The Sosland Journal
2020

A Journal of Student Writing

Mary Henn, Editor
Anna Stokes, Asst. Editor

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Editor's Note

This issue of *The Sosland Journal* has been cultivated in an unprecedented time, especially in the world of academia. COVID-19 has affected individuals and communities across the globe, and our campus community at UMKC has seen drastic changes in student life and learning practices. Still, students at UMKC, as this issue of *The Sosland Journal* proves, have found ways to maintain their commitments to learning, achieving, and performing as ethical citizens. This year has also been impacted by the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter Movement. I would like to use this space to state that *The Sosland Journal* stands with the movement and the black community at UMKC and elsewhere.

The following pages include the work of twelve talented writers who have demonstrated their dedication and commitment to writing, research, and academic scholarship during this difficult year. From discussion of Netflix's *Tiger King* to consideration of automobile advertising during the pandemic, this issue of *The Sosland Journal* offers student scholarship on literature, pop cutlure, art, science, and current events. It is my hope that such scholarship will spark classroom discussions, both virtual and face-to-face. As in previous issues of *The Sosland Journal*, this issue also offers discussion questions related to content and style after each essay. As well as encouraging discussion, the essays here can be used to consider the strategies and techniques employed by the writers of this issue.

In addition to the print edition, the current and back issues of *The Sosland Journal* can be accessed online through our website home: info.umkc.edu/sosland_journal/. If you have comments or ideas about ways to make *The Sosland Journal* more instructive and accessible, please feel free to reach out to the editorial team via email at soslandjournal@gmail.com.

The Sosland Journal is made possible through the support of Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family, whose generosity supports a number of programs and awards at UMKC. The editorial staff of *The Sosland Journal* is also grateful for the direction and support of Interim Director of Composition, Dr. Crystal Doss. Dr. Doss has supervised the production of *The Sosland Journal* with care for the last two years.

I am personally indebted to Brynn Fitzsimmons, former editor of *The Sosland Journal*, for her continued support and assistance in the process of assembling this year's issue. I am thankful for Anna Stokes, whose editorial skills, attention to detail, and overall perspective have also helped make this issue possible.

Finally and most importantly, I want to thank all of the students who submitted to the *The Sosland Journal* this year, despite challenges faced in their personal and academic lives. I have felt a sense of privilege and renewed hope reading new student writing over the last few months. The commitment to academic achievement and progress displayed in the following pages is noteworthy. If you are reading this year's issue of *The Sosland Journal*, thank you—I wish that you too will share a feeling of hope in reading the essays.

Sincerely,
Mary Henn
Editor, *The Sosland Journal*

Essays

Intermediate Category Winner

Psychosis in Surrealism: A Review of "Three Drops of Blood"

Anahid Shook

Stories about the mentally compromised are sometimes told with a flourish, enticing the reader with thoughts boarding on whimsical or the opposite extremity—dark and cruel. The idea is to draw the reader into a realm where common sense does not prevail, and encourage them to seek alternative meanings to symbols or events as perceived by the ill character. Recent studies have shown that schizophrenic hallucinations in particular are dependent upon situational and cultural background (Banerjee). The story "Three Drops of Blood" begins with the narrator, Ahmad, exhibiting common behaviors associated with schizophrenia, disbelieving or questioning whether he was ever truly delusional. He proceeds to compare himself to other patients that are more outwardly ill and less verbal, as well as those who work in the facility he is incarcerated in. Throughout the story, author Sadeq Hedayat uses symbolism to assist the reader through Ahmad's madness.

In "Three Drops of Blood," Hedayat uses symbolism to tell the story of Ahmad's daily life in the mental institution. Ahmad begins the story by speaking about those who run the institution and its constituents, which then progresses to memories of his ex-fiancée, Rokhsareh, and his old neighbor friend, Siyavosh, who does not visit him anymore. Roksareh is mentioned at the top of the narrative as someone who is not present in Ahmad's visions, when in fact she is referenced in visions in the form of a cat who is promiscuous, yet dedicated to a single tomcat. Alternatively, Siyavosh is fondly spoken about often when Ahmad remembers his time before his incarceration in the mental institution, depicting him as a favored friend with whom he spent time in college. Ahmad, throughout the story, portrays himself as a neutral party and as someone without ulterior motives. It soon becomes apparent that Ahmad uses other characters in his hallucinations to depict his darker thoughts and murderous intentions. In the end, the story becomes difficult to discern while Ahmad speaks in ways that are common to persons diagnosed with schizophrenia. At some point, the reader realizes that Ahmad's fiancée, Roksareh, had an affair with his best friend, Siyavosh, and that Ahmad has actually been incarcerated at the mental facility for multiple years. Hedayat leads the readers through Ahmad's schizophrenic mind using symbols such as cats, guns, the tar, birds, and specifically, three drops of blood.

A symptom of schizophrenic disorders includes severe paranoia, which Ahmad displays when he expects the physician to attempt to poison him. Delusions of grandeur or superiority, depending on interpretation, are also exhibited in the same breath when Ahmad criticizes the physician's technique of patient care and treatment, stating, "If I were [the physician], I'd give everyone poison in their dinner one night, and then, in the morning, I'd stand in the garden with my hands on my hips and watch them carry out the corpses" (Hedayat 94). Obviously, this is not a realistic response to sick patients or treatment, but it hints to how Ahmad views those other patients—below him and of no consequence if they were to be disposed of. Another delusion involves some narcissism: Ahmad claims that a young girl obviously likes him and brought flowers for him when another patient, Abbas, swept through and pulled the young girl away to kiss her. It is up to interpretation of the reader whether Abbas was a fabricated personality of Ahmad and if the family that the girl belonged to was indeed his own (Hedayat 96). Hedayat finely illustrates skimming the line between the diagnosed symptoms of schizophrenia and an imagined disbelief of reality using symbolism in his characterization of Ahmad.

Immediately, one of the first symbols introduced to us is the theme of the cat. Ahmad notes that the warder—the physician who runs the mental hospital—has lost his canary from the cage outside of his window to a free-roaming cat (Hedayat 95). Throughout the story, Ahmad focuses on the killing of cats by shooting, even though he never admits to harming a cat himself. This may invoke a power fantasy where Ahmad has the power to enact revenge on those who wronged him without allowing himself to be seen as the actual perpetrator. He creates characters that act out in ways that he believes are below him, and thus Ahmad uses characters such as Abbas, the warder, and Siyavosh. It was once believed that having dual personalities was a common symptom of schizophrenia, though current literature explains how dissociative identity disorder and schizophrenia are unrelated mental illnesses (Fischer).

When these multiple different characters kill cats using a gun, Ahmad is always witness and never expresses any emotional attachment or dismay to the murder of these cats. It becomes clear when Siyavosh describes the cat Fifi as having “two big eyes like a made-up woman’s” and how female cats were “cunning, more loving and more sensitive than male cats” that the author has linked felines to women in Ahmad’s mind (Hedayat 97). Siyavosh’s entire speech regarding the nature of female cats could be a possible reference to the unspoken betrayal by his ex-fiancée, Rokhsareh, and her affair with her cousin and Ahmad’s best friend and neighbor, Siyavosh. It is described in the story the differences in Fifi’s sounds, which sounds she uses to call tomcats and her raucous noise while she and her beau engage in coitus. When the sounds became too much, Siyavosh tells Ahmad in his speech that he shot and killed Fifi’s beau

(Hedayat 98). As Siyavosh finishes, he tells the tale of how he could not get any sleep because the ghost of the dead tomcat called for Fifi. There is a deep unsettling theme of an implied murder fantasy in the speech of how Fifi is described as loving one moment, cruel and cold while playing with a mackerel head the next moment, and full of sadness and despair after the murder of her tomcat. Ahmad listens to Siyavosh tell the tale of killing the ghost of Fifi's tomcat (Hedayat 100). Yet, it seems that Ahmad has been haunted by the sounds of Rokhsareh and Siyavosh's lovemaking, which in his mind translates to the sound of Fifi and her lover in the night. Connecting the shootings of the tom to how Ahmad feels about the affair may imply that he would enjoy murdering Siyavosh, regardless of how much of a friend Ahmad considers him to be. However, in many scenarios that Ahmad experiences, he is akin to a bird instead.

When Ahmad interprets the events and stories surrounding him through the interactions of his characters, there is a constant reference to a "Bird of Truth"—a screech owl (Hedayat 95). In The Orange Fairy Book, there is a story with the same title, "The Bird of Truth," translated as an 18th century Spanish fairytale, that tells the tale of two young twins, a boy and a girl, who are the long lost children of a king and queen (Lang). In the story, an owl is described as the only bird who can bring good fortune to the boy—now a man—and prove his lineage. In the end of the story, the owl's wisdom proved to be the undoing of a deceitful witch and evil courtiers. The owl told the truth of the children's lineage to the king, and everyone lived happily ever after.

Ahmad links the helplessness of birds to cats to his own unhappiness, and the Bird of Truth from the fairytale is a source of strength in honesty for Ahmad. While he cannot consciously admit it in the story, Ahmad subconsciously feels lied to and betrayed by Rokhsareh. As a result, he harps on the existence of a Bird of Truth who can cry the honesty of the affair to everyone it can reach. Ahmad also links the Bird of Truth to a specific type of owl who is known for its incredibly loud calls, indicating his need for everyone to know the truth. This type of mental tactic is common for many different mental illnesses, including schizotypal personality disorders, by imposing personal struggles or feelings on items or other persons (Carey). His references to birds dying in cages at the claws of free-roaming cats, and being beheaded and played with by feminine felines, point towards Ahmad's feelings of being in a mental institution, waiting to be slaughtered via poisoning, the attempts to silence the truth of the betrayal that had befallen him, and his current mental state post-betrayal. To protect himself, he conjures up the Bird of Truth from the fairytale and the revolver as a form of armament against these undefendable emotions.

It is unclear whether there was an actual physical revolver involved in Ahmad's story, or if it was always a toy to serve his metaphysical needs. It is also unclear as to why a mental institution would have an armed guard, but the first appearance of a weapon of any kind is the gun that the guard uses to shoot a tabby with similar markings to when Siyavosh described Fifi (Hedayat 95). This may indicate an early foreshadowing to how Ahmad feels while incarcerated in the mental ward and at the beginning of his mental break—that he still wishes to enact a revenge plot on Siyavosh, even though the clear thought of doing so never presents itself to the reader.

As the story begins, the reader is lulled into it by Ahmad's narration, casually speaking about his room and his perception of the food, staff, and other patients (Hedayat 93). The killing of the cats with a gun is really the first indication that something is truly amiss in Ahmad's reality. The next mention of a gun happens during the story told by Siyavosh in Ahmad's mind (Hedayat 96). Ahmad claims to have only heard the shot after Siyavosh tried to kill the ghost of Fifi's tomcat. It is explained here that the revolver was used to silence Fifi's lover, but also succeeded in stirring his ghost to mewl every night before being shot again. Again, there seems to be a fantasy of killing the man who betrayed him, his best friend and neighbor, Siyavosh. However, Ahmad may subconsciously believe that the ghost of Siyavosh would haunt him and leave him unable to sleep were he to murder Siyavosh. Yet still, it provides an element of imagining how Ahmad's version of justice would appear. It is interesting that the revolver travels from Ahmad to Siyavosh, and how Siyavosh suddenly goes from wearing no pants to having trousers on in this scene in Siyavosh's room; again, another indication that events are not as they seem.

The final time the revolver is introduced is in a scenery change from Siyavosh's bedroom to Ahmad's room, when his best friend removes the toy revolver from Ahmad's pocket, and calmly shifts topics from the exhausted subject of the three drops of blood (Hedayat 100). This scene hints at another delusion that Ahmad might be suffering from: seeing his toy revolver as an actual weapon. Near the beginning of the story, Ahmad makes note that it has been over a year since Siyavosh has visited him in the institution, making the appearance of the revolver at the end of the story most likely a toy version that Ahmad has deluded himself into believing is real (Hedayat 96 & 100). After disarming him, Siyavosh then asks Ahmad to play the tar.

Up to the end of the story, it is incredibly difficult to follow Ahmad's descent into madness. The instrument, the tar, provides the reader a focus in each scene, appearing almost always in the corner of the room. This may indicate at the end the fact that the entire universe in which the reader experiences Ahmad's reality is skewed or fictitious. As the story progresses, the narration Ahmad provides becomes muddled, and ideas begin to blend together: "This evening I came to get an exercise book from Siyavosh, and we spent a little while taking pot shots at the pine tree to amuse ourselves, but those three drops of blood aren't from the cat, they belong to the Bird of Truth. You know the Bird of Truth took three grains of wheat from a child, and every night moans and moans until three drops of blood drip from his throat. Or else, a cat had caught a neighbor's canary, and was shot for it, then passed by here." (Hedayat 100). This type of disorganized speech is a classic symptom of schizophrenia, often resulting in word salad, tangential or circumstantial speech, derailment, and neologisms (Fischer). Word salad is often a result of multiple linking ideas that continue as a run-on thought. Normally, a person can differentiate and divide their thoughts into common coherent speech. Unfortunately, persons affected by schizophrenia have such rapid thoughts that they lack the ability to communicate them effectively or with any coherency. It is incredibly difficult to follow without knowing the origins of the rapid thoughts, and in "Three Drops of Blood," Hedayat gives the reader a compass—the tar.

The initial introduction to the tar is given to the reader when Ahmad points out that Abbas, his in-patient neighbor, had fashioned himself the instrument out of some wire and a wooden board (Hedayat 96). Ahmad seems to make it obvious that Abbas is slightly off kilter, though he is still within the realm of relatively mundane human interaction. This is interesting, especially if Abbas is considered a character of Ahmad's because of the implication that subconsciously, Ahmad acknowledges something is wrong with Abbas, and therefore, himself. Ahmad then watches as Abbas kisses a young girl that is with a woman and a man who are visiting the mental hospital, and then we never hear another mention of Abbas again. Often, patients who are caught becoming too physical with visitors or other patients are isolated from the population (Rueve 44). It is possible that Ahmad's room change in the beginning of the story and Abbas' violation of institutional rules could be the same incident, but it is worth consideration while operating under the assumption that Abbas is a character made up by Ahmad.

The tar's next appearance happens during the conversation about Fifi with Siyavosh. This scene is a hint that Ahmad's room and

Siyavosh's room are one and the same, as this scenery is repeated twice for each room description: "A few books and school papers were strewn over the table" (Hedayat 97). This scene, as aforementioned, is incredibly long, and telling of the current state of Ahmad's feelings regarding Siyavosh and the affair. This instrument being present in this room represents a character change in Ahmad's world. It is at this point that the reader begins to really question the validity of Ahmad's reality.

A final character change happens at the end, when Siyavosh hands the instrument to Ahmad to recite a poem/song in the presence of him, his cousin, Rokhsareh, and his aunt, Rokhsareh's mother (Hedayat 100). The poem Ahmad recites is the same as the one spoken by Abbas, completing a character change from Abbas to Siyavosh, and finally, to a mad Ahmad.

Ahmad's descent of madness is followed closely by references to three drops of blood. In each scene where the blood is referenced, they are used as a justification that truth and righteousness occurred in each spot. The symbol is first presented in Ahmad's doodle: "Now that I look carefully, after a whole page of doodling all I can read is: 'Three drops of blood'" (Hedayat 93). His obsession grows as three drops of blood appear from what Ahmad believes to be the Bird of Truth confronting the warder in the garden by the tree (Hedayat 95). The same appears in Abbas' poem of woe (Hedayat 95). The symbol appears multiple times during the story told by Ahmad's version of Siyavosh (Hedayat 97 & 100). By the end of the story, Ahmad is so obsessed with the three drops of blood coming from the hoarse screaming of the Bird of Truth that his friends can do naught but amuse him and ploy him to let out some of his madness through poetry and his tar. The poem that Ahmad shares ends with, "Three drops of blood have dripped on the ground" (Hedayat 101). At each of these moments, Ahmad seems to want to justify or ask that there be justification for the situation—for all that has happened to him to have purpose for his reasonless woe. Unfortunately, Ahmad receives the opposite in the very end as he watches his best friend kiss his ex-fiancée.

Ahmad's narration clearly depicts his mental illness in a way that allows the reader to have insight into his disorganized speech. His mental break can be seen happening slowly over the course of the story, ending with the final blatant betrayal of his ex-fiancée and his best friend. His delusions of grandeur, increased paranoia, and ultracrepidarian views contribute to his skewed view of reality. Ahmad meets almost every criteria for a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia (Fischer). The timeline of Ahmad's story is so skewed, the reader cannot be sure of when the events are occurring—such as Ahmad mentioning it has been a year from Siyavosh's last visit to when Abbas encountered the man and woman with a young girl visiting the institution. Even after that amount of time, Ahmad expresses that he still experiences the past as if it were actively occurring—a blurring of reality consistent with schizophrenia. With the help of the multitude of symbols available for the reader to follow, Ahmad's short word salad is explained by the thoughts and memories of his previous life. Hedayat's symbolism in "Three Drops of Blood" indicates Ahmad's needs, character changes, unconscious biases, and his failure to obtain justice. Hedayat has done an excellent job taking the reader through the dark downward slope until Ahmad suffers the loss of his final sliver of sanity.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Literature and art often use symbols, metaphor, and non-literal methods to convey meaning. Shook argues that Sadeq Hedayat's "Three Drops of Blood" uses symbolism to convey the life of a man incarcerated in a mental institution. Can you think of other literature or artworks that function in a similar way?

Style

1. How does Shook incorporate secondary sources into her essay?

Ann Radcliffe and the Rationalized Ending

What it Teaches Us About Contemporary Horror

Audrey Seider

There is one genre of entertainment that has remained relatively unchanged in its creepy aesthetic of dark forests and shadow-filled manors. The Gothic genre has grown considerably from its early conception in literature. There is now a significant amount of other media such as films and television shows that are labeled as Gothic. While these mediums have moved into the modern age, the basic concepts that make up a Gothic work have remained relatively unchanged. There are a few common elements of what can be considered Gothic; namely, a large house with East Asian-inspired architecture holding a dark mystery, a distressed heroine trying to solve the mystery, and general confusion of what is real and what is a torture of the mind. Ann Radcliffe incorporates all these elements in her genre-defining novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, a story in which the protagonist Emily St. Aubert is trapped within the walls of a dark castle. While being occupied in trivial drama, the story is also plagued by repeated and seemingly unexplainable supernatural occurrences. While this novel is from a much different time period than today, the same elements of terror are also present in more modern horror films.

In recent years, the genre of horror has become applicable to all films or books that evoke fear or disgust. Radcliffe rejected the idea of her books being considered horror and instead likened them to the definition of terror. Her strategy of writing evokes traits of the supernatural, such as a veiled portrait which houses a curse, or a horrific corpse concealed behind a curtain. After these traits are played out to successfully frighten the reader, she gives a rationalized explanation of the corpse being made of wax. By many critics, this strategy was an unpleasant way to cheat the reader out of getting frightened (Black 149) . However, the reception of these types of storylines are not the same today. In 2016, the horror-thriller film *The Boy* received generally positive reviews for its clever storyline and innovative plot. In brief, a young woman named Greta is left alone in a large mansion to serve as the nanny to a boy named Brahms. The twist is Brahms is actually just a life-size doll, which she is forced to treat as a real child. Several supernatural events occur within the story: doors open and slam on their own, items belonging to Greta seemingly disappear while no one else is in the house, and so on. However, at the climax of the film, all these events are explained away as—spoiler warning—the activity is actually caused by a man who lives in the walls. This film takes the general structure of Radcliffe's novel and slightly subverts it to fit the modern audience's taste in horror, which is to add an additional threat of a terrifying man who lives in the walls.

The method of terror with an aspect of realism that Radcliffe laid out has proven to be popular in modern horror, in fact it might be the preferred. *Brahms: The Boy II* came out earlier this year and proved to be an absolute flop in theaters. While most of the production team was the same as the previous movie, it appears the decision was made to completely disregard the anti-supernatural approach that was revealed in the first film. The doll, Brahms, turns out to be possessed by a demon intent on destroying people's lives. According to one review, the movie is subject to overall bad performances by the actors, but the most disappointing aspect is that the film undermines everything that made the first film great. The stereotypically supernatural aspects seem cheap by comparison (Roberts). After many years of ghosts and demons parading dominance over the horror genre, the prospect of something different was refreshing. Unfortunately, the sequel to The Boy does not live up to this expectation.

The Gothic literature of the Romantic Era foreshadows common traits in more modern adaptations of horror. The first recognized piece of Gothic writing is *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole. When the book was first published, Walpole pretended it actually dated back to the 16th century and was discovered in an abandoned house (Black 152). This, of course, was not true, but might have positively affected the reputation of the novel. Radcliffe sets another of her novels in a similar tone. *The Italian* was framed as "an entertaining artifact of another age and country" (Schmitt 855). In a method similar to Walpole's novel, Radcliffe uses the excitement and intrigue that exists in the prospect of reading about an exotic place to add uniqueness to her novel. While it can be assured that the ending will turn out quite logically, the appeal of the book comes from untangling the web of terror Radcliffe puts forth.

