical marijuana card. Recreational use will not

have many negative impacts that have been mentioned by opposers. I believe future evidence will

continue to support my arguments in favor of legal recreational marijuana.

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The Proper Development of a Gifted Child

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The Proper Development of a Gifted Child

Over the last 150 years, educational practices have been tailored to cater to the specific needs of gifted children, but the question that arises quite often is whether children are born gifted or they are nurtured into being considered gifted. Lewis Terman's longitudinal study of gifted children began in 1921, with 1,528 gifted children on whom massive data were accumulated in one of the most extensive longitudinal studies in psychology and education (Terman, 1922, as cited in Wechsler, 2012). By what standards do we qualify children to be gifted when there is no true meaning of gifted? An American definition of giftedness was offered by Witty (1959), who writes, "Perhaps it is desirable to broaden our definition of the gifted and to consider as 'gifted' any child whose performance, in a valuable line of human activity, is consistently and repeatedly remarkable" (p. 10). A child can be born with exceptional ability and identify that ability, but if the child does not have the drive to chase that ability, they will never perfect the skill to be considered a gifted child.

One might stand on the belief that all children are born gifted, but one might question how this is measured at birth. The earliest testing of the IQ using Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), for ages 2 years 6 months to 7 years 3 months, can be used to identify intellectually gifted preschoolers, but parents and teachers should be reminded that IQ testing of preschoolers can be extremely unreliable and easily underestimate their abilities, particularly if they are shy, perfectionistic, or extremely active. This scale of testing intelligence does not prove that children are born gifted because there is no valid testing available from birth. In addition, the IQ test provides index scores for verbal comprehension, perceptional reasoning, working memory, and processing speed, providing excellent measures of intelligence of children who usually thrive in gifted programs (Froiland and Davison, 2020). Burns, et al. (1990) describe

a three-step solution to the challenge of identifying intellectually gifted preschoolers in Louisiana, a state that offers publicly funded preschool programs for gifted children. Even though an IQ test can be given at 2 years and six months, there is no true way to test a child from birth.

Even when a child is born with natural talent, development of the talent is necessary. Without proper devotion to the development of the birth-given gift, the said gift will never evolve. According to Da Costa, et al. (2014), Binet and Simon laid out ten processes they felt were important to include in a measure of intelligent behavior: memory, mental imagery, imagination, attention, understanding, suggestibility, aesthetic feelings, moral sentiments, muscle strength, and motor and visual skills. Several of these processes, including imagination and aesthetic feelings, may be surprising to readers who associate intelligence testing with a unitary and strictly cognitive measure. The child must have a continuous drive and devout devotion to the development of the gift. If the said gift was to fall in a musical ability, the devotion to practice would increase memorization, muscle memory, muscle strength, muscle, and visual skills. Without devotion to practice, study, and develop the skill, the gift will not truly develop.

Despite noted interindividual variation in behavioral, affective, and cognitive patterns (Hodge and Kemp, 2000), there is a cluster of characteristics commonly cited in descriptions of young children who go on to be identified as gifted. Under-identification, cultural bias, and poverty levels can interfere in children's becoming truly labeled as gifted. Children who do not have the means to support their talents do not get to practice to the same degree as those whose parents can pay for private lessons. Children whose parents do not play a big part in their childhood may go under-identified and not develop their giftedness. Children may not be culturally allowed to pursue their gifted talents or be accepted in the talent that they have shown

special ability in. These children suffer from cultural bias when it comes to being labeled as gifted.

A child born with a gift may be better in the said gift even without devotion and determination; however, without the drive, the true magnitude of the gift may never be recognized. Parental involvement is necessary for proper development. The child must have the means to obtain needed mentors and guidance. In conclusion, there is no proof through testing that a child is truly born gifted, but the talent of giftedness is enhanced through devout devotion and the diligence to enhance the skill.

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Teaching of Student Mental Health

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Teaching of Student Mental Health

A survey from "Poor Mental Health" states that "about three in ten high school students said they experienced poor mental health most or all of the time" (Shaeffer, 2022). Today almost all students report that they suffer from some sort of depression or anxiety. Many college students have said they struggle with depression and anxiety, and a study in 2021-22 showed that "44% of students reported symptoms of depression and 15 percent reported seriously considering suicide in the past year" (Bowe, 2023). Many in today's society struggle with mental health, and poor mental health can take a heavy toll on a student's school and personal life. Although teaching about student mental health is not something that is often done in the classroom, there should be greater emphasis on it because it can improve academic performance, make students feel more secure in the learning environment, and help students feel more confident about being more open to an adult.

When talking about student mental health, it is important to keep in mind that not all students deal with it, but most do. Teaching mental health in the classroom can be a leading factor to the outcome of grades. Students can have a hard time trying to focus on class, let alone do their work, because of what is going on inside of their heads. These issues can potentially lead to academic failure. A study from the Skills of Life program in Chile reports that "results showed that mental health was a significant predictor of future academic performance" (Murphy, et al., 2015). When students are having a harder time because of issues they have going on, it can lead to many bumps in the future, such as lower performance in their later years of school or even having their failure reflect badly on the school district. Another survey that was taken by a Boston University mental health researcher states that "83% of students said their mental health had negatively impacted their academic performance … two-thirds of college students are

struggling with loneliness and feeling isolated" (McAlpine, 2021). It is important to notice that students are saying that their mental health is affecting their academic performance. When students recognize that their mental states are affecting them, school personnel have the perfect opportunity to show that they care. Showing that the school district can realize that the health of their students is important to them can lead to a better outcome in the future.

Equally important, mental health not only impacts the students in school, but it also affects their everyday lives. There are many aspects of a student's life that are important for their wellbeing. If these areas are not treated properly or are affected by the student's mental health, it can lead to the student having a harder time succeeding: "Often, poor mental health leads to problems such as social isolation … This can have particularly harmful effects on children and adolescents whose development depends on forming bonds with their family members and peers" (School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, 2021). Most of the time, mental health stems from some sort of trauma that has been present in the past. When this happens, it carries over into students' social lives and how they communicate with others and present themselves. An article from the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* states that "passive and active interactions with nature reduce stress, anxiety, and depression" (Trevino, et al., 2022). Being able to go out in public and do things that bring students peace can help them when dealing with their mental health. Most of the time, mental health suffers when students are cooped up in their room, alone, playing video games or on social media. These happenings are more common in this society because that is all children or teenagers know. When being influenced by things such as social media, a child can fall into a deeper, harsher, mental state.

Lastly, teaching student mental health makes students feel more comfortable when talking about their feelings. More knowledge of mental health helps students feel more

comfortable talking about how they feel. A study has shown that "65% of teens say they feel comfortable talking about their mental health with those closest to them, and 63% say they are comfortable talking with their parents or guardians, specifically, about their mental health" (*Teens comfortable talking about mental health*, 2022). When students know that their school cares for their mental health, the students feel better about themselves and have hope that they can have someone to talk to. Many parents are not willing to listen to their child's problems, mostly because they have their own. With school being an escape from family problems, students can feel more themselves there. Having peers or teachers who are willing to learn about new things and genuinely care for a student can lead to great relationships and can build a lot of trust. Building relationships will make it easier for students to open up and be honest about how they feel.

