

# First Year Reader

Student Essays | Spring 2020



Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences

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### Editor's Note

To say that the 2019-2020 academic year at AUS has been unusual would be an understatement. Witnessing traditional education being turned upside down and familiar physical spaces like classrooms and computer labs being replaced by virtual classrooms has been nothing short of extraordinary. For now at least, we no longer enter a classroom on campus and expect to be greeted by the familiar smiles of peers, or sit at desks that have been ours since the semester started.

It saddens us to think of the many high school and university students who had their moments of glory stolen from them: student athletes who worked for years to arrive in their senior year, only to see the tournament season shut down. And all the other students who worked hard and struggled for years in anticipation of going up on stage in their school auditoriums to receive due honors and recognition--they too had to settle for joining online commencements, missing last opportunities for heartfelt goodbyes, handshakes, and hugs.

But in spite of the challenges we have all encountered, it's comforting to see how students at AUS have managed. And what is most remarkable is the level of resilience that so many students exhibited in adapting to these changes. Not only did students manage to get by, many excelled, as this collection of essays demonstrates.

To all the first-year students entering AUS in the Fall of 2020, we certainly anticipate some of your anxieties. As the father of a student entering his junior year of university in the States, I know some of these anxieties. Some are questioning if they should even continue a university experience that takes place exclusively at the computer on the desk in the bedroom. Many students, my son included, are considering taking a gap year to wait out the whole pandemic/quarantine.

For those of you who feel daunted by the prospect of succeeding in a writing course which will take place in a virtual classroom, we offer these essays to you. They are written by students who have been where you are now. Many of them also endured distance from classmates and teachers, and spent a good portion of their Spring semester in quarantine. Our goal with the *DWS Reader* is to offer students an opportunity to read outstanding essays which are current and culturally relevant. This time-honored project continues to represent the heart of what we are trying to achieve in the first-year writing classes in the Department of English: student empowerment and critical engagement. We hope you enjoy it!

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## 101 Essays

### Comparisons



### Angarebs and Assumptions

Ibtihal Kamal

The heartbeat of the home in my blood, over 6000 miles away from where I was born and raised, beats like no other. Riding a rickshaw with the sound of the engine roaring in my ears and the sand blowing in my face, along with admiring the grandeur yet elegant simplicity of the date tree in my grandparents' home was all an unexpected, pleasant surprise. Initially, poverty and crime were only some of the derogatory terms that floated through my mind. Despite my initial expectation of Khartoum, Sudan being the embodiment of a third world country, once I laid eyes on the land, the home that runs in my veins, I realized my preconceived notions of Khartoum were flawed. The modernness of the facilities, degree of conservativeness, and overall safety and atmosphere were quite unlike what I had presumed.

Growing up as a Sudanese American, I constantly felt like my cultural identity was not concrete. I didn't have a strong cultural connection to Sudan, despite my parents' efforts to speak the Sudanese dialect at home. My parents also made it important that my brother and I attended events hosted by our Sudanese community. However, I still wasn't quite in touch with my roots, so my parents decided to take me to visit my extended family in Sudan. Considering that I was born and raised in New York City, I was used to being in an open-minded society with a variety of food, technology, art, and people surrounding me.

Therefore, when I would overhear my parents talking to relatives in Sudan about the corrupt government and constant electricity cuts, I was horrified and assumed the worst about Sudan.

Initially, I had expected Khartoum to be lacking in modern facilities, and rather have more traditional, worn-down commodities. As soon as we would land, a swirl of dust and wind, which I eventually came to know as a “kataha”, would greet me. Houses made of makeshift objects would be scattered everywhere. In these houses, I thought we would be forced to sleep on wooden beds with a thick string-like material as a base, just like I had seen in my sixth-grade history textbook. I still recall feeling quite embarrassed when we discussed ancient Nubia and attempted to discreetly drive any peering eyes away from me. A myriad of Google searches led me to believe that I would have to use a squat toilet, which is when the toilet is on the ground. Fear and shock coursed through my veins. The searches continued to bombard me with images of what is typically associated with “third-world”. Little to no electricity with candles mainly illuminating houses, lack of sanitary water with wells being the primary source of relatively decent water, and disconnectedness from the rest of the world due to a lack of internet connection would all be major issues.

Although Sudan is not as advanced as some of its neighboring countries, such as Egypt, Khartoum combines tradition and customs with relatively modern facilities. Although “angarebs”, the aforementioned wooden beds, were present in the majority of households, many households, including ours, had modern beds, similar to the Western-style. The “angareb” was mainly used as a traditional object in weddings and the sort, as I came to learn. Relief rushed through me when I realized that I wouldn’t be forced to use a squat toilet. A “normal” sit toilet was the norm in the majority of households. Squat toilets existed in many households, but they were mainly for the maids. My constant need to be connected via the Internet was met, as a relatively high-speed router with Internet connection and VPN was accessible. Essentially, the majority of people in Khartoum had some sort of access to the Internet, whether through WiFi or data connection. Additionally, most houses in Khartoum did not resemble the dinner party scene from “The Great Gatsby” with candles everywhere. Electricity was available, and candles were used whenever the electricity would be cut, but some households had a device called a generator, which supplied electricity whenever it would be cut.

Considering that Sudan’s official religion is Islam, I thought Khartoum would be the epitome of a conservative society, unlike what I had grown accustomed to in the United States. As a female, donning a hijab and abaya would be required in public. Free will be gone, and I would have no other choice but to conform to the “norm” in Khartoum. Women covered from head to toe would be not just the most common sight, but the only sight. Interaction between the two genders would be considered taboo. Seeing men and women openly interacting in public would be a foreign concept. I presumed the concept of public interaction between men and women would be frowned upon stemmed from a conservative mindset. Coming from the Western culture I was raised in, I feared the narrow-minded attitude would cultivate a stereotypical culture, where a woman was merely a housewife. Nonworking women would be the standard. A culture where women would be considered beneath men would be predominant. I was worried that if I mentioned my dreams of becoming a doctor or biomedical engineer, I would be subjected to ridicule and reminded of my supposed place in society.

Although several people in Khartoum are quite devout and Sudan follows Sharia law, various contemporary aspects in the culture and people left me dumbfounded. There was no mandated, enforced dress code. Thus, wearing the hijab and abaya was not mandatory, and although many people did dress conservatively, just as many wore knee-long skirts and short-sleeved tops, and it was generally not frowned upon. I was reassured when I realized that the

outfits I had brought with me from the United States were mostly acceptable. Men and women interacted freely in grocery stores, shopping centers, and the like, and it was normal, but to a certain extent. The public interactions between the two genders did not resemble that of a Western setting. Nonetheless, the reality of the situation was not as extreme as I had initially visualized. Moreover, like many other cultures, there were certain stereotypes when it came to the role of a woman and a more patriarchal mindset in Khartoum's society that was present in people's conversations, actions, etc. However, pride and satisfaction coursed through me when I visited hospitals and my cousins' school. I realized that most people in Khartoum had some form of education, and there were many intellectual women, ranging from doctors and engineers to lawyers and teachers. Therefore, discussing my career aspirations with my family in Khartoum was surprisingly encouraged.

Whenever the term "Africa" and, in turn, "Sudan" came to mind, I was programmed to automatically associate it with being a third world society with the majority of people living in poverty and an overall unsafe atmosphere. In my head, orphans and homeless people would be scattered everywhere. Beggars and people with dull, depressed countenances roaming the streets would be a common, unfortunate sight. Murder and crime would be rampant. I feared Khartoum would be the African version of the infamous gangster mob movie "The Godfather". Every negative term and concept I associated with underdevelopment in regards to safety was what I thought Khartoum would exemplify.

Although the overall quality of life and safety in Khartoum was incomparable with NYC, Khartoum had a relatively positive and safe vibe with friendly, cooperative people. There were impoverished people, but most of Khartoum's society was able to sustain themselves and quite many were able to afford extravagant lifestyles. Crime, in general, exists in essentially any region, and Khartoum is no different. However, felonies were not as abundant as I expected. Crime was more common in a few, particular neighborhoods that most people tended to avoid. Moreover, it was a relief realizing I wasn't amid a recreation of some gangster mob movie. In comparison to where I grew up, there were just as many homeless people in Khartoum as there were in New York City.

All in all, initially, shame and dismay were amongst the many negative feelings I harbored about Khartoum, Sudan. Despite this, I began to consider Khartoum my second home, as I came to realize how flawed my perceptions of the city and culture were. My stereotypical way of thinking led me to believe that Khartoum was the epitome of a third-world society, crime-ridden, highly conservative, and lacking modern amenities. Seeing first hand my expectations being quite inaccurate in most aspects left me confounded. The sound of the rickshaw's engine that rings in my ear from time to time will serve as a constant reminder to prevent making assumptions.



## OOEHS Meets AUS

Mahira Pathan

During the second half of my Physics Placement Test at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), I had entered the equation to formulate the tangent of the 30 degree angle on a calculator and the answer that this highly accredited machine had calculated threw me off, of a cliff. I knew for a fact that it was malfunctioning as I called upon my instructor and said, “Miss, I believe that the calculator you have provided is incorrect” to which she reacted with the most dumbfounded expression. The situation worsened when she asked me to shift to a different set of units from degrees to radians. My cheeks flushed with embarrassment as I had to request her to do it for me because I do not know how to actually use a scientific calculator. This humiliation is a promised experience for any student who graduated from Our Own English High School (OOEHS) and has followed the CBSE (also known as Indian) Curriculum. The learning experience and culture at AUS is significantly different compared to OOEHS. AUS and OOEHS differ greatly in terms of feminine influence, teaching modules, overall development opportunities, cultural diversity, and fashion and beauty standards.

Firstly, OOEHS is an all-girls institution with women managing from the position of Headmistress to the teachers and staff. As a result, my personal opinions and those of others originated from a female mindset. I knew how to tackle a situation, debate or conflict because, being a female, I could relate to the experiences of my colleagues better than a male could. Being surrounded by so many strong women who would speak their minds without being overshadowed by a patriarch has shaped me to become a blunt and confident speaker. The perception that Indian women are quite reserved and humble was false in the case of OOEHS. Most students and teachers transcended beyond conservative cultures despite such an upbringing and developed an open-minded and accommodating mindset. Hence, the concept of feminism was quite evident at OOEHS.

Like most universities, AUS follows a co-education system due to which I have encountered a greater diversity in opinions since these are now coming from the opposite gender as well. Consciousness dawns upon me whenever I voice my concern or

inconvenience because I have no experience in how a guy would react when I call him out on an issue. I now find it uncomfortable to talk about sensitive or feminine issues. Hence, the bluntness in my conversation is replaced with re-thought while the confidence prevails. For example, in my Writing 101 class, a group of students were discussing whether or not men should consult with their wives before scheduling for a meeting with his friend. One guy remarked, “I don’t need to ask her. I can do as I want.” But when he was questioned whether his wife could do the same, his answer was a clear and affirmative ‘no’. Now, if I was in my high school setting, the class would have heard me roar. But, instead of my usual fiery comeback, I put my foot down to prevent getting someone “triggered”. It is disappointing to note the lack of feminism and open-mindedness among the majority of students at AUS which I believe is due to stereotypical upbringing.

Secondly, OOEHS follows a CBSE Curriculum wherein teachers rely on previous knowledge and are focused on the more complex aspects of a topic. Students were expected to memorize formulas and equations in math, physics, and chemistry. In the year twelve, my chemistry teacher had prepared what she called a “drilling sheet” with more than a hundred and twenty-five equations, name reactions and processes which we were able to recall on our fingertips before the final exam. Furthermore, calculators were strictly prohibited. All calculations were to be performed manually including logarithms using a logbook. One may picture us studying with the help of the tools used by Pythagoras or Aryabhata. Furthermore, the teachers used simple terminologies and buzzwords were referenced in their shortened forms. The exams involved Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) questions which required an out of the box approach. However, despite the time constraint, teachers would provide the students with maximum amount of practice for the examinations.

Contrastingly, the curriculum at AUS focusses on the basic understanding of a subject. The professors place an interest on the skill-set brought in by the students and how a problem is approached rather than just solving it. For instance, in a Physics course, the professor would ask his students to set up a scenario to solve a numerical before actually plugging in the values. Additionally, the terminologies used at AUS are foreign to me. “ $x$  tends to  $a$ ” is replaced with “ $x$  approaches  $a$ ”, “tan inverse” with “arctangent” and “torque” with “moment”. The exams strictly follow the content assigned in the syllabus. However, the professors do not offer enough practice to prepare the students for the exam.

Thirdly, OOEHS offers a limited number and variety of extra-curricular opportunities to students within the school. Unfortunately, there are absolutely no volunteering clubs or community welfare campaigns at OOEHS. Students have to participate in extra-curricular activities outside of school on learning from other sources. Also, sports training within the school was charged extra over the tuition fee thereby restricting talented and interested students coming from middle-class financial backgrounds from pursuing their sports interests.

On the other hand, AUS offers a plethora of extra-curricular opportunities including cultural clubs, volunteering, sports, etcetera. The volunteers club at AUS is very active and has carried out several campaigns making a significant difference in the local community. Every student is informed and well-aware of the activities taking place around campus. Free training opportunities are available for students who would like to join a particular sport. This provides the students with enormous scope for overall development.

Fourthly, cultural diversity at OOEHS is almost non-existent. Most students are either from India or Pakistan and a minority belong to Bangladesh. This means that it is easier to strike a conversation with a fellow student because of common interests and knowledge on topics ranging from the current Lok Sabha Elections in India to how the kheer is a better delicacy than the rabri despite both of them being sweet, condensed-milk-based dishes.

Although most students come from different states of India, with each state having a distinct language, they often converse in English to break the “state language barrier”. This instills an accommodating characteristic in any abrupt conversation leaving no individual uncomfortable.

Alternatively, AUS possesses great cultural and ethnic diversity. I have met students from almost all over the Middle-East, Sudan, Armenia, Japan, Ethiopia, Brazil, the United States and from several other countries in Europe. Due to such a large variety of cultures, it is difficult to stir-up a conversation and all the more difficult to keep it going. For example, I once told a student that I had puris for breakfast and had to spend a good fifteen minutes trying to explain to her what a puri actually is. However, since the majority of the students come from the Middle East or Africa, they are well-acquainted with one or the other dialect of Arabic. Hence, there is a momentary switch from English to Arabic during conversations which may, at times, broadcast an unwelcoming vibe to non-Arabic speakers.

Furthermore, addressing the concept of fashion and beauty standards for girls, OOEHS portrays a great diversity in the sense that most students have varied styles and beauty standards are not normalized. Every state in India has a rich and unique cultural heritage. Hence, the students belonging to different parts of India portray great differences in clothing styles, each with a hint of ethnicity. For example, a North Indian would style her mirror work gagra (long skirt) with a t-shirt or a choli (blouse) over a pair of jeans and a South Indian would accessorize using the gajra (flower garland) with a western outfit. The girls resorted to minimal makeup on a casual day and even on festive occasions.

When it comes to beauty and fashion at AUS, in my perception, girls, in particular, follow a norm of pumped nude lips, perfectly arched thick eyebrows, parallel trousers topped with tucked-in shirts. Most of the time, I can find girls with heavy makeup and deep contours. Although there are several students who wear the abaya, it is difficult to find cultural differences in outfits since most students resort to western wear. Hence, there is a lack of a natural as well cultural sense of fashion.

In conclusion, progressing from OOEHS to AUS has opened a portal of new learning opportunities for me, not only in the academic field but also in the face of reality beginning with a mere shift from degrees to radians followed by development in my personality and thought-process. The skills that I had acquired during my time at OOEHS are now put to test on a much larger platform at AUS. On one hand, OOEHS with its cumbersome education system, single-gender exposure, common ethnicity, and academic-oriented curriculum instills the virtues of persistence, hard work and confidence amongst its pupils. On the other hand, AUS incorporates a liberal curriculum, a co-education system, great cultural diversity and a holistic approach thereby allowing students to develop a modest character and comprehensive thought to offer practical solutions.



## **Nablus or Ramallah?**

Tala Fuad Al Abweh

Have you ever wondered what life in any of the Palestinian cities is actually like under the Israeli occupation? Have you seen the news revealing all the terrible acts of violence taken against Palestinians? Although such monstrosities cannot be denied, life in Palestine, more specifically the cities Nablus and Ramallah, is more stable and reserved than is portrayed by the media. This is one of the many similarities you might find between the two cities. However, one can still point out many differences between them. These differences come in terms of people's traditions & mentalities, job opportunities, entertainment facilities, and building & road structures.

Firstly, the citizens of Nablus have an unusually strong attachment to their old, conservative traditions and societal beliefs to the extent that people one-hundred years ago & those of today, still view things the same way. For example, you will never find a group of girls & boys out together as friends, as that was frowned upon in the community years ago and is still maintained today. It can also be illustrated in the way the citizens dress, more specifically girls. Due to the fact that the majority in Nablus are Muslims, Islam has a major influence on the traditions and culture in the city. Thus, around 80% of the female population wear the hijab, and those who do not, dress modestly. Moreover, the majority of the people in Nablus have a very negative outlook on life since most of the citizens have never experienced different lifestyles, and follow the same daily routine resulting from the city being in a never-changing state. In addition, because the city is very small, the concept of privacy is almost unknown there. Everyone pays attention to the actions of the people around them and nothing can be kept hidden since everyone knows each other. For example, if a man and his wife fight or get divorced, the whole city would be talking about them the next day. One person would tell the next, and suddenly everyone would know your private matters.

On the other hand, Ramallah has adapted to the modern culture which reflects opposite gender friendships, love relationships, and even clothing style. The community in Ramallah is more diverse, for many people come from other countries, and religions other than Islam are being followed at a greater ratio. Consequently, most people, especially the younger generation, no longer give the outdated traditions any importance and tend to try to fit in with people from the outside world by allowing trends to be a major influence on their actions. Moreover, the city has a larger population due to more people visiting the city for tourism, jobs, and many other varying reasons. Therefore, it is hard to know everyone, which prevents rumors from spreading since people's actions are not being watched by others. Thus, people have more freedom to carry out what they desire without worrying about how people might talk

Secondly, there is a serious lack of job opportunities in Nablus which results in a very high unemployment rate. One of the reasons for that is the underdevelopment of the city. Even though engineers, doctors, and architects make up a large portion of the population, they have no projects to work on or in the case of doctors, no hospitals to work in. Thus their jobs usually have low salaries and are very scarce. As a result, most of these people turn to one of two options; either they look for work in another city or country, or they settle for working in trade. Moreover, for a city with so many businessmen, one would expect to find many of the branded stores commonly found in malls worldwide, however that is not the case. The license permits for such stores are very hard to obtain and usually cost a fortune. Thus, the main suppliers of food, clothes etc., in Nablus are the owners of the small local stores found in the center of the city.

In contrast, the economy in Ramallah is continuously growing. With people making brave and smart investments in international retail stores and restaurants, the sales movement starts increasing and stores attract more customers from all around the West Bank. This provides more job opportunities for people working in all sectors; retail workers become of greater demand, engineers and architects are needed to design and build structures for the newly built malls, etc. Moreover, since most if not all governmental offices are found in Ramallah, more of the foreign helping funds are used to improve the living situations and create more job opportunities for its own citizens than in any other city.

Thirdly, the options for fun activities and things to do in Nablus are very limited. I remember sitting at home with my cousins trying to think of places we can go spend time in but coming up with nothing except the same few parks we've been to a hundred times. As teenagers, our definition of fun is going to a theme park or bowling or any of such activities, which if found in Nablus would be in very poor condition and have many safety concerns as they are not well maintained. Yes, there are many beautiful historical and religious monuments to visit, and the view and nature on top of the mountains are breath-taking. However, in addition to them being hard to reach, not many people are interested in such spots and appreciate their beauty.

On the contrary, entertainment outlets are widely found all around Ramallah. They vary from haunted houses and theme parks with thrilling rides, to ice skating rinks in the newly opened mall, and everything in between. All machines and equipment undergo regular maintenance and the workers try to improve the quality of the facilities as often as possible given the country's circumstances. Although Nablus is the main base of the major historical sites in the West Bank, the lovers of history would not be disappointed in Ramallah. They can walk around several museums found in the city like the famous Yasser Arafat museum, as well as take pictures with statues of many historical figures situated within the streets like Martin Luther King and Rashid Haddadin, the founder of the city.

Lastly, the city infrastructure in Nablus is in terrible condition. For instance, have you ever seen a two-way road that is wide enough to only fit one car? Many of the roads in Nablus suffer from this problem due to the mountainous landscape of the city and lack of money to invest in improving the infrastructure. This leads to the roads being improperly paved and as narrow as they were years ago, before cars became more common among people. Consequently, the city often lacks traffic control. Furthermore, buildings and houses in Nablus have ancient designs and are built of stone as they have been there for decades, and new constructions are rarely built in the city. The newest buildings are around 10 years old and are made of the same material as the old ones but with a little twist to the design. This twist includes the buildings being of greater height, however still not tall in comparison to buildings in Ramallah, considering that the tallest building is around 15 stories high.

Contrastively, the infrastructure in Ramallah is in a constant state of improvement. Most roads have undergone recent amendments to pave them properly for drivers to drive without sudden jumps due to pits and uneven roads. Broader highways can be found with clearly lined lanes to prevent the previous traffic problems which the roads in Nablus still suffer from. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the many investments made are causing an increased demand for buildings and malls, so the engineers responsible started using cement as a cheaper and easier alternative for construction. This resulted in completely new building structures and designs; making them easily identifiable. Although skyscrapers cannot be found in the city, the buildings are still considered pretty tall in comparison to those in Nablus as many are more than 30 stories high.

In a nutshell, although both cities are suffering from similar political conditions, the people in Ramallah have learned to cope and make life easier and more enjoyable for themselves rather than just surrender to the limitations like those in Nablus. This has created countless differences in the lifestyle, mentality and overall structure of both cities, such that if someone moved from one to the other, he would have to change in many ways to try to adapt.



### **Sunday Mornings vs. Thursday Nights**

Hind Al Habtoor

Do you ever just sit in your last class on Thursday, counting down each individual minute, waiting ever so patiently for class to end? Do you ever enable your thoughts to linger as you look forward to the liberation that is the end of yet another laborious, stressful week? What am I going to wear? Where are we going out to eat tonight? How many hours of sleep do I have to catch up on? These are the feelings that navigate their way around my head as I await the minute that brings about the commencement of my weekend. Each day of the week has a great impact on how I feel, the greatest contrast of which is my mood on Thursday nights versus my mood on Sunday mornings. There are various differences between my lifestyle on all days of the week, including the way I dress, emotional status, physical status, how I treat people and the activities that I partake in.

The typical work week for me, as a university student, is filled with ceaseless, tremendous amounts of stress. Stress that piles up, tasks upon tasks that never seem to halt. Midterms, finals, essays, due dates, projects, quizzes, and a simply never-ending amount of work. I embark on every week with an emotionally worn-down state, immediately looking forward to Thursday night as soon as I open my eyes on Sunday morning. I dread the commute from my house to the university, I dread the three cups coffee that I am forced to scarf down in order to be able to properly function before my 9 A.M Physics class. Sunday mornings are hands down the most difficult time of the week to get through. My sense of fashion is usually nonexistent, with my attire of choice being my sweatpants, a face free of any form of cosmetics, and my worn out comfortable slippers. My Sunday morning routine, unlike Thursday, is very melancholic and a crime to fashion. I wake up, practically reaching for a cup of coffee, my brain aching for any form of caffeine in order to be able to operate, function or even focus. The only words coming out of my mouth are complaints about how exhausted I am and how much I am dreading the coming week for it will surely be abundant with tasks that I've been procrastinating. My ability to focus is highly difficult to summon, and the whiteboard at the front of the class appears before me, filled with foreign, unclear symbols and gibberish language. It is insurmountable for me to understand, just like explaining Egyptian Hieroglyphs to an illiterate person. During the first miserable hours of every Sunday morning, I try to avoid

any form of human communication, as well as anything that requires socialization or utilization of my interpersonal skills, prior to my morning dose of caffeine. All in all, Sunday mornings are the definition of agony and they are the true form of suffering for I don't think I dread anything more than a Sunday morning.

Thursday mornings, however, are on a polar opposite end of the spectrum when it comes to my spirit. I wake up, the feeling of euphoria practically darting through my veins, supplying me with an ecstatic high. My choice of clothing is usually more fashionable for I invest a lot more time and effort into putting myself together, along with applying a fresh face of makeup; all in anticipation for the day that brings upon my long-awaited weekend. Elucidated by my good mood in addition to my positive energy, I only need one cup of joe, freshly brewed, to wake myself up on Thursday mornings. This is all due to the fact that I will finally get some time to unwind, time to pull myself together and rearrange my psyche after a long, eternal week. The ability to focus during class is effortlessly mustered and comprehending the professor's words is as easy on the ears as listening to a gleeful, melodious tune. I particularly enjoy Thursday mornings, as the overall ambiance and atmosphere of everyone is less grumbly and more upbeat. The way people treat each other on Thursday is different, people are more tolerant of each other and everyone is visibly buzzing, discussing their plans for the weekend with one another and patiently waiting for the initiation of their long-awaited rest time. Personally, part of my Thursday traditions includes trying one of Dubai's countless and diverse restaurants coupled with going out for coffee and desserts with either my family or my trusted friends. I get through all of my classes, with perpetual thoughts of where I'm going out to eat tonight, what I am going to wear, what style of makeup shall I apply today, the questions never ending. Is it going to be in Jumeira? Downtown? Is it going to be a full face of makeup? A natural look? I can never foretell.

Sundays, on the other hand, to me are the epitome monotony and routine. They resemble the hypothetical mountain that I have to look forward to climbing in order to get through yet another week. My emotional state on this particular day of the week is the most regressive and drained to the point where the thought of having to adhere to composing my mindset in order to portray myself professionally is emotionally debilitating. The burden that is managing to push through and survive Sunday morning is something that I deserve to be awarded for, for it is the most challenging thing that I am forced to endure, as well as it being a weekly combat that I have to take on. Being tolerant and nice to others on Sundays is also a major struggle of mine that I have to deal with since no one is in a proper mood to chit chat first thing in the morning after a weekend filled with too much fun. However, I believe my best friend is the biggest exception to me on this atrocious day, considering she wakes up at 5 am; she has already had time to gloom and dread the day before my arrival, causing her to be filled with rainbows and sunshine upon the time I show up to class. She grabs me my morning coffee and meets me every day before our joint 9 A.M Physics class, which is what primarily makes my mornings more bearable. Typically, I personally would not want to be approached and bombarded with cheerful greetings as soon as I open my restless eyes, therefore, I do all that is in my ability to avoid any form of human interaction.

All in all, Sunday mornings are what I like to call a thunderstorm, a hurricane of mixed emotions, depression, stress, and sleep deprivation. On the other hand, Thursday nights are beautiful, euphoric, and a hypothetical breath of fresh air. On Thursday nights I get to experience, I get to live life. On that particular night, I get to unwind, forget what is yet to come and just live in the moment. I have assigned the fun to that particular night for the reason that it is my exhaust button where I let everything flow. It is my outlet for fun and joy and I exceedingly need these carefree nights in order for me to be able to function on the yet coming,

tremendously tiring Sunday morning. When all is said and done, Sunday mornings won't be bearable without Thursday nights.



## **Double Standards in India**

Nadia Altaf

Since prehistoric times, males and females had established roles to fulfill, which differed based on biological differences, while being equals as human beings. Yet, for centuries, societies slowly became patriarchal. Equality for the sexes is something the world has still not fully achieved, though this varies from country to country. India, for one, has a long journey to reach equal treatment of the sexes in society. The difference in treatment of each gender in Indian society extends to the household, the workplace and the ideals that they have to uphold.

Firstly, the home is the birthplace of ideas of femininity and masculinity. In the majority of Indian households, children are raised with strictly traditional gender roles. Ironically, in a country with revered goddesses, women are discriminated against just for their gender. Before they are allowed to think, young girls and boys are taught that the kitchen is a place solely for women and that the main purpose of women is to serve men. For example, young girls are expected to serve their brothers and be responsible for their actions, while brothers are expected to protect their sisters. Girls are told that they need to be able to cook, clean and take care of their family to be able to secure a future alliance and to be accepted in society. Men are generally allowed much more freedom and have a greater voice in discussions pertaining to family matters than women do, even if the women contribute to the family financially. After she is married, a woman has to be able to satisfy the demands of both her husband's family and her own. In short, managing the home is largely a woman's domain in traditional Indian society, which includes tasks such as preparing food, taking care of her in-laws and family, and doing household chores.

Secondly, men have a largely passive role as nurturers in the family, but there is immense pressure on them to be the breadwinner of the family. Due to this, education is made more of a priority for boys rather than girls. Men with stable and well-earning jobs are prioritized in marriage over those who are unemployed. Women, on the other hand, are discouraged from pursuing higher education, and thus have lesser scope for a lucrative career. This is why the literacy rate for women is lower than that for men. Some societal mindsets also prevent women from choosing certain career paths, like engineering. Conversely, Indian society believes that the only worthy career men should pursue is engineering, and they have to earn higher than their wives to be 'masculine enough'. This clash of ego between higher-earning wives and their male counterparts, coupled with the difference in wages between men and women is a common issue, especially in corporate environments. The women who do get high-ranking positions are taken less seriously and looked down upon by men despite being equally capable. Women are expected to prioritize their families over their careers and are not encouraged to be financially independent. To be an ideal wife, they must manage their careers and households simultaneously, with little to no support from their husbands or in-laws. The only real issue that married, working men face is the lack of paternity leaves. Overall, the workplace is largely catered towards males, with just a few women placed in high-ranking positions.

Furthermore, there are ideals of behavior that both men and women have to uphold, but beauty standards are harsher for women, the ideal being long hair, fair skin, and a slim figure. In Indian society, women are expected to be compliant, demure, and submissive. Anything less than that is met with judgmental stares and words. They are pressured to get married and have children as early as possible, by not only relatives but the people around them. Men, on the other hand, are expected to be outgoing and strong but are not allowed to express emotions as freely as women are, for the reason that it will emasculate them. Discussion of mental health is taboo for both males and females, but men have a harder time talking about their feelings than women, which is why a lot of their stress and concerns go unnoticed. When they do get noticed, their so-called 'well-wishers' do not empathize with them as much as they do with women. They are expected to tolerate any physical burden and have to be handy in the house, whereas there are no such expectations of women. For example, they need to know how to screw in a lightbulb, repair a car, fix the computer, and kill pests, among many other things. But women are expected to tolerate abuse from their husbands or other relatives, be it emotional, domestic, or sexual. While it is true that women have lesser freedom within their marriages, both men and women are often forced into marriages by their parents, with their own choice disregarded. Asking for dowry from the woman's family is another common problem that leads to unnecessary violence and poverty. Sons have more responsibility for their parents than daughters do, meaning they have to provide for them economically when they are elderly, whereas daughters have to serve their in-laws. Family honor and values are of utmost importance in not only India but also in many south-Asian cultures. Women have to protect their family's honor with chastity and being a good wife and mother; similarly, men have to protect it with being a good provider for their family and passing on the family name. Apart from that, in Indian culture, the birth of a boy is celebrated; the birth of a girl is a burden, which leads to female infanticide in many rural parts of India. Thus, it is inferred that boys are more valued than girls in the eyes of traditional Indians, and women they grow up to be are restricted for such a reason.

Most importantly, the treatment of men and women varies with time, place, culture and religion. In a south-Asian country such as India, many traditional norms of gender still prevail. The household chores are mainly women-dominated, with no burden on men for such tasks, however, their onus is to have a respectable job and earn enough for their family's

needs. The role of men as fathers and their mental health are pressing issues that are often ignored in society, as there is such an emphasis for men to 'man up' or 'be brave'. The fact that both men and women have different roles to play, so they each have issues to face in society, cannot be denied. Thus, one can conclude that the reasons men and women have been treated differently, since the dawn of mankind, were biological, which subsequently evolved to become aspects of culture and society as we know it today.

## Causes and Effects



### Causes of this Killer Virus

Hamad Jassem Al Hammadi

Around the city of Wuhan, where the most comprehensive biological laboratories are built, a new type of coronavirus was identified and classified as a pandemic at the end of 2019. Pandemics are diseases that are spread over the globe exponentially and rapidly, as they appeared historically and continued to the present time. According to Lapan (2020), “Widespread trade created new opportunities for human and animal interactions that sped up to such epidemics. Malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, influenza, smallpox, and others first appeared during these early years (para. 4).” The species of coronavirus were discovered in the 1960s, as they caused respiratory infections. Since 2003, a slight number of viruses were identified, and the most famous between them were: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and COVID-19. The disease is identified through several symptoms such as fever, and shortness of breath. Governments are advising their citizens to stay in their homes in order not to get infected by the plague. However, many countries failed in quarantining the virus from being spread. For instance, Iran was the passageway of transferring infected people towards the gulf. Similarly, Italy was the center of virus transmission in Europe. The Coronavirus outbreak was a result of multiple factors such as the transmission of viruses from eating animals, human to human transmission, in addition to the preparation of other nations in receiving the infected.

One of the reasons behind the outbreak of the coronavirus is the transmission mode of the virus from animals to humans. COVID-19 is classified as a zoonotic disease, which is a plague that begins the transmission of viruses from animals to humans. The pandemic started spreading from the food market of the Chinese city Wuhan, where livestock is sold. However, most of the suspect cases were from the minority of the Chinese people that may

have an abnormal trait of feeding on exotic animals that are sold in illegal food markets. Research by Weston and Standaert (2020) states that “Animals sold in these markets are often kept in filthy conditions and left to fester in their own waste, which means they incubate diseases that can then spill into human populations” (para. 8). When abnormal animals from different habitats are collected and kept in a close environment, a considerable risk of developing a deadly virus might occur (Westcott, 2020, para. 11). Before the breakout, the Chinese laws allowed the trade of wildlife animals because of the usages of these animals in different fields of medicine. However, some of these animals should have been banned from their dangerous traits. For instance, bats are known to carry diseases that can lead to epidemics, and such diseases include AIDS, Ebola, and Coronavirus. When bats carry the pathogens, they do not show any signs of them. Science Daily (2018) Asserts that “Scientists find that in bats, an antiviral immune pathway called the STING-interferon pathway is dampened, and bats can maintain just enough defense against illness without triggering a heightened immune reaction” (para. 2). Furthermore, merchants may sell these animals to laboratories, but secretly trading them somewhere else to improve their welfare, which indeed assisted the spread of the disease.

Another reason behind the pandemic of the coronavirus is the human to human mode of transmission. Experts in virology advice the public to follow a proper set of hygiene instructions. The disease is not airborne and tends to transfer from one human being to the other by Sneezing and letting the droplets contact the other person’s mouth, or nose (Osler, 2020, p. 18). Nowadays, individuals are less aware when rubbing their eyes or touching their face without understanding that the virus is transmitted through intermediaries such as surfaces. COVID-19 can remain contagious on surfaces at room temperatures up to 9 days, and up to 28 days at 4 degree Celsius (Kampf, et al., 2020, para. 7). Moreover, when places are overcrowded, exposure to the infected can happen regularly because of the close contact of individuals passing by each other. Some countries may restrict visits to public places in order to prevent the disease from spreading rapidly. For instance, Saudi Arabia’s prince has announced a curfew in order to diminish the number of people infected. However, other countries such as the United States or Italy failed to limit the crowding in public places such as airports and malls where the pandemic could be quickly spread. Statistics show that the issue of limiting the crowding in urban has caused the United States to register more than 100,000 cases in less than one week (Smith, et al., 2020, para. 1). Most of the countries will consider the closure of places where crowding occurs to endure the outbreak and prevent the cases from spreading until patients are appropriately treated.

Poor preparation abroad is considered as one of the significant factors behind the coronavirus outbreak. Medical preparations are one form of measurement that a country should take into action. Shortages in equipment and professionals in the field of medicine could cause the illness to be quickly spread. For example, Italy has not expected to view a hasty increase in the number of infected, and they had scarce medical supplies to contain the patients. According to Baker and Mahbubani (2020), “Healthcare workers in the country have reported severe shortages of medical equipment and hospital beds, and an increasing number of medical staff members have gotten infected (para. 5).” China sent medical kits to Italy to reinforce its medical capabilities. However, Italy started witnessing a rising number of cases by the time they received the packaging because of the overwhelming number of patients waiting for their treatment. Furthermore, developed countries tend to enforce strict guidelines when receiving tourists in order to decide either they quarantine themselves for 14 days or continue where they are headed. As a matter of fact, UAE tried to endure the outbreak by screening travelers arriving in Dubai and Abu Dhabi’s airports by checking for temperatures in a specific range of fever (Osler, 2020, p. 125), and other nations used

different approaches. However, the most vulnerable countries are the undeveloped countries that do not possess modern technologies and health care systems to aid them in identifying ill people. Moreover, delay in releasing laws that are related to closures, and quarantine contains potential risks to the society as the people could be roaming through the cities and spreading the disease in public spaces. Generally, when decisions are delayed, the number of infected individuals could increment rapidly. Scientists have approximated that if proper measurements of separating the infected are not implemented, then every person with the coronavirus could infect between 1.5 and 3.5 people (Osler, 2020, p. 13).

In conclusion, virus transmission from animals to humans, virus transmission through humans, and inadequate preparation abroad led to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in 2020. Infections began from trading ill animals that are kept in unclean environments, and these animals start transmitting the viruses when humans consume them. Additionally, mode of transmission slightly differs in humans as it is transferred from one individual to the other by direct contact or through mediators. Moreover, poor precautions by countries when either having a shortage of medical supplies or delaying the release of lockdowns allowed the infected to spread the disease towards public places hastily. In order to cope with the situation, the World Health Organization (WHO) is inviting all the countries to stand against humankind's greatest challenge. Most of the developed countries are sending medical aids worldwide to prevent the disease from extending aggressively. Leaders are requesting support from their people to follow their directions attentively in this dreadful situation. Functional vaccines to cure the illness are not developed yet. However, avoiding the disease and quarantining is preferable instead of expecting a vaccine to be produced.

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## **Haitian Earthquake's Causes**

Saud Al Mutawa

Fear, death, damage, and displacement were all signs of the horrendous earthquake that took place in Haiti on January 12, 2010, recording a magnitude of 7.1 on the Richter scale. More than 200,000 individuals were reported to have been killed, 1.5 million people became homeless, and 280,000 buildings were destroyed (Pallardy, 2018). The earthquake was caused by the buildup of stress along the conservative plate margin between the North American plate and the Caribbean plate. The capital city of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, was the most affected area as it was situated 25 km southwest from the epicenter of the earthquake, resulting in the destruction of 60% of its infrastructure. At least 52 aftershocks had been documented on January 24, all weighing intensities of 4.5 or higher. Haiti's 2010 earthquake is considered to be one of the most destructive hazards in the world due to its devastating economic, social, and environmental impacts.

To begin with, the economic development of Haiti was diminished by the destruction of its agricultural sector. Despite the fact that Haiti has been always regarded as one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, its GDP had experienced an increase from \$11.6 billion in 2008 to \$11.9 billion in 2009, which indicates that the economy was previously heading in the right direction until the earthquake, unfortunately, led to its decline. The agricultural sector which Haiti's economy mainly depends on was severely affected by the earthquake. Food production declined after the earthquake due to the destruction of roads, irrigation systems, fishing ports as well as bridges. This affected nearly half of Haiti's population, estimated between 5 to 6 million Haitians that live in rural areas (Waburton, 2011).

Furthermore, the earthquake showed new trends in government expenditure. Prior to the earthquake, the government had put efforts to increase food production, reforest exposed hillsides and adopt measures to prevent flooding; however, this stopped after the earthquake took place as more focus was put in addressing people's vital needs. By losing one of its biggest sources of income - agriculture - the government faced difficulties in investing in infrastructure and providing essential services.

In addition, the apparel and tourism industries were also severely affected by the earthquake. Haiti was best known for its manufacturing sector that specialized in the production of clothing. It was listed as the 17th biggest supplier of US apparel industry in 2008, with exports generating around \$412 million (Amadeo, 2018). Due to the effects of the earthquake, many workers in the industrial sector were adversely affected, resulting in higher levels of unemployment. On the other hand, efforts to use tourism as an economic driver were disrupted by the earthquake, and that included the establishment of new hotels, the arrival of cruise ships, and the availability of international airlines services to the country. This further delayed Haiti from stepping out of its categorization as one of the highly indebted poor countries (Curley, 2017). This is a noteworthy issue since the earthquake struck at a time when the economy was beginning to revive, in turn impeding any progress Haiti had made to develop its economy and relieve its population from poverty.

Moreover, apart from the economic effects, the earthquake had adverse social impacts such as poor living conditions and the spread of diseases. It was reported in the local media that roughly 3 million individuals were impacted by the earthquake, accounting for approximately one-third of Haiti's total population. Of these, 1.5 million became homeless in the aftermath and had to relocate to crowded and disorganized encampments within Port-au-Prince during the months following the earthquake (Pallardy, 2018). Problems started to arise in camping sites as a result of inadequate sanitation and water supplies. Even worse, other issues such as sexual assault were becoming prevalent due to lack of security, minimal privacy, and unavailability of light on the campsite. Women were essentially left vulnerable without the protection of their spouses after the earthquake. In addition, the provision of sanitation was inadequate and the encampments were shortly inundated with human excrement. There was only a single delivery of potable water each week, and thus individuals were compelled to drink untreated water leading to adverse consequences on their health following the crisis.

As a result of unsanitary conditions, many diseases such as malaria, dysentery, and drug-resistant tuberculosis spread among Haiti's poverty-stricken populace. The first situation of cholera took place in October 2010. More than 6,900 deaths associated with the disease occurred on November 2011 and more than 500,000 incidents were reported (Garrington, 2012). The elders and the youth were the most susceptible to waterborne disease, which was transmitted through bacteria spotted in the feces of infected individuals. Problems involving dehydration and diarrhea could not be addressed due to the shortage of health workers and underfunded healthcare system. The lack of available clean potable water and issues regarding the disposal of human waste resulted in the disease becoming endemic.

Lastly, The earthquake has created many detrimental environmental problems in Haiti. The sanitation of Haiti's drinking water has worsened after the earthquake and the food supply continued to deplete. These complications were exacerbated by earlier environmental issues, such as deforestation and intensive logging since the 1950s. Intensive logging has led to the decline of Haiti's forest cover from 60% to fewer than 2% today (Dover, 2010). The absence of vegetation cover gave rise to soil erosion problems, which resulted in a higher incidence of floods, pollution of clean water supply and the erosion of available arable land. In addition, the change in soil structure and the removal of loose soil particles increased the frequency of landslides. Haiti's rapid population growth, which is increasing by 2.5% every year, has

amplified the negative impacts of environmental degradation (Dover, 2010). This has forced many Haitians into marginal locations such as floodplains, which could have better been utilized for generating crops and profit. For instance, most of the fertile land areas were deployed for slums, while steep lands and hillsides, susceptible to erosion, were utilized for cultivating crops.

Another grave environmental issue is the buildup of mass graves and the neglect of corpses, which is a great public nuisance due to the mass biodegradation of flesh in anoxic conditions. Corpses trapped in buildings were left to decay under humid and high heat conditions, while only identified bodies were buried in mass grave. Worsening the problem to a further extent, the chemical constituents of the corpses along with microorganisms degrading them have contaminated both ground and surface water. Clean water supplies have been also severely depleted due to pollution. The destructions of slums and poorly built buildings by the earthquake have resulted in higher levels of debris and rubble entrance in the already contaminated waterways. Other side effects to the intensity of polluted water supplies are heightened levels of cholera outbreaks.

In conclusion, Haiti's 2010 earthquake had destructive economic, social, and environmental consequences. In terms of the economic impacts, the agricultural sector that Haiti's economy thrived upon suffered major losses along with its important manufacturing and tourism industries. On the other hand, social problems such as homelessness, lack of security and the outbreak of various diseases have been exacerbated. Environmental issues involving soil degradation, inadequate sanitation, and water pollution became prominent. The consequences of this earthquake is a reminder that governments should implement better management strategies and prepare their populations in case of any catastrophic potential hazards. Many of the issues that had risen after the earthquake were a result of the country's vulnerability and the problems that the government neglected to act upon prior to the earthquake. Haiti's susceptibility to the impacts of the earthquake could have been minimized through the enforcement of better building codes, accessible services, and effective interaction with relief and aid organizations.

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## AUS Student Stress

Khalid Ali

You have made every effort to survive this excruciating week, and it is finally Thursday. You plop down on the couch and rest your eyes for what seems to be a few minutes of peaceful solitude. Suddenly, it is already Saturday night. You begin to drown in thoughts about all the stress you will have to endure and the deadlines you will have to meet in the next few days. Anxiety and worry flood your system as you attempt to keep them out with no avail. For many students, simply being able to make it through the week is an achievement on its own. It seems to be an inevitable cycle of worrying about exams, stressing about grades, and panicking about deadlines. Almost half of all undergraduate students surveyed in the 2013 edition of the National Health College Assessment reported having extreme stress (Applebury, n.d). The stress which university students experience is often caused by different forms of pressure; academic, social and financial.

Academic pressure tends to be the most prominent cause of stress, especially for freshmen. This is because freshmen are not readily equipped for the transition from high-school to university. The change in the pace of the professors, the heaps of work compiling all at once, and the never-ending list of assignments all contribute to making studying a whole lot harder than what it already is. As a freshman myself, I have had a continuous stream of exams for an entire month, and that was excluding the weekly quizzes. This intense

workload barely leaves any breathing room for students, hence causing them to stress about not being able to keep up with the workload. Furthermore, new university students are inexperienced with scheduling, as high-schools tend to already have a readymade timetable with set times in which students must perform certain tasks. To succeed in university, students must schedule their work and organize their priorities. This newfound responsibility on their shoulders could act as another factor of stress. Moreover, to deal with the high workload, students try to study as frequently as possible, however, not all students manage their studying efficiently. For instance, a lot of students tend to study in big groups, and often students will find themselves spending countless hours trying to study but either getting distracted or not taking in much information. This leads to them feeling like studying is pointless and causes them to stress about not knowing how to perform as required. Despite there being many students that try to study hard, some students lie in the complete opposite end of the spectrum. They would find any reason to delay studying, causing what is infamously known as procrastination. A study conducted in the US discovered that 80% to 95% of students regularly procrastinate (Cherry. 2019). Procrastination leads to issues such as being incredibly overwhelmed and having to pull all-nighters, resulting in high-stress levels. Even though some can work well under stress, a lot fail to do so, causing a significant drop in their academic level and a rise in their stress levels as they need to put in even more work to compensate.

Moreover, students also experience a lot of social pressure, which is not necessarily related to academics. Social pressure may be due to a lot of factors, one of which is the rivalry between friends. With the constant examinations that students undergo, comparison between friends is bound to occur, causing students to worry about falling behind. Another factor would be connecting with others; students worry about not being able to make many friends, which in turn causes them to feel the need to attend as many events as possible. This is a major issue, especially for new students, as it causes them to fail in balancing their social and academic life. Additionally, social pressure may be caused by the student's family, who tend to have very high expectations for their child. This is since they are the ones paying for their child's tuition, so they would not want their money to be "going to waste". However, these high standards could have a negative impact, and students may stress about disappointing their parents. This type of stress is likely to worsen academic performance and grades. According to the ACHA, more than 25% of students reported that stress levels have lowered their grades or hindered their abilities to complete a course (Carlson. 2016). Other factors of social pressure may be group projects, which prove to bring a whole new source of stress. One may end up in an ideal group with hard-working members, but this is seldom the case. You could find yourself feeling pressured by other group members to do more than you can do, causing you to feel as though you are not working at their level of performance. On the other hand, the roles could be reversed: being the hard-working member with group members who do not put nearly as much effort is a difficult scenario to be in. It can lead to a large amount of stress as well as an increased workload all landing on your shoulders, as you would need to handle the responsibilities of other members to ensure your grades do not suffer.

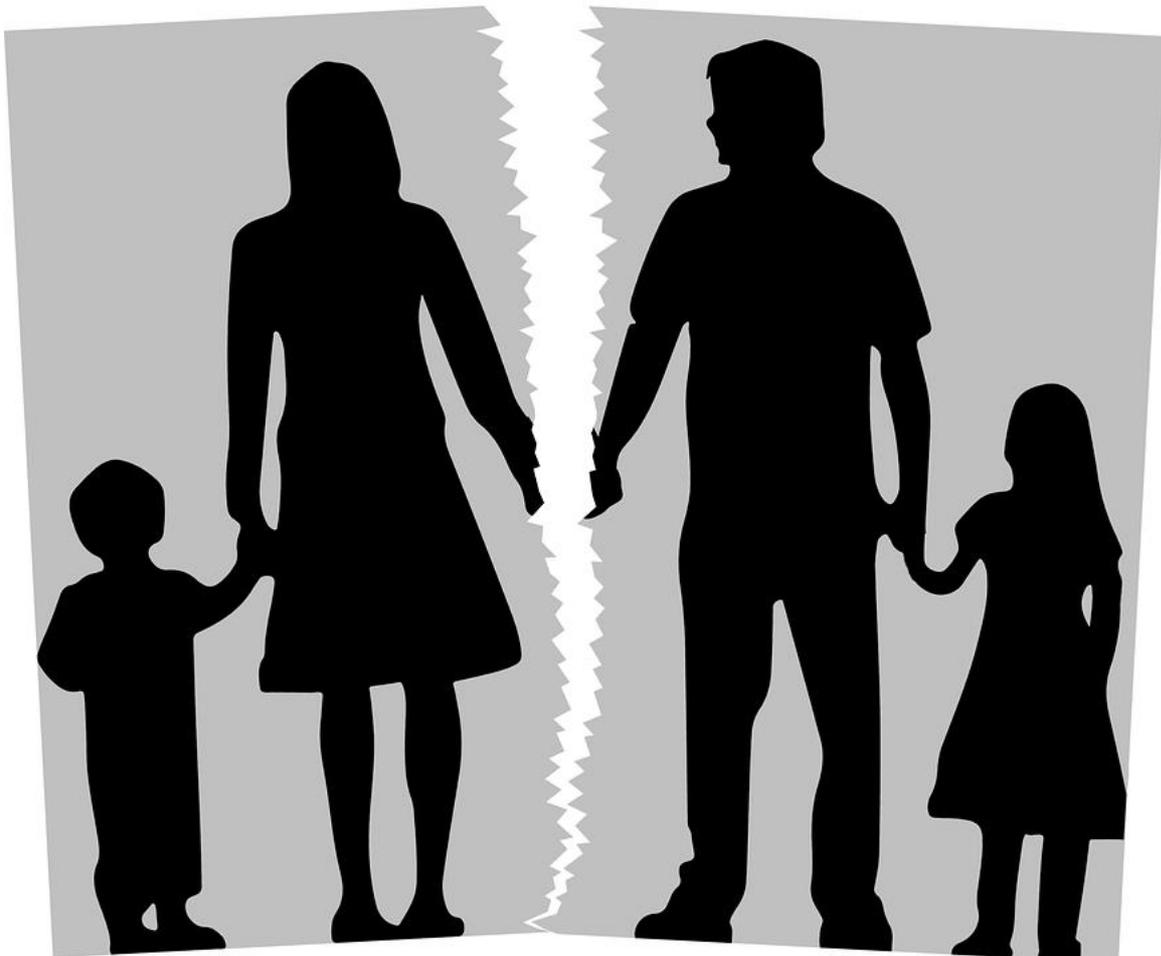
A prime cause of stress for people in general, regardless of who they are, is financial pressure. Not everyone can afford to pay the expensive tuition fees, hence why many resort to student loans. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as of the end of 2018, there is \$1.47 trillion of student loan debt in the US (Chiwaya, 2019). The issue with student loan debts is the fact that it acts as a life-long source of stress. Once a student graduates, they are left trying to pay off debts over the next 20 years or so. Although there are some financial support systems such as grants or scholarships that give students discounts off tuition fees,

they come with drawbacks of their own. Scholarship students are expected to maintain a certain high GPA. Dropping below the required GPA puts them at risk of losing their scholarship, thus forcing them to pay the absurdly high tuition fees from their own pockets. This means that for students, their only options are between studying hard or losing their opportunity at a university education. Though it is possible to maintain a high GPA by working hard, for some that may require sacrificing emotional and mental well-being, as well as their social life. In addition to maintaining a high GPA, some scholarship institutions require students to complete many hours of mandatory volunteering work to keep the scholarship. Although this may be helpful in terms of providing students with new experiences, it can prove to be another source of stress when it is forced onto someone with hardly any free time.