There has been an increase of horror genre films that use this trait of false authenticity to further the appeal of their story. Most notable is the *Paranormal Activity* franchise, which stages their films as being found footage believed to be real. In the same way when readers first pick up a copy of *The Italian* or *The Castle of Otranto* expecting an unusual aspect, viewers of the movie franchise are conditioned even before seeing the film to believe that the horrors shown are real. Not only does the franchise promote false authenticity, it also incorporates "clever filmmaking and a fear of what is not shown" (Ryan). This is accomplished by a unique method of not giving the viewer a physical entity to be afraid of. Instead it uses effects that stimulate fear and uneasiness, such as cabinets swinging open on their own or characters running from some unseen force. Within Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, she incorporates actions that stimulate fear. When Emily asks why the veiled picture cannot be shown, the maid responds, "I have heard there is something very dreadful belonging to it—and that it has been covered up in black EVER SINCE" (Black 158). In this passage, nothing is shown except a quiet exchange in the candlelight, but the implied fear that comes through the passage is enough to intrigue the reader. This same concept is sampled heavily in contemporary horror films and other media. The Gothic genre might not be as prevalent in our culture as before, but the classic themes in the genre are constantly recycled in multiple media.

It's hard to say if Ann Radcliffe would have approved when common themes in her books show up in our modern movies alongside the plethora of jump scares and gore we have become so accustomed to. She approached her method of terror in a very slow burning, methodical way that focused on coming full circle in explaining away the fears she put in her stories. Nowadays, the preferred method of horror is much more intense and faster paced. However, it appears there might be a resurgence in the rationalized side of horror, perhaps favoring a more realistic approach rather than the ghosts and demons that for so long dominated the horror field. The elements of the Gothic have for many years held at least a niche in our society's awareness, especially when it comes to horror. It can undoubtedly be said that at the basic level, the effects of horror in a book or movie have been much the same for hundreds of years.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Seider references the Paranormal Activity and Brahm films within her discussion of modern horror stories versus the Gothic. Can you think of additional contemporary horror films that either allude to or evade the Gothic genre?
2. Consider Seider's statement: "Viewers of the [*Paranormal Activity*] movie franchise are conditioned even before seeing the film to believe that the horrors shown are real." Can this be extended to other films in the horror genre? How do trailers, posters, and other forms of movie advertising build up viewer expectations in the horror genre?

Style

1. Try reverse outlining Seider's essay. What does the activity reveal about her organizational methods?
2. What does the incorporation of The Italian and The Castle of Otranto add to Seider's discussion of Gothic literature and The Romantic Era?

The Balance of Realistic and Sterotypical Portrayals of Homosexuality in Media

Morgan Rogers

Media is full of interesting topics that are presented in devices like radio, television, books, music, etc. It opens a world where unique cultures and ideas can come together to create new content. Gay people are portrayed in many ways including being put into stereotypical roles, as in the show *Will & Grace*, or being put into more realistic scenarios such as in the movie *Moonlight*. A wonderful and meaningful graphic novel, *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel, gives a semi-autobiographical story about how Alison, the author, grew up in a family with a closeted gay father as well as her own self-discovery of being a lesbian. *Fun Home* and *Moonlight* portray some of the struggles of LGBTQ identities and can be thought of as more realistic interpretations of what being gay is like. Comedy shows like *Will & Grace*, on the other hand, portray homosexuality in a humorous, stereotypical way. Media in the United States gives a variety of views on homosexuality and both the realistic and stereotypical interpretations of gays are important for the reduction of homophobia and giving the LGBTQ community a more accurate representation in media.

There are so many devices that provide media in the United States today including televisions, cellphones, radio, and books, and all of those devices provide ways for people to express emotions and views whether it be harmful or not. Media has come a long way since the early 20th century due to technological advancements and the overall growth of connection between everyone. Televisions and cell-phones have made it possible for someone to connect to anywhere in the world, which has paved way for more unique and diverse content in media. Even though media is becoming more diverse and open to the inclusion of marginalized groups, there comes with it good and bad media representations. "Good media" has no discrimination and promotes the acceptance of minorities, while "bad media" uses harmful language to minority groups and overall depicts them as something less than another people. Both types of content, however, are important to the growth and improvement of how minorities are portrayed in media.

An example of good media would be Alison Bechdel's graphic novel, *Fun Home*. Bechdel gives a realistic point of view of what growing up as a lesbian was like for her. With *Fun Home* being a graphic novel, the book provides a lot of visuals that help transport the reader into the book and give them a closer connection to Bechdel's life. In "An Interview with Alison Bechdel," conducted by Hillary Chute, Bechdel explains that, "my research also involved a lot of archival stuff—diaries, photographs. Photographs were a huge resource for me." Photographs and Bechdel's diary were essential to *Fun Home* in making it a true story about growing up with a closeted gay father as well as Alison's self-discovery as a lesbian in a non-accepting family. The drawings of the photographs were actual pictures taken during the time Bechdel was young and living with her family. On page 120 of *Fun Home*, Bechdel is shown holding up a couple pictures of her dad and one of herself when they were both a similar age. Her father, Bruce, is seen in one photo dressed up in women's clothing when he was in college and Bechdel points out that he looks "lissome" and "elegant." There is another photo of him, just after he turned twenty-two, sunbathing on the roof of his fraternity house, and Bechdel questions whether the boy who took the photo was his lover. She then compares the pictures of her dad to the picture of herself at twenty-two, taken by her girlfriend, and suggests that they are not so different (Bechdel 120). Bechdel is not only discovering her father's true self but also the connection she has with him by being gay.

Moreover, Bechdel realizes that this connection can help her better understand her father's sudden and unexpected death after he was hit by a truck. Bechdel does not know if it was an accident or if he committed suicide. Throughout the graphic novel, Alison struggles with the thought that her father died because she came out to him as lesbian. Bruce hid a lot of the struggles he had while being closeted as gay. As an example of how gay men felt during the time Bruce was an adult, *Letters to One: Gay and Lesbian Voices from the 1950s and 1960s* by Craig Loftin, contains many letters written by queer men and women during the 1950s and 1960s. A young man named Richard explains in a letter, "Now I'm nineteen and think that [gay life] is a very happy but lonely life. A lot of times I feel like committing suicide, but I shouldn't be so cowardly as to do anything like that" (Loftin 14). Richard experienced the relief of not hiding his true self, but also criticism for being gay. The dark feelings Richard must have felt led him to wanting to commit suicide but not wanting to seem cowardly. Being a "man" was important to receiving respect back in that time and one can only imagine the struggles Bruce was also dealing with living a heterosexual life and constantly having to push away how he truly felt. He seemed to hang out with young men very often, as Alison mentions a couple of times throughout *Fun Home*. A prime example being the centerfold of the book, which is a picture of Alison's babysitter lying on a hotel bed in only his shorts. *Fun Home* opens itself to a lot of criticism by focusing on homosexuality, but also makes room for a discussion about the reality and hardship of gay experiences. Bechdel gives her audience a realistic view on what growing up gay is—and was—like by providing insight to her father's closeted life and his eventual death as well as providing detailed drawings of her life, not only of herself and her girlfriend when she was in college, but also of her father and the way he presented himself and acted around young men. This graphic novel gives queer audiences something to relate to with Bruce and his experiences by providing non-stereotypical, realistic views of the LGBTQ community, and may also reduce the prejudice some may have towards gay people. *Fun Home*, therefore, falls into the category of good media.

While *Fun Home* portrays a realistic, serious view of homosexuality, other media gives audiences a more stereotypical, light-hearted version of the LGBTQ community, like the sitcom *Will & Grace*. *Will & Grace* originally aired from 1998 to 2006 and featured the first gay leads on a hit American sitcom, Will and Jack. Both men are charming, but Will sometimes tries to pass as straight, while Jack is flamboyant and outgoing with his sexuality. The show received criticism for its stereotypical portrayal of gay characters, but it was very successful overall, and it recently returned with a ninth season in 2017. Even though Will and Jack can seem stereotyped, they are still charismatic and likeable, traits that served to humanize them to a broader audience. Grace, Will's best friend, is straight; this positive relationship between a gay and straight person is a model for viewers who may not have had prior exposure to the gay community. A *Washington Post* article, "'Will & Grace' reduced homophobia, but can it still have an impact today?" references a 2006 study conducted by Edward Schiappa, Peter Gregg, and Dean Hewes that discovered how prejudices were reduced. Schiappa was quoted from his study saying, "For those viewers with the fewest direct gay contacts, exposure to *Will & Grace* appears to have the strongest potential influence on reducing sexual prejudice" (Borden). This study acknowledges that stereotypical portrayals of gays are not all harmful to the community and can even be empowering. *Will & Grace* gives people with few gay contacts a positive outlook on the gay community which reduces sexual prejudice and gives the LGBTQ community more support and friendly connections between straights and gays. Even though *Will & Grace* could be considered bad media, the show still gives the LGBTQ community representation and raises awareness by giving gay actors and characters more prominent roles in media.

The 2016 movie *Moonlight*, an example of good media, tells the coming-of-age story of a gay black man named Chiron. Throughout the film, Chiron struggles with his sexuality and identity as well as with the physical and emotional abuse he experiences from bullies while growing up. Not only was *Moonlight* critically acclaimed, it also won the Oscar for Best Picture with an all-black cast and an LBGTQ-related storyline, paving the way for more LGBTQ representation in media. An article titled "The *Moonlight* Effect" by Tim Stack catalogues how much more media revolving around the LGBTQ community is being released since the opening of the film. The movie *Love, Simon* was released in 2018 and was based on Becky Albertalli's novel, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, about a closeted high school senior that starts chatting online with another gay classmate. Another 2018 movie, *Call Me by Your Name*, focused on a romantic relationship between two young men and was also based on a novel with the same name by Andre Aciman. The current influx of gay films gives the LBGTQ community something to latch onto and gives the rest of the audience a better understanding of what the LGBTQ community experiences and the difficulties they face through life. Tim Stack quotes the director of *Call Me by Your Name*, Luca Guadagnino, in his article: "In general, I hope for better and deeper movies and more earnest movies to be made, whether it's about gay characters or straight characters or bisexual characters. If some-one leaves [*Call Me by Your Name*] feeling the urge to love another person, I think that would be an achievement" (Stark 34). In other words, if there is more representation of all unique groups in the LGBTQ community in media, audiences with similar feelings will be able to relate and spread love and give more people the opportunity to express themselves openly. *Moonlight* was able to give an accurate representation of its gay characters and reach a large audience, which is proved by its successful achievements including high ratings and receiving an Oscar. *Moonlight* paved way for the influx of LGBTQ coming-of-age films which in turn reached an even larger audience and allowed more people to express themselves and feel more comfortable in their own skin.

Even though there is a lot of good media and content being produced, bad media which includes homophobic intentions also exists. Media before the 21st century did not have many coming-of-age stories for LGBTQ teens to relate to like *Moonlight* or *Love, Simon*. According to Blain Branchik, who wrote an article called "Funny, scary, dead: Negative depictions of male homosexuality in American advertising," in 1934, the Motion Picture Association of American began strict enforcement of the Motion Picture Production Code. Branchik states, "The results of the Production Code enforcement included the elimination of all explicit references to homosexuality, use of the terms "fairy" and "pansy" or portrayals of overtly gay or effeminate male characters" (Branchik 528). This code completely cut off the film industry from giving the LGBTQ community any representation but helped catalyze the rise of gay and lesbian activism.

There was a lot of homophobia and negative views presented toward the LGBTQ community in the 20th century. The movie *Cruising* (1980), an example of bad media, was about a serial killer who targeted gay men. The movie overall stigmatized the gay community and presented them as worthless and easy to kill. The horrible portrayals of gays are important to the advancement of the "good" representation of gays in media. Without the "bad" media there would have been no incentive for the gay community to rise and fight for proper representation. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) was founded in 1985 and the group is about promoting gay and lesbian media activism. Vincent Doyle, in his book Making Out in the Mainstream: GLAAD and the Politics of Respectability, points out that the entertainment media director for GLADD, Scott Seomin, has an original poster of *Cruising* in his office as well as a poster of *The Object of My Affection* (1998) which was about the friendship between a straight woman and a gay man and was much less offensive than *Cruising*. Doyle comments on the dichotomy in Seomin's office, saying "Even by GLAAD's definitions of defamation, arriving at positions about cultural texts was never as simple as telling the difference between *Cruising* and *The Object of My Affection*. Positions are intrinsically matters of perspective. They are formed in the process of viewing the world in particular ways and, as such, always produce exclusions" (Doyle 177). Doyle's point is that there are many kinds of good and bad media in the world and that the different perspectives the media provides gives people the ability to exclude the bad media and make room for good media. Homophobic depictions in media have declined since the early 20th century which has in turn opened space for media like *Fun Home*, *Will & Grace*, *Moonlight*, and many others to give their perspectives on the LGBTQ community.

The media in the United States is very diverse and is filled with books, movies, graphic novels, tv shows, etc., and among all of the material and genres provided in American media, some of it presents diverse views on homosexuality and unique stories on how gay people deal with life around them. Media can change people's views on homosexuality by providing realistic and even humorous portrayals of gays. *Will & Grace* made a huge impact by giving their audience lovable gay characters, which changed the views of many homophobes in the *Will & Grace* fanbase despite the fact the gay characters in the show could be seen as stereotyped. *Moonlight* paved way for the acceptance of young gay men as well as the popularity of coming of age stories revolving around the LGBTQ community. Finally, *Fun Home* opened discussion for the issues revolving around homosexuality in family and the acceptance of gay and lesbian family members. Gay and lesbian activist groups like GLAAD would not have risen without homophobia presented in media like the movie *Cruising*. Media can only help curb homophobia when it gives audiences a way of understanding homosexuality through different perspectives, both realistic stories and humorous, light-hearted relationships between straights and gays.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Do you agree with Rogers that “bad” media, like “good” media, can have a positive impact in representing the queer community and other marginalized groups? What examples can you think of that, like Will & Grace, may employ stereotypes while still creating a positive impression of their characters?
2. Think about how media representation around other minority groups has evolved. For example, what are some recent examples of Asian and Asian American characters in TV and movies, and how do these contemporary portrayals differ from Asian representation—or lack thereof—in early film?

Style

1. Rogers nests an example of bad media, Will & Grace, between two examples of good media, Fun Home and Moonlight, respectively. What effect does this strategy have on her argument?
2. How does Rogers utilize secondary sources, and what do they add to her essay?

Differentiating the Benefits and Hindrances of Background Music in Writing

Jesse George

Abstract

A few studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between background music and learning. Although this may allow for better insight into what environments should be created to enhance learning processes, "learning" is a very ambiguous term, a conducive learning environment may look different according to the particular activity. For example, the environment setup and processes an instructor might use to teach an individual how to rock climb or to read a book surely would look a lot different. This research project unveils insight into the dynamic of background music and the writing process. Does background music increase a student's ability to focus while writing? How do the genre, tempo, the person of interest, and other variables alter the effects of background music while writing? Overall, is background music a benefit or a hindrance to the writing process? To address these questions, a survey was conducted to gauge the current feelings and attitudes of college students' opinions on writing with background music. The sample consisted of 50 students from 17 different universities and colleges across the Midwest. This paper uses the survey to confirm and deny some of the current theories

and claims about the effects of background music on the writing process. Beyond the scope of this paper, the results of this study may provide further explanation on how to enhance writing environments in the classroom.

Discussion

In the past 30 years, technology has drastically changed the lives of millions of Americans and many more around the world. From the ability to reach into your pocket to access a plethora of information in search engines, to interfaces allowing video conferencing from different hemispheres of the world, things have certainly evolved. Advancements in technology have altered some of the most integral, ubiquitous practices in life, such as looking for an answer to a question or communicating with a colleague or friend. Because of how common technology has become in American culture, not to mention how quickly it is assimilated into everyday life, it is imperative to understand the implications associated with it. When it comes to music, specifically, advancements in technology have broadened everyone's capabilities to create, listen, and share. It is not uncommon to find someone listening to music in the background on their commute to work, or for there to be different types of background music playing in each store you walk into at a mall. If one cannot say in general that Americans' exposure to background music has significantly increased in recent history, then at the very least, one could say that Americans' access to background music has undoubtedly increased. Moreover, the research surrounding the effects of background music is still in its infancy. Not many definitive conclusions have been reached surrounding the topic, let alone its effects on the writing process.

In a 2005 study, Danhauer and Kemper found that music that was carefully selected can lower stress, enhance feelings of relaxation and comfort, and can act as a distractor to pain. Furthermore, the study linked the heightened state with physical changes in the body such as reduced cortisol levels, lowered amounts of stress administered to the heart, and an increase to the efficacy of the neural and immune systems. A similar study found that classical music and Nasyid, a traditional Malaysian music composed of a cappella and instrumentals, were effective in creating a more relaxed environment (Kadir et al.). It seems as if the general public took studies such as these to confirm the "feel-good" phenomena one can experience when listening to music. Although the results in this section of the review of literature were promising, it is important to note that simply because background music can positively change an individual's feelings does not necessarily mean it will positively affect an individual's performance in writing, or any given activity for that matter.

When considering the effects of background music on the writing process, a process heavily involved with reading, writing, recalling, and rewriting, the tempo of music seems to be a variable of concern. Juliane Kämpfe et al. found that there is a direct correlation between the tempo of music played and the tempo of the behavior exhibited regardless of the activity performed. Kallinen, and later on by Day et al., further confirmed the previous research highlighting slow paced music can decrease the speed and efficiency of reading. However, it seems too early to resolve that slow paced music is only associated with negative implications. In a study performed by Oakes and North, they found that slow tempo music proved the more beneficial condition in advertisement content recall than fast tempo music. Despite the juxtaposing results of the effects of the tempo of music on a variety of activities, it is important to note that there was little difference in the results of advertisement content recall when comparing the slow tempo music condition with the no music condition.

In addition to tempo, the genre of music seems to have an influence on the effects of background music in writing. Mullikin and Henk showed that while reading, between classical music, rock music, and no music, classical music proved better results than the rock music and no music conditions. Freeburne and Fleischer concluded that while listening to jazz music in the background participants exhibited faster reading speeds than listening to classical music. There are even differences in the results of background music within the same genre. Music with lyrics proved much more distracting to learners than instrumental music (Perham and Currie).

The effects of background music in writing not only vary based on song selection, but the individual in question can be an important determination as well. In a study exploring the effects of background music on word processed writing, S.E. Ransdell and L. Gilroy found that participants identified as having a high writing span or having some kind of musical training wrote essays of greater quality and with longer sentences then those identified with a low writing span and no musical training. Furthermore, the study found that the higher quality writers were more likely to pause at clause boundaries than at random points in a sentence. Depending on a writer's understanding and proficiency within a language, those who have a greater understanding may experience a relative increase in writing speed without jeopardizing the quality of writing (Cho). During the actual process of writing, an individual's working memory handles the brunt of the information processing in their brain (Lehmann and Seufert). Furthermore, the study notes that individuals with lower working memories saw a reduction in the quality of their writing while under the background music condition.

As the discussion of the effects of background music continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly apparent there is much more than simply a "feel-good" phenomena occurring. During the writing process, whether the effects of background music are a benefit or hindrance seem at the very least dependent on the tempo and genre of the song selected. In addition to the variability of the song, the person of interest's writing span, musical training, language proficiency, and working memory all seem to play a significant role in the effects of background music on the writing process.

Methods

This study consisted of a comprehensive survey created through Google Forms and was sent out to participants through a web link. The theme and background color of the survey were kept at their default settings, purple, to minimize outside suggestions. The survey consisted of 20 questions: one check box question, nine short response questions, and 10 multiple choice questions. The question and answer selections were carefully worded to be concise and consistent. For example, for questions concerned with frequency, the answer choices remained consistent with the selections being never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, and almost always. All the questions were worded such that the least amount of words was used while attempting to retain the meaning of the question. If further explanation seemed appropriate, additional information was provided in parentheses.

50 participants were chosen at random using a program in Microsoft Office's Excel from a larger tested sample size of 67 students. All the results of the survey were collected from the participants over a 24-hour time period. The randomly selected participants represent 17 different universities across the Midwest coming from Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, and Kansas. However, nearly half of the participants are from the Missouri University of Science and Technology: 24 of the 50 participants. Of the 50 participants, 35 of them are male and the other 15 are female. The participants

are all between the ages of 19 and 24, and either still working towards a degree or just recently graduated. Of the 50, 23 of the participants are studying a discipline within engineering, nine are studying some form of business, nine are studying within healthcare majors, six are studying within life sciences, and three participants were still undecided as to their major.