However, many believe that mental health is an inappropriate topic for discussion and that it should not be taught in school. People have concluded that school is not the place to be seeking treatment for mental health. Many believe school should be a place of learning academically, not emotionally and physically. With this being true, these people need to consider that school should be a safe place for students, letting them feel more comfortable. There are many people who also believe that mental health should be treated in personal time, meaning students should go to the doctor for it. Students should have a choice whether they want to learn about mental health, and if they do, they can go seek a professional.

The teaching of student mental health, to some, is not appropriate for the school setting, but when the teaching is present, it can lead to great success for students, give them the motivation they need, and make them feel important when at school. Therefore, teaching mental health is something that should be considered so that that students feel more confident and open

at school. Helping students get through their problems, especially with someone who believes in them and cares for their wellbeing, can lead to many different outcomes. It just depends on whether people want to take it to that extent for the safety of their children. The ones who do not believe mental health should be taught are usually the ones who do not believe that their child is suffering, and that can leave a dreadful impact on students' home lives and personal lives. The ones who would like it to be taught in school show great appreciation, knowing that if students have poor mental health, they can better themselves and get the help they need. Even if schools do not decide to teach about mental health, it is still something that should be taught somewhere in hopes of the future of the students.

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A Tiger Cannot be Purchased at Petco for a Reason

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Abstract

There has been a rise in the ownership of exotic animals that has greatly affected the ecosystems of countries all over the world. Debates have sparked on whether or not it is okay to own a foreign species. Some people's desire to own exotic animals has become a reality, and the reality is dangerous. The issue at hand is bigger than the feelings of citizens or the ownership of house pets. Our ecosystems are threatened by the possibility of exotic animals roaming loose and becoming invasive species. Our neighborhoods are threatened by the chance of dangerous exotic pets escaping. Our future generations will be forced to deal with the long-term effects of exotic animals on our lands and resources. The risks of owning exotic pets far outweigh the reward of possessing a dangerous animal.

A Tiger Cannot be Purchased at Petco for a Reason

A glamorous lifestyle has an appeal to many humans, and glamor often results in the desire for outrageous possessions. Some people desire enormous mansions or five-hundred-thousand-dollar cars. Others fantasize about luxury destination vacations, but some people want to own tigers. Many people see the ownership of exotic pets as something that is not an issue. Those who are okay with the ownership of exotic animals do not see the harm that can be caused whenever people possess foreign species. It is understandable to fall into the fantasy of owning a big cat or venomous snake, but the risk greatly outweighs the reward.

Exotic Animals Are a Danger to Humans

Many who support the ownership of exotic animals feel like there is no danger in owning exotic pets and argue that people should have the right to own whatever pet they desire. Mark Klaus, a farmer from Chancellor, South Dakota, champions this cause. Klaus (2010) claims, "I believe all of us in animal agriculture can agree that people should have the right to own whichever type of pet they choose, as long as they have the proper education or experience in the care of those animals." It is true that animals are not inherently dangerous just because they are exotic, but most exotic species can pose a threat to humans. Most people simply do not possess the proper knowledge to care for exotic pets. Amy Marquis (2010), writer for *National Parks*, shares the belief that most people do not have the proper knowledge to safely own exotic pets. She reports on how the lack of knowledge when owning Burmese pythons negatively impacts the Florida Everglades. Marquis expresses the belief that "pet owners aren't equipped to handle a python's rapid growth spurt—20-inch babies can grow up to 12 feet and weigh almost 200 pounds by age two—so many people release the snakes into the wild." Burmese pythons have

been known to prey on humans, so having these non-native predators roaming around is not ideal.

Exotic Animals Are a Danger to Native Species

Exotic pets that escape do not just pose a threat to humans, but they also pose a threat to the environment. Exotic pets that escape often become invasive species. Invasive species are exotic species that have been intentionally or unintentionally introduced to a foreign land. They thrive in their new environment and often end up outcompeting the local species (Mcgrath, 2021). There are some who argue that invasive species are not necessarily a bad thing for the ecosystem. Dana Gattuso (2008) is a writer for the National Center for Public Policy Research, a conservative think tank, and believes that invasive species get a bad reputation. Gattuso expresses the belief that "some scientists believe non-natives enhance diversity." The argument that invasive species enhance biodiversity may be true, but the effects on ecosystems after invasive species is clear. Invasive species prove to be devastating to ecosystems more often than not. Marquis (2010) gives insight on how the Burmese python is forever changing the Florida Everglades, and it is not for the better. Marquis states, "An exotic pet-gone-wild, the Burmese python may be responsible for altering Florida's best places in big ways." Marquis then goes on to tell how the invasive-exotic animal has been destroying the natural habitat and causing general mayhem for the Everglades. She gives examples of the many animals that have fallen victim to the Burmese python, and one of them is incredibly shocking. Marquis claims that some snakes have even been killing the American alligators that inhabit the park. This is concerning to humans because alligators are the apex-predator in the southern part of Florida. The introduction of another non-native apex predator is something that often results in the annihilation of native species.

Captivity with Good Intentions Is Still Captivity

Aside from their potential to harm humans or native species, exotic pets often do not live good lives in captivity. There are some that argue exotic animals live better lives in captivity than in the wild, but that just is not true. Tigers are one of the most notorious exotic pets, and some people strive to own one of these big cats. Those who decide to keep one of the exotic creatures as a pet often give them grotesque excuses of enclosures. The enclosures are far too small for tigers to receive any play or exercise. Male tigers can range up to forty miles a day, and females can range eight miles a day on average ("Tigers," 2018). Is it fair to these animals to have to downsize their homes so that humans can receive pleasure from the knowledge they own a big cat?

Most Exotic Pets Are Endangered

The exotic animal trade has led to new problems for endangered species. Endangered species are categorized as flora or fauna that are under the threat of going extinct ("Endangered Species," 2011). Many who partake in the trade of exotic animals are moving critically endangered species from their native habitats. Ezra Cheung (2022), writer for the *South China Morning Post*, reports on some of the exotic animal trade going on in Hong Kong. Cheung states, "We found that over half of the exotic animals . . . imported over the last five years were from threatened species, meaning that these animals are facing the threat of extinction in the wild." Endangered wild animals will not be able to procreate if their specimens are being ripped from their natural habitats at a rapid rate.

The Idea is Nice, but the Reality Is Not

Most people have indulged in the idea of owning their own exotic pet at one point or another. While it is okay to dream about this, the reality of owning an exotic pet is a hard pill to

swallow. Humans often cannot properly take care of the exotic pets we seek. We import animals that often pose threats to humans and our native ecosystems. Most of the animals we want to own are critically endangered and should not be taken out of their natural habitats. Those who support the ownership of exotic animals often look past these facts so they can live out their fantasies.

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When Love Takes a Child In

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When Love Takes a Child In

The emotional stability that a family forms helps develop children's characters and sets them up for the world that is ahead of them. Many children find themselves sleeping in places that they cannot truly call home, whether it be in an orphanage, a foster home, or no home at all. The United States finds itself struggling with a broken system of adoption that causes pain for thousands of children. Adolescents are put into uncomfortable living situations where their caretakers have no emotional connection with them or use them for self-gain. A solution to the corrupt adoption system relies on the psychological evaluation of both parties involved, revaluation of the economic structure, and introducing an emotional grace period during the adoption process.