University students are pressured in different forms; academically due to high workloads, socially due to expectations of surrounding people, and financially due to expensive university costs. Despite all this, there are ways for students to overcome or reduce the stress they are facing. This can be done through counseling, which is readily available for students on most campuses, or exercising regularly along with keeping a healthy mentality. Universities can help reduce stress even further by reducing the difficulty of courses for freshmen to help make the transition into university a little easier.

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### **Silence, Violence, and Money: Key Factors Behind Marital Disruptions**

Nadia Altaf

We have often heard of the phrases 'soulmates' and 'eternal love' before. In many cultures, marriage is seen as a sacred bond lasting for eternity. This belief has lasted even until today. However, it is naive to believe that the person we find is 'the one'. Hence, falling out of love is an inevitable truth for many individuals around the world. The rates of divorce are higher than ever, with around 40% of marriages ending in divorce, and roughly 2,419,196 divorces per year in the US alone (Wilkenson & Finkbeiner, n.d.). The issues that lead up to divorce are not limited to monogamous, but also affects polygamous and same-sex marriages. So, this begs the question: why do marriages sever in the first place? What causes a union deemed so everlasting to break with such alarming frequency? Although many life-changing decisions are circumstantial, the causes of divorce are largely based on lack of open communication, abusive partners in relationships and financial struggles.

Firstly, the main reason for divorce is the lack of communication. The incompatibility of the partners, by arranged marriages or otherwise, is to blame. This can come from the clash of different cultures and beliefs, where none of them are willing to express and establish middle ground. The unwillingness to communicate is also because they are scared of or not ready for the commitments that a long-lasting marriage demands. This is why one or both spouses cheat, which often leads to divorce. Everyone tends to put on their best behavior

before marriage. So, a lot of dating couples have a set of preconceived notions and expectations of their partners, which is difficult to combat without talking about what they want. This leads to misunderstandings, mistrust, and resentment when their expectations are not met. Many important issues, such as assignment of duties and work, fertility issues, and family planning, are not properly discussed before or after marriage. Spouses also often struggle with setting boundaries and making compromises, a problem that being dishonest with one's spouse exacerbates. Not being vocal enough about concerns they have in the relationship causes an overall dissatisfaction with their marriage, which leads to a large number of couples divorcing. Thus, one of the factors for divorce is the lack of communication, effort, and compromise made by one or both partners in the relationship.

Secondly, the increasing number of reports of domestic violence among spouses only prove abusive partners to be another cause for the breakdown of a marriage. The lack of healthy communication and disagreements can stem from abusive partners. While men are the key initiators of said abuse, women also abuse their spouses, though it remains largely unreported. The reasons for abuse are primarily related to the personality of the abuser and the abused. Narcissistic and sociopathic personality types are prone to exerting physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse, whether the individuals are male or female. The problem is aggravated when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (Calvete, 2008). Abusers go to any extent to get what they want, and families are destroyed once they turn to illicit methods to sustain their addiction. The egos of one or both partners can get in the way of a healthy relationship and lead to verbal abuse, as they are just trying to safeguard their interests rather than their marriage. Culture and society can also play a part in the extent of how far abuse is tolerated. For example, in South-Asian and Southeast-Asian cultures, it is mostly acceptable for men to hit their wives, and women are expected to bear the pain this inflicts. Mental health issues that are linked to abuse is a secondary cause that deteriorates the marriage. If one of the partners has panic disorder or depression, for example, they need more support from their loved ones, which their significant other does not provide. It takes a toll on both the victim and their partner to the point where divorce is a better solution for both. To conclude, abusive partners and the consequences they bring along with their behavior threaten the harmony of the marriage.

Thirdly, financial constraints are a leading cause of divorce amongst middle-class couples. A reason for this could be the fact that many people have a difficult time finding the balance between their professional lives and their personal lives, and so they sacrifice their career growth, which affects the family. Here, the lack of communication and opposing personality types also play a role in money related- fights, especially when it comes to what to spend money on and how much (McWhinney, 2019). Granted, money is not the only aspect of a successful marriage and family, but it is important to sustain them. An ulterior motive many have in marrying their spouses is to use them for their wealth, which is ultimately not beneficial to the marriage in the long run. Once their partners suffer from financial difficulties, their selfishness decides that they are not being provided enough. Such people are usually the ones who have expectations of their partners that are too high. For example, many wives nag their husbands to spend money on whatever they desire, even if she earns herself. This is true for the other side as well, where some husbands expect their wives to earn lesser than them, or not to work at all. These expectations, more often than not, are not met and thus costs the marriage. For some couples, it is a mutual decision to part as they would be more financially stable. For more still, it is out of desperation to be able to provide as much for their children as possible, even if it means cutting ties with their spouses. Altogether, financial issues, such as burdening one partner or not having enough money for

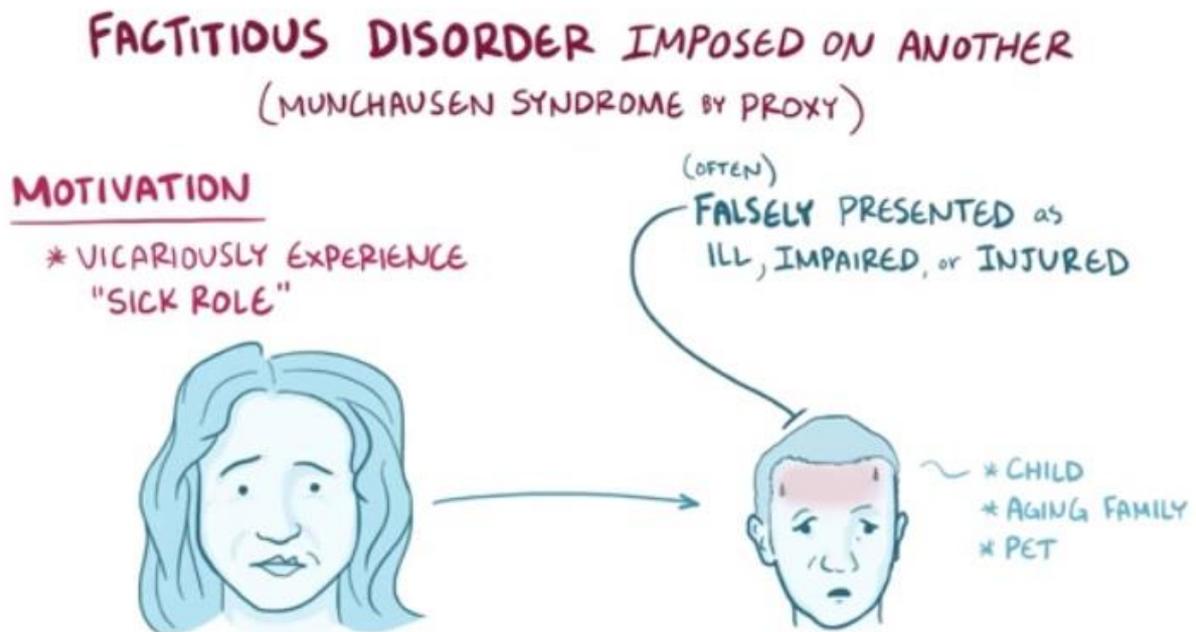
the children, negatively impacts the marriage, whether they were present before the marriage or not.

There is always a rational solution or prevention, no matter the cause. It may seem obvious, but a way to prevent misunderstandings and mistrust is to communicate clearly what you need and what you expect of your partner to arrange an appropriate compromise. Being open to communication in the first place is key to keeping most interpersonal problems at bay. Fixing an abusive partner's behavior is certainly more difficult than preventing yourself from being trapped in such a relationship. Therefore, it is best to be aware of the traits of abusers and get to know your partner fully before being committed to the relationship. Some ways to prevent financial problems to affect your relationship is to settle debts, establish the roles of both partners financially, and to not let your ego get in the way. Lastly, it should be noted that such causes usually do not happen in isolation. They are all interlinked, and it is often-times the culmination of these events that lead to divorce. Marriage is never about perfect partners; rather, it is a perfect balance of love, understanding, and continual efforts from both sides. Thus, it can be said that the minds of people change over time, so it takes immense dedication to keep a union of two very different souls intact.

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## The Curious Case of Hannah: A Causal Analysis Essay on Factitious Disorder

Danyah Khan

It is Hannah's fifth week in hospital when the nurse finds her seizing in her room. Her body convulses uncontrollably, muscles jerking – it looks deceptively real. Her sister frantically rushes in as nurses crowd the bed, systemically adding to the chemicals already in Hannah's veins. However, the situation is not as dire as it seems: unbeknownst to everyone in the room, Hannah suffers from Factitious Disorder (FD). She mimics symptoms of the psychosis she claims to have, often exaggerating her condition and leaving doctors confused when her unpredictable symptoms do not seem to respond to treatment. But what causes Hannah to behave in this way? Because FD can have devastating consequences, early recognition and treatment is essential. Therefore, identification of its causes is crucial. These include a history of trauma and illness, desire for the attention given to the "sick role," direct exposure to situations involving severely ill patients, and the rewards that come as a consequence of feigned symptoms.

The predisposing cause of FD is rooted in experiences and conditions which leave a patient feeling mentally unstable, abandoned and neglected. This may be a traumatic experience after which a patient did not receive the adequate response from loved ones. Such cases can include emotional, physical or sexual abuse (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2019). Hannah's childhood experience of sexual abuse scarred her. Her relationships crumbled, leaving her detached from her surroundings and insecure when coping with stress. She now feigns symptoms as a maladaptive coping strategy to attract the attention she needed then. Additionally, a pre-existing mental illness may leave a patient more susceptible to developing the disorder; this includes personality disorders and depression. To illustrate, Smith (2019)

highlighted that approximately 42% of FD patients suffer from coexisting depression (Prevalence and Causes section, para.2). Social isolation and family dysfunction may also contribute, as such cases can lead to a lack of social support from the person's surroundings. Consequently, they are left feeling neglected and isolated. The emotions resulting from traumatic experiences or mental illness may follow someone with FD into later life, surfacing as a need to fake symptoms since the patient seeks the attention they still crave.

While trauma and illness increase susceptibility to FD, its principal cause is an intense desire for attention or a fascination with deceiving others – to patients, the most effective way to achieve this is through the “sick role.” The first reason for this perception is a past experience where the patient has acclimatized to receiving concern from others. For example, this can occur if a person has previously suffered from chronic or severe illness (Smith, 2019). In Hannah's case, she suffered from a chronic kidney condition and would spend months hospitalized to receive the necessary care. Following recovery, in a desperate attempt to regain the attention and care she had become accustomed to, she began to fake the symptoms of chronic kidney disease. The second reason FD patients may mimic illness is linked to parental neglect during childhood, which can lead them to later act upon these unresolved issues due to repressed anger (Smith, 2019). Therefore, patients may attempt to mislead parents as a means of seeking revenge for issues that were not addressed during childhood and which left the child feeling disregarded. They therefore use deceit as a coping strategy that attracts attention or delude others.

The precipitating cause of FD is exposure to situations where the sick receive attention. Sometimes this is linked to working in a healthcare environment. For example, working in hospital as a doctor, nurse or even pharmacist can trigger FD symptoms since the person is constantly surrounded by sick patients (“Overview of Factitious Disorder,” 2017). In Hannah's case, she interns as a nursing student at the local hospital. A career in the healthcare profession provides the perfect environment for her to be tempted by the attention towards patients she views every day. Moreover, it allows her to have excessive knowledge about medical conditions; this enables her to make her symptoms appear as convincing as possible. These factors can trigger the development or relapse of the disorder, as it increases the chances of a patient successfully deluding others. Furthermore, patients may be in such situations when they are closely familiar with someone receiving care and attention. According to Smith (2019), this can include instances in which a close relative suffers from an illness. Hannah's sister, for example, has anorexia nervosa. As a consequence, Hannah sometimes feels subconsciously envious of her sister's “limelight,” and thus fakes the same symptoms to receive similar attention. As a result, being in a situation where other patients are receiving care can encourage patients such as Hannah to exhibit the same types of symptoms.

Finally, the perpetuating cause of FD is the rewarding emotions the patient experiences due to fabricating or inducing symptoms. Patients may feel satisfied by the attention they receive when family and friends visit; this acts as positive reinforcement that encourages them to continue their deception (Smith, 2019). Since childhood, Hannah had been craving attention and sympathy from those closest to her. Now she is finally receiving it. As a consequence, she continues to overexaggerate and fake her symptoms in a desperate attempt to maintain this attention and to avoid a supposed recovery. Secondly, patients may find a reward in observing a previous attachment being rekindled or recreated. For example, if they suffered from severe illness during childhood, they may have developed a close attachment to a nurse or a doctor (Smith, 2019). Thus, by faking a prior illness, FD patients such as Hannah are able to recreate the same relationships. If they are successful, they will

continue exhibiting symptoms in order to maintain this relationship – this may especially be the case if there was a lack of other attachment figures during childhood.

In conclusion, it is essential to investigate the causes of FD in order to treat it. Factors such as Hannah's traumatic experiences in childhood can increase susceptibility to developing the disorder; however, craving for attention is the main motive behind it. Situations such as working in a healthcare environment can trigger the onset of symptoms, while the consequent gratifying emotions are what keep the patient locked in this cycle. FD can have serious consequences because of unnecessary and dangerous tests or treatment, self-harm, or even death. Thus, additional funding and research is necessary to further understand the causes and characteristics of FD so that more effective treatments can be designed.

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## Advertising Analysis



### Smoking Kills the Ocean

Ramzi Al Sharawi

“It’s our collective and individual responsibility to ... tend to the world in which we live in.” As the days pass by, and as the situation of environments around the globe worsens, this quote from the current Dalai Lama becomes more and more relevant to the current predicament humanity finds itself in. Seas filled with waste, deteriorating air quality due to toxic gas emissions, and greater frequencies of natural disasters are all a result of how badly humans, over the past few decades, have treated the environment. As a result, many institutions and groups have decided to raise awareness on some of these issues, in order to convince people to take better care of the environment. One of these institutions is the ‘Sea Shepherd Conservation Society’, which released a print ad on sea pollution in June, 2019, urging readers to become more aware of the impact their actions have on marine life. This print ad is very striking, and does a great job in convincing the reader to stop polluting the oceans. The use of logos, pathos, and ethos in the ad helps make it convincing to the reader, with such advertising techniques appealing to the reader emotionally, logically, and ethically.

In order for the reader to gain a better understanding of the purpose of the ad, some background information on Sea Shepherd is needed. The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) is a non-profit organization based in Oregon that aims to protect marine life. As stated on their website, their mission is to “... defend, conserve and protect the seas and marine wildlife like no organization can.” To achieve their mission, they have established independent

entities in over 20 countries, and continuously collaborate with communities and governments to stop illegal and harmful activities that affect marine life. In addition, they also aim to raise awareness of their mission to the general public, so as to attract more volunteers and to continue to protect marine life (SSCS, *Our Story*, 2019.)

This ad is mainly directed to people that smoke, although it can also be generalized to include people that litter. For years, the negative effects of smoking on smokers and non-smokers alike have been neglected. Recently, it has been shown that non-smokers who breathe cigarette smoke are affected just as badly by the smoke as smokers, with the health of the lungs of both sets of people almost just as bad. As awareness about the negative effects of smoking grew, people became hesitant to get into smoking, and the amount of people smoking decreased, although there are still a lot of people that currently that smoke. Littering, on the other hand, has just as bad of an effect on societies and the environment. Littering in oceans has a negative effect on the drinking quality of water and can lead to the death of many forms of aquatic life. As a result, people have aimed to raise awareness on the negative effects of littering as well. The print ad by SSCS cleverly uses both of these issues to their advantage, so as to emotionally connect with the reader. Littering and smoking have negatively affected people for years, so when I looked at the striking image in the ad and saw how littering and smoking affects animals as well, I felt a sense of sympathy for them, and felt the need to do something to help them, and I imagined that other readers of the ad would've felt the same feeling. The fact that the print ad mentioned SSCS in the form of its logo encouraged me to research about them, to read more about their mission, and to see what interested people could do to help aquatic life impacted by such issues.

When looking at the ad, the reader first notices the striking image that takes up all of the ad: a picture of a pelican struggling in an orange and white oil spill, which matches the color of cigarette butts. The pelican is soaked in the oil spill, with white colored liquid dripping from its wings and orange colored liquid dripping from its legs. With its mouth wide open, it looks as if it's calling for help, which creates a distressing image for the reader to see. Surrounding the struggling pelican are rocks and land to its left and right, and the ocean directly behind it. All over the land surrounding the pelican are cigarette butts, while the rocks around the pelican are also covered with white liquid from the oil spill. Behind the pelican, the gloomy sky can be seen, along with a small mountain in the distance. Accompanying the image of the distressed pelican is the title of the ad, which says: "Smoking kills the ocean." Below the title, there are a few lines of text which say: "One cigarette butt can pollute up to 500 liters of water. Every year, billions of cigarette butts end up in the ocean." Finally, below the few lines of text is the organization's logo, which is a skull that is protected by Poseidon's trident and a shepherd's staff which are crossed together in the shape of an 'X', with the name of the organization 'Sea Shepherd' mentioned directly below the logo. (SSCS, 2019.)

The main advertising technique used in this ad is pathos, which is the appeal to one's emotions. The main source of pathos within the ad is the image of the distressed pelican. The manner in which the pelican opens its mouth makes it clear that it is calling for anyone to help it, including the reader. The way in which the pelican is struggling creates a feeling of guilt and remorse within the reader, making them feel that it is their fault that the pelican finds itself in such a bad situation. That feeling of guilt is reinforced through the many cigarette butts that the pelican is surrounded by, and through the color of the oil spill in which the pelican finds itself in being the color of a cigarette butt, as such things are a result of people not taking care of their surroundings. This would make the reader feel at least partially responsible and make them want to help the pelican in any way they can. Also, the ad cleverly uses a pelican in the image, as opposed to any other animal. This is as pelicans are predators of many forms of marine life, such as fish. This makes the reader wonder: if a predator is struggling as a result

of throwing cigarette butts into the ocean, what about the prey? Furthermore, underlining the title “smoking kills the ocean” helps emphasize the importance of that statement, with the use of the word ‘kills’ highlighting to the reader the seriousness of the issue, and making them feel the need to act quickly.

The ad also uses logos, which is the appeal to one’s sense of logic. Although the ad scarcely uses text, the weight of what the facts in the text say place a heavy burden on the reader’s mind, and substitutes the need for a large number of facts. Logos is present in the ad through the use of numbers, such as when it is stated that “one cigarette butt can pollute up to 500 liters of water.” (SSCS, 2019.) The use of numbers in this case helps support the serious tone of the ad, with the reader then wondering to themselves: if only one cigarette butt can pollute up to 500 liters of water, how many liters of water are polluted due to cigarette butts? Also, how many liters of water are polluted due to other forms of litter, such as plastic? This fact ensures that readers are aware of just how serious the issue is, as it is surprising that something as small as a cigarette butt, which is found all around the pelican in the print ad, can pollute 500 liters of water. The other line of text in the ad makes clear to the reader just how many cigarette butts are thrown into the ocean every year, as it says: “Every year, billions of cigarette butts end up in the ocean” (SSCS, 2019.) This statement, coupled with the statement above it, clarifies to the reader just how detrimental polluting the ocean with cigarette butts is, with the fact that billions of cigarette butts end up polluting the ocean every year showing that, according to what was said previously, at least 500,000,000,000 liters of water are polluted every year! This makes the reader feel that they need to do something to help, and convinces them to avoid throwing litter into oceans and to raise awareness on this issue.

The final advertising technique used in the ad is ethos, which is the appeal to one’s sense of trust or good faith. Through raising awareness on this issue to the reader, the SSCS portrays itself to the reader as an organization with good intentions. The SSCS works to protect marine life from illegal and harmful practices by working with governments and other organizations, which makes it seem like the hero in a movie, rather than the villain, which convinces the reader that the SSCS can be trusted. It also makes the reader think that if the SSCS are raising awareness on such an issue, it must be a serious issue that needs a lot of attention. Ethos is also used in the ad through SSCS’s logo; the skull in the logo represents the death of marine animals caused by humans, while the presence of Poseidon’s trident and a shepherd’s staff indicates to the reader that they care about the ocean, just like Poseidon, who is the Greek god of the seas, and that they aim to protect their herd, which in this case is all marine animals, just like a shepherd would. This builds a trustworthy bond between the reader and the organization, encouraging the reader to listen to what the SSCS has to say.

SSCS’s print ad does a great job in convincing the reader of their message, which is to stop polluting the oceans and the environment in general. Although the ad may seem simple at first glance, logos, ethos, and pathos are used subtly throughout, tugging at the reader’s emotional strings and making it easier for SSCS to convince the reader about their message. If other organizations were to follow suit and make ads, like SSCS’s, that raise awareness on important world issues such as hunger, climate change, and homelessness, there is no doubt that people would work on solving such issues which would make our planet a much better place to live.



## Feel Right at Home

Tala Al Abweh

Have you ever been on a really long flight? What was the thing that annoyed you the most throughout that flight? Although answers to these questions may vary, the majority of the people can agree on one thing. That is, the seats are usually very uncomfortable and the space very cramped; which in turn makes sleeping on said flight almost impossible. *Malaysia Airlines* was able to recognise this common annoyance among travellers and use it to their advantage. In *December 2012*, the airline released an advertisement portraying the comfort in their flights, and visually comparing the comfort in their seats to that in a large bed with silk sheets. The ad was well thought out and delivered a very persuasive image. It cleverly used the three persuading techniques: logos, pathos and ethos, while focussing more on the play of emotions, to convey the message to the consumers.

The advertisement depicts a woman, wearing what appears to be a blazer, and sleeping calmly on a large bed with burgundy & grey, silky sheets. One could notice a hint of a smile lingering on her face while she is asleep, indicating the satisfaction this flight has given her. Moreover, several lighted candles can be seen in the corner giving off a dim light and adding to the atmosphere of relaxation the advertisers are trying to sell. To make the concept of flying more obvious, the image included a noticeable view of the sky seen from a large window. The reader can clearly see the moon and stars lighting up the dark blue night sky, along with the plane's wing resting right above a sea of clouds. These illustrations are compiled to form an indirect visual metaphor for the consumer, which goes hand in hand with the title of this ad "Feel Right At Home." Simply, the advertisers are trying to convey that the feeling of comfort and familiarity one can see in this picture, is what one would experience on their flight.

The previously described picture takes up slightly more than two thirds of the space in the advertisement. The rest of the space is filled with text giving more information related to the seating in the plane and the airline itself. A little below the top right corner, the title of the campaign is written in all capital letters and bigger font than the rest of the text. That is to bring attention to the main purpose and attention-grabber of the ad. The rest of the text is

written in a smaller font size and accumulated in the bottom right corner. It contains descriptions of what to expect on the flight as well as rankings showing the superiority of the airline. Moreover, the airline's logo, slogan and website are placed in the footer of the advertisement such that they do not grab all the attention, but enough to clarify the company responsible for this campaign.

Colors and brightness play a major role in what one notices in an advertisement and the emotions it is meant to spark. The advertisers responsible for creating the Malaysia airline's ad appear to have carefully chosen the colors used after much consideration of each color's effect, and the emotions they want the reader to feel when viewing this ad. As a result, the advertisers generally used dark colors for the furniture in the room; which as a result emphasised the brightness of the moon and stars that can be seen from the large windows. Thus once a person views the ad while flipping through a magazine, he or she would be taken aback by the breath-taking view and intrigued to know what this is for. The dark colors also helped in painting the image the advertisers wanted to sell; that is enjoying a good "night's" sleep. Moreover, the blue, purple, woody brown, and grey color combination used for the room's furniture are considered part of the cool colors group, and provoke feelings of calmness and peace. The woody brown stands and floor specifically, give off a very homely vibe and not the usual vibe you would find in an airline advertisement.

The audience being targeted can vary based on what a person chooses to focus on when looking at the image. Generally, the ad can be seen to be directed at anyone who loves travelling in comfort rather than under annoying conditions. However, since the advertisement is for first class seats, it is promoting tickets more on the expensive side. Thus, someone who only goes on three to four hour flights or does not travel frequently would most probably not opt for such tickets. Business men or women on the other hand, are usually forced to take frequent work related trips that involve long flights. These trip expenses are usually covered by the company the employee works for, therefore the ad can be seen to specifically target members of that audience as they would much rather travel in comfort and style. Another viewpoint however, can be that the audience targeted is people with flight anxiety or fear of being outside their comfort zones. Such an ad with its comforting vibe can calm the nerves of an anxious person and reassure them on how "seamless" their flight is going to be.

The use of logos is how an advertiser appeals to the consumer's sense of logic and reason. Although this is usually done by the use of numbers and statistics, the advertisers in this ad took a different approach. Logically, one may ask what makes sleeping on this plane easier than in others. It just has regular airplane seats after all, right? That is answered by the advertisers when including that the "... seat converts comfortably to a fully flat bed." This appeals to one's sense of logic, as it makes more sense than sleeping on an upright regular airplane seat. Moreover, the airline proved their superiority in the travel industry by using rankings like being the "World's 5 Star Airline, awarded by Skytrax". Skytrax is an internationally verified ranking site for airlines and aircrafts that takes all aspects of a flight into consideration when writing a review. This makes having such an award very logically appealing to a traveller. The award of "World's Best Cabin Staff" has also been stated smoothly within the text complementing the idea of the "seamless experience" resulting from the staff taking care of your every need. Furthermore, "Our A380 flies daily to London" can be noticed among the text and is placed with a purpose. The airline has previously suffered due to several crashes and lost many of their major flights; which consequently resulted to London becoming their key destination. Thus having daily flights to London means that if you have a big trip planned from Kuala Lumpur, finding a convenient time would not be a problem.

The use of emotional approach in persuasion has been seen to have the greatest effect on people. Therefore, pathos is the dominating persuasion technique throughout this ad. The most obvious example is the use of friendly, calming language. Phrases such as “Settle down and drift off at the touch of a button” and “Enjoy a good night’s sleep,” were placed strategically to promote feelings of simplicity and a stress-free environment; things almost everyone is looking for in a busy world filled with problems. The phrase “Journeys are made by the people you travel with” is placed near the airline’s logo. One would think that this refers to a person’s actual travel companions. However, it is just the airline trying to create an environment that reminds the reader of home with their loved ones; whether it was friends or family. They are indirectly referring to the cabin crew as the people who will make your journey enjoyable by indirectly relating them to a reference that directly means the reader’s friends or family. The advertisers are also trying to persuade the reader by showing the happiness and satisfaction one would experience on the flight. That is done through the placement of the image which includes a calmly sleeping woman with a hint of a smile on her face. If she was not enjoying her flight, would she have been smiling in her sleep?

Although not plainly evident, the advertisement is indirectly appealing to the reader’s trust and authority. Many people have trouble trusting the advertisements that they see. They believe advertisements are just a scam and that they create a fake version of reality. Malaysia airlines cleverly found a way to get around that belief by including a real picture of a real passenger in the corner of the advertisement. The picture proved to be a great example of honest advertising as it presented a real life situation, and gave visual explanation to how one can sleep on the real plane’s seat and how it actually looks like. This gives the reader the ability to trust the airline, since the airline is showing that they are real with the consumer. The airline promises to meet the expectations of the customers and provide a trouble-free journey in the text. They use the phrase “...It’s what our customers have come to expect from us...,” after stating how the cabin crew will improve the travellers’ experience to show that they are planning to fulfil that promise. Furthermore, rankings by the verified reviewer - Skytrax- can be considered as authority approving of the quality of the airline. However, the logo of the airline alone is enough to represent authority, as the airline is very well known among many for its great service and excellence. As a result, the reader knows that this advertisement is a promotion for a guaranteed, well-reputed company and not for an unknown airline.

To summarise, one cannot deny the amount of effort spent on creating this advertisement. Malaysia airlines has imaginatively found ways to persuade the consumers, in both a direct and indirect manner. While mainly appealing to the reader’s emotions, logical and ethical appeals were also used effectively throughout the advertisement; even if some of their use was camouflaged. The thought of being on a plane was enhanced and made to feel like a relaxing night at home; all the while maintaining a truthful image of the aircraft.



### Adopt Today

Furat Abdeljaber

As a child, I always had an endless love for animals. When I turned fifteen, my dad finally allowed me to get a pet. And so in May of 2017, I adopted a little kitten with huge ears. It grew up to be my best friend and the reason for my happiness. Adopting a pet is one of the greatest things you can do; not just for your own mentality but for theirs, too. You are providing those animals with a safe home and the love that they deserve. ASPCA's ad about animal abuse, urges whoever is reading to adopt as soon as they can. An ad as simple as this has exactly what is necessary to be considered perfect. It uses three main elements; logos, pathos, and ethos. Appealing to ones sense of logic, sense of emotion, and sense of ethics.

Some background information about ASPCA would be necessary to understand what their purpose is as an organization. As mentioned on their website, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is an organization that gives animals their rights, by giving them the aid they need and the home they deserve. They are a privately funded not-for-profit corporation headquartered in New York City. The ASPCA's mission, as stated by founder Henry Bergh in 1866, is "to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States". Not only do they provide free treatment for those who cannot afford it, they also rescue animals from disasters. (ASPCA, About Us, 2017).

This ad is directed towards everyone with a heart. The targeted audience is anyone who cares for or loves animals. They can be a pet owner who is looking for a new pet to add to their family, a single cat-lady who wants to save more cats, or simply to a person who wants to save as many helpless creatures as he or she possibly can. As a pet owner myself, I get so intrigued when I see this ad. Not only is the design so melancholic, but also the fact that they state is very alarming. When I saw this ad for the first time, I gasped. Pitbulls are such harmless creatures that it made no sense to me why so many of them are killed. Since I was attracted to the ad instantly, I researched this organization and felt a wave of relief wash over me. To know that there is still generosity in this world, gives me hope for the future. Although this ad is about Pitbulls, it is addressing all animals and how they are being killed every day. So no matter who you are, you are bound to feel a certain way when you see the huge numbers of animals that are being killed. And as previously mentioned, this

organization will do more than just help you adopt; it can also help you donate. Even if someone does not want a pet, he/she can always support by donating or simply sharing the website.

One of the major appeals of the ad lies behind the touching design. The first thing that strikes the reader is the distressed Pitbull behind a chain-link fence. The picture of the dog fills up half of the page, moving the reader. The text beside the picture expresses that “1 in 600 Pitbulls finds a forever home, 599 are killed” with the word “killed” in bright red (ASPCA, 2017). Below that sentence is the phrase “adopt today”. At the bottom right of the page we notice the logo of the company and their catchphrase “WE ARE THEIR VOICE” underneath in red; making us certain of what this company has to offer to our beloved pets. We can notice that the entire ad is in black and white except for the important words that they want to attract our attention to.

Animals these days are being abused more than ever. Thousands of cats get harmed every day for the mere enjoyment of others. Dogs are being treated like they have no feelings, and are being kicked by many insensitive people. Cows are killed for their flesh, mistreated to get their milk, and forced to mate so we can get more meat. Chicken, ducks, fish, and every animal in between is being harmed so humans can get their stomachs full. Ads like these snap us out of what we are doing and help us realize how much damage we are causing to these beings.

The most obvious and apparent appeal in this ad is Pathos, which is the appeal to one’s emotions. It is clear that it is the most dominant appeal in this ad, since we can notice it almost everything. By adding that picture of the Pitbull, it makes the reader feel terrible for all those poor animals that have died. Thus, the reader donates or does whatever he or she can do to help. They did not just pick any picture of a dog, they made sure to add one that flawlessly describes what the dog is feeling. He is staring into the camera with his crystal, glossy eyes like he is calling out for your help. His eyebrows are almost frowning. By only looking at the dog you instantly feel sorry and guilty for all the other dogs you could not save. Another detail is how they kept the entire ad in black and white, but used the color red to highlight the word “killed”. It stands out in the black and white ad and draws attention to itself. They purposely used the color red of all colors to emphasize the seriousness of the situation, and the fact that the word has turned red due to the blood of animals that has been shed.

Logos, which is the appeal to a person’s reasoning, is used intelligently in this ad. They use logos subliminally. Some will argue that there is no logos in this ad, but that just means they did not look close enough. We can see logos in their use of numbers; how they intentionally repeated the fact that 599 Pitbulls die and only 1 in every 600 is saved. They are repeating the same information to emphasise the intensity of these numbers. When you think about these numbers, you realize just how many dogs are being killed every day. This ad does not even touch on the other breeds; it specifically only mentions Pitbulls. This makes the average reader think and wonder; if this number of Pitbulls are killed, then how many dogs in general are murdered a day?! Not to mention how they used the phrase “adopt today” to express how easy and quick it must be. They did not say “adopt now” either, because they want to clarify that it is not a simple concept. It is rather a very important step and will definitely need more time from you. In addition, when using the word adopt you appeal to peoples wallets too, since most people want to have a pet but they cannot afford one. Why would you not own a pet for free, while simultaneously saving a soul?!

Ethos is the appeal to a person’s sense of trust and authority; and it is the last appeal in this ad. Firstly, the entire cause of this organization, which is to help and save those animals who are in extreme suffering, is honourable. They save animals from disasters. They

give animals a place to live, a place to call home. They are encouraging many people to do the right thing and they are not profiting from it. They are creating a trustworthy bond with whoever is reading. Secondly, they have their catchphrase which declares “WE ARE THEIR VOICE”, which gives the reader a sense of security and assurance. It makes the reader feel like he/she is in safe hands. Using the phrase “their voice” also confirms his/her trust. They are stating that they understand what your pets might need. Sometimes when your pet is not acting like usual, you cannot really tell what they want or what is wrong with them. As humans we cannot understand what our pets or animals are telling us, but this organization gets close enough; and they will give these animals all that they need. They will find the right home for them and they will save them from the horrible environments they were in. They are giving you their trust, so you can give them yours and adopt today.

The world needs more ads like these; those who talk about important problems that are going on and how we can help fix some of them. It is no doubt that this ad has the power of persuasion. It uses all three techniques and has a powerful message behind it. Animals do not deserve the cruelty that they get. Hopefully ads and organizations like these will somehow shape the world in a better way.

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**Sonja the Sea Lion**  
 Volunteer Sea Lion  
 Sponsored by Recycle Across America

**Dear Humans,<sup>™</sup>**  
 We need your help. **Seriously.**

Animals are getting hurt...  
 Did you know that 60% of all ocean waste is actually recyclable?  
 Isn't that crazy? It's dangerous, too. Animals sustain life-threatening  
 injuries because of the trash and recycling that end up in the oceans.  
 The best way to prevent this from happening is to create a strong  
 recycling culture.

That's why you humans should use standardized labels on recycling  
 bins society-wide... they make it easy to recycle more and recycle right.  
 The U.S. generates more waste than any other country in the world, so  
 we need the U.S. to lead the way!

Here's how you can help — text **FIX IT** to **40649** to ask your elected  
 officials to display the standardized labels on recycling bins in your  
 community. Visit [RecycleAcrossAmerica.org](http://RecycleAcrossAmerica.org) to learn more about the  
 standardized labels and to see tips that will help you recycle right.

Let's get waste and recyclables out of oceans and waterways once and  
 for all! Oh, and one more thing — when someone offers you single-use  
 items like a plastic bag or straw, please, **refuse it, don't use it!** They  
 are a huge problem for all of us living here in the oceans.

Yours Truly,  
**SONJA**

**Let's recycle right!** Society-wide standardized  
 labels on bins make it easy.

**Text FIX IT to 40649**  
 to ask community leaders to join the national  
 solution to fix the confusion of the bins.

**recycle across america.org**

Recycle Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to expediting environmental progress by introducing society with  
 standardized labels on recycling bins to make it easy and possible for the public to begin to recycle right — wherever they might be.

## Saving Sonja

Mahira Pathan

On her 16th birthday, Princess Ariel, the legendary Disney mermaid of the 1980s, explored the life of the mythical kingdom she was born into. Harboring the most breathtaking underwater creations, she discovered that her beautiful abode comprised of hundreds of species of flora and fauna ranging from glowing coral reefs to whales, clown fishes, sea lions and octopuses, and a fork and a cigar that had been thrown into the ocean by the human world above. This story is staged in the 1980s, when the ocean was not as polluted as it is today, which made the description of the ocean almost believable. Had the tale been set in the present, most kids would argue that the ocean no longer appeared blue and the portrayal of healthy corals would add as another myth. Considering the current statistics of ocean waste, Ariel would have found dead corals and a thousand kilograms of plastic, and Marlin and Dory would have never found Nemo. The advertisement by Recycle Across America (RAA) raises awareness among the people about the adverse effects of ocean waste and encourages us to recycle this waste. It uses logos, pathos and ethos as it speaks to the reader's mind, heart and ethics.

The ad features aquamarine colors such as blue and green, giving an oceanic theme to it. The background of the ad captures a high-resolution picture of a gorgeous sea lion named

‘Sonja’. This covers the upper half of the page, immediately grabbing the attention of the reader. The sea lion appears to be swimming just below the surface of the swirling water. In the foreground, about a quarter of the page is dedicated to a letter, printed on a paper that is ripped along the sides. The letter is addressed to “Humans,” and is signed by Sonja. At the bottom left of the page, we notice four recycling cans in different colors, which is an example of the agenda that the ad is promoting. The four cans are labeled as ‘Paper’ coded by a blue can, ‘Plastic’ coded by blue as well, ‘Compost’ indicated by green and ‘Landfill’ by black. And below the cans is the phrase “Let’s recycle right!”. The ad also asks the readers to “Text FIX IT to 40649” so community leaders will be asked to set up the segregation cans. At the very bottom of the page, written in small text, is a short description of RAA which states that Recycle Across America is a non-profit organization striving to promote a recycling culture among the people, using a “society-wide standardized labeling system” for recycling bins so that people can recycle waste, anywhere and everywhere.

The ad is mainly directed towards the American society since it is published in *Forbes*, which is an American business magazine, and the statistics and objectives point towards the problem of the U.S. being the largest waste generating country in the world. It addresses a large target audience comprising of businessmen, marketing agencies and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it is not directed towards specific financial strata of the society. Irrespective of how many bucks you’re carrying in your pocket, it is your duty to protect the environment. The ad appeals to a woman from a lower-middle-class family as much as to the CEO of the world’s largest company. Also, the idea of the SMS code grabs the attention of politicians as it offers a chance to gain the confidence of environmentalists by taking up this challenge.

The ad appeals to the readers’ sense of logic by laying out the statistics that about 60% of the waste that is dumped into the oceans can instead be recycled. Firstly, this waste is extremely harmful to aquatic life and causes life-threatening injuries to aquatic animals. Secondly, waste comprises different materials and, logically, each material will have a different recycling process. Thus, it is useless to collect all recyclable waste in one can. The segregation of recycling cans makes the job faster, easier and more efficient. Furthermore, recycling is an integrated process that is highly dependent on the quality of waste. For example, if paper has been contaminated by water, it can no longer be recycled. Thus, mere collection of recyclables is not the goal. The next step is to collect recyclables in the right manner so that they can be efficiently used. This is the main objective of the ad which is evident by highlighting the word “right” in green. One of the most striking ideas suggested by the ad is to have a landfill waste-collection can. Nowadays, most people live in apartments and do not have a backyard to set up a compost pit. Thus, the provision of a landfill bin allows apartment users to contribute to recycling landfill as well. This assures the reader that the organization has really dug deep and come up with clever solutions. A mindful reader would want to personally congratulate the company for their work.

Pathos is almost entirely concentrated in the letter that is displayed in the foreground of the ad. The ad immediately appeals to the sentiments and feelings of the reader by the salutation of the letter that is addressed to all humans, also expressing the naïve nature of the sea lion which is trying to address all humans through a single letter. Any human would feel obliged to help an animal in danger, more so if called out to do so. The sentence “We need your help” followed by “Seriously” depicts the urgency of the situation. It shows that humans need to take responsibility for their actions and protect the ecosystem before it is too late. Now, it is high time to transform words into actions. The letter also says “Animals are getting hurt....” This evokes care and concern from the reader and makes him/her feel sorry and guilty. We have all seen pictures of turtles and fish found along the coast with plastic straws

stuck in their noses and gills and come across videos showing how much pain these animals go through to simply remove these straws. The use of the three dots in the sentence makes it seem as though Sonja is on the verge of a breakdown but does not want to toy around her emotions and gets straight to the point. Furthermore, the letter has been signed off as “Yours Truly, Sonja” (Sonja, meaning wisdom). The former naïve nature of the sea lion has been ironically replaced with wisdom. This is a satirical contradiction of the belief that humans are the smartest creatures alive. If an animal can still be true to all the counterparts of its ecosystem, despite humans being the cause of their misery, then surely humans are wise enough to realize that it is their duty to do the same. It appeals to the maturity of an individual to take responsibility for his/her actions. The repetition of the word “Let’s” evokes brotherhood and togetherness and encourages the readers to come together as one.

The ad utilizes ethos in several places to gain the confidence of the reader. The sea lion photographed in the ad is designated as a “Spokessealion” for Recycle Across America. This shows that the organization values credibility and realizes the importance of treating animals as equally as humans. At the bottom of the page, RAA describes its mission and mentions its web address which indicates the legitimacy of the organization. Furthermore, the note of caution tells the reader that the use of the SMS code to support the cause will entail charges. It also immediately informs the reader about how to stop such charges or how to ask for help. This shows that the organization is almost completely transparent to the reader thus establishing a sense of trust and proves that it is not a scam. These factors appeal to the reader’s sense of ethics and provide assurance.

The ad has been orchestrated cleverly using logos, pathos, and ethos to make it persuasive. Appealing to the readers’ logic to segregate recyclables, evoking concern by holding humans responsible for the harm done to aquatic life and instilling trust that the organization will help to solve the waste crisis, is enough to persuade the reader. All areas of question are covered and by mentioning how to ask for further assistance, there is no room for doubt. Furthermore, since the ad is published in the *Forbes* magazine, it expects a mature audience to read it. This explains why it deviates from general advertising techniques and does not use striking colors like red or yellow. The company knows that it will need a strong argument, featuring statistics, than mere colors if it wants to persuade a *Forbes*’ reader.

In conclusion, such ads strike a chord at reality and wake up the reader. After leafing through pages and pages of marketing schemes selling cars, cosmetics, accessories and so much more, the reader is reminded of the consequences of his or her actions. The fatality of our actions has led to a complete catastrophe not only under the mighty ocean but on the earth as a whole. The ad is a clear expression of the fact that we cannot undo what has been inflicted but, we can prevent further destruction.

## Genre Analysis



### Packaging Personal Care

Janainah Anam

The use of personal care products is nothing new; the roots of personal care products can be traced all the way back to ancient Greece and ancient Egypt. However personal care products in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is nothing like what it used to be back in 3100 B.C.E. For instance, toiletries that used to be relegated to upper class women are now in use by the majority of today's population. Additionally, the personal care product industry has bloomed into a billion-dollar industry, which I believe reveals certain home truths about modern day gender stereotypes. By analyzing these products, I have been able to infer that the packaging of personal care products shows the varying standards the two genders are measured by.

To come to this conclusion, I took several samples of different personal care products. I looked at shower gels, shampoos, perfumes and face washes from different brands, both drugstore and high end. All the samples I selected had very obvious differences in color, imagery and names. However, I also noticed that there were common patterns in the men's products and also some commonalities among the women's products. However, the similarities between the men's and women's products themselves, were negligible.

In terms of jargon, there were marked differences between products meant for men and those meant for women. On a women's shampoo bottle, it was commonplace to find what hair type the shampoo was for and what the shampoo did. For example, on a Dove women's shampoo bottle, it said that the shampoo was meant for normal to dry hair and helped to remove frizz and restore shine. However, what I noticed on the other side of the spectrum was that men's shampoos almost always had one of two functions- either to reduce grease or remove dandruff, with no mention of hair type or frizz eradicating properties. Even the text on the back of the bottle differed- descriptions on men's bottles had phrases like "Leap out of bed for this one." or "Face the day with head to toe invigoration." On the other

hand, women's product descriptions had expressions such as "Leaving skin superbly soft, clean and fragranced," or other phrases in a similar vein.

There were also glaring differences in how the products were named. Men's products had very strong, impactful names, while women's products had names that could be interpreted as softer or more feminine. Some of the examples that I found were: Body Fuel (Men's) versus Musk Shower Gel (Women's) and Powerfruit Delight (Women's) versus Cool Kick (Men's). In some instances, it was even explicitly mentioned on the bottle that the scent of the product was supposedly "masculine" or "feminine." To give an example, a Nivea women's shower gel was described on the bottle, as having "A feminine water lily scent," while the men's version simply had an unspecified "masculine scent." The men's bottles had words such as "invigorate," "deep cleaning" and "energized," while words like "pampering," "moisturizing" and "nourishing" were used with careless abandon on women's products.

Not to mention, in some cases the men's version of the product contained more product and to add insult to injury, was priced cheaper than the women's version. The men and women's versions of the Davidoff Cool Water perfume, Adidas deodorants and The Body Shop's face washes all shared a single commonality: the men's product contained more actual product and was also cheaper than the women's version. One of the reasons that this is such a common occurrence is that perhaps manufacturers assume that someone shopping in the women's aisle at the supermarket would not immediately go to the men's aisle to compare prices. Additionally, the differences in price also stinks of a marketing ploy to make women pay more for a certain type of product. Said product being one that is supposedly different from the men's version and is, again, supposedly more tailored towards women. However, according to the information I had found, the common consensus seemed to be that although a man's skin is different than a woman's, it was perfectly alright for men to use women's toiletries and vice versa.

Continuing from my previous point, many of these products that were priced differently, contained the same core ingredients, meaning that their chemical makeup was almost exactly the same, with only minor differences in the perfume or coloring used. One example is the NIVEA shower gels for men and women, which both contained ingredients like Sodium Laureth Sulfate, Acrylates and Copolymers, to name a few. The evidence clearly showed that women were buying essentially the exact same item as men, while getting gyped into shelling out more money.

I also noticed a few other minor differences, one of them being that more often than not, women's products were packaged in rounded bottles, while men's products came in angular bottles with straight lines. Secondly, according to my samples, it was evident that Caffeine/Coffee and Charcoal were staple ingredients in almost all products meant for men. Whereas women's products didn't have any particular ingredients that stood out across different products and brands. Thirdly, when I looked at the bottles for imagery, I observed that women's bottles tended to have fruity, floral motifs while men's bottles had something neutral on them, like spheres, or no motifs at all. In terms of color, the packaging on men's products were darker and almost always black, grey or navy blue. Comparatively, products for women were packaged in bright pinks and purples or subtle pastel shades. Lastly, I noted that a men's product could serve several purposes, like a 2-in-1 shampoo plus conditioner or a 3-in-1 shower gel, meant for the face, body and hair. However, to find such multi use products for women was rare as most women's products were made to serve a single, specific purpose and not multiple ones.

From the evidence that I have collected and my analyses, I can conclude that the standards to which women are made to live up to are much different to those of men and this difference is particularly evident in the genre of personal care product packaging. From what

my samples show, the companies who make these products have impossibly high standards for women. According to them, a woman must smell like a certain “feminine” scent, ranging from roses to strawberries, must have smooth and shiny hair and must also have perfect, blemish free skin. Additionally, women must be able to achieve these results while spending more money than men too. Whereas men it seems, only have to achieve the bare minimum, which is, be clean, in order to be deemed acceptable.

According to Dean (2008), “Genres pervade lives. People use them, consciously and unconsciously, creatively and formulaically, for social functions and individual purposes, with critical awareness and blind immersion” (p. 8). This, I have found to be especially pertinent in the use of personal care products. These products reflect the way women have unreasonably high expectation placed on them, coupled with numerous restrictions, while the expectations on men are comparatively low (Not to mention how men do not have the same type of restrictions as women). To put it briefly, by buying gendered products, we are unwittingly contributing to the wider double standards that exist for men and women, outside the realm of personal care products.



### **Nike: Buying a Lifestyle?**

Younna Eneim

Advertisements are the universal tool that connects any entrepreneur with the people. Nowadays, advertisements' forms vary starting from the posters on the poles to the videos on the screens of our mobile phones and televisions. According to Dean (2008), "An aspect of genres, their ability to be flexible, also contributes to their dynamic nature: because genres can adapt, they also change" (p.14). Advertisements as a genre are constantly changing, evolving and finding ways to break any conventional image about how an advertisement is supposed to look like. When a company starts thinking of producing an advertisement, an infinite number of options regarding the way the subject is going to be portrayed appear in the brainstorming process.

If you ask anyone in the street, what is the purpose of an advertisement? Almost everyone will answer to sell a product. However, Nike does not follow this stereotype because rather than advertising a specific product, it advertises a lifestyle. Nike's advertisements have been on another level of creativity by making sure that their products are not just made for the time people exercise but as a part of their everyday activities. The company advertises itself untraditionally by avoiding the standard conventions of sports advertising. Nike depends on its methods to impel people to buy its products. This is evident by the fact that many people in a workplace, school, or university settings wear Nike's training pants or gym shoes even when they are not exercising. One of the possible reasons for this phenomenon may be that the advertisements make people feel like they belong to a certain lifestyle. To explore this idea, I analyzed recent video advertisements created by Nike to demonstrate how it is successful in making its shoes and sportswear a part of people's everyday life.

Nike is far more concerned with creating and forwarding ideals that connect to its market than just producing a mainstream ad like other sports companies. It takes inspiration

from those that have greater pursuits beyond just sports, which makes the lifestyle advertised suitable for everyone. For the past two years, every Nike video advertisement has contained a theme which addresses distinctive social issues. In 2018, the views on these videos have exceeded 464.2 million with the videos' length ranging from a minute to a minute and a half. This success's apparent reason is that the topics discussed are relevant to almost everyone. They help people realize that they are not alone in facing whatever difficulty and that other people tackle similar challenges in life. As a result, people feel encouraged to buy Nike's products because it makes them feel like they are following a constructive lifestyle.

In their advertisement *Bridging Through Sport*, Nike is exploring a run club in Chicago called GumboFit. The purpose behind this club was to create a community that shows the authentic self of the black people in public spaces. Also, this club helps black people feel more confident running with a group who understands them (See Fig. 1).



Fig. 1

*Find Your Greatness* is another example of its successful advertisements. During the video, the voiceover is talking about the misconceptions people have about the definition of greatness. It states a clear message by saying that greatness is accessible to everyone; it is not an inborn trait found in some people and inexistent in others. Nike portrayed this idea by



taking a video of an overweight boy jogging on an empty street to show that greatness depends on the lengths a person is willing to go to achieve what they want (See Fig. 2).

How does this make the audience feel? It makes them feel like they are pertinent to a lifestyle that puts important societal subjects under the spotlight, therefore encouraging them to buy the product.

To further support my claim, I would like to examine the music included in the advertisements. Incorporating music in advertisements can drastically affect the emotional reaction of the audience. Most sports advertisements are about a famous athlete exercising and talking about the excellence of the shoes and clothes. To match the rhythm of the ad, the music that is played is almost always upbeat and energetic. Nike, on the contrary, tries to deliver its products to a variety of people, not only athletes. So, it intentionally varies the music genre satisfying everyone's different tastes in music. This variety helps all types of people relate to the brand and encourages them to be a part of a lifestyle like them. In the same time, the music played

Fig. 2

of the advertisement.

For instance, in their remarkable commercial *Dream Crazier*, the ad's rhythm gets more intense as the narrator begins mentioning more examples of women being called crazy because they want to break the barriers society has set for them. The music starts very slowly and starts getting higher as the narrator's voice gets more insistent. Moreover, the musical instruments that are played during the ad are the violin and cello. The choice of using classical instruments makes it easier for the audience to associate themselves with the message of the ad. Sometimes, like in *Find Your Greatness*, Nike chose not to include any music in the advertisement so people will focus more on the message of the ad through the emotion the narrator is conveying. This is another strategy that does not limit the type of audience watching making everyone feel welcomed to this lifestyle.

Another noticeable pattern found in all of Nike's advertisements is the diversity evident in all the actors and celebrities appearing in any video. Different races, ethnicities, and religious groups are always represented. Also, when a multi-billionaire company like Nike uses this approach in its advertisements which are seen by everyone, people will start accepting others; this action will be a part of their everyday life. The variety of people included continues to reinforce the claim that the lifestyle advertised by Nike is one where everyone is accepted.