The ethical considerations of this study were of utmost importance to protect the identity and privacy of each of the surveyed participants. A message was sent out to 250+ different students with a brief description of the survey and how the data was going to be used. None of the data collected, such as personal information for later communication, was used outside the confines of the study. Moreover, the communication and results shared between each of the participants and the researcher were all kept separate. Due to the extraordinary circumstances created by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, each participant took the surveys on a device connected to the internet from remote locations, and all the communication was directed through messaging applications and email to respect social distancing practices.

Results

After a thorough analysis of the survey results, writing in an environment in which background music was playing seems to be the popular option among college students. Of the 50 participants, 31 students, or 62%, at least occasionally play background music while writing in any form. Furthermore, of the 31 students that listen to background music while writing, 12 of them "almost always" listen to background music. For further analysis, reference figure 1 below.

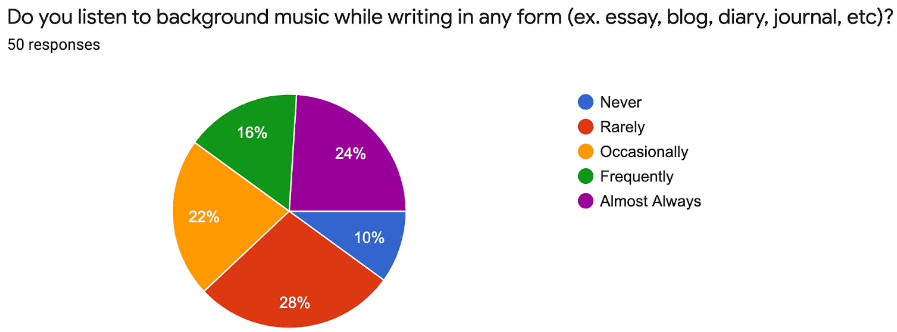

Figure 1.

Although the multiple-choice question in figure 2 isn't referencing just writing when asking why participants choose to have background music playing while completing a task, it was interesting to see the reasoning behind each decision. Furthermore, despite a majority of the participants doing it to improve their mood, there doesn't seem to be any significant trend behind why students listen to background music while doing something. If the participants could not categorize themselves into one of the provided answer selections, then a short response box was given in the next question for further explanation. In figure 2, the "To get me into a rhythm, work wise" answer is reflective of the only participant who chose to explain themselves further.

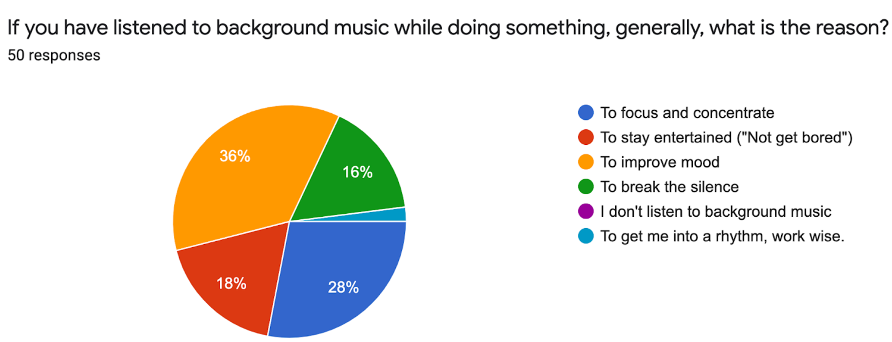

Figure 2.

When the participants were asked what type of background music they listened to while writing, the results varied quite widely. A slim majority, 26 participants, preferred music without any lyrics in classical music (7 participants), instrumentals (7 participants), and lo-fi hip hop (12 participants). As illustrated in figure 3, the other 24 students listened to an assortment of genres, and of those 24 participants, half of them preferred to listen to hip hop/rap music.

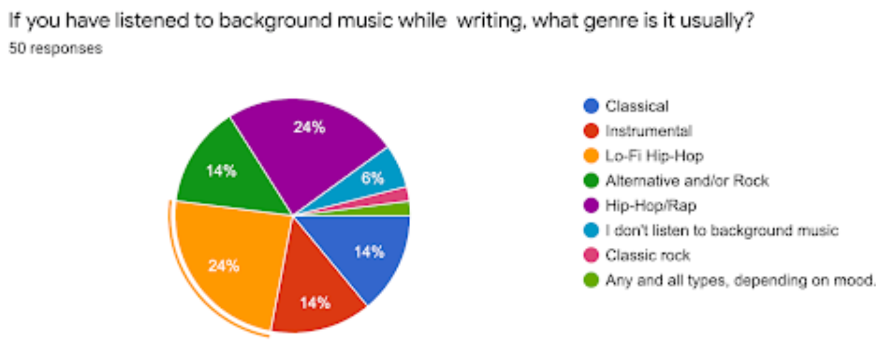

Figure 3.

When participants were asked at what point they listen to background music during the writing process, interestingly enough there seems to be a trend toward reducing the amount of background music participants listened to the further they got into the writing process. Surprisingly, as illustrated in figure 4, only four of the 50 participants stated they don't listen to background music at any point during the writing process.

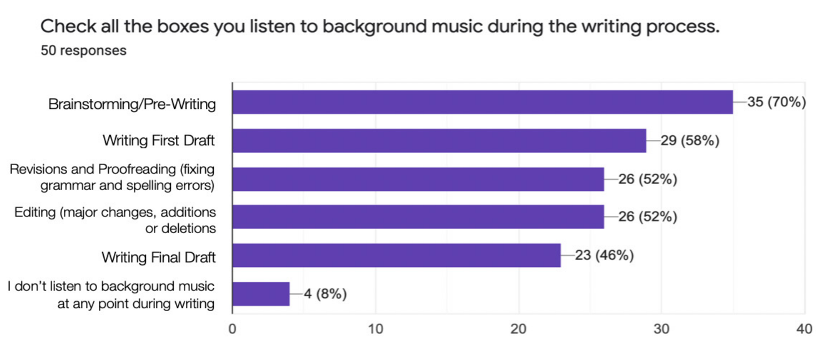

Figure 4.

To gauge how well versed the sample was musically, a question was asked to see if the participants had musical training of any kind. Of the 60% of participants that answered yes, further explanation was required. Most of the participants that answered yes seemed to have a significant amount of musical training, but three of the explanations seemed questionable. One of the questionable explanations stated, "Does playing the spoons count?" and the other two did not shy too far away in terms of validity. After accounting for this error, the participants that have received musical training make up a slightly smaller majority than displayed in figure 5.

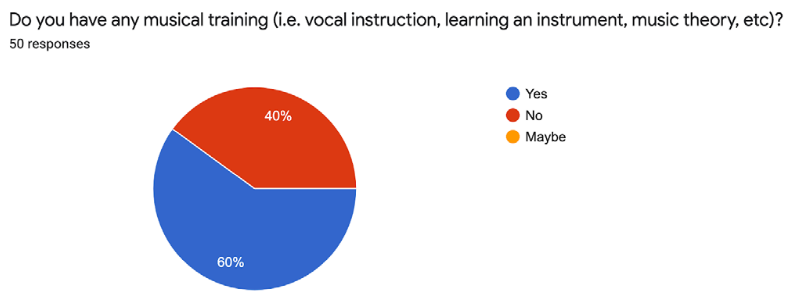

Figure 5.

The very last question of the survey asked if the participant had to write an essay at that very moment, would they prefer to do it with background music or in silence? Looking at the results of figure 6, two out of every three college students would prefer to write an essay with background music.

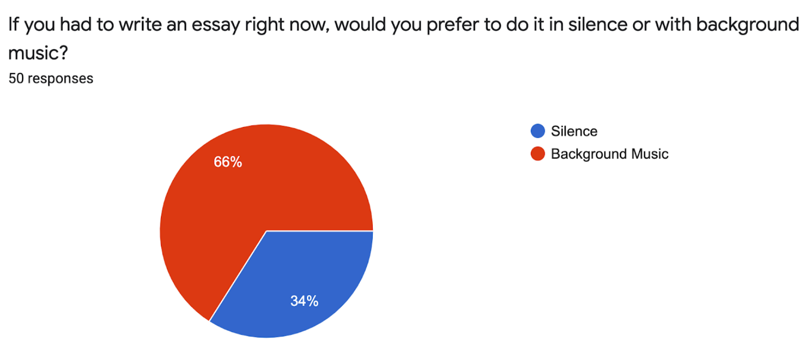

Figure 6.

Conclusions

The inspiration behind this study originated from the common, positive feelings one might experience while listening to the music of their choice. A majority of students' reasoning as to why they listen to background music was to improve their mood. When it comes to writing, college students' thoughts and opinions fell in line with Danhauer's and Kemper's study suggesting people use background music to feel better while stimulated by an activity such as writing. Furthermore, with two out of every three students choosing to write an essay with background music instead of in silence, the survey suggests that listening to background music while writing is a fairly common practice. This is just more reason to differentiate the effects of background music in writing from the simplistic mood-arousal effect (Thompson, Schellenberg, and Husain).

From college students to published authors, it seems like the decision to listen to background music isn't exclusive to writers with less experience. Award-winning American author, writing coach, and public speaker Marylee MacDonald mentions in her article "Music vs. Silence: Does Listening to Music Get in the Way of Writing?" that "Hamam: The Turkish Bath, helped me recapture the sense of strangeness and dislocation… [to] write the stories in my prize winning chapbook, The Rug Bazaar" (MacDonald). After listening to the soundtrack, the music can be described as fast paced. Furthermore, although due to the limited capabilities to accurately track the tempo of music listened to by the participants in the survey, the respective results from the Kämpfe et al. and Kallinen studies in conjunction with MacDonald's professional experience seem to indicate a slightly beneficial effect to writing time when listening to fast tempo music. However, more research is needed to further identify how the tempo of music facilitates its effects on the writing process.

The survey indicated that college students prefer to use background music in the beginning of the writing process, such as the brainstorming and pre-writing phases. However, the survey also displayed that interest in using background music continually dwindled moving further and further into the writing process. That finding is consistent with the findings of Ransdell and Gilroy, which stated that music should disrupt writing because it is interfering with two essential subprocesses to rewriting: reading text and the translation of ideas into text. Furthermore, Torrance and Galbraith conclude that even the best of writers constantly revise their work. Students and professional writers alike change, revise, and edit their work, activities heavily dependent on reading text and translation of ideas into text. Thus, it's more than likely background music tends to be more helpful in the beginnings of the writing process when there is less to reread and revise.

Although studies such as Mullikin and Henk, and Freeburne and Fleischer, suggest some genres of music to be more helpful than others, the findings in this survey don't suggest any preferred music genre over another. Moreover, about half of the participants listened to music with lyrics and the other half did not. If under the assumption each participant only listens to the music they personally think is beneficial during their writing process, then the near 50-50 split should challenge Perham's and Currie's finding of how music without lyrics is more beneficial.

Interestingly enough, those that answered "no" to having musical training in the study also represented a majority of the population that answered "never" and "rarely" when questioned how frequently they listened to background music while writing. In addition to the findings in Ransdell and Gilroy's study, the survey suggests that an individual's exposure to music can be an important determination in whether listening to background music can be a benefit or hindrance. Because of the limitations of the data collection in this study, there is not enough information to make evidence-based assertions as to an individual writing span, language proficiency, and working memory on the effectiveness of background music. Furthermore, studies in the future should take into consideration the tempo and genre of music, musical training, language proficiency, writing span, writing task, and working memory to further centralize the conversation around the effects of background music on the writing process.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Based on the findings presented in George's essay, has your perception of the role of music in learning and writing shifted?

Style

1. George's essay is presented in a scientific research essay format. What are the benefits of that format? How do structure and form in writing affect the way content is percieved by the reader?

Animal Protection

Studying *Tiger King's* Dangerous Actions Against Animals

Gina Dwyer

The year 2020 has already been a whirlwind in just its first few short months. We are currently facing a pandemic unlike any we have seen before, and it is so severe that there are stay-at-home orders across most states in America and in countries around the world. Because people are stuck at home and out of jobs at the moment, one of Netflix's newest documentaries, *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem, and Madness*, has been a sensation. The documentary details the lives of roadside zoo owners and workers, and highlights the laws currently in place when it comes to owning and selling exotic animals. While the main focus of the documentary is Joe Exotic's actions and his rivalry with fellow roadside zoo owners, the truth is, for the most part, glossed over: the exotic animals mentioned throughout the documentary are in danger. Most of the animals in the documentary are critically endangered and there are not many laws implemented to help save them from extinction. Laws currently enacted are not strong enough to help save endangered animals from the peril they are put in, whether by zoos, poaching, or lack of protection. The world needs to do more to save animals from extinction.

Tiger King highlights the ease that exists when it comes to buying tigers in the United States. In episode one of the documentary, "Not Your Average Joe," it is explained that tiger cubs can be sold easily to other people—zoo owners or not—for merely $2,000. Tigers are an endangered species and should have more laws to protect them from being traded to ill-equipped owners. Tigers are not the only endangered animal subject to limited protections. "The Status of Poaching in the United States—Are We Protecting Our Wildlife?" by Ruth Musgrave et al. details the laws for endangered animals in place by the United States, revealing how such laws are enacted, and the effects they have on poaching. It is important to note that Musgrave et al. define poaching as "the illegal taking of wildlife" and this can be alive or dead (979). Musgrave et al. also note that while the federal government have authority to protect certain wildlife species, "It is primarily the states that regulate the taking of wildlife within their respective borders" (978). Because laws can vary across each state, there are inconsistencies. Poachers and other animal traffickers take advantage of said inconsistencies to move animals across the country. This is prominent in *Tiger King* as Exotic and fellow roadside zoo owners and workers sell animals across the United States with no legal issues at hand. In episode six, "The Noble Thing to Do," Exotic has some of his employees transfer animals across the country for a profit. They are able to traffic animals and sell them to other individuals and zoos. The laws do not protect the animals, but in fact, keep the animals isolated and living a life they are not meant to be living. Musgrave et al. highlight that $200,000,000 is made annually in the United States through the illegal taking of wildlife (979). The roadside zoo industry contributes to that $200 million by repeatedly selling their animals across states because they know the ins and outs of the laws.

"The Status of Poaching in the United States—Are We Protecting Our Wildlife?" also considers why poachers poach. There is a common misconception that poachers do not affect wildlife populations. Research shows that when people realized certain fish populations were diminishing, they adopted the "catch and release" method. After implementing the new method, the fish population was raised, proving that poaching does affect animal populations (Musgrave et al. 985).

More research conducted by Musgrave et al. proves that once people fully understand the extent to which animal populations are diminishing, they can realize what they are doing is harmful and find alternatives. A way to do this is to educate society and especially those who hunt, poach, or sell animals, and help them understand the full extent of their actions. Once that is realized, there is a way to help animal populations return to what they once were, even without immediately changing the laws enacted. While laws need to be changed and more punishment should be given to those who do break laws, education can also be enacted to help save endangered animals. Exotic and the people in the same line of business can educate themselves and help them find new ways to stay in business without exploiting and endangering animals.

Tiger King goes through an arc of multiple episodes of Exotic and fellow roadside zoo owners having a legal battle with Carole Baskin as she tries to create the Big Cat Safety Act, which would create more laws that protect endangered exotic cats. The documentary shows the long process to get laws in place to help animals, no matter the severity of the law trying to be enacted. In "Live by the Gun, Die by the Gun," Goemeone EJ Mogomotsi and Patricia Kefilwe Madigele detail Botswana's shoot-to-kill policy, and while it may be a controversial law, it has been effective and shows that there are ways to save endangered animals. Mogomotsi and Madigele state that research between 1970 and the early 2000s tells us that the African elephant population diminished by 50%, and then another 30% between 2007 and 2014. There was also a decrease in black rhino population by 67% between 1960 and the early 2000s (51). Such statistics are cause for high alarm, as the population of elephants and rhinos are exponentially decreasing, and both will likely soon be extinct.

The laws currently in place in much of Africa are not protecting the wildlife there. Botswana knew the urgency for a change and wanted to help the animals in their homeland. Botswana's conservation efforts are some of the world's most successful (Mogomotsi and Madigele 52). Because their efforts are some of the best, it is no surprise the shoot-to-kill policy is effective in helping wildlife populations. They have almost a third of the African elephant population and knew they needed something advanced to help them survive. The shoot-to-kill policy worked by reducing poaching. For instance, South Africa accounts for 86% of the rhino poached since 2010, but Botswana accounts for .1% of deaths (Mogomotsi and Madigele 52). Botswana did not go for a shoot-to-kill policy at first but tried to implement new laws to stop poaching. However, they were not effective, which led to a militarized approach. Because of Botswana's success with helping the elephant and rhino populations, other countries in Africa implemented it as well. Zimbabwe, for example, raised their elephant population by 20,000, from 52,000 to 72,000 (Mogomotsi and Madigele 54) because of the shoot-to-kill policy.

In America, we cannot legally implement a shoot-to-kill policy on poaching and selling endangered animals. However, Botswana and other African countries found a way to raise populations of endangered animals. It is possible to help endangered animal populations recover from the harm caused by humans. The United States can do more and can come up with creative legal ways to help tigers, elephants, lemurs, and other animals that may not be here in the next few decades. Musgrave et al. highlight the reasons behind poaching and illegally selling and trading. Mogomotsi and Madigele show there is a way to stop it. It is up to the United States to take animal poaching more seriously and focus more efforts on how to protect animals at a federal level, as well as ensuring states on the same page so there are not any loopholes that put these animals back in danger. Baskin's efforts for the Big Cat Safety Act in *Tiger King* should be taken more seriously by the government.

Throughout *Tiger King*, the different roadside zoo owners are faced with challenges from the animals they have kept. Workers have to learn the boundaries the animals have as well as what to do once they get to a certain age and size. In episode seven, "Dethroned," Exotic is charged with the killing of five different tigers. His reasoning is that the animals were sick, so he killed them, even though the tigers were supposed to be protected by his zoo. Along with that, at the end of the final episode of the documentary, viewers learn that there are 5,000-10,000 tigers that live captive in the United States, while less than 4,000 are free in the wild. Such discrepancy in distribution of the tiger population has to do with how exotic animals are viewed. Most people who have exotic animals realize the money that can be exploited from them, and the animals then become property. In "Changing Legal Attitudes," a section in Andrew Linzey and Desmond Tutu's anthology on animal protection, several experts express that one big issue in legality with regard to animals is that animals are viewed as property. Even endangered animals have only limited protection because of the fear of environmental damage that would come from a species dying off, not because the animals should live (Linzey and Tutu 230). This stance on how animals are viewed is where the problem starts when it comes to legal attitudes and actions that are implemented for animal safety. Animals have minimal protections against poaching or ownership. The focus of animal law isn't on animals, it is on humans. Humans are protected from the animals, but the law does not protect animals from cruelty by humans. The laws in place right now need to change how animals are viewed, and that starts with education, as suggested by Musgrave et al. Educating our lawmakers and citizens will vastly help how animals are viewed and valued. Without animals, we have no biodiversity, which, in essence, will harm humans and our environment, and it's not too late to create new laws protecting the animals that need it.

In "Elephants, Ivory and CITES" by Armin Rosencranz and Dhiren Sehgal, the importance of elephants to our environment is discussed. According to their research, elephants are considered megaherbivore species as well as "keystone species," meaning they have a large impact on our environment and are unique in the role they play. The disappearance of the elephant species would be "detrimental to the ecosystem" (Rosencranz and Sehgal 2). Elephants, for example, help engineer and shape forest lands as well as help the survival of other species in our environment. They also help balance the food web by "aiding and facilitating hunting for predators" (Rosencranz and Sehgal 2). Elephants play a crucial role in our environment, and they are not the only species that do so. Tigers, rhinos, and many more endangered animals play an important role in the biodiversity our world has. Without such animals, trees, flowers, and other animals would not exist, or the environment would be overrun with animals and plants that endangered animals help to control. All animals play a role in the biodiversity of the world as well as have their status in the food chain. Protecting all endangered animals is crucial to human survival as well as the survival of the planet. Because laws do not do that and have not for a long time, Rosencranz and Sehgal remind readers that elephants are the last megaherbivore species that reign on the earth with humans (2). Many other megaherbivore species are already extinct due to insufficient laws in place to protect them. The zoo owners in *Tiger King* who keep animals in metal cages in rural Oklahoma or Florida are not helping the environment and biodiversity of the world by taking tigers from their homes in the wild where they are needed. The focus of such zoo owners is not on protecting animals, but rather on making money. Endangered animals deserve more protection to help their populations.