Before allowing adolescents to move in with their new family members, foster homes and other organizations holding adoptable children should require a psychological evaluation and a variety of other tests/evaluations of both parties. When placing potential matches together, agencies rely on a set process that excludes the mental state of the child and possible parent(s). Children come from a variety of backgrounds, some being very violent or neglectful, that could affect how they interact with their new caretaker(s). Additionally, agencies do not investigate adopters' medical history. Information obtained is as simple as a background check, a few interviews, and local authority reports to assure prospective adopters can proceed with the adoption process (Griffith & Tengnah, 2011). Prospective adopters appear suitable based on these guidelines and appearance alone. Personal past, mental health, and a variety of personal issues go unchecked by agencies and can cause issues in the future. Answers during interviews can be twisted and created on the spot to please the interviewer and make the candidate appear

worthy. Psychological evaluations could prevent unstable environments that could go unnoticed when following the original federal guidelines of adoption.

The children being considered for adoption may also have mental or emotional problems: "Emotional disturbances are frequently noted in neglected children raised in institutions or those removed from their families and placed in foster care" (Quevedo, et al., 2015). Adolescents come from a plethora of backgrounds and places. The things they have experienced could have caused psychological issues that could disrupt the development of emotions and coping mechanisms. While agencies do provide classes and information to potential adopters, they cannot prepare adopters for issues that may arise from the child's unknown past. Likewise, children sometimes wait years to be adopted, and during these times, they can become emotionally unconnected. By evaluating both parties, the adoption process has a higher possibility of succeeding.

The financial aspect of the adoption system dissuades prospective adopters due to the high fees from agencies and the opportunity to profit from fostering children. There are a variety of ways to start the adoption process such as contacting local agencies or voluntary agencies. The price of adoption through agencies can vary from $5,000-$40,000 depending on the professionalism of the agency and how thorough they are with matching families together (Heesch, 2019). People who are not as financially secure are unable to adopt because they cannot afford the prices presented by the agencies (Rochat and Mitchell, 2015). While the adopters may be able to have a stable way of living, the large sum of money being paid to these agencies may not be realistic. Additionally, to the cost of the original process of adoption, some states have secondary rates and fees as the process moves forward (Argys and Duncan, 2013, p. 938). A considerable number of adopters may be able to pay the original fees, but for many, these high fees can become a detriment to the progression of the adoption. Adjusting the sum will allow for

adoption rates to increase because the opportunity is more affordable with lower rates. However, the government provides payments to foster care parents but not to adoptive parents. People with foster children opt out of adopting because they will no longer receive government compensation, and the ability to care for the children will thus become unachievable. Furthermore, higher authorities issue generous amounts of money to providers of the child welfare system (Argys and Duncan, 2013, p. 935). Money brings out a dark side of people that can potentially exploit a child for financial gain. By taking away the advantage of money within the fostering side of the process and providing it to both sides, families would be more likely to adopt and get the child out of foster care.

Without an emotional connection between both parties before the association procedure, the environment can become tense and uncomfortable. Instead of feeling like a family, a child would not feel accustomed to their surroundings and the people around them, similar to a new roommate. Often after the matching, the child will move into the prospective adopter's house without being legally adopted yet. While gaining parental responsibilities under the law, the potential parent(s) have the same rights as the biological parents and the agency. After ten weeks, an adoption order may be placed, and the child can become part of the family and legally take the family's surname (Griffith and Tengnah, 2011). Children are forced into an unfamiliar place with unknown people. There is a possibility that the adopter and the child may not get along or the child may feel unsafe because they had not previously connected. By allowing time for the new match to familiarize themselves with each other through visits to the child's residence, both parties can slowly become more comfortable and gradually adjust to their new living situation. Many adolescents come from neglectful and unsafe places and require a loving family to help them cope through their struggles. As children develop, the need for compassion

and a sense of belonging grows. Overall, the issue of immediate pressure to conform to a new lifestyle should be reduced significantly by creating an orientation to allow both sides to become familiar with each other and gain an emotional connection.

Hundreds of children are adopted throughout the year, but thousands remain within the foster care system with what seems like no hope. New federal guidelines for the adoption system need to be put in place to allow for the rate of children being adopted to increase. The utilization of a psychological evaluation before the matching of families can ensure loving homes. Decreasing the fees of the adoption process will allow for a substantial increase in the number of children finding homes. Providing funding to both foster care families and adopting families will make adoption more appealing to families who originally are not eligible due to cost. Prior meetings will create a relationship that will allow for a smooth transition to the family's new life and enable more successful adoptions so that fewer children return to the foster care system. When love takes a child in, it nurtures, provides, develops, and teaches a child amazing things, but the current adoption process is detrimental to their development. The adoption system needs to be changed for the sake of the children.

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The World of Immigration

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The World of Immigration

What idea comes to mind when the word *immigration* comes up in a conversation? Generally, one might believe it only consists of one single definition or kind. However, this concept consists of many terms that often cause confusion among people. These terms include *immigration*, *emigration*, *refugees*, *asylum seekers*, and *migrant workers*. Each one of these words has a different meaning. As a matter of fact, most of the public do not know the difference between these terms, and while one might be stuck with one's own definition of immigration, the importance of differentiating these distinct terms can be crucial to fully understand this concept.

Different Types of Immigration

Immigration, being the main confusing term, consists of the "act of moving from one's home country to another nation with the intention of settling there permanently" (Immigration, 2021). Immigrants have the possibility to become naturalized citizens of their new country or stay to become a permanent resident. In both cases, immigrants have the right to live and work in their new countries.

Emigration consists of the act of moving to another country for a temporary amount of time for either work, school, or a nice vacation spot. These people include tourists, foreign students, and temporary visitors, and the government does not consider these emigrants to be immigrants.

Refugees consist of "people forced to leave their country by persecution, war, natural disaster, or some other crisis" (Refugees, 2021). Refugees are people who have a risk of being persecuted or threatened with being in danger if they do not rapidly seek safety. In addition, one might confuse the term *refugee* with *asylum seeker*; however, the

main difference between these two terms is that *refugee* refers to people receiving

granted status before emigrating from their possibly dangerous native country to the safe

country, whereas asylum seekers seek status once they arrive in their new country. However,

both refugees and asylum seekers need to prove immediate danger exists if they were to

remain in their home country, and they do not have permission to leave their safe countries

until the danger has passed, or their native countries become safer to live in once again.

Migrant workers consist of "people who move from place to place for work"

(Migrant Workers, 2020). Most workers do not have the intention of permanently staying in

the countries of their workplace. Some migrant workers may migrate to various parts of their

own country or migrate to different countries in hopes of a better job or pay. Those who

decide to work outside of their native countries become referred to as foreign, migrant, or

guest workers. Migrant workers have many varied reasons as to why they decide to migrate

for work.

Causes and Effects of Immigration

Immigrants migrate to new countries for many varied reasons. One of the most

known reasons why immigrants may migrate consists of the hope of a better life for either

themselves or for their families. Most immigrants come because they are "attracted by the

country's entrepreneurial culture or to pursue high-paying jobs" (Immigration, 2021).

However, to immigrate to a new country legally, one must apply for a visa at a United States

consulate or embassy. This process consists of "an interview, a criminal background check,

a review of financial information, and a medical examination" (Immigration, 2021).