This observation is very clear in the campaign *Dream Crazier*. Throughout the video, the narrator, Serena Williams, lists the stereotypes against women, while the shots shown highlight the accomplishments of women athletes in different fields of sports. Serena Williams, the black narrator, is considered by most to be the most successful female athlete. She is known for her 23-time tennis Grand Slams. One of the main athletes mentioned is the Asian Chloe Kim, who became the first female to land a Frontside Double Cork 1080. Ibtihaj Muhammed, an exceptional fencer, is the first woman to compete in the Olympics wearing the hijab. The US football team is also featured in the advertisement. They are not only known for their superb performance, but for fighting to receive higher wages. This type of variety of people who came from different backgrounds is not found in any other sports advertisement. Nike keeps proving that it is selling a brand that stands for a lifestyle that acknowledges everyone.

What do these patterns say about Nike advertisements? Most sports advertisements will only include one, if any, of the patterns discussed because their priority is to sell their shoes and sportswear using traditional methods. It doesn't matter to the company if it is only a group of people who are interested in purchasing their product as long as they are gaining money. Nike's priority is to sell its product, too. However, Nike's advertisements create an

atmosphere that allows the consumer to think of the product they are buying as a necessity, a part of their day. If Nike used different advertising methods, most people would consider its products as something to wear only when exercising. On the contrary, people wear Nike shoes and sportswear when they want to feel comfortable for a long day.

The music, the themes, and the diversity of the actors in any of the advertisements are all factors that help Nike achieve its goal of selling a lifestyle that doesn't exclude anyone. A lifestyle that everyone would like to be a part of. A lifestyle that accepts everyone and encourages people to do the same. This way of life also boosts people's confidence by making it clear in the advertisements that everyone meets some obstacles in his/her life. This is the way all companies should advertise and sell their products.

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### Sci-Fi Book Covers

Christoforos Spyropoulos

Science fiction-based books use science as a way of introducing the reader to an imaginary world and to an extraordinary experience. Such books have existed because of the availability of science to the public and the interest people find in it. In such a context, the role of the book cover is to establish an initial line of communication between the reader and the book, providing the preliminary presentation of the fictitious scene of the novel in an effective and inviting way.

Most science fiction book covers target the average person who does not possess any extraordinary scientific knowledge. As a result, all books and their content employ scientific elements that the reader will find interesting. Considering current covers and covers from the 1950s, it is remarkable that the selected scientific aspect is space. In covers from both eras, stars, spaceships, exoplanets and extraterrestrial creatures are the most prominent science related element. This obsession that has led to nearly every science fiction cover to revolve around space, clearly indicates the perception of the wider community of what science is. For many, upon hearing the word science the notion of space comes to mind, with the most notorious discoveries of the latest century being all space related.

As a genre, science fiction book covers do more than merely advertise the book to potential readers. According to Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi (2004), genres “reflect the values of various communities” (p. 51). These values, as demonstrated through an analysis of the genre from the 1950s until now, have changed dramatically. Based on their content they clearly illustrate the society’s perception of the meaning and purpose of science. By analyzing science fiction book covers from different time periods and focusing on their content, stylistic features and theme, modern book covers show that a significant increase in science literacy has occurred along with the gender neutralization of science.

### **The Shift in Science Literacy**

Despite the common space related theme found in both eras, maybe their most apparent difference in the emphasis that is placed on the scientific element. The presence of a plot in any science fiction book (usually in the form of an adventure), forces its cover to include parts of scientific and adventurous elements. It is obvious, however, that in covers from the 50s the scientific aspect of the novel is sidelined. This can be initially observed by the word choice in the title. The use of rather vague phrases such as “space plague”, “other worlds”, “cosmic flame” and “imagination” drift the reader to a more fictitious and adventurous realm, distant from scientific sense. The above makes the scientific element a secondary aspect of the novel, employed to marginally enhance the plot, supporting the more emphasized adventurous element. In addition, the selection of color used throughout the cover is not close to what would normally relate to the space theme. Rather, more universal colors are selected, such as yellow, green and red, which allude to the palette of the superhero comic. Also, it is striking to consider that any scientific attributes are not positioned at the center of the cover but marginalized either at the background or at the sides, thus diminishing their significance. Furthermore, such attributes always appear as far-fetched and roughly sketched which fail to enliven fiction with the scientific element while still remaining abstract and imaginary. In addition to the superficial integration of science in the cover, the oversimplification of the scientific element (being merely constrained to aliens, evil robots and heroic astronauts), provides an overall sensation of science being forced into the novel, manipulated throughout and shaped around an incompatible adventurous theme.

Conversely, in current science fiction book covers the scientific element is far more prominent, with the novel revolving around science. This can be identified from the use of science jargon in the title of each book. Scientific wording such as “Enceladus”, “solar war” and “rings of Saturn” makes the titles more relatable to science, specific, while emphasizing the active participation of the scientific element in the evolution of the plot. The leading role that science has in contemporary novels is also stressed by the appropriate selection of color in the cover. In line with the scientific space related theme, colors that are connotated to space and the stars are being used. Darker colors such as black and deep blue, as well as gloomy, spooky, glowing white and purple accents which are inspired from artistic representations of galaxies and stellar structures, are common occurrences in the science fiction segment today. Moreover, science-related elements are grouped and portrayed in the center of the cover which is the first thing the reader will notice when initially encountering the book. Instead of being pushed to the sides and background, their positioning clearly illustrates the greater emphasis that is now being placed on them. In relation to this, greater detail is being attributed to the science related figures, with most of them carefully drawn, as they are a crucial aspect of the novel. Also, an escape from the traditional simplistic nature of the employed scientific aspect can be noticed. The scientific content is far more complex, extensive and deep, containing not only astronauts, robots and aliens, but also more mature and complicated elements such as stellar phenomena, exoplanets and galactic characteristics, all of which illustrate the significance and dependence of the novel on science.

Through the above and by keeping the aim of the cover in mind, it can be said that now the average reader, and hence the wider society, is far more science literate than it was in the 1950s. As the cover tries to appeal to the majority of the audience, it is an indicator of the public's scientific interest. The lack of focus on scientific attributes in the covers from the 50s shows a lack of real interest by the majority in science in general. The complexity of the scientific element is bounded by what the readers will understand and appreciate. Because of their limited scientific knowledge, the scientific element is being obscured as an inferior notion of the novel. By contrast, the application of science which has gradually become an integral part of human life, as well as the greater focus on science by the educational sector and the increased ease of accessing information, have made the average individual more aware, interested and curious about science and its potential. This has been the primary reason of the transformation of the covers of science fiction literature. As a result of this, current covers incorporate far more complex and science-oriented ideas, with the reader being more attracted to science than ever before.

### **Shift in Gender Roles in Science Toward Gender Neutralization**

In relation to this, each cover depicts the values, assumptions and characteristics of the wider community at their respective time periods, which is evident by comparing the level of importance of the human and gender element in science fiction from the two eras. The most key characteristic of covers from the 1950s is the excessive portrayal of hypersexualized women, with a disproportionate emphasis on their appearance and appeal. In such a context, female figures are assigned the role of a victim who is in imminent danger. These rather passive roles that females have are in direct opposition to the appearance of male figures. Male figures and those connotated to the male sex (such as robots and aliens), feature masculine associated characteristics such as strength, determination and fierceness, all fueled by their active stance. This is clearly illustrated by their duties within the plot as saviors and torturers, with the female characters being subjected to their will, held captive and lying in their savior's hands. The above dynamic of men and women, as well as the use of chroma that aims at stirring up passion, provide a more emotion-driven tone to the cover. With most of the plots revolving around an erotic triangle, it is no surprise that the gender element is gathered at the center of the cover, with other scientific related 'distractions' being pushed to the background. From the above it is obvious that the majority of science fiction novels from the 50s is targeted to male readers and hence to what they would perceive as interesting, according to their view of society.

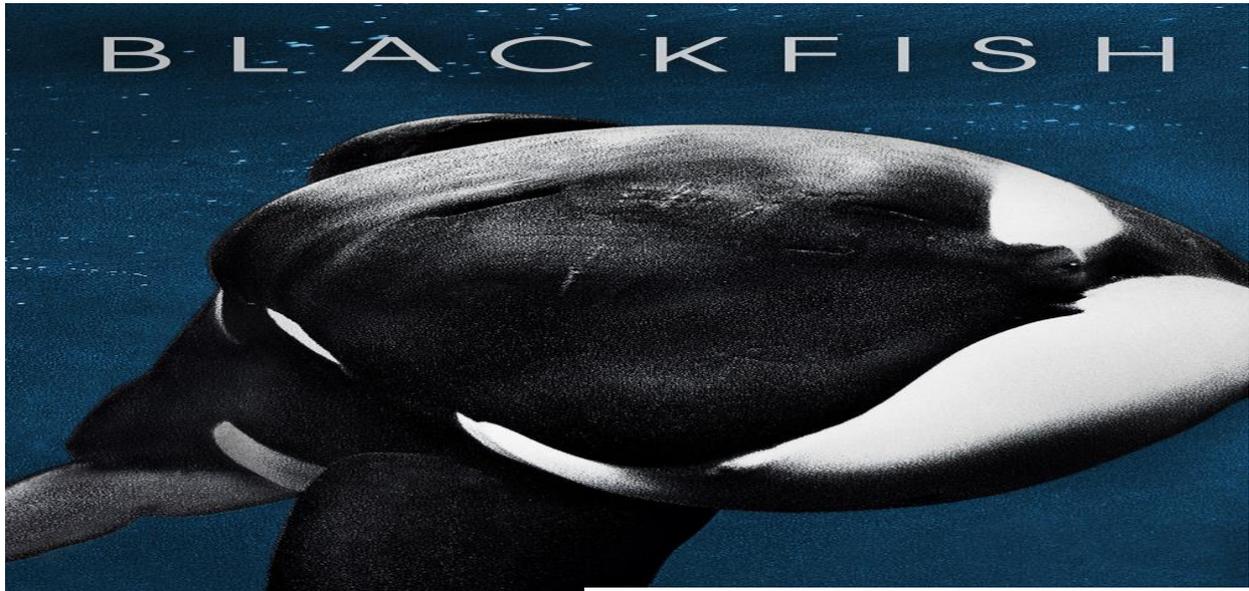
Then again, analyzing contemporary covers, it is apparent that the human element and especially the explicit specification of the gender of any human figure is absent. Many covers, either remove human figures entirely, or refrain from including information that would identify their gender. Contrary to science fiction in the 50s, any human attributions are positioned away from the center of the cover, with the prominent scientific element in the middle of the book, overshadowing them. Current covers are not aiming at stirring up emotions that would attract the reader's attention. Instead they allow their scientific element to be clearly distinguishable by the audience, enabling it to be the primary source of interest for the reader. Furthermore, it can be said that current science fiction book covers are plainer in terms of their representation, focusing only on the science and not trying to disproportionally include as much features as possible. All the above shape a cover that is more impersonal to the audience's gender, and significantly more neutral in terms of its approach in attracting the reader's attention, allowing the scientific element to appeal to the reader. Therefore, there are no elements in the covers that would appeal solely to men. The more neutralized presentation of the cover allows the novel to be appreciated by both males and females, maximizing the size of the potential audience.

This contradiction in the appearance of covers from the two time periods, is justified by the drastic change in the cover's targeted audience. While covers from the 50s appeal exclusively to men with the hyper sexualization of women, current covers are open for both sexes. This change is a mirror image of a wider change that has occurred in values and characteristics of science and society. Science fiction in the 50s is targeting only men by placing significant emphasis on hypersexualized females and it reflects the wider belief of the time that science and science related topics were exclusively for males. In addition, society's perception of the roles of each gender is again portrayed in the covers. Men were the ones at front with their more energetic attitude and women being dependent on males usually are in a weak and submissive position. In contrast, the absence of the human and gender element indicates that readers are not only more scientifically literate (and therefore do not require any additional stimulus to read science fiction), but science fiction is now not restricted to a particular sex. This reflects the change in the role of women in society as well as within the science field itself. Since the 1950s, women have broken free from the stereotypical attributes imposed by society and have come to alter the values and characteristics of today's society. With the number of female scientists as well as their contributions to science having increased dramatically, it is apparent that an underlying increase in interest for science and science fiction exists from both genders rendering science more neutralized in this sense.

### **Conclusion**

Through the analysis of the genre of science fiction book covers and the comparison between contemporary covers and those from the 1950s it is evident that they reflect the transformation and change of the values of society. From a minute emphasis on science and its exaggerated simplicity to the prominence of complex scientific phenomena in today's science fiction, we can witness the change in the levels of curiosity for science. From the saturation of hypersexualized women in the book covers and interest in only the adventurous part of the plot to the interest in science itself and absence of the gender element we can witness the change in the roles of genders in science. As a result of the comparison above, it can be said that science fiction book covers provide a tangible evidence of the continuous progress in science literacy and awareness as well as the decentralization of science from the gender element.

## Introduction to Argument



### **Blackfish: Dark Side of Sea World**

Syeda Maria Raza

Cowperthwaite's (2013) "Blackfish" is a documentary that exposes the dark side of sea-parks; their unethical commercial practices, misleading and incomplete information provided to trainers, sugar-coated incidents reported to the public and unacceptable treatment towards orcas is unveiled in this documentary. Gabriela Cowperthwaite is a filmmaker who produces films that cover social, cultural and environmental matters. CNN highlighted in an article written by Cowperthwaite that she "sought to answer questions about Dawn Brancheau's death", thus resulting in the production of Blackfish that investigates the controversial topic of holding killer whales' captive. Moreover, Cowperthwaite states in the article that "[she] hope[s] that we [viewers] take the "Blackfish" momentum and use it to help evolve us out of animals for entertainment" (2013, para. 10), thus outlining the purpose of filming Blackfish and the outcome she hopes to gain from it. The documentary presents a well-articulated argument highlighting the dark side of SeaWorld and SeaLand, and the harm done to orcas in captivity followed by the consequences faced by trainers. Cowperthwaite's effective use of primary sources of evidence, strong arguments, and engaging visuals make a convincing case against using killer whales for entertainment.

The documentary Blackfish directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite (2013) unfolds the story of Tilikum, a captive killer whale who was responsible for the death of several trainers during orca shows and training sessions. Although these deaths were reported as "trainer error" by Sea-World, the documentary presents the deaths as a form of retaliation by orcas because of the aggravation of being trapped in confined pools, vigorous and abusive training sessions, food deprivation and separation from their families. The preceding factors had eventually led to the death of SeaWorld's most famous orca, Tilikum. Furthermore, Blackfish sheds light on human's inconsiderate nature towards holding large and intelligent mammal's

captive for entertainment purposes, thus resulting in a comparatively shorter lifespan of captive orcas than wild ones. It concludes that killer whales may become hyper-aggressive when held in captivity leading to devastating consequences.

Cowperthwaite (2013) succeeds in presenting a strong case by effectively justifying the trauma experienced by captive killer whales through several primary sources. There were several instances where the director was successful in exhibiting pathos in the film. John Grove, a diver, said, "I just started crying" (00:12:32), when describing the cries of baby orcas being taken away from their families. This statement provokes an emotional response from viewers signifying that orcas are emotionally scarred for the rest of their captive life that is later manifested as frustration and violence during their training sessions and performances. Correspondingly, the former director of SeaLand had explained the unpleasant living conditions these creatures were forced to withstand, thus fuelling their frustration. Similarly, Christopher Potter, a former trainer at SeaLand had described the orcas' living space, a module, as "one small steel box" (1:23:05) where these whales remained immobile for more than half of their lives being starved if they refused to enter the module. For instance, in Tilikum's case, a trainer used punishment techniques and food deprivation during training. If Tilikum failed to follow instructions, all whales were punished, and this caused aggravation and tension leading to Tilikum being scratched by orcas in his batch. Hence, these series of first-hand reported events succeed at justifying the aggressive reaction of killer whales towards trainers.

Furthermore, Cowperthwaite (2013) presents a strong argument that contributes to the effectiveness of the purpose the documentary tries to convey. It has been noted through several clips and interviews that the cause of killer whales becoming hyper-aggressive during shows or training is a result of the harsh and unacceptable circumstances these whales endure. To illustrate, the death of Dawn Brancheau, an experienced senior trainer, was first reported as a "trainer-error" by SeaWorld. However, it was later discovered in interviews with former trainers that the attack was a consequence of an accumulation of events that Tilikum had experienced during training: trainers ignoring his perfectly performed tricks and not rewarding him with food. These actions seemed to trigger Tilikum's aggression thus leading to the death of Dawn. Additionally, upon analysing the video of Dawn's training session, Samantha Berg, a former trainer at SeaWorld mentions, "Tilikum jumps right in and does what she [Dawn] asks him to do" (1:07:25), suggesting that during the first half of training Tilikum happily obliged and performed the tricks. Therefore, the situation analysed by the former trainer serves as a strong case against holding killer whales' captive by suggesting that both Tilikum and Dawn were not at fault, as it was the unnatural circumstance of captivity that led to a devastating outcome.

Moreover, the documentary presents an array of actual footage, animations, and visuals that captivate the viewer's attention. The interviews with former trainers, researchers and experts are followed by actual footage. For instance, in the interview footage where Carol Roy, a former trainer at SeaWorld, recalls the story of a baby (Kalina) being separated from her mother (Katina), the story is followed by a clip of the orca screeching and crying calling out for her baby. This technique increases the credibility of the content and evokes a sense of pathos from the viewers. Moreover, the use of animation in various sections of the documentary, for example, an animation illustrating the splitting up of killer whales to protect their calves from being captured, grabs viewers' attention and allows for better visualization of the scenario.

Cowperthwaite (2013) succeeds in effectively presenting valid pieces of evidence and reasonable arguments through engaging visuals, thus making a strong claim in the controversial topic of killer whale attacks. Additionally, the documentary release evoked a

strong response from the public, hence making it the “most talked about show on CNN in the whole month” (n.d., para. 1), as reported by Dive Magazine. As a result of this documentary, SeaWorld experienced negative consequences, referred to as the “Blackfish effect”; some of these effects included a decline in SeaWorld's visitor numbers and profits, musicians being influenced to back out from concerts at SeaWorld, a boycott from regular customers as well as backlash and awareness raised by celebrities online. Therefore, these negative implications faced by SeaWorld indicate that Blackfish was successful in effectively exhibiting a convincing case against the issue of holding killer whales’ captive and revealing the dark side of sea parks.

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## Conspiracy Theories

Yusra Hassen

Witches represented a universally established concept throughout the American colonies in the 17th century. The Salem Witch trials took place in the puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay, where a group of girls accused three women of practicing witchcraft. As a result, the already raging fear of witches strengthened, causing the puritans to turn against one another. The accusations spread like wildfire, and a special court was appointed. The court tested these so-called witches in inhumane ways, and those found guilty only survived if they confessed their sins and revealed their conspirators. The court executed 20 innocents before the Salem Witch Trials came to an end. This is a prime depiction of a conspiracy theory, the belief that some covert group is responsible for unexplained situations. Despite the supernatural being a ridiculous notion, their beliefs drove many of the puritans apart. Thus, of all the conspiracy theories that exist, the most compelling theories are those surrounding the 9/11 attacks, the Apollo 11 moon landing, and the Roswell incident.

On September 11, 2001, the lives of countless Americans changed forever. Nineteen terrorists hijacked four airplanes heading for San Francisco and Los Angeles. The first two planes crashed into the North and South towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Both 110-story buildings, the 47-story World Trade Center Tower 7 and all other buildings in the complex collapsed within the hour. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon, demolishing the west wing while the last plane heading toward the Capital crashed in Pennsylvania instead. The attacks took 2,977 lives that day. Although the FBI linked the hijackers to al-Qaeda, the 9/11 truth movement believes that the U.S. government may have had a role in the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers. The adherents of this movement believe that the World Trade Center the Towers collapsed not because of the plane crash but due to explosives planted inside the buildings on the orders of the U.S. government. An article on the Truth Movement website states, "The Twin Towers collapsed at free-fall acceleration through the path of greatest

resistance.” This indicated that in spite of the 80,000 tons of structural steel, the rate at which the buildings collapsed displayed a lack of resistance, which meant the buildings collapsed from inside. The next argument points out that a plane did not actually hit the World Trade Center Tower 7, and yet, it collapsed falling “neatly into its footprint.” as though it imploded (Kreidler, 2011). Over the years, countless scholars have come forward with evidence to debunk these claims but the 9/11 truth movement firmly asserts that these attacks were planned to gain popular support to invade the middle east and obtain its oil.

It was July 1969 when John F. Kennedy took the oval office and declared a challenge to put an American on the moon before the end of the decade. On the sixteenth day of that month, the astronauts boarded the 363-foot rocket that would launch them into space. Twelve minutes after takeoff, Houston cleared Apollo 11 for translunar injection, meaning it was clear to enter the moon's orbit. In three days, the Apollo was in the lunar orbit. A day after that, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin descended to the surface on the lunar module called *Eagle*. With half a billion people watching on television, Armstrong climbed down the ladder and became the first human to step on another extraterrestrial body. NASA called the Apollo 11 mission, "the giant leap for mankind." However, according to some conspiracy theorists, this never happened. Some people believe that NASA staged the landings on a secret film set somewhere in Hollywood or Area 51. One of the theories sprung from the footage of Aldrin planting the American flag. The movement of the flag indicated the presence of wind, which would be impossible in a vacuum. Conspiracy theorists also raise the question of why there were no stars in the photos. Since the moon has no atmosphere, the stars should have been visible. Another fact conspiracy theorists point out is the absence of the cloud of dust and crater that the lander should have made during landing. There are plenty of people that believe that in the U.S' desperate attempt to beat the Russians in the space race, the Kennedy administration faked the landing.

The Roswell Army Air Field issued a press release a few days after rancher W.W. “Mac” Brazel reported seeing a shiny extraterrestrial aircraft crashed in the New Mexico desert. The press gave a straightforward account of how the RAAF handled the discovery. The military then asserted that the recovered wreckage was a weather balloon and other equipment. That seemed to settle the uproar. However, with the publication of *The Roswell Incident* by Charles Berlitz, the story was back in public once again. Interviews of individuals with information about the incident and rumors of recovered extraterrestrial bodies quickly became a part of America's culture. In 1990, in hopes of denouncing the claims of a government cover-up, the U.S government declassified documents regarding the Roswell incident. *The Roswell Report: Facts vs. Fiction in New Mexico Desert* and the second publication *The Roswell Report: Case Closed* was published to let the American people know the details of the Roswell incident but instead strengthened the conspiracy theory's acceptance throughout the public.

In light of extensive research, the theories concerning the 9/11 attacks, the Apollo landing, and the Roswell incident prove to be some of the thought-provoking conspiracy theories on the internet. It is evident how the mysterious collapse of the towers, the flag movement on the moon, and the notion of a flying saucer can capture the imagination of many people. The idea of there being a different explanation is quite alluring. Nevertheless, with a little deliberate reading and research, it is clear to understand from the numerous factual evidence that disproves these assumptions that the theories are just that, ideas conjured up by imaginative minds to explain a seemingly unexplainable phenomenon.

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## **Animal Experimentation May not Be ‘Bad’ After All!**

Saud Al Mutawa

If you have ever consumed antibiotics, had an organ transplant, had a blood transfusion, had a vaccine or went through chemotherapy, then you have benefited from animal testing. Remarkably, nearly all medical treatments, drugs, diagnostics tools and medical devices have been developed with the utilization of experimented animals. Numerous diseases that once killed millions of people such as smallpox, polio and tuberculosis are currently either treatable, preventable or had been completely abolished with the aid of animal testing. Despite this, serious ethical dilemma continues to engulf the subject of animal-based research: if it is undertaken, animals would have to suffer; if it is not, critical biomedical advances would be severely impeded. Although views on animal testing vary from complete advocacy to complete rejection, the majority appears to believe that it is justifiable to use animals in experiments because the medical benefits they provide cannot be attained without animal testing. In other words, it is necessary to violate animal welfare for the common good and the safety of all human beings by enabling the progression of medical development. Overall, the scientific benefits of animal testing outweigh its ethical implications by enabling the advancement of scientific knowledge, development of medicines and safety testing of drugs.

Firstly, animal testing has played a crucial role in the advancement of scientific research. Many major medical research bodies believe that animal research is fundamental to investigate human diseases and develop new medications. For example, progress in the understanding of genetics suggests that animals can be bred with certain genetic traits that would enable scientists to investigate the medical conditions ranging from heart disease and cancer to dementia and stroke. In 2002, a report published by House of Lords committee concluded that "We are convinced that experiments on animals have contributed greatly to scientific advances, both for human medicine and for animal health" (as cited in Walsh, 2012). Research that uses animals for testing has helped treat or prevent conditions that includes tuberculosis, polio, cystic fibrosis, high blood pressure, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson disease. For instance, around half a million individuals in the United Kingdom (UK) living with type 1 diabetes depend on insulin, which was initially produced in 1921 by John J. R. Macleod and Frederick Banting through performing tests on canines and rabbits to understand the effect of insulin on lowering blood sugar levels. Similarly, meningitis, a

disease that causes the swelling of membranes in the brain and spinal cord, have been eradicated by the production of vaccines that have been tested on mice and rabbits. This has resulted in the reduction of meningitis cases by more than 90% in the UK compared to the 700 reports per year in the previous decade (2014). Further, millions of lives in Britain were saved through the development of polio vaccines by Albert Sabin in 1955. In fact, Sabin once claimed, "there could have been no oral polio vaccine without the use of innumerable animals" (Winston, 2006). Thus, the history of medicinal advancements heavily relied on animal testing for the development of the reliable treatments still used today, which emphasizes the role of animal testing on the health progression and overall welfare of modern society.

Regardless of the evident benefits that modern medicine has reaped from animal testing, advocates of animal rights still argue that animal testing is becoming unnecessary as more alternative testing methods are being developed. Technologies such as 3D organ and tissue cultures, stem cell platforms and computer simulations are argued to be sufficient alternatives to animal testing. Additionally, recent developments declare that nearly all types of animal and human cells have the potential to be grown in research labs. Scientists have been able to mimic and replicate cell growth into 3D structures such as a miniature of human organs, which promotes a realistic approach for the examination of new treatments. Furthermore, creative small devices known as "organs-on-chips", which were developed by Harvard's Wyss Institute (2016), have been established through human cells. These can be utilized in place of animals to analyze drug digestion as well as disease and biological procedures. Likewise, various devices that resemble and imitate human kidney, heart, gut and lung functions are being created. The fundamental objective is to use these chips to establish an entire "human-on-a-chip" (Massey, 2017). Moreover, cell cultures have been crucial in fields involving AIDS, kidney disease, sepsis and cancer, and are frequently adopted in drugs advancement, vaccine production, and chemical safety tests. Another suggested alternative to animal testing are computer simulations that can replicate different parts of the human body. Animal activists stress that digital replicas of kidneys, skin, heart, lungs, musculoskeletal and digestion are now made available (2014). These devices would be utilized to undertake virtual experiments established on numerical data and existent information. Hence, these developments serve as an alternative to animal testing methods, which could eventually diminish the reliance of many scientists on animals for medical research.

Although it is true that many existing alternative methods can replace animal testing, they are nonetheless inefficient in testing whole living body systems. Living systems like animals and humans are noticeably complex and it is, therefore, inaccurate to be modeling them using immature replicated models. Thus, the examination of interrelated procedures that take place in the immune system, central nervous system and endocrine system cannot be done using cell cultures (2017). In addition, evaluating a medication for reactions requires a circulatory system that distributes the drug to various organs; a mechanism that is difficult to replicate. Comparatively, certain conditions such as visual impairment and hypertension cannot be examined using tissue culture. For instance, it is not possible to study or replicate the response of the infectious disease, leprosy, using cell cultures because the bacteria that causes this diseases grows under high temperature. Another example of the inefficiency of cell culture is highlighted in the development of the artificial antibiotic Prontosil (Fehmer, Kiupel, Exner, & Limbach, 2016). Despite the fact that Prontosil resulted in no impact in the cell culture, it was demonstrated to be effective when used in animals. All of the cases mentioned above underline the inaccuracy of using alternative methods to animals testing in medical research.

Apart from its necessity in furthering scientific advancement, animal testing remains an essential mean for ensuring the safety of particular drugs. Animal testing helps researchers decide whether certain types of drugs and treatments should be tested on humans. Also, many laws and regulatory agencies around the world obligate research facilities to test new medicines on animals before undertaking clinical trials on humans. Animal testing allows researchers to predict positive as well as around 70% of the negative side effects of drugs on humans (Shanks, Greek, & Greek, 2009). This is evident in the case of the acid that is found in Aspirin, which is known as acetylsalicylic acid and was tested on rats. The experiment showed that although it relieves suffering and pain felt by humans and rats, it can also escalate bleeding in both species; thereby stressing the strong correlation between human and animal reactions to certain medications. Furthermore, another medication called Asbestos was found to induce lung cancer in both rats and humans, and plastic solvents that cause liver cancer in both as well (Fehmer, Kiupel, Exner, & Limbach, 2016). The outcomes of these drug testings demonstrated the efficiency and safety of animal tests in significantly diminishing the risks associated with new cures through showing similar effects on both species. Consequently, 36% of the drugs that fail in animals in preclinical stage are not utilized in clinical tests on humans because of unwanted responses and safety risks, which eliminates them from being used in development stage (Fehmer, Kiupel, Exner, & Limbach, 2016). Therefore, animal testing effectively discards drugs that are potentially dangerous to be used by humans, which ultimately prevents large-scale human suffering.

Although animal testing remains an important approach for determining the safety of drugs, it is sometimes ineffective in predicting the response of drugs on humans. It is difficult to make valid deductions on the outcomes of certain drugs when tested on animals since the effects on humans could be different due to the genetic, physiological and biochemical differences. For instance, Dr Jarrod Bailey, a senior research scientist at anti-vivisection group of Cruelty Free International, claimed that hundreds of stroke treatments and over 85 HIV/AIDS vaccines have shown efficiency when used in animal figures such as, chimpanzees and monkeys, but failed to provide humans with valuable stroke treatment or HIV/AIDS vaccines (Lo, 2016). Other disease treatment experiments that use animal testing and have continued to fail are due to the significant differences in the immune system of different species. These differences have escalated the uncertainty surrounding the effective use of drugs tested on animals in clinical trials. More so, there are several notable cases in which animal testing was unsuccessful in foreseeing the lethal/harmful health consequences of drugs on human patients. For instance, the clinical trials that were conducted in 2006 at the Northwick Park Hospital to test an antibody called monoclonal TGN1412, have provoked a destructive immune reaction that resulted in the widespread organ failure of six participants, despite being proven to be effective and safe when used by an assortment of animals (particularly monkeys). Another example is the thalidomide drug, which was a mild sleeping pill sold in Germany that claimed to be completely safe to be used by pregnant women after it has proven to be completely harmless when tested on pregnant rats, mice, guinea pigs and cats. Nevertheless, after consumption, the drug resulted in severe birth defects along with the malformation of many of the children's limbs in 1962 (Fintel, Samaras, & Carias, 2009). This showcases that animal testing is not always effective in generating assumptions about the safety of drugs on human safety due to differences in genetic makeup and immune systems of species.

In conclusion, animal testing will remain an important approach to the advancement of scientific knowledge and testing the safety of drugs. Many detrimental diseases such as breast cancer, polio and tuberculosis have been reduced through the development of various treatments that were initially tested on animals. Correspondingly, safety tests of medical

products through animal experiments eliminate potential harm from being caused on humans. However, animal testing is not always helpful in testing medications as the response of certain drugs used in humans reacts differently in animals due to differences in genetics and the immune system. Also, there are many alternatives to animal testing such as cell cultures and computer simulations, which are beginning to replace animal testing. It is crucially important for scientists to stop depending on animals for the basis of their research and continue to search for alternatives.

Scientists should nonetheless try to limit animal suffering through means of refining experimental procedure as well as providing better living conditions and medical care for the animals. By looking at more efficient and reliable alternatives, the number of animals used in labs will be eventually reduced.

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### **The School Uniform: A Stifling Unity**

Nadia Altaf

One of the first things that comes to mind when one visualizes a school is its uniform. It portrays the essence of a school, through elements such as the school emblem and colors. The first uniforms, from which the modern ones have evolved, date back to the 16th century and have originated in Britain. The black smock and white-collar of the student emphasized humility, solemnity, and modesty (HESAPÇIOĞLU & MEŞECİ-GIORGETTI, 2009). The uniforms started with the intention of illustrating the lesser status of the students wearing them compared to their teachers. Today, uniforms serve as a tool to unite students and make them feel a sense of belonging with their school. However, as with many old traditions, uniforms in schools should be abolished since it is antiquated and serves no real purpose for modern times.

First and foremost, the main reason uniforms fall short compared to casual dressing is that they do not provide a chance for students to express their individuality. Students, irrespective of age and gender, should be allowed to express themselves. Without such variations in expression, the school becomes a dull and static place. For example, in most parts of Korea, "there is an opinion to be considered that middle school and high school students are at a stage in their life where they develop individuality and an interest in appearance and clothes, and wearing school uniforms that provide little room for choice in terms of design or color can interfere with development of individuality or aesthetic sense" (Kaiser, 1990). Another point to be noted is that uniforms will not change the personalities of the students, instead, they will only mask it. Students who do not care much for appearances will continue to do so in school, while fashion-conscious students will continue wearing branded accessories and makeup to school (Park, 2013). Students wearing regular clothes or not does not affect that. Additionally, morality and judgment are not necessarily affected by the lack of uniforms and individual liberty. If students are allowed to wear what they choose,

it heightens their sense of responsibility for how they carry themselves yet enables them to feel comfortable being themselves. Students, more often than not, prefer to wear something they prefer rather than a fixed outfit for all working days of the week. Schools take the principle of conformity to the extreme, making the student body a sea of mindless clones. Hence, expressing individuality is not only an individual's right but also helps boost their creativity and comfort.

Moreover, the way uniforms look and feel physically is sometimes so off-putting that students do not feel empowered while wearing it. The physical comfort of a student often translates into their mental well-being, so if a uniform happens to be suffocating, it can negatively affect their attention span and learning experience in class. The designers of school uniforms have to create them such that it satisfies the parents, teachers, and students. Thus, incorporating the designs, costs, and colors that everybody wants cannot be realistically achieved. The issue of uniforms is in their adaptability, especially when there are students whose uniforms require special adjustments due to height, weight, or disabilities. Finding a specific size, shape, and color for the items of clothing becomes a major inconvenience on the parents' part. Schools capitalize on this by selling the required clothing only in school stores, often making it much more costly than what is available elsewhere. In the UK, 95% of parents believe that school apparel is too expensive, 16% of parents spend money reserved for essential items on uniforms, and 13% of them report going into debt (95% of Parents Think That School Uniforms Cost Too Much, 2019). Thus, students wearing regular clothes eliminate such restrictions and difficulties.

Furthermore, the standards set up for 'proper uniform' in schools are unreasonably high. This abnormally high standard of presentation and academic achievement adds stress to students and hinders their individual growth. It is worth noting that the aspects of uniform covers not just the proper clothing, but also the overall appearance and demeanor of the student. For example, in India, girls must braid their hair after shoulder-length, keep short nails, and keep their skirts up to their knees in many schools. In extreme cases, the length of hair, color of hair ties, and length of skirts are all carefully measured. Failure to comply with the rules can result in detention, or worse. Complaints come from not just the parents passively watching, but also the students. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017, in Devon, Exeter, the boys of the Isca academy were not allowed to wear shorts in the blazing heat due to the uniform policy, so 30 of them wore skirts in protest (Morris, 2017). This proves that it is unnecessary to scrutinize tiny details which will not directly affect the pupils' performance and education. Some argue that schools must instill a sense of self-discipline in their pupils. However, the concepts of discipline and responsibility can be learned without the aid of strict uniforms just as adequately. Hence, schools must implement their uniform rules in moderation and sensibility.

On the other hand, some may claim that uniforms promote equality, as everyone must dress the same, and everyone is treated equally as students. This proposal implies that students who are not as well-off compared to their peers will be subject to less discrimination and bullying, particularly at the age where peer pressure is powerful. It is partially true; however, prejudice finds a way to seep through equality, simply because of the hierarchal nature of society. Students find one reason or another to compare themselves to others, which inevitably leads to some form of discrimination. This hierarchal system is true in the outside world, where injustice and social inequalities run rampant. By forcing everyone to be equal, they are merely covering their eyes to reality, and not fixing it (Wilkins, 1999). Therefore, the notion that uniforms create equality is true to a certain extent but does not extend to the harsh realities of day to day life.

Lastly, the right to freedom of expression is one that extends to all spheres of life, including school and other educational institutions. It transforms the way a person views themselves, so the question of whether school attire infringe on this right depends on the individuals wearing it. If such outfits need to be in place, both the look and feel of the uniform should be considered. Rules, while necessary to run a school, need to be made and enforced with moderation and purpose, whether or not there is a uniform. Reasonable regulation of the dress code is an effective way to control questionable clothing instead of banning them entirely. The subject of school uniforms is slightly controversial and is a familiar one for many students. Thus, to conclude, one can say that conflict arises when a student favors individual needs and identity over those of the school.

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## Reflection



### Hidden Lessons in the Midst of Chaos

Shireen Ahmad

Ever since I was a kid, I hated that time just went by so fast that we hardly got to enjoy what we had because it just passed away like the speed of light. I always used to ask God to just stop life for a second, just let us gather our mess and fix it. I know it may seem odd to say, but I finally feel like he answered my prayers. I think with this virus outbreak, which caused many countries to have a lockdown, it brought us so much time to finally do the things we have always wanted to do. Whether it was finding a new hobby, reorganizing your room, spending time with loved ones, or just simply working on yourself. I for sure have not been taking granted of this precious time that has been given to me. While this virus has caused great disturbance and misery around the world, it also brought some good lessons with it, at least for me; it evolved my personality, brought me new experiences, a change of habits, and a different perspective on life.

The second our university told us that we are going to start having online classes at home, was the day we knew things had escalated. While many people celebrated the fact that they will be staying home, I was unhappy. It was my first semester at university, my first experiences being made with my first new friends. So, I wanted to enjoy university life a bit more. However, being at home wasn't too bad, we started online studying quite quickly. It was hard in the beginning to grasp for both us and the teachers, but we slowly got the hang of it. I most definitely loved that I could wake up 5 minutes before class starting and have breakfast while watching the lecture being taught. It was an interesting experience, but I felt like being face to face with the professors was more productive. Yet, I continued to make sure

I did my notes every day, and still studied the same. But then the whole online learning started to become worse, our exams were made harder with less time and no backtracking to prevent cheating. 60 questions in 30 minutes. Can you believe that?? Anyway, I thankfully still managed to pull through, but then it got very tiring sitting on the same seat every day in front of a laptop. My legs were tired, I was losing motivation, could no longer be bothered to concentrate in class. On top of that, a problem started occurring on blackboard (the site where we had classes) many of us couldn't see what was being taught or hear the professor teaching so it was very frustrating and useless. Nonetheless, it was a good and interesting experience. I still managed to learn a lot, so I'm thankful I at least had that opportunity.

Moreover, during the lockdown, I was able to create new, improved habits. At first, I would stay awake all night watching Netflix, wake up, have classes, then go back to sleep. But then one day I had fallen asleep early and woke up around 6 am and started my day. I realized what I had been missing all along, it was such a bright, quiet, and fresh atmosphere. Waking up early, I felt so energized and got things done early whereas before I would I would always finish at midnight. I realized this is the lifestyle I want, that's good for me, so I started making it a habit to wake up early every day and start studying from then. Fortunately, I also had the time to work on my religious faith. I continued my Quran classes online. I would memorize a page every day, in hopes of completing the whole Quran one day. My family and I also began praying regularly together too. We would also usually play a family board game like scrabble together or watch a movie every other night. We took every advantage of the time we had to to bond with each other because you never know when it can be taken away from you.

In addition, during this unstable time, I came across a post that a social media youth company needed someone to make TikTok videos for them. Since I was already growing on the platform and had a great passion for it, I applied for the internship. And guess what! I got in. So, when I say that I was able to create new experiences, I meant it. I started working from home, making videos for them. It was my first paid internship ever so it was a delightful learning experience. I had the opportunity to work with many skillful people so I was able to make new connections and learn from them. I was doing so many things at once. I think quarantining gave me a little more time for myself and my family before I fully devoted my life to my studies and time at uni. So, I am thankful for that.

One lesson that I especially learned during this quarantine, is self-love. Being at home alone, away from the world, away from people, really forces you to be with yourself, alone, for once. It makes you ponder about so many things, especially within yourself. I was a person, maybe still am, who would do anything for the people around me. I was emotionally invested in every relationship I had. So much that I put everyone else's needs above mine, to the point where one day it just really burnt me out. I remember days before lockdown had happened, I wanted to give up on going out, interacting with others because it was exhausting pleasing everyone when you just didn't feel like it. So being alone made me realize what I put myself through. I learned that I'm important too, that I deserve to have people put the same effort into me as I do for them. I slowly distanced myself from everyone, no longer being available 24/7 available, I unfortunately did get lots of backlash for that but my time with myself was very much needed. I had time to think and take care of my wellbeing. I realized that I love myself and I will not let me be taken granted for, to be of use and then nothing. So, I decided, to put myself first for once, prioritize my family and focus on the little things that made me happy. Suddenly, now my life is filled with peace and calmness. I had a lot of inner struggles with myself, with my identity, who I am during this quarantine. I might not have figured it all out, but at least I now know who I am, what I want and what I think I deserve. Of course, I will still always be there for others but not at the cost of my mental health.

In conclusion, I do not regret anything that has happened, because I know for sure that everything happens for a reason and that reason is what is best for all of us. But if I were to go back in time, to the beginning of 2020, I would have lived in the moment more, laughed a little louder, enjoyed being out there with my loved ones, appreciated their presence, hugged them a little longer and smiled brighter. One thing I'm sure we all are learning from this experience is to never take anything for granted because the small things in life are what makes life worth living for. To appreciate every tiny thing, every moment, every person, every experience, because they can be unexpectedly taken away from you at any time. You never know what you have until it's gone. With no doubt, this lockdown has taught me valuable lessons of life I will always carry with me.

## Writing 102

### Reader Response Essays



### Love Will Always Win!

Tala Al Abweh

Imagine living in a culturally diverse country like the US or the UAE. You are living a normal life with no major changes until you meet one special person. It may be love at first sight or love after being properly introduced; however you just know that person is the one. Your connection is clear to the blind eye, and your relationship starts growing stronger and more serious by the day. Then one day, society intervenes and throws a billion reasons in your face why you should not be together. Those reasons mainly revolve around one aspect; that is you two are from different cultural backgrounds. Whether it was black and white, Western and Middle-Eastern, or even being from two different countries or cities, society will probably either disapprove of your relationship, or find it unusual and weird. But why? What makes interracial or intercultural relationships so wrong and unacceptable in the eyes of people? Is it merely racism or is there an underlying reason? Love between people coming from different backgrounds is an amazing sight for the eye, as it is a sign of great tolerance and advancement from past racism fuelled issues.

As the years go by, we can see people becoming more open minded and educated than they ever were in the past. Looking back in history, many people can find things their ancestors believed or did that in these days, would be completely unacceptable. One of those past problems that is on the route to being overcome, was addressed by Dr Nicholas Kristof in his essay *Love and Race* (2002). There, Kristof discusses the increase in intermarriage in America after years of extreme racism. He chooses Ole Miss University to be his main example which was “once the symbol of racial confrontation” (p.1); yet now has interracial couples normally strolling around campus. He then, gives very impressive statistics showing the exponential spreading of interracial relationships where “40 percent of Americans had dated someone of another race.” (p.1) Kristof’s argument is more persuasive since he is speaking from personal experience, having been married to a Chinese-American woman. He believes that “the surge in intermarriage [is] one of the most positive fronts in American race relations today” (p.2); although it is still the beginning of a very long journey. I personally

completely agree with Dr Kristof as society should not have the power to enforce what love should look like and who a person has to love. Love is a very special thing shared between two people and things like skin color should not, and should have never been a problem standing in the way.

As a Palestinian I personally relate to the argument presented by Nicholas Kristof because I see it happen every day. The people from my country are very adamant when it comes to the nationality of the person you love. The person must be purely Palestinian, otherwise the family usually disapproves of the relationship, and treats both the kids and the significant other with great unfairness. My aunt for example, recently rejected a man who proposed to her daughter just because he was Lebanese-Palestinian; even though she is someone who lived in the UAE and was open to more cultures. So can you imagine how opposed someone living in Palestine itself would be towards this argument? I agree that our Palestinian nationality is something we should hold on to strongly with the current identity crises issue. But we cannot deny that the majority of Palestinians live outside the country itself, and are bound to eventually fall in love with someone outside their culture and background. What makes us entitled to tell them they cannot be together? The same applies to interracial couples in America.

One cannot deny that Americans have a past filled with severe racism. Kristof gives a heart-breaking example of a situation that happened back then involving a little black boy, Hanover Thompson. He explains how a mother "...called the police after her little girl kissed a black playmate on the cheek; the boy, Hanover Thompson, 9, was then sentenced to 14 years in prison for attempted rape." (p.1) If little Hanover was a white boy, would the mother have reacted the way she did? Kristof stresses the fact that "the miscegenation laws voided any interracial marriages, making the children illegitimate...My wife is Chinese-American, and our relationship would once have been felonious." (p.2) Imagine living in a world where anyone marrying someone from a different race or country would end up in prison. A murderer may be placed in the same cell as a person whose crime is falling in love. Makes so much sense, right? Moreover, if the Supreme Court did not invalidate these laws the children of mixed race couples would have suffered the most discrimination against them for no legitimate reason.

My best friend told me stories about such discrimination here in the Arab world. His mom was Palestinian and his father was Syrian; as I explained above Palestinians do not accept such a thing. His parents loved each other and got married against anyone's will. However, his mother's family were still persistent on splitting them up and kept poisoning the woman's brain with fake problems in her marriage. They also made sure to treat my friend and his sisters worse than the rest of his cousins. They would never treat them as family and would only call them "the Syrian's kids". After years of marriage and problems, there is only so much one can handle and his parents got divorced. These problems are one side of interracial/cultural marriages which Kristof did not mention in his short essay regarding this topic. However, many of the problems currently thrown at such couples arise from the mentality and views of the surrounding society. If people were less judgemental and more accepting interracial couples will live just like any other couple; with their normal ups and downs.

When someone looks at a black and white couple, he or she is usually taken aback by the sight and their looks linger for a while. They act as if one of the two is an alien; not that both are equal human beings in a normal relationship. Kristof states that scientific studies proved "that race is...reflecting very little genetic difference, perhaps one-hundredth of 1 percent of our DNA."(p.1) Such a negligible difference in our internal genes, reflected in our skin color is enough to make some parents "freeze in fear" (p.1) when they see their kids in

an interracial relationship. To elaborate on Kristof's point, I remember studying natural selection and genetics in my grade ten biology class, and finding out that the greater the diversity in one's genes, the higher their chances of survival are. That is because the probability of inheriting culture or location related diseases and mutations decreases, and that of having genes able to adapt to various conditions increases. Moreover, the resulting genetic combinations seen in the looks of mixed race children are usually breath-taking! So when one actually thinks about it, children coming from intercultural or racial marriages have a greater advantage than many others in this world.

Nowadays, interracial relationships are on a steep surge in America. In fact, Mixed-race marriages in the U.S. "now number 1.5 million and are roughly doubling each decade" (p.1). These statistics given by Kristof were actually an underestimate of the actual rate of increase happening these days. Some may view this increase as a bad sign and a road leading towards less diversity; when in fact this will lead to greater diversity and people opening up to more cultures. New genes will start to appear due to the racial/cultural mixing; completely new versions of beauty will therefore be seen. Moreover, the combination of two cultures will give people a different, more educated perspective towards life. As an expat living in the UAE, I find the country being very open minded towards the interracial/intercultural relationships topic. People of different origins are meeting and falling in love with little to no intervention from people. This led to everyone living in harmony, regardless of ethnicity or race. Hence, I can agree with Kristof when he says intermarriage "is an enormously hopeful sign of progress in bridging barriers [between races]" (p.1) in the U.S.

The testimony given by Randall Kennedy in Nicholas Kristof's essay perfectly summarises Kristof's. "We talk about desegregation in the public sphere; here's desegregation in the most intimate sphere." (p.2). Race has been a problem everywhere not just within America for all the wrong reasons. We need to stop classifying people based on skin color and background, and start to accept everyone for who they are. Next time "Sara Beth brings home a brotha" (p.1) her parents should acquaint themselves to the guy first, then make the judgement of whether or not he is good enough for their daughter. Love is deeper and stronger than any superficial boundaries society placed on it throughout the years. Love will always win.

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## **Becoming Human**

Mahira Pathan

Birthed and raised by a Muslim mother and a Hindu King, Princess Mastani was one of the earliest harbingers and witnesses of successful inter-cultural marriages. Keeping her mother's religion, she got married to the legendary Hindu Maratha warrior, Peshwa Bajirao. She led her life as a practicing Muslim in a Hindu empire which subjected Mastani to immense criticism and censure. Although she was skilled in martial arts and politics, she was a victim of severe character assassination. Despite being lawfully wedded to the king, she was branded as "the Peshwa's mistress" and her enemies degraded her as a "Muslim dancing girl" for her proficiency in music and dance. Her first-born son, Shamsheer Bahadur was treated as an illegitimate child and rejected by the Hindu priests in the kingdom. However, Mastani carried on the ideals of altruistic love and rose above narrow prejudices to make herself prominent in the vast Maratha Empire. Ultimately, she died as an influential Muslim Princess who was married to a Hindu ruler and rendered one of the most fascinating love stories to Indian history. Throughout her life, she was one of the earliest believers in inter-cultural marriages. In a culture burdened with the dogma of racial and ethnic prestige, inter-cultural marriages were the fine thread that bound together the otherwise discrepant society. Even today, interracial marriages continue to pave the way for the integration of different races, cultures and religions.

In the essay, "Love and Race" (2002), Nicholas Kristoff analyzes the growth of interracial relationships in America and provides reasonable statistics and arguments in their favor. He believes that the inter-mixing of races is one of the best things to have happened to America and that it promotes empathy and compassion among people. He begins the essay by mentioning the large number of whites and blacks walking as couples around the campus of the University of Mississippi. He deliberately uses Ole Miss as the ground for comparison to showcase the progress of desegregation because it was once the center of deep racial conflict. He then emphasizes the insignificance of racial divisions and their irrelevance on a scientific front. Furthermore, he gives examples of prominent public figures and celebrities involved in interracial relationships to emphasize the fact that such inter-mixed bonds are now validated on larger platforms. He reiterates that interracial relationships are at the forefront of bridging

barriers and bringing people from different races together. Finally, he acknowledges that we still have a long way to go before we can achieve complete integration and harmony.

Nicholas Kristoff believes that segregation on the basis of race is baseless and futile. He insists that, “We should welcome any trend that makes a superficial issue like color less central to how we categorize each other.” (2002, p.1). Kristoff backs his argument on the concrete scientific evidence that “there is perhaps 10 times more genetic difference within a race than there is between races” (2002, p.1). Recent research shows that all humans bear the same collection of genes with only slight tweaks and variations. The differences in hair color or skin color arise as a result of adaptation to external conditions and environment. However, these adaptations are regarded as developments rather than mutations because they came into existence as a means of survival. In tropical regions, the darker skin which contains more melanin (a kind of protein) acts as a biological shield against ultraviolet radiation. Furthermore, based on a recent Harvard Medical School study, it is astonishing to note that two Asians may have more genetic similarity to a European than with each other. This proves that racial classifications are a mere social construct with no scientific back-up.

Personally, I agree with Nicholas Kristoff and believe that human beings need to accept one another, regardless of their race, culture, background, etc. It is undeniable that one may feel a certain assertion towards someone from his/her own race. For example, having spent more than fifteen years in the Middle East, it is difficult to ignore the fact that an Emirati is more comfortable and open to a fellow Khaleeji; not necessarily on an intimate level but even as colleagues or friends. However, one cannot be blamed for experiencing such a sense of belongingness perhaps due to their common culture and language. Their shared background eases out the burden of the ice-breaker to begin a conversation and makes it easy to connect. On the other hand, this should not stop two people coming from different descents to fall in love because every relationship, regardless of its origin, deserves a chance; and society should not stand in the way of that. Nicholas Kristoff persuades the reader with powerful arguments and makes this very point through his article.