Tiger King's big personalities and wild animals drew viewers in, making it the number one documentary watched on Netflix. While people loved the unexpectedness and drama of it all, the significance of the way the animals were treated was missed. Being trapped in cages, fed expired meat from Walmart, and having no stability is the reality and lives of wild, exotic animals in the United States. Often, such animals are also critically endangered. Efforts such as the Big Cat Safety Act need to be implemented to save animals and help our world.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. How does Dwyer use a contemporary documentary (*Tiger King*) as framework for her research and discussion of animal endangerment and poaching? Can you think of other Netflix documentaries that could serve as a similar framework?
2. Most portrayals of Carole Baskin in the media have been negative or satirical. How is she represented in this essay?

Style

1. How does Dwyer's essay begin? Is the beginning of the essay conversational? How does it work to draw the reader into the piece?

The Crushing Weight of Big Money

Mason McGregor

In 2012, Barack Hussein Obama was reelected President of the United States of America. Hailed as one of the most liberal candidates ever brought to the White House, Obama was greatly admired and respected by the American left. Looking back on the campaign run in 2012, however, reveals a striking reality; Obama's opponent, Mitt Romney, wasn't the only candidate to receive money from dubious sources. Both benefited from contributions by big corporations and organizations designed to raise up a lot of money, known as political action committees, or PACs. Outside spending—or, the money raised by organizations with no affiliations to candidates—spiked in 2012 to over $1 billion, after having risen slowly to about $300 million in the previous year. This is an unprecedented level of private funding, and although a lot of it was in support of Romney, Obama was still helped by a large portion of these increasingly large donations from increasingly fewer individuals (Bowie and Lioz). According to the Center for Responsive Politics, in fact, nearly $400 million of outside money was spent in support of the liberal candidate.

Corruption in the United States is one of the most pressing issues on average citizens whether they realize it or not. 44% of Americans believe that corruption is pervasive in the office of our president, and over a third have noticed it within Congress and other government officials (Pring). It's not hard to see why when you look at the 2016 election's outside spending. In fact, the Center for Responsive Politics reports that nearly $750 million was spent in support of President Trump's election. Even a Democratic win wouldn't have meant much in terms of corruption, seeing as about $650 million was spent toward Hillary Clinton. If we live in a developed nation that so heavily prides itself on freedom and democracy, how can nearly 150 million of us decry the state as fraudulent or exploitative? How deep does the problem go if even liberal darling President Obama became heavily influenced by big money? Let's dig a little deeper to discover some of the roots of this money-hungry tree.

One place to start digging first might be *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*, a landmark Supreme Court Case that helped shape our modern democratic process. In a 5-to-4 decision, the majority of the court claims that corporations and political organizations are simply groups of people and that limiting their ability to support politicians by funding "electioneering communications"—such as political advertisements and other funded endorsements—would be a violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution (Kennedy). This ruling allows for organizations such as corporations, PACs, and PAC-compiling groups known as super PACs to contribute indefinite money into their support for a candidate. Of course, logic follows that free advertising will be appreciated by that candidate and therefore if they win, a member of the government will view a supporting organization or wealthy donor favorably. This is the exact problem that Justice Stevens brings up in his dissenting opinion from *Citizens United.*

"We have no evidence to support the notion that the Framers would have wanted corporations to have the same rights as natural persons in the electoral context," Justice Stevens writes in his opinion. He goes on to explain that "we have ample evidence to suggest that they would have been appalled by the evidence of corruption that Congress unearthed [in crafting anti-corruption legislation]." When viewed from the perspective of our nation's founding fathers, Justice Stevens argues that the American government is already knee-deep in fraudulence and that *Citizens United* would simply serve to deepen that pool.

In regard to the declaration that *Citizens United* is simply a matter of free speech and the First Amendment, he argues the point that no, the founding fathers could not have foreseen this and therefore it does not apply. I'm going to go even further than Justice Stevens in my counterargument; I couldn't care less about what this country's founders had to say. Corruption is corruption, and our government is neck-deep in it. Stevens is right, however, in his examination of the awful consequences this system has.

"A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold," he continues, making it clear that providing the upper class with more straightforward influence on politicians will indeed stifle the voices and heighten the apathy of impoverished individuals. As we noted earlier, Justice Stevens' exact fears have come true; nearly half of all Americans view the government as corrupt in some way (Pring). This could partially be attributed to the direct effects of *Citizens United*. Since its implementation in 2010, the US has seen a drastic increase in the role of money in politics.

In his book *Corporations Are Not People: Reclaiming Democracy from Big Money and Global Corporations*, Jeffrey D. Clements details a number of ways that corruption has become more rampant since 2010. Adding to our story about the 2012 election, Clements notes that around $10 billion was spent on the federal election and even more on state and local politics. That enormous amount of money was also spent by fewer individuals than ever before; as little as a dozen people contributed over 60% of the money compiled by super PACs. The total of all super PAC money for 2012 was donated by just over 3,000 individuals, less than 0.0011% of the US population (Clements 26).

One particularly relevant example given by Clements is Chevron's contributions. During his campaign in 2012, then-Speaker of the House John Boehner gained large amounts of money from the super PAC known as the "Congressional Leadership Fund." Chevron, a large multinational corporation primarily focused on the oil business, contributed $2.5 million to the Congressional Leadership Fund (Eggen). This shows the powerful precedent that *Citizens United* has set; corporations and the ultrarich can essentially donate unlimited funds toward their preferred candidate as long as they sneak it through the semblance of "electioneering communications."

When it comes to real consequences, the Boehner story doesn't end at receiving ridiculously high funds from corporate interests. If a politician simply took money and then kept his funding separate from his beliefs and policies, there truthfully wouldn't be much harm in doing so. The problem arises when government leaders like Boehner take money from a rich entity and then act as an extension of that entity's interests. Unsurprisingly, Boehner is largely against environmental regulation on businesses like Chevron. He's vowed to cut oil and gas subsidies as well as prevent plans to combat climate change which interfere with Chevron's bottom line (Clements 26). Climate change and the destruction of the environment, some of the issues that billion-dollar industries like Chevron pay politicians to fight against, are factors that directly impact the poor. The land most heavily disrupted by climate events are agricultural centers, and roughly 75% of impoverished people in the world rely on those centers for survival. Even more apparent, the increase in natural disasters caused by climate change leads to flooding and destruction that can only be remedied by money—money that the rich have and that the poor do not (Schwartz).

Climate change isn't the only quality-of-life issue being impacted by corruption, either. Some of the largest political contributions made in America are from the healthcare industries many of us are forced to depend on for survival. In Daniel L. Hatcher's book, *The Poverty Industry: the Exploitation of America's Most Vulnerable Citizens*, he points out just how involved these supposedly life-saving companies are in keeping the poor on the ground:

> In 2011, the defense industry spent in excess of $134 million on government lobbying efforts. Impressive. But the healthcare industry spent almost four times that amount—more than half a billion dollars, including a significant focus on lobbying related to government healthcare programs for the poor. The defense industry also spent almost $24 million in 2011 on campaign contributions, but the healthcare industry multiplied that amount by almost eleven. In fact, campaign contributions made only on behalf of hospitals and nursing homes were about equal to all the campaign contributions made on behalf of the entire defense industry. (38)

Another detrimental effect that laws and cases like *Citizens United* have on the poor are the flow of money through the economy. Wait a second, one might argue. What does corruption have to do with economics? Isn't it just a factor in how the rich receive benefits? Well, yes and no. The upper class often engages in legal bribery such as campaign donations in order to pass policies that make their lives easier, but those policies often have other dubious consequences. One example is the rise of the predatory payday loan lender. These businesses have cropped up more and more frequently in recent years, and their primary function is similar to that of the old mafia loan sharks: they give out easy loans to impoverished individuals or families, and then slap high interest rates on them and demand payback sometimes several times more than the original loan. At one point back in 2006 the loan lender industry had a stranglehold on many American soldiers, nearly 20% of whom were utilizing lenders and getting hit with interest rates of 360-720%. The average interest rates, of course, are generally around 10-28% (Song). Seeing the damage being done to the military, Congress eventually settled on a cap of 36%, but this covered the military alone and left the rest of the Americans on high interest plans stranded (McNay).

What does any of that have to do with corruption? Well, this legalized loansharking isn't exactly popular among average citizens. A referendum in Ohio meant to place a 28% cap on lender interest rates received a high 63% of the vote and passed. So why didn't the federal government simply extend the 36% cap out to all Americans? The answer is, of course, big money. Outside of the lenders themselves, who spent more than $1.5 million on election donations in 2010, many big banks openly profit off of these industries. JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Bank of America are just a few examples who trade loan lender stocks on Wall Street (McNay).

So now we're starting to see the ways in which corruption can have a clear impact on those living below the middle class. The rich pay the politicians to support their interests, and those interests— purposefully or not—perpetuate the cycle of living standards, money, and political influence being sucked away from the poor. We've looked at an example of corporate interests damaging living standards for the less fortunate in the form of climate change, and we've seen the example of loan lending to support the monetary consequences for those in poverty, but what about their democratic voice? How is political influence damaged by the upper class? Aren't the poor able to vote just like the rich? Democracy is supposed to be the great equalizer, after all. According to Justice Kennedy in *Citizens United*, allowing corporations to donate is just a matter of free speech, it shouldn't interfere with the electoral process whatsoever.

For starters, let's take a look at how ideas become laws of the land. We all know the process, most of us probably learned it in middle school. A person comes up with an idea, which is then told to a representative in the government, who then crafts it into a bill that's deliberated over in Congress and eventually can become a law by the President's signature. This, of course, is not attainable for everyone. Obviously, those who are most in contact with politicians are those few who are friendly with them—and those who pay for their election campaigns. Another avenue for creating laws is the more local option: propositions and other ballot initiatives, which can be petitioned onto a ballot and are voted on by the population of a state. This might sound simpler, but oftentimes getting an idea on a state ballot can be just as difficult—and require almost as much money—as the federal option. Initiatives require support by their very nature, and support comes from advertising and awareness. Not all political activism can be free, and as one might guess, a large amount of ballot initiatives have begun to come directly from the rich.

Tom Steyer, an American billionaire and political activist who ran for US President in 2020, is one example of a rich man using his vast money supply to force his issues onto a ballot. "I'm someone who believes that actually the best thing we can have is a highly respected and competent Legislature," he explained after spending over $20 million on getting a proposition onto the California ballot, "but it seemed as if there was a need for somebody to do something, and I have a bad enough temper that I figured I wasn't going to wait any longer" (qtd. in Onishi). Despite Steyer's track record as being generally progressive and anti-rich, this isn't a shining example of heroic work. Several other initiatives on the same California ballot were also funded by rich individuals, most of them furthering the interests of the upper class. This is as much of a threat to democracy as buying national politicians, and its frequency is growing by the year as more and more million- and billionaires recognize the power they have over local and state politics (Onishi).

So, what's the solution? It's clear that money in politics creates a terrible cycle of propping up the rich and pushing down the poor, but the answer is often unclear. Money is so pervasive in our democratic process that it's often difficult to imagine a world without it. The answer might be found in a few different ideas: publicly financed elections and the ban of lobbying.

Several developed nations already utilize an electoral system with a single payer for campaigns. In Paul Waldman's article compiling campaign financing data from around the world, he details some countries that technically have no limits on raising and spending funds but are restricted in more successful ways. "In most places there's substantial public funding of campaigns," Waldman explains, "and candidates are often forbidden from campaigning until a relatively short period before election day." With restrictions like these, we would be able to incentivize politicians to take public money rather than corporate donations. If politicians accept money from their constituents' taxes rather than from a billionaire, perhaps they'll think first of the little people in their decision-making. Waldman also reinforces the dangerous effects legislation like *Citizens United* can have on the process, citing TV advertising—electioneering communications—as "the single largest expense for most American congressional candidates," while reporting that many other countries restrict political ads heavily and, in some cases, even forbid them.

When it comes to lobbying, reform might be more difficult to achieve. While many are attempting to ban a concept known as "the revolving door" —politicians leaving office and returning shortly thereafter as lobbyists—very few are attempting to ban the practice of lobbying as a whole. Some, such as myself and The Hill contributor Billy DeLancey, believe that restricting or even outright banning the revolving door is not enough. In an article about the topic, DeLancey writes, "If lawmakers are serious about limiting the influence former members of Congress have on policy, a ban won't work unless they also close the loophole that allows them to lobby Congress but not register as lobbyists." As he explains, there are certain laws and stipulations in place that bar corrupt practices like lobbying from being banned. Unless we take them all out and remove such loopholes, people will find a way to influence members of our government.

Looking at all the ways money has influence over our democratic process can be a little bit depressing. It's truly horrible that so many people are deeply affected by such a pervasive system. What isn't depressing, however, is knowing that we can change it. Movements are growing across the nation to get money out of politics. Even some in the government are starting to change their tune on outside spending.

Several candidates for the 2020 presidential Democratic primary—including Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar—vowed to not take any money from PACs. It's sad to admit that after all has been said and done, the only candidates who remained firm against outside spending were billionaire candidates Tom Steyer and Mike Bloomberg due to their high personal wealth (Robillard). What remains true, however, is the sentiment for a better democracy coming from those few who tried to make it alone. Change is difficult to accept, and even more difficult to pull off. As Senator Warren said, "It can't be the case that a bunch of people keep [super PACs] and only one or two don't" (qtd. in Robillard). If you want to change an immensely large system, you must start from the ground up and force those who refuse change to listen. That's exactly what we need to do. Grassroots movements are the cornerstone of many political revolutions throughout history, and it's about time we stand up to the upper class and tell them that the voices of the less fortunate matter just as much as theirs.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Do you feel that corporations should be classified as people? Why or why not? In what other ways do we see corporations being treated like individuals?
2. What do you think would be the most effective way(s) to get money out of politics?

Style

1. How does McGregor ensure smooth transitions and clear organization throughout his essay?
2. McGregor uses a good deal of research to support his argument, a strategy that falls into the rhetorical category of ethos—or, an appeal to authority. What other rhetorical strategies does he use?

The Cultural and Structural Implications of American Automobile Culture

Lee Francis

Parked side by side in one of the nine parking garages in the Kansas City Country Club Plaza are a pristine silver Tesla plugged into the wall and a battered red Ford pickup truck. This juxtaposition reflects not only the variance in visitors to the Plaza, but also how radically different and yet fundamentally similar subcultures that develop under the greater American car culture can be. Picture the owners of these vehicles: who are they? Two distinct people of different classes come to mind, each with their own unique, likely opposing values. Fundamentally, a Ford truck and Tesla are both automobiles with the same purpose—transportation—and yet they reflect distinctive subcultures. This is because the United States is a nation built around cars, and our culture highly regards both models as material objects and greater symbols of American values. The drivers are similar in that they are wealthy enough to literally and metaphorically buy into American automobile culture. Americans have a romantic association between freedom and driving, but in the United States today we have been limited by automobiles, paradoxically removing our freedom of choice. Car culture and the creation of suburbia, as promoted by J. C. Nichols, led to automobiles becoming a necessity by changing the structure of our cities through urban sprawl, plus government regulations and subsidies that encourage driving. By encouraging driving above every other method of transportation, our society has become auto-dependent and uses transportation as an obstacle for social mobility that further disenfranchises those in poverty.

Automobiles have historically served as indicators of wealth and status both in everyday life and in popular culture. The mere act of owning a personal automobile was a statement of wealth and class until Henry Ford made the more affordable Model T that increased demand and made the automobile more accessible to the masses (Alvarez). Today, owning a particular brand or model of vehicle is still a statement of wealth considering the disparity between the price of a used, mid-sized car and a new, luxury sports car. Each automotive brand has a distinct subculture of devoted consumers, and stereotypes have been assumed about these subcultures to the point where cars are often used in media as indicators of a character's values and socioeconomic status. To return to the example from the beginning, when you ask someone to picture the owner of a Ford and the owner of a Tesla, there is a clear distinction between the two. Likely, the owners of these vehicles are pictured as men, but men with different values, careers, and lifestyles based on the stereotype of the All-American, working-class Ford driver and the environmentally conscious, wealthy Tesla driver. These stereotypes are often reinforced by the brand itself in commercials and social media messaging.

Automobiles were once thought of as merely a fad for the wealthy, but J. C. Nichols built the Plaza in Kansas City with automobiles in mind as a model for the nation (Country Club Plaza: History and Significance). This was a bold endeavor, as he would be creating the first shopping mall designed to accommodate consumers arriving via automobile. To give Nichols credit as an innovator, he was right that automobiles were more than just a passing fad. In the US alone, there are more than 30 automotive brands (Gould, Skye, and Zhang). J. C. Nichols is also responsible for suburbia as we know it today, with aesthetics focused on landscaping and curved streets. What Nichols did was stray away from the traditional, straight gridded street system and instead opt for a hierarchy of streets in which there are major roads for faster travel. Roads then gradually get smaller and allow for less mobility as they become more local. As this trend caught on, almost no new housing developments were built on a traditional grid system from the 1950s to the 1980s (Badger). In "Urban Roadway Classification," Gerry Forbes demonstrates how the traditional road classification systems are based on "mobility and access functions of roads." The American Institute of Architects (AIA) uses a classification system that names roads based on how they connect communities, and uses terms that people within American culture can recognize, such as "highway" and "avenue." It should be noted that the American system has significantly more roadway terms than some other countries, perhaps suggesting the importance of roads in American society since a society's understood language can be reflective of its culture. At the top of the hierarchy of roads is the principal arterial road which allows the fastest travel and typically runs for statewide or interstate travel. These principal arterials are then linked by minor arterials that are fed by collector roads, which in turn are fed by small, local roads for slower travel that end in cul-de-sacs or residential streets (Forbes 2). This slows traffic in residential areas and reduces through traffic, but it also creates what we now refer to as the urban sprawl and suburban isolation, as more roads are necessary to travel.

J. C. Nichols is responsible for another staple of suburbia: the idyllic cul-de-sac. According to Sara Steven, during his development of the Plaza neighborhood, J. C. Nichols was a "key player" and advocate in the creation of cul-de-sacs, which later were promoted by the Federal Housing Administration. A cul-de-sac is a street, typically residential, that minimizes through traffic and reduces the speed limit by nature of it being a dead end. Due to the decrease in the prevalence of people who "do not belong" in the neighborhood, as well as slower driving, parents may feel as if it is their moral responsibility to opt for a home on a cul-de-sac as opposed to one in the city. Buyers will go out of their way to spend an estimated twenty percent more on a house in a cul-de-sac (Nielsen). In reality, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that young children are in more danger of being backed over by a car than being hit by through traffic (15). In a cul-de-sac, there are plentiful opportunities for a child to be a victim of a backover, as most cars exit the driveway in reverse. The creation and advocacy for the cul-de-sac was not the only way, however, that J. C. Nichols and the United States government changed the way we live and travel through the structure of our cities.

One study, "Community Design and How Much We Drive" by Wesley Marshall and Norman Garrick, found that people who live in more sparse, treed communities spend about 18 percent more time driving than do people who live in dense grids. This may sound like a mild inconvenience, but the distance between where you live and major locations such as school, work, stores, and medical centers is significant when you do not have consistent access to transportation. With the way our cities are structured, walking to most locations is simply not possible. To use Kansas City as an example, if you live near 18th and Vine, it is a fifteen-minute drive to the nearest Walmart. From 18th and Vine, the Country Club Plaza is also about fifteen minutes away, but Walmart is the location of choice for this example because it is an inexpensive big-box store commonly accessed by people within the lower and middle classes. Stores on the Country Club Plaza, conversely, fall more within the budget of someone in a higher socioeconomic class. According to Google Maps, it is about a forty-five-minute bike ride to Walmart from 18th and Vine, give or take traffic. On foot it is a two hour and fifteen-minute trip, assuming you are able-bodied, take the path Google lays out, and walk at an average speed. Public transit would take fifty-five-minutes on three different buses, sitting through 50 different stops. This is at 2 pm, assuming that all the buses are on time, stops are short, and you're able to walk between stops when you change buses. These estimations are all just one way. Keep in mind that eventually, the bus stops running, so a late-night emergency trip for diapers or medication is not possible. Using a ride-share service such as Uber or Lyft would be just as quick as driving yourself, but it costs about 9 dollars, plus a tip. The most viable option outside of a car would be to bike, but not everyone is physically capable of doing so. The second most viable option would be public transportation, but not everyone has two and a half hours (at least) to dedicate towards a single shopping trip, especially for those who are in school or at least one job. In "The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility," Raj Chetty and Nathaniel Hendren found that commute time is "strongly correlated" with upward social mobility. This marks access to transportation as one of the first and most important obstacles to achieving upward social mobility. Urban sprawl has made our society auto-dependent and therefore disenfranchises people who do not have access to an automobile.