Aspiring applicants must also obtain a sponsorship from either a United States citizen or a

lawful permanent resident. Unfortunately, the fact that large numbers of immigrants have

decided to leave their origin countries "has led to a condition informally called 'brain drain' where origin countries lose talented, educated, and skilled citizens" that later affects the population of the origin country (Immigration, 2021).

Others immigrate to the United States to "work at low-paying jobs in the hope that their children can access educational and career opportunities [not] available" in their country of origin (Immigration, 2021). Children will no longer have to follow in their parents' footsteps. Since the children of these immigrants would have access to schools in the United States, they would now have an opportunity to obtain a better life than they would have had in their parents' origin countries. Because of these educational opportunities, many children will have careers and various job opportunities to help them succeed in life, and these children will now be able to help support their families. However, the pressure to become successful and overcome challenges as a first-generation student can severely affect the child's mental health. Because of the struggles the child's parents went through, the child will have pressure to contribute to their family, thus perceiving themselves as a burden towards their family if they do not contribute enough.

Reuniting with Family Members

Many others immigrate to reunite with family members who have migrated before them. Reuniting with family members creates a crucial need for the development as a family. Children need both a mother as well as a father figure to help them throughout their lives. Having the presence of both parents, children will thrive within their new communities and become the future citizens of their new countries. According to Silva and Van Orden (2018), "a close relationship with family, parental and familial connectedness and bonding, and positive relationships with parents have been identified as protective factors for

suicidality among Hispanics." To immigrate to the United States, many families in Mexico use the chain migration method to bring their families across the border. This method consists of a male worker entering the United States, either legally or illegally, who obtains a paid position while working to obtain his legal residency and sends money back home to help support his family. Once he obtains his residency, "he can then legally apply to bring a spouse and children to the United States" and help his family become residents (Immigration, 2021).

Undocumented Immigrants

Unfortunately, many immigrants do not have the opportunity to immigrate to the United States as legal residents. Many immigrants arrive to the United States without any legal paperwork; therefore, these immigrants become labeled as undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants immigrate for the same reasons as legal immigrants. Both groups of immigrants want better jobs and lives for themselves or for their families. As a matter of fact, many immigrants arrive in the United States legally with a visa, granting immigrants permission to temporarily live in their new country, but if they overstay the length of time of their visas, in the eyes of the law, they break the law. Some migrant workers who work in the United States also become labeled as undocumented immigrants unless they obtain legal permission to work inside of the United States.

Many immigrants leave everything behind in hopes of a better future for themselves and for their children. The immigration laws of the United States often crush the dreams of these immigrants who do not want anything else in life but to live in a safe country with opportunities for either themselves or their children. Immigrants who desire

opportunities for themselves or for their children struggle to overcome these harsh

immigration laws.

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ENGL 1023-010

10 February 2023

<center>Chasing Perfection</center>

The story "The Birth-Mark," by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is about a scientist, Aylmer, who marries a woman, Georgiana, who has a hand-shaped birthmark on her left cheek. This birthmark plays a detrimental role in the story and leads the characters to an ultimately sad and unforgiving ending. This story uses the birthmark as a representation of the ways in which humans are seldom satisfied with anything less than perfection and shows the effects a pursuit of perfection can have on them in relationships. This is shown in the way Aylmer grows more critical of the mark and constantly highlights that Georgiana is so close to being perfect, but her birthmark is what prevents her from being such; it is also shown in the way Georgiana's feelings towards her birthmark slowly deteriorate and become hateful until she finally succumbs to her husband's desire to get it removed.

The narrator offers no description of Aylmer and Georgiana's relationship until right after they get married, which is when the trouble surrounding the birthmark begins. Aylmer asks if Georgiana has ever thought of removing her birthmark, and she replies that it has been called a charm, so she sees it as such. Aylmer then tells her that it could never be a charm on her face, and it prevents her from achieving perfection. He states, "...you came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature, that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection" (Hawthorne 367). He himself uses the term "earthly imperfection," implying that imperfection is a part of nature, yet

he holds a disapproving stance to her imperfection and makes her aware of this to the point she bursts into tears. Aylmer is already admitting that she is perfect in every aspect except her birthmark, but her birthmark shocks him to the extent that, in his eyes, her beauty is clouded by it. Her one simple imperfection is what keeps him from fully loving her, as she mentions he cannot love what shocks him. This can easily be correlated with human nature's desire to chase perfection for satisfaction.

Aylmer's comments and actions regarding Georgiana's birthmark as the story unfolds display his intolerance for her imperfection, and this causes Georgiana to see her birthmark as more of a burden than a charm. The way she grows increasingly insecure over his looking at her face demonstrates how she no longer feels good enough for Aylmer due to his hatred for her birthmark. Aylmer's described fear of her birthmark is much more than his thinking it is unattractive; he goes as far as to label it his wife's "liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death" (Hawthorne 368), causing him to be distraught by the thought of her mark. He grows increasingly obsessive and disturbed by the sight of it, causing Georgiana's feelings towards herself and her birthmark to become more resentful, and she learns to shudder at her husband's gaze (368). Her face's natural rosiness fades to a deathly paleness at the instant of his staring at her cheek, and this progresses to the point of her suggesting that the mark be removed. Her suggestion of this results in Aylmer being the most pleasant he has been since the beginning of the story.

The deep effect of this on Georgiana is clearly shown when she states, "Danger is nothing to me; for life, while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust—life is a burden which I would fling down with joy. Either remove this dreadful hand, or take my wretched life!" (369). Her husband has pushed her to the point of wanting death rather than to

stay looking how she does because it burdens him. His dissatisfaction with her one imperfection has taken full control of her mental state and how she values herself and her life. Her birthmark is her reminder that she will never be good enough for Aylmer, and it is his reminder that she is never going to be his version of perfect. This story shows the lengths people will go to chase perfection, whether it is for themselves or to get perfection out of someone else. Aylmer drives himself mad, berates and risks poisoning his wife, and ends up losing everything to make Georgiana fit his idea of perfection. Georgiana loses all her internal value, no longer seeing the purpose of living, and accepts death in order to be considered perfect by her husband.

This story's use of the birthmark is a daunting symbolization of the unhealthy effects of constantly seeking perfection. The story unravels its representation through the actions and thoughts of Aylmer as his fear-driven obsession with Georgiana's birthmark grows, and it demonstrates the harmful effects of needing perfection from within through the downfall of Georgiana's internal value and self-image. This demonstrates why people should not chase perfection in themselves or others; it is an unrealistic expectation that many people succumb to and let rule their decisions in life. It shows how difficult life can become with constant comparison of what could be.

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ENGL 1023

7 October 2022

Genre and Rhetorical Analysis: "Sonny's Blues"

James Baldwin was an African American writer who brought up intriguing and

fundamental questions about psychological dilemmas and complex social issues, usually

touching on race, sexuality, or societal roles. In "Sonny's Blues," Baldwin establishes that the

correct form of escapism is necessary to be allowed to live, not just survive, in the poor

circumstances that one is born into. To establish this main claim, Baldwin introduces a struggling

but inspired character and a protagonist who fails to understand and connect with his struggling

brother. Baldwin then utilizes purposeful story structure to characterize the characters, as well as

contrasting ideas that develop throughout the story. The utilization of these methods throughout

the story develops the idea of how life can only be lived by pushing through suffering by turning

to positive outlets instead of ignoring the cause of suffering through intoxicating forms of

escapism.