Racial discrimination was an extreme social dogma that was upheld for a prolonged period in American history. Kristoff gives the example of Hanover Thompson, a young African-American boy, who was allegedly “sentenced to 14 years in prison for attempted rape” (2002, p.1), because a white playmate kissed him on the cheek. The fact that the young kid was accused of rape and was further imprisoned for it, showcases the insanity and absurdity of the apartheid culture that was prominent back in the 1900s. This concept of racial or cultural purity was actively followed throughout the globe. Even in India, interracial relations, on any level, were prohibited and considered sinful. During the period of colonization, the very rare cases of interracial marriages between a British and an Indian were regarded as immoral.

One of the major challenges of interracial marriages that Nicholas Kristoff does not address is the problems faced by children who belong to dual cultures or races. One may lead you to believe that these children may be torn between cultures and lack a certain sense of belongingness to one particular culture. Furthermore, in certain societies, multi-cultural children are considered illegitimate. For instance, the offspring of a British and an Indian was called a “kutchra butcha” meaning “half-baked bread” pointing to the inadequacy of the individual, being neither Indian nor British. However, I would like to believe that children who are born into such families are woven between cultures and have a deeper and more realistic understanding of the importance of desegregation. From a tender age, the child becomes more welcoming of people from other cultures and subconsciously develops empathy and compassion for people in general rather than for someone of his/her particular culture or race.

I have witnessed the problems and outcomes of interracial, inter-religion as well as mere inter-clan marriages on a first-hand basis. My father belongs to a very conservative Muslim *Miyan* family whereas my mom comes from a traditional Muslim *Garasiya* family. My mother's ancestry is of the Rajputs (who were traditionally Hindu) while my father's family has Afghanistani roots. However, despite both clans having settled in Gujarat, my parents' marriage was resented by both sides because Garasiya parents refused to send their daughter off with a Miyan whereas the Miyans were adamant to reject a girl who did not have a pure Muslim bloodline. The fact that this is not an extreme case of interracial marriage, and yet it was resented and frowned upon portrays the intolerance that people bore for someone from outside their own sphere. But, as the people began breaking out of this shell, interracial marriages became increasingly normalized. Just a decade after my parents' marriage, my uncle fell in love with a Jordanian lady and got married. She was warmly welcomed into the family and treated with respect and equality. Such a drastic change was primarily due to the diminished influence of the elders in the family and the young generation becoming more independent.

Nicholas Kristoff mentions that the people are now beginning to accept and even advocate "desegregation in the most intimate sphere" (2002, p.2) with the number of interracial marriages doubling every year. A little less than half of the American population has been in an interracial relationship and "about 40 percent of Asian-Americans and 6 percent of blacks have married whites in recent years" (2002, p.1). Kristoff strengthens his argument by quoting Randall Kennedy, a Harvard Law School professor with an expertise in the regulation of race relations, who also believes that the inter-mixing between/among races is a symbol of progress and growth. He uses the examples of celebrities involved in interracial relationships to illustrate the progress of desegregation in the American society. Such progress is not only confined within the States but is witnessed all across the globe. The iconic marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle is a classic example of how interracial relationships are now increasingly normalized and accepted.

Finally, Kristoff remarks that desegregation "is still in its infancy" (2002, p.2). Although we have come a long way from racial discrimination, racial and cultural distinctions have not completely vanished off the face of the earth. I still have a Keralite friend whose mother is dead set on finding her a spouse from the same varna (social class), jati (caste), gotra (clan) and having the same kundali (horoscope). When my cousin got married to a Hindu, their marriage was furiously criticized, although his wife had converted to Islam. My brother seemed to have dropped a bomb on the entire family and some of my relatives are still suspicious and waiting for their marriage to fall apart. Inter-religion marriages are complex and it is difficult to address this issue. That being said, their presence further validates the argument that people are now changing for the better and accepting the notion of desegregation.

People from different races, cultures and religions are transcending beyond barriers and defying the notions of segregation. We are becoming more accepting, tolerant and compassionate towards other races and religions and love is paving the way to a more integrated global society. Just as the exquisite blend of the sky at sunset is more beautiful than any time of the day or night, individuals coming together as one makes us more innately beautiful; it makes us more human. When we start defining individuals based on their characters and morals rather than their cultures and backgrounds, our relationships with them will feel more real and true.

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## Critique and Evaluation



### Ethical Analysis of Cannibalism Aboard the *Mignonette*

Farah Watsy

#### Definition of Ethics

In “Ethics in a Nutshell,” Stephen J. A. Ward (2020) explains that ethics involves applying and systematizing ethical principles and guidelines based on different political states, social environments, and advanced technology. Firstly, the author describes ethics and its nature by giving it an initial definition based on its etymological derivation. The definition involves the evaluation of correct behavior and practices based on good morals, judgment, and facts on current situations. Furthermore, ethics is used by individuals, government officials, and professionals to determine the correct approach to find solutions to important issues and perplexing situations. Moreover, the author notes that disagreements may arise over different principles and their use in practical situations. Ward also explains that ethics is based on a set of guidelines; however, different principles are applied based on different situations and changing social environments. Secondly, the author discusses the range of ethics and changing boundaries. He states that ethical discussions changed as time passed and now include topics that were not previously discussed. Ethics also includes many different subjects such as professional ethics, the application of ethical principles in professional environments, environmental ethics, and the ethical treatment of animals. Thirdly, the author

introduces the two main types of ethical inquiry: theoretical and applied ethics. Theoretical ethics is concerned with ethical ideas and reasoning as well as the nature of ethics and ethical philosophy. On the other hand, applied ethics is the study and application of ethical principles in professional environments. Fourthly, the author discusses the different categorizations of ethical theories. One method of categorization involves focusing on the major recurring aspects of ethical actions such as goods, rights, and virtue. Goods-based ethics is concerned with maximizing goods and minimizing harm. It includes utilitarianism, an ethical theory that determines right from wrong by focusing on the greatest number of desired outcomes. On the other hand, duty ethics focuses on whether the action itself is right or wrong using a set of rules, not based on the outcomes. Virtue ethics focuses on emphasizing and developing virtuous character, wisdom, and honesty. Furthermore, another method to categorize ethical theories is focusing on how they justify ethical judgments or where they place their authority. For example, authoritative voices follow the rules of a leader, tradition, or religion while naturalists base their ethical judgment on natural human feelings and reason. Lastly, Ward concludes the article by explaining that social agreement is based on a consensus between all parties.

### **Extended Definition of Ethics**

In the first section of “A Framework for Ethical Decision Making,” Manuel Velasquez et al. (2015) describe ethics by explaining how it differs from some factors that many believe are similar to it and its principles. The authors begin by briefly defining ethics as guidelines of moral principles and behavior that all people must follow in different situations. Next, they identify several factors that may be associated with ethics but are, in fact, remarkably different. Firstly, although emotions play an important role in making important moral decisions, ethics differs from feelings as not everyone feels a sense of guilt when committing wrongdoing. Furthermore, humans feel reluctant to make correct ethical choices when faced with difficulty. Secondly, the authors discuss how ethics differs from religion. They mention how it is universal and does not apply to religious people alone; however, many religions do advocate correct ethical conduct in some of the issues people may face. Thirdly, although all good law systems must greatly incorporate ethical principles, ethics differs from the law as not all that is legal is considered ethical. Additionally, laws can become corrupt if individuals of power use them as means to increase their influence and wealth. Moreover, the authors also mention how culturally accepted norms are not the same as ethics. Many cultures are moral and ethical; however, some can become morally corrupt or neglectful to certain moral issues. Lastly, ethics differs from science. Although science may provide important information that may increase ethicists’ understanding of human nature, no physical data can provide proper and ethical reasoning to inform people what must be done in the issues they face.

In “Framework for Ethical Decision Making,” Manuel Velasquez et al. (2015) also explain the different sources or approaches that philosophers base their ethical standards on and how they are applied in practical situations. Firstly, the authors discuss the five different sources of moral standards. The first approach, the utilitarian approach, evaluates actions based on their consequences or how well they increase goods and minimize harm. This approach also involves providing the most good to the greatest amount of people. Another important source of ethical standards and conduct is the rights approach. This approach focuses on respecting and protecting the dignity, rights, and freedom of individuals. Moreover, the rights approach differs from utilitarianism as it focuses on providing good for all individuals rather than most individuals. Additionally, the authors also discuss the fairness or justice approach. The teachings of Ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle greatly impacted this approach as it deals with the equal treatment of all people and the elimination

of discrimination and unfair bias. Furthermore, the fourth approach, the common good approach, refers to the contribution of individuals' actions to society as a whole and the policies and systems that provide welfare to members of that society. On the contrary, the virtue approach is concerned with emphasizing and developing virtuous character and ideals such as generosity, compassion, integrity, and honesty. Secondly, all of the mentioned approaches are applied together to determine the guidelines of ethical and moral principles; however, some issues and disagreements may arise. For example, philosophers may disagree on what is the common good, what should be considered good or bad for individuals and society as a whole, and what is human rights. Issues may also arise from the differences between the approaches as each approach has a different understanding of what is ethical or morally correct; however, each approach provides essential information that can be used to determine the ethical choices in certain situations. Thirdly, determining the correct decision requires a certain method that must be practiced regularly. This method involves examining and evaluating the consequences of certain actions to make the best decision in each scenario. For more complex and difficult choices, however, we must consult others and ask for their outlook and insight on the matter before coming to a final decision. Fourthly, the authors mention certain steps that facilitate the ethical decision-making process. The first step is recognizing and acknowledging the ethical problem. This step also involves determining whether the situation is potentially harmful or if the situation involves a decision between good or bad choices. The second step to this process is getting as many relevant facts to the situation as possible to allow us to make the best decision that produces the least harm. The third and fourth steps are evaluating alternative actions based on the different approaches and using the option that best fits the situation. Lastly, try to decrease the harm done and reflect on the consequence of the decision made.

### **Case Study**

In 1883, a small English yacht named *Mignonette* was purchased by John Henry Want, an Australian lawyer. Want wanted to transport the ship to Australia by sailing as it was the reasonable choice of transport; however, the ship's small size and the long trip made it difficult to find a proper crew for the voyage. By the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1884, however, Want finally found a suitable crew and the yacht began its voyage. The crew consisted of four members. They were Tom Dudley, the captain of the voyage, Edwin Stephens, the first mate, Edmund Brooks, the sailor, and Richard Parker, the cabin boy. Parker was a 17-year-old orphan and this was his first long voyage. By the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1884, as the yacht was sailing near the Cape of Good Hope, the crew was falling asleep when a wave hit the ship. Given the small size of the yacht, Dudley realized the ship would sink and ordered the lifeboat to be lowered. Within a few minutes of the lifeboat being lowered and the crew escaping, the ship sank. Fortunately, all four crew members managed to escape on the flimsy lifeboat; however, they had no freshwater and only two cans of preserved turnip for food. On the first night, they lost their oars fighting a shark and, therefore, could not use them to drive the boat towards the nearest land which at the time was over 1,000 km away. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, the hungry men shared one of the cans of preserved turnips. Two days later, they caught a turtle and ate its meat and bones alongside the other can of turnips but did not drink its blood as it was contaminated with seawater. After that, they ate nothing for the next 8 days and as they failed to catch any rainwater, they began drinking their urine. Around this time, Parker drank seawater against the advice of the others as it was known that drinking seawater could be fatal. As a result, he became visibly ill. By the 16<sup>th</sup> up to the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, Dudley suggested that the crew members draw lots to kill one of them so the others could feed on his meat and drink his blood; however, Brooks refused and no lots were drawn. Two days later, as Parker was in a coma and appeared to be dying, Dudley suggested the idea once again but Brooks

refused to draw lots once more. That night, Dudley discussed the idea with Stephens alone. He told him that they had wives and families that care for them and Parker was on the verge of death. Finally, they decided to leave the matter until the morning.

#### **Decision**

The next morning, Dudley and Stephens decided that killing Parker was the best decision to make as he was probably dying and letting him die a natural death would not preserve his blood properly. Brooks was impartial to the idea although Dudley always insisted that he agreed. Dudley then preceded to tell a prayer as he stabbed the boy in his jugular vein with a penknife, killing him, as Stephens held the boy so he would not escape.

#### **Outcomes**

The men then ate Parker's body and drank his blood. Even Brooks, who first refused the idea, consumed the most alongside Dudley while Stephens consumed very little of the boy's body. Fortunately, the men also managed to catch some rainwater. A few days later, they were spotted and finally rescued by a German sailboat named the *Montezuma* and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1884, they returned to Falmouth, Cornwall. However, upon their return, the men were immediately arrested and put on trial. Dudley and Stephens were charged with murder. Brooks, however, was not as he did not commit the act of killing the boy. In the "special verdict," as it is now known, Dudley and Stephens argued in front of the jury that they had no other choice for they were dying of starvation. The jury, unsure of whether or not they should impose a death penalty, asked the High Court for their judgment. Lord Coleridge, then, convicted Dudley and Stephens of murder as necessity was no excuse for murder. They were also sentenced to death; however, due to public protest, their sentence was commuted to six months in prison. Today, this case is taught in law schools and philosophy as it discusses whether or not murder and cannibalism out of necessity is morally and lawfully correct.

#### **Analysis**

The case of R v Dudley and Stephens is still debated between philosophers to this day. Philosophers use the five different approaches to justify whether what Dudley and Stephens did was, in fact, considered morally and ethically correct or incorrect. For example, some philosophers may use the utilitarian approach to justify what they did. The utilitarian approach determines morally correct and incorrect behavior by focusing on the outcomes that they yield. Utilitarian ethicists search for and focus on the action or behavior that leads to the greatest number of desired outcomes to the greatest number of people. In the infamous case of R v Dudley and Stephens, killing Parker enabled Brooks, Dudley, and Stephens, who had families and wives, to survive as his meat and blood allowed them to sustain themselves when there was no food or water until they were rescued. Therefore, according to the utilitarian approach, murdering and devouring Parker was ethical as it provided the greatest good for the least harm. Other approaches, however, may provide a different point of view. For example, the rights approach focuses on respecting and protecting the dignity, rights, and freedom of all individuals and implementing the behavior that best benefits everyone. In this case, killing Parker disrespected his personal rights and freedom to live as he was used as means to benefit the three men. Parker was also killed without consultation which disrespected his dignity and right for consent; therefore, according to this approach, what Dudley and Stephens did to Parker was unethical and immoral. Additionally, another approach that could be implemented is the fairness or justice approach, the approach that deals with treating all humans fairly and equally and the elimination of discrimination based on gender, age, race, and other factors. Parker was a 17- year old orphan with no family; however, it was still unfair that he was not treated as an equal and was seen by the men as an instrument for their survival. Moreover, the common good approach could also be utilized to prove that Dudley and Stephens' actions were unethical. This approach deals with how the

actions of individuals can benefit everyone. Murdering and consuming Parker only benefited the men as they thought about how the action or behavior led to the greatest goods and least harm rather than what action could lead to the greatest benefit for all of them, including Parker. This approach also focuses on respect and compassion to the vulnerable; however, the men did not recognize Parker's welfare and only focused on how he can benefit them. Lastly, virtue ethics focuses on developing actions and behavior that lead to virtuous character and values such as honesty, generosity, and compassion. Dudley and Stephens' actions did not display or develop good values or character. Killing Parker was a selfish act that did not display any generosity or compassion as they only thought about what benefitted them.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Dudley and Stephens' action was not morally justifiable as necessity does not excuse murder or cannibalism. Moreover, Parker not giving his consent to be killed and devoured disrespects his rights as a human being as he was seen as an animal or object that could be taken advantage of to benefit the others. However, if Parker agreed to be killed to sustain the rest or died a natural death, one may believe that it could be moral to eat him. If he agreed to be devoured, then he gave his consent and therefore it does not violate his personal rights or dignity. On the other hand, if he died a natural death, then the men might as well benefit from the dead body to sustain themselves until they are rescued. Furthermore, fear of death causes humans to make poor decisions and not think clearly. One must not judge them if they have never been in a similar situation before.

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### **Borderline Rock: 5 Seconds of Summer**

Furat Abdeljaber

It was the summer of 2014; my best friend and I were sitting cross-legged on my bedroom's blue carpet. Out of nowhere she screams and points at her phone, almost scaring my soul out of my body. "Look! The music video came out!" and in less than a second, the music video for the song "Amnesia" starts playing. I was not expecting much; after all this band got famous thanks to "One Direction". But to my surprise, that song swept me away. All kinds of emotions flooded through me. Without realizing, I was nodding my head along to the music, enjoying every beat. When the song was over, I took out my phone and started downloading all of their songs; which were not much at the time. Prior to this, the name 5 Seconds of Summer made me think of pop music, bright colors, and cute boys. But after truly listening to them, they were much more than any of that.

5 Seconds of Summer is a punk-rock band consisting of four Australian members who started their journey in December of 2011. Each one of them is skilled with an instrument. They have two guitarists, Luke Hemmings and Michael Clifford, a bassist, Calum Hood, and a drummer, Ashton Irwin. Their lead singer, Luke Hemmings, started posting song covers on his Youtube channel early 2011, and soon his fellow band members joined him. They gained a large amount of recognition for their cover of "Teenage Dirtbag" and they attracted the attention of One Direction's band member Louis Tomlinson, who shared one of their videos on his twitter. At the time, they only had an EP (extended player), which is basically an electronic album, with four songs. Fortunately, One Direction decided to have "5SOS" as their opening act; and that made them incredibly famous. They released their debut album in July 2014, right after they finished the tour. They currently have three albums and each tells a different story. This band broke through all the false labels and became known worldwide. 5

Seconds of Summer is an extraordinary band with captivating lyrics, mesmerizing voices, and a range of instrumental skills.

A song with no meaning is like a painting without paint; empty and untouching. 5SOS write their own lyrics with occasional features, and they only write songs about past experiences and their own struggles; which appeals to the troubled youth. Their lyrics are so raw and personal to the point where you find yourself relating to something you have never experienced. They describe pain with such sorrow that you feel your heart break with every word. They draw a perfect picture of happiness. Your whole life turns brighter the second you listen to them. What I personally admire the most about their lyrics is how they make you feel like you are not alone. A favorite song of mine is Broken Home; which basically talks about this girl whose parents are going through hardships and she wonders if her family will ever be happy again. *"She's a scar, she's the bruises, she's the pain that you brought"*. She is getting affected by each and every fight they have. All the love is draining from within their house walls, and she is left alone in this broken home. It appeals to me so much, not because I relate to it, but because the drummer wrote this song on his own and it was about his own struggle. His parents got divorced and he had to look after his younger siblings; being their only mentor. So the fact that he poured out his heart and soul into this song with no hesitation, makes your back hair stand on its ends. Most songs you hear on the radio these days feel empty and ingenuine; an example of that would be the song "Gucci Gang", where he literally says Gucci gang over 50 times, or the song "Panda" where he is talking about getting money and, just like Gucci Gang, repeats the word panda. However, almost every song 5 Seconds of Summer have released has its own story to tell; for instance their song called "Rejects," which used to be the only thing I listened to in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Because the members were outcasts in school, this song was a portrayal of their experience as rejects. Whenever I played that song, it made me feel like I belonged somewhere; and that is exactly the reason why their music means so much to me. It helped me overcome a rough period in my life. With their lyrics, I never feel alone.

Certain voices have a special tone that makes you feel elevated and like you are flying. Each member of this has an impressive voices. Although they have definitely come a long way, I will admit that. When they first started making music, their voices were squeaky and they did not have much control over certain notes. I can easily say that each one of them has a distinguished voice. Ashton, the drummer, usually does background vocals or harmonies. Calum, the bassist, hits all the high notes and has a huge vocal range. Michael's voice is definitely my favorite. He has a unique rasp and could fit right into a rock band. However, it is worth mentioning that Luke's voice developed the most out of the four, and now he sings most of their songs. His voice is filled with emotion and passion, and it is striking how much control he has over his voice now. To many, Patrick from "Fall Out Boy" sounds much better, but personally Luke fascinates me the most. His voice can be calming and soothing, or angry and hurt; and it will hit you in a whole different way. Patrick may be able to hit higher notes, but his voice comes off as really nasally. Not to mention, Patrick is the only singer from FOB, but Luke is not the only singer from 5SOS. They are all gifted with stunning voices and incredible talent.

For a while, Luke was my idol for improving my singing. I was so inspired by how well he had developed, that I started to copy his style. What specifically caught my attention were his flawless and effortless runs. It took me so much practice and singing in the bathroom to get it right. I still try to sing along with him, but his voice has gotten too deep; so now I just harmonize. I had no clue what harmony even was before I became a fan of them. Whenever they would harmonize together, it would give me chills all through my body. Their voices go better together than alone. And so I started attempting to harmonize with them,

until I finally grasped it. Not only do I feel like my troubles melt away when they start singing, but I also have the time of my life. It is like we are singing along together; as if they are always there with me.

The key factor that connects and binds their voices and lyrics together is their music. Without the right instrumentals playing in the background, a song is not complete. The fact that they each add a certain touch to the music, makes you more immersed in the song. Ashton is the most passionate drummer I have ever seen. When he is playing his drums, he is in another world. You can see the sweat going down his face with each swing of his drumsticks. His band members always say that “he is like a gorilla behind those drums.” He adds the right kind of “head-nodding” to the beat. If it is a calm song or a loud song, it is up to him to decide. As for the two guitarists, they basically run the song. The guitar riffs are different and unique; making each song special in its own way. Their sound mainly consists of electric guitars and heavy strumming. Nevertheless, the bass finishes the mixture and perfects it. Calum can change the mood of the whole song just by adding the right bass. Personally, I think that the bass is an underrated instrument. It is quite difficult to master and it is crucial to have in a song. I think that with the bass the song can either be smooth, if the player is talented, or completely ruined, if the player does not know what he/she is doing. Most pop songs nowadays will have the loudest bass, causing your whole head to throb. A song called “Rockstar” by Post Malone has the same bassline repeated throughout the song, and it is practically the only thing you hear. That is why with 5SOS’s songs, you truly feel calm even if the song is loud and rock-y. Another beautiful feature in their songs, especially those from their second album, is that you hear all kinds of instruments you normally would not hear. You would hear distant bells ringing, or a single piano note, or a whistle; keeping your ears open to take in every single detail.

Personally, what really makes this band stand out is the fact that they cannot be categorized into a single genre. They are so open and diverse, that their music cannot be forced into a single box. They were, and still are, this band that writes music which reaches other people in every way possible. They never wanted to be a boyband, but they cannot be described as a rock band either. People usually compare them to bands like One Direction or The Vamps, but they are actually not like either of those two bands. One Direction is a power pop boyband; and so is The Vamps. As for the Australians, they are a mix of genres, which makes them even more interesting. They have songs for all kinds of people. Their genre is more punk than anything else, but they do have some rock song. In addition, they have some pop songs in their newest album. However, one band that has a similar sound as 5SOS is Green Day. Green Day was 5 Seconds of Summer’s inspiration for many things, including their overall sound. They are heavily inspired by them that they even made a cover of Green Day’s song “American Idiot”. Nonetheless, I have so much respect for these Australian boys, because they have stayed true to their original sound. No matter who you compare them to, they will always stand out as different and inimitable.

Music is a form of art that truly elevates the soul and touches it in a way nothing else can, 5 Seconds of Summer have that impact on me. They have made it so far on their own, and that is extremely admirable. They have blurred the borders for what is rock and what is punk. Their music knows no boundaries except for true passion and love. They love and enjoy what they do; clearly evident in their lyrics, voices, and music. And even though they get a lot of hate for being different or for being “watered-down rock”, they mean a lot to me. It sort of feels like we grew up together, since I discovered them when they were only 18. Talented and dedicated, they are a true inspiration.



### **The Best Persian Food in Dubai**

Khalifa Hamad Al Nuaimi

Going down the staircase of the company's headquarter from the offices in Bur Dubai, after an exhausting day spent with endless tasks to complete I was starving. I tracked down the smoke that escaped from the chimney and located a restaurant that was crowded with people outside waiting for their turn to enter and indulge in a feast of epic proportions. A once lost appetite is restored from a fragrance of delicious kebabs that passed by me through a breeze of hot air coming from around the corner. After all there was this huge sign that held the name "Al Ustad Special Kebab" which is one of the most historic, famous, and family owned Persian cuisines located in the heart of Dubai. The restaurant was established by the late Mohammed Al Ansari who left a magnificent trace and a legacy, in which his three sons followed. Al Ustad special kebab is an outstanding restaurant which has all the main features that would give an amazing experience. The criteria for this experience are spectacular and delicious food, remarkable service, euphoric ambiance, and both prime and historic location which makes Al Ustad the best Iranian restaurant in Dubai.

Food quality and the authentic taste of the food both contribute to the success of any restaurant. Furthermore, the finest quality of food must be served for customers in Al Ustad since it is a very important aim for the owners. They insist on serving the best because their goal is to gain a customer's loyalty and assure a re-visit. Therefore, owners are mostly found in the kitchen between the chefs, directing them and help the waiters to serve the food in an appropriate presentation to make the customer feel satisfied and happy. Maintaining a certain standard is very important to the owners and they ensure that their customers have the best experience in the restaurant. Although there are hundreds of different restaurants of the same cuisine, Al Ustad stands out because of the type of service they provide. Furthermore, the deliciousness of the food served by the restaurant is outstanding. The late Mohammed Al Ansari created secret sauces which are used to marinate the mutton and chicken kebabs to enhance the actual taste. As soon as a customer sits, a complimentary salad that contains different types of vegetables such as, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, lemon, and peppers is placed on the table. Also, a bowl of yoghurt and fresh sliced cucumbers is provided. Moreover, the delightful marinated kebabs with yoghurt, garlic, and other secret sauces are served with either the appetizing saffron rice with sun dried pomegranate or hot Iranian flat bread. The

tantalizing fragrance of the strongly marinated kebabs wafts into the restaurant from the kitchen, grabbing people's attention. In addition to that, they also offer this lemony flavored spice called sumac alongside salt and pepper on the table if a customer wants to add a bit of extra flavor to the dish. If food quality and authentic taste is one's wanted experience, Al Ustad special kebab is the right restaurant.

The service is really what a customer seeks for in a restaurant, and it determines whether the experience is significant or not. It all begins when a customer enters the doors of Al Ustad, where Majeed the eldest son of the founder is at the reception welcoming customers with a smile that graces his face. He always makes sure that a customer enters with a smile, and if not, he throws jokes and does what it takes to draw that smile. I cannot remember a day where I entered this restaurant with a sad face on. Talil his younger brother, takes customers from there and helps them find a suitable place to sit and enjoy. Moreover, waiters are always available and ready to take the orders and they sometimes give their own recommendations if a customer was not sure what to order. Fast service is a priority for the owners and they have the urge to always provide the best and continue improving to maintain the restaurant's reputation. Although the restaurant is usually crowded and waiters are running back and forth, they still manage to serve the food on time. The maximum duration of waiting for the food is fifteen minutes and orders are always right and there are no mix ups among them. If any customer complaints, the owners notice and act immediately to try and improve the situation, after all, the restaurant was founded on the belief that making the customer feel at home is the prime objective. For example, Al Ansari once saw a tourist who did not have money to pay for a meal, so he invited him in and secured him a lunch for free. The same tourist visited Dubai again and approached the restaurant, but this time with his family and gifts for Al Ansari to show how thankful he is. This is the legacy the three sons are willing to continue.

Ambiance is what defines the customer's experience at a restaurant. Al Ustad provide all the comfort a customer needs to have a great experience. Firstly, the restaurant is located in Dubai which is known for the numerous different cultures within it. The restaurant offers different seating strategies to try and minimize the negative interference within different cultures. Aiming for the comfort of all people in general without specifying anyone, is one of the targets of Al Ustad. For instance, local families generally try to avoid crowded restaurants with a tight space between tables for dinner, because of their culture unlike most Europeans who do not mind. Therefore, Al Ustad offers a family seating area in the restaurant for those families who want to have privacy. Secondly, the vibe at the restaurant is incredibly fun. No matter where you look the only thing you will see is laughter, enjoyment, and pleasure. This surely will boost up your happiness if you were having a bad day. The three current owners will always be found throwing jokes around and making people enjoy their time at the restaurant. I was once sitting with my friends and Majeed pulled the chair next to us and sat. He started chatting and showed us funny videos online and we all laughed together. They always remember their customers and I do not have a single memory of boredom or sadness at the restaurant. Nowadays, if I feel sad, I will immediately go to the restaurant to lift up my mood. Thirdly, the restaurant is filled with snapshots hung on the wall. Pictures of members of the royal family, celebrities, business men, and tourists who visited the restaurant are all attached around the restaurant. A person can sit for dinner and a crown prince might be sitting on his right, a famous singer on his left, a well-known business man behind him, or even a recognized government official eating his kebab on the opposite side. In comparison to other kebab restaurants like "Al Fareej", there might be a possibility in comparing the food taste and quality between both restaurants. However, it is impossible to compare the

atmosphere of Al Ustad to any other restaurant. Al Ustad will always have a unique ambiance.

If both a historical and prime location are combined then for sure it is a successful restaurant. Therefore, Al Ustad indeed expresses the story of success clearly. Four decades ago before the unity of the emirates the restaurant was established in a city named Bur Dubai, which is known to be the heart of the emirate of Dubai. Also, within the radius of the astonishing city Bur Dubai; the famous Al Fahidi fort is present which is currently a well-known museum. The city converted from only having one road surrounded by sand, a building or two, and residential villas into a city that began to develop within the decades. New residential buildings, shopping centers, and commercial shops were built. It is true that the developments changed the city, but it continued to hold and maintain the historic part of it. Today it became a historic district and a main attraction for tourists that visit the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, Al Ustad is always crowded by tourists from all over the globe, in which the restaurant also does a great job in capturing a great memory of the best food experience that tourists could have. Although, the restaurant is located in such an amazing location, the area can get over crowded and the traffic jam is so horrible. The road can get packed with cars making it difficult to find a parking, that might take you a full hour. Furthermore, many old locals are found sitting in the restaurant having lunch or dinner on a daily basis. It reminds them of the good old days where they grew up, and this gives the customers a good impression of the restaurant. Another key point, is the fact that Al Ustad is located in an area that holds historic significance therefore it keeps competitors on edge. Many other restaurants may have good food and service, but only a few can have a restaurant located in such a historic district, as well as maintain such an immaculate reputation.

In conclusion, the restaurant Al Ustad special kebab is an outstanding restaurant in all aspects. Food quality and deliciousness is what their legacy is all about, an amazing service is what they aim for, the restaurant's atmosphere has a unique touch, and the location is just wonderful. Although there are a lot of Persian cuisines in Dubai, Al Ustad is the only one that can give you the authentic flavor and experience. Al Ustad special kebab will serve you the golden kebab platter cooked by experienced chefs using secret homemade sauces to tantalize everyone that sets foot in the restaurant. All in all, it takes great consistency, determination, and patience to build a place like this, and they have surely done a great job.



### **With Love, Mom.**

Mahira Pathan

*“Darling, just do exactly what I said,” my mom said calmly while she stood next to me. “Mama, making kebabs is more difficult than cleaning my room.”, I whined in response. “Alright, just watch as I make them.”*

I watched her as she crushed the ginger and garlic on the wooden chop board and delicately added it to the large glass bowl filled with minced lamb. Then, she squeezed a whole lemon and added chilly, turmeric and fenugreek leaves to the mixture. She blindly gauged some salt on her hand and poured it in too. I would always ask her how she knew how much salt to add and her classic response would be, “You just feel it.” Using a spatula, she thoroughly combined all the ingredients and wrapped the bowl in plastic. Five hours later, I went back to the kitchen to find my mom excitedly unwrapping the marinated lamb. She molded a portion of the meat mixture into balls around a wooden stick and inserted red and yellow bell peppers on the top and bottom ends. I watched in awe as she placed the stick into the pan with sizzling butter, smoked it with hot charcoal and brushed the kebabs with oil. She garnished the succulent kebabs with three coriander leaves and set them on the dining table. Even as a child, I always sat on the kitchen counter and carefully observed as my mom poured her heart and soul into every dish she prepared. Cooking is my mom’s forte and she is the best home-cook I know. Her excellence is evident by the mouthwatering flavor and aroma, wide variety, aesthetic presentation and large quantity of the food that she prepares.

The most important aspect of any food is the flavor and aroma. Taste and fragrance go hand in hand while judging any platter. The first perception of the quality of the food one gets is its aroma. My mom renders special attention to ensure that her food smells amazing and uses several spices and ingredients to enhance the fragrance. She adds cinnamon, cardamom and/or rose water in most of her main course dishes including biryani, mutton karahi, rogan josh and even tea. In addition to spices, she uses an ancient Indian technique called “dhungar” for smoking and infusing the flavor of burnt charcoal into meat entrees. She sprinkles saffron on savories for sweet fragrance and rich color and texture. Indian spices render a zesty flavor to any food. However, the key lies in the combination and measure of each spice used. My mother’s food has divine flavor because she is experienced at using spices in the right quantity and composition to procure their exquisite tang. Furthermore, she is always consistent with the taste of the food that she prepares. Whether she is preparing kheer at three in the morning or in the afternoon or after six months, it is guaranteed to taste exactly the same and have the same creamy, delicate fragrance; one you can smell from 20 feet across. At times, I wonder how she comes up with absurd mixtures of ingredients that also taste surprisingly yummy. For example, she once made a small appetizer of a pineapple cube, a tiny slice of cheese and an olive on a toothpick. I laughed at the bizarre combination but the moment I popped the toothpick into my mouth, I was craving for more. It tasted heavenly and I felt like I had been transported to Hawaii enjoying the Honolulu vibes. If you do not believe me, you must try it at home. You will not be disappointed.

The ability to prepare a variety of cuisines is a characteristic of an experienced chef. In India, each state has a distinct and diverse cuisine and is known for a particular entree. Belonging to a traditional Indian family, my mom is skilled at making most of the well-known dishes of each state. Her Gujarati “khandvi” is impossibly thin and tightly wrapped and “dhoklas” are as soft as cotton. She can prepare a perfectly round and crispy Keralite “dosa” served with delicious “sambar”. Her tangy Maharashtrian “vada pavs” are to die for and spiraled “jalebies” will have you licking your fingers. Furthermore, my mother is extremely fond of preparing seasonal Indian dishes throughout the year. During summer, one will find an unlimited supply of “aamras”, which is a dessert made with mango pulp and served with pooris, in our house. In winter, my mother prepares laddus made with ginger, jaggery and ghee to prevent inflammation and sinuses. In fact, she is very cautious about the nutritious value of the food she prepares and its health benefits. Apart from main course meals, she makes a vast variety of scrumptious snacks such as chicken puffs, croissants, potato chips, etc. on a regular basis. In addition to the various Indian eatables, she can cook a variety of cuisines ranging from Italian to Chinese, Lebanese and Mexican. Be it tacos, hummus, lasagna or dumplings, my mom’s got every recipe up her sleeve. On the other hand, other women in my family lack the potential to make cuisines outside our traditional food. For example, my aunt can prepare tasty Indian food such as “idlis” and “chaat” but is unable to make any main course outside Indian cuisine. In school, I used to have the most diverse lunchbox menu throughout the week and my friends would wait for me to open my tiffin and hoard my lunch. They used to call me “the continental queen”, all thanks to my mum.

Presentation is an important aspect of every dish, and my mother possesses finesse in this area. Our cabinets are lined with different shapes and sizes of dishes, each serving a special purpose. Her deep, red dishes are reserved for food items that are curry-like while she uses the shallow white plates to serve rice and chapattis. We have several types of crockery and cutlery including gravy boats, seven types of knives, kettles, ladles and vegetable dishes. My mom is fond of purchasing aesthetic crockery and treats it like a prized possession. However, unlike typical Indian housewives, she does not reserve her expensive china for the guests. She uses it on a regular basis because she is constantly concerned with serving her

food in the right and most exquisite manner. She takes the garnishing for food very seriously and has a whole compartment in the fridge devoted to ingredients used for garnishing. While picking the mint leaves from their branches, she picks them in two different ways; one with the three crown leaves attached to the branch, used for garnishing and the other with only leaves, used to add as an ingredient. Whether we have three or thirteen guests, each serving of hummus is always adorned with olive oil that is poured in a perfect spiral along with the gustatory garlic paste. Moreover, my mother puts in extra effort in decorating salads because she believes in making a good first impression. She always skins the tomato in the shape of a rose and diligently places cucumbers and carrots in symmetric designs. Her motto is, “If the food doesn’t appeal to the eye, you would not want to put it in your mouth.” On the contrary, my grandmother, from whom my mother learnt most of the recipes she uses, misses out in the presentation of her food. She serves each meal in the same plain manner which makes it ordinary and less appealing. Most of my friends’ mothers barely take any effort in preparing salads and some skip this whole portion of appetizers. Furthermore, my mom implements traditionality in cooking as well as serving the food. For example, irrespective of the cuisine, she makes our family have our meals while sitting cross-legged on the ground on a “dastarkhwan” (a tablecloth spread on the ground) and eat with our fingers in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

Several home cooks have difficulty in preparing meals in large quantities. This, however, is not an obstacle for my mother. My mom started cooking from the age of twelve. She made her first meal for five people when she was in the seventh grade. After she got married, she used to run a mess and cooked two meals a day for all thirteen of her customers. For my cousin’s engagement, she made biryani for the 97 people who attended the function. Evidently, she has an experienced hand and does not step back from the challenge of preparing large meals. We live in a joint family and she cooks three meals for a family of nine almost every day. However, she does not opt for the easy main course even while making big meals. Our house is the center for gatherings on most occasions and festivals. On the first day of Eid, around 30 of my cousins and relatives visit us throughout the day and it is in the Indian custom to have a meal with literally each and every visiting family (talk about having big appetites!). Our signature servings include “sheer khurma”, sizzling minced meat served with “naan” (an oven-baked flatbread), chilly-and-garlic marinated lamb chops and biryani. My mother prepares each of these toothsome delicacies overnight and makes the tedious task look effortless as she handles it with patience and finesse. Contrastingly, my dad’s sister, with whom I have spent quite some time, lacks the dexterity to prepare food in large quantities. She can barely prepare a meal for more than 5 people at a time.

In addition to the above aspects of my mother’s cooking abilities, she exercises a very disciplined and organized demeanor in the kitchen. She is very strict with the placement of the dishes on the dish rack in ascending order of size and categorizing the different types of spoons based on their various purposes. She does not allow us to tilt her containers stored with curry to avoid spoiling the sides. No one is allowed in the kitchen without slippers nor can we touch the food or utensils without washing our hands. She is very cautious about the cleanliness of the kitchen and does not compromise in this respect.

Lastly, the dedication, love and effort that my mother puts into preparing even the simplest dishes render the final touch that makes her food delectable. She is always on her feet whenever anybody in the house asks for food. She is more enthusiastic about cooking for people who enjoy eating whole-heartedly and have a big appetite, rather than for stingy eaters. However, despite my mom’s exceptional cooking abilities, she lacks in one particular sphere, which is, she hates baking desserts such as cakes or cookies. She despises making these items at home because they require expensive ingredients such as whipping cream,

vanilla essence, chocolate chips, etc. My mother grew up in a very middle-class household wherein her parents could not even afford one full kilogram of meat to feed a family of five. So, she is used to cooking dishes that require cheaper ingredients and believes that a good chef is one who can make do with what is available inside the house. Fortunately, God has bestowed the passion for baking onto me as I often bake different types of cakes and cookies for my family and friends.

In conclusion, my mother is an excellent cook and her outstanding skills in the presentation, variety, flavor and quantity of her food stand witness of the same. The secret to the divinity of her food lies in the love and effort she commits to the task of preparing it. If you ever happen to visit our home, you are guaranteed to be served with a delightful full-course meal that will have you craving for more. One can say that the kitchen is my mom's battlefield, her cutlery is her ammunition and she always comes out a winner.

# EUROVISION

## SONG CONTEST

### How War Birthed the World's Happiest Competition

Omar Abu Farha

Circa 1950, Europe was still healing from the ravages of the Second World War. The European Broadcasting Union took the initiative and began looking for ways to employ entertainment to bring the continent's divided nations together. The outcome? The launch of the Eurovision song contest in 1956—an annual competition.

The contest works as follows: countries pick artists to represent them, and the artists create an original song. In May of each year, the participants travel the host country (the country that won the year before) and perform the song live. After all songs were performed, viewers can vote for their favorites from home. However, viewers cannot vote for their own country. The winner gets to host the following year.

Nowadays, the contest rakes in 200 million viewers a year, and watching it is considered a pan-European tradition. Eurovision helped launch the global careers of Celine Dion, ABBA and Epic Sax Guy. Moreover, huge names such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Dean Martin and David Bowie all covered a Eurovision song. I find the contest magnificent; the knowledge it provides, the music, and the entertainment are all top-notch.

What sets Eurovision apart from rivaling musical competitions is its pedagogical value; as a non-European, I learned a lot about Europe's geography, history, traditions, and political relations just by watching it annually. Geographical and historical studies in the UAE, especially those concerned with South-America and Europe, are rather weak and lacking in their scope. Passing these courses would allow you to point Germany out on a map, but almost all other countries, like Montenegro or Latvia, would remain under your radar. I only fully memorized European map and capitals through Eurovision. Firstly, before each Eurovision season begins, cities in the host country undergo a prolonged and publicized bidding process to decide on the most suitable city to host the competition. Through this phase, I familiarize myself with the city names and their facilities. For instance, bidding involves comparing each city's hotel prices, transport infrastructure, and safety—valuable information if I were ever to tour the country. Eurovision season also includes several tours around Europe that the artists take part in throughout March and April. The purpose of this is to promote their song before the actual contest in May. Many artists document their journey and share it publicly and with fans; their observations and exploratory videos helped me learn a lot about Amsterdam and Riga. Another way you can learn more about European

geography is by watching the video segments before each performance; these feature the artists either showing off their own country's culture, or exploring the host country. Apart from just geography, you can learn about many traditions by watching Eurovision. For example, a supergroup of three represented Norway in 2019; the group included a Sámi performer—Sámi people are an indigenous Finno-Ugric group inhabiting parts of Scandinavia and Russia. Unlike his groupmates who sang regularly, he yoiked throughout the song; yoiking is a traditional Sámi way of chanting that is highly distinctive in its sound. Another example is 2020's Ukrainian electro-folk band that sings in an Eastern European 'white/open voice.' Other countries choose to express their cultural identity differently—via clothing and staging. Armenia's performance in 2010 featured a giant apricot stone on stage; apricot stones are Armenia's emblem. In the same performance, a backing singer played the duduk—a traditional Armenian wind instrument made of apricot wood. Armenia was able to introduce, in just one performance, numerous elements of its culture to millions of outsiders. Since watching a show means you interact with other fans, you can learn more about political relations between countries by noticing how fans from different countries treat one another. For example, I came to learn about Greece and North Macedonia's (now resolved) naming dispute, or Armenia and Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh territorial dispute. I do not think any other European musical show, such as X-Factor, The Voice, or Idol, portray Europe's political and cultural landscape as thoroughly as Eurovision does. Since Eurovision a song contest, it is no surprise that it can introduce many quality numbers to your playlists. Moreover, the variety of genres in the contest is unprecedented and, through exposure, helps expand your taste. The winning song in 2016 was Sophisti-pop-funk, but jazz in 2017, and electropop in 2018—the fact the contest is any genre's game encourages the participation of numerous avant-garde songs such as Portugal's 2019 entry (genre: worldbeat, art pop, alternative R&B, and kuduro). Genre and style, however, are not the only ways Eurovision songs vary; they differ thematically, too. Russia finished second in 2012 by sending a band of grandmas baking bread on the stage while charmingly chanting "Party for everybody! Dance! Come on and dance!" Contrast this with Iceland's 2019 dystopic entry warning Europeans against engaging with populist movements.

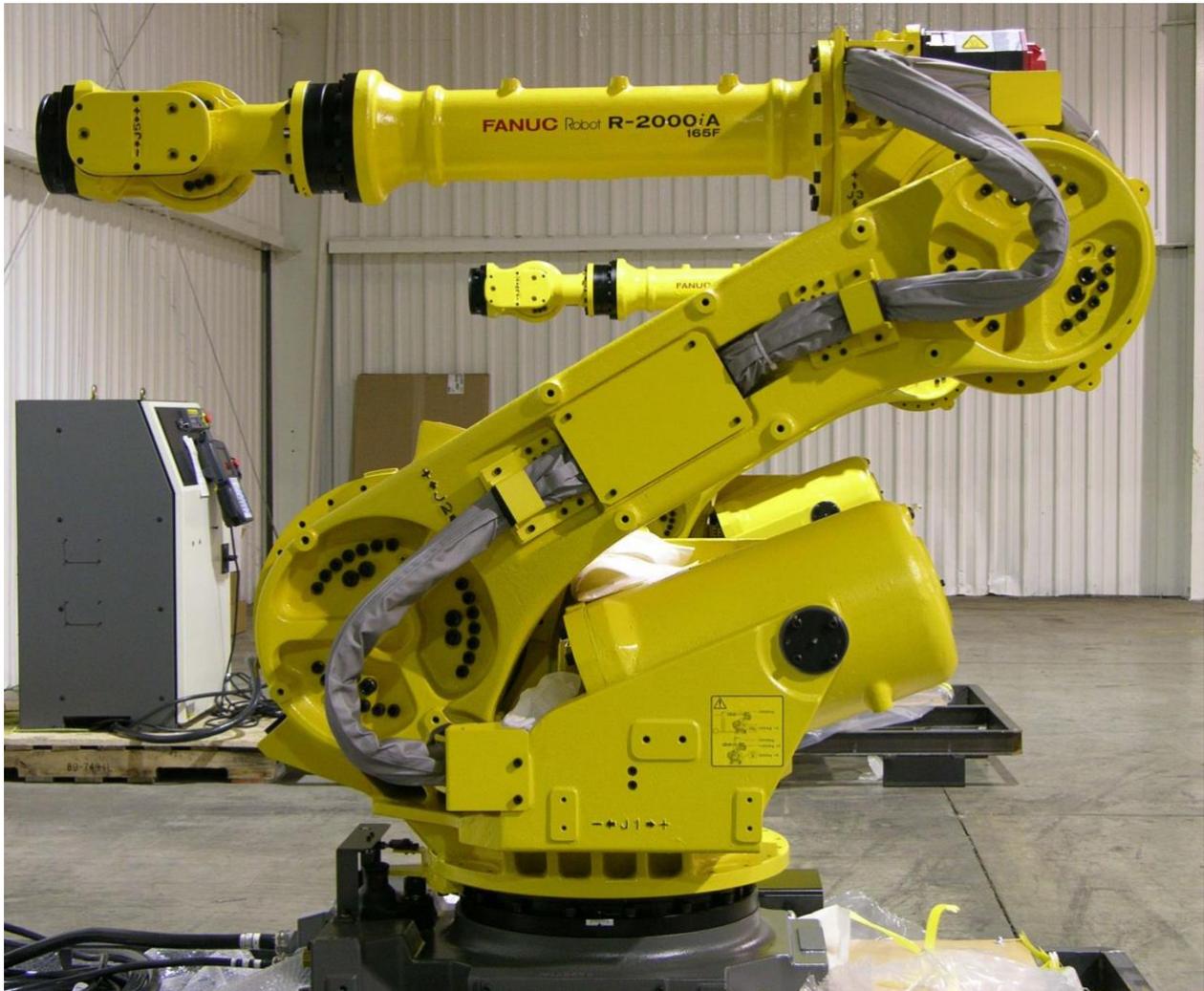
“Hatrið mun sigra, (Hate will prevail),  
Evrópa hrynja; (and Europe's heart impale;)  
Vefur lyga (burn off its web of lies.)  
Rísið úr öskunni (Now from that conflagration)  
Sameinuð sem eitt (Rise in unity.)”

After watching the contest for several years, my playlist—that started as a list of similar-sounding and similarly themed pop songs—became a balanced compilation of songs that discuss different subject matters and span many genres.

Another advantage of keeping up with Eurovision is how entertaining it is. With a budget up to €60,000,000, Eurovision uses world class technology. The stage designs, for example, are extravagant and highly functional. The 2019 stage had moving triangles and triangular lights that formed stunning effects and illusions. The 2017 stage had a hidden chandelier that opened up to expose dozens of huge transparent LED screens and lights that swarmed around the artists. These gimmicks, along with professional camera effects, LED stages, flames, and numerous other features, result in distinctly arresting live performances that look just like music videos. Moreover, the hosts (who are usually comedians) perform skits throughout the show, especially between the live performances of the contestants. The voting segment of the show, which is the most tense, is highly unpredictable and keeps you on the edge of your seat.

Though I highly recommend everyone to try to watch the contest, you should first be aware that bloc voting happens to a degree. Bloc voting is when viewers from a certain country tend to vote for neighboring countries. Greece and Cyprus, for instance, exchange the highest number of points every year. Though it is irritating, I do not believe bloc voting is significant enough to affect results noticeably. If voting patterns remained constant, we would expect similar results every year. However, this is not the case; for example, Austria won in 2014 and landed the last place in 2015. Bloc voting is far away from a hidden issue; the show's organizers know of it and combatted it by adding a system of jury votes to dilute the public vote (which is more prone to political voting).

Overall, I believe that watching the Eurovision Song Contest is a pretty unforgettable experience. It contains just the right mixture of pedagogy, quality songs, and entertainment to earn it a spot among the largest TV shows of all time. In fact, many Swedish people celebrate Eurovision season more than Christmas.



## **Critical Evaluation of Technological Unemployment and Human Disenchantment**

Khalid Al Hashemi

The article “Technological Unemployment and Human Disenchantment” by Loi (2015) discusses the erosion of job opportunities due to automation. While targeting robotic innovators, large corporations, private industries, and policymakers, the author elicits an ethical debate on the dangers of computer-driven automation, contributing to high unemployment rates among middle-class workers. Loi quotes relevant economic theory and makes inferences using qualitative data to prove his assertions. His academic qualifications and skills make him the best candidate to initiate the discussion. For instance, his doctorate in political theory authorizes him to deliberate on the loss of middle-class jobs, while his past studies on data ethics and social justice confirm his knowledge about the topic. Generally, a critical review of the article concurs with the authors’ allegations that innovations in the Information Technology (IT) sector contribute to job disfranchisement. The paper’s strengths

can be found in its clear, organized structure and use of a variety of rhetorical styles, although it could be more balanced in its perspective.

Loi has two explicit objectives: one is to uncover the misconception that mechanization improves the lives of workers, and the second is to support his argument with empirical evidence from the economics of machines, which proves robotics can be harmful to workers. While noting the benefits of machines in assuming physically exhausting, uncomfortable, or repetitive roles, Loi provides substantial evidence to confirm the trend has changed, and machines are currently competing against humans in the job market. He laments that since the Industrial Revolution, machines have encouraged the exploitation of workers because the latter are forced to offer their services at low wages or else be replaced by robots. Meanwhile, while the loss of bargaining power explains tolerance towards meager salaries, the gap between the rich and poor increases constantly, courtesy of such exploitation. This growing problem Loi seeks to address with a variety of tactics, hoping to convince the audience to be mindful of the increasing ethical issues in the field of robotics.

The strength of the study lies in its structure and the conclusive evidence that supports its arguments. First, it follows a pattern that appeals and attracts readers to its content by maintaining clarity and accessibility. For instance, the introductory section provides and defines keywords. Opening with definitions is strategic because it facilitates full comprehension of the following content. The following section summarizes previous findings and theories linked to the history of equipment in economics. The third section is central to the paper as it convincingly rejects the hypothesis that computerization guarantees better jobs than previously held, and division four provides empirical evidence to back the claims made. Part five further rejects the humanistic fallacy supported by capitalists. The second to last fragment examines ethical issues posed by mechanization. This logical progression is easy to follow. Additionally, the commentary provides comprehensive data that offer insights on how automation has systematically eroded meaningful employment opportunities, thus inhibiting the wellness laborers. This section predicts the future of graduates is in jeopardy if nothing is done to create sustainable vacancies. The main argument is that innovations in IT contribute to job loss under current circumstances. The study is applicable in the IT sector where robotic innovations have contributed to job loss and to the biomedical field, which is linked to healthcare. The article shows its strong practical focus in that it considers case studies that deliberate on the ethical issues of the technical revolution and provide guidelines for how to curb the growing problems. Consequently, this paper is appropriate not only for academic purposes, but also for computer programmers, capitalists who prefer machines to maximize their profits, government agencies in charge of work protection policies, and potential personnel who need to position themselves advantageously in the job market to secure employment. The overall relevance of this study is unquestionable.