The availability of parking, much like quiet, suburban roads, has become another key selling point for housing that drives the price up for buyers and influences the structure of our cities. A map of the Country Club Plaza specifically dedicated to showcasing parking options displays nine free multi-level parking garages, and if those were somehow not enough, valet parking and street parking are also plentiful. This is not a new hallmark of the Plaza. When J. C. Nichols created the Plaza in the 1920s, it was only a 30-acre project, but 46% of that land was dedicated to streets and parking lots (Euston). This was revolutionary at the time, as commercial buildings rarely provided any sort of space for parking cars. In the 1960s, city governments began directing private individuals and property developers to construct parking spaces on their property. This reached the point at which the construction of apartment housing complexes without parking was downright outlawed in big cities (Shill 46). This norm stretches beyond housing to commercial areas with massive parking lots that cover "more than a third of the land area," and cities such as Des Moines and Houston "are estimated to have 7 and 30 spaces per resident, respectively (Shill 45). When we can no longer fit any more parking spaces on the ground level of venues, we build upwards. Parking garages are a common sight in universities and urban areas, where parking is otherwise a commodity that comes at the price of metered spaces or passes costing upwards of a hundred dollars, such as at UMKC. Despite their convenience, parking garages still cause issues by directing traffic flow across sidewalks, further exacerbating the pedestrian issue discussed earlier. When parking is a necessity for residency and business, public or private, and each parking space takes up at least 300 square feet, urban sprawl becomes worse as more space must be dedicated to temporarily storing vehicles.

Not only is driving promoted through media and the structure of our cities, it is also subsidized by law. In J. C. Nichols's time, Americans chose to drive because they wanted to. It was a matter of novelty and convenience, but the demand was created by consumers nonetheless. Today, consumers do still continue to buy into the automotive industry and create demand, but the government reinforces this demand by literally paying people to drive themselves to work instead of taking alternative, more environmentally friendly methods of transportation. According to a combined report by the TransitCenter and Frontier Group, the US government spends "7.3 billion per year" through taxes encouraging people to drive to work. According to the IRS, there is a tax break of up to two hundred and seventy dollars a month for employee or employer-paid parking in 2019, which has gone up fifteen dollars since the 2017 TransitCenter report. In comparison, the transit tax benefit is at two hundred and fifty-five dollars a month but only applies to employer-provided mass transit passes. Drivers can also deduct miles driven for work at fifty-eight cents per business mile driven, which is an extra benefit on top of that aforementioned parking deduction that is not provided to those who commute through public transportation or other alternative methods. Biking to work maxes out at twenty dollars per month, and there is no tax benefit to walking to work. The transportation sector is responsible for 55% of nitrogen oxide emissions (among other emissions), which cause air pollution and lead to increased vulnerability to asthma and the development of other chronic lung diseases (Environmental Protection Agency). Reducing the rate at which we drive could help reduce these emissions. Our society has become more concerned with the environment in the past decade, and yet is taking minimal action to subsidize more environmentally friendly ways to travel. Public transit is part of the transportation sector and therefore responsible for emissions; however, it is more efficient to have one bus carrying upwards of fifty people than 50 separate cars on the road creating traffic congestion and worsening pollution.

The danger of driving does not only impact our society through the environment. When cars were first taking to the roads in droves in the later 1920s, society was built around the pedestrian. If there was a street, you could cross it. Kansas City was the exception, and is credited with inventing the concept of "jaywalking" in 1912 (Brown). "Jaydriving" did not catch on in quite the same way; we instead tend to refer to incidents involving vehicles as "accidents," subtly shifting the blame away from the driver through the gentler term. The invention of "jaywalking" is the first example of society shifting from being built for the pedestrian to built for the automobile. The stop sign did not even appear until years later, but the precedent was set. Streets are highly regulated now with plentiful signs, traffic lights, and designated crosswalks, but pedestrians are still at high risk every time they step onto the street. Vehicles are safer than ever before for the driver and passengers, but pedestrians are all but ignored in US vehicle safety regulations. In 2008, the United Nations designed regulations to protect pedestrians, which has been adopted by forty-four countries as of 2015 but has been ignored by the United States (Shill 63).

Just one year after the updated report on pedestrian regulations was released by the United Nations, the United States hit a 25 year high in pedestrian deaths, in which a pedestrian was killed in a traffic crash every 1.5 hours (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Cars are the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 1 and 44, as documented by the CDC in 2010. The US Department of Transportation reported than 5,967 pedestrians were killed in 5,900 crashes in 2016. It is easy to attribute these fatalities to alcohol, weather, dark environments, or even blame the pedestrians themselves for failing to cross at a designated crosswalk at an intersection, but another factor that is often under-examined is vehicle design.

Cars are built to dominate the road, promising safety for those fortunate enough to be behind the wheel, but further endangering pedestrians for the sake of unnecessary aesthetic structures and slipping through the loopholes of government regulation. The pedestrian, who could be anyone from a driver simply crossing the road after leaving their car, to a child, or a person who is walking to work because they cannot afford a car, is regarded as less important by automotive manufacturers and government agencies responsible for their regulation. In the United States, manufacturers are focusing on building taller, heavier trucks and vans as opposed to smaller, safer cars. In the 1920s, Henry Ford's Model T was the most affordable car on the market, and was dangerously designed with a tall, flat front, with a tin frame separating the driver from the gas tank (Alvarez). We have thankfully since relocated the fuel tank from beneath the driver's seat, but many of the vehicles built today still have tall, flat fronts and rigid pieces. Greg Shill explains the trend in dangerous vehicle design by referencing The Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards published by the federal government, which set requirements for a vehicle's average mile per gallon (MPG). Cars are required to get a higher MPG than a category of vehicles known as "light trucks," so manufacturers find that cars are less appealing to make because they have a more stringent requirement on MPG. The category of "light trucks" was originally reserved for work vehicles as an exception, but today "encompasses pick-up trucks, sport utility vehicles, and minivans," which are taller, heavier, and pollute more than the average car (Shill 58). These CAFE standards, as Greg Shill reasons, are why 69 percent of the new car market now consists of vehicles that fall within this "light truck" category (58). The World Health Organization explains that when hit by one of these vehicles, such as a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV), the pedestrian does not ride over the top of the vehicle but instead is pushed forward by the tall, broad front and then underneath the wheels. In head-on collisions with shorter vehicles, tall vehicles such as trucks and SUVs tend to drive over the smaller vehicle and crush the occupants inside (Shill 58). A "light truck" is only a safe vehicle so long as the car does not roll over and the safety of those outside the vehicle is ignored. The federal government is one of the primary backers of the automobile industry, and therefore should take responsibility for standardizing safety regulations in the decisions of automobile manufacturers.

J. C. Nichols may not have known the full extent of what he was putting into motion when he took advantage of the new market and the rising popularity of the Model T by creating a shopping center and residential neighborhoods dedicated entirely to the automobile. Nevertheless, his impact has been profound on the physical and cultural shaping of the United States. Today, those in lower socioeconomic classes experience cultural strain when they are unable to achieve the culturally defined American goal of achieving wealth and success because they do not have access to reliable transportation. Cars are responsible, in part, for urban sprawl, commute time, and accessibility to resources such as jobs and healthcare, and are therefore also responsible for creating a wedge between different socioeconomic backgrounds and reinforcing economic inequality. Automobiles are ingrained in our culture as a symbol for the American Dream, in our cities as suburbia and sprawling, dead-end roads separate us, and in our law as we are subsidized to drive. Urban planner Jeff Speck said it best in a National Public Radio interview: "Your car is no longer an instrument of freedom but a prosthetic device." By becoming more reliant on automotive transportation, the very thing that gave Americans the freedom to travel in the 1900s, we have paradoxically become more entrapped by it as transportation is now a determining factor in upward mobility. We became an auto-dependent culture by choice, but the option to choose has since been rescinded as it has become a requirement to function in society, mandated by culture and government regulation. Our culture will remain car-centric and auto-dependent until our nation changes on an institutional level.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What do you know about J. C. Nichols' impact on Kansas City? Do his contributions to car culture and city planning fit into what you already knew, or complicate it?
2. What surprised you about this essay? Have you ever considered how deeply car culture impacts the U.S.?

Style

1. How does Francis' focus on Kansas City support their larger claims about car culture in the U.S.? Is this focus effective? How so?

Advanced Category Winner

Exposing a Misinformed and Disabled Fairytale

Audrey Seider

"If we are to achieve a richer culture, we must weave one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place." This quote by Margaret Mead emphasizes the importance of diversity and acceptance in society. A fairy tale often reflects society by telling it in a whimsical way. However, there is a variable that is often present in fairy tales that's not as whimsical—disability. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity" (ADA), such as deafness or blindness. This definition does not imply the person's life is any less important, but simply outlines the reality of their situation. Within the time period of the famous Grimm Brothers, however, the threat of disease was severe, and death was feared most of all. Only those who were the most physically and mentally able were the ones who prospered and gained benefits in society. There was more of a survival instinct to favor those without disabilities. That is less true in today's society, and thankfully there are now resources for people with disabilities to live a more fulfilling life, and awareness of accessibility is on the rise. This statement greatly conflicts with the themes present in famous fairy tales, which often teach critical morals negating the possibility that a disabled person's life can be fulfilling.

The fairy tale "Rapunzel" is by no accounts an unhappy tale by the end of the story. In true Grimm Brothers fashion, it deals with themes of sexuality and cautiousness in the face of strangers. Rapunzel is taken from her mother and father after she is born because of a bargain her father made with a fairy in exchange for vegetables from the fairy's garden. Rapunzel is taken to a high tower and lives in isolation except for visits from the fairy. One day a prince comes by and falls in love with Rapunzel and pays her many visits until the fairy tricks him and sends him toppling off the tower. It is here that he loses his sight and is left to wander in the wilderness "eating nothing but grass and roots, and [doing] nothing but weep[ing]" (Grimm 13). The prince lives a truly miserable life until he is finally able to lead himself back to Rapunzel.

Ultimately, the prince's story has a happy ending, but it isn't realistic. In her article entitled "Blindness as Metaphor," Naomi Schor recounts her struggle with the decrease of her vision and the effect it had on her daily life "I could read but my depth perception was gone, ascending and especially descending staircases became a perilous exercise, and, of course, driving was out of the question" (82). Schor had a much less dramatic reason to lose her sight. Instead of falling off a high tower, she succumbed to the effects of age. While this is still disheartening, it also is quite easy to understand how this could actually happen to anyone. Disabilities in fairy tales are often represented by dwarfs or goblins, or other manners of inhuman characters. Disability should not be seen as being a type of punishment, or even as abnormal, as it is most often portrayed in fairy tales.

The Grimm Brothers wrote down many fairy tales they had collected from oral tradition. Conveniently they reveal social ideals within their late 19th-Century society. The prospect of having a disability, which is in this case blindness, is extremely frightening. There is some fascination with disability, too. For example, what is completely normal to some people, is completely impossible for others. Within the story of Rapunzel, the prince wanders alone in the woods for a number of years after he is blinded. Lacking resources and apparently the will to try and return to the kingdom he belonged to, he is able to exist in a place of living but not exactly to the fullest. Instead of dying, the prince is reduced to a shell of his former self, being neither fully human nor a monster. He exists in this place until Rapunzel cures him of his blindness. After this, he is completely restored to a whole person within his full capacities. This idea of being less than a full person is outrageous, but sadly reflects the ideals of the past.

While the stigma behind disabilities has softened in recent years, the stereotype that has emerged through fairy tales is very much present in contemporary variations. In Neil Gaiman's retelling of Snow White called *Snow Glass Apples*, he incorporates an interesting description of the characters that live in the forest: "A greedy, dangerous, feral people; some were stunted—dwarfs and midgets and hunchbacks; others had the huge teeth and vacant gazes of idiots; some had fingers like flippers or crab claws" (Gaiman 329). What he is implying in his work is the typical fairytale trait of deformity, linked to villainy. Here in this context, the forest people are regarded as lesser than or less human than the other town folk. This same comparison can be made in the traditional fairy tales, such as Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. In a passage spoken by the prince, he remarks his dilemma to the little mermaid, that he must choose between her and another woman: "She is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling" (Andersen 10). Here, the mute mermaid is regarded as only almost enough. Unfortunately for her, she holds the trait of being a "dumb foundling". This reflects the survival instinct present in fairy tales, which is to reward the most physically and mentally able. Anyone not up to the qualifications is seen as inferior. Organizations like The Whole Person work to break down these stereotypes, which can very easily still be instilled into the minds of children even today, with works such as Gaiman's *Snow Glass Apples*. One of their main goals is to uplift the people they serve and educate the community they are working for.

This semester, I was granted the opportunity to intern at The Whole Person (TWP). Specifically, I helped with their annual art exhibition called Expressions. The Whole Person is a non-profit organization that works to connect people with disabilities to the resources they need to help live stable and fulfilling lives. As the name of the company alludes to, it is strictly against regarding people with disabilities as less than a full person; they are regarded in just the same way as any person without a disability. According to The Whole Person's mission statement, they picture "a fully accessible community where opportunities and choices are not limited by disability" (TWP). They execute this idea in a variety of different ways. For example, when I first started working, I was told to not label the artists as "disabled artists" but rather as "artists with disabilities". The key was to not let a persons' disability define them; it simply is one part of them that makes them unique.

Every fairy tale is a reflection of the social tendencies present in the society it was created in. With that understanding in mind, it is important to look into the history of disability, and the stigma assigned to it. The consensus of disabilities was generally negative during the late 19th Century, the time the Grimm Brothers wrote their stories. During their lifetime, the brothers wrote seven editions of their collection of fairy tales, all of which underwent large changes. By the time of the seventh edition, the stories had become drastically different from the original edition (Zipes). Like any good scholars, the Grimm brothers were adapting their stories to better fit the environment they lived in. They were not writing to children when they first started, but as time progressed, they adapted their stories for a young audience. By the seventh edition, these stories imparted morals onto the children who read them. Unfortunately, the morals taught in regard to people with disabilities were not positive ones. In her book, *No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability*, Sarah F. Rose discusses how people with disabilities in 19th Century America were often sent to what was called "Asylums for Idiots". By definition, "idiots" were "people with a wide range of impairments, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, deafness, and what would later be described as autism, as well as cognitive disabilities... in general, 'idiot' referred to a person who was not able to care for himself or herself, do useful labor, or understand the legal consequences of his or her actions" (Rose 14). The conditions listed in this definition are, in fact, conditions that can describe a disability. However, what is no longer accurate or deemed acceptable in today's society is how people with these conditions were considered. Today, the term "idiot" is of course viewed as deeply insulting and is rarely justified in being used to describe a person. The same logic can be applied to the term "dumb," which is viewed as a negative insult. In the classic fairy tale by Andersen, the little mermaid is regarded as dumb, as shown in the above paragraph. Today's readers would find such words offensive. However, at the time these stories were written, these words were simply what was used to describe someone with a disability. What can be concluded from this observation is that as time passed, these words changed definition from descriptive, if ignorant, into hateful words due to the general stigma placed on the people they originally represented.

It should be explained that while there has been a great misunderstanding about people with disabilities for many years, it does not mean authors such as the Grimm Brothers were trying to be heartless in their portrayal of those with disabilities. In her book, *Disability, Deformity, and Disease in the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, Ann Schmiesing elaborates on a statement made by Jacob Grimm. She argues that "[Jacob] claims that a blind person will often have the extraordinary ability to almost see with his or her fingertips, or a deaf person will often have extraordinary taste and smell" (147). Here, Jacob Grimm is trying to regard all people with disabilities as capable of achieving a highly inert sense to make up for the one they have lost. When examining the fairy tales Grimm collected and edited, this same philosophy shines through. In the case of "Rapunzel," the prince initially loses his sight and manages to wander the forest until, by some chance, he leads himself to where Rapunzel is staying. After losing his ability to see, the Grimm Brothers allow this character to succeed through some secondary sense created because of the loss of his sight. Schmiesing comments on this idea by explaining that through this act of "compensating" some people would try to disregard a person's actual disability or "psychologically erase the reality of the impairment" (148). In many cases, a disability does not cause another sense to become hypersensitive, and to try and argue so is offensive to individuals who only want to be accepted as themselves.

In *The Little Mermaid*, the main character was shown to feel some hesitancy toward what she has to offer once her voice is taken away. The witch offers words of compensation such as "your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes" (Andersen 8). However, that is all for nothing because as the end of the story shows, the little mermaid's other attributes are unable to make up for her muteness. This shows that characters with conditions such as the little mermaid's are truly seen as the lowest in society, as illustrated by what is written of them in children's tales. In fairy tales, characters with disabilities more frequently than not are given the short end of the stick as either villains or as tragic characters doomed to remain unhappy their entire life.

Fairy tales are known for their morals on how to be a proper citizen in society, however, those such as "Rapunzel" and *The Little Mermaid*, and even some contemporary retellings, neglect to teach proper morals on how people with disabilities are also a valuable part of society. If one followed the ideals outlined in classic fairy tales, people with disabilities would be seen as lesser than and without worth. From a historical background, this was the general opinion of disabilities around the time when the Grimm Brothers were writing their famous stories. By effect, this ideal is reflected in their work. Thankfully, there is now more understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities and the outlooks on life they possess. Disability is not a disease that needs a cure, which was believed in the past. It is simply a variation on the mental or physical level that changes the way a person navigates life. Unfortunately, in years past a negative stigma behind disabilities has formed, and in some ways still exists today. It is important to remember, the actions taken in the past to assist or categorize people with disabilities were not necessarily done with malicious intent, but were done through a simple misunderstanding of someone different from them.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Think about your community, whether it be UMKC (online or in-person), the stores you typically shop at, your place of worship, etc. What are some ways those spaces are accessible, and in what ways are they not? What does accessibility mean beyond wheelchair ramps and elevators? Such things are important tools for accessibility, but our thinking on the topic often stops there.

Style

1. How is Seider's own experience as an intern at The Whole Person working to help develop her argument?
2. Seider's two main examples of disability in fairytales are the Grimm Brother's version of "Rapunzel" and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." What is the effect of weaving these two examples throughout the essay, as opposed to a structure that separates them more?

CONTENT WARNING:

The following essay discusses sexual assault and harassment.

An Analysis of Harvey Weinstein's Apology Speech

Lara Makhoul

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, "Every 92 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted" ("Scope of the Problem"). Unfortunately, such statistic is obscenely high, and many Americans are no longer tolerating this, which is why the news of Harvey Weinstein's sexual harassment allegations shook citizens across the country. On October 5, 2017, the New York Times released "Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades," which spread the news of the Hollywood producer's disturbing misconduct. The piece affirmed that he had been sexually abusing women for nearly thirty years, and the victims included famous actresses such as Angelina Jolie and Gwyneth Paltrow (France and Gonzalez). He was accused of inappropriately touching numerous women, asking them to perform sexual favors on him, and threatening to fire actresses from his movies if they did not oblige to his commands. Some women even admitted that he r*ped them or attempted to. In response to these accusations and to clear his name, Weinstein issued his first formal statement on the same day as the article's release.

Weinstein faced several barriers when addressing his accusations, and he was not able to overcome these disadvantages. Although he began harassing women decades ago, the article was released amidst a social and political period that maintains zero tolerance for sexual harassment of any kind. Over the past decade, activists have been working hard to ensure that the "r*pe culture" which has plagued this country is halted immediately, and "Recently, r*pe-culture theory has migrated from the lonely corners of the feminist blogosphere into the mainstream" (Maxwell). Therefore, when the news surfaced that Weinstein was abusing his elite position in Hollywood by sexually assaulting actresses, the public immediately created an uproar in response to his transgressions. This national protest served as a barrier for Weinstein since American citizens were much less open to accepting his apology, which essentially held little value for them after he already committed such horrifying acts. Another barrier for Weinstein was that he paid women to stay silent for decades, which lowered his credibility and made it even more difficult for his audience to believe his apology. Harvey Weinstein even hired an "'army of spies' to block the reporting of sexual misconduct allegations against him" ("Harvey Weinstein Reportedly Enlisted"). When the public found out that this sexual predator had been hiring highly qualified officials to ensure that the women stayed silent, it only tainted his reputation more and decreased the slightest possibility that the victims or general public would forgive him. Ultimately, Weinstein was not able to overcome his barriers since they were too great for him to overcome in his apology statement.

Harvey Weinstein's sole advantage was his position as a major contributor to the Democratic party, so he tried to appeal to Democrats in his apology in order to win them over. An article from the National Rifle Association (NRA) states: "The allegations have put several prominent Democratic politicians in a difficult position. CBS has reported that Weinstein-hosted political fundraisers have brought in more than $5 million for Democrats" ("ILA: Alleged Sexual Predator"). Initially, it was difficult for his Democratic supporters to decipher how to deal with the new indictments since he played such a crucial role in terms of fundraising for their campaign, but they quickly dismissed both his apology and monetary contributions as invalid since they "disgorged themselves of Weinstein's money in the wake of his sex scandal" ("ILA: Alleged Sexual Predator"). Thus, although Harvey Weinstein deviously tried to maximize his advantage of being an ardent Democrat, he was unsuccessful since the people were able to see right through his distractions.