Baldwin begins the story with a chaotic and messy introduction. The unnamed narrator is

sent reeling through his day, looking at the newspaper where he constantly "read it, and couldn't

believe it," and "perhaps [he] just stared at it" and felt constant reminders of "it" on the "faces

and bodies of people, and in [his] own face" (659). The reason for the protagonist's

disorientating denial is revealed in the next paragraph, which explains "[he] couldn't doubt it"

anymore, and that he was "scared, scared for Sonny" (659). These opening paragraphs are

purposefully chaotic and messy, placing the reader in a similar anxious and confused state as the

protagonist. By purposefully delaying the explanation of the object of panic, Baldwin is

mirroring the protagonist's escapist habits to avoid looking at his problems directly, but instead

to try and either deny their reality or dance around the issue standing in front of him.

This habit of avoidance is more apparent later in the story. After first reading the news in

the paper, the protagonist never writes to his brother, Sonny, to check on him. Only after "a long

time . . . just after" his daughter died does he write (663). The letter that Sonny sends back makes

the protagonist "[feel] like a bastard" for not writing sooner, as it is evident in the reply that

Sonny has been suffering alone, describing himself as "trying to climb up out of some deep, real

deep and funky hole" (663). The protagonist's silence in the time skipped is purposefully

portrayed as a further cause of suffering for Sonny and highlights the protagonist's guilt for

remaining silent for so long. The protagonist decides to write only after he has suffered a great

loss himself, leading him to realize the importance of familial bonds to help heal from a harsh

situation, which helps begin the protagonist's and Sonny's journey to reconcile their brotherly

bond. Baldwin is placing these characters in situations of despair and suffering to argue how

turning to positive outlets such as family members will help the healing process in moving on

from hardships. It is demonstrated how turning to drugs to deal with problems or trying to ignore

important issues is self-destructive behavior that damages one's personal well-being or that of

loved ones around one, illustrated by Sonny and the protagonist respectively.

Baldwin introduces these two characters who are in a hole of despair and sets them on a

path of healing, where they attempt to understand each other and mend their familial bond. This

is illustrated by the story's evolving and contrasting word choice, where Baldwin uses menacing

imagery and repetitive symbolism of silence to mirror the struggles that both characters go

through at the beginning of the story. The narrator recalls a conversation with his mother after

his father's death, and this conversation reveals intentional parallels between the father and the narrator. The mother reveals that the narrator's father "once had a brother," to the surprise of the narrator who has never heard of him before (667). The mother describes the narrator's uncle as a man who "just liked to perform Saturday nights" with his guitar and "go to dances and things like that" before he died (667). The uncle's hobby of performing musically is meant to create a connection between the uncle and Sonny, and the father's silence about having a brother is meant to reflect the same silence that the narrator is so habituated to do. This connection between two distinct generations is meant to be a warning for the possible trauma that may follow the protagonist if he continues on his father's path of silence. Baldwin illustrates the further negative impact of silence and not coping with a loss directly by elaborating on the cycle of suffering that follows the family as they birth newer generations and showing how disastrous it can be to not properly face these struggles directly and together with family.

So far, Baldwin has described these situations as dark and menacing endeavors that the characters must push through, with silence being a hazardous catalyst that only multiplies the despair and passes it down. However, at the end of the story when the narrator is finally coming to understand his brother's suffering in Sonny's performance, Baldwin utilizes contrasting images to those he set up earlier to illustrate the development of the characters and how they have come to mend their brotherly bond.

At the end of the story when the brothers are inside the nightclub, the protagonist describes how "Sonny's fingers filled the air with life, his life" and how "[f]reedom lurked around" them with Sonny's melody, but also how the narrator was "yet aware . . . that the world waited outside, as hungry as a tiger" (681). Baldwin is utilizing positive imagery in this sequence and contrasts it with the dark and heavy world that weighs down the characters. The protagonist

is aware that they are still going to have difficult times, but Sonny's music is depicted as an antidote for the narrator's silence as it breathes life into the people. Through developing the brothers and the language used around them into a more optimistic and bright tone, while darkness still lurks in the background, Baldwin is implying the necessity of familial connections to push through suffering and break the cycles of despair without undermining the possible endeavors that await one in life. While it is guaranteed for one to suffer great losses and reel back from them in life, Baldwin argues how mutual and loving bonds can spare one from the worst of despair and help one to heal from such emotional traumas.

James Baldwin introduces the readers to two struggling and despairing brothers who are alone in confronting their traumas. Through the utilization of meaningful emotional story structure as well as evolving and contrasting language, Baldwin depicts the strength that family has as a catalyst to speed up the healing process from suffering while criticizing negative outlets such as drugs or ignorance to only be self-destructive or damage others.

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ENGL 1023

9 September 2023

<div align="center">Look Up into the Sky</div>

In "A Wall of Fire Rising," Edwidge Danticat uses allusions referencing the Haitian slave revolution, symbolic imagery, and dialogue to illustrate her short story's interest in engaging with the struggles of freedom. Achieving freedom is portrayed as being released from one's capturers; however, a life after being subjugated is a whole different matter. Danticat shows the struggles of not only gaining freedom, but the overwhelming aspect of what to do after.

The author, Edwidge Danticat, was born in Haiti in 1969 but left when she was twelve years old. She grew up interested in her home country's history, specifically the Haitian Slave Revolution that took place from 1791 to 1804. In her short story, "A Wall of Fire Rising," Danticat specifically references Boukman, a popular Haitian revolution leader. From this reference we know that this story takes place after the revolution, but the author also notifies the reader of the continued importance of the revolution through the repeating lines of Boukman's speech that the seven-year-old son, Little Guy, keeps repeating. The learning of the lines and the repetition of those lines show the reader that slavery is a main topic of the story in an allusive way. Following that, Little Guy represents hope for freedom and the fixation on it through the young boy's obsession with learning the speech for his school play.

Furthermore, symbolic imagery is used through the mentioning of the hot air balloon and the father, Guy's, infatuation with it. As mentioned in the story, the balloon inspires wonder and amazement in Guy. As Danticat says in the text, Guy's wife can tell from "the look on his face

that he was thinking of sitting inside the square basket while the smooth rainbow surface of the balloon itself floated above his head" (398). This quote includes details showing Guy's wonder and desire to sail with the hot air balloon. Guy's obsession with this balloon represents the pursuit of freedom from everyday life struggles. The balloon represents adventure, the ability to start anew in a completely different area, along with the potential to go anywhere. However, the overwhelming realization of these possibilities becomes the dooming factor for Guy. Before he is able to fly the balloon, he has large aspirations for a better future, but after achieving that freedom to choose what to do next, freedom then becomes dangerous and the main component that contributes to Guy's intentional suicide.