The author uses ethos to appeal to the audience. First, he quotes relevant sources and uses applicable theories to demonstrate his understanding of the topic and gain the audience's trust. For instance, he provides the origin of the phrase "human disenchantment," which is from the discipline of bioethics (Henschke, 2012). Consequently, the readers can verify the definition and further understand the meaning of the expression by finding the given source. Moreover, the writer provides different perspectives concerning machine intelligence by comparing it to biomedical alteration of human genes to improve wellbeing. The approach increases the scope of the report and enhances its validity. The use of credible sources, objectivity, basis of the evidence on facts and legitimacy of its arguments further enhances the ethical appeal of the paper.

Second, the investigator presents the arguments logically and uses trustworthy reasoning. Throughout the article, Loi uses a large variety of sources to back his claims,

knowing that this strategy makes his ideas more convincing. For instance, he uses over sixty sources from different authors, making it possible to analyze the merits and demerits of machine intelligence and eventually make logical deductions. Additionally, the premises made can be authenticated by the facts provided in the reference materials, leading to logical conclusions. Importantly, the broad scope of citations is not only sufficient and distinctive but also pertinent to support inductive reasoning that mechanization limits employment opportunities.

Third, the author makes an emotional appeal to the culprits to reconsider the use of machines before their adverse effects become irreversible. For instance, the article refers to advancement in the biomedical field to show how positive technology enhances the quality of life by empowering people with disabilities. Furthermore, the author juxtaposes genetic interventions and computerization to show how the former improves life while the latter worsens the wellbeing of people. The use of frequent examples appeals to the emotions of readers, which eventually compels them to consider the dangers of machines.

Though the paper is extensive, it is nonetheless biased in its overall arguments concerning technology. For instance, the author observes that discoveries in genetic modification of specimens are beneficial since they improve the lives of the subjects. In contrast, such technology becomes adverse when companies use it to increase their profits by lowering labor costs. Loi also ignores the fact that gene alteration gives people an undue advantage over the others. For instance, an athlete whose genes are altered ridicules the spirit of sportsmanship because such modification eliminates the element of equality (Pokrywka, Kaliszewski, Majorczyk, & Zembroń-Łacny, 2013). Given that he is an advocate of social justice, it is only logical he adopts the authoritarian point of view that favors decisions, which impacts the common good of the majority. Addressing these few counterarguments would strengthen the paper's credibility.

To sum up, Loi successfully illustrates how advances in artificial intelligence jeopardize job opportunities. The organized structure of the essay lures the audience to read it in its entirety because premises are presented reasonably. The free-flowing research provokes understanding that ushers in the sense of urgency in stakeholders to enact conservative measures that protect current and future job opportunities. Importantly, the writer magnificently ridicules the humanistic fallacy that technology creates jobs. While acknowledging the benefits of automation in the medical field, the author effectively illustrates how skewed novelties enrich private firms at the expense of unskilled staff. Consequently, the relevant authorities need to establish laws that regulate artificial intelligence to protect jobs.

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## The Triple Talaq Bill in India

Fathima Farhana Moyikkal

The divorce of a 62-year-old woman in 1985 in India still troubles the country to date. *Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors, 1985* was the case about a Muslim woman who filed a petition to the court demanding maintenance money from her ex-husband Mohammed Ahmad Khan after he divorced her using *talaq-e-biddat*. In Islam, there are different methods in which the end of the marriage is confirmed. From the wife's perspective, she can divorce her spouse using *khula*. Similarly, the husband can use *talaq*. There are different forms of *talaq* or the unilateral right of the husband to divorce his wife. For the purpose of this writing, the stakeholders will explain the basic idea revolving around *talaq*. *Talaq* can be performed by the simple utterance of the word "talaq" by the husband. If the husband pronounces "talaq", the marriage bond is broken. After this action, the wife waits for some time, a period called *iddah*. The duration depends on the condition of the woman. Usually, the length is three months or until the wife finishes three menstrual cycles. If she is pregnant, then her *iddah* period ends after she delivers the baby. *Iddah* period is put up mainly to make sure that the wife if she decides to marry another man is not declared pregnant with the offspring of her previous husband, which eliminates the questions that may arise from paternity issues. Additionally, the husband and wife are allowed to restore their marriage if they decide to before the end of the *iddah* period.

The husband has three chances with *talaq*. He can perform *talaq* once and restore his marriage. Then, he can perform *talaq* again and restore his marriage. However, the third time he performs *talaq*, he is not allowed to take back his wife. If the couple wishes to reconnect after three *talaqs* are performed, the wife needs to marry another man, separate legally from him, and then remarry the previous husband. From the religious perspective, the husband is

only required to give the maintenance money for the iddah period and the wife's *mahr*, a certain amount of something valuable given to the wife in the beginning by the husband for her hand in marriage. Talaq-e-biddat or triple talaq or instant talaq happens when the husband utters, "talaq, talaq, talaq", using up all three chances of talaq without giving an option to restore the marriage. Talaq is a complicated concept when misused and is also one of the most hated lawful or *halal* matters in Islam. Marriage in Islam is a sacred bond and divorce should only be seen as the last resort.

In India, triple talaq was sometimes seen as a mechanism to threaten and blackmail vulnerable women. Wives and mothers were afraid of losing the source for their income and protection which is, in this case, the husband. In the case of *Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors*, triple talaq was not the only issue. Rather, it was also the refusal of the husband to give maintenance money after the iddah period is over. It was officially the first time when India started questioning triple talaq and its impacts. The Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Khan should give maintenance until Shah Bano can support herself or remarry (*Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors*, 1985). Additionally, the Supreme Court outlawed the triple talaq but never put up an exact punishment due to the diverse types of triple talaq cases reaching the court and making the conclusion that one-type-fits-all punishment would not work. Consequently, many Muslims started rioting against the ruling of the Supreme Court, saying that the court was interfering with Muslim personal laws. The government which was administered by the Indian National Congress (commonly referred to as "Congress") at that time passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986, as a result, which nullified the ruling Supreme Court. According to s. 3.a of the *Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986*, the husband is required to give maintenance for the divorced wife for the iddah period only.

In December 2017, however, the government which was overseen by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party, introduced a new bill, the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2017. The bill illegalized triple talaq with three years imprisonment for the husband as a punishment for the breach of the law. The bill was passed by Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India, but failed to pass counting the numerous oppositions in Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament. In July 2019, the bill was then reintroduced and renamed as the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019. The bill was commonly known as the Triple Talaq Bill. In the Parliament, the opposition, which was led by the Congress and the proposition, led by BJP had several heated debates. They observed many reasons as to why the Triple Talaq Bill should be rejected or passed. The bill was this time passed by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. It was notified as law in the same month. Undoubtedly, the bill saw the uprising of frequent protests and riots on the streets of India. Many questioned why a practice that was considered void by the Supreme Court was criminalized by passing a bill. Although the Triple Talaq Bill may be seen as a violation of religious laws by some or as a measure to punish Muslim husbands and give freedom to Muslim wives by others, there is no doubt that the outcomes that may emanate from the practice of triple talaq can be minimized.

Defenders of the bill affirm that the bill protects women's rights. As Yadav and Banerjee (2017) claim "The judgement gives us a lot of things to celebrate, the first takeaway is that it recognises women's rights based on the right not to be discriminated against as a ground to test customs" (para. 6). By illegalizing triple talaq, women do not need to fear that their husbands can use triple talaq to threaten them when arguments and fights occur. This empowers women by removing the concern of losing their source of income for them and their children. N.R. Madhava Menon who is a law professor at the National Law School of India University believes that this bill will restore "women's dignity and assures equality of

gender” (Datta, 2017, para. 5). When the permission to use triple talaq is on the table, the husbands would not hesitate to use it, especially those inhabiting in the rural areas of India where women are still seen as inferior to men. There is no question that women are still being discriminated against largely in the country and that India must focus on changing the mentality of women being perceived as subservient in society. Muslims are the largest religious minority in India with an estimate being around 12% of the population. Muslim women are structured as the oppressed ‘minority within a minority’ by several Hindu nationalists (Kirmani, 2011, as cited in Lateef, 1998, p. 57). The proposition of the bill also cited Article 51A(e) which states that it is the duty of the citizens “to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;” while discussing the bill in the parliament (IN Const. art. 51A, § e). Triple talaq is insulting the dignity of women by giving the husbands the right to end a marriage by just uttering a word trice. It is argued that enforcing the bill should be viewed as one of the many steps taken by the Indian government to reach equality in the Muslim community which later snowballs to the Indian community as a whole.

Similarly, a supplemental advantage of the bill is that it provides the government the right to intervene with Muslim personal laws and is a step closer to bringing a uniform civil code in secular India. The uniform civil code is a common set of rules governing every citizen. Mandating the uniform civil code is an ongoing debate in the Parliament. Article 44 declares “The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India” (IN Const. art. 44). During the early stages of Indian independence, the recommendation of having a uniform civil code was proposed to unify the country in terms of personal laws. This is when Article 44 was added to the Constitution. When a uniform civil code applies to all citizens of India, everyone will stand before the law equally, leaving no gray areas for the judges to interpret. Even though the article remains undone to date, many laws were passed to adjust Hinduism to democratic standards. The state has nationalized Hinduism by taking authority and amending Hindu civic and marriage laws (Harel-Shalev, 2009, para. 10). By meddling in Hindu religious laws, many argue that the government has the right to interfere with Muslim religious laws and change them to better fit the democratic world. This bill is just one way to do so.

Per contra, the BJP fails to address the destruction of religious freedom of the Muslim community that will transpire after the execution of the bill. Talaq in any form is the right of Muslims and removing that right by criminalizing triple talaq is discriminating against Muslims regarding religion. This is unconstitutional subsequent to Article 15(1) which states “The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them” (IN Const. art. 15, § 1). Even though the bill only criminalizes triple talaq, it is still taking away from the privileges of the Muslims. In line with Article 29 which asserts “Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same”, outlawing triple talaq is against the Constitution because triple talaq is part of the Muslim culture (IN Const. art. 29). Cambridge Dictionary defines “culture” as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (“Culture,” n.d.). Passing the bill is a directly contradicting Article 25(1) which expresses “all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion” (IN Const. art. 25, § 1). Concerning Article 25(1), Muslims have the fundamental right to exercise triple talaq. If emotional or physical harm is done to wife, a case can be filed under statutes such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) and Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which will certainly rule in favor of the wife if the husband is found to be guilty (Agnes, 2018, para. 12). From the perspective of average Muslim women like Mehvish, a 56-year-old

homemaker, triple talaq is not damaging the dignity of a woman rather just a part of Islam. Mehvish said:

Nothing can override what our religion tells us to do. We will continue to practice what has been prevalent throughout these years. It is ultimately a matter of our faith and we are the ones who have the right to take a decision about it. (Ghosh, 2017, para. 4).

The uniform civil code is a negligent motivation for passing the Triple Talaq bill.

By changing the normal culture of Muslims to fit the “democratic world”, the government takes a step further to encircle the country under one set of civil rules. Encompassing the whole country with a uniform civil code will bring many unnecessary consequences to add to the already fueling problem between the Hindu nationalist and the Muslim community. If put into action, the uniform civil code will contain content that mainly serves the favors of the Hindus, the majority. Although India is a secular nation in words, the country has been suffering from Hindu nationalist ideologies challenging the country’s status. Especially, after BJP taking over the government, Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, has been indirectly feeding into the Hindu philosophy. According to Agnes (2018) “It is indeed ironic that Modi, who has chosen to remain silent on the issue of the lynching of innocent Muslims by cow vigilantes and Hindu extremist organisations, has time and again commented on the plight of Muslim women” (para. 6). Modi’s government has been narrating this whole situation as if the only concern of Modi in this problem is the protection of Muslim women. It is time and time clear to mindful Indians that there is a political motive behind criminalizing triple talaq, gaining the votes of the Muslim women. Only one article, Article 44, in the whole Constitution talks about enforcing a uniform civil code. However, there are numerous articles such as Article 29, Article 15(1), and Article 25(1) to name a few, that add to the Constitution’s value of protecting the interest and rights of the minority before any. In 1937, the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act was ratified in India which makes the application of Sharia laws to Muslims permissible. Bringing a uniform civil code nullifies this long-standing act that gave Muslims the right to practice Islam and to be prosecuted using mainly Islamic Sharia laws.

The opposition of the bill also put into consideration that without a procedural safeguard the bill does no good for the Muslim women and only criminalizes the Muslim men. Shashi Tharoor, a former international diplomat who is currently serving as Member of Parliament, said:

The bill does nothing to improve the status of Muslim women who suffer from numerous other difficulties. Therefore, this bill cannot claim the benefit of the exception under Article 15(3) of special provision. Instead of protecting Muslim women, all this bill does is punish Muslim men. (NDTV, 2019).

By placing the husband behind bars after he exercised triple talaq, the husband will be unable to give maintenance without being able to make a living. As a result, the wives are back to the same situation that would have occurred without the bill. In fact, the situation is worse now, because the husbands would not be able to provide maintenance even for the iddah period. Without a procedural safeguard, the bill may become a dangerous weapon. If a wife manipulates evidence, for example by creating fake text messages send by “her husband” announcing talaq, an innocent man could be incarcerated. The bill’s incompetence in protecting the Muslim women and men by providing an action plan towards what should be done after triple talaq is observed is one of the main reasons the bill had abundant oppositions.

The successes and failures of the bill are debatable; however, its impact is not. The Triple Talaq Bill criminalizes a civil right but it is also useless against talaq itself. In Islam,

triple talaq is not the only form of divorce, as mentioned earlier. Uttering the word can break the marriage bond instantly without the husband using the triple talaq. The cases of triple talaq are rare in India and it is not impacting the Muslim community on a reasonable scale. Nonetheless, there is no denying the fact that the bill does empower women to some degree by punishing spouses who use triple talaq to insult and intimidate the wives. On a similar note, removing the bill and then changing some approaches the government makes to combat this problem will give better results. One of those approaches is educating the young generations in school about adult life and giving free marriage counseling to couples. In India, mental health, therapy, and counseling are still considered a stigma. Changing that mentality will take time and effort. By starting early, the nation can prevent many hindrances in the future including triple talaq cases. The success of the next solution will be in the hands of the Supreme Court. When a triple talaq case approaches the court, the judges can decide what should be done case by case (Habibullah, 2017, para. 7). For a general rule of thumb, however, the court can assign a certain part of the husband's income for the wife and the children to maintain themselves. Making such judgments will make sure that triple talaq is not criminalized but is controlled. Some may see the triple talaq as a problematic concept. It is a religious right nonetheless and provoking the minority communities with their fundamental rights is only going to cause problems in India. In words and in actuality, India should stay secular and true to its nature. It should try its best to give full advantage to the citizens to practice religion. Whether triple talaq will continue to be banned and criminalized is an important question. A more important question, however, is whether India will challenge more of these forthcoming that will transform the country into a nation where minorities will be mistreated or not.

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## Argumentation



### The Dangers of Hate Speech: An Argumentative Essay

Amna AbdulJalil

“Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace,” Buddha once said (Sharma, 2013, p. 124). Speech is vital for democracy. It builds bridges between people of various nationalities, beliefs and genders. Only through communication are they allowed the opportunity to speak out against injustice, resolve their differences and live in harmony with one another. However, freedom of speech has often been confused with the ability to express views without evidence, or censorship. Inappropriate language, hateful comments and stereotypical accusations have become the norms of speech, as people continue to underestimate the consequences of such forms of expression. Furthermore, laws, including the first amendment of the in the constitution of the United States, do nothing to prevent those who engage in hate speech or, even, protect its targeted groups. So, hate speech is a growing issue that must be addressed correctly; it is a cause of hate crime, the reason many people are socially marginalized, and a claim that does not outweigh the rights of vulnerable groups.

Through their words, people have the power to instill dangerous ideas into others. Repeated exposure to such concepts over a long period of time can alter attitudes. This technique is used by professionals of various fields, including teachers, psychiatrists and, most commonly, advertisers. Advertisers use repetition to increase their viewers’ likability of their

services. Psychologists refer to this tendency of people to prefer things they are familiar with as the “mere exposure effect” (Akadjian, 2015, para. 1) In the same way, repetition of negative thoughts can enhance a listener’s feelings of hatred. Hate speech may gradually influence listeners’ actions and cause them to act out against certain groups. For example, anti-muslim hate speech has been on the rise since the attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States in 2001. In 2010, some right-wing Christians stood outside a Connecticut mosque holding signs that read, “Islam is a lie” and “Jesus hates Muslims.” Moreover, one protester shouted, “murderers” directly at the younger children departing their place of worship. The First Amendment allows such protests to take place and causes many similar incidences to go by unnoticed (2011, p.26). Another cause of such misdemeanor is linked to the media’s ongoing bias that displays a negative image of people of the Islamic faith. Also in 2010, a cab driver was severely stabbed by a 21-year-old man in Manhattan just moments after discovering he was muslim (2011, p.30). The FBI reported that attacks on Muslim Americans increased by 67 percent in 2015, marking the highest rate since 2001 (“The Trump Effect,” 2017, para.10). Therefore, hate speech spreads messages of intolerance that influences people’s actions and drives them towards expression through criminal activity.

Hate speech can hurt people not only emotionally, but also psychologically and socially. Its most damaging types are the ones that address their identities; race, religion, sexuality, and disability are matters that make a person who they are. Once hate speech is initiated, rumors emerge, stereotypes are set and people begin to divide. The most damaging result, however, is the spread of fear among listeners. An innocent target fears rejection and begins to doubt his/her eligibility, while others fear the consequences of accepting them into the society. Thus, hate speech has the power to diminish an individual’s dignity and lead to a loss of self-esteem. People who face social isolation must then overcome the challenge of succeeding in an environment that has set limitations on their opportunities. For instance, racist hate speech in the 1960s against African Americans was battled by leaders, such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. These civil rights activists dedicated their lives to ensure that people are treated with justice and equality. Despite their efforts and accomplishments, it is apparent that racist hate speech still exists as a major problem in many societies. The coming of a digital era has unintentionally affected the situation, as it has created room for online hate speech which ranges viewers worldwide. Additionally, younger generations are exposed to a whole new form of hate that can drastically influence their identities for better or worse. Educating them on the dangers of hate speech and the necessity for people to unite in order to resolve differences is the only way to end it.

A right to freedom of speech does not entail the ability to hurt others and socially degrade them. Physical protection from hateful demonstrators does not complete a law-maker’s duty towards victims of hate speech. Instead, the responsibility to defend people’s social and emotional standing must also be reflected through appropriate laws. Those who participate in divisive hate speech inviting violence should face its consequences. Several UK universities have taken the initiative to ban hate speech on their campuses, including Oxford, Edinburgh and Newcastle university. The changes were influenced by previous protests and public demonstrations that were caused by debates held at the institutions. Their new censorship regulations aim to ensure the social and emotional well-being of vulnerable groups (Rosen, 2017, para. 2). Diversity is an asset and should be valued rather than treated with bigotry. It allows economies to grow through an exchange of knowledge, an increase in productivity through trade, and an attainment of political connections that aim to solve problems that concern people all around the world, including poverty and world hunger. Thus, division encouraged by hate speech distracts many people from the real threats affecting a society.

Nothing can outweigh the basic human rights of all individuals to live in their hometowns with no fear of being targeted, marginalized, or socially isolated.

Many view hate speech as a part of freedom of speech that must be protected. The same people believe that restrictions on speech imply that a society is moving backwards. However, hate speech itself completely opposes the purpose of freedom of speech; an expression of dangerous ideas oppresses the freedom of others by limiting their opportunities and exposing them to hatred no one should endure. Appropriate measures and laws must be established to prevent hate crimes initiated from hate speech and restore equality among diverse communities. It is crucial to build a safe, positive and hopeful environment for future generations who will face the new challenges that develop with political, social, and environmental changes. Restricting freedom of speech in public is necessary, but people should be given the right to express themselves privately or in their own homes. The reason is that no one can control people's opinions or eliminate the existence of hate speech entirely. Hateful people will find a way to express their thoughts through either violence or online hate speech. Furthermore, some argue that the bans of hate speech at universities are a threat to debates. While discussions of certain topics are crucial, the change in policies were mostly due to participants' use of offensive and hateful statements. It is possible to present opinions using intellectual and factual information without targeting and victimizing participants of debates.

In conclusion, the dangerous outcomes of hate speech and its link to hate crime can no longer be ignored. Ideas of intolerance and division influence people's actions and cause real harm to their targeted groups. The consequences can be improved by the implementation of stricter laws and education that explores distinct cultures around the world. Transforming viewpoints that are derived from ignorance can bring communities together and allow them to resolve important problems of upcoming generations. Freedom of speech encourages people to express themselves, but not to crush the self-esteem and confidence of others. Every individual has the right to preserve his/her identity and live with no fear of encountering acts of racism, islamophobia, Semitism or homophobia.

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## **The Veggie Venture**

Rofa Arfan

Are you aware that the piece of succulent steak on your plate is slowly killing the planet? It is a known fact that animal agriculture contributes to 18 percent of all greenhouse gases, compared to only 13 percent from transportation (Brasier, 2019). This is only the tip of the iceberg as the meat industry is notorious for the mistreatment of animals, while its impact on human health is also questionable. Fortunately, people have become more conscious of both their health and the environment, thus actively seeking ways to sustain them. This has resulted in the vegetarian diet gaining widespread popularity in recent years. Adopting a vegetarian lifestyle involves abstaining from the consumption of meat, fish, and poultry. People often adopt a vegetarian diet for religious or personal reasons, as well as ethical issues, such as animal rights. (Link, 2018). Even though it has been widely criticized for resulting in nutritional deficiencies, a balanced vegetarian diet can lead to a healthier society, while also preserving animal rights and reducing environmental degradation along the way.

Adopting a vegetarian diet has been linked to various health benefits. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, an evidence-based review showed that a vegetarian diet is associated with a lower risk of death from ischemic heart disease (Craig, 2009). This is due to the abundance of fruits and vegetables this lifestyle relies upon, therefore providing vegetarians with numerous vitamins and minerals. It also limits the consumption of saturated fats that lead to cholesterol plaques. Furthermore, since cholesterol comes only from animal foods, vegetarian diets are cholesterol free. Although cholesterol is an essential component of each human cell, vegetarians do not need to worry about not getting enough cholesterol, because the body can make all the cholesterol it needs from vegetarian foods (Toppo, 2018). Another positive aspect of this diet is that vegetarian food is usually rich in fiber and water, thus promoting healthier skin and proper digestion. On the other end of the spectrum,

processed meats have been labeled a carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. This means that they are now classified as something that can lead to cancer (Simon, 2015), further probing people to choose health over ham.

Moreover, animal cruelty in the meat industry is no longer a secret. Innocent animals that are unable to vouch for themselves are treated inhumanely. They are confined in places known as 'Factory Farms' where they are kept in cramped cages with limited movement and hardly any veterinary care. A grim example is found in an article by animalEquality (2016) of baby chicks that are raised for slaughter. With little hope of surviving in the first place, weak chicks are thrown directly into the trash bins and are either suffocated or crushed with clubs. As if this wasn't enough, animals are kept in harsh conditions with high temperatures that they are unable to withstand, while also being regularly tormented with vaccines and hormone injections. These animals are tortured and abused just to satisfy the ever-growing food industry. According to the United Nations, the number of industrial live-stock sent to slaughter each year is equivalent to eight times the human population on planet Earth. At no other time in history have so many animals died or suffered so much throughout their lives (Thornton, 2019). This is the bitter reality of the meat industry that will continue to flourish until us as consumers decide to put an end to it. Fortunately, many well-known figures have switched to plant-based diets in hopes of raising awareness about animal rights. This includes everyone from Joaquin Phoenix, who recently used his win at the Oscars to bring attention to his vegan agenda and Serena Williams, who gave credit to the vegetarian diet for her increased energy levels and better performance in sports.

Environmental degradation is another issue that comes along with eating meat. Although at first it might be difficult to see a correlation between them both, the facts show a different story. Livestock farming has a vast environmental footprint. It is a large contributor to climate change due to its carbon emissions. The uncertainty of weather conditions this causes can lead to floods, droughts, and heatwaves in the future. Likewise, meat production is highly inefficient as around 30 percent of the earth's land surface is used for livestock farming, additionally, around 15000 liters of water are required for just 1kg of beef. This creates a lot of problems as land and water are scarce in many parts of the world. Alternatively, the water and land used for livestock farming can instead be used to irrigate and plant crops, thus helping feed around an extra 3.5 billion people and averting the impending global calamity that is world hunger (Vergunst and savulescu, 2017).

Critics on the other hand argue that the vegetarian diet can lead to nutritional imbalances. They have claimed that this diet can lead to B12 and Iron deficiencies. It is undeniable that eating meat provides you with iron and other important vitamins and minerals, while also being an important source of protein. This helps in maintaining weight and better energy levels. Nonetheless, there are plenty of foods included in a vegetarian diet that provide the same amount of protein and iron. Examples include nuts, lentils, quinoa and Greek yogurt which are excellent sources of protein. Furthermore, most vegetarian foods such as spinach, oats, and kidney beans are higher in iron than meat itself. It has also been shown that B12 deficiency isn't just a problem for non-meat eaters. The Framingham Offspring Study found that 39% of the general population may be in the low normal and deficient B12 blood level range, and it was not just vegetarians or older people. Most interestingly there was no difference between those who ate meat and those who did not. The people with the highest B12 blood levels were those who were taking B12 supplements and eating B12 fortified cereals ('Riseofthevegan', 2017). This makes it clear that rather than relying on meat, the key to avoiding nutritional deficiencies lies in following a vegetarian diet

with a variety of foods. This will not only be better in the short-term but will have lasting benefits in the near future.

In conclusion, a vegetarian diet can make a strong case for itself. The various advantages of this lifestyle cannot be undermined by its few flaws. Firstly, going meat free will allow us to gain various health benefits, provided we follow a well-balanced meal plan. This will contribute to better skin, digestion and have an overall positive effect on our well-being. Secondly, animals will no longer have to suffer just to satisfy humans, they will instead be seen as friends rather than food. Lastly, the earth will be protected from the dangers of climate change, which if left untreated could lead to worse problems for humans in the future. As Paul McCartney once said “If anyone wants to save the planet, all they have to do is just stop eating meat.” Granted that it may seem daunting at first, small steps such as meat free Mondays and experimenting with meat alternatives, which have become easily accessible due to the number of people trying to reduce their meat intake can make all the difference. As at the end of the day, one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind (Armstrong, 1969).

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### **Special Needs Children Need Special Attention!**

Shania Cardoz

According to Scarborough (2015), a minimum of one-seventh of the world's total population suffers from some kind of disability. Of this, approximately more than 100 million of these cases affect children. As children require constant support during their developmental stage, the education they receive is vital for building skills for their future lives. Nonetheless, what about children with special needs? Inclusive education is a solution that is supposed to deal with children that have disabilities. As the term suggests, inclusive education involves teaching students of all kinds, disabled and non-disabled in a mainstream school. Each student is treated equally, receiving the same level of teaching and attention from the teacher. Although it may seem to be a positive and hopeful solution, inclusive education has consequences. For example, are teachers in mainstream schools equipped to deal with autistic children? Research studies by *Priory Education and* (n.d) suggest that mainstream schools are not fully educated on how to provide autistic children with their relevant needs and support. In fact, this is just one example of the inconvenience that children with special needs have to face in mainstream schools. Thus, children with special needs

should engage in special education where teachers are professionally trained to teach them, and negligence is avoided by offering abundant time to each student.

Firstly, special schools would not be functional without professionally trained teachers that can teach and handle the students. Special education teachers have to be extra tolerant, kind, and have commendable communication skills as the students they are dealing with have more difficulties than normal children (*Special Education Teacher*, n.d). As research from *Teaching Special Education* (n.d) suggests, these teachers develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for each student. Hence, the program sets individual aims for each child based on their learning style and capacity. As per the results, the teacher alters the way the curriculum must be taught so that each child can maximize their learning. For instance, some students need to be taught skills on how to live independently, while others require basic life skills, such as how to simply respond to questions (*Special Education Teacher*, n.d). For example, Asperger's syndrome is a form of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in which a person's communication and socializing abilities are affected (Stöppler, 2019). Similarly, there have been incidents in which children with the syndrome cannot adjust to general schools like normal children. 'I really could not be in a classroom with other people all day long. Not knowing how to speak to people, I could not make friends or be close to others' (*Adjusting to school*, n.d). In a special school, the scenario would be different. To clarify, special teachers build trust between their students: hence even reserved students are made comfortable. To illustrate, a special teacher mentioned using a few minutes of class to group students based on foods they like or birthdays. As students were grouped based on things they had in common, they instantly began to build friendships (Poth, 2018). Mainstream school teachers would not take the time to carry out such activities as they usually begin teaching their lesson. Additionally, are not trained enough to know how to deal with special needs children.

Secondly, special teachers spend great amounts of individual time with each student, preventing any form of negligence. Typically, these teachers deal with approximately eight students (*Program Guide, Masters*, n.d). Hence, the teacher has a more intimate relationship with every student to provide the individual education they need. Dealing with each student at their pace of learning removes negligence out of the picture. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said about a mainstream school. As it is familiar to all, a general classroom would contain at least 20 to 25 students. Due to the large number, teachers are most likely to spend their time equally with all students. This inevitably leads to negligence of the special child as they require much more attention than a normal child which they barely obtain in a mainstream school. According to facts, children who have been neglected in class tend to have issues in maintaining good relationships with their teachers (Miller, n.d). If this applies to a normal child, what about a special needs child? To demonstrate, children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) lack focus, have trouble following instructions, and daydream frequently (*14 Signs of*, n.d). Resultantly, their school performance is generally poor, inducing a decrease in their self-esteem and significant stress to parents (Karande & Kulkarni, 2005). Contrastingly, while special teachers follow IEPs for each student, they ensure the time they spend with each one is relevant to how much they require. To clarify, special teachers would simplify instructions and communicate it in an easier way to ADHD students. Until the student comprehends the task, the teacher would constantly attempt to send the message across. Usually after knowing the learning style of the ADHD student through IEPs, the teacher will be aware of the average time it takes them to finish a task and can equivalently teach the child in a productive manner (*Teaching Children with*, n.d).

In spite of the aforementioned necessities, a large proportion of the world still believes that special needs children should be taught in a mainstream school and be a part of

inclusive education. According to (“8 facts about”, n.d), special needs kids will be able to interconnect and gain support from peers in mainstream schools that are absent in special education. Likewise, it is suggested that special students are able to achieve academically higher scores in inclusive classes than those in special schools. As the child will be able to learn in a class filled with ‘normal’ students, they will look up to their friends as role models, gain emotional support from them, and have more motivation to develop themselves as better people. In that event, it is true that students will be able to improve their mental health and indulge in a school life that any other child should be able to. Although this is true to an extent, not all school settings are as accepting as they appear to be. For instance, what about bullying? In every five students, more than one is likely to report being bullied (*National Center for*, 2016). In the case that students do not report it, it is definitely a greater percentage. Nevertheless, if this is how normal students are treated, what about students with disabilities? In accordance with fairly recent statistics, students with learning disabilities like Dyslexia, ASD, and other behavioral disorders experience far more victimization than students without disabilities (Rose & Gage, 2017). Therefore, special students will only have improved mental health if the school they attend is free of bullying, which is quite unlikely. Instead, if the child experiences bullying, their confidence and self-esteem levels can drop so low that their mental health can worsen further. To demonstrate, statistics from (*Center for Disease*, 2017) suggest that sleep difficulties, anxiety, and depression can all stem from a child being bullied, hindering their daily progress. Though in the case of special schools, classrooms are filled with students that suffer from their own disabilities, resulting in their understanding for one another. As students can relate on a highly emotional level, they will not undergo any unjust treatment from each other.

Since special education is taught by highly skilled teachers, students are handled proficiently and suffer from no negligence as they would be treated in mainstream schools. With an efficient team of teachers, special children obtain education that is catered to them at their particular level through IEPs. Guiding each child individually, the teacher ensures that no one is neglected or gaining less attention than they should. Unlike mainstream schools, students are unlikely to witness bullying as they relate with another’s condition. Thus, none will undergo drops in their mental health; in fact, they will improve it. If mainstream schools had the experienced teachers that special education has, parents would be more comfortable sending their children to them. Equivalently, bullying plays a large role in the context of whether inclusion or special education is more favorable to special students. Correspondingly, if students themselves are willing to abstain from bullying, the need for this segregation is unnecessary. Besides, this is for the students to decide. Until the world is free from bullying, this division will be present; therefore it must be stopped to be able to undergo inclusive education successfully.

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## **The Effect of Trade War on China**

Mohammed Al Dawood

How far are countries willing to undermine their economy just to participate in political warfare? In 2018, Trump contributed to the current trade war between the US and China by implementing a 25 percent tariff on Chinese imports (Aleem, 2018, para. 2). China immediately responded to this and placed a 25 percent tariff on US goods (Aleem, 2018, para. 4). This trade war, while controversial in terms of which country disbenefits the most, clearly contributes to obstructing the growth of China's community. Negative impacts on the currency of the country, its sales, its tech industry, and its employees are results of the trade war, and all contribute to the downfall of China's economy.

The most important factor negatively affected from the trade war between the US and China is the Chinese currency. Foremost, the Chinese currency is devaluated because of the trade war. Due to the severe drop in the Chinese export rate, China devaluated its currency by 2 percent to accommodate the export rate loss (Inman, 2015, para. 1). The devaluation of the currency causes problems for Chinese companies in repaying debts as they become more expensive for them. On the contrary, some believe that the devaluation of the currency is a good thing for China because it helps boost export rates and cause them to become more competitive ("Devaluation of Yuan," 2015). However, according to Liu, "A weaker yuan also does not necessarily lead to more exports" as an appreciated value in currency can also boost export rates (2018, para. 24). To conclude, the decrease in export rates due to the US-China trade war has caused China to devalue its currency, which negatively affected the economy.

Imposing tariffs on imports results in negative consequences on the sales of the country. Firstly, tariffs cause deflation within the country. To exemplify, the manufacturers in China are forced to sell their products at a discount rate due to an increase in domestic competition (Carter, 2019). To avoid tariffs, manufacturers sell their products locally at a

discounted rate, which therefore causes deflation in the country. On the other hand, some argue that tariffs imposed by the US do not affect the sales of China because it is trading more frequently with other countries as an alternative (Reed, 2019). However, China trading with other countries still does not accommodate for lack of trading with the United States. Carter states that the Producer Price Index (PPI) decreased at about 0.3 percent (2019, para. 2) and “remained in deflationary territory for 54 consecutive months from March 2012” (para. 4). In short, tariffs placed by the US obstruct the economic growth of the country and force sellers to sell products locally and at a discounted rate, causing deflation.

The tension between the US and China, which contributed to the trade war, negatively affects the tech industry. First, banning trade between Huawei equipment in the US poses a threat to China’s tech industry. According to Wilson (2019), “The Huawei ban threatens the company’s entire supply chain” (para. 4) as it receives many of its equipment from US companies (para. 4). If Huawei undergoes an economic decline, then so does China as Huawei is one of China’s most important tech companies (Haselton, 2018). Second, Huawei’s tension with the US threatens its relationship with other countries. Cillufo and Cardash (2019) state that Donald Trump classified Huawei as a national security threat, and that many countries, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, promoted the act of banning the manufacturing and enhancing of Huawei equipment in their countries. This promotion weakens the ties between China and these countries, and negatively impacts the industry and the country. To summarize, tech industries are at risk due to the trade war between the US and China as the US and other countries are avoiding the use and manufacturing of Chinese technology.

Furthermore, the collapse in the economy as a result of the trade war negatively affects Chinese employees. The first reason for this is the tariffs placed by China affect Small to Medium Enterprises (SME). Pronk (2018) states that SMEs that rely heavily on US exports become less active in the market. This is because marketers in the US avoid exporting goods to China due to the tariffs. The economy of Chinese SMEs that rely on US exports, therefore, is at risk of declining. Another reason for Chinese employees being at risk is workers losing their jobs due to deflation. According to Pi, 23 percent of staff were dismissed from work because of companies cutting down prices (2018, para. 26). This means that deflation, which result from tariffs, makes it more difficult for these companies to keep up with the economic competition, and thus cut down staff to accommodate for it. In summary, the trade war contributes to the economic decline, which hurts employees.

In conclusion, the trade war between the US and China disbenefits the Chinese economy and community in many ways. The currency and the sales in the country decreased as a result of the war, which contributed to economic decline. Some debate that the devaluation of the currency and the deflation in the country are useful to the economy, but statistics show otherwise. The trade war has significantly affected China’s important tech industry, threatening China’s relationship with countries other than the US. SMEs are also affected by the trade war as lower rates of imports causes them to have limited access to Chinese imports and thus become less active in the market. Deflation also causes workers to lose their jobs. China should negotiate with the US instead of imposing more trade barriers between them.

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## The Culture of Fame

Mahira Pathan

Every morning, I wake up, squiggle out of my blanket and blindly search for my phone on the bedside table. My fingers have been expertly trained to maneuver their way to the Instagram icon and render ease to my curiosity to know what I have missed out on within the past eight hours of my sleep. My feed is generally flooded with posts from numerous celebrities from around the world. But today, as I watched Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas question the Director-General of the WHO, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, about the COVID-19 pandemic, realization dawned on me. When I focused on the questions asked by the two star celebs, I deduced that they were incapable of asking the “real questions” about how to handle the pandemic once a vaccine is invented, how to provide easy-testing kits in rural areas, the protocol to help someone who is experiencing symptoms of the infection and so on. The live Instagram conference catered to their status as celebrities, even if they were truly trying to raise awareness. What the viewers really learned is that Chopra suffers from asthma and Jonas is a diabetes patient, and that such conditions do not affect their immunity against COVID-19; an answer available by a simple Google search. Such instances make us question the prevalent celebrity culture. The fact that Dr. Tedros requires an introduction as “Director-General of the WHO” while Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas are effortlessly recognized makes us question who we consider as “celebrities”.

Celebrity Culture is a captivating and fast-spreading phenomenon that has been prevalent for several decades worldwide. Irrespective of where we are, celebrities constitute a major part of our daily discussions and news. Despite their prominence, the question arises, “Is celebrity culture harmful?” There are many aspects of celebrity culture that require careful assessment in order to answer this question, such as the reality in the lifestyle portrayed by celebrities, how celebrity culture shapes the thoughts of ordinary people and the influence and effect of celebrity philanthropy. On one hand, some people believe that celebrity culture is more realistic than any movie or television series and thus people concur with it. They believe that celebrity culture promotes positivity and encourages charity

through celebrity philanthropy. Contrastingly, others argue that celebrities portray unrealistic personas to uphold their fame and popularity which in turn adversely affects the minds of ordinary people. Furthermore, they also claim that the involvement of celebrities in politics degrades the quality of political choices made by people and that celebrity philanthropy is inefficient in bringing attention to worthy causes. I belong to the latter fraternity of people and believe that celebrity culture is harmful in terms of all the above-mentioned aspects.

In the article, “Celebrity Culture is Beneficial” (2011), American journalist, Neal Gabler presents his argument in favor of celebrity culture. He suggests that celebrity culture is effective and beneficial in the sense that it unites people, serves as a form of entertainment and educates the common public on life lessons, morals, choices, etc. According to Gabler, celebrity culture is a form of art that is more entertaining and superior to any theatrical presentation. He mentions, “It is actually a new art form that competes with—and often supersedes—more traditional entertainments like movies, books, plays, and TV shows” (2011, p.1). He suggests that celebrity culture is a never-ending cycle; some celebrities become dormant while new ones are always in the making. People get bored from movies and TV shows because they always have a finale and closure. The perpetuity of celebrity culture challenges this drawback; people are guaranteed to be entertained by celebrity gossip even during the darkest times. Thus, celebrity culture “give[s] us something we can all talk about” (2011, p.1) and unifies people. Gabler stands by the opinion that celebrity culture is real in every sense. He claims, “For one thing, celebrity doesn't have to create the pretense of reality; it is real.” (2011, p.1). Furthermore, he insists that following the lifestyle of celebrities “provide[s] us with life lessons...because they capture the cultural moment or because they give us a glimpse of transcendence or because they stimulate the imagination.” (2011, p.1). He suggests that a person learns how to deal with love, family, wealth and even fame from the decisions and mistakes made by celebrities.

In another article, “Celebrity Culture Is Natural And Can Be Beneficial” (2015), David Cox uses the example of Stephen Hawking to illustrate that some celebrities serve as good role models from whom people learn about science, culture, moral values and ethics. Hawking’s documentary portrays his personal life, the sacrifices he made and the difficulties he encountered on his path to success. Thus, in a way, it helps you to deal with reality because you realize that someone, whom you consider superior, is also experiencing or has experienced similar circumstances and obstacles. When he writes, “Celebrities are informal life coaches. By watching them, people learn how to groom, learn how to wear their hair, learn what to say, learn what opinions are sexy, learn what's right-on and not right-on.” (Cox, 2015), Cox implies that celebrity culture teaches us how to fit into society. Furthermore, he claims that following celebrity news makes teenagers more independent and popular because “sharing facts and gossip brings groups together and helps them bond” (2015, p.1). It creates political awareness among people based on the statistics that “An American study found that 80% of its sample had discussed the political views of celebrities with friends.” (2015, p.1).

Among those who condemn celebrity culture, Chris Hedges, in his article “Celebrity Culture is Harmful” (2011), asserts that we have so deeply absorbed ourselves into a quagmire of gossip, fame, and false hopes that we have failed to address the reality and insanity in the prevalent celebrity culture. We should be focusing this attention towards more pressing issues such as wars, fluctuations in the economy, increased unemployment, etc. He suggests that following celebrity culture ultimately makes one feel inferior and worthless when he/she fails to achieve the utopian vision. Finally, he states that celebrity culture is an illusion that we need to fathom, which otherwise will usher in a new dark age.

One of the most adverse effects of celebrity culture is the flawed correlation of happiness with appearance. Hedges addresses this detrimental phenomenon when he writes,

“The route to happiness is bound up in how skillfully we present ourselves to the world.” (*Hedges, 2015*). True happiness comes from having healthy relationships with the people you love and having a good mental health; not from mere appearances and luxury. However, when one succumbs to celebrity culture, “The realities within the home, the actual family relationships, are never addressed.” (*2015, p.1*). Ultimately, when people fail to achieve the pinnacle of power and fame, they feel inferior and frustrated. Cox’s remark is in contrast to Neal Gabler’s belief that celebrity culture teaches us about relationships and that it develops a more integrated community.

Most people experience a sense of validation and joy from public acceptance. For women, this acceptance is rooted in appearance and body image. “Plastic surgeons, fitness gurus, diet doctors, therapists, life coaches, interior designers and fashion consultants all, in essence, promise to make us happy, to make us celebrities. And happiness comes, we are assured, with how we look” (*Hedges, 2015, p.1*). Female celebrities undergo several cosmetic surgeries and procedures to achieve the ideal body type. One may argue that such stereotypes are set by movies and television series too. However, it must be noted that when you watch a movie, you are convinced that it is fictional. But, when you browse through 300 pictures of Kylie Jenner or Bella Hadid, you are left feeling insecure about your own body type; as though “you are not enough”. Furthermore, Hedges alleges that celebrities fabricate their personality to gain public appraisal; thus challenging Neal Gabler’s claim about the reality of celebrity culture.

In the article, “Celebrity Culture Harms Teens” (2011), Emily Stimpson assesses the adverse effects of celebrity culture on teenagers. She observes that teenagers develop a sense of spiritual emptiness in terms of morals and ethics, deviate from reality and lose perspective from worshipping celebrity culture. Her accusations on celebrity culture correlate with Hedges’. Firstly, most people want to acquire a significant position and power in society effortlessly and quickly. “They also want it easy, and they want it fast, with no suffering and no sacrifice. Which is why most fantasize about becoming the next Paris Hilton, not the next Bill Gates.” (*Stimpson, 2011*); and celebrity culture has convinced people that it is possible to do so. Thus, the ideals of hard work, true talent and dedication have been compromised. Secondly, Stimpson believes that teenagers should channel their talents and interests to enhance their spiritual connection with God and nature and work to serve a greater good, instead of being driven by the thirst for fame and glamour. Finally, she asserts that “The more people desire what's not ordinary—fame, celebrity, instant greatness—the less joy they'll find in life.” (*2011, p.1*). Thus, the desire for fame makes one feel lonely and insufficient.

Celebrity philanthropy is an important characteristic of celebrity culture that determines its influence on the society. Some people claim that celebrity culture encourages charity and raises awareness about the happenings around the world. As Alain de Bottom suggests in his article, “Celebrities can Help Bring Attention to Worthy Causes” (2015), it is normal for people to be reluctant to help a stranger. Nevertheless, when celebrities, who serve as noble role models, take a step forward to improve the lives of the underprivileged, we too are encouraged to do so. Similarly, when celebrities get involved in politics, the public (who worships celebrity culture) becomes more politically and socially active. On the other hand, writers like Kimberly Elworthy in her article “Celebrities Use Philanthropy for Financial Gain” (2009), believe that celebrities trivialize important issues and only offer the community a shamefully fractional amount of their enormous earnings because it caters to their public status. Also, they utilize their power to deceive the public in order to promote questionable agendas and validate the wrongdoings of a political party.

In my opinion, celebrity culture is harmful. Firstly, it is true that celebrity gossip is quite entertaining and perhaps ever-lasting. But, to say that it is superior to traditional

entertainments is arguable. At some point, people will get bored of reading about Justin Bieber's breakup and Priyanka Chopra's marriage. Thus, I can only partially agree with Gabler's assessment of celebrity culture. Secondly, the very distinction between "celebrities" and "common people" expresses a superiority complex among the former. Thirdly, most celebrities utilize the media as a weapon to devour maximum attention from the public. Although some celebrities have worked their way to fame, others have faked it until they made it; the Kardashians family exemplifies this strategy. With their bodies transformed with plastic surgeries and their TV series (*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*) portraying their apparent lifestyles, the Kardashians are now ruling the tabloids. Despite such success, they are subjected to extreme criticism and hate because most people see through their public façade. In my opinion, the Kardashians are utilizing their power to indirectly shape the minds of their gullible followers, for the worse. They portray despicable behavior towards family and unrealistic body standards. Hence, to refute David Cox's evaluation of celebrity culture, one can say that not all celebrities are Stephen Hawking.

As Chris Hedges suggests, celebrities utilize their fame, money, power and influence to deceive those who lack these privileges. "Ordinary people" are treated like cattle in a herd and celebrities are the shepherds, misleading us into fantasy and unrealistic optimism. Instead, people should be driven to work hard and lead a healthy and comfortable lifestyle. With families to feed and debts to repay, the financially struggling classes should not be given the examples of Oprah Winfrey and Jim Carrey (who are one in a million), because they cannot afford to take the risk of "being different. Furthermore, celebrities are willing to go to extreme ends to keep their status in society. For instance, when Kanika Kapoor, a well-known Indian singer, was tested positive for the COVID-19, the news took the internet by a frenzy. The astonishing fact about this was that she hid her travel history and had organized a party for around fifty people after her return from London. Despite this knowledge, the news was followed by hundreds of sympathy messages from several celebrities and fans. This encouraged the people to ignore the irresponsible behavior depicted by Kapoor. Hence, celebrity culture has resulted in a lack of accountability among celebrities. This illustrates the fact that we have too many celebrities but not enough heroes; we have upheld the wrong people in society.

It is disheartening to learn that the lives of some people have become a source of entertainment for society. Monitoring every move of an individual, to make money, is a despicable act. If a person is going through a breakup, a miscarriage or a divorce, he or she is entitled to a certain amount of privacy. Furthermore, the need to foster the tabloids has resulted in many celebrities suffering from depression and anxiety issues. However, despite the chaos over celebrity culture, it has been successful in shaping public life. After leafing through pages and pages of tabloids, people are falling for vanity and transient fame. Maybe human beings are innately programmed to ignore the reality in the culture around them or they are too stubborn to accept the fact that they have made wrong choices. Either way, it is time we start asking the right questions about whom we respect, follow and uphold as "celebrities."

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### **A Message to Celebrities: Be A Whole Person; Not Just Half**

Jana Bastouni

#### **Letter to The Editor**

It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet we still seem to struggle with body image and self-worth. I, like many other teenage girls, live everyday comparing myself to perfect images that surround me. It is hard enough being a teenage girl, but it is even harder and more heartbreaking when a girl's idol promotes unrealistic body images.

It is understandable that celebrities, just like the rest of us, want to feel good about themselves, and by posting beautiful pictures it helps them achieve a sense of confidence. However, it is their responsibility to recognize that these pictures are affecting millions of girls into thinking that what they look like isn't enough. They begin to have the mindset that if they weren't curvy or thin enough then they are ugly. What makes it worse is that they believe that these pictures are realistic while in fact they are posed and photoshopped. This contributes to body image issues in young girls which is detrimental to their mental health.

I urge you, anyone with influence, to remember that you were once a young girl struggling with body image. Be the kind of role model that helps to build up teenagers' self-esteem, rather than bringing them down. I know it is your job to post beautiful pictures of yourself, but it is equally important to show your followers that you have bad days too. Be a whole person; not just half. At the end of the day, it is okay to not look "perfect" as long as you love and accept yourself.

Kind Regards,  
Jana Bastouni

## Letter Rhetorical Analysis

### AUDIENCE

The issue I will be arguing about is that celebrities should post more “real” pictures of themselves just as much as they post “perfect” pictures. The reason being is that the pictures they post include a favorable thin idealized body which is setting unrealistic and unattainable expectations for many young girls viewing them. The audience I will be addressing in my letter are the readers of *Vogue* which often include celebrities. I have chosen to target celebrities since they have a great influence and impact on everyone watching them. The “perfect” pictures they present contribute to body image issues in young girls. The reason being is that they promote the “perfect” unrealistic pictures with perfect bodies and beautiful aesthetics that are often photoshopped. However, I understand that the majority of times it is a requirement for their job, or even just to feel good, confident, comfortable in their own skin. Moreover, celebrities also use their beautiful pictures as a way of motivating their viewers to have a healthy lifestyle. However, in my opinion, when celebrities post the “perfect” pictures online, they are not aware of the multiple negative effects it has on young girls. Instead, they should also post pictures that make their followers aware that that’s not always the reality and that they also have bad days.

### CONTEXT

The issue I will be tackling is that celebrities should post more “real” pictures in order to help their followers accept and love their bodies. Moreover, when celebrities don’t take into consideration the influence that their “perfect” pictures have on young girls, it results in the deterioration of the mental state of these girls. It is understandable that at times they post “perfect” pictures to feel good about themselves, and by posting a beautiful picture it helps them achieve a sense of confidence. One the other hand, by just posting beautiful pictures all the time it causes their viewers such as young girls to feel like they have to live up to the standard presented in those pictures. The depression and anxiety girls face are fueled by the body and social comparison which results in dissatisfaction in themselves. This issue is a very important discussion that needs to be addressed in order to bring awareness to the outcomes of celebrities’ posts of themselves and how posting the “real” unmanipulated pictures helps girls relate more to the celebrities which makes them feel good about themselves.

I intend to publish my letter in one of the top-selling magazines, *Vogue*. The reason I chose *Vogue* is that it is very popular among celebrities as evident by the multiple collaborations between the magazine and the celebrities. Featuring in this magazine can be used as a way to reach out to young girls that are inspired by *Vogue*. For example, celebrities with big platforms can post their “real” natural pictures to show girls behind the scenes and what really is the reality. Moreover, the discussion about how celebrity posts have negative effects on young girls is already an ongoing discussion that *Vogue* has discussed so it would be a perfect place to publish my letter.

### AUTHOR

As an author that has struggled with body image myself, “perfect” pictures presented by celebrities have heightened it. So, I will do my best to make celebrities aware of the effects that those “perfect” pictures have on young girls and how posting more “real” pictures of themselves will help many girls around the world feel like they are not alone. Moreover, credibility was established throughout my letter through relating the struggles of young girls to my own personal struggle with negative body image. For example, “I, like many other teenage girls, live everyday comparing myself to perfect images that surround me.” This shows that I can relate to the struggle caused by these images therefore, qualifying me to talk

from experience. I will make sure my points come across by using a serious, understanding, and confident tone rather than one that is combative.