Although Weinstein never specifically addressed them, his target audience was presumably the numerous women he harassed, their loved ones, and the public as a whole. In his rather brief statement, Harvey Weinstein attempted to use defeasibility, bolstering, mortification, and corrective action, but overall, his tepid apologia was not effective.

Despite the fact that Weinstein did not deny his actions or shift the blame away from himself, he attempted to use defeasibility. He slightly evaded his responsibility when he stated, "I came of age in the 60's and 70's, when all the rules about behavior and workplaces were different. That was the culture then" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). However, his audience did not fall for this ploy since Gwyneth Paltrow, who was one of his victims, stated "We're at a point in time when women need to send a clear message that this is over… This way of treating women ends now" (France and Gonzalez). Although Weinstein sexually assaulted Paltrow and numerous other women several decades ago, his victims and the general public do not agree that the difference in time periods—if any—should be used as an excuse to justify his actions. Thus, his efforts to use defeasibility are unsuccessful since his audience did not accept it as a reasonable validation.

Next, Weinstein used the bolstering technique to boast about his credibility and build rapport with his audience. Near the beginning, he remarked, "I realized some time ago that I needed to be a better person and my interactions with the people I work with have changed" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). This statement implies that he recognized his wrongdoings and made efforts to change, but he likely would have never spoken up if the news had not surfaced. By claiming that he willingly decided to change his behavior, he suggested that he is a very honorable, credible man, which does not align with the accusations. Additionally, he directly stated, "I so respect all women and regret what happened" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). In order to appeal to the people who now doubted his integrity, he attempted to build his character by clarifying that he respects women, regardless of his past mistakes. Furthermore, Weinstein continued to use bolstering when he noted that "One year ago, I began organizing a $5 million foundation to give scholarships to women directors at USC" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). By adding that he is assisting women in the theater industry, Weinstein attempted to regain his credibility and prove to the public that he is a selfless man. Lastly, Weinstein shifted the focus to the NRA and President Trump in an attempt to maximize his advantage and please Democrats. In the final paragraph, he declared, "I am going to need a place to channel that anger, so I've decided that I'm going to give the NRA my full attention. I hope Wayne LaPierre will enjoy his retirement party… I'm making a movie about our President, perhaps we can make it a joint retirement party" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). This remark is an attack on both the NRA's Chief Executive Wayne LaPierre and President Trump, but "Weinstein's clumsy attack on gun owners was immediately seen for what it was, an attempt to distract the public and curry favor with anti-gun Hollywood" ("ILA: Alleged Sexual Predator"). Democrats were not deceived by this ploy, and rightly so. Repeatedly using the bolstering tactic to save his reputation and essentially make up for his misgivings ultimately did not help Weinstein's case since the public could see right through the sham.

Throughout his apologia, Harvey Weinstein used the mortification technique to show the public that he accepts responsibility and apologizes to his victims, but he never specifically addressed his accusations of sexual misconduct. He apologized by saying, "I appreciate the way I've behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it," but he did not specify that he feels remorse for assaulting numerous women ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). As the statement continued, he seemed as though he was sincerely apologizing when he stated, "I cannot be more remorseful about the people I hurt and I plan to do right by all of them," but again, he does not outwardly address the women he harassed ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). While it is helpful that he accepted responsibility and apologized for his transgressions/abuse??, his elusiveness regarding the details of his actions and victims ultimately hurt his apologia and undermined his use of mortification altogether.

In addition to apologizing, Weinstein promised corrective action to show his audience that he is attempting to improve himself. He demonstrated that he is fixing his behavior by saying, "Though I'm trying to do better, I know I have a long way to go. That is my commitment… My journey now will be to learn about myself and conquer my demons" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). He wanted to prove that he is dedicating himself to changing his thoughts and actions. Harvey Weinstein also noted, "I've brought on therapists and I plan to take a leave of absence from my company and to deal with this issue head on" ("Statement From Harvey Weinstein"). He explains that he is taking definitive steps to change himself, which will hopefully appeal to both the people he hurt as well as the general public.

In his statement, Weinstein employed defeasibility, bolstering, mortification, and corrective action to respond to the accusations regarding his mistreatment of women in Hollywood. His use of defeasibility attempts to clear his name by stating that the social climate during which he began sexually harassing women was much different than it is now. He repeatedly relied on bolstering to maximize his advantages by convincing the audience that he is a good, moral Democrat who respects women, and that he voluntarily decided to change. He employed mortification by accepting responsibility (for actions that he never clarifies as being related to sexual abuse) and apologizing for the people he hurt, but he never clarifies that his victims are the countless women that he harassed. Lastly, he offered corrective action by assuring the audience that he is seeking help, and that he has made it a priority to better himself.

Overall, Weinstein's apologia was ineffective, and he was not able to overcome barriers or maximize advantages due to his ineffective use of image repair theory and the public's general intolerance for sexual abuse. Although unlikely that even the finest use of rhetorical strategies could reverse the pain and humiliation he caused women, Weinstein should not have used defeasibility to try to evade responsibility, and his bolstering does not maximize his advantages since the public sees right through it. Finally, his use of mortification and corrective action could have been more beneficial in overcoming barriers if he specifically apologized for sexually abusing individual women and clearly explained his plans to correct his actions with each of them.

Thus, as a rhetor, Harvey Weinstein was never successfully able to rehabilitate his image, and his actions even sparked a nationwide 'Me Too' movement against sexual harassment. Just a few days after the news of Weinstein's allegations surfaced, Alyssa Milano "urged any women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted to write two words on Twitter: 'Me Too'" (Schmidt). To show that they were standing together to stop predators like Harvey Weinstein, thousands of women came forward and identified instances in which they have been sexually abused. Additionally, three days after the accusations surfaced, "the Weinstein Company board, which includes Weinstein's brother Bob, fired the embattled producer" ("ILA: Alleged Sexual Predator"). The verdict completely shattered both his career and image in the Hollywood industry. Lastly, at the 2018 Oscars ceremony, actors wore all black and 'Me Too' pins "in solidarity of fighting against sexual harassment and assault in Hollywood and beyond" (Duncan). The Hollywood stars stood together in response to Weinstein's allegations to show the world that this behavior is unacceptable and must be stopped. Thus, Harvey Weinstein was never able to effectively use the image repair theory to rebuild his image since society as a whole decided to remind him that his actions were—and always will be—unforgivable.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Makhoul's essay offers critique and analysis of Harvey Weinstein's apology speech. Can you think of other contemporary speeches that could be analyzed through similar rhetorical methods?

Style

1. Identify the thesis, key points, and organizational structure of Makhoul's essay. What do you notice?

Life & Decline in Mansfield Ohio

An Interview with Florence Lawson

Adrienne Simmons

There are so many experiences that shape our lives and help us become who we are as people. Such a large part of what shapes our human experience is the environment in which we grow up and a huge part of that is based on the communities in which we live. As explored in Robert Putnam's *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, our communities can greatly impact our lives for better or for worse, even though we are not always in control of the components that make a community. It is with this understanding that I interviewed someone from the community which shaped not only my own childhood but also the lives of my relatives. Although I currently live in Overland Park, Kansas, I was born in Mansfield, Ohio, a small manufacturing town southwest of Cleveland. I wanted to interview someone who had been a part of that community to not only see the impact living in Mansfield had on her life but to also help understand the impact it has had on my own life.

Florence Lawson lived down the street from my grand-parents on Glessner Avenue in Mansfield, Ohio. Growing up I remembered her as the friendly cherubic lady who always waved to neighbors, keeping her gate open so kids could zoom up to the porch to share a snack, a story, or an occasional scolding. She wore wire-rimmed glasses that sat on her round, rosy cheeks. She had a plain and simple face with small, kind dark-grey eyes. There were streaks of brown in her crown of thick silver curly hair, which she always kept in a tightly cropped, slightly windblown bob as she bustled around the yard. Even after we moved to Kansas, my family would always be sure to stop by to say hello when I visited my grandparents. The last time I had seen Florence was on a trip to visit family back in Ohio. I was shocked to hear she was still living in her home and went to see her. She looked almost identical to how she had looked over 20 years prior, except her hair was now all white which gave her an even more adorable "Mrs. Claus" look. I promised her I would keep in touch and made sure to call on occasion to check in on her. When I reached out to her to speak about her life, community, and experiences, she laughed and said that nobody would be interested in that, but she gladly shared her memories and experiences of growing up in Mansfield.

Florence was born in 1921 in Berea, Ohio a small and quiet suburb of Cleveland, to a working-class family. Her father was a simple man of little education. He had been wounded in WW1 and struggled to find steady work, so he made ends meet by job-jumping and selling odds and ends until he landed a job at the sandstone quarry. He worked long grueling hours at the quarry and often found solace from his long, hard days in the bottle. Florence's mother was a quiet and humble woman with little education who took up work as a semi-skilled operative in a canning factory while raising Florence and her two brothers. Despite their humble backgrounds, Florence's parents worked hard to provide the best they could for their children.

Florence grew up in a clean and modest middle-class home and attended the local high school, graduating with high marks. Of her parents she noted, "They worked hard their whole lives, but I will say we rarely went without dinner and we always had clean clothes and a roof over our heads" (Florence Lawson). In 1948, she married her sweetheart, Harold Lawson, after he returned from serving in WW2. The young couple settled in the town of Mansfield, where Harold's parents had left them a home. Harold took up work in the Westinghouse plant working on an assembly line. As they settled into the town and started to build their family, Florence began to see the beginnings of a deep decline that would slowly unfold in Mansfield.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Mansfield experienced manufacturing growth which created lots of opportunities for honest work and good pay. Harold's work at Westinghouse was steady with opportunity for growth, while Florence found part time work at Sears Roebuck and gave birth to their first daughter, Carole. They still lived in the modest home in which Harold had been raised. The house had large bay windows trimmed in white and a neatly manicured lawn, and sat in the middle of a clean residential area. Their other two daughters, Alicia and Cathy, were soon to follow after Carole. The single-bedroom home had grown tight, and the Lawsons hoped to one day move into a bigger home, even though they loved their diverse neighborhood filled with families of all races and religions who looked out for each other.

As manufacturing grew in the city and more residents began to move in, new opportunities opened up in Mansfield. Florence had saved up the money she made at Sears and decided to open a food counter near the manufacturing district. Harold still worked at the plant, but he and the girls would help out at the family business prepping meals and packing carry-out bags. "It was a different time..." Florence noted, her voice slightly trailing off in thought. She remembered how busy they would be for lunch and dinner with all the factory workers rushing through to pick up a hot meal. She noted how although nobody felt rich, that pretty much anyone could afford to get a quick bite for lunch and dinner.

Her oldest daughter Carole attended the local public school, walking to and from school and the business each day. Florence noted how little she had to worry about the girls playing or walking outside because the neighborhood felt safe, and everyone knew each other.

As the late 1960s and early 1970s rolled in, Mansfield began to experience a major shift. First a recession hit, and then many of the major manufacturing factories began to close due to shifts in the markets and the increase of imported goods. As decent paying manufacturing jobs left, so did many of the residents who were moving into the cities trying to find work. The rapid loss of residents made Mansfield an area with one of the fastest declining populations (Calio et al.). Florence certainly believed there was a direct correlation between the manufacturing decline and the decline of the city. "Everybody seemed like they just up and left once the plants left, but who could blame them? What could you do? There were no good jobs here anymore" (Lawson). As manufacturing began to decline, so did business at the food counter. The Lawsons had always run a tight pocketbook and made modest profits, but things began to feel different. They had to dip into their savings for a new home to keep the business afloat, which made the dream of a new house begin to fade. They were forced to shut down the business, and Florence took a clerical job at Mansfield General Hospital School of Nursing. Harold was able to find work at the local GM plant.

Florence also began to notice another form of decline. The once safe neighborhood of Glessner Ave. began to change. As families moved away, more young singles moved into the neighborhood. The pride in the ownership of a home seemed to disappear as the once manicured lawns began to be filled with weeds, broken down cars, and random appliances. Drug usage and crime started to increase. I asked Florence if she and her husband had considered leaving Mansfield but, as she noted, "We didn't have the money to do much else and the house was paid for" (Lawson). Although Mansfield remained below the national average in overall crime, they experienced high volumes of property crimes and thefts (Mansfield). The school the girls had attended declined in quality as the income level dropped. Cathy, the youngest daughter, experienced a completely different environment than her oldest sister as the school saw an increase in teenage pregnancy and truancy. Carole, Florence's oldest daughter, had easily graduated, married, and moved closer to Columbus with her family. Alicia, her middle daughter, had become pregnant in her late teens and had a few children but finished school, later marrying her children's father and moving to a nearby town. Cathy, her youngest, struggled for a while with alcohol and drugs, and got pregnant at a young age. Florence had often felt that her younger two daughters were unfairly influenced by the declining environment around them, and she tried to encourage them to think about college. She admitted, "I had no idea how I would pay for it, but I really wanted them to go, I think it would've done them some good, but none of their friends were going, they didn't see any use for it" (Lawson). Although her oldest two didn't go to college, eventually Cathy did get her RNA, which was something that made Florence very proud. "I still have her certificate," Florence noted with joy.

The struggle continued for both Florence and Mansfield throughout the '80s and the '90s. More businesses closed as Mansfield lost Hoover Plastics in 1980, National Seating in 1985, Tappan Stoves in 1986, Westinghouse & Ohio Brass in 1990, and so many more (Fraser). Harold had retired from the GM plant in the '80s and Florence still helped out at the School of Nursing, but only on a part-time basis. She finally retired in 1996 at the age of 74. Sadly, Harold died suddenly in 1997 at the age of 71, leaving Florence alone. The children were grown, and she thought about leaving the area but wondered where she would go. Her children and grandchildren were still close by, and all the resources and relationships she had formed her whole life were in Mansfield. Between her & Harold's social security payments and the small pension he had earned at GM, she was able to maintain the little brick home in which she had raised her family, even as the neighborhood around her declined.

According to *USA Today:*

> Mansfield was hit hard by the bankruptcy of General Motors in 2009 when GM closed its plant in the area. The plant was the area's biggest employer at the time with more than 400 workers. Nearly 3,000 more people moved out of the area than people moved in between 2010 and 2013, one of the largest outward migrations in the country over that time frame. The area's unemployment rate was 8.1% in December 2013, higher than the U.S. unemployment rate of 6.7%. Mansfield's economy shrank by 0.4% in 2013, even as national output grew by 1.9%. The area's poor economy and the city's inability to generate sufficient funds from taxes, led the Mansfield city school district to declare a state of fiscal emergency. (Calio et al.)

As Florence noted, Mansfield had become "skin and bones" of the town it once was. Currently, its poverty rate is at 28%, its median income $11,000 below the national average of $41,994. The little bit of manufacturing work that is left is non-union, and $10 an hour is considered a good wage (Fraser). A recent report from the WMFD of North Central Ohio showed that only 0.3% of workers in the Mansfield, Ohio area have jobs that typically pay six figures, and the median wage of those living and working in the Mansfield area was found to be about $32,680—several thousand dollars less than the national average of $38,640.

Mansfield is just one example of cities across the Rust Belt and throughout the country who have experienced significant decline, and Florence's experience is sadly one of many. Now, at age 98, Florence still lives in her one-bedroom brick house with her cat, Lucky. Her house is easy to spot because its neatly manicured lawn jumps out among the weed-filled and overgrown lawns that line the street. She often sits out on her porch and looks out at the neighborhood, which once bustled with playing children and friendly neighbors, noting how "nobody speaks anymore" (Lawson). The once trusting neighbors now keep to themselves, blinds drawn and barely acknowledging each other. Even Florence now keeps her security alarm, which is a fully loaded .45 Smith & Wesson, by her door. Sometimes, Florence wishes that she had moved or went somewhere with more opportunity, but she notes, "Who's to say the same thing wouldn't have happened?" Even with the struggles she has faced, Florence feels she has lived a good life without regret. She has 6 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, and although she lost her daughter Cathy to cancer earlier this year, she remains optimistic. When I asked her if she felt that the community in Mansfield shaped who she was, she replied, "Absolutely! Mansfield is where I have lived my life. These streets, these buildings, these people have all made me everything I am today, and I'd be a liar if I said they were always good to me, but here I am, 98 years later. I'm still here. This place gave me that, it made me strong, it made me durable, and even on my worst days, it always accepted me" (Lawson).

It is also in Florence's story that I found a part of my own. Although I left Mansfield early in my life, I continued to be connected to the city through my grandparents until they moved in the early 2000s. I witnessed the decline of a neighborhood that had once been a special part of my childhood as it turned into a shadow of its former self. In our current era, facing the onset of COVID-19, the lack of access to community resources compounds the difficulties faced by towns like Mansfield even further. Mansfield, and towns like it, rely heavily on community and religious programs and resources to help fill in the gaps left by the lack of federal resources and economic opportunity. The challenges faced by this community, like so many, are almost guaranteed to become more difficult as they attempt to combat the virus while still trying to address the issues which continue to keep the city in a state of decline. The humble streets I grew up on in Mansfield are certainly a stark contrast to the cookiecutter and manicured homes that line the streets of Overland Park that I have come to know. Sadly, the streets of Mansfield are a not uncommon effect of the decline of manufacturing cities and towns across the country. We have seen what happens when people are stretched to their brink and when opportunity is taken away, how it affects people trapped by fates over which they have little influence. We have seen the consequences when people lose trust in their neighbors and friends and blame “others” for their own misfortune. We have watched families be worn down by lack of opportunity with little hope for change. However, it is the strength and resilience of these communities that has given me hope that, despite the many challenges we face, we can find a way to overcome. It is in these communities, and in people like Florence, that we find the spirit that serves as an inspiration for each of us and shows us the importance of continuing to push for all communities to have equal access to the resources they need. Mansfield taught me to not take my opportunities for granted and, like Florence, it made me stronger and more prepared for a world where like the city of Mansfield, nothing is promised but much can be gained.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Where did you grow up? Was it someplace like Mansfield, Ohio? How do you think a person's upbringing (specific to their geographical location) affects their later life?
2. Simmons connects the economic decline of Mansfield to the economic consequences of COVID-19. What connections can you make from either the economic decline of Mansfield or the pandemic to other similar historical economic situations?

Style

1. Simmons blends research, interview, and narrative to craft a compelling essay on the impacts of economic change. What does such style offer to readers that typical research writing often does not?
2. How does Simmons incorporate secondary source material within her essay?

Bring Out Your Dead

Deceased Celebrities in Advertising

Dalton Blackwell

The celebrity is perhaps the most prominent and lucrative pop-culture artifact that we have. As a public we have placed the celebrity on a pedestal, and as consumers we flock to them. Many of them have transcended their roles and purpose as entertainers and have become their own brands. Their brands are perhaps the most powerful as they are tied to an individual. Their work and personality are essential in the establishment of their brand and its growth. When their brand and celebrity is popular enough, corporate brands seek to use the celebrity in order to further their reach and bring in more consumers. Since each celebrity brand is tied to an individual, a complex situation arises once that person has passed on, a situation unique to the "individual brand" they have created. In recent years, the likenesses of deceased celebrities have been used in a myriad of ways, included in media such as commercials, concerts, and film. It seems that no longer will a celebrity be able to fully die, and their brand with them, as we can digitally resurrect them with the sole purpose of gaining more monetary value. In this essay I will highlight the ways in which brands purchase an image for themselves through endorsements and the ethical issues that arise from using the image of the dead as capital.

The practice of recreating celebrities who have passed on for the sake of advertising is nothing new. This was fairly common in the early 90s with commercials featuring Humphrey Bogart, Gene Kelly, and Cary Grant among others. Though the means were different from what is possible now, the theme is the same: using the dead to produce more wealth. In 2014, Dove Chocolate used a computer-generated Audrey Hepburn in their ad. Moreover, it was recently announced that James Dean's likeness would be digitally recreated for a new film decades after his gruesome, untimely automobile accident. This sparked outrage, concern, excitement, and most importantly raised the very important question of the ethical implications of this practice. Without the conceptual framework provided by consumer capitalism, this phenomenon would seem unthinkable. Thus, it is necessary to analyze how this branded world developed.

Writer, social activist and critic Naomi Klein took corporate branding to task after analyzing and researching the topic for her best-selling book *No Logo*, a takedown of the brand centered culture within which we reside. In it she discusses how brands developed, stating that branded products arrived at the same time as the invention-based ads for factory-made products. The ascendance of the factory meant new products could be introduced, and old ones could take on new forms. The market became flooded with mass-produced products indistinguishable from one another. The machine age was responsible for the development of competitive branding, as the sameness of a product to other products meant it needed an image to differentiate it from the rest (Klein 6). Thus, the role of advertising was no longer set on delivering products, but rather, delivering a brand image. Generic goods such as flour and sugar needed to be bestowed with proper names. This changed the culture of consumerism as these products "had previously been scooped out of barrels by local shopkeepers" (Klein 6).