To continue, Danticat uses a heavy emphasis on dialogue towards the story's climax to portray the struggle of grasping freedom and what comes after being freed. In this perspective, Guy is more than just a character in the story; he represents a larger population of freed people who do not have a sense of direction after slavery. Danticat states in the text, "I'd like to sail off somewhere and keep floating until I get a really nice place with a nice plot of land where I could be something new" (402). This quote shows how Guy first represents the aspirations after gaining freedom: the ability to be whoever he wants and start anew. This dialogue represents hope. However, there are foreshadowing instances towards Guy's death in quotes such as this: "How do you think a man is judged after he's gone?" (403). This phrase purposely makes the reader think of death and its relation to suicidal tendencies. As the story continues, Guy can fly the balloon, but he climbs out of the basket and plunges to his death. This is a representation of achieving freedom and being faced with the challenge of following through with the expectations set out for the future; but the overwhelming challenge causes Guy to jump to his death. This shows a metaphorical fall from grace, showing that even though slaves were given freedom, they

were not prepared to step into a whole new life, causing many to face the end to their aspirations, just as Guy does.

To reiterate, Edwidge Danticat uses allusions to the Haitian slave revolution, symbolic imagery, and dialogue to create a visual representation of the struggles of freedom. Danticat's short story uses the main character Guy as a figurehead for slaves aspiring for better lives but being unable to succeed. She uses symbolic imagery like the use of the hot air balloon to represent moving into new possibilities and the chance for change. She also uses dialogue to show the shifting of hope to a more negative tone that foreshadows Guy's eventual suicide. Danticat uses these methods to illustrate a larger picture of the struggles for freedom.

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ENGL 1023-010

19 February 2023

<div align="center">Memento Mori: Life After Death</div>

Memento Mori is a Latin phrase that reminds one to never forget the inevitability of death and often serves to teach one not to fear it ("Memento Mori"). While simply saying such a thing will not help to ease the worries of most, there are other ways to cope with seeing death and accepting it. "The Lives of The Dead" is a short story by Tim O'Brien from his book *The Things They Carried*. The story is about a character coping with death as a child and an adult at war and portrays how the dead continue to live on through others, whether through simple remembrance, stories or songs, or being given a voice again by others.

"Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them" (Eliot). Though gone, the dead still influence the choices and lives of those they knew in life. Linda, in "The Lives of The Dead," expresses this idea with a well-placed metaphor: "I'm *not* dead. But when I am, it's like... I don't know. I guess it's like being inside a book that nobody's reading" (O'Brien 66). Essentially, being forgotten is portrayed as perhaps being worse than death itself.

Stories, on the other hand, are a method of remembrance. Eulogies are used to commemorate the deceased. Holidays often have stories behind them, too, and others are dedicated to celebrating the deceased's lives. Linda is remembered through the stories O'Brien tells about her in "The Lives of The Dead," as are the soldiers he met during the Vietnam War. The entire written story is the narrator telling a story that helps himself and others to remember the dead.

Finally, the dead can be given a voice by others. Whether that be in one's mind or through their own recorded words, those words will still affect those who hear them. Linda speaks directly to O'Brien in the dreams depicted in the story, and the soldiers are given a voice by those who choose to speak for them. At some points, the soldiers even sit down and have a one-sided conversation with the dead in order to cope with losing friends and allies. Early on in the story, one character speaks for his dead comrade after another asks the corpse a question:

"How's the war today?"

There was a short quiet.

"Mellow," somebody said. (O'Brien 60)

"The Lives of The Dead" is a story about remembering the dead through practices such as basic memory usage, storytelling, and conversation. Coping with death is something that everyone will have to do at some point in life, and many of the coping mechanisms involve remembering those who have passed. The passing of loved ones also prepares one for death oneself; it reminds one to remember death.

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English 1023

8 February 2023

<div align="center">La Comida de Abuelita</div>

In the poems "Green Chile" by Jimmy Santiago Baca and "The Abuelita Poem" by Paul Martínez Pompa, the theme of sacrifice for family is prevalent. This theme is important to analyze because Latin American countries have historically struggled with poverty, meaning that families had to work closely together and help each other out.

In Baca's "Green Chile," the speaker says, "on her hot mouth, sweating over the stove" (line 29). The speaker is describing his grandmother's state as she cooks. She is experiencing a struggle or stress. However, it is only physical in this instance. A couple lines further, the speaker says, "mysterious passion on her face" (line 31). Once again, this is a description of the grandmother's state. However, this time it is about her emotional state. She is happy to cook for her grandchild despite the heat of the kitchen. The cooking is done out of love, and it can be seen as a sacrifice.

Further down, he says, "with beans and rice—her sacrifice / to her little prince" (lines 34-35). He is describing the food the grandmother is preparing, which is presented as an act of service to the grandchild. Right after that, he says, "I slurp from my plate" (line 36). He not only accepts the food, but this line also implies that he enjoys the food. He appreciates his grandmother's sacrifice, and there is an innate understanding that service offered and accepted is what defines family.

"The Abuelita Poem" describes a similar scene of a grandmother cooking for a grandson.

Towards the end of the first part of "The Abuelita Poem," the speaker says, "So much labor for this peasant bread" (line 14). He is referring to the process that his grandmother is taking in order to make tortillas. He is implying that the result is not worth all the work it takes. Despite the laborious process, tortillas have a simple taste, texture, and role. Another thing this line could imply is that the speaker is unappreciative of his grandmother's effort.

During the second part of "The Abuelita Poem," the speaker reveals, "I cannot remember / if she made corn tortillas from scratch" (lines 21-20). In the beginning of this part of the poem, the speaker confesses that he is not sure if his grandmother actually cooked homemade tortillas. The speaker could be an adult or a teenager thinking back on memories of his grandmother. Once again, tortillas are a quite simple food. Such simplicity can be unappealing to small children. Further down he says, "How she'd knead the buttons on the telephone, order me food from Pizza Hut" (lines 25-26). These lines imply that the speaker refused to eat the tortillas, which differs from the narrator in "Green Chile," who happily accepted the food. Tortillas are such a vital element of Latin American food, so in rejecting them, the speaker is also rejecting the culture that they come from. This rejection is further supported by the choice to include Pizza Hut, a U.S. franchise, as a replacement.

The speaker's description of tortillas as "peasant bread" in "The Abuelita Poem" brings up the topic of poverty. It is no secret that Latin American countries have struggled a lot with poverty. However, there is a particular situation that sticks out. "Green Chile" by Jimmy Santiago Baca was written in 1989, which was towards the end of a period sometimes referred to as The Lost Decade. According to an article from 1989 by Margaret Daly Hayes, one of the many difficulties during this period was debt. Many Latin American countries had gotten into a lot of debt, and they were struggling to pay it back. Other key issues included

high inflation, low economic growth, and an increase in drug trafficking. There was one positive accomplishment, which was that most of Latin America had transitioned from military governments into civilian governments (Hayes). It is clear that most of the issues during The Lost Decade were economic. This is only one instance of Latin America's history with poverty. For families to survive during economic difficulties, it is important for them to learn to depend on one another, and this dependence can come in the form of sacrifices or acts of service.

The theme of sacrifices for family is important in the poems "Green Chile" by Jimmy Santiago Baca and "The Abuelita Poem" by Paul Martínez Pompa because Latin America has struggled with poverty throughout its history. During such challenging times, families needed to grow close and work together. Sacrifice can manifest itself in something as simple as cooking food for a loved one. For Latin America, said food has become an important part of its culture.