### **PURPOSE**

Celebrities often present a non-attainable body image through their Instagram posts. My purpose is to raise the awareness of celebrities on the negative effects that young girls feel when viewing these pictures. In addition, I intend to persuade celebrities to embrace the “real” them by posting the reality of what they look like without always manipulating their pictures and trying to make it look perfect because it is sending unrealistic expectations for girls. This is an important message I want to send across to celebrities and a short straightforward letter will be the most effective way. Moreover, if there is anyone who could make a difference in these young girls’ life it is them due to the large following celebrities have.

### **STRATEGIES and LANGUAGE**

The purpose I aim to achieve in my letter is to raise awareness on the effects of the “perfect” images that celebrity’s posts on young girl’s body image. Moreover, I also want to inspire celebrities to post more “real” and natural pictures of themselves which allows their followers to see the reality behind the “perfect” pictures. To be successful, it is important to follow certain strategies and discourse that support my argument and make it stronger.

The discourse I will be using in my letter is straightforward and quick to read. This is important because celebrities live a busy life and are always on the go. As a result, it is more likely that they would read a text that is short and straightforward rather than lengthy and complex. Moreover, this not only applies to celebrities but also individuals in general. Providing a short and simple text helps me reach a larger audience since more people are willing to give their time to an issue if it wasn’t overwhelming. In my letter, I introduce the issue directly by using phrases such as, “heartbreaking when a girl’s idol promotes unrealistic body images.” This directly tells the audience that celebrities are promoting unrealistic body images without using any embellishments. Other than being direct, the audience of *Vogue* magazine want something fun and easy to read so using complex language along with a serious topic will contribute to the audience losing interest.

Another important strategy is the tone. Moreover, the tone I use throughout my letter is serious, understanding, and confident. Tailoring the tone to my specific context and situation, will help me present a better argument. Establishing a serious tone like “it is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet we still seem to struggle with body image and self-worth” will emphasize the importance of the issue and why it needs to be discussed. In addition, the main purpose of my letter is to convince my readers, especially celebrities with the argument I am making. Therefore, using a confident tone like “I urge you, anyone with influence” will show celebrities that I have enough knowledge on the issue due to my personal experience which results in an effective way of them believing what I am saying which also makes me gain credibility. Moreover, I am not using a combative tone when talking to them which will help them accept the message I am delivering.

Another effective strategy I use throughout my letter is understanding my audience’s side, celebrities. This helps me build a relationship with the audience. If I didn’t show them that I understand their side of the story, then my argument wouldn’t be as effective since I am not recognizing their side of the issue. Building an understanding relationship between me and the audience is essential to making a change. I achieved this relationship by using statements such as “it is understandable that celebrities, just like the rest of us, want to feel good about themselves, and by posting a beautiful picture it helps them achieve a sense of confidence.” This shows that I am not trying to bring celebrities down and be against them but rather find a compromise between both sides of the issue.



## **Can We Be Civil About Physician Participation in Executions?**

Marianne Breidy

### **Letter to the Editor**

I recently read “Why It’s O.K. for Doctors to Participate in Executions” (April 22) by Sandeep Jauhar. I was surprised to see a harsh division in the comment section, with some supporting physician participation, and others protesting against it. This expression of conflict is an issue that is reflected in both our politics and society.

The conflicts surrounding physician participation in lethal injection threatens the integrity of the medical field, making it an important social issue. One of the reasons why physicians do not participate in executions is their concern with preserving physician-patient relationships. Even though physicians who do participate share the same concern, they handle it by not abandoning their patients in their time of need. Ultimately, it is unfair to label sides of the argument when both physicians are looking to benefit their patients regardless of their social status.

To the people who put our lives and health before theirs, we owe them understanding and compassion. Medical ethics is not black and white and as citizens we must support doctors as they support us. Instead of arguing on who’s right or wrong, let us seek understanding. Only through doing that, we will be able to resolve the expressions of conflict in society.

Kind Regards,  
Marianne Breidy

## Letter Rhetorical Analysis

### AUDIENCE

The topic of physician participation in executions has risen in controversy over the years causing a split in both the medical community and society. While this topic mainly concerns medical professionals, it is also a social issue that many educated individuals are interested in. Since medical professionals have a high social standing, they are usually pinned as an example of virtue in society. Therefore, the moral image of physicians must be conserved. When controversy surrounding their medical ethics rose, this image was compromised, and many citizens, in true American fashion, we are quick to take sides. They assumed that one must be right: people who are with physician participation and those who are not.

This split was reflected in the spiteful comments responding to “Why It’s O.K. for Doctors to Participate in Executions” (April 22) by Sandeep Jauhar. These interactions show how deeply rooted the anger between both sides really is. One comment stated: “Dr. Jauhar, it must be comforting to know that you will have a guaranteed job waiting for you after your current patients have run for the hills.” This hostile approach caused the conflict to rise. As a result, opposing arguments also increased in aggression. For example, another commentator responded with, “Even my pets when they had to be euthanized at the end of their lives were more comfortable and peaceful. And for chrissake(!) why not a fellow human?”. Although not as aggressive, the tone of frustration and anger could be clearly detected. This hateful and divisive mindset is not limited to physician participation in executions. Moreover, Americans often have trouble resolving conflicts because their politics has taught them to take sides. I argue that there is more to an issue than just right or wrong. Ultimately, there are only decisions made with the best ethical intentions in mind.

### CONTEXT

Physician participation in lethal injection is an important topic for both the medical and social scene of the U.S because it threatens the integrity of the medical field. Many individuals are concerned with medical ethics since they represent the height of morality in society. As a result, arguments on whether physician participation in lethal injection is ethical or not have risen. The main argument against these participations aligns with a doctor’s role to protect and prolong life. On the other hand, the opposing argument states that non-participating physicians risk a more painful death for the prisoner. However, through my research, I have found that there will never be a “right” ethical standpoint to support. I argue that citizens must not fuel this argument, instead, they should understand the difficult ethical decisions that medical professionals must make. Moreover, they should accept that not all doctors are united in the medical ethics that they follow.

I would like to publish my letter in *The New York Times* since its target audience is college graduates, often with advanced degrees. Moreover, their audience is more likely to be interested in such controversial topics in comparison to the readers of lifestyle magazines. *The New York Times* provides good coverage and is a popular source that most people are familiar with. This is important to my underlying argument, picking sides does not solve conflicts, which targets the American community. Its platform is perfect for the issue that I will be discussing since physician participation has been an ongoing conversation in the newspaper. With multiple articles published and hundreds of comments from the readers, it gives me a chance to be part of an important conversation. However, there are specific guidelines that I must follow to publish my letter. The letter I send must only be to the Times and not to any other publications. They also don’t accept open letters or third-party letters. My name, address, daytime and evening phone numbers must be included. Finally, the letter should be limited to 150 words with some leniency if it is frank and to the point. The word

limit helps in reaching a larger audience since more readers are likely to read something short and straightforward.

### **AUTHOR**

As I was doing my research, I was surprised to see how a simple disagreement split the medical community and caused many citizens to take sides. I deeply understood the ethical reasoning from both sides of the argument. As a result, I realized that all physicians are trying their best to make decisions that would benefit their patients. Therefore, neither side should be labeled as right or wrong.

To get through to my audience, I use a serious tone that demonstrates my understanding on the seriousness of this issue. This is coupled with a calm tone that shows the readers that being aggressive about a conflict is not the correct way to resolve it. As the author, I must assert my credibility. I achieve that by explaining the ethical reasoning behind both sides of the ethical conflict. I also mention that I read “Why It’s O.K. for Doctors to Participate in Executions” (April 22) by Sandeep Jauhar. Both these moves, demonstrate that I am well versed in both arguments as well as interested in the conflicts surrounding this issue.

### **PURPOSE**

In the article by Sandeep Jauhar, a cardiologist and medical writer, Jauhar argues that physicians participating in the lethal injection help elevate pain and suffering. As mentioned previously in the audience section, even though he addressed the issue calmly, the comments were not as kind. The harsh division and lack of unity inspired me to publish my opinion on this topic. I realized that it was time to stop fighting and instead come together. Moreover, I felt that this is an important message that people needed to hear. I want to show the readers of *The New York Times* that harshly picking sides is unnecessary in any conflict or issue including physician participation. At the end of the day, physicians who participate and those who don’t are united under the same moral intentions of supporting one’s patient which is the ultimate purpose of a physician. As citizens, we must support the doctor’s in their decisions as they support us in our times of need.

### **LANGUAGE and STRATEGIES**

In writing a letter to the editor, I hope to convince the readers of *The New York Times* that medical ethics is not black and white and as civilians we must be understanding of the difficult ethical decisions that physicians must make. To achieve my purpose, I must wisely choose the language and strategies that I will use in my letter.

The readers of this newspaper are highly educated and are interested in learning about serious topics and issues. Moreover, establishing a serious tone will emphasize the importance of physician participation in lethal injection. This issue is a very controversial topic that many people are concerned with. I established a serious tone all through my essay with phrases such as, “the conflicts surrounding physician participation in lethal injection threatens the integrity of the medical field, making it an important social issue.” Moreover, I emphasize the seriousness of the issue by focusing on the integrity of medical ethics. If I were to approach the topic cynically, not only would it be out of context, but it will also offend the audience. As the author, it is my job to be confident as well as credible with the audience. For my argument to be successful, my tone must convince the readers of my knowledge on the issue. However, if I were to use a sarcastic tone or a more casual one then my ideas would be undermined, and the audience would not be interested in my opinion.

Another important factor is having a calm tone. Moreover, it influences the readers to listen to what you have to say. If the audience was approached in an aggressive and argumentative tone, then they would feel attacked and they would no longer be interested in your argument. In my letter, I approach the audience calmly since many people are

aggressive about their thoughts on this topic. If I were calm with them, then they would have the time to think and reflect rather than getting fired up by my argument. It also reflects my message that being calm and understanding is the most effective way to resolve a conflict.

When writing any piece of work, it is important to use language to your advantage. To do that, you must tailor your discourse to a specific environment, audience, and context which then allows you to achieve your purpose. Since I am writing for a newspaper such as *The New York Times*, my discourse, sentence structure, and phrases must be straightforward. Their audience is citizens on the go. They have busy schedules and they want a piece of writing that is easy to read and gets to the point. Moreover, using unnecessary information will influence the readers to lose interest and my purpose will be lost. In my letter, I directly establish the issue that I will be addressing which is that “this expression of conflict is an issue that is reflected in both our politics and society.” Instead of embellishing the conflict and going into detail with examples on how this issue is reflected, I get straight to the point.

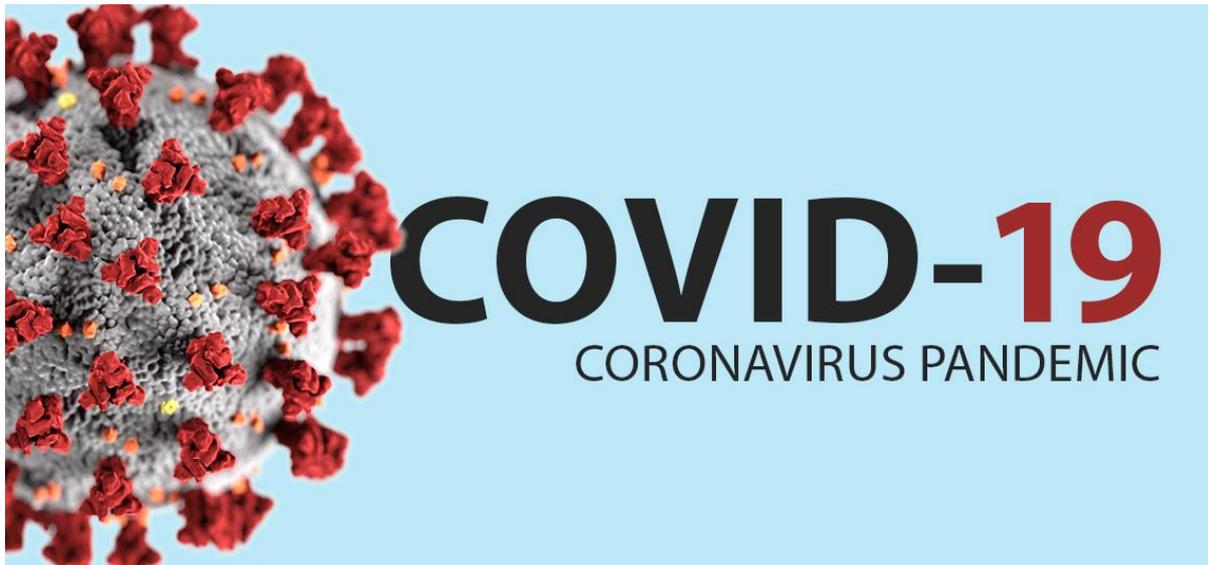
Every academic writer establishes rhetorical moves that guide readers through their text. If the text is not organized and does not flow well, then the readers would be confused, and the writing will not be successful. Rhetorical moves include entering a debate, using evidence, critiquing, and so on. These moves allow the writer to portray their message successfully to the audience.

The first move in the introduction of my argumentative letter was establishing credibility and introducing my argument. By mentioning that I have read “Why It’s O.K. for Doctors to Participate in Executions” (April 22) by Sandeep Jauhar, I show the readers that I have previous knowledge on the issue as well as have delved into this topic before making any assumptions. Moreover, by mentioning the division in the comment section I slowly build up my argument and the issue that I want to address. It is also another way to show my audience that I am interested in being part of this conversation. I then end my introduction with the statement “this expression of conflict is an issue that is reflected in both our politics and society.” This statement hints at my argument but does not completely give it away. This allows me to draw in the readers and make them want to know more.

In my second paragraph, my goal is to show the audience that physicians from both sides of the argument are united and share common concerns. I demonstrated both sides of the debate and showed how different physicians deal with the same concern in their way based on what they think is best for their patients. Moreover, I painted both physicians in a positive light that showed how both are ethical. By doing this, I shift the perspective of the audience on this issue and instead of judgment, they feel compassion towards the physicians. I end this section of my letter by directly stating that “it is unfair to label sides of the argument.” This statement helps summarize the entire section and allows the readers to reflect on the conflict.

In my third and final move, I shift from speaking in an informative tone to directly addressing my audience. By using phrases such as “we owe them” and “let us seek understanding”, I establish an emotional connection with the audience. Resorting to an emotional appeal strengthens my argument since I can sway the emotions of the audience in my favor. I also remind the readers of the sacrifices that doctors make for our benefit. This not only influences the readers’ compassion but also their understanding. Moreover, they are able to connect the trust that they have in physicians in a hospital room with the trust that they should establish in this particular topic. I also address the underlying assumptions of right or wrong, to remind the audience that this is an assumption that they should move away from. Instead, I emphasize my argument which is about seeking understanding.

Finally, I end the letter with “only through doing that, we will be able to resolve the expressions of conflict in society”. Relating this conflict with an issue that affects other aspects of our lives, adds importance to my argument and purpose.



## **Problems Resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Their Solutions**

Wanes Kalayejian

### **Introduction**

A pandemic is a global outbreak of a specific disease or disease that spreads like wildfire throughout the world and affects millions of people worldwide. Different types of viruses spread in different methods, hence that is a crucial aspect in identifying the number of people affected and the impact pandemics have on people universally. Some diseases result in the death of millions of people and wipe out entire civilizations, like the Spanish flu in 1918 which infected roughly a third of the world's population and killed more than 50 million people (All About History, 2020, para. 1). The COVID-19 is not the first coronavirus that has spread, and it was preceded by the SARS coronavirus and the MERS coronavirus. However, the COVID-19 coronavirus has spread at a much faster and a more alarming rate than its predecessors. According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (n.d.), the SARS coronavirus affected about 8000 people mainly in China between the years 2002 and 2003, while WHO (n.d.) also reports that the MERS coronavirus affected 2498 people in twenty-seven countries around the Middle East in the year 2012 (para. 1; para. 1). The COVID-19 has had the largest impact between all the other coronaviruses and BBC News (2020) reported, as of April 23, 2020: "Coronavirus is continuing its spread across the world, with about 2.8 million confirmed cases of coronavirus now in 185 countries. At least 197,500 people have died" (para. 1).

The source of the most coronaviruses is believed to be from animals and more specifically from bats. The COVID-19 coronavirus is believed to have originated from Wuhan's live animal market and transmitted and mutated from bats or pangolins during the month of December in 2019 (Kandola, 2020, paras. 6-7). The virus was first found in the city of Wuhan, and since then it has spread to numerous countries and affected billions of individuals. However, others believe that this virus has been created in labs, and it is man-made for various reasons. Several conspiracy theories have emerged about the origin and source of the coronavirus. Politics have been involved and the United States president,

Donald Trump, has accused China of accidentally leaking the virus to benefit from the situation. Kristian Andersen (2020), a co-author from Scripps Research in California, claimed: "By comparing the available genome sequence data for known coronavirus strains, we can firmly determine that SARS-CoV-2 originated through natural processes" (as cited in Rincon, 2020, para. 27). Moreover, Fadela Chaib (2020), spokeswoman of WHO, further strengthened that argument and said, "All available evidence suggests the virus has an animal origin and is not manipulated or constructed in a lab or somewhere else. It is probable, likely, that the virus is of animal origin." (as cited in Reuters, 2020, para. 3). Therefore, all the evidence suggests that the new type of coronavirus has been introduced from animals, most probably from the city of Wuhan in China.

The COVID-19 coronavirus was first reported by a Chinese doctor at Wuhan Central Hospital and he identified the virus by explaining that the new disease is similar to the SARS coronavirus and the patients had similar symptoms. Dr. Li Wenliang was an ophthalmologist and first sounded the alarm of the new type of virus when he discovered seven patients who were showing symptoms similar to the SARS coronavirus which outbreaked in China about two decades back. He started sharing this information with other doctors in the hospital and shared the message on a platform warning his university contemporaries about the emergence of a new, deadly, highly infectious, and dangerous disease. Later, he was threatened by authorities and the police about sharing false information and spreading false rumors; consequently, he was forced to sign documents to not share this type of information with others. Nevertheless, Dr. Wenliang continued warning more doctors about the new type of disease and advised them to take necessary protective measures. Soon thereafter, the information was shared on multiple platforms and social media websites in China. Dr. Wenliang succumbed to the COVID-19 coronavirus himself on February 7, 2020. This event caused a wild counterattack from many citizens and inhabitants in China and his story was shared. Dr. Li Wenliang is considered a hero for his actions and his story proved to the world about the importance of taking quick action, as by the time the government and authorities believed the information it was already too late and the virus had spread to a multitude of countries, infecting millions of people (Green, 2020, paras. 1-5). Dr. Li Wenliang is now a martyr, an honor bestowed to him and his memory by the Chinese government, after being the first to discover and share the information about the newly found deadly virus (Bostock, 2020, para. 1). Ever since this information was shared the COVID-19 outbreak has been observed in numerous countries all around the world. The COVID-19 coronavirus has impacted the lives of billions of people worldwide and has resulted in a multitude of problems such as boredom due to the lockdown, less medical treatment since hospitals are packed with Coronavirus patients, and the economic recession resulting from the virus.

### **Problem 1: Boredom**

The lockdown resulting from the coronavirus has led to the boredom of billions of people worldwide as they are confined to their homes and lack of places to visit. Around the globe, shopping malls, restaurants, beaches, entertainment places, including cinemas, gyms, and parks, have all remained empty and isolated for months to contain and control the spread of the virus. According to Langton (2020), "More than three billion people in almost 70 countries and territories have been asked to stay at home" (para. 26). Additionally, numerous competitions and events have completely stopped, adding to people's anxieties and worries and a lack of entertainment and events to watch and follow. Moreover, governments around the globe have urged people to practice social distancing and not to visit others during this time. Furthermore, a myriad of countries have forced education providing institutions to shut their doors and resort to online teaching methods. A statistic from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) shows that "These nationwide

closures are impacting over 90% of the world's student population" (para. 2). In addition, many businesses worldwide have stopped providing services temporarily or they have started conducting meetings and conducting their sales online, whenever possible. This affects the population's mental health as people will not be able to communicate face-to-face with other people and visit their friends and enjoy some activities outside their confined spaces. According to South African Depression and Anxiety Group's (Sadag) operations director, Cassey Chambers (2020) "Covid-19 and the lockdown have affected many South Africans, and it has had a serious impact on people living with a mental health issue, often heightening their symptoms" and an online survey conducted by Sadag revealed that "almost two-thirds (65%) were feeling stressed or very stressed" (as cited in Jordan, 2020, para. 3). These results show that boredom and anxiety often lead to numerous problems and at this time, they are directly related to the coronavirus. Besides, boredom often results in people conflicting in arguments with roommates and family members not particularly for being angry at them but also to release the stress and panic they face during these tough times.

#### **Solutions: Multiple**

Although staying at home with fewer activities and work to do can be irritating and affecting mental health, several actions can be taken to reduce the stress and worries of being secluded. Firstly, this is an excellent opportunity to finish any remaining and future work with minimal distractions. At the office or at school, people may get distracted and concentrate less while trying to do their job because of other people's presence and influence. On the other hand, when individuals are at home, there is a minimal amount of distractions, hence leading to increased productivity and concentration throughout their work. Additionally, employees and students who commute to work save that time and convert it into performing useful tasks. According to the United States Census Bureau (2018), "In the U.S., the average, one-way commute time is 26.1 minutes" (as cited in Berger, 2018, para. 2). Another potential solution is to talk and catch up with some friends or family members who are in a similar situation during the lockdown. Often, talking to people helps pass time, and since these individuals are in a similar situation, there will be plenty of topics to share and help one another with some tips to pass time. Additionally, a crucial step to overcome the boredom and fight the pandemic is to dedicate a part of your day to exercise and stay active. Exercising helps pass time and since gyms are temporarily closed during this crisis, exercising at home is an excellent method to stay healthy and fit. Not only does exercising help with overcoming boredom, but also increasing one's immunity and lowering the risk of chronic diseases that can weaken your immunity, hence acting as a method to fight the virus as well (Drayer, 2020, paras. 5-6). Furthermore, a potential method to fight boredom is by engaging in activities like watching television or playing video games or spending time on social media websites to pass time and keep one's self entertained. According to BMO Capital Market analyst, Dan Salmon (2020), "Netflix is an obvious beneficiary if consumers stay home due to coronavirus (COVID-19 virus) concerns, and this has been reflected in considerable stock price outperformance" (as cited in Spangler, 2020, para. 2). This indicates that people follow methods according to their preferences during these unprecedented times and find methods to stay entertained and continue with their daily routines.

#### **Problem 2: Less Medical Treatment**

Another distressing event is the fact many hospitals and medical institutions do not have enough medical staff to take care of patients, including individuals suffering from diseases other than the coronavirus. According to Zhang (2020), there are two major medical-related problems that the United States may be facing during this pandemic: firstly, the lack of beds and equipment in hospitals, and also the lack of medical staff and the risk of them getting infected; hence decreasing their supply even lower (paras. 6-12). This means that

people are finding difficulties obtaining a space in hospitals when they are ill, and this is catastrophic to patients who suffer from diseases not related to the COVID-19 virus as well. Trevor Hughes (2020) mentioned in his article in USA Today, “doctors across the country cancelled tens of thousands of non-urgent surgeries so that hospitals and medical professionals could begin clearing bed space and freeing up staff to prepare for the now-growing number of coronavirus patients” (para. 4). Moreover, medical staff are higher in demand now than ever before, however they are at a much higher risk of contracting the virus hence causing their supply to decrease. According to Scott et. al (2020), “The numbers from the initial Wuhan, China, outbreak indicate 15 percent of the roughly 1,700 Covid-19 cases for medical personnel as of mid-February were critical or severe” (para. 14). This indicates that medical staff are at a much higher risk and develop worse symptoms than other COVID-19 patients; therefore, their supply may decrease substantially over time without proper solutions and they would be able to treat fewer patients. Besides, another problematic incident is the lack of crucial equipment and machines necessary to deal with the virus. The lack of equipment, like ventilators, vital to cure people infected by the virus is affecting particularly the poorer countries. Data from the International Rescue Committee shows that “South Sudan, for example, has just four ventilators and 24 ICU beds for a population of 12 million people” (as cited in Woodyatt, 2020, para. 3). Dr. Alison Pittard (2020), Dean of the Faculty of the UK-based Intensive Care Medicine, also reported that “15-20% of the people hospitalized with Covid-19 require a ventilator, while 70% of patients who enter intensive care need one” (as cited in Woodyatt, 2020, para. 10). This shows that as the number of COVID-19 patients increases and the demand for equipment increases, there will be more people perishing due to virus-related and non-virus-related problems. Also, people suffering from chronic diseases, or elderly citizens, or pregnant women are at a higher risk of contracting diseases, since entering hospitals is unsafe during the pandemic; consequently, if there is a need for them to visit the hospital, they risk getting infected by the virus. All the results indicate that patients are suffering worldwide whether by infections due to the virus or otherwise and the health of many people is deteriorating with the emerging virus.

#### **Solutions: Multiple**

The globe is now united to find solutions to try and attend to everyone’s medical needs to minimize the effect of the coronavirus on other individuals’ health conditions and a multitude of actions are being taken worldwide. One of the most effective methods to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and be able to treat other patients is an action taken by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE started accepting people from different nationalities to come for treatment from the coronavirus since it is one of the countries less affected by the virus, and adequate space is available. Additionally, people from highly affected areas were invited to stay in the UAE so that their chances of getting contaminated by the highly infectious virus would decrease and 215 people were evacuated from China and kept under quarantine as a humanitarian act by the government (Al Amir, 2020, paras. 1-4). This act not only benefits the patients but also it is an act that increases the values of the accepting country. Another beneficial solution is to build hospitals and transform halls and areas into treatment locations temporarily to deal with the massive outbreak. For example, in the city where the coronavirus started and spread the wildest, China built a hospital in a mere ten days to help fight the virus and later shut its doors when the spread of the virus was controlled (Ankel, 2020, para. 1). Another example is the Dubai World Trade Center in the UAE, which has been temporarily transformed into a hospital capable of accepting 3000 patients (Reynolds & Webster, 2020, paras. 1-3). In addition, a solution primarily used by numerous countries in Europe was the decision to allow medical students to start practicing and start working to treat patients immediately. Furthermore, these countries are encouraging younger

medical students to volunteer and start doing mild work in hospitals and help deal with the situation. Geotano Manfredi (2020) stated, "This means immediately releasing into the National Health System the energy of about 10,000 doctors, which is fundamental to dealing with the shortage that our country is suffering" (as cited in Kottasová, 2020, paras. 1-8). This attempt of controlling the virus not only benefits the population and patients suffering from the virus but also helps the medical students in the future by improving their standards and curriculum vitae and being more in demand by future employers. These solutions are a key part to cure other patients as well as treat COVID-19 patients, and to decrease the number of suffering patients due to diseases worldwide.

### **Problem 3: Economic Recession**

Due to the COVID-19 situation, thousands of businesses are discontinuing to provide their services, permanently or temporarily, leading to a global economic recession and causing millions to become unemployed. Businesses across many countries have slowed down their production, and thousands are struggling to receive ordered products from suppliers. Also, the overall demand in many sectors has decreased substantially. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2020), "The global economy will shrink by 3 per cent in 2020, marking the worst recession since the Great Depression" and Gita Gopinath (2020), the chief economist at IMF, mentioned that "the crisis could knock \$9 trillion (£7.2 trillion) off global GDP over the next two years" (as cited in Horti, 2020, paras. 1-2). This provides evidence of the impact that the coronavirus will have on the global economy during these unprecedented times. Additionally, the decrease in the global GDP signifies that there would be less global demand; thus, decreasing the demand for employees in a plethora of countries. Moreover, if food supplying industries stop providing services and stop supplying food, people may starve due to a lack of food in markets. Unemployment, one of the major threats to governments, may increase around the world if the situation continues for longer periods. James Knightley (2020), chief international economist at ING Financial Markets claims: "Even if the economy starts to re-open in mid-May, more than 20 million Americans will have lost their job with the economy likely having contracted around 13% peak-to-trough, more than three times deeper than the global financial crisis" (as cited in Golle & Yoo, 2020, para. 5). Unemployment leads to further problems in countries and it results in protests, damaging reputations of a country, and a lower standard of living in many different places across the globe. Undoubtedly, the unexpected spread of the coronavirus has left numerous economists worried and in a state of panic. The COVID-19 situation has risen a feeling of terror in many businesses and the main event more terrifying than the deadly, contagious virus is an economic recession worldwide.

### **Solutions: Multiple**

In light of the new situations, governments and economists globally have been working extensively to prevent a catastrophic economic crisis risking many countries. For the economy to run smoothly again and minimize the economic problems generated by the virus, individuals, businesses, governments, economists, central banks, and commercial banks must all work and cooperate and support ideas to try and reach a compromise. One of the possible solutions is for governments to provide stimulus packages to individuals and businesses to minimize the decline in the demand and keep companies in business amidst the exceptional situation. In the United States, President Donald Trump signed the largest stimulus package in U.S. history on March 27, 2020, a \$2 trillion bill projected to minimize the economic disasters due to the coronavirus (Fabian & Sink, 2020, para. 1). The United States is not the only country to provide a stimulus package due to the coronavirus and many

countries have taken similar steps to ensure the economy runs with minimal problems after the COVID-19 situation clears. The stimulus package intends to extend periods of loans and lower interest rates so that demand in the economy increases again and people and businesses do not get affected by the ongoing condition. Another solution being used mainly in football clubs, where employees and players earn a tremendous amount of wages, is to decrease the wages of the players. Almost all sporting events have stopped to reduce the rate of the spread of the coronavirus, hence the decision by many clubs to reduce the wages of employees. After a meeting conducted by multiple football clubs, including Juventus, Real Madrid, and Barcelona, several players and clubs reached a mutual agreement for a temporary reduction of wages to help deal with the financial burdens resulting from the COVID-19 situation (McCambridge, 2020, paras. 1-14). Moreover, many businesses are adapting to new situations, such as featuring products online and conducting business meetings online. Dubai Mall, for instance, is featuring many of its stores on an online store, noon.com, to help boost its sales and reduce the effect of its temporary closure. The Dubai Mall has allowed various stores to feature their products and sell their items on noon.com after an agreement was made between the two companies (El Sawy, 2020, para. 1-4). Innovative methods are being developed every day and businesses continue to find methods to stay active and minimize the effect of the coronavirus on their sales and avoid a potential economic recession.

### **Conclusion**

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has caused observable complications everywhere throughout the globe, and it has resulted in problems such as boredom, reduced medical treatments, and the start of an economic recession. The closure of many entertainment places has left many people confined to their homes with fewer entertainment facilities and have resigned to solutions like watching shows on televisions and exercising at home rather than at gyms. Another worrying factor is the fact that many medical amenities have found difficulties in finding enough spaces for patients dealing with diseases including ones other than the COVID-19 virus. Medical staff supply has also decreased leaving millions around the globe fighting for their lives and governments have resided to resolutions like encouraging newly graduated medical students to work and building new hospitals. Furthermore, the start of an economic recession has been deemed to be inevitable by many economists as businesses have started shutting down due to the unprecedented situation and to slow and minimize the spread of the highly contagious virus. Governments around the globe have been trying to provide stimulus packages in an attempt to boost the economy and prevent an economic crisis. Around the globe, people must follow all preventive measures set by their respective governments and try to stay home, unless necessary, and follow the set regulations to save themselves and potentially the lives of many others. Governments, businesses, and individuals must also cooperate and work together to find resolutions to return to the older life routine. Additionally, medical professionals have been providing a multitude of health tips and preventive measures from the coronavirus. People must be aware of all the precautions and follow them vigilantly. Furthermore, individuals should try to support companies working hard to produce cures and vaccines for the coronavirus. If people follow all the precautions set, it will help all the population tremendously, and help in finding solutions to end the COVID-19 situation.

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## Introduction to Research



### Architecture: Science or Art?

Deema Al Refai

Every generation since the renaissance has had its own unique answer to whether architecture is a form of art or science. The reason that this question even exists is due to the fact that architectural products, which are mainly buildings, are usually produced to fulfill a function. Consequently, this makes architects follow certain safety instructions and other rules that involve science. However, what is frequently gone completely unnoticed by some people is the fact that not all buildings are architecture; there are lots of buildings that have nothing to do with architecture. Some buildings are built for economical purposes or enclosure, but would not be considered works of architecture. For instance, it is when form follows function such as in modular government buildings and military houses that architecture is not employed. On the other hand, the Colosseum in Rome, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur exemplify architectural designs that are tremendously inspiring. Additionally, the American architect, Richard Meier, once declared, “To be a work of architecture is to create a work of art” (Meier, 2015).

Before one can get to determine whether architecture is art or science, “the first question one has to answer is what science and art are,” says Gregory Watson, the former professor of architecture at Louisiana State University and current design professor at the

American University of Sharjah who has earned a professional degree in architecture (M.Arch) from Washington University in St. Louis (see appendix). According to professor Watson, science has a very specific and clear definition. Simply put, science is “any systematic field of study or the knowledge gained from it” (“Science Definition,” n.d.). On the other hand, art has a very challenging and peculiar sort of definition. “It is hard to define art. But the simplest one is that art, and this is true, is there to keep us conscious and alert. If people don’t have these things that challenge their head, they really become overwhelmed, blind, deaf and insensible. Art is there to keep people alive and conscious” (see appendix). Additionally, the inseparable synergistic relationship between art and architecture reveals the importance of architecture that extends beyond the practical realm of building and can provoke a powerful emotional experience. Hence, architecture is primarily a form of art as it is; the art of constructing buildings that evoke emotions, an area where aesthetics are given great importance, and it critically involves artistic concepts.

Generally, architecture is referred to as a “poetical” art by numerous outstanding personalities as it tends to be provocative, stimulating and challenging. The American scholar of Chinese art, collector and procurer for American art museums, John Ferguson (1966), explains in his influential book “Survey of Chinese Art Chapter VII Architecture” why architecture is of great significance to him by stating “Architecture is the art of constructing buildings which have beauty of form and proportion.” He also praises the creation of elaborated powerful buildings that are not necessarily built using completely luxurious materials, but rather haberdashery as it helps to make the building “extra provocative.” Furthermore, the Polish-American architect, designer and professor Daniel Libeskind declares, “Architecture orients us. Architecture brings us alive. It is much more than what we see, it is what we hear, what we touch, what we smell. It is part of our deepest dreams” (Imanova, 2015). He also explains how architecture addresses the heart, soul, and it is something emotional that brings poetic dimensions into inert material such as steel and concrete. He indicates that not all buildings are works of architecture, however, only works that can be viewed as authentic can be ranked as works of architecture. Additionally, the American architect Arthur Bell suggests “It is only when a building bears the impress of a genuine style that it takes rank as a work of architecture”(Bell, 2010). For that reason, architecture is not only about creating a place that is just a repetition or nostalgia for the past, but it is something that opens a completely new perspective, and inspires ordinary people with new thoughts. Since buildings belong to everyone, architects always attempt to have a very strong claim on how they want them to be, what they want them to do and how they want them to relate to human beings. Libeskind (2015) adds, “In great cities, the great buildings tell you things you do not know and remember things which you have forgotten. The great cities we really admire have this perplexing variety of thoughts, forms, colors, dialects, spiritual ideas.” Accordingly, architects are responsible to make a personal linkage not only with the physical surroundings of the building but how it stirs the memories and emotional responses. To some extent, everything architects do can be immensely touching, emotionally loaded, and profound.

Another vital reason that makes architecture vividly a work of art is the aesthetic quality present in its products. The painter Edward Winters, who has a PhD in Philosophy from UCL and currently teaches at West Dean College and is a member of the Executive Committee of the British Society of Aesthetics, explains that “our aesthetic judgment of architectural works is determined by our understanding of what architecture is, or, more precisely, that judgment depends on what we consider to be a ‘work of architecture’” (Winters, 2007). Referring to the Classicism’s ideology, “architecture is understood as ‘imitative of the process of building.’” This explains precisely why the conception of

Classism is completely rejected by Winters and is described as too narrow and exclusive. Architecture has a loosely wider range of concepts than just a mere “imitation,” it is the “creative intuitions, hunches, the strength of a point of view, the triumph of unrelenting labor” (Moore, 2015). Winters goes on by explaining that “architecture is conceived not only as a field of human activity but also as a visual art.” Winters goes even further, stating that architecture “engages our aesthetic understanding which provides architecture with its status as an art” (Winters, 2007). Additionally, the German painter and History of Arts professor at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) who is also the founding Dean of the School of Architecture and Design at the AUS, Dr. Johannes Martin Giesen, indicated in 1997 that architecture should not be an engineering branch, but should rather be integrated to the college of arts and design. Dr. Giesen believes that “architecture is art when the functional purpose of the product becomes subordinated to its aesthetic quality, and that is something that has been part of architecture since its very beginning” (see appendix). He goes on by giving examples of “artistic” buildings that were built in ancient times which are Stonehenge, Gothic cathedrals, mosques, and museums. He concludes by mentioning one of the most articulately designed buildings of this time which is the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Guggenheim in Bilbao. These buildings exemplify ancient and recent artistic innovations in building in which some of them have existed since prehistory and survived to the present day.

Moreover, Philip Jodidio (2005), who studied art history and economics at Harvard, asserts, “architects depart from the principles of classical modernism and historical models to integrate artistic concepts into the design and construction of their buildings.” This indicates that architects’ method of including artistic concepts into their design has persisted robustly and yielded numerous accomplishments. Additionally, Zbigniew Herbert (2015), the Polish poet, essayist, drama writer and moralist, states in one of his poems, “you are there, / architecture, / art of fantasy and stone, / you are there beauty, / above an arch, / light as a sigh, / on a wall.” He named this poem “Architecture,” and in it, he extolled the artistic effect architecture has on its viewer due to the artistic concept assimilated in the larger design of any architectural product. Also, the American architect, Charles Willard Moore, who is also an educator, writer, fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and the winner of the AIA Gold Medal in 1991, explains how the purpose of architecture is to overcome chaos. He writes in one of his journals, “[Architecture] might more usefully be described as the making of places or, as Suzanne Langer styles it, the creation of an ethnic domain.” He also suggests that the act of art in architecture is embodied by taking possessions “of portions of the earth’s surface and then [we] subject that act of taking possession to some degree of abstraction, in order that the abstraction might have some [order and stability]” (Moore, 2015). Lastly, he explicitly proclaims that architecture is a form of art that brings order to the world through its orderly thoughtful design process and implementation.

Nevertheless, opponents argue that architecture is a form of science rather than art due to the fact that architecture has to obey safety and civic guidelines in order to produce a habitable construction. In “What Is Art,” the American architect who is a fellow in the American Institute of Architects, Bob Borson (2010), claims, “Architects can be artistic but what they make has to conform to standards and measures established by the laws of physics and regulatory entities.” Further, “unlike music, painting, and other forms of art, architecture is mainly produced for a utilitarian purpose rather than artistic aspect.” In other words, since all architectural products are being produced only to be later utilized by human beings, architects tend to be obligated to follow some regulations to make their products usable. For example, an architect cannot design a house without taking into consideration the fact that this house is going to be later occupied by humans. This makes him obligated to include

some human necessities such as ventilation shafts and doors to allow in and out access. In that sense, architects are preoccupied with the process of producing adequately livable buildings and that takes away their freedom of working on the “artistic form” of the final outcome. In addition to that, “architects use a scientific method to research and develop concepts on myriad levels required to create buildings” (Borson, 2016). For these reasons, opponents argue that architecture involves science in the process that can be easily seen in the end result. Therefore, people who oppose the idea of architecture being a form of art believe that a scientific approach is adopted by architects to achieve an aspiration.

It may be true that science is needed to produce a successful architectural product, as some opponents have suggested, and this ultimately results in diminishing the artistic quality of the product. However, just because science is used through the process, that does not make architecture a science. Architecture is art but not necessarily the same kind of art that painting and sculpture might be which does not include science at all. The American architect, professor, academic writer and former Dean of the Yale School of Architecture, Robert Stern (2012), suggests that “Architecture is public and social art that requires the support of an enormous number of people to produce buildings.” Meaning, architecture is a unique type of art that is shared among the people and can be utilized collectively. Architecture is not like a single painting on a canvas that can be agreed upon its artistic quality unanimously; nevertheless, architecture is a form of art that requires many collaborative professionals to perform a task within the larger constraints. Professor Stern adds, “If people just make buildings that solve problems, then that is not irresponsible, that is completely responsible, but typically, architects aspire to have their buildings taken seriously on another level. That is why too much emphasis is being placed on the artistic expression of tectonic responsibility.” In short, when architecture is equated with art, various definitions of art are taken into consideration and that is what needs to be understood in order to comprehend easily the fact that architecture is art.

Another claim opponents argue is the fact that before architects get an official job, they have to go through serious examinations in order to get licensed. In “Work Health and Safety: Some Considerations for Architects and Designers,” the lawyer Cameron Solley explains that the purpose of this system of examination is to make sure that the person is qualified and competent enough to carry the responsibility of ensuring the public’s safety, welfare and health (2013). However, artists do not have to worry about this burden, as they are free from such responsibilities. Subsequently, this makes architecture transcend the label that defines art (Borson, 2010). What is intended to be explained is the fact that architects’ work is done more thoughtfully than artists’ as it is not created for their own pleasure, and they have to take into consideration other people’s position and propensity. For instance, no architect can perform a task without being officially licensed, unlike artists who can work freely without violating any rule. Thus, people who dissent the notion that architecture is art believe that architecture is taken much more seriously than art.

To some extent, it is true that architects have a great responsibility on their shoulders, and they have to worry about some functional aspects of their work during the process, as some critics have claimed, which is something artists do not take into consideration. However, architecture does not have to match art in every single manner to be a form of art. The Romanian critic, historian, novelist, academician and journalist, George Călinescu, defines architecture in “Architecture and constructions – generalities” as “one of the purest arts, next to music and poetry” (Ianca & Mircea, 2015). Călinescu refers to architecture as a form of art but distinguishes it from music and poetry, as each one is a distinctive type of art. Added to that, all works of art have to consider the point of view of the spectators. Artists should not create works of art that might offend the viewers or aggravate critics, or else

critics would publicly condemn their work. For instance, the American painter James Whistler was harshly attacked by the English art critic John Ruskin after painting “Nocturne in Black and Gold.” Ruskin claimed that this is not art and accused Whistler of flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face (Adams, 2015). This shows that not only architecture, but also every work of public art should be fairly taken seriously. Therefore, Călinescu states that no one should think of architecture as something that has nothing to do with art, but as a “major constituent of the arts” (2015). So, just because one aspect is not entirely mutual between art and architecture that does not mean that the two are not related. Architecture and art have several qualities in common, and that includes being appealing, artistic, engaging, alluring and attractive. Ultimately, the qualities that are shared between art and architecture contribute noticeably in making architecture a great and major form of art.

All in all, perceiving architecture as a form of art or science is not a matter of life and death, but it is of a crucial importance to the future of architecture and architects. When considering the significance of art in architecture, one can hardly regard architecture as a pure form of science. Methodological artistic concepts and ideas have been well integrated into architectural forms since ancient times and this merge tends to appear inseparable. Not only that, but architectural products in most cases are influenced by aesthetic qualities that can provide inspiration. Therefore, viewing architecture as a form of art can serve as an encouragement for architects to produce more innovative and artistic buildings that would impact the industry in an unprecedented way. Lastly, and as the youngest Pritzker Architecture Prize winner, Richard Meier, once proclaimed, “architecture is not just art, architecture is the greatest of arts” (Meier, 2015).

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1. In his poem “Architecture,” the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert (2015) eulogizes the outrageous beauty that is handled by an architectural arch. The author describes architecture as an “art” as it decorates the arch and its surroundings. He also exalts the artistic quality that is contained and encompassed by architecture. Plus, he goes into details by describing some subaltern architectural elements such as the window and the door that are next to the arch. This source offers an artful view of architecture that includes descriptions of ancient and recent architectural monuments. The purpose of including this source was to provide an understanding of the artistic and intrinsic value of architecture and its beauty. Since the poem comprises ideas that are directly related to the research, it helped in strengthening the proponents’ argument. Additionally, the poem stipulated a basic understanding of how architectural beauty is a factor that qualifies architecture to be a form of art.
2. The book “Architecture: Art,” written by Philip Jodidio (2005) contains a detailed explanation of how recent creativity is emanating from the existing relationship between art and architecture. The book mainly discusses the outstanding revolutionary designs and projects that have challenged the boundaries of art and architecture. Correspondingly, the author talks about the disappearance of barriers between architecture and art, and how architects have come closer to artistic expression lately than they have ever before. Jodidio collected evidence from historical books, excerpts, and photographs from architectural articles. The source is considered to be beneficial as it enriches the reader’s understanding of the nature of architecture, architects, and their work. It also serves as an elucidation of the evolution of architecture and how contemporary architects attempt to create a disparity by coming up with unparalleled new ideas. The author delivers the main points candidly, without favoritism or inequitable judgment. Moreover, the book encompasses notions that are similar to the point of view introduced at the beginning of this research paper; as a result, it helped in crystallizing and vivifying the facts and opinions that were stated.
3. The influential American architect, Charles Moore (2015), writes in his architectural journal “Architecture-Art and Science” how architecture uses some elements of science but is mainly composed of art. He then goes on by explaining the complicated

existing relationship between architecture, art and science. Not only that, but he also suggests that the answer might differ depending on the way these three terms are defined. The author analyzes the situation meticulously and determines that this is an extremely controversial topic. He addresses the difficulty in giving a definite answer to whether architecture is science or art but indicates that creative architecture persists as a result of its artistic hidden value. Incorporating some quotes from this journal was intended to increase the ethos of the paper, as Moore is greatly known for his influential designs and architectural acumen. The source was useful in several ways. For instance, it increased the validity of the argument as it viewed that this issue has been debatable for a very long period of time. Therefore, using these elements clarified some misunderstandings and confirmed previously mentioned ideas.



## Effective Self-Motivation

Eyad Mohamed Ali

### Abstract

Many college students face motivational problems and require motivational techniques to assist them. Research has shown that motivation can be divided into nine inter-related components that, when addressed properly, increase a student's motivation (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 17). Furthermore, research has shown that a student's choice of technique could be influenced by many factors. This study aims to determine what defines an effective strategy and what factors may affect the difference in effectivity between students.

Based on previous research, an interview was conducted as a basis for a more extensive online survey to collect information on students' goals, problems, and currently used techniques. The results showed that students used differing techniques based on the goals and problems they had. It was also found that a technique's interaction with the student's goals and problems was what determined its overall effectiveness. The results suggested that students aim to incorporate techniques which deal with the cause of the lack of motivation and practice self-awareness to understand what works best for them.

### Introduction

Most people would agree that motivation is an essential part of success. Without it, most people would be lacking the energy and drive to perform at their best leaving them with a significant disadvantage in the academic and work environment. Students seem to be especially familiar with this struggle, often finding themselves procrastinating or too tired to study. As such, students must develop effective motivational techniques to maintain a consistent level of performance. However, with the limited research in the field, determining the most effective methods can be quite a challenge. I, too, have found myself demotivated at times, unwilling to work or study, even with the knowledge that it could be essential to my

future success. This research aims to collect data from past articles and papers as well as the personal lives of college students to determine what defines the most effective motivational method and how that differs between individuals.

The investigation began with preliminary desk research to establish a common understanding of the effect of motivation on an individual's performance, as well as possible factors that might determine what works best for each person. The information collected was then used to create a set of questions to use in surveys and interviews that provided data about the many forms of motivational methods and their effectiveness among the participating students. This data presented enough insight to ascertain the most effective motivational techniques.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Components of Motivation**

According to Bomia, Beluzo, Demeester, Elander, Johnson, and Sheldon (1997), there are nine components of intrinsic motivation that, when addressed with appropriate teaching strategies, can increase motivation in adult learners (p. 17). These components are "autonomy, expectancy, instrumentality, effort, interest, satisfaction, valence, relevance and self efficacy" (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 17). Other studies have also mentioned one or more of these components as essential to motivation and persistence (D'Lima, Winsler & Kitsantas, 2014; Schweinle & Helming, 2011; Wolters, 1998).

A student's freedom, or perceived freedom, is described as autonomy (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 18). Within their research, Bomia et al. (1997) showed that instrumentality and expectancy were defined similarly in past research as "individual control" (p. 18); although the terms might slightly differ, with instrumentality referring to the role of a student's efforts in achievement, and expectancy meaning the hope or thought of a particular outcome (Bomia et al., 1997, pp. 6, 13-14). Regarding the motivational teaching strategies, most aimed to increase the perception of these components (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 18), showing that a self-motivation technique may need to do only that.

Bomia et al. (1997) also connect autonomy, instrumentality, and expectancy to self-efficacy (pp. 18-19). Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to succeed and is essential to motivation (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 18). D'Lima, Winsler, and Kitsantas (2014) also refer to self-efficacy, stating that "students with high self-efficacy tend to persevere in the presence of challenges" (p. 342). Also, Schweinle and Hemling (2011) stated that a student is more motivated to perform a task when they have more self-efficacy from completing a similar assignment in the past (pp. 531, 541). It becomes clear that self-efficacy plays a significant role in a college student's motivation.

Furthermore, Bomia et al. (1997) also mention the enhancement of motivation "through increasing interest and effort" (p. 19). Bomia et al. presented an increase in interest as an arousal of curiosity and an increase in effort as a result of an increase in the other components of motivation (1997, pp. 6, 19-20). The authors also explained how an increase in effort and interest increases in the value of a task, valence (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 19). Valence is also related to relevance, whether an action leads to a bigger goal. Wolters (1998) shows that some students remind themselves of the importance of a task in achieving their goals to increase motivation (p. 228). The students make use of relevance and valence in this way to increase motivation and what Bomia et al. call satisfaction, the degree to which a task meets needs (p. 20).

#### **What Technique and Why**

Wolters (1998) has identified 14 different types of motivational strategies used by college students (p. 227). When studying why students would use a particular technique, Wolters (1998) concluded that students used different strategies depending on why they

lacked motivation (p. 232). Additionally, Wolters (1998) observed that students applied different techniques when the tasks differed (p. 233). These findings suggest that the context in which a student finds themselves lacking motivation can affect the choice, and effectiveness, of a strategy.

Besides the reasons behind a lack of motivation, Wolters (1998) identified that "students tend to use strategies ... that are congruent with the goals they adopt when engaging in those tasks" (p. 231). Similarly, D'Lima, Winsler, and Kitsantas (2014) have claimed, with the support of past research, that differing goal orientations resulted in different cognitive and motivational strategies (p. 342). Usually, students who were attempting to master a subject used intrinsic strategies, while those with a performance orientation used extrinsic strategies (Wolters, 1998, p. 233). However, students may have multiple differing goals at the same time, which may result in the use of different techniques (Shweinle & Helming, 2011, p. 530; D'Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014, p. 342).

Additionally, a student's ethnic background, gender, and personality may all be influences on their chosen goals and strategies (Clark & Schroth, 2010; D'Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014). For example, D'Lima, Winsler, and Kitsantas (2014) claimed that women were more mastery-oriented than men, while men were more performance-oriented than women (pp. 342, 346). Furthermore, Clark and Schroth (2010) found that there was a significant difference in personality between motivated students and their nonmotivated peers (p. 22). Additionally, there existed some differences in personality, depending on the nature of a student's motivation (Clark & Schroth, 2010, p. 22). D'Lima, Winsler, and Kitsantas (2014) further support this point with findings that present a difference in goal orientations between different ethnicities (pp. 351 - 352).

### **Methodology**

To gather the necessary data, I developed three possible collection methods: an online survey, an interview, and a group case-study. For the current research, I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview followed by an online survey. The interview allowed for detailed responses and presented the interviewees with a comfortable no-risk environment to answer at their leisure. Meanwhile, an online survey made it easier to collect information from more people, even though further elaboration was limited. A case-study would involve the investigation of techniques students use over time as well as the effectiveness and circumstances of each method. Although the third method seems the most reliable, it was unreasonable under current conditions.

I used the interview to collect information on the main motivational problems faced by college students, the motivational techniques used by these students, and the goals adopted while attending college. I then used the information gathered to analyze which components of motivation were targeted by the various techniques, what was the most widespread and seemingly effective techniques, and if the goals a student had, or any other perceivable factors, affected the results. By using this method, I created an in-depth understanding of the participants and the motivational aspects of their lives, which provided a basis for the online survey that provided a more comprehensive perception of the most effective motivational techniques.