In the 1880s corporate logos for mass-produced items entered our social consciousness with brands such as Campbell's Soup and Quaker Oats developing a brand image, giving their product a sense of familiarity and folksiness to consumers. Moreover, mascots such as

Uncle Ben and Aunt Jemima gave goods a familiar personality. "After the product names and characters had been established, advertising gave them a venue to speak directly to would-be consumers. The corporate 'personality,' uniquely named, packaged and advertised, had arrived" (Klein 6).

While brand mascots are still used today and still convey the values of the brand and company, celebrities are used in a similar manner. Celebrity endorsements have been a part of culture since the 1700s, predating the development of mass-production and corporate branding that is so engrained in our lives. The earliest recorded example of this phenomena dates back to the 1760s in which royalty was used as celebrity branding to promote products. The first company to use this type of endorsement was Wedgewood of UK, who produced quality pottery and china. Their founder Josiah Wedgewood, who is called the father of the modern brand as it exists today, used these royal endorsements as a device to display the value of the company and the items it produced (Goyal).

We should ask ourselves why celebrities are such an integral part of culture, the branding and advertising world, and why we are so drawn to them. The easy answer is that we are simply appreciative of whatever it is they provide to us. While that is certainly a piece of the puzzle, there is a deeper reasoning behind it. Celebrities are fixtures of the social elite. They engage the public through media including television, music, print, and yes, advertisements. This type of wide-reaching exposure greatly impacts us as consumers, especially younger ones. Celebrity endorsements are more likely to resonate with Generation Z, whose ages range from 15-20, and Millennials, who are ages 21-34 ("Impact of Celebrity Endorsement"). Younger consumers find themselves looking at celebrities when it comes to constructing their identities, though this phenomenon is not exclusive to younger generations. A study done by a marketing researcher at the University of Arkansas and her UK colleagues suggest that consumers take a more active role in "using celebrities to help them build their own identities and self-images, rather than merely passively receiving meanings and messages from celebrities and incorporating them into their lives" (Consumers Develop Complex). Consumer and celebrity relationships allow the consumer to form an identity of who they want to be. They continue:

> In effect, the various meanings and messages displayed by celebrities help consumers develop a portfolio of relationships that allow them to function as creators of meaning for themselves. Cocker describes the complex combination of these different and sometimes fragmented relationships as "celebrityscapes" or "celebrity bricolages," within which the consumer has the freedom and opportunity to engage or not or to manipulate at will. (Consumers Develop Complex)

The celebrity acts as a figure of inspiration—a tool that we use to measure ourselves. They are the standard by which we measure our achievements and failures, and as consumers we aspire to be in their position. In some cases, they take the role of deities (Lunardo et al. 5). We crave connections to the famous and powerful, and buying products they are connected to gives us that power (Sager). Essentially, they are defining parts of our culture—an integral piece to our identity. We follow them so intensely because we feel we are participants in their cause and belief system (Heflick). So, in a sense, we see them as extensions of our desires, our beliefs, and ourselves.

It is important to analyze whether or not celebrity endorsements are effective in the context of sales. A study conducted by the Journal of Advertising Research looked at stock market values and sales data from athlete endorsements. They found that while the stocks go up around a quarter of a percent on average with celebrity endorsement, the sales for products featuring athletes (who are celebrities in their own right, of course) boosted sales by an average of 4% (Sager). Nicole Kidman's 2003 Chanel signing saw global sales of the promoted perfume increase by 30%. Nike's deal with Tiger Woods in 2000 resulted in Nike's market share going from 0.9% to 4% in 6 months. When Nike maintained their endorsement deal with Woods after his well-publicized scandal, the company lost $1.7 million in sales and 105,000 customers. In the book Contemporary Ideas and Research in Marketing, research found that 85% of the people surveyed said that the endorsements from celebrities raise their confidence and preference of the item. However, only 15% said that celebrity endorsements had an impact on their purchase decisions. Fifty-one percent of consumers said that these endorsements have little to no impact on purchasing decisions ("Impact of Celebrity Endorsement").

So, if the celebrity is not guaranteed to drive sales or market value up, what is the purpose of brands using them in their advertisements? It boils down to brand image and identity. Celebrities can convey a lifestyle and image that is widely understood as they become a text.

As previously stated, celebrities have become their own brands—in a way, they always have been. They own themselves and their destiny, though often they are at the whim of those who employ them. Moreover, in becoming a brand, they are at the whim of consumer perception as well. They do have people to answer to; however, there is an element of freedom in how they conduct themselves, market themselves, employ themselves (which movies they make, what music they play, etc.), and most importantly, brand themselves. This was not the case in the early days of Hollywood where actors were contracted to work solely for a specific studio. The star system ensured that stars exclusively belonged to whichever major studio owned their contract. They were told to assume personalities and personas to ensure that both their brand and the studio brand was safe. Image took precedence above all else. This glamorization of the star made them feel larger than life and people would flock to the theater just to see them. A poster with Humphrey Bogart, Greta Garbo, or Joan Crawford was practically a guarantee that the film would be a monetary success. The studios had complete control of these stars with the freedom to change their names, image, and identity. This was an ingenious form of branding on behalf of the studios. In hindsight, though, the clear ethical issues that arose from these practices were cause for concern and part of the reason why this is no longer how Hollywood operates.

To this day, the celebrity is a brand which is easily exploitable by the celebrity themselves and those who seek to profit from it, including consumers. After death, a celebrity's image and persona still lingers within our hearts and minds even decades after passing. The longer they are dead, it seems they are more easily exploited. The further we are from them, the less concerning it is to use them. If we decided to electronically put Alan Rickman in a new film, it's likely that the public, and most importantly consumers, would not favor this decision. Our memories of him still hold power over us. It would be viewed as being in "bad taste." However, once we are a generation or two removed from Rickman and his work and allowing that his brand is maintained generations to come, it is not out of the realm of possibility that his image could grace our screens again through digital manipulation. It would be up to his estate, who possesses the power to decide what is done with his brand and image. The more removed the estate is from him as a once-living person, the more he morphs into a piece of capital to be used for monetary value. He transforms into an idea. The brand and person fully merge. He is no longer a person that once lived, but rather a brand in the same vein as Nike or Starbucks. Like Judy Garland lives on as Dorothy in our minds, he too may live on as Snape.

In a 2010 article for *The Guardian*, Naomi Klein analyzed how corporate culture has taken over the government. She states, "From studying Nike and Starbucks, I was well acquainted with the basic tenet of brand management: find your message, trademark and protect it and repeat yourself ad nauseam through as many synergized platforms as possible" (Klein). Message is key to branding, and who conveys that message is perhaps more important than how they convey it. Brands want to use names and faces synonymous with a certain image. What a brand wants to convey depends on who they choose to convey it.

For example, in 1992, Coors Light released a commercial that starred actor R. Lee Ermey, who is known for his role in the film Full Metal Jacket, so much so that he essentially reprises his role in this commercial. It begins with a typical emasculation routine in which he talks down to the would-be soldiers, asking who the pack of Coors Light he found belongs to. In the commercial, one soldier has visions of drinking the beer surrounded by women. None of the soldiers respond, then suddenly, a familiar voice chimes in off screen saying, "It's my beer, Sergeant." Ermey is then approached by the man. In awe, he softly asks, "You put this beer here?" Then the familiar voice is revealed to be that of legendary Western actor John Wayne, who died in 1979. They achieved this by way of superimposing old footage of Wayne's face from a film he starred in (it is worth noting that the dialogue is from the film as well). Wayne was no stranger to beer adverts. He appeared in posters for Rheingold with the phrase "My beer is Rheingold," as well working with Budweiser. He could also be found in ads for Camel cigarettes. Beer and cigarettes are staples of masculinity in American culture. These products and their ads have always been coded male, and they are signifiers of male identity. This commercial succeeds in transforming Wayne from an actor who once lived into a sign of Western masculinity. His brand association has always been closely connected with masculine ideals and virtues, but he has now become a total embodiment of these virtues.

We must ask ourselves why this ad is constructed this way. What is gained from the setting, its use of symbols, how/why John Wayne becomes one of those symbols, and what is gained from his association? The military backdrop is an extension of its hyper-masculine notions of self. It is just as symbolic as everything else in the commercial. Barry Brummett offers the idea of symbolic value and symbolic wealth. So, what is the symbolic value of this beer? Though this commercial features typical notions of value associated with beer, what sets this one apart is the value added by John Wayne. Wayne is rugged and manly. On the screen he was a vagabond, a traveler who answered to no one. He was, in essence, the man's man. In turn, any beer associated with him represents that lifestyle, a means of attaining his status as a folk hero. The advert becomes a power fantasy with his inclusion. The drill sergeant, who is introduced as domineering and commands respect, becomes submissive in Wayne's presence. The power dynamic shifts, and that shift centers around this beer. The women-filled leisure fantasy of the one soldier has taken a back seat to what really matters, authority. In purchasing the rights to Wayne's likeness, Coors also bought certain branded traits via association. What is bought through association, in this case, is power.

I mentioned above that beer ads are largely coded male. It is no surprise that advertisers put to use different codes to appeal to different audiences. Ads which are coded female will use themes of beauty, family and romance. This is in contrast to male ads, which are more rugged as we have seen above (Kellner and Harms 3). This is not a groundbreaking concept by any means, as we understand it as a fundamental of advertising. We recognize this phenomenon and accept it. That said, when it is applied to the genuine article, you begin to see the patterns more vividly.

In 2014, Dove chocolate released a commercial which featured a computer-generated Audrey Hepburn, who died in 1993. The ad begins with an establishing shot of an Italian coastal town. CGI Audrey is seen sitting on a crowded, noisy bus. She looks down at her purse where a bar of Dove dark chocolate lies. Just then, a handsome man in a vehicle pulls up listening to Hepburn's version of Moon River from her film Breakfast at Tiffany's. They catch each other's eyes. He offers her a ride, which she accepts. She playfully takes the bus driver's hat and places it on the man. She sits in the back. As they drive to the countryside, she takes a bite of her Dove chocolate, and a smile spreads across her face.

Hepburn is fondly remembered for her elegant and classy demeanor. In every film she starred in she played a graceful, good natured woman. Often, she would be dressed in extravagant clothing. When not, her clothes were extensions of her virtue, humility, and feminine ideals. As an artifact herself, we can channel those virtues into a product, giving them her essence. Dove wants their chocolate to be thought of in a certain way—light, dreamy, spontaneous, adventurous, flirtatious, and romantic. Those are bought by association through Hepburn whose brand was constructed on such traits. Her setting and actions personify these traits as well. Italy is thought to be a place where romance can bloom. She acts in a carefree way, getting in the car with a stranger to avoid the minor inconvenience of bus travel. This sort of rash decision making does not exist in reality, but rather within a very cinematic and romanticized interpretation of it. The use of Hepburn was a calculated decision about how the brand should be perceived by the public. Marilyn Monroe can't offer the same image as Hepburn. Monroe's brand is hypersexualized and wild. If she were to get into the car with a stranger, the overt suggestion would be that she is going to have sex with him. The suggestion of sex is more subtle in this ad, and it is constructed on the basis of romance. Hepburn's romantic and flirty image fits perfectly into the grand puzzle of image construction which Dove has pursued. No living actress could have the same affect that she does, nor could a dead one.

Media theorists and critics John Harms and Douglas Kellner offer insight in how behavior is an important role in advertisement, stating:

> For instance, advertising conveys through its images positive presentations of assertive "masculine" behavior and images of well-groomed and fashioned men and women who want to be successful in the dating and romance game. Thus, advertising presents proper and improper images of behavior and role models for men and women. The result is a culture where image plays a more important role than linguistic discourse, for while

> verbal imagery is discursive, visual imagery is non-discursive, emotional, associative, iconic, and fictive. (4)

Ads suggest ways we should behave through identifiable role models. Both ads I have analyzed construct their narrative around ideal behaviors and appearances. The role models they have chosen exemplify societal standards of appearance and behavior. The brand's image thus appropriates the image of the role model's brand. Association is immensely important in advertising as the image is everything to the brand. These artifacts are metaphors for life, culture, and the pursuit of economic stability. Consumer capitalism is dependent on the meanings and associations crafted by advertisements which champion what Kellner calls "commodity fetishism and a fetishized consciousness," where goods, services and individuals are infused with symbolic properties. This results in associated products being infused with traits that are socially desired. Social information is embedded in material commodities that offer personal identity to consumers. It's the key to a consumer-based society because the systems of meaning established play a key role in our social and personal relationships (Kellner and Harms 4).

It is plausible that ads of this nature act as a testing ground for companies to experiment with the technology in order to use it on a bigger scale. They can habituate the masses to the practice and normalize it. We are seeing this idea develop now. While the moral implications of using the dead in this form of advertising products alone is cause for concern enough, it is expanding into much bigger platforms. On November 6th2019, it was reported that actor James Dean would return to the cinema via CGI by way of using footage and photos in the upcoming film *Finding Jack*. One of the film's directors, Anton Ernst, can be quoted as saying "We searched high and low for the perfect character to portray the role of Rogan, which has some extreme complex character arcs, and after months of research, we decided on James Dean." The logic used by Ernst here is that only Dean can portray this character. However, the logic does not adhere to reality as Dean is not actually playing the character. Only his appearance and brand are in the picture, not the man himself. His essence is loosely tied to the picture, but physicality, personality, and ability are not. Ernst continues, saying, "We feel very honored that his family supports us and will take every precaution to ensure that his legacy as one of the most epic film stars to date is kept firmly intact. The family views this as his fourth movie, a movie he never got to make. We do not intend to let his fans down" (Ritman). Ernst attempts to spin the story as a loving tribute to Dean's legacy supported by his family. And naturally it wouldn't be in his best interest to do anything but; however, it is clear that this decision was made for marketing purposes. If the film were to star a living actor, the press would not cover it as widely as it did when the news broke. The film's existence feeds off of the press, its very existence a topic of debates that would not happen otherwise. So, in a sense, Dean's likeness is used to advertise a film that would not gain as much attention without his brand.

A person's likeness and appearance has always been used as a piece of capital, its monetary worth being astronomical in the right hands. It is a cultural currency, and the more attractive one is, the more that likeness is worth. Thanks to the advancements of technology, likeness is now a product to be bought, sold, and even stolen thanks to deep faking. The construction of the dead and the technology used to do it could have harmful and dangerous implications for the public. If we rely too heavily on the past, there can be no advancements. New stars may not be made because we rely on the ones of the past. Employment opportunities can shrink for actors. Moreover, without new stars being introduced to the public, once the luster of older ones has faded, the less impactful ads may be, and the less revenue films would generate. People gradually fade into obscurity. It is inevitable. We can prolong their brand and image, but they won't last forever, especially in a society keen on innovation and growth. Moreover, the effects of this practice will not only impact Hollywood, but culture as well. Brands are inescapable as is. They are on our televisions, in our print media, on our computer, and even in our car. Even if we keep the radio off, billboards, which loom in the distance, remind us of our branded existence. The brand is embedded in our life and consciousness, and this practice may increase the level of influence and control they have in our lives. Moreover, an individual's value could begin to plummet as a result. We may no longer view them for who they are, but rather, their brand and what it can offer us in a financial and economic context. We are already heading in that direction, and some may argue that we have already arrived.

Brands are the foundation of our lives. They dictate and influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions more than we may realize. The brand is an identity we use to measure ourselves, materials that convey the message of who we are and where we are going. They impact culture regularly thanks to the personal brands of those with status that consumers find appealing. Though the celebrity is a brand, we must not forget they are first and foremost people. We may think of brands as living entities that grow and change over time. That is not an incorrect way of viewing them, but there is an obvious separation to be done when it comes to brands and people. Starbucks is not the same as Greta Garbo, yet there are similarities between them. Consider that the branding of Starbucks is decided upon by a group of individuals who decide what the brand's identity is and how they seek to market it. During the star system, Hollywood operated in a similar fashion, deciding how the star would behave and act as a means of establishing brand identity. Yet the distinction is made when you factor in that behind the branding and persona of Garbo, there was a real person. She had thoughts, emotions, and opinions on how she was marketed. It's plausible she had some say when it came to her brand. Whether or not she was satisfied with it is a different topic, but her sentience nonetheless makes her different from other brands. The person can be a brand, but the brand cannot be a person. And when that person passes on, they are no longer able to consent to their brand's direction; thus, it is an amoral practice to pursue the use of a late celebrity's likeness for the sake of monetary value.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Do you agree that using a celebrity's likeness after their death is immoral? Why or why not?
2. How do living celebrities build their personal brands? How do these brands extend throughout their work, social media, and any brand deals they're a part of? Focus on a specific celebrity or two, and feel free to peruse their social media presence in order to assess their brand.

Style

1. Have you read *No Logo*? How does Blackwell use Naomi Klein, and other secondary sources, to support his argument?
2. How does Blackwell use examples from Old Hollywood to explain modern celebrity culture? Why does he end by

Artificial Intelligence

Saving Species and Science

Lindsey Gard

The world we live in is ever becoming more technologically advanced. It is hard to believe that people once thought computers would never be able to be as smart as humans are. With the use of artificial intelligence, things we see in movies have been able to come to life. Artificial intelligence (AI) can be defined as a system's ability to interpret data. Furthermore, when a computer or machine can mimic the intelligent behavior of a human being. AI has made image recognition, Face ID, smart speakers, and self-driving cars possible. However, AI can be used for much more than that. Biologists use AI to locate and study endangered animals and medical researchers use AI to make surgeries more effective and less invasive. With the use of artificial intelligence, both the fields of medicine and biology are becoming more advanced.

The idea of artificial intelligence has fascinated people for years. It was first written about as early as 1942 in Isaac Asimov's short story "Runaround." "Runaround" introduced one of Asimov's most famous ideas, the Three Laws of Robotics, and became the basis for many fields including robotics, AI, and computer science (Haenlein and Kaplan 6). At about the same time the story was published, an English mathematician named Alan Turing was working on the Bombe for the British government. This computer would be used to break the Enigma code that was put in place by the German army in the Second

World War (Haenlein and Kaplan 6). Turin's work was successful, and the Bombe became the first electro-mechanical computer and the first machine with intelligence. The term artificial intelligence was first introduced in 1956 by John McCarthy and Marvin Minsky when they held the first academic conference on AI (Smith et al. 4). McCarthy was a computer scientist at Stanford, and together with Minsky hosted the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence (DSRPAI) at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. This brought many scientists and researchers together and many of them would go on to become the founding fathers of AI. Since then, the field of AI has advanced to the point that companies have started expanding AI into everyday life.

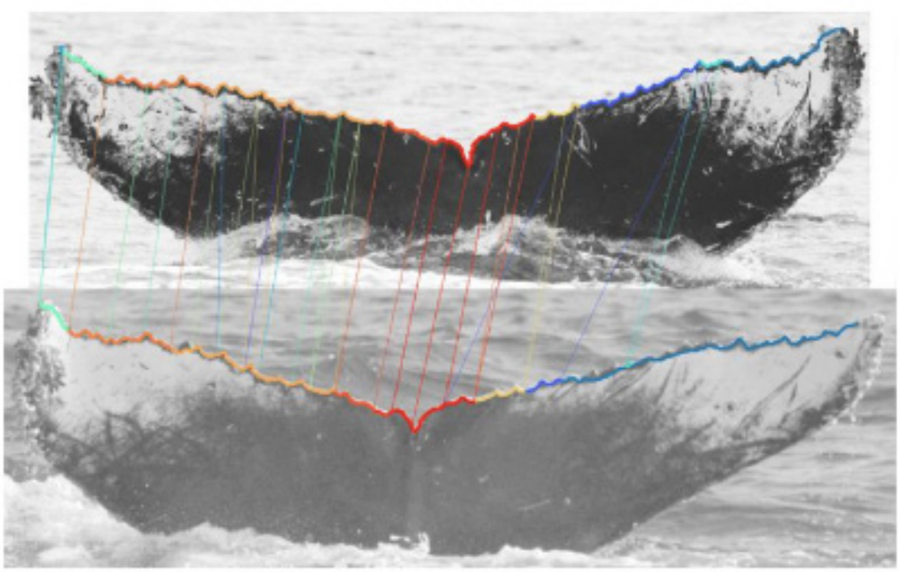
This technology has grown significantly and is now being used in the field of biology for research and conservation. Anne Casselman explains that "just as artificial intelligence (AI) powers Amazon's Alexa, Gmail's spam filter, and Facebook's new friends suggestions, it's now being used to help out the animal world." When researching endangered species, it is important to survey them in their natural environment. However, surveying threatened and invasive species can take a considerable amount of time and money, so AI is becoming a solution. In the article "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Artificial Intelligence Revolutionizing Wildlife Monitoring and Conservation," Luis Gonzalez et al. explain, "recent developments in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), artificial intelligence and miniaturized thermal imaging systems represent a new opportunity for wildlife experts to inexpensively survey relatively large areas" (1). UAVs have been proven effective in a number of cases. In an example from Gonzalez et al., Figure 1 shows a greyscale image using thermal imagery tracking (a) and a digital image of the same view using a digit view at 60 meters (b). The digital view is much like a photo that is taken with a colored digital camera at home, although on most UAVs have a camera with a higher resolution. Comparing the two images, the koala is more visible in the thermal image (a) than in the digital image (b). This is important because the thermal cameras on UAVs are more accurate and able to provide better data to animal conservation research.