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Elizabeth Flores

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ENGL 1023

22 September 2023

<p style="text-align:center">The Complexity of Coming Out</p>

Even though society has evolved to understand and accept people's gender, there are still a lot of conflicts surrounding this topic. The poems "The Kind of Man I Am at the DMV" by Stacie Waite and the "The Changeling" by Judith Ortiz Cofer reflect the problems that some people struggle with. "The Kind of Man I Am at the DMV" shows the internal feelings of a transgender man. In the "The Changeling," Judith Ortiz Cofer discusses how she dealt with stereotypes and misconceptions about Latin American women in Puerto Rico as a child. The poems "The Kind of Man I Am at the DMV" by Stacie Waite and "The Changeling" by Judith Ortiz Cofer both illustrate the struggles of coming out by incorporating representation of gender, differences between childhood knowledge and adult knowledge, and relationships with mothers.

Although the poems take place in different times, they both show the representation of genders. In *The Truth about Girls and Boys: Challenging Toxic Stereotypes about Our Children*, Caryl Rivers and Rosalind Barnett say,

> We are told that girls can't excel at math, and shouldn't aspire to the highest levels of management, and that boys are hyperaggressive, and can't be nurturing or cooperative even if they want to. Children internalize such stereotypes at an early age, thus putting brakes on the fulfillment of their individual potential. (5)

The authors here are explaining that from a young age, children are being given a certain

representation of genders which they internalize as the correct representation.

In both poems, a mother is telling a child a certain representation of genders. The speaker in Cofer's poem says, "She'd order me back to the dark cubicle . . . to shed / my costume, to braid my hair furiously / with blind hands, and to return invisible, / as myself, / to the real world of her kitchen" (lines 24-29). Judith Ortiz Cofer was born in the 1950s in a small Puerto Rican town. This means she grew up in the 1950s and 60s when gender roles were different from what they are now. Samantha Francois says in her PhD dissertation, "All agree that in the 1950's, women were often constricted by gender roles that devalued their work outside the home, their interest in higher education, and 'contained' them as individuals" (9). This quote explains the representation of genders in the mother's eye. The mother believes that a woman's role is in the kitchen while the men go fight during the war due to the fact that this was the customary view point in the 1950s.Francois goes on to say, "Girls growing up in the l940's and l950's received mixed messages about their place, and their future in American society'' (16).

In Stacey Waite's poem, the speaker says, "'Mommy, that man is a girl,' says the little boy / pointing his finger, like a narrow spotlight / . . . his kid-hand / learning the failure of gender's tidy little / story about itself'' (lines 1-6) The poem shows a little boy expressing his confusion about the speaker due to this representation of gender. The boy was taught that males and females are supposed to look a certain way, which brings up the confusion. These social expectations show why many individuals are afraid to come out. Many do not want to disrupt the common roles that that we have been socialized to fit into.

The process of growing up is a vital representation in these poems. The knowledge gap between childhood and adulthood is large. Adults have much more knowledge than children. In both poems, we see a certain difference between a child's knowledge and an adult's knowledge. In *Growing Up: From Eight Years to Young Adulthood*, Jennie Lindon explains how children can be surprised or distressed with new events that they have no prior knowledge about (39). Children are very naive unless they are taught certain things, whether it be at school or at home. In "The Changeling," the speaker does not understand why her mother is upset that she wore her brother's clothes and helmet. As a child, she was only doing it to get the attention of her father as he always paid attention to their son. However, over time she realized that her mother was upset due to her strong beliefs about women's roles in society. In Stacey Waite's poem, the child tells his mother that the speaker has earrings, which he thinks is reasonable evidence to assume that the man that he sees is a girl. Here the child is only concluding based on prior knowledge and observations he has made. He does not have any knowledge about gender complexity in today's society.

As far as the knowledge gained when growing up, the relationship between mothers and their children has a big impact on this. In both poems, the underlying relationships between mothers and their children are important in the conflicts of the speakers. In *Language of Love and Guilt: Mother-Daughter Relationships from a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Ruth Wodak and Muriel Schulz say,

> Argumentation concerning the relationship has frequently been undifferentiated, failing to accommodate the irony that on one hand it is the patriarchal structure of society which is responsible for women's status, while on the other it is often the

mother herself who passes on to her daughter a negative appraisal of the female role. This implies that the relationship between mother and child has an impact on what children see in society. In Judith Cofer Ortiz's poem we can see that her mother does not approve of the clothing that her daughter, the speaker, is wearing and tells her to take off the clothes or she would not eat. However, in Stacy Waite's poem, the speaker says, "His mother snatches his finger from the air, / *of course he's not,* she says, pulling him / back to his seat . . ." (lines 16-18). Here the mother tries to show the boy that what he implies is not true and tries to bring his attention to something else, so he does not bother the speaker. In each poem, the child involved is confused about what the roles for genders are, but the mother clarifies what she believes they are.

As society progresses, gender roles are very different. We see women's rights growing more and having more of an impact in today's world. We also see more gender equality and people supporting a variety of sexualities. However, society is not perfect, and people can be judged or hurt because of their sexual orientation, which can cause them to be afraid. In both poems, we see how one mother is accepting of these new roles while the other is still using old gender representations. Although both poems take place in different historical times, both show the struggle of coming out.

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ENGL 1023

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<p style="text-align:center">What Has Been and Will Be</p>

The human experience is affected by many factors, but the factor of death shapes the lives of every individual in irrevocable ways. One thing that separates people from animals is that we know we are going to die. In some sense of the word, death is not necessarily the end of someone, but when they are forgotten, that is when they truly stop existing. History, although meant to be learned from, makes societies hold on to the mistakes of the past. The decisions of our ancestors will forever affect the lives of our children's children, either for better or worse. In the poems "Sci-Fi" by Tracy K. Smith and "Pilgrimage" by Natasha Trethewey, the theme of death is important because death is a fundamental part of life, and when it is removed, either through the advancement of science or the inability to allow the tragedies in history to die, the human experience is dramatically changed.

Natasha Trethewey was greatly influenced by the history of her family and home state through a book of Eudora Welty's photographs of Mississippi in the 1930s. In an article called "Natasha Trethewey Reflects on Mississippi's Past," she writes, "As a native Mississippian, I was drawn to this remarkable woman as much for the clarity and vision and truth of her fiction as for the history we shared—rooted in place—the fate of our geography" (Staff). In the poem "Pilgrimage," Natasha Trethewey's speaker talks about her experience visiting a Civil War memorial in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In 1863, the city was under siege for forty days before surrendering on July 4th to Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant. This event is seen as an

important turning point during the war. The speaker imagines the horrible experience of the woman recording the event: "in 1863, to the woman sitting in her parlor, / candlelit, underground. I can see her / listening to shells explode, writing herself / into history, asking *what is to become / of all the living things in this place?"* (lines 14-18). In these lines a sense of hopelessness and trauma is well established. This memorial is remembered as a great victory though it has subsequently kept these horrible times alive, immortalizing the worst parts of humanity. Later in the poem, the speaker ends the poem with "the ghost of history lies down beside me, / rolls over, pins me beneath a heavy arm," as if history holds the speaker hostage using the tremendous weight of the tragedies of the past (lines 36-37). This shows how terrible acts in history continue to live long after they occur, and they affect humanity in later generations.