The participants of the interview were four college students that were already acquainted with me beforehand; although this guaranteed that the interviewees were comfortable throughout the conversation, it raises the likelihood of similar answers as participants may be from similar backgrounds. To avoid this outcome, or at least reduce its effects, I tried to diversify the sample by interviewing students of various genders, experiences, and fields of study. On the other hand, the online survey had a total of 32 participants who had received the link from one of various social media platforms. The

students that participated came from different ethnic backgrounds and practiced different fields of study, assuring a more random sample size than in the interview.

## Results

### The Components of Motivation

By looking at the most frequent motivational problems students face, we can come to understand which components of motivation a technique should address to be effective. During the interview process, one student stated that their most frequent motivational problem was "professors who can't teach ... and make success more difficult than it should be." When asked for further explanation, it seemed that this resulted in low perceived autonomy, instrumentality, and self-efficacy, which resulted in low levels of motivation. Another student reported more than one motivational problem. The first was a "lack of energy and time," where he felt that he had "a lot of work" and didn't "have time for the things that make [him] happy." This situation seemed to be one where satisfaction is low. The second reported problem was very similar to the problem reported by the third participating student. Both students described a "low number of friends" or feelings of "loneliness" as factors that led to periods of low motivation; this problem does not seem to coincide with any particular component of motivation, but, as one of the students claimed, the brain becomes preoccupied with negatives instead of focusing on their capabilities or goals.

After conducting the interview, the survey was used to gather similar information from a wider sample. The answers were grouped into five main themes: overwhelmed, helpless, disinterest, emotional distress, and other. Overwhelming problems were those scenarios where students felt the tasks were too difficult or were too numerous. Helpless is when students felt they couldn't do much to affect their situation whether it was due to a professor, a lack of resources, or some other reason such as "strikes." Disinterest is when students found the task boring or simply irrelevant. Emotional distress is when students felt sad, afraid, or some other negative emotion. Finally, 'other' covers all responses that were either blank or too vague, such as "low motivation," to put into any of the previous categories. Each student was free to put in more than one response. By the end of the survey, as seen in figure 1 below, most students faced problems relating to emotional distress, followed by disinterest.

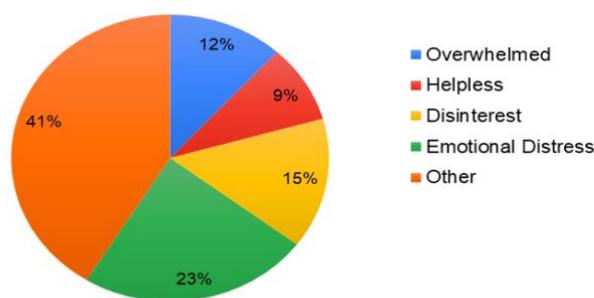


Figure 1: Types of Problems Students Face

Each type of problem indicated low levels of different combinations of the nine components of motivation. Overwhelmed was observed to result in low levels of self-efficacy. Meanwhile, helpless scenarios were accompanied by low levels of autonomy, instrumentality, and self-efficacy. On the other hand, disinterest, much like the name implies, was accompanied by low levels of interest, relevance, valence, and satisfaction. Finally, emotional distress indicated no particular effect on the nine components of motivation.

Another important aspect is what components techniques already address. Each of the interviewees reported differing strategies to combat low motivation. One of the interviewees presented "ranting" as her technique to get motivated. It seems that her goal was to reduce stress and built-up negative emotion. Another interviewee reported working by interest to "get [herself] going" or working with urgency if there was a deadline. The last of the interviewees listed "sleeping" and interacting with friends as his favored motivational technique. He claims that these help him deal with exhaustion and negative emotions.

Similar to the interviews, the surveys resulted in a diverse list of motivational techniques; however, these methods could be grouped into categories similar to those adopted by Wolters (1998) in his article "Self-Regulated Learning and College Students' Regulation of Motivation." The categories used were extrinsic techniques - dealing with external motives; intrinsic techniques - relating to internal motives; volitional techniques - relating to the environment, emotion, attention, and willpower; information processing - dealing with cognitive techniques or help-seeking; and other - all blank or vague answers. As with the previous section, students were free to elaborate as they like, this resulted in some giving more than one answer. The chart below shows the percentage use of each type of technique.

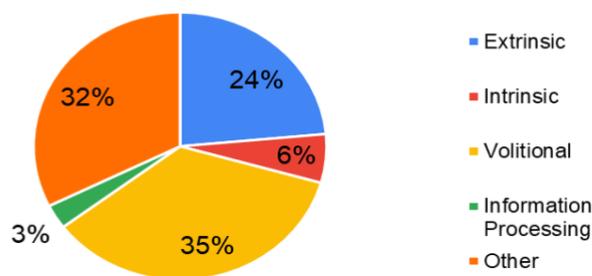


Figure 2: Techniques Students Use

Regarding the nine components of motivation, each type of technique was able to deal with different components based on the subtler aspects of the method. Extrinsic techniques often aimed to increase valence and satisfaction. Meanwhile, intrinsic techniques seemed to address satisfaction or self-efficacy. On the other hand, volitional strategies aimed to calm emotions instead of directly interacting with the nine components. Additionally, information processing, though believed to be used to increase self-efficacy, in the case of the survey, dealt with emotions as well.

#### What Technique and Why

One of the factors that might influence the technique used is a student's goal orientation. D'Lima et al. (2014) would categorize goal orientation into three main types: mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance (p. 342). The same categories are used here to analyze the responses students gave when asked about their goals at university. Regarding the interviews, all three students showed differing goal orientations. The student with mastery goal orientation reported the use of extrinsic and volitional strategies to keep them motivated; however, the strategies varied from those intended to place pressure on herself to those directed towards making her feel better. Another student, with a performance-approach orientation, claimed to use similar strategies but mostly aimed at increasing the satisfaction of an action or task. Meanwhile, the student with a performance-avoidance orientation used volitional strategies to keep themselves emotionally secure and an extrinsic strategy that pressured her to work.

In the case of the survey, students were free to report more than one strategy and goal, much like in the interview. The responses were then analyzed and categorized into their corresponding groups. The results were then gathered into the below table.

Table 1: Student Goal Orientations and Techniques Used

	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	Volitional	Information Processing	Other	Total
Performance-Avoidance	1	0	2	1	3	7
Performance-Approach	6	2	3	0	4	15
Mastery	3	0	7	0	1	11
Other	0	0	1	0	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>

Each type of goal orientation seems to result in a preference for a certain type of technique. Volitional techniques were preferred overall and especially so by mastery-oriented students. Meanwhile, those with a performance-approach orientation showed a preference for extrinsic strategies. Unfortunately, there exists too small of a sample to say for certain what performance-avoidance oriented students prefer.

When studying the effectivity of a technique, it was observed that those with a performance-approach orientation and used extrinsic techniques reported the highest effectiveness of all combinations. Most students who reported this combination, when asked about the effectiveness, said it was "very effective" or "super effective." On the other hand, students with performance-avoidance orientation, in both interviews and surveys, reported that extrinsic methods focused on negative consequences resulted in stress. One student went so far as to claim that she felt most motivated when she was "studying and sitting" without thinking about the consequences of failure.

Wolters (2019) claimed that students would decide on a technique based on what motivational problem they face (p. 233). In the interviews, two of the three students used strategies that directly tackled the main motivational problems they felt. For example, sleeping when feeling tired or talking to friends when feeling lonely. On the other hand, one student's technique didn't directly address the problem they stated beforehand. Similarly, in the survey, most students reported the use of techniques that directly tackled the main motivational problems they feel. Take, for example, the students who used volitional techniques to calm themselves when they face distressing scenarios or students who used extrinsic strategies to make uninteresting tasks more satisfying. However, some students used motivational techniques that didn't directly address their motivational problems. One example is the use of volitional strategies instead of information processing strategies to deal with difficult tasks. Upon further investigation, it was shown that students that used techniques that directly dealt with the motivational problems were more effective. Students who directly addressed their problems claimed their techniques worked "for sure" and that they were "good enough." Meanwhile, students who didn't directly deal with their problems stated that

their techniques were only good for "the occasional boost." Nevertheless, this variation could be due to the student's understanding of the question.

#### Discussion

In this paper, the aim is to define the most effective motivational technique and understand what might affect the effectiveness of this technique. By studying the results of the interview and survey, I observed several key concepts to be shared. The following paragraph discusses the most important findings that were made.

Regarding the issues students face, the results have indicated that more students encounter emotional distress as compared to other types of problems. Since it is difficult to link sadness and other negative emotions to any specific components of motivation, this finding suggests that assessing a method on its capacity to interact with a particular component of motivation is insufficient. Alternately, judging a method on its synergy with the nine parts of motivation as well as if it directly solved the motivational difficulty is preferred. Furthermore, in the survey, students who used techniques that directly interacted with the problem they faced reported higher effectivity on average. These findings suggest that the most effective technique differs depending on the situation.

Another factor found to affect the effectiveness of a specific method is the goal orientation a student has. Students who adopted a more performance-approach orientation reported higher effectiveness with extrinsic strategies. One possible explanation is that those particular students valued rewards and positive outcomes more than their peers. On the other hand, they might be more likely to use a specific type of extrinsic technique, which is more effective than others. Other learners that used extrinsic techniques were performance-avoidance oriented. Since these learners didn't report high effectivity and instead reported stress when relying on deadlines and the fear of failure, positive rewards are likely more effective than negative consequences. Those who adopted the last of the goal orientations, mastery-goal orientation, preferred volitional strategies. A probable explanation is that volitional strategies assist the learner in focusing on their tasks, allowing them to reap joy from being able to work towards their goals without distraction. However, it could also be due to the volitional strategies being the best suited for dealing with emotional distress, the most commonly reported problem in the survey.

The previous conclusions agree with the findings of Wolters (1998), where he declared that students used methods that were "congruent with the goals they adopt" (p. 231). The findings also match the one made by D'Lima et al. (2014), where they claimed that differing goal orientations influenced the choice of strategy (p. 342). However, the findings do differ a little since some students didn't agree with the statements completely. One reason could be that some students have different goals not mentioned in the survey, or they have a habit of using techniques not aligned with their goals. Further investigation into a student's motivational habits and goals would be required to support or refute the claims. The small sample size and some student's unwillingness to answer the entire survey limited the accuracy and generalizability of the results. However, this pilot study provides a small foundation for future research into the effective motivational techniques students should adopt. Research into the effectiveness of specific methods, such as positive awards, is recommended to further recognize their value. Additionally, investigating a well-defined scale for the effectiveness of a motivational technique could be useful for future research on this topic.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, what defines the most effective techniques is whether it can directly handle the motivational problem at hand and the way it interacts with the nine components of motivation (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 17). The research has also shown us that a person's goal

orientation can considerably affect what technique they prefer as well as what motivational method works best. Additionally, students should aim to take their goals into perspective when trying to motivate themselves. For example, if you're motivated by good grades, I suggest using other positive rewards to regulate your motivation.

Further investigation of the specific effects of different techniques and their interaction with other situations could be a highly beneficial next step. Additionally, looking into emotional distress and its interaction with the nine components of motivation can provide insight into how it interacts with motivation. The topic of this paper presents more opportunities for research that could help students globally with their academic journey.

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## **Geothermal Power Should Be Adopted Globally**

Mohammed Mahmoud Rais Ali

How can the ground power a car? When nations discovered that greenhouse gases influenced climate change, most decided to hamper their emissions. To do so, scientists first had to identify the origin of such gases. According to Haley (2003), the salient sources of greenhouse gases and other pollutants are energy-related processes, such as combustion in coal factories. However, choosing between either terminating indispensable power plants or impairing the environment represents a global dilemma. After further research, discussions led to a compromise: the concept of sustainability. Sustainability involves notions such as solar and wind energy that aim to meet the resource needs of both the current and subsequent generations. Among these practices is geothermal power. This method extracts thermal energy from the fervid areas underground, and it does so through the use of steam. Its primitive model was constructed when the Italian Piero Conti sought to reduce production costs for his boric acid extraction business. The land Conti owned incorporated some points of the crust that leaked steam, so he directed it to his geothermal generator, which produced electricity. Moreover, modern geothermal power plants do not rely on these limited spots. Instead, geothermal engineers create underground systems that obtain heat from regions as far as Earth's mantle. However, "geothermal energy today accounts for just 0.3 percent of globally installed renewable energy capacity" (Keating, 2017, para. 5). Although geothermal power is not as renowned as other means of energy, it should be implemented worldwide because it is an environmentally and economically beneficial energy source.

Firstly, geothermal power is eco-friendly. According to Horton (2010), producing power relies on the Law of Conservation of Energy. This law states that "energy cannot be

created or destroyed but may be changed from one form to another” (Luscombe, 2018, p. 3). Based on this law, power plants must have energy sources in order to supply their customers with energy. In thermal power plants, a source provides energy in thermal form. Many of thermal power processes direct this heat to a pool of water, evaporating it. The steam then rises to a turbine, and a generator converts the kinetic energy into electricity. Moreover, coal power plants, a form of thermal power plants, obtain heat through a combustion reaction between fossil fuels and oxygen. Although the reaction produces an immense amount of heat, it has other products as well, namely carbon dioxide, water, and at times, carbon monoxide. These gases affect the environment’s stability. Meanwhile, geothermal power receives its heat from thermal energy trapped in Earth’s inner layers (Britcher, 2015). Geothermal systems utilize underground pipes that pump water to these regions. Because of the temperature difference between the semi-molten rocks and the water stream, heat flows into the pipes. As a result, the formed steam rises to the segment of the pipes close to the surface, carrying the acquired thermal energy with it. At the surface, the steam reaches a generator, producing electricity. Furthermore, geothermal power eliminates the ones previously mentioned gases from the process. The sole use of water is the reason geothermal power is benign. In addition, not only is geothermal power eco-friendly, but it can also assist in reducing pollution from other sources as well. Among these pollution sources is sewage water. According to Ambulkar (2017), 80% of global wastewater is disposed of in natural water bodies. Since geothermal power excludes chemical reactions, the chemical properties of the geofluid seldom matter. Hence, sewage water from factories and households, after being treated to a certain degree, can be used for geothermal purposes. In short, geothermal power is a green energy source.

Secondly, geothermal power benefits the economy. According to DiPippo (2012), geothermal power is misconstrued to be expensive. Although its start-up costs, which involve governmental aid, are high, the long-term expenses are significantly lower than that of many other power practices. This attribute results from the design of the plant itself. In wind power, for instance, the windmills are continuously exposed to friction and corroding chemicals, such as water and oxygen. As a result, rust forms, which increases maintenance costs. On the other hand, in geothermal power, the underground pipes are constructed of materials that are durable, especially to heat and pressure. As these pipes are not exposed to oxygen, geothermal plants are less susceptible to endure repair costs than many other forms of energy production. Furthermore, rare substances, such as lithium, which are essential in many sustainable power practices, can be obtained using geothermal power. Obtaining these chemicals locally instead of importing them is beneficial to the economy. In some geothermal plant models, the water in the pipes mixes with some of the substances underground. When these chemicals are extracted and refined, a geothermal power plant becomes more cost-effective (Kaplan, 2009). Geothermal power is also advantageous to the economy by enhancing technology. In the 20th century, when the dominating energy source was combustion, the scarcity of fossil fuels significantly affected prices. Whenever coal or gasoline, for instance, became less available, businesses shifted to focusing on reducing operating costs. This change meant that companies had to reduce costs on any form of on-going research. However, in geothermal power plants, the thermal energy source is the Earth’s core that confines an immense amount of energy. Because of this extensive amount of energy, the output of a geothermal power plant is constant regardless of the number of extractions (Lachner, 2019). Therefore, in the market of energy, as the supply seldom changes, the energy prices fluctuate less frequently. This reduced-price variation allows businesses to anticipate market changes more accurately. Hence, entrepreneurs will be more

eager to invest in technological research that improves efficiency. In summary, geothermal power is advantageous to the economy in which it is present.

On the other hand, many environmentalists claim that geothermal power is dangerous. According to Roos (2012), “geothermal power plants may have an unintended and potentially dangerous side effect: earthquakes.” When entrepreneurs and governments search for locations for building their geothermal plant, they seek areas that have the thinnest crust. The closer the geothermal plant is to the blistering mantle, the more convenient is the extraction process. For this reason, many businesses and authorities build their geothermal power plants in regions close to tectonic plate edges, which are the divisions of Earth’s crust. In these regions, there are many critical points in the underground layers that, if affected, can cause severe earthquakes. Whenever water runs in the geothermal water pipes, it applies pressure on the inner walls of the pipes. This pressure, in turn, transmits to the outward rocky vicinity. If, however, the pressure influences the previously mentioned critical points, the geothermal power plant’s location is susceptible to earthquakes (Stober, 2013). Unfortunately, this was the case in 2006 in Basel, Switzerland. A geothermal power station initiated a series of minuscule earthquakes in which one registered a magnitude of 3.4 on the Richter magnitude scale, which measures seismic wave strength. Although geothermal power plants may cause earthquakes, there are certain procedures that can slightly impede this issue. According to Garthwaite (2019), preventing cognizable small earthquakes before they grow can reduce the likelihood of harmful earthquakes. Computers that monitor seismic activity around geothermal power plants can assist in realizing the need for operation adjustment, such as decrease in water flow. In addition, risk management can also improve geothermal power. By providing a clear study of the energy source and the potential earthquake magnitude and damage, civil authorities can choose whether abeyance is reasonable or not (Watson, 2013). In short, although some assert that geothermal power is harmful due to induced earthquakes, its harms can be confined using monitors and risk management.

Sustainability is essential in dealing with rising energy demand while maintaining environmental stability. Among the sustainable practices, such as wind power, is geothermal power. This energy source extracts energy from Earth’s inner layers using steam and transforms it into electricity. Geothermal power is green because it not only does not emit pollutants but also aids in reducing water pollution. In addition, geothermal power has pecuniary benefits in that it reduces long-term costs, assists in extracting rare substances such as lithium, and motivates technological advancement. While many people claim that geothermal is dangerous by inducing earthquakes, the damage can be reduced using seismic monitors and risk management. Hence, geothermal power should be adopted globally due to its advantages to both the environment and the economy. Why don’t we invest in it?

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## Valley Speak

Janainah Anam

*Valspeak is like this, um, sociolect? And it totally originated in California, in like the 1980s, y'know.* If I were to continue writing the remainder of my paper in the same way, chances are the majority of readers would be, *like*, instantly put off. The earlier couple of sentences are an, albeit exaggerated, example of “Valley Speak,” a dialect rife with negative connotations. Some of its main features are the use of a low a creaky voice (Vocal Fry), an upward inflecting intonation for statements that aren’t questions (Uptalk) and the use of filler words (“Like” and “Um”). Think Alicia Silverstone in the film ‘Clueless’ or the speech patterns of singer, Britney Spears. Aside from these linguistic markers, speakers of Valspeak are often stereotyped as being spoiled, unintelligent, superficial and arrogant. *As if!* While these features are hardly quantifiable, “certain dialects are stigmatized, not because of actual linguistic deficiencies but because of a symbolic association between a certain way of talking and low social status” (Kottak, 2017 p. 94). In this paper, my aim is to explore the reasons behind these negative perceptions of Valley Speak as well as Vocal Fry and Uptalk.

According to Kottak (2017), “Stereotypes about regional speech styles show up in mass media, which then reinforce and help spread these stereotypes.” The same is true for Valspeak, as some of the most well-known stereotypes of this dialect stem from portrayals in popular media. In fact, Valley Speak gained popularity in America after the release of Frank Zappa’s 1982 song, ‘Valley Girl’ (Hoffman, 2013), featuring his daughter, Moon Zappa. “I’m getting my braces off y’know. But I have to wear a retainer. That’s going to be really, like, a total bummer” (Zappa, 1982), monologues Moon in what is a largely hyperbolic version of the speech patterns of young, white, upper class girls from California’s San Fernando Valley. Although this was the first, it’s by no means the only time Valspeak has been parodied in popular media. The 1995 film ‘Clueless,’ featured Alicia Silverstone, who played the quintessential Valley Girl- young, upper class, Californian and armed with a lexicon of “As ifs,” “Likes” and “Duhs.” Despite its perpetuation of several Valley Speak stereotypes, the film can possibly be credited for bringing about the Valley Speak renaissance in the nineties. Another film which seemingly perpetuated aforementioned stereotypes, was ‘Legally Blonde,’ with main character Elle Woods, embodying all the typical features of a

Valley Girl. Although, some may argue that this film sought to subvert the less than positive stereotypes associated with Valley Speak, by and large, most portrayals of the dialect in popular media have been disparaging at best.

But it isn't just Valley Speak which has earned a bad reputation; the individual vocal tics that constitute Valspeak have received plenty of flak as well. Vocal Fry in particular, has garnered a fair share of criticism on its own. Vocal Fry is a way of speaking in which one deepens their voice, while almost croaking out certain words. On the Slate podcast, "Lexicon Valley," guest Bob Garfield described Vocal Fry as being "Vulgar," "Annoying" and "Repulsive" (Arana, 2013). And this seems to be a commonly shared sentiment- In a study published in the journal, *Plos*, it was found that Vocal Fry can hamper women's job opportunities. In the study 800 men and women were made to listen to different audio clips, with Vocal Fry and without, and were asked to pick which version they preferred. The responses were overwhelmingly skewed against Vocal Fry, with most respondents preferring the normal voice, stating that that was the person they would choose to hire (Anderson, Klofstad, Mayew & Venkatachalam, 2014, p. 6).

The results of this study show that women have to cross an additional hurdle while trying to enter the labor force, which is modulating their voices. On one hand, people tend to prefer women with a higher pitched voice, but deeper voices make the speaker appear more dominant and in control (Khazan, 2014). However, at the same time women's voices shouldn't be too deep as that would encroach into Vocal Fry territory, which, as previously mentioned, is considered to be undesirable. Furthermore, this is a hurdle that only women have to cross as Vocal Fry is "perceived less negatively in men than in women. One possible explanation as to why there is a difference in perception is that of sex atypical voice modulation." This means that men who already have naturally deeper voices are not changing the pitch of their voice if speaking with Vocal Fry. On the contrary, women who have naturally higher pitched voices, are modulating their voices to become deeper, which is considered unattractive (Anderson, Klofstad, Mayew & Venkatachalam, 2014, p. 6).

One of the reasons Vocal Fry and by extension, Valley Speak is so commonly mocked is perhaps due to the fact that linguistic prejudice appears to be one of the last bastions of "acceptable prejudices" (Reynolds, 2015). Linguistic prejudices aren't a new phenomenon either. People speaking with British accents or to be more specific, what is referred to as "BBC English," have been thought to be more intellectual than their Cockney English speaking counterparts. Similarly, in the U.S, Standard American English appears to be the widely accepted norm, while dialects such as Valley Speak, or African American Vernacular English are considered to be inherently inferior.

Another reason as to why Valley Speak is viewed so unfavorably is that linguistic changes can be hard to adapt to. Especially for older generations who seem to have the most problems with adapting to such changes. While researching new linguistic trends, linguists look to non-mobile, older, rural males (NORM) who are generally examples of where "language has been" (Arana, 2013). NORMs tend to be linguistically conservative and opposed to change. In the previously mentioned study on Vocal Fry, it was noted that most female college students spoke using Vocal Fry and that it was viewed much more favorably by young adults. There is after all a reason why young women have been considered the vehicle for changes in language and why linguists tend to spend a lot of time studying the speech innovations of young adults (Kottak, 2017 p. 93). The reason being that young women tend to be innovators of new speech styles and in a way tend to be ahead of the curve (Arana, 2013).

Uptalk is another component of Valley Speak, which like others, comes attached with a certain gender bias. It refers to an upward inflecting lilt for statements that aren't

questions. “Thank you for the chance to come and speak to the Philadelphia World Affairs Council? This is an important organization that has uh since 1949, has provided a forum for debate? and discussion on important issues?” Perhaps an instance of a dumb Valley Girl not knowing when to tone the Uptalk down? *As if!* The above lines are an excerpt of former American President, George W. Bush Uptalking his way through the opening lines of a speech. Yet, even though someone as high profile as Bush has been caught using Uptalk, one can hardly find “Uptalk” and “George W. Bush” being mentioned in the same breath.

Like Vocal Fry and Valley Speak in general, Uptalk is also seen as something to be unlearned. However, after analysis of the information I’ve gathered, Uptalk only appears to be a problem when it’s a woman doing the Uptalking, similar to Vocal Fry. “This is despite the fact that researchers have found uptalk in speakers that are very unlike young female Californian speakers” (Ploschnitzki, n.d.). In an article titled “She Turned Her Upspeak Down a Notch,” the author describes her experience of being infantilized by clients for the way she spoke, which culminated in her hiring a voice coach to help alter her speech patterns (Grose, 2013). There is an obvious difference in the way male and female Uptalkers are treated, which simply begets the question: when was the last time George W. Bush was asked to turn *his* Upspeak down a notch?

Going by my sources, it is clear that the use of Valley Speak, even broken down into its individual components such as Vocal Fry and Uptalk negatively affects women but has little to no negative impact on men. Although male Uptalkers have become more common, over the years (Miller, 2013), rarely have men been stereotyped or have suffered negative consequences for Uptalking. And the same is true for Vocal Fry. Despite the fact that high profile male celebrities such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Bruce Willis have been caught using Vocal Fry, it’s almost always female celebrities, for instance, Britney Spears or Zooey Deschanel who are primarily associated with it and are criticized for it. The study in the journal, *Plos* and the New York Times article by Jessica Grose show that these negative perceptions of Vocal Fry and Uptalk, have resulted in difficulties in the job market for women, while such difficulties are seemingly a non-issue for men.

So, *like* why does everyone hate Valley Speak? While there is no single correct answer, a mix of gender bias, dialectal superiority, stereotypes in media and resistance to change all contribute to why Valspeak is so unfavorably viewed. From the information that I have gathered, it is evident that there is nothing inherently wrong with using Valley Speak, Vocal Fry or Uptalk. In all my sources, nowhere was it mentioned or even implied that women using any of the three were in any way stupid, arrogant or inferior. Such stereotypes have simply been perpetuated by representations or rather misrepresentations of Valspeak in the media. And since these stereotypes have been so deeply entrenched, it is not easy to be rid of them.

Furthermore, the usage of Vocal Fry and Uptalk have been linked to certain social benefits, which goes to show that they’re not simply signs of air headedness. According to some, Vocal Fry is a sign of being educated and upwardly mobile (Anderson, Klofstad, Mayew & Venkatachalam, 2014, p. 1), while Uptalk is a tool which can allow women to “hold the floor,” a technique by which the speaker staves off potential interruption by using a rising tone at the end of a statement (Hoffman, 2013), or Uptalking. Moreover, Valley Speak is no longer restricted to upper class, white Californian girls and has seeped into the speech patterns of other demographics as well, proving that many of the stereotypes are outdated. Ultimately, Valley Speak is a perfectly valid dialect which shouldn’t simply be blindly mocked. Treating Valley Speak as an acceptable dialect can perhaps help erase some of the negative perceptions that surround it. Additionally, it could also lead to more dialectological

research on what is essentially an unfairly overlooked dialect. After all, “when it comes to language, the rules of natural selection apply: Evolve or perish” (Arana, 2013).

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## Self-Objectification of “Picture Perfect” Images on Instagram

Jana Bastouni

### Introduction

A big part of my daily routine consists of scrolling through my Instagram feed which is flooded by a massive number of “picture perfect” images. Picture perfect images contain girls that meet the appearance standard online. This standard includes the thin-ideal body and a beautiful face of makeup. I’m always left with multiple questions in my brain: Why don’t I look like that? Am I not good enough? Will I ever meet the appearance standard? Not feeling good about myself has always been an issue since I was little a girl, and I find that the older I get, the harder it becomes to deal with it. One day I was sitting at home and got a call from one of my closest friends. She asked me if I suffer from diabetes because ever since she came back from studying abroad, she realized that I have put on some weight. She then explained that the thin and toned body is the appearance standard that I should aim to meet since society like magazines, television, and advertisements idealize it.

I left the phone call feeling extremely miserable and very body-conscious and it made me realize that there is a stereotypical standard for beauty that society praises which is the thin-curvaceous body with a glamorous face of makeup. The way I feel looking at the “picture perfect” images on Instagram guided my research question because it made me curious about the effect it has on other teenage girls. This research paper explores the topic of self-objectification and the constant comparison that teenage girls face due to the long-established standard of the pictures on Instagram. Moreover, this paper also explores research that demonstrates that the majority of teenage girls seek acceptance and rely highly on validation from their peers and Instagram followers when posting a picture on Instagram. Platforms like Instagram constrain teenagers to meet the beauty “standards” online. In this paper, I will investigate the negative effects of self-objectification in teenage girls in particular, including eating disorders, an increase in anxiety, and depression, due to viewing the “perfect” images on Instagram.

### Background Information

Instagram is not just a random application on a phone, but it is integrated into many teenage girl's daily lives. Platforms like Instagram are used as a self-expression tool, identity formation, and a way for girls to compare themselves to the online society. Teenagers seek acceptance and rely heavily on validation from their peers and Instagram followers when posting a picture online. As a result, teenage girls tend to post positive and uplifting content to make them appear interesting and likable to grab their followers' attention. This includes content like partying, traveling, or playing a sport. Moreover, the content posted by teenagers' adored celebrity poses potential challenges for the teenagers watching them. Challenges like body and social comparison which result in dissatisfaction in themselves. The majority of celebrities on media platforms all post the "picture perfect" image. Te'Eni-Harari and Eyal (2017) argue, "the most common body shape they present is the thin and toned body" (p. 949). This glamorizes, promotes, and praises the thin and toned body, due to the fact that the thin-ideal is associated with positivity, success, and attractiveness. This results in many girls feeling pressured and insecure if they do not lie in the category of the thin-ideal body.

Many teenage girls view these images on Instagram, and they start to self-objectify. Self-objectification can be a very dangerous act that leads to a constant "monitoring of how one's body looks in order to determine whether one meets internalized appearance standards" of the "picture perfect" images (Lamp, et al., 2019, p. 705). Girls self-objectify because they feel evaluated, judged, and watched by their Instagram followers. There is a cultural standard for beauty that magazines, television, and advertisements favor to use. This cultural standard contains a thin and toned body with a beautiful face of makeup which normalizes the unrealistic body ideal, making it very problematic because many teenage girls view these pictures. This established standard by society makes girls feel like they have to follow this specific standard in order for them to fit in and feel accepted by the community. Due to the standard online that society praises, teenage girls feel the need to constantly compare and self-objectify their social and physical attributes to their fellow peers and Instagram celebrities. This comparison causes them to either feel good if they met the "standards" online or bad if they didn't, which leads to many negative outcomes like an increase in body dissatisfaction, lower self-esteem, and feelings of envy. These damaging psychological corollaries have been shown to contribute to a number of negative mental health outcomes, like eating disorders, increased anxiety, and depression.

### **Eating Disorders**

Self-objectification is linked to a number of negative mental health outcomes. One negative result affecting mental health is disordered eating, like anorexia and bulimia nervosa. Anorexia nervosa is when one suffers from a distorted body image of themselves that causes them to see themselves as overweight even when they're dangerously thin. They often refuse to eat, they exercise compulsively, and develop unusual habits such as refusing to eat in front of others, which results in losing large amounts of weight and may even starve to death. Moreover, people who suffer from bulimia nervosa eat excessive quantities, and then purge their bodies of the food and calories by vomiting everything out. They do this because they feel disgusted and ashamed when they binge eat, so they release it by emptying their stomach. Calogero, Davis, and Thompson (2005) suggest, "women with eating disorders may behave in unhealthy ways in an attempt to alleviate feelings of shame about their body by self-objectifying" (p. 44). As a result of these psychological imbalances, anorexia and bulimia lead to a combination of extreme behaviors such as starvation or highly restrictive dieting in order to look a certain way or feel a sense of control over one's body.

Women's bodies have long been the subject of scrutiny, this results in emerged eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia, which are one of the most prominent health problems for

teenage girls. The best-known contributor for anorexia and bulimia is negative body image and high body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction refers to a discontentment with the shape and size of one's body and appearance. Today, negative body image encourages women to engage in these eating disorders and obsessive behaviors in order to fit a certain beauty ideal represented mainly throughout Instagram. According to Perloff (2014), "media exposure predicts body dissatisfaction, thin body ideals, self-objectification, leading to eating disorders among preadolescent girls" (p. 363). The reason being is that when a person suffers from anorexia or bulimia, they shed a huge amount of weight which makes them now lie in the category of the thin ideal that society favors. This thin beauty ideal is favored because with thinness comes the projection of beauty, power, success, value, and love. It is shown through Barbie, Bratz dolls, television, magazines, and video game characters, this ideal is implanted into young girls' heads at an increasingly young age. This allows "for exponentially more opportunities for social comparison and dysfunctional surveillance of pictures of disliked body parts than were ever available with the conventional mass media" (Perloff, 2014, p. 336).

### **Anxiety**

Another negative mental health problem that emerges with the use of Instagram is an increased appearance anxiety. Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, negative thoughts and physical changes such as increased blood pressure, sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat. With the use of Instagram comes a lot of positive benefits like connecting with the online society which can be enjoyable, but it can also lead to health problems, like anxiety. Instagram has become an integral part of many teenage girl's daily lives and is used as a method of managing and constructing one's self-presentation. Many users choose to construct their online personas through photo selection on their profiles. Teenage girls' users present themselves as friendly and sociable by presenting aesthetically pleasing photos in which they looked attractive, wore pleasing attire, and posed in a beautiful setting. The reason for teenage girls being "cautious curators on social media, keenly and laboriously grooming their profiles to present a positive image of themselves" is to get positive commentary on their pictures (Yau & Reich, 2018, p. 197). The need for presenting a positive and beautiful profile results in girls feeling anxious about the feedback they will receive.

Instagram has a feature that allows users to comment on other users' pictures. On Instagram, users observe attractive individuals receiving attention and positive commentary about their appearance. This increased internalization may then turn users' attention to their observable physical features in an attempt to identify which traits will or will not be met with positive evaluations, which corresponds to increased rates of self-objectification and a heightened appearance anxiety to look attractive. According to Harper and Tiggemann (2007), "A host of negative experiences have been associated with high trait self-objectification including appearance anxiety" (p. 650). The importance of looking attractive in their photos is "due to the societal pressures already placed on girls to adhere to strict and often unattainable ideals" (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017, p. 313). These ideals which are a thin body and a full face of makeup create a lot of pressure on girls who think they need to meet them in order to fit in. These ideals cause "physical appearance comparison which serve as a direct mediator between Instagram use and attention to high-anxiety" (Bue, 2020, p. 10). It causes high anxiety because those girls are trying to change to be what society favors. Teenage girls then start to compare their realistic, flawed selves to perfectly crafted images posted by online friends and celebrities they think met these ideals. In addition, Mackson, Brochu, and Schneider (2019) examined, "the association between Instagram and anxiety, and found that in a sample of girls in the United States, higher daily social media use was

associated with greater dispositional anxiety symptoms and an increased likelihood of having a probable anxiety disorder” (p. 2162). Moreover, when girls start to interact online by posting pictures, they think meet the beauty standard there will still be appearance anxiety. Due to the evaluation received by their friends on the pictures. So, this vicious cycle of trying to meet the standards and then meeting them will still result in anxiety.

### **Depression**

Instagram displays a numerous number of glossy images that are viewed by many teenage girls. The glossy perfect images on Instagram play a major role in girls’ happiness. The main reason being is that it greatly reduces the self-confidence and self-esteem of those young girls because they think they have to meet the standards of those pictures which then leads to higher rates of self-objectification and depression. Lamp, et al, (2019) argued, “Self-objectification has been related to a number of negative mental health outcomes like depression” (p. 705). Depression is a serious medical illness that negatively affects how one feels, thinks, and acts. The more a user engages with Instagram, the more exposure they will have due to the commentary about their physical traits from the online society. The positive feedback like complimenting one’s body or looks results in boosting their self-esteem. Unlike negative feedback which causes sadness and high body consciousness, since teenagers rely heavily on validation from their fellow peers. The negative feedback on girl’s pictures results in them experiencing “contrast between themselves and the thin and toned, idealized bodies” which then triggers feelings of depression (Kleemans, et al., 2016, p. 94). So, the “perfect pictures” always leads to the constant comparison that results in “less positive self-appraisals, including feelings of inadequacy, lowered body satisfaction, which leads to depression” (Te’Eni-Harari & Eyal, 2017, p. 951).

### **Conclusion**

Instagram is the playing field of today’s youth; a place where lessons are learned, attitudes and identities are formed, and body image concerns emerge. Instagram is prevalent in today’s society and the way teenagers use it plays a significant role in psychological outcomes. I have shown through the research that teenage girls do not use social media platforms such as Instagram carelessly, they are rather thoughtful about the norms of Instagram, and how best to present a favorable image for the online society. Instagram is used as a tool for various reasons like social and physical comparisons, identity formation, and a way for self-objectification. These all result in negative outcomes that affect the well-being of its users, including emerged eating disorders, an increase in appearance anxiety, and depression.

For years, the media has portrayed an unattainable image of what a women’s body should look like. This sad reality has not only affected many women from past generations but also the new generation of young girls that lived their lives through Instagram. Even though the negative psychological effects of this phenomena remain to this date there has been a positive change towards fighting the eating disorders, anxiety, and depression that come with it that affect young girls. This is because body image has finally become part of the conversation in today’s society. Many celebrities with huge platforms like Demi Lovato, Jennifer Lopez, and Winnie Harlow, have spoken up about how they themselves have struggled with body image and that the online society should spread positivity towards one another. Moreover, talking about this issue and recognizing that there is no such thing as an ideal body raises awareness and acceptance among young girls. As a step forward, we must all work towards supporting all body types and destroying the image of the “perfect” body. By doing the research needed for this paper it made me realize that as long as one is happy with how they look then that alone makes them special.

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## **Ethical Conflicts with Physicians and Lethal Injection**

Marianne Breidy

### **Introduction**

It was a normal day for Dr. Smith and Dr. Adams, two state-employed doctors. They start the day with their names being repeated on the speakerphone of the emergency room. They rush to their patients and are relieved to find them alive. Both physicians are consumed with the thought of saving their patients' lives. After hours of hard work, the doctors, along with their medical teams, have satisfied the purpose "of a profession dedicated to preserving life" (qtd. in Walker, 2017, para. 13). A feeling of happiness and relief rushes through them knowing that they are fulfilling their duty as physicians. Later that day, Dr. Adams receives a phone call from the state asking him to participate in the lethal injection of a convicted murderer in the upcoming execution. His role would be to inject the deadly drugs in the prisoner's vein, monitor vital signals, and pronounce the moment of death. As he tries to make his decision, he remembers the Hippocratic Oath and he tells himself "I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures" (Shiel, 2018). With that in mind, he accepts the state's request in an effort to benefit the prisoner by elevating and preventing any unnecessary suffering. While Dr. Adams is on the phone, Dr. Smith overhears this conversation and is repelled by the thought and refuses to believe that his fellow physician would participate in an act that harms the prisoner. The only way to benefit the prisoner would be to preserve his/her life whenever there is a chance at survival.

While we might think that doctors are united in the medical ethics that they follow, that is not true. The different responses that both doctors had to physician participation in lethal injection represent the two arguments that have split the medical community for years. Lethal injection is the process of injecting drugs to paralyze and kill the convicted felon. In some states, executions through lethal injection must be supervised by a physician. These laws have created a conflict between the states and professional medical organizations that have accepted the modern version of the Hippocratic Oath as their code of ethics. Moreover, the American Medical Association and other medical professionals stand against physician participation in lethal injection. However, more important than the legal conflicts are the medical ethical conflicts of physician participation. The main argument against these participations aligns with a doctor's role to protect and prolong life. On the other hand, the opposing argument states that non-participating physicians risk a more painful death for the prisoner. In this paper, I review background information on lethal injection and the death penalty. Then, I present the ethical arguments for and against doctor participation to show the complexity of this issue as well as highlight ethical differences within the medical profession.

### **Background Information**

The use of the death penalty as a form of punishment dates back to early human history. According to the *Death penalty information center*, the first recorded execution in the US was in 1608. However, as concerns for human rights rose, the death penalty was seen as a cruel punishment and therefore a violation of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution which prohibits the government from using any cruel or unusual punishments. In an article about a physician's role in executions, Clark (2006) reviews the events of the first production and usage of the lethal injection. Moreover, in the mid-1970s, the state of Oklahoma took into consideration the ethical concerns with execution and began working on alternatives for hanging, firing squad, and electrocution. A professor of anesthesiology developed a three-drug lethal injection as requested by the state. This method of execution involves large doses of sodium thiopental, an anesthetic, pancuronium bromide, a paralysis inducing drug, and potassium chloride, a cardio-toxin. Charlie Brooks was the first person executed using the lethal injection in 1982, Texas. Two physicians were present for the execution in order to overcome the inhumane allegations associated with the death penalty and to reach public acceptance. According to Dr. Guillotin, "the medical role in executions was driven by a desire to lessen the suffering of the condemned (and thus of the witnesses), or by a more mundane willingness to play the part insisted on by the state - to assist in bureaucratic aspects of transforming a prisoner to a corpse and to certify death"( qtd. in Clark, 2006, p. 96). To this day, as stated in the *Death penalty information center*, lethal injection is the method of choice by states and has resulted in 83% of executions since 1976.

The presence of physicians in lethal injection "medicalizes capital punishment by moving a process that has always been a function of the penal system into the domain of medicine" (Black & Sade, 2020, para.4). This medicalization has created struggles within practicing physicians and between medical professional organizations and state laws. Even though physician organizations such as the American Medical Association (AMA) prohibit the participation of physicians, according to the *Death penalty information center*, 35 out of the 38 states that allow the death penalty require or permit physicians to participate in the executions. When comparing the professional codes of medical ethics of the AMA and state laws and regulations, there is a huge contradiction. The AMA's Code of Medical ethics only permits physicians to prescribe sedatives before execution and produce a certification of death after it has been declared by someone else. On the other hand, states require physicians to use more of their medical skills to insert injections, monitor sedation and vital signals, and declare death. Most states protect the anonymity of physicians who participate in the process

to prevent them from any future problems with medical organizations. With the ongoing conflict between the state and medical organizations, lies an even more intense debate between physicians who are willing to participate and those who are not.

### **Ethical Arguments Against Physician Participation**

Despite being developed to decrease the suffering of prisoners and to deliver a more humane execution, lethal injection is still viewed by many physicians as a harmful process that contradicts the healing purposes of medicine. Opponents to medical participation in executions refer to the Hippocratic Oath which clearly states, “To please no one will I prescribe a deadly drug, nor give advice which may cause his death” (qtd. in Clark, 2006, p. 96). This oath condemns physicians who use fatal drugs on their patients. Moreover, the ban of physician involvement in lethal injection in the recent Code of Medical ethics has been adapted from the Hippocratic Oath. In an article published by *Criminal Justice Ethics*, Walker (2017) discusses how physician participation contradicts the virtues of medical ethics as stated by the AMA. Physician participation in executions violates the primary healing purpose of medicine by causing harm rather than alleviating pain and suffering. In the process of execution, medical technology is being used in an act of death rather than in the preservation of life.

Other than the lethal injection being a deadly procedure, many physicians refuse to take part in this process because it puts prisoners under excruciating pain. Zivot (2012) argues that lethal injection is not more humane than other methods, but it rather creates an untrue image of peace. He states that “anesthetics produce an outward appearance of calmness” but do not address the suffering of the condemned (Zivot, 2012, p. 1). Many studies including those mentioned by Clark (2006) explore the efficiency of the anesthetics and muscle relaxing drugs used in the lethal injection. Clark found that according to a study by Koniaris and colleagues, the lethal injection does not contain sufficient amounts of anesthetics. This causes the prisoner to experience a sensation of suffocation, the pain of cardiac arrest, and a severe burning sensation. “This would be a very cruel way to die: awake, paralyzed, unable to move or breathe, while potassium chloride burned through your veins” (Clark, 2006, p. 100).

Opponents of physician participation argue that partaking in lethal injection executions breaks the foundation of trust between a physician and their patient. Moreover, preserving physician-patient relationships is the medical ethical duty of every physician. In an article exploring the role of physicians in executions, Clark (2006) looks at the negative effects of physician participation on doctor-patient relationships. The text emphasizes the physician’s duty towards building a solid foundation that allows patients to place his or her trust. However, when physicians participate in executions, they neglect that duty and instead “undermine the credibility of the medical profession” (Clark, 2006, p. 99). Clark further adds that the prisoner will continue to be confused with the image of a ‘white-coated healer’ and that of a ‘black-hooded executioner’. Not only will this practice break the trust between the physician and the prisoner, according to Zivot (2012), it will also “increase cruelty from the perspective of the condemned” (p. 2). Nelson & Ashby (2011) add another side effect to physician participation which is the “loss of public trust in physicians” (p. 32). The two authors consult Lee Black and Mark Levine that state, “If physicians are viewed as facilitators of death, patients might not believe that their physicians are always acting in their best interests” (qtd. in Nelson & Ashby, 2011, p. 32).

Another argument against physician participation, is the idea that physicians who participate in the lethal injection serve the interests of the state rather than those of their patients. Walker (2017) quotes Robert Truog and colleagues to further understand the ethical conflict of physicians serving as agents of the state. Truog et. al argue that the states use the

power and the ethical front of medicine for purposes that don't align with the ethical duties of physicians as stated by the Medical Code of Ethics and by the Hippocratic oath. Walker further elaborates that society has granted doctors extraordinary trust and dispensation to administer drugs on them, put needles in their bodies, and practice procedures because physicians do so for their benefit. However, "to have the state take control of these skills for its purposes against a human being—for punishment—seems a dangerous perversion" (Walker, 2017, para. 18). This is highly unethical since physicians who participate in the lethal injection repurpose their medical skills away from the benefit of a human being, and instead use those skills to fulfill another agenda.

Furthermore, the state uses the trustworthy image and highly respected status of doctors to brainwash the public into believing that a medicalized execution is a humane execution. According to Clark (2006), "This not only violates the rights of these physicians but violates the basic ethical principles of the medical profession and distorts the physicians' role in society" (p. 102). Clark adds that physicians are being used as pawns in a plot to prevent capital punishment from being declared unconstitutional. He refers to an article by Dr. Joe Geiderman that compares the moral values of the medical establishment in Nazi Germany and those of current medical professionals. Geiderman uses the participation of physicians in the Holocaust to highlight the main similarity between those physicians and the physicians who participate in executions. Moreover, both parties used their medical expertise in favor of the state. Individuals who are against medical interference in state affairs find that "the penal system, not the medical profession, is responsible for finding a way to perform executions" (Black et. al, 2020, para. 17).

### **Ethical Arguments for Physician Participation**

Medical professionals that support the participation of physicians in the lethal injection follow ethical reasonings differently than those who oppose physician involvement. According to a survey by Dr. Neil Farber and colleagues in the Archives of Internal Medicine, "almost half the respondents - 43% - said there was nothing wrong with physicians actually injecting condemned inmates with lethal drugs" (qtd. in Clark, 2006, p. 98). These physicians argue that participation helps avoid any unnecessary pain and suffering that could occur during the execution. As explained by Clark (2006), "the practice of medicine is a therapeutic and compassionate enterprise, dedicated to furthering human dignity and well-being beyond the myopic goal of simply preserving life" (p. 99). Clark further explains that in the situation of the death penalty the patient is going to die regardless of whether the physician is present or not. In that case of inevitable death, physicians should help make the prisoner's execution free of pain and suffering.

The agony that prisoners often experience during executions is due to the lack of medical expertise. Walker (2017) explains how medical mishaps such as misplaced IV lines or inadequate doses of anesthetic have caused lengthy death times, conscious suffocation, and an internal burning sensation. In the article by Nelson et. al (2011), an example of a botched execution, resulting in the emotional and physical pain of the prisoner, is used to emphasize the importance of physician participation. The execution team spent more than fifty minutes injecting the prisoner with needles before they resorted to a surgical cut that gave them access to the prisoner's veins. This entire procedure took place all whilst the prisoner is filled with fear as he anticipated his death. Furthermore, "It seems nearly unimaginable that a patient in surgery, attended by an anesthesiologist or other well-trained physician, would suffer these mishaps" (Nelson et. al, 2011, p. 31).

Other than the poorly administered process of injecting the prisoner, the issue with the lethal injection is that it has never been tested for efficiency. As a result, many prisoners consciously suffocate as they near their death. Sandeep Jauhar (2017), a cardiologist and a

medical writer for *The New York Times*, argues that since the efficiency and the correct dosages of the drugs used in the lethal injection can't be tested on human subjects, the best protection against botched executions is for a trained physician be present during the procedure. Physicians know more about these drugs and their effects than non-medical participants, therefore, decreasing the chances of painful execution. Jauhar justifies his stance by clarifying that "participating in executions does not make the doctor the executioner, just as providing comfort care to a terminally ill patient does not make the doctor the bearer of the disease" (Jauhar, 2017, para. 14).

Proponents of physician participation in executions believe that it is the obligation of every physician to never abandon a patient. Moreover, the foundation of trust in every physician-patient relationship is held together with the patients' expectation that in their time of need the physician would be by their side. If physicians are not present for their patients, then that foundation is broken, and the physician-patient relationship is severed. In the context of lethal injection, Clark (2006) argues that considering that the patient has been legally condemned to death, with no option at redemption, then it is the physician's duty to not abandon the patient at their most vulnerable hour. He further emphasizes that physicians should "tailor their actions, as much as possible, to the interests of their patients and the realities and necessities of the circumstances" (Clark, 2006, p. 99). One of the many doctors that agrees with Clark's realization is Dr. Carlo Musso, an emergency department physician that also works at the local jail. For his interview with Walker (2017), Dr. Musso explains why he accepted the physician role in the death penalty at the nearby prison. He states that the cure for the lethal injection is the abolition of the death penalty, but if the government won't allow such an action, then you have two options: the first being not participating in the execution and the second being comforting your patient. Dr. Musso chooses to participate because "it just seems wrong (...) to walk away" from your patient in their time of need (qtd. in Walker, 2017, para. 30). Similarly, in the article by Nelson et. al (2011), Kenneth Baum views physician participation in lethal injection parallel to that of a physician taking care of a terminally ill patient. In both cases, the patient has no chance at survival, and the physician should not abandon them in a critical time where his or her presence provides a sense of safety and stability.

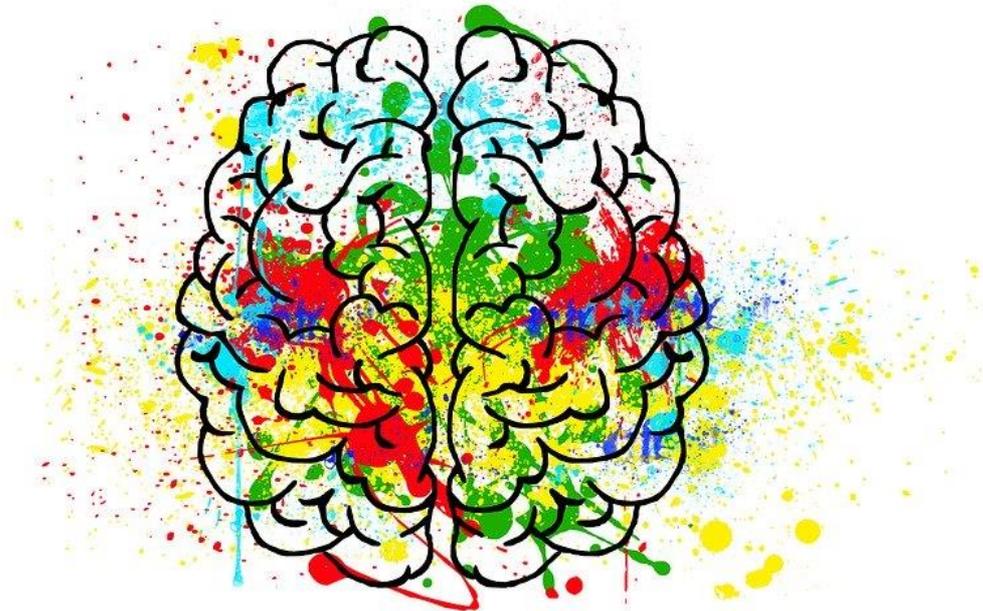
Regardless of their good intentions, physicians who choose to participate in lethal injection executions are often accused of unethically serving the interests of the state. These physicians deny such accusations. Instead, they explain that medicine should always protect the health needs of individuals regardless of the state's apparatus. Physicians such as Dr. Jauhar (2017) believe that not participating in lethal injection leads to "more brutal forms of execution" such as electrocution or firing squad (Jauhar, 2017, para. 11). Moreover, "states will go to great lengths to execute criminals" and it is a physician's duty to reduce any pain in this inevitable procedure (Jauhar, 2017, para. 13). It is important to realize that physicians do not signal approval of taking a life, but in times of necessity, honoring conventional medical ethics is ineffective. To elaborate on this idea, Zivot (2012) uses the example of military physicians. Military physicians are state agents that technically serve the interest of the state, but in reality, their purpose is to protect the welfare of its citizens. However, much like physicians participating in executions, military physicians must resort to non-conventional medical ethics. This includes treating soldiers without their consent or creating medical shortcuts so that soldiers can go back to the battlefield. All these procedures are deemed unethical in common medical settings. But, in unique situations when the interest of the state does not align with medical ethics, physicians must bend the rules to ensure the best interest of individuals in that situation. Moreover, in the act of the state against medical ethics, physicians must be the angels to the act of the devil.