"Sci-Fi" by Tracy K. Smith was influenced by her late father, a scientist who worked on the Hubble telescope (Tomassi). The speaker talks about the future when advancements have led humanity not only far from earth but far from how humanity lives in the 21st century. In lines 17-21 the speaker states, "And yes, we'll live to be much older, thanks / To popular consensus. Weightless, unhinged, / Eons from even our own moon, we'll drift / In the haze of space, which will be, once / And for all, scrutable and safe." While talking about what many would see as a bright future when people live much longer and the threat of dying is so low, the speaker uses a tone that makes this sound like these are not necessarily good things. This part of the poem makes readers think of how lonely and boring a long life in space would really be. Even with other people, what experiences in space would we have to develop bonds with each other? The speaker elaborates more on what life would be like in lines 7-12: "Women will still be women, but / The distinction will be empty. Sex, / Having outlived every threat, will gratify / Only the

mind, which is where it will exist. / For kicks, we'll dance for ourselves / Before mirrors studded with golden bulbs." This extended life in the vastness of space would force us to entertain ourselves in whatever way possible and eliminate the need for individuals to start families, thus never having close connections to others. The speaker continues, "The oldest among us will recognize that glow— / But the word *sun* will have been re-assigned / To a Standard Uranium-Neutralizing device" (lines 13-15). This is a future when even the sun is a foreign concept. If humanity finds a way to live forever, what price will we pay to achieve that life, and are we still human if we never die? Living forever or delaying death takes away from the many experiences that make life interesting. People will have fewer and fewer new experiences to explore. The unknown will no longer be feared or exciting. Removing the ability for people to die will cause life to become repetitive and meaningless.

The most human thing is death. It shapes people's lives and the way societies structure themselves. When it is taken out of the human experience, life is irrevocably changed. History keeps alive many great accomplishments but at the cost of also making us remember the dark, terrible things people are capable of. Death is not just something to fear but something that makes us human. It is like flowers that wilt and die in the winter, but when spring comes, they blossom, and their beauty is amplified by the fact that they do not last forever. Science and history will direct humanity down paths that negatively impact it if we carry the heavy weight of the past or continue to fear death in the future.

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<div align="center">Dreams of Lorraine Hansberry's Characters from A Raisin in the Sun</div>

Lorraine Hansberry, a female African American born in the 1930s and raised in the southside of Chicago, is the author of the text of analysis, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Having personally experienced residential segregation, Hansberry took to writing a play inspired by her experiences through her endeavors with *A Raisin in the Sun*. This drama begins with the poem "Harlem" by Langston Hughes, which makes commentary about the deferred dreams that African Americans have had for many years and have not achieved due to limitations of many systems that did not support them and, in fact, actively worked against them. Hansberry's use of this idea can be seen throughout practically all the characters within this play, who all have their own dreams and their own means of achieving them. The most effective examples of deferred dreams are the competing ones of Walter Younger and his mother.

Beginning with one of the major main characters, Walter is the man of the household, so-to-speak. He has a wife by the name of Ruth and a son named Travis, and he also lives under the same roof as his mother (referred to as Mama) and sister Beneatha. Being the man of the Younger family household, Walter longs to provide for his family, albeit through shady business practices. When asked about what life is by his mother, he responds that "it [money] is life" and "it was always money" (1582). His idea is to open a liquor store business, but everyone else in the family disapproves of his idea. During the exchange in which Walter's mother asks him what life is, she says that the liquor store "wasn't the thing for us [the family] to do," (1582). Despite

the vehement discouragement from the family, Walter still insists on going through with his plans and ends up losing a lot of money through trying to work with shady people. His despair leads him to consider caving in to the demands of a racist white man. When the Youngers plan to move into a new house from their small apartment, it is in a white neighborhood. A man by the name of Mr. Linder offers to pay them to not buy said house, and Walter is intent upon telling Linder, "Just write the check and the house is yours" (1616). However, in wisdom, he does not end up doing so and sides with the rest of his family at the end of the day.

Walter describes his dreams as him "want[ing] so many things that . . . drive him crazy" (1615). He describes in detail towards the end as he is determined on getting the check from Linder, "I want me some yachts someday! Yes, I want to hang some real pearls 'round my wife's neck" (1615). This is a man who simply wants him and his family to be able to experience a life of luxury and give them the best, but he does not know how exactly to go about it the best way. Walter, in reference to Langston Hughes's poem at the beginning of the play, experiences this craziness as the "fester[ing] like a sore" and even perhaps the "sag[ging] like a heavy load" that irritates him for so long that he affirms the question at the end of the poem, "does it explode," with a yes (1099).

In contrast to Walter, Lena "Mama" Younger is the matriarch of the Younger household and seems to be more of the household's head as opposed to Walter. A recently widowed older woman, Mama Younger's plan is to use the benefit money she has gained from the passing from her husband to buy a house for her family. However, as mentioned earlier, they are faced with opposition due to their house being in a white neighborhood and the prevalence of racial segregation during the time period of the play. As explored in looking at Walter's dream, Mama

is seemingly opposed to Walter. However, they both seem to want the same things and same goal, but they wish to achieve it in different ways.

The differences between her and Walter are made all the clearer through the previously mentioned conversation about what should be considered life. Mama argues that "[o]nce upon a time freedom used to be life—now it's money," and she goes on to explain to Walter just how different they are: "In my time, we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North . . . and how to stay alive and still have a shred of dignity" (1582). She says that her children are "talking 'bout things [she] ain't ever thought about hardly" (1582). With such a generational gap and having had so much to worry about and lose in times past, Mama has much more of a sense of contentment with her situation as it has not always been the status quo for her like Walter and is much more of an improvement as opposed to what she faced during her earlier years.

Mama's dream is detailed in a conversation she has with her daughter-in-law Ruth, during which she talks about the initial dreams she had when settling down with her husband to "set away . . . and buy a little place out in Morgan Park" where she had a house selected that she dreamed about "buying . . .and fixing . . .up and making [her] a little garden in the back," (1568). However, as she concludes sadly, "didn't none of it happen" (1568). Mama just wanted a nice, stable place where she could raise a family and even hoped to have a bit of pride and luxury in probably the humblest of ways ever with a small garden in her backyard. Mama's dream was deferred for quite a long time, having still not been achieved even after her husband's death, and she held this dream since she and her husband had first eloped and settled down. To be frank, that is quite a long time. However, the way she responded is much different than Walter opts to respond.

While Walter responds with recklessness and bears resemblance to the possible explosive ending of Hughes's poem, the same cannot be said about Mama. She is much more in line with the descriptions of the dreams "crust[ing] and sugar[ing] over / Like a syrupy sweet" (1099). This dream does not seem to particularly hang upon her or fester within her as it does with Walter to lead to such an explosive reaction. The way Mama conducts herself throughout the story shows no indication that she is antsy and pained as Walter is to the point of feeling crazy. It rather may just be that this dream is still sweet to her and within reach like the syrupy sweet, but it has been sitting for so long that it has become crusted over due to the deferral of the dream.

In overview, we can focus on what dream is endorsed by the play as a whole from these two main conflicting viewpoints. Although Walter's recklessness does cause the whole family to follow in the direction he forcefully chooses, we see a shift towards the end of the play when Mr. Linder comes to the house and offers money to prevent them from moving in. Walter, despite having decided to take the money before letting Linder in, gives an impassioned speech ending with "We don't want your money" (1618), siding with his mother's desire to move in and fulfilling her dream. Mama is seemingly always the voice of reason throughout the entire play, and her reason seems to finally get through to Walter in these last moments, fulfilling her dream and providing the happy ending to the play.

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