## Conclusion

Is it ethical for physicians to participate in lethal injections? Or is it not? There is no one right answer to this question. Both sides of this argument are often pinned against each other. However, through my research, I have found that physicians from both sides of this ethical argument are united under one similarity: They are both trying to make the best ethical decisions that fulfill their duty as physicians. For example, one of the reasons why physicians refuse to participate in lethal injections is to preserve trust in physician-patient relationships. While physicians who do participate in executions are also concerned with preserving physician-patient relationships, they do so by not abandoning their patients in their time of need. This is only one of the many ethical conflicts explored in this paper that shows us that physicians from both arguments are looking to benefit their patients in the best way possible. In the anecdote about Dr. Smith and Dr. Adams, both physicians are united in their medical duty of treating a patient and saving a life. But, when Dr. Adams receives that call asking him to be part of the execution, a wedge is formed between him and his colleague. In that scenario, a label of who is right and who is wrong is formed. However, it is unfair to label sides of the argument. Instead, we should try and understand the difficult ethical decisions that medical professionals must make. As a result of such difficult decisions, physicians might not choose the same paths and solutions, but at the end of the day they are united under the same moral intentions of supporting one's patient. For this reason, physicians who participate in executions should not face retribution from medical organizations such as the AMA. Nor should physicians who do not participate in executions, be forced to do so under state laws.

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## **Color Psychology and its Impact, Influence and Interpretations**

Nitika Dileep

### **Introduction**

We live in a world of color (Huchendorf, 2007, as cited in Kurt & Osueke, 2014). Color psychology refers to the psychological effect of a variety of colors on human beings. Previous research has shown that human emotions and behaviors tend to be impacted by the surrounding colors, making this an important topic in our daily lives. Several factors including age, gender, personality and culture influence color perception, which makes it difficult to determine if color alone impacts our emotions and actions. In spite of this varied response, Color Psychology is heavily implemented in marketing and design to influence consumer purchases. Because of this significant role of color in our lives, I think it is a topic worth looking into so that I can understand how it affects us and to what degree. The topic is not specific to any particular group since it affects almost everyone, with the exception of blind and colorblind people. The areas I will study through this research pertain to understanding how color is interpreted, the impact color has on mood, feelings and behavior and how it influences marketing decisions and consumer purchases. The primary data to support my research will mainly be collected through an online survey targeted at my university peers, family members and friends belonging to different cultural backgrounds and age groups while background research will include the study of scholarly articles drawing upon insights backed by scientific research.

### **Literature Review**

Many researchers have found that people in different emotional states choose and interact with colors in different ways. Emotionally well-adjusted individuals, for example, respond to color openly, whereas people who are more emotionally inhibited eschew color when possible (Birren, 1980, as cited in Withrow, 2004)

### ***Interpretations of Color***

So, what triggers our interpretation of the different colors around us? Most researchers reason that different colors hold different associations for people, triggering memories and emotions, which in turn affect performance. However, Graham (1998, as cited in Withrow, 2004) presented a chemical explanation, based on melatonin and serotonin levels in the body. During the day, when full-spectrum sunlight illuminates all the colors around us, the hypothalamus releases a stimulant called serotonin. At night, when the absence of light turns the colors around us into tones of gray and black, the hypothalamus releases a depressant called melatonin which helps us sleep.

Color preferences are also affected by gender as research findings reveal that 76% of women prefer cool colors compared to 56% of men (Hemphill, 1996, as cited in Rider, 2009). Earlier, Valdez and Mehrabian (1994, as cited in Rider, 2009) discovered that although the genders responded very similarly to variations in saturation and value, women were more sensitive to the variations than men were.

Color preferences and responses, however, are entirely subject to context (Elliot & Maier, 2007, as cited in Rider, 2009). Although blue is consistently preferred and yellow consistently disliked (Crozier, 1999, as cited in Rider, 2009), most people would prefer yellow in the context of a lemon or a wedding band. Finally, these associations are thought to have biological and evolutionary roots, in addition to being grounded in classical conditioning processes (Elliot & Maier, 2012).

### ***Impact of Color on Mood, Feelings and Behaviors***

Research has led to some universal inferences with regards to the effects of color on mood, feelings and behaviors. Wexner (1954, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017) conducted one of the earliest studies on the relationship of color and mood. In this study, ninety-four participants were instructed to choose a mood descriptive adjective from a presented list to best describe a series of eight colors randomly displayed on a gray cardboard background at the front of a classroom. Participants indicated a strong relationship between red and exciting/stimulating, blue and secure/comfortable, orange and distressed/upset, and black and despondent/dejected and powerful.

In general, colors comprised of longer wavelengths, like red, are more stimulating to the nervous system than colors of shorter wavelengths, like green and blue (Graham, 2000, as cited in Withrow, 2004; Mahnke, 1993, as cited in Withrow, 2004). A series of experiments by Valdez and Mehrabian (1994, as cited in Rider, 2009) hypothesized that the brightness and saturation of a color would be positively correlated with pleasure and emotional arousal.

Different personality types also seem to exhibit different color preferences. Outgoing people gravitate toward warm, invigorating colors, like red and orange, whereas introverts are drawn to cooler, calming colors, like blue and green (Birren, 1980, as cited in Withrow, 2004). Introverts, who are more sensitive to color stimulation, find the warmer colors to be distressing, whereas extroverts, who are less sensitive, find cooler colors not stimulating enough (Mahnke, 1993, as cited in Withrow, 2004). Prisons that have painted different wings in different colors have noted that violent behaviors increased amongst inmates living on red and yellow wings had decreased among those living on blue and green wings (Graham, 1998, as cited in Withrow, 2004)

### ***Color in Marketing to Influence Consumer Purchases***

The relationship between colors and buying behavior is very intense. Consumers remember colors first, then graphics, numbers, and finally words (Wallace, 2002, as cited in Rider, 2009). A product's packaging and color have direct and foremost impact on consumers' psyche. It is a powerful marketing tool that significantly influences consumer

purchases, so much so that it accounts for 85% of the reason why someone decides to purchase a product (Hemphill, 1996, as cited in Kumar, 2017).

Colors have the capability to lure attention, this is called the approach orientation of color (Bellizzi et al., 1983, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017). Experimental research in the retail environment suggests that cool-colored store environments (interiors) are preferred over warm-colored store environments (Bellizzi et al., 1983, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017; Bellizzi and Hite, 1992, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017). Bellizzi and Hite (1992, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017) reported that consumers react more favorably to a blue environment in a retail setting, and that colored background seems to elicit attention and attract consumers to approach a store. Valdez and Mehrabian (1994, as cited in Rider, 2009) reported that blue environments generally evoke better feelings than do orange environments. In a less distracting blue environment, less purchasing decisions were postponed and more money was spent. (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017).

Manipulating the odors and color in a shopping environment was found to influence consumers' purchase intentions and time spent-shopping (Bellizzi et al., 1983, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017). The inappropriate use of colors in products not only attracts the customers but also may prevent them from buying the product.

Toward the conclusion of his book, 'Selling with Color', Birren (1945), determines that color is extremely powerful in advertising and can be the difference between success and failure, but this does not mean that color should be used haphazardly and negligently.

### **Methodology**

After all the secondary research into the scientific studies carried out on the topic of 'Color Psychology', it was time to conduct some primary research. The three methods considered for the primary research were:

- An online survey
- A face-to-face interview with a physical questionnaire
- A case study

With an online survey, I could quickly reach out to a large audience with a detailed questionnaire to understand the impact of color on moods, feelings and behaviors, as well as probe on how people interpret color and whether it influences their purchases. A face-to-face interview would have allowed for a thorough conversation on the subject, capturing an interviewee's emotions and behaviors from verbal and non-verbal cues. Through a case study, in-depth data could be collected, organized and interpreted to understand the effect of color psychology. To select the methodology for the primary research, I had to consider three crucial aspects: the cost of the selected data collection method, the accuracy of data collected and the efficiency of data collection. Thanks to technological advances, an online survey methodology was the clear winner, as online surveys can help collect research data in a fraction of the cost and time attached to the other methods in consideration. Market researchers have found that participants overwhelmingly prefer to complete online surveys rather than take part in written questionnaires and usually provide longer and more detailed answers. By designing and sending relevant and targeted surveys, people are more likely to respond with honest answers, which further supported the selection of this methodology. The online survey was sent to acquaintances, friends and family members across different age groups and cultural backgrounds. The survey questionnaire consisted of 19 questions with the initial few querying on demographic background followed by those related to the three sub-topics included in my study of Color Psychology: the impact of color on mood, feelings and behaviors, the interpretations of color and the use of color in marketing to influence consumer purchases.

### Results

The survey was received with great interest by the participants and I got an overwhelming 101 responses. The age range of the respondents were from 16 years to 54 years and from these a large majority were females, as seen in Figure 1.1. The respondents hailed from various parts of the world with an equally high percentage from Middle East & North Africa and South Asia, as displayed in figure 1.2.

The results of the survey are outlined below with insights gained on each of the sub-topics on the subject of ‘Color Psychology’.

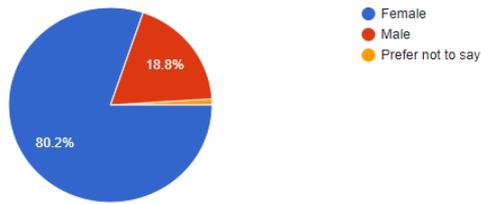


Figure 1.1

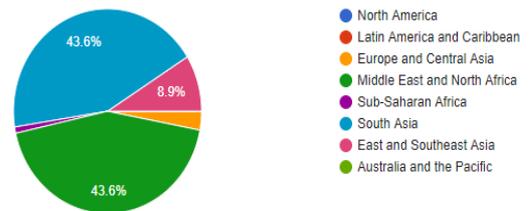


Figure 1.2

### Interpretations of Color

The results of the survey indicated that a larger percent of males prefer cool colors over warm and/or neutral colors as shown in Figure 2.1.

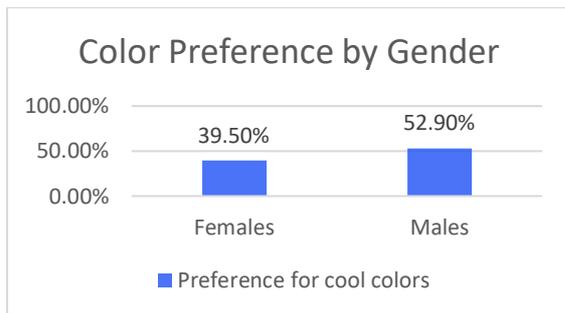


Figure 2.1

95% of respondents found blue to be a calm, soothing, serene or peaceful color reflecting the sky and sea. From within the two major regions, a majority of the respondents found blue to be a calm color. Within Middle East & North Africa, a similar percentage of respondents interpreted blue as the sky and sea, while South Asians made this association to a much smaller degree. This interpretation of the color blue is represented in Figure 2.2.

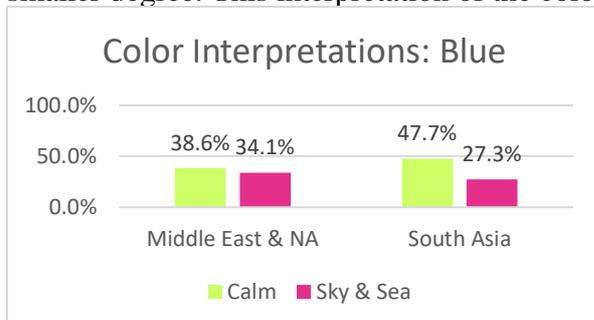
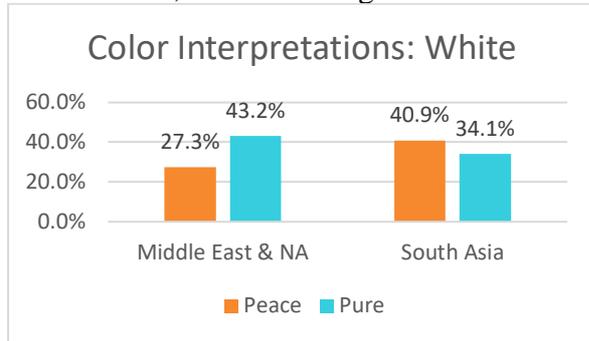
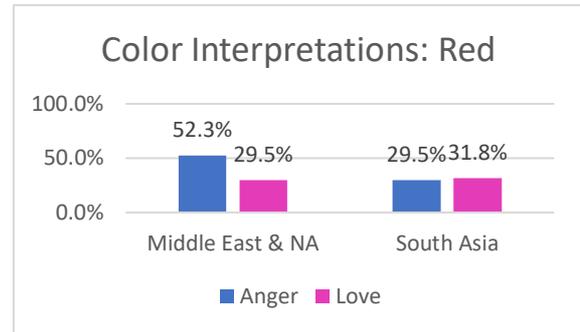


Figure 2.2

Figure 2.3 shows that white was largely seen as a color of purity in the Middle East & North Africa, whereas a larger number of South Asians considered it to be the color of peace.



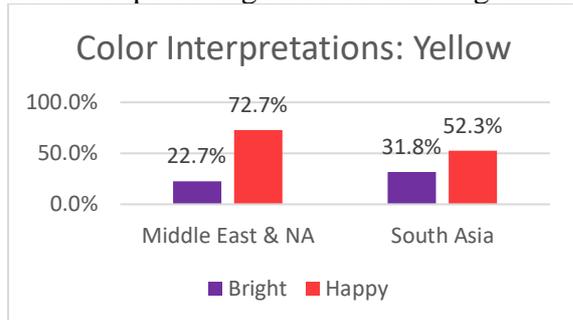
**Figure 2.3**



**Figure 2.4**

In both regions a similar percentage linked the color red with love; however, when red was perceived as anger, the Middle East & North Africa region numbers were nearly twice its South Asian counterparts, as highlighted in Figure 2.4.

As shown in figure 2.5, yellow was largely seen as a happy color in both regions, with a smaller percentage also considering it as bright.



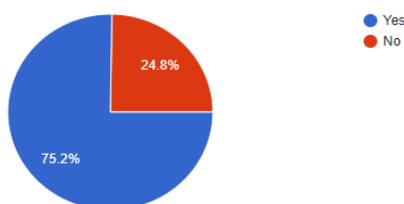
**Figure 2.5**

Anecdotal feedback highlighted different color associations for different people, some even triggering memories and emotions, as seen in the comments below.

- Lilac, due to specific memories and associations.
- Purple and shades of blue as they are colors that comfort me and to me, they mean to love and be loved in return.
- Black as it covers flaws easily, camouflages weaknesses, nothing can go wrong with black.
- Teal – moving from turquoise as I have realized that life is not always so bright.

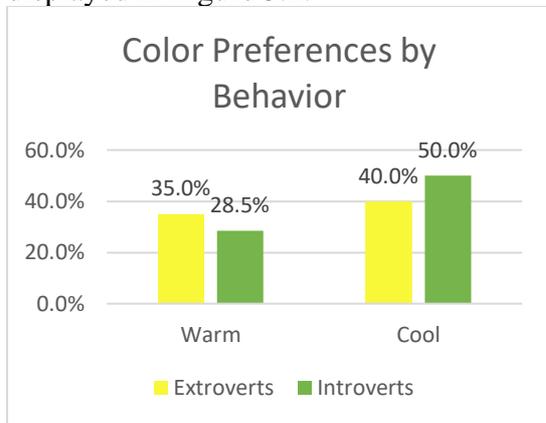
**Impact of Color on Mood, Feelings and Behaviors**

On enquiring if color impacts their everyday lives, three quarters of the respondents confirmed that it certainly did. Results are visually represented in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1**

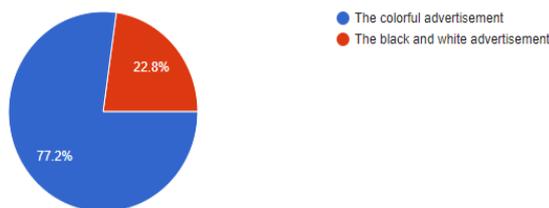
From amongst the extroverts, there was a relatively smaller percent who chose warm colors over cool. However, this percentage is still more than the percent of introverts who chose warm colors; which was half the percent who chose cool colors. These findings are displayed in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2**

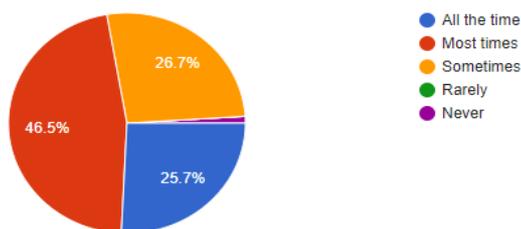
When probed on feelings associated with different colors, 35% of those surveyed expressed feelings of ‘excitement’ when viewing the color yellow, whereas 76.5% felt ‘angry’ at the sight of the color red. For ‘security’, 29.6% of the participants chose blue, with green as a close contender at 24.5%. Yellow was the preferred color for ‘happiness’ for 50% of the participants. Red was cherry-picked by 58.2% of the respondents as the color evoking feelings of ‘love and passion’ with pink coming in at second place with a 36% response.

#### ***Color in Marketing to Influence Consumer Purchases***

In response to the question on whether a colorful advertisement would catch their attention versus a black and white version, as seen in Figure 4.1, more than three-fourth of the participants voted in favor of the colorful advertisement.

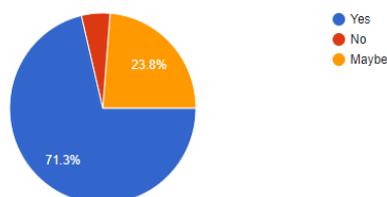
**Figure 4.1**

During enquiries into the influence of color on purchase decisions, almost half of the respondents stated that color led their buying behavior at most times, which was the case with a quarter of them at all times. A quarter only sometimes based their purchases on the color of the product, while one person said color was never an influence on purchases. Figure 4.2 below reflects the above-mentioned results.



**Figure 4.2**

A huge majority of the participants said that they would use color to influence their customer's purchase behavior, whereas only a few were certain that they would not do so, as apparent in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3**

## Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction, the objective of this research was to study color psychology and its impact, influence and interpretations in everyday life. The focus was to understand the impact that color has on one's mood, feelings and behaviors, its influence on purchase decisions and how it is interpreted by different people. This discussion aims to link the results of the primary research to the background literature review in order to arrive at a conclusion on the interpretation, impact and influence of colors on people.

### *Interpretations of Color*

Different people interpret colors differently and this was seen to be true in the survey. Hemphill (1996, as cited in Rider, 2009) had found that more women preferred cool colors compared to men; however, our online survey showed the opposite as a lower percentage of females preferred cool colors in comparison to the larger preference of cool colors seen in males. This contradiction in color preferences could also be due to the influence of biological and evolutionary influences grounded in classical conditioning processes as seen in the research by Elliot & Maier (2012). Such an influence was also visible in the cultural interpretations of different colors by audiences from different regions and yet there were common universal interpretations too like seeing yellow as a happy color.

Anecdotal feedback suggested that people linked strong emotional associations with their color choices like choosing purple since it is comforting or lilac due to childhood memories or using black to cover weaknesses. Color choices were also linked to context such as interpreting blue for the calming sky and sea, just as reflected in studies by Elliot & Maier (2007, as cited in Rider, 2009).

### *Impact on Mood, Feelings and Behaviors*

The online survey results highlighted a definite relationship between colors and one's mood, feelings and behaviors. When describing the feelings that arouse at the sight of a certain color, blue ranked high as a color for security while red stimulated the respondents with feelings of passion and anger, which resonated with the findings of Wexner (1954, as

cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017) where he found red to be stimulating while blue was associated with secure/comfortable feelings.

Just like Graham (2000, as cited in Withrow, 2004) and Mahnke (1993, as cited in Withrow, 2004) demonstrated, longer wavelength colors were found to be stimulating while colors of shorter wavelengths had a calmer effect on the respondents too. Nearly all responders found blue to be a soothing, peaceful color while red was largely seen to excite with feelings of love, passion and anger.

From amongst the extroverts, a larger number were drawn towards warm colors while the introverts showed a greater preference for cool colors; observations that matched with the research results from Birren (1945).

### ***Influence on Consumer Purchases***

It is very evident from the survey that color of a product or its packaging would sway a purchase decision. The fact that most participants confirmed that a colorful advertisement would catch their attention, aligns strongly with the approach orientation of color and its capability to lure attention as put forth by Bellizzi et al (1983, as cited in Agrawal & Singh, 2017).

Similarly, the observation that color makes up for 85% of ones purchasing selections (Hemphil, 1996, as cited in Kumar, 2017) was held true by my survey participants as nearly all of them claimed that color influences their purchase decisions. The influence was so apparent that nearly three quarters of the participants said that they would use color to influence their customer's purchase behavior.

### **Conclusion**

Learnings from the data collected on the topic of Color Psychology has demonstrated that colors greatly affect everyday life and is linked to how people feel and behave on a daily basis. Color is interpreted differently by different people based on various factors such as gender, age, personality and culture. In spite of this varied response many marketing and design companies continue to use Color Psychology to influence human behavior and attempt to manipulate their purchase decisions.

The survey results confirmed almost all of the theories and results of other researchers studied in the background literature review, yet this study is merely a small pilot study and is not entirely sufficient to gauge the absolute interpretation of colors or their impact and influence on human behavior. The research sample was small and the methodology restricted to an online survey and hence more scientific research is needed to gain a better understanding of color psychology.

Clearly, using color to affect mood and behavior is not an exact science. The variables are too many, and the differences in response from one individual to the next are too great. While color can have an influence on how people feel and act, these effects are subject to personal, cultural, and situational factors, yet, there is no denying the fact that color grabs our attention and is an inevitable part of our life.

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## Does Money Bring Happiness?

Khondoker Rahman

The human state of well being has been a topic of heated discussion among psychologists and other experts for a very long time. Several theories and ideas have been proposed to highlight the different factors that influence a person's mental well being. However, the definition of well being is not always clear cut, and this means that there is often much debate about which factors positively affect our well being. Money or wealth is one such factor whose positive effect on our well being is often questioned. Money is mostly associated with the aspect of well being known as happiness. Whenever the question of whether money buys happiness arises, many people quickly jump to the conclusion that money can only help us obtain materialistic things, which is not sufficient to provide long term happiness. This strong link between money and materialism that has formed in peoples mind often prevent them from realizing that there are many other ways in which money can bring happiness. The extent to which money influences our happiness varies from person to person. However, money can always bring about happiness to a person in several ways.

Firstly, money helps us earn respect and high status in society, which in turn contributes to our happiness. While the phrase 'you cannot buy peoples respect' has some validity, being wealthy still goes a long way in making sure that we are well respected in society. The reason for this is that being wealthy indicates success and brilliance, both of which are qualities that are very likely to stimulate admiration from others. Moreover, having money gives us power and influence in society. People often see money as a sign of strength; hence the wealthy people in the society are often given the most responsibilities and enjoy the

highest ranks. The phenomenon of how a high social status is crucial for our happiness is not unheard of and is discussed extensively by Richards (2016) in her article. Her main idea, which she supports using statistical evidence is that social connectedness is a vital tool for enhancing our psychological well being as it helps us achieve a good status in society. According to her, a good status helps us achieve happiness “through the enhancement of self-worth, self-esteem or control” (Richards, 2016, p.532).

On the contrary, some people believe that a high social status can be achieved without money, and hence money is not crucial for happiness. This misconception is tackled by Richards (2016) in her article when she explains how money can act as a solution for a lack of social skills. She discusses how money enables a person who lacks social skills or is introverted to fit into society and achieve good status. While this idea does not discard the traditional method of social connectedness as a way of achieving a good status in society, it does indicate that money makes it significantly easier to achieve happiness through social status. Moreover, this also supports the concept that money can help bring happiness to different people in various ways; for example, in this case, money brings happiness to people who are socially isolated by helping them achieve higher ranks in society.

Furthermore, apart from helping us achieve happiness through social status, money can also help us achieve happiness when we spend it on others, and when we spend it on developing social ties. Happiness is a highly subjective mental state, and this means that different people need different things to be happy. However, one basic necessity needed for almost everyone to be happy in the long term is strong social connections with people that are close to them. In order to make sure money brings happiness, money must be spent on things that positively affect our relationship with others. Futrelle (2017) addresses this concept in his article when he says, “those with five or more close friends are 50% more likely to describe themselves as ‘very happy’ than those with smaller social circles” (para.14). He goes on to claim that for this reason, we should spend money “to invest in our friendships” (Futrelle, 2017, para.14). According to him, money used to prompt social events such as parties and gatherings is likely to widen a person's social circle and hence positively affect their happiness. This idea of Futrelle is supported by Peterson (2008) when he states in his article that “money can buy happiness, so long as the money is spent on someone else” (para.9). Peterson claims that spending money on others rather than just oneself is positively associated with general happiness; hence engaging in activities such as giving gifts to others can be psychologically beneficial. The articles from Futrelle and Peterson collectively convey that our relationship with the people around us is an essential aspect of our happiness and well being. Therefore the articles support the idea that if money is spent wisely on the people around us, the outcome will be an increase in our level of happiness.

In addition, spending money to help the people we care about may also make us happy. The satisfaction of knowing that we can help our close ones and contribute to their happiness can make us feel good about ourselves. Aknin, Dunn, Norton, and Sandstrom (2011) provide support for this idea in their article. They state “that spending money on people we know well leads to higher levels of happiness than spending money on acquaintances” (Aknin et al., 2011, p.2). Their main idea is an elaboration of what Futrelle (2017) and Peterson (2008) have mentioned. Futrelle and Peterson only mention that spending money on others can lead to happiness, however, Aknin et al., takes this a step further and explains how the level of happiness depends on our relationship with the person on whom the money is spent. Aknin et al. explain in their article that if we direct our spending more towards the people who are closer to us, then we are more likely to be happy.

This idea mentioned by Aknin et al. complements the claim that money can bring happiness when it is spent right.

Although having money has social benefits, the most direct way that money can bring happiness to us in a short time is by enabling us to live a luxurious and comfortable lifestyle. With the money we can buy the car we always wanted or live in the house we always dreamt of or eat at our favorite restaurant anytime we want or do any one of several other things which bring us happiness. However, the concern that most people have with this approach is that materialistic things can only bring us short term joy, as “pleasures by definition are short-lived, we [eventually] adapt to them” (Peterson, 2008, para.5). Hence, after a while, we will get used to the materialistic gains, and they will not affect our mental state of happiness. The inability of materialism to increase consumer happiness in the long term is discussed by Caldas (2010) in his article when he states that “correspondingly expensive consumption does not make people much happier” (Caldas, 2010, p.15). Moreover, another problem that people claim may arise when relying on materialism as a source of happiness is that the more materialistic possessions we have, the more possessions we need the next time around. Eventually, a threshold is reached beyond which additional materialistic possessions make no difference to our happiness. Futrelle (2017) mentions this idea when he says in his article that “indeed, the more you make, the more you want. The more you have the less effective it is at bringing you joy” (para.5). Futrelle’s idea is supported by Caldas (2010) when he says, “it is evident that there is a threshold past which happiness ceases to increase, regardless of how many resources are consumed—or wasted—seeking material well-being” (pp.32-33). These ideas suggest that even though money can cause happiness, using it to for materialistic goods isn’t the best way it does this.

The amount of evidence that portrays materialism as ineffective in bringing long term happiness is overwhelming. While some of the arguments made are valid, this still does not change the fundamental fact that rich people tend to be happier and more comfortable when they face the same problems as poor people, even when these problems cannot be solved with money. As Peterson (2008) states in his essay, “Mae West once said, ‘I’ve been rich, and I’ve been poor; believe me, rich is better’(para.2). The reason for this is that even if rich people cannot solve some problems with money, they always have the choice of falling back on their luxuries and possessions to support them in times of distress. On the other hand, for people who lack money, any other nonfinancial problem is more distressful as it adds on to the financial issues the person may already be experiencing.

Apart from the ineffectiveness of materialism, compulsive buying is yet another argument that is often presented by some people to advocate against money leading to happiness. López and Villardefrancos (2016) examined this issue in-depth in their article by studying compulsive buying in university students and how it affected their mental health. López and Villardefrancos (2016) concluded that “they [compulsive buyers] presented significantly lower levels in self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism” (p.128). Compulsive buying is one of the very few ways that money may actually not bring happiness and instead cause psychological distress. However, this idea should not be used to give people the general impression that money negatively affects happiness as only a small number of people suffer from compulsive buying. Additionally, this issue can be solved if more control and wisdom are incorporated into how the money is spent, thus again proving the point that money does bring happiness if it is spent right. It is just that compulsive buying is not the way to go when trying to use the money to stimulate happiness.

Lastly, money can lead to even more happiness if it is used to pursue hobbies. Hobbies are essential for our mental well being, and having money means it is more likely that we will be able to try out a particular hobby. Money ensures that no financial constraints

stop us from pursuing hobbies that bring us happiness. Pursuing hobbies is much better than spending money on other materialistic things as hobbies give us good memories which are more effective in causing long term happiness than consumer goods. Futrelle (2017) supports this idea in his essay when he states that “doing things can bring us more joy than having things. Our preoccupation with stuff obscures an important truth: the things that don't last create the most lasting happiness” (para.17). Nevertheless, some people claim that those who are wealthy are often very busy people and have many responsibilities, so they seldom have time for hobbies. While this is somewhat true, people must realize that to achieve long-lasting happiness; they need to give more time to hobbies and activities which they enjoy. Money increases the chance of a person being able to partake in an activity they like and hence increases the likelihood of a person being happy.

In conclusion, while some claims of materialism being ineffective in increasing our long term happiness are valid, this does not necessarily indicate that money cannot cause happiness. The ways in which money generates happiness are not limited to providing a luxurious lifestyle or helping us gain materialistic possessions. Although using the money for these things does provide immediate short term happiness, money that is spent wisely on people we love or on things we genuinely enjoy doing provide long-lasting happiness that is more fulfilling.

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## Reflection



### Academic Writing: A Form of Expression

Rashid Al Suwaidi

Academic writing follows a particular style of writing, usually with five paragraphs, with stringent requirements and formal tone. This is the high school definition of academic writing that made me frustrated each time I attempted to write an essay. Nevertheless, the perception towards academic writing changed drastically, once I entered the American University of Sharjah. It took a while for me to understand that the five-paragraph essay format is not what academic writing is about. In fact, writing courses at university made me understand that writing is a process and not an all-nighter task, which becomes monotonous and a forceful project. In particular, this semester WRI 102 helped me learn new genres in academic writing and researching skills.

To begin with, the first assignment of this semester, the critical analysis was quite a challenging task but a refreshing break from the boring definition of academic writing. The critical writing assignment was about analyzing a scholarly journal article to find the strengths and weakness in the author's strategies. During the course of this assignment, I realized that even scholarly journal articles can have flaws and it is essential for us to critically analyze all the information before believing in the reliability of any written piece. In fact, this analysis also taught me the importance of audience and purpose before beginning any written piece. It was during this assignment, when I learned about logical fallacies. I did

not realize how academic writing had different fallacies and how a simple piece of information could just be taken wrong in the way it is phrased. As I applied logical fallacies and found author's bias in the journal article I was analyzing, I properly understood the importance of academic writing, and the blunders that can result from certain approach or format. Further, during this time of coronavirus, with multitude of articles being published daily, it is because of the critical analysis approach that I have moved from believing in every single piece of information. I cross check the information from multiple places about any statistics or interpretations, refer to the original source even if the information I have obtained is from popular newspapers. Thus, academic writing and some genres within it can also help us apply some learning outcomes to our personal life and daily activities.

Furthermore, for the next assignment, a research essay helped me not only learn researching and synthesis skills but understand the importance of cross-cultural communication. This assignment was completed while the whole world was engulfed by the coronavirus situation and students were restricted to online sessions. I believe physical classes may have been more effective, but constant communication with the professor and the availability of peer feedback through online medium was quite helpful. The topic I chose to focus on was cultural intelligence and its application in military operations. Indeed, this writing assignment was tough given the number of secondary scholarly material I had to read and analyze, to locate an existing problem and suggest possible solutions for the same. However, having completed this project, I now realize how documentation of such issues is pertinent to bring to light the problems that can arise by neglecting the importance of cross-cultural communication and understanding. For instance, during this time of coronavirus, countries have closed their borders and a certain sense of animosity has taken over all of us. Many crimes against Asians are being reported, which is a result of low cultural intelligence about the Asian culture. Moving away from the macro aspect of this situation, this assignment made me understand how one must not rely on just media sources for all the information. As I read media articles for my essay, I realized the polarized nature of many of the articles. While, in many scholarly sources, I observed more objectivity and critical analysis, thereby helping me understand the sense of purpose in my own writing style. I found the relevance of using some specific words, which can have more impact on the information being delivered. Further, the problem solution format allowed me to explore my own understanding and provide recommendations with scholarly support, rather than just providing monotonous argument structure to every single topic or idea.

Lastly, with the final assignment, an argumentative essay, I found this essay to be quite creatively formatted. I had never included surveys conducted in this case by the professor in an argumentative essay. It was refreshing to include my personal experiences and those of my colleagues to a topic that is relevant to the students in the present time. In fact, it helped me understand, how online learning has become a problem for many as they approach their exams and assignments. It was through this academic medium that I expressed my views formally and it felt nice to be heard even if it is only by our writing professor. I have realized that emotions can be expressed through academic writing and it is not always a combination of statistics obtained from secondary literature.

Additionally, all these assignments taught me that writing is a process. I ended up drafting different sections for each assignment with breaks in between rather than within a day, in turn allowing me to not feel burdened. Once I finished each draft, I would show it to my cousin who is a literature major and she would proofread to provide feedback. She always provided constructive feedback, which further motivated me to work harder. In fact, given the professor gave us plenty of time to work on essays, I had enough time to complete the

work for other courses. Free flow writing and writing divided over a period of time, made academic writing more fun and productive.

Overall, the writing, critical analysis and reading skills learned during this semester shall be quite helpful for me as I progress into my major classes and approach academic writing as a necessary means for communicating ideas and knowledge, rather than just a compulsory task to be completed for the sake for grades.



## How Important is Academic Writing?

Batoul Ihab

To my younger self,

Although this is only six months into the future, my experience through writing 102 as compared to 101 has changed my view on formal writing drastically in light of the recent pandemic. The 101 course sparked my interest for formal writing, but the requirements for our essays were not as specific as 102. The activities and essays we worked on developed my skills as a critical reader, thinker, and writer, which is of high importance in today's fast paced world where most communication occurs online. 102 had a strong focus on applying critique principles, which allowed me to provide a deeper insight to my papers and their main ideas while remaining focused. The sudden shift to distance learning during the pandemic came as a shock to us; we suddenly had to express all our concerns to our professors and deans online effectively. This was the moment I became grateful for my formal writing courses, with everything I learned in 101 and developed in 102.

Prior to the critical essay, we were introduced to many different logical fallacies that authors may commit in their writing and discussed the article in class in a completely different perspective; one I have not considered before. In the past, I perceived a critique to

be a simple examination of the negatives. To my surprise, being a critical reader and thinker requires critiquing the positives too. Upon learning these aspects and analyzing the article, I came across multiple fallacies I would have never identified in the past or been familiar with had I not been introduced to them in 102. It highlighted the importance of formal writing to maintain credibility in the future by considering each article in more depth. I, as a university student who might pursue a career as a professor and write research papers in the future, am required to establish my credibility in my writing. Otherwise, my work could be disregarded or deemed unreliable. This was emphasized further when examining sources for my research paper and writing the annotated bibliography. Previously, our sources were more flexible. I could simply google my topic, find information to support my paper, and work on my essay. In this course, we were introduced to the library website that provides thousands of peer-reviewed articles that can be specific to any topic once narrowed down on the search engine. The articles, being peer-reviewed, ensured the integrity of the authors and their work, which is extremely relevant in a research paper. This intense focus exemplified the level of critical reading and thinking I should possess when reviewing the validity of articles and authors. Thus, to get my point across efficiently and enlighten my readers, I have to utilize reliable sources to get my point across; otherwise, it would reduce my credibility as a writer.

When we switched to distance learning in the pandemic, it resulted in a barrier when communicating with my professors and deans. Face-to-face office hours were not available anymore, and our main form of communication was through emails. From a professor's perspective after the shift, they received an increase in student emails which is a strenuous task. It was my job as a student to navigate my way through a clear and focused email that discussed my main question adequately to receive priority when professors respond. This proved to be difficult in the beginning as I never took emails seriously. As the semester progressed, I got a deeper insight on how my skills as a critical writer require my work to keep the primary topic at the core of my ideas. This enables my readers to not lose track of my focal point, which was vital when writing emails to express my questions and concerns, especially when the strict examination rules were implemented. In an attempt to change these rules, this technique was prominent in getting my point across to the dean of CAS, which allowed some rules to become flexible. The heavy reliance on online communication required my skills as a critical writer to ensure the process of effective and formal communication.

Like many other students, prior to this course and the pandemic, I did not think academic writing was significant. APA rules were too confusing, some assignments were uninteresting, and it felt demanding when trying to balance it out with my other courses; in my opinion, this is the main reason students disregard its importance. Formal writing, when you have a passion for the topic discussed, could be one of the most enjoyable writing processes. Does it have to follow APA guidelines and be error free? Definitely, because in my experience when writing the research paper and examining many articles, I realized the immense effort contributed by the authors in their studies. They deserve to receive credit where its due which is why APA citations are vital, and this further establishes my credibility by being honest with my readers and not claiming others' ideas as my own. However, it is not limited to these factors; achieving a high level of academic writing is necessary, whether it is for university courses or communicating in jobs.

Academic writing is known to be formal to fulfill educational requirements but does not mean it has to be boring. Its vital for students aiming to progress their careers in the future and is definitely a skill employers will look out for when it comes to communicating with business partners. So, to Batoul in writing 101, hang in there because you are about to explore a whole new perspective in writing 102.

Batoul Ihab



### **Diary Entry: Reflections on My Writing Journey**

Gouthami Pillai

Dear Diary,

I haven't written in here in so long – but don't worry, I've been keeping up with my writing. I took up an Academic Writing course this semester at university, so I've been doing my fair share of writing. I'm nearing the end of my semester though, so there's only one final assignment for the course, and then I'm done. My, what a whirlwind of emotions this semester has been. About two months back, the situation with COVID-19 got pretty bad, so my university decided to cancel regular classes and shift to online learning for three weeks. Initially, I was pretty excited to get a break from the busy university life, but that all changed pretty soon. The situation worsened, so online classes have been extended until the summer semester. It's pretty lonely being in quarantine, honestly. I miss the chaotic fun that came along with university life, meeting up with my friends, and I didn't think I would ever say this – but I miss attending classes as well.

The shift to online classes was pretty rough at first. It was hard to stay motivated to study from home and it became quite difficult to stay on top of my academics. But over time, the professors helped us ease into it. There's definitely a lot more spare time – though I can't say my productivity has increased. However, this time has allowed me to get back into reading for pleasure. Back in university, I was so flooded with events and activities that I barely had time to read. But now that I'm back at home, I have had a chance to catch up on all the books that were collecting dust on my bookshelf. I noticed something quite strange while reading – I now tend to carefully skim through the text, attempting to analyze the

writer's tone and critique the writing. I think I owe it to the writing course I enrolled in this semester; I grew and learned a lot more than I thought possible.

Going into the course, I was quite nervous, considering that I was still an amateur when it came to academic writing. However, as we progressed through the semester, I discovered that it required me to simply fine-tune my analytical thinking skills. We had great discussions in class which helped mold the base for every assignment. I think my favorite one we worked on was the research paper. We began working on it around the time online classes began, and yet the transition into the assignment was seamless. Since we were given the liberty of choosing our sub-topics for the essay, I chose a business theme to focus on. As owning a business is an ambitious dream of mine, I really enjoyed researching and reading about the topic.

The course taught me quite a lot, but I think the most important thing I learned was the importance of crediting the original innovator. Back in high school, I used to resort to simply copying information off the net, giving little regard to referencing the original authors. Now, I find myself being cautious while researching, ensuring that the sources are reliable, and giving references where necessary. Additionally, I find myself much more capable while writing formal emails. I applied for a couple of summer internships this year, and writing out emails was a lot easier. This was a pleasant surprise – I didn't imagine the impact the course would have on my professional aspects. I have to say, my outlook on academic writing has completely changed. It is not as restrictive as the name might suggest, instead it is simply a more formal mode of writing incorporating well-supported facts. I'm really looking forward to my ENG204 course in the spring.

Well, I've taken up too much time now – I have to get back to my writing assignment. It's a reflective assignment, which honestly seems quite fun. I get to evaluate my personal involvement over the duration of the course – quite like what I did in this journal entry actually. I might just send this in as my assignment.

Signing Off,  
Gouthami



## **My Journey with WRI102**

Virgin Attala

### **INTRODUCTION**

After successfully but difficultly going through my first semester in AUS and in WRI101, I was truly concerned and anxious about my second semester and all the courses that I'll have to enroll in, including WRI102. I knew that it's going to be even more demanding and challenging, as naturally the material will get even more complex. However, after undergoing this journey in WRI102, not only did I figure out that writing can be fun, but I also found out that with the right effort, concentration and hard work, this course can be manageable, even online. Although, this course was not an easy one, specially through these hard times, but all the many reading assignments, discussion posts and activities, helped me in managing my time, in producing multiple drafts and in truly understanding the material, to be able to develop successful and effective papers. Moreover, as we went deep in the semester, the course and the written assignments became less concerning. I will be dividing this paper into 3 units; each division will include the outcomes of its journey and its final paper. Every single unit in this course allowed me to gain a mass of knowledge and skills. Such as, analyzing the writing used in my disciplinary, researching and providing evidence, and developing an argument based on a specific rhetoric situation.

### **UNIT 1**

For this unit's final paper, we had to write a disciplinary arguing assignment involving the writing used in our disciplines. We started off by understanding audience, context and purpose, how arguments have to differ and be specific to different audiences, in order to meet the purpose of the written material. In this unit we had to complete a number of activities and discussion posts in order to recognize the different variations of writing used in different disciplines. This unit also covered many reading assignments, including the work of the linguist Ken Hyland and Marina Bondi about disciplinary discourse. Because of those readings, I now understand the meaning of disciplinary discourse; that "it provides a principle

way of understanding how meaning is produced in interaction and proves useful in identifying how writers' rhetorical choices depend on purposes, setting and audience" (Hyland, 2006, p. 20). This was crucially important for me to learn, as before this assignment it never really crossed my mind how writing is important in my discipline as a design management student. As I mentioned in my final paper for this assignment, "I now know for a fact that strategies and language have to be studied in order to interest specific audiences, and that there is no "one size fits all." Thus, I now truly believe that "experience can impact our language choices" (Hyland and Bondi, 2006, p. 8)."

In addition, in this unit we took a questionnaire about plagiarism. My definition of plagiarism has greatly changed. At the beginning of the semester, on the questionnaire, I wrote that plagiarism is "when work is copied in the same exact way, or when a student uses work they didn't write themselves." However, being at the end of the semester, I now know for a fact that this is not alone what plagiarism is about. Many more factors can determine if the work is plagiarized or not. For instance, plagiarism is also using someone else's hard work and time without crediting them, or even using the sequence or ideas of someone else's work.

## UNIT 2

The second unit of the semester was a huge transition, physically and educationally. Having to go from real life classes to virtual classes was not easy, it was a challenge. However, I like to think that it's a challenge that made me work harder and give in more effort.

In this unit, our final written assignment was a research paper. We started off by individually choosing a title for our research paper, and to be able to choose a title that I'm personally interested in was truly exciting and motivating. We then went on completing a number of activities and discussion posts to first learn how to correctly use APA, how to correctly reference, how to use in-text citation in the right way and how to research scholarly articles or any published source needed for the research paper. Generally, all activities done were extremely helpful, but three of them truly mattered with me. They were the "reading a scholarly article" activity, the "using citations" activity and the in-class activity when we got the chance to learn the correct way of searching our chosen titles on WorldCat, as without those certain activities I still would have been so overwhelmed and confused by this assignment. In addition to the final research paper, we also had to develop a research log and an annotated bibliography. This was helpful in many ways, as having a research log made it easier for me to remember why I chose a specific article, and how this article added or changed to my understanding of my research topic. This was easier than just going back and reading the whole article again. Furthermore, citing the articles in the research log while writing the research paper was very useful, as I could search up the articles I chose easily. Also, developing an annotated bibliography was very beneficial, it kept me focused on my research question, as I constantly got back to it to read the summaries of the articles I have chosen to use. In the beginning, this assignment seemed so unmanageable in every way possible, but with your help professor I was able to gather and benefit from the numerous ideas I had roaming around in my head for my research question, "what are the gender differences when considering rape victims in society?" A part of your comment on the paper was, "I still think that there is so much more to write about the issue as it's so complex--even more so than you demonstrated in the paper. I'm sure you'll keep thinking about the issue!." Due to your comment, until now, I still try to get more educated about the issue and I also still think of ways to further develop my paper.

### UNIT 3

In this unit we had to write a rhetorical situation analysis and a letter to the editor of an individually chosen publishing source. This assignment builds on the previous assignments, as we had to include everything that we have practiced throughout the semester. Having to incorporate my research paper and what I have learned about context, purpose and audience from the first assignment, all in one paper was not an easy task. Also, compared to the last assignment, we had such short time to write this paper, making this unit's final assignment even more challenging.

At first, we had to start with completing a draft of the rhetorical situation analysis intended for our letter. This was very important to do before starting to write the actual letter, as it set a goal and a plan for the final draft. After deciding on the topic of the letter, I was able to establish its context and the purpose. Then I had to determine the beliefs and underlying assumptions of particular audiences, to be able to figure out the right strategies and language to be used, in order to make an effective argument. The discussion posts we have done were helpful in many ways, as they allowed me to understand the different points of views that were coming from my peers about my topic, which helped establish the strategies to be used.

Similarly, the readings and activities we have done during this unit were also extremely beneficial. Specially, the "keep it short" reading, as I found it very challenging to stick with the 250-word count for the letter. This reading helped me in understanding that "a sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts" (Heitman, "Keep it Short," 2014), as to make every word count. Although, I reached to 404 words, but I felt that it was significant for the amount of information that I had to portray in my letter. Overall, this assignment was very interesting, as it educated me on how to link my strategies and languages to the audience targeted, to be able to convince the readers of the issue discussed.

### CONCLUSION

All in all, I believe that my journey with WRI102 was incredibly effective in every way possible, as this course allowed me to gain so much knowledge that I will be able to benefit from in the future. Such as, learning new persuasion skills, as being a design management student requires the ability of coming up with successful arguments and writing convincing proposals. Similarly, this course also helped me in understanding and educating myself about the writing used in my discipline. In addition, because of this course I'm now confident and familiar with using APA. This will definitely be helpful for my future, as being a designer requires citing the sources that I have used to get inspirations from using APA. Therefore, my experience with WRI102 will certainly be beneficial for my future in many different ways, and because of being able to choose topics that I'm interested in exploring, writing has become a practice that I look forward in developing my skills in.

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## Reflecting on a Living Nightmare

Lamya Al Suwaidi

If somebody during 2019 told me that within a couple of months a pandemic would cause the whole world to lockdown, I wouldn't have believed them. It has only been about two months in lockdown, but it feels they had lasted an eternity. I've lost track of time and started counting by the weeks rather than days. Our responsibilities as a global community are becoming clearer by the minute. It feels like the world has come to a halt, yet we're all trying to force it to move forward. The simple things we took for granted have become bittersweet memories. This surreal pandemic has not only affected my life as a student but as a member of my family and as a member of society.

I already found that coping with all my assignments and exams would be difficult before this pandemic, but this situation raised the difficulty level to whole other level. As a CAAD student, my grades practically rely on using feedback on both my projects and my peers' projects to help improve my skills. However, it has been extremely difficult to replicate the studio environment while studying at home. Back at the beginning of March, we were assigned a two-part project called the 'Skin and Bones' project. While we had started the 'Skin' before the lockdown, we were left to do the 'Bones' during the lockdown.

Although the projects were supposed to be integrated within each other they felt disconnected, not just physically, but psychologically. There was a significant difference when approaching an assignment with sufficient feedback versus only a couple of comments. I realized that I had to work harder in order to compensate for not being in the studio every day. Other than feedback, I also felt like I was more productive working at home, but not as satisfied or happy as when I would work in the studio. When I would enter university, I always felt like the place was alive and bustling with students eager to work. Instead of being able to alternate between working and socializing, I was confined to my desk for hours trying to complete my assignments one after the other. It felt like an endless stream of work and all I could wonder was when I'd be able to take a break. Despite the fact that it kept me busy, all I could wonder was I remember going to university on a rainy day before the lockdown was in effect so that I could buy supplies for the rest of the semester. Seeing the entire place dark and empty made me realize how much I truly miss university. I hate waking up early, but I'd gladly wake up as early as dawn just to go back once more. If I could go back in time, I'd definitely hug my friends harder than I did.

I think the most important thing I realized during this quarantine was how important it is to take care of myself and the people around me. My family's lifestyle has changed, both for the better and the worse. Luckily, we've been able to adjust when it came to working at home and making sure we were all following our lifestyle before the situation as closely as possible. Since my brother is also learning from home, I've been able to help him with his schoolwork. I don't usually see my family on weekdays because I usually spend the majority of my day in university, so it's nice being able to check up on them whenever I want to. However, it has been really difficult when it came to keeping in touch with our relatives. Because all our at-home schedules have merged with our work schedules it has been troublesome trying to find times when we could phone each other. Before the lockdown, most of my relatives and my family would all meet up at my grandfather's house on Fridays to chat and connect. During this time, fear has become overpowering and all we need is reassurance. I definitely used to take those gatherings for granted because now all I want is to hug all my relatives once more. The most simple act of love and reassurance, a hug, is impossible now. This quarantine has made it practically impossible to leave the house thanks to the strict restrictions put in place. I've only left my house once and that was to go to the doctor since I was feeling unwell. I don't think I'll ever forget the sight I saw once we made it to the parking across the street from the doctor's office. Every single person walking around was wearing a medical face mask, but you could see the sadness and weariness in everyone's eyes. I've been going to the same doctor for years and parking across the same exact street, but this sight was unfamiliar and unsettling.

This quarantine has provided me with more time to think about myself as an individual and a part of society. I understood the importance of self-care and responsibility during this challenging time. There have been so many moments where I would just pause and reflect on what was going on. I realized that life stops for nobody, so I should make the most of every single moment. I overworked myself both last semester and during the beginning of this semester, but I realized how important breaks were. Usually, I'd have absolutely no time to take breaks because being at university requires me to constantly be working. Taking a break and doing whatever was on my mind, however, has been a great way for me to destress. I went back to playing the piano, which is something I haven't done in years. I also rekindled my passion for writing short stories and drawing portraits. This time has been really difficult, but we must push through spend our time wisely. Instead of sitting around and sleeping all day, I've used every moment I could to be as productive as possible.

I've had one reoccurring thought during this entire quarantine; When is this all going to end? It might be more weeks, potentially months, and hopefully not years until this whole situation is nothing but history. Even if we go back to our typical lives, it'll be drastically different than what it was before. This pandemic has been a lesson and a worldwide reality check that has taken over our lives. Even though it has been difficult to cope, the only thing we can do now is keep moving forward and do our very best to stay safe.