Figure 1. This shows the difference in greyscale imaging using thermal (a) and standard digital view (b). (Gonzalez et al. 13)

The challenge with UAVs comes with identifying specific animals, or when multiple species must be identified. The accuracy of detection with UAVs varies depending on many factors. Gonzalez et al. explain that the optimal height for the UAV is likely to vary depending on a variety of factors such as the size, thermal footprint, behavior and habitat of the target species (16).

Many other AI software programs have been used in biologists' conservation efforts as well. One way that biologists are using AI today is to research endangered populations. In the article "How Artificial Intelligence is Changing Wildlife Research," Jenna Stacy-Dawes describes the importance of current research efforts. She explains that across the regions of northern Kenya where she studies, the giraffe population has declined by 70 percent in the last 30 years (Casselman). With the help of AI, biologists are able to assess the giraffes' numbers, movements and preferred habits in order to provide protection.

An algorithm that identifies individual animals in collaboration with Microsoft's AI for Earth, Wildbook's latest innovation has the ability to scan YouTube in order to find new whale shark videos. This is another endangered species. They call this innovation their "intelligent agent" or bot. Casselman explains that "the intelligent agent locates and extracts still images of the whale shark from the video clip [that are often uploaded by divers or tourists] … The bot can analyze the [whale] shark's unique constellation of spots and identify it." Each whale shark has a unique set pattern of spots. These spots can help differentiate and identify each animal like a fingerprint does in humans. The software can also identify the whale's unique fluke (Figure 2). Another amazing thing the bot can do is read through the comments in order to collect the date and location of the sighting (Casselman). The intelligent agent is also much faster than a human is. It is reported that "the intelligent agent currently works in five languages and averages about 30 video analyses a day… since the launch the Intelligent agent has located over 1,900 videos" (Casselman). With the data collected, researchers have been able to locate 20 hotspots where these whale sharks aggregate (Dove et al.). This data is impressive and has helped with conservation efforts.



Wildbook software can identify individual whales by analyzing photos of their flukes, each of which is unique.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HENDRIK WEIDEMAN, ZACH JABLONS, AND CHUCK STEWART

Figure 2. Shows how the Wildbook software is able to match a whale shark's fluke by its unique pattern. Although a lot of photos in Wildbook are taken by humans, the software also uses computer vision-aided animal identification.

Another artificial intelligence piece of technology used is a camera trap. Dan Morris, who is a principal researcher in the Microsoft AI for Earth Program says, "you can't put people everywhere but you can put cameras in a lot of places" (Casselman). These cameras are a great tool for analyzing a variety of different animals and populations. A camera trap is "a remote camera that's triggered by a motion or infrared sensor to snap photos of bypassing wildlife" (Casselman). One issue with camera traps is that the images are not perfect; they may come to the lab blurry or poorly lit. Camera traps capture quite a large number of photos that then have to be analyzed. AI has helped animal conservation tremendously by being able to locate and research the animals that are endangered.

Beyond this, there is so much more that AI can do to improve animal conservation efforts. Sound can be a powerful tool for animal conservation. Researchers are able to collect and interpret animal calls with the use of AI technology. They use this for a variety of animals including birds, amphibians and cetaceans. This costs about $0.06 per every minute of audio being analyzed. The AI technology is able to automatically detect a number of audio sounds. For example, conservation biologist Marc Travers studies bird collisions with power lines in the Hawaiian Islands. The use of the AI software increased his data harvest to 75,000 hours per field season (Kwok 133). In the future, the audio AI combined with camera traps could make conservation run even smoother. One firm has even created custom hardware called Fish Face ID to identify fish subspecies. Creating custom hardware or anything similar is about $50,000 (Kwok 134). This may seem steep, and traditional studies in the field of conservation biology may very well be less expensive, but more traditional means are costly nonetheless. For example, if researches using more traditional methods want to apply for a government grant, they must request at least $50,000 (Comparing Popular Research Project Grants). Therefore, the cost of AI technology is a negligible factor when considering which conservation methodology to use.

Aside from animal conservation, scientists at Stanford University have even created an artificially intelligent gecko. This gecko is a gateway AI robot; the science put into it is astonishing. Christine Blackman explains that "the science behind gecko toes holds the answers to dry adhesive that provides an ideal grip for robot feet." Imitating the biology of a gecko's sticky foot was instrumental in the team's design, enabling the robot to climb. Geckos' feet are unique in that they contain hundreds of lamellae, with millions of setae dividing into spatulae, all of which interact by van der Waals force (Blackman). As described by project director Mark Cutkosky, "with direction adhesion, it's almost like you can sort of hook and unhook yourself from the surface" (qtd in Blackman). This AI gecko is able to climb wood paneling, painted metal, and glass, even at vertical angles (Figure 3). This innovation could be translated in so many ways, and allow scientists to access dangerous and hard to reach places (Blackman). The team is working on improving their AI gecko to work on being able to climb with rotating angles, move upside down, and even walk straight down a wall. Stanford's next project is the Z-man, which would "allow humans to climb with gecko adhesive" (Blackman).

Paul Day and Alan Asbeck worked on adhesives for the feet of the gecko-like Stickybot.

Figure 3. Students at Stanford demonstrate how their AI robot can climb vertically on this glass window (Blackman).

Artificial intelligence has become essential to many other fields as well. Artificial intelligence has already made a mark in the medical community and it is still on the rise. One of the first ways that it was introduced into medicine was through electronic health records. Electronic health records have improved patient care, safety and communication. On the other hand, "the physical part [of medicine] deals with robots assisting in performing surgeries, intelligent prostheses for handicapped people, and elderly care" (Amisha et al. 2328). Tokio Matsuzaki, in the article "Ethical Issues of Artificial Intelligence in Medicine," explains that with certain diseases, "a fully automated surgery, performed using artificial intelligence ("AI") technology has a mortality rate of 1% due to mechanical error, while the same surgery performed by a human surgeon has a mortality rate of 10% due to human error" (Interpretable qtd in Matsuzaki 255). Artificial intelligence and fully autonomous surgical robots do have an advantage with accuracy, as they have inherent visual advantages and the ability to continue to develop due to machine learning algorithms. AI has also become essential in patient medical data as well. Many patients have "physiologic sensor data from wearable devices, genetic sequences, and race-dependent treatment options" (Matsuzaki 257). Although there are some key concerns when it comes to integrating AI in the medicine field, the use of AI outweighs the disadvantages; the use of AI leads to fewer mistakes. Roh et al. explain that there are also lower levels of blood loss and improvement in the function recovery (qtd in Matsuzaki 271). Artificial intelligence in medicine is just one example of a field that has seen the benefits of AI technology.

Despite the advantages, researchers and scientists must also think about the cost of using AI in their work. The field of conservation biology is one that is already low on necessary time and resources (Casselman). AI software is very costly to develop and maintain, with many variables affecting costs. For instance, training data must be put in the software in order for machine learning to take place. This could range from hundreds to thousands of manually classified examples (Kwok 134). Wildbook is currently able to recognize over 20 species but hopes to expand that to thousands. And in the future, "the goal is to move from start-up costs [of Wildbook] as high as tens of thousands of dollars down to an annual operating cost of $1,000" (Casselman). As of right now, anyone is able to join Wildbook projects for free; however, the startup price for a new project is $10,000-$20,000 (Holmberg qtd in Kwok 134). Lowering the cost would make this software publicly accessible, making study efforts and data sets even larger. In the future as more companies start to develop AI the cost will become lower as well.

Beyond monetary cost, there are still concerns about AI application, such as in the field of medicine. Jason Chung and Amanda Zink explain that "courts have traditionally deemed it impossible for machines to have legal liability as they are not legal persons. Indeed, U.S. courts have previously outlined that "robots cannot be sued" (Artificial Intelligence Litigation qtd in Chung and Zink 51). This raises questions with AI and liability. For example, a recent medical AI device for detecting diabetic retinopathy was just approved with an accuracy of 87-90%. Most AI in the medical system have limitations.

When these AI machines and devices are built, the programmer for these must be sure that they applied the correct algorithms, the program was correctly applied, and the quality and accuracy was appropriate. Many of the AI machines use the database approach. According to Amisha et al., "the database approach utilizes the principle of deep learning or pattern recognition that involves teaching a computer via repetitive algorithms in recognizing what certain groups of symptoms or certain clinical/radiological images look like" (2329). For the doctor, the diagnosis and treatment should be based on multiple things including lab tests, patient history, and a physical exam. Therefore, when it comes to the diagnosis, the responsibility will mainly fall upon the doctor (Matsuzaki 269). However, there is debate concerning the level at which AI is at fault for their errors. Laura Nichols explains that when it comes to AI in healthcare, the general public is worried and views them with trepidation (qtd in Chung and Zink 57). Another concern with AI in medicine is security and decision making as AI has no transparency. This can cause a lack of trust with AI devices and machines. Matsuzaki explains, "This means that doctors and patients are not able to know how the AI system reached the decision" (269).

We don't yet fully understand AI technology and decision making. In the article "How the Machine 'Thinks': Understanding Opacity in Machine Learning Algorithms," Jenna Burrell explains that "while it is straight-forward to assess the quality of the output generated by such systems… [the] process used for doing so remains largely opaque. Such opacity can be intentional (e.g., if a corporation wants to keep an algorithm secret)" (qtd in Haenlein & Kaplan 11). Another researcher, Junaid Nabi, further explains how this software works in the article "How Bioethics Can Shape Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning." Says Nabi, "machine learning-based decisions support systems… depend on the data extracted from electronic health records documented by providers" (11). She continues by explaining that more data helps to make a more accurate diagnostic output (Nabi 11). And lastly, in the article "Artificial Intelligence: Implications for the Future of Word" John Howard introduces the idea of decision support systems (DDSs). A DDS is an AI-embedded tool that can aid in the machine's ability to make decisions. "DDSs may have a role in improving risk assessment and risk management strategies" (Howard 921). To achieve more trust and better performance, the developers could design modules to explain, in layman's terms, how DDSs and other AI software are able to reach their conclusion (Guidotti et al. qtd in Howard 921). This way there would be less concern, as more people would be familiar with the process. However, no matter how much programming is put into AI, a difference that remains between robots and humans is emotional intelligence. Chung and Zink explain that "a common suspicion is that AI's inability to intuit situations may lead to overly cold and harsh decisions that devalue human life" (57). These machines only mimic human behavior and problem-solving abilities based on the data they are programmed with. IBM's Watson, for example, uses Bloom's Taxonomy of knowledge to make decisions (Chung and Zink 63). AI does have limits when it comes to decision making and capabilities. For now in the medical field, it was concluded that the final decision and difficult decisions should arise from humans alone. However, AI devices and machines can still be great assistants in healthcare.

When it comes to healthcare, another important factor that should be considered and remembered is bioethics. In the book *Bioethics: Issues and Dilemmas*, Tyler N. Pace explains the importance of bioethics in the medical field. Ethical decision making is centered around the patient and their needs; therefore, the decisions and guiding principles should prioritize the best interest of the patients and their families (Pace 56). An example of bioethics in practice is giving the patient opportunities to make decisions on their treatment plan. Pace explains, "[there are] different ways of responding to terminal illness (such has the… opportunity to die at home with appropriate palliative care rather than in an acute medical ward surrounded by escalating technology)" (58). This is especially important with new technology and AI in healthcare.

Nabi explains how vital it is to involve bioethics in the design of AI technologies (12). She suggests that Bioethics can help to "protect patient rights, minimize risks to patients, establish accountability for operators of machine learning-based AI system, and institute robust metrics to study effectiveness and benefit" (12). Machines often think one way; however, not one person is like the next. When making a diagnosis many key things must be considered and this is why bioethics must be applied to AI technologies. Nabi feels that "an informed discussion on how ethical frameworks can support novel technologies is overdue" (12). One idea for including bioethics in AI is to account for contextual design and anticipatory design. These can be used to develop algorithms with preliminary ethical reasoning. With contextual design, AI would be able to integrate patient factors, provider factors and environmental factors. And with anticipatory design the AI would be "able to predict the most beneficial outcome from the system's interface" (Nabi 12). These ideas will help to eliminate wrong diagnostics and human error, and to address the issue of inequality in the health care system.

With the implementations of AI in both medicine and biology, regulations have been put in place with the FDA to keep AI as safe as possible, especially since AI does not fit the traditional regulatory environment. Timothy Craig Allen explains that under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988, AI algorithms must be developed before the technology is validated and implemented (1175). The American Medical Association also says that AI must follow federal regulation when used in the medical system. AI must follow patient privacy and confidentially requirements as well as the AMA polices (AMA qtd in Allen 1175).

AI is fast evolving technology that Allen suggests would be an ideal fit for a self-regulation model (1176). This would put the regulation stage mainly on the premarket. However, companies would be able to have their own standards. Piper K. and Murphy H. disagree and explain that self-regulation is often ineffective and hard to enforce, which can lead to negative outcomes (qtd in Allen 1176). Some other suggestions are peer regulation or quasi-governmental regulation which are being implemented in some areas. However, non-traditional regulation systems may not work, since AI technology can be very complicated. Whatever the case, regulation and bioethics will become increasingly important as more AI technology is integrated into these fields.

This era of AI is just the beginning. AI can not only advance the field of medicine and biology but can have a positive impact on many other specialties. AI is used in video games, banking, education, business, manufacturing, sports, and almost anything you can think of. AI helps with the repetitive and routine tasks in many of these companies. However, AI expert Kai-Fu Lee stresses the importance of humans in the workforce. Lee explains that "today's AI is useless in two significant ways: it has no creativity and no capacity for compassion or love" (qtd in Thomas). People are often fast to dismiss and distrust AI because it is emotionless. AI technology is given the power to make decisions, but without emotions this can be a limiting factor to some. Lee also suggested that a solution for the people who may be losing jobs would be to train these people for new jobs. These jobs may even be in coding and understanding how the AI machines function (Thomas). Beyond this, AI is projected to help with sustainability, climate change and the environmental issues that the earth is facing. For one, by using "sophisticated sensors, cities will become less congested, less polluted and generally more livable" (Thomas). AI offers great benefits to many specialties.

It is impressive to see how far artificial intelligence has come, starting from an idea in a science fiction novel. With the use of artificial intelligence, many daily tasks are made easier and more effective. The world we live in is ever becoming more technologically advanced with the help of AI. Today, companies have started to expand and integrate AI into everyday life. AI now plays a key role in biological and medical research. In summary, one way that this technology has helped is with animal conservation by being able to locate and collect data on endangered animals. Aside from animal conservation, scientists at Stanford University have even created an artificially intelligent robot gecko able to climb and research places that previous AI systems could not. This gecko will be a gateway for AI robots. AI technology has also made significant advances to the medical field. Bioethics can help to eliminate wrong diagnostics, human error, and help to address the issue of inequality in the American health care system. AI can be harnessed to make the future more sustainable. Besides biology and medicine, AI is being used to research sustainable energy, autonomous vehicles, smart agriculture, protecting the oceans, and overall climate change. There are many potential benefits with AI technology. Artificial intelligence, if used correctly, can one day save many species and many lives. I urge you to understand how AI technology is working with you in your daily life. It is a technology that many people take for granted. Understanding how AI works is the first step to realizing the potential that this technology can have. Please support AI research in your area.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Do you agree with Gard that the benefits of AI outweigh any ethical or moral concerns surrounding it? Why or why not?

2. Beyond the possibilities explored in the essay, how else do you think AI might be used in the future?

Style

1. How does Gard use evidence to support her claim that AI is ultimately good? How does the organization of that evidence support her argument?

Auto Advertising in the Age of COVID-19

William Hart

Obviously, the last several months have been a tremendously difficult time for most folks. Quarantining, job loss, and social distancing have all proved to be the new reality that must be faced as the world's population attempts to ride out this global pandemic. Up until the past few days, most people were operating under the shelter-in-place guidelines put into place by the CDC. Because of this, considerably more time is spent watching content on streaming services and scrolling through social media platforms in search of some escapist media, and in turn, our exposure to advertisements has increased as well. Although consumer spending is liable to slow down as the economy endures the fallout from the pandemic, larger corporations and their advertisers have wasted little time letting their consumers know that they still want their money. Even though most consumers are parked on their couches, auto manufacturers want to remind the world that their cars still need to be purchased.

A key component of "flattening the curve" of COVID-19, or reducing the intensity in which the world's population is infected, is to reduce contact between human beings. By reducing physical contact, carriers of the virus have less of a chance of sharing it with others and those that do not have the disease are less likely to contract it if they are not exposed to it. As such, citizens of the world are advised to stay at home unless they absolutely have to leave. Despite these new implementations, automakers' advertisements are still occupying ad-space. Consider a current advertisement by Land Rover, titled "Explore the Great Indoors." The premise of the commercial focuses on a die-cast version of a Land Rover SUV that is being "driven" around an indoor, household setting by a young woman. Throughout this "driving" sequence, viewers are explicitly reminded of Land Rover's rugged, safari-tested heritage. For example, the copper-colored toy is first pushed through a crowd of plastic animals, including a lion, giraffe, and rhinoceros, animals that one may encounter while "on safari." After this, the tiny Land Rover is seen "driving" through a puddle of water, representing the streams and water crossings that one may encounter whilst they drive their Land Rover in remote locations. Similarly, the car is pushed through piles of flour in attempts to depict arctic, frigid conditions; whereas the scene in which the car traverses through a brown comforter should be reminiscent of exploring rugged locations like the red rock of Moab, Utah. The car's descent down a wooden bannister should be similarly indicative of steep, off-road excursions. Finally, the commercial ceases with the car parked in front of a set of keys containing a Land Rover key fob, which are sitting next to a pair of sunglasses, once again reminding us of the adventure and excitement that the Land Rover brand is meant to inspire us with.

Consider then, Stuart Hirschberg's article titled "The Rhetoric of Advertising." While discussing the techniques of advertising, Hirschberg raises several important points regarding the manner in which companies and advertisers manage to create a life of their own for their products. Hirschberg explains that the most important technique for creating a brand image is to transfer "ideas, attributes, or feelings from outside the product onto the product itself." He expands upon that sentiment in the sense that by doing so, a company's product "comes to represent an obtainable object or service that embodies, represents, or symbolizes a whole range of meanings" (Hirschberg 292). It is that technique that Land Rover is obviously employing in their advertisement. They want consumers to associate their product with ruggedness, excitement, and exploration. Advertisers want consumers to believe that by buying a Land Rover, they will be able to experience such descriptors within their own personal lives. By examining the imagery that evokes emotions of adventure, such as the toy animals or household scenes turned outback excursion, we can come to understand Hirschberg's point in which he states that such technique can "encourage the audience to discover meanings and to correlate feelings and attributes that the advertiser wishes the product to represent in ways that allow these needs and desires to become attached to specific products" (Hirschberg 292). Never mind the fact that contemporary Land Rovers offer little in relation to the rugged, durable Land Rovers of years past, like vintage Defender models, that had few luxury frills yet possessed actual off-road capability. A Land Rover of today is supposed to exude that same sense of adventure and wonder, despite the fact that most will never leave the pavement.

Toyota, one of the world's most popular auto manufacturers, provides a similar style of advertisement during these trying times. An advertisement campaign titled "Let's Dream Places" displays a series of six landscape images designed to evoke a sense of adventure, much like the Land Rover advertisement. The locations depicted in these advertisements are not ones that one might encounter on their daily commute, instead they are destinations: beaches at sunset and rugged, rocky mountainscapes. The text featured most prominently in the advertisements, "Let's Dream Places," holds greater meaning in two senses. For starters, it is a riff on Toyota's existing tagline of "Let's Go Places," which in itself is an attempt by Toyota to associate their cars with adventure. Hirschberg writes that "the most common manipulative techniques are designed to make consumers want to consume to satisfy deep-seated human drives" (Hirschberg 293). While most consumers of Toyota's vehicles will likely use them as an appliance that takes them from point A to point B, Toyota hopes that the "Places" their slogan professes will mean remote landscapes and time spent with friends and family, to their consumer base at least. By buying a Toyota, consumers are able to create who they want to be, perhaps a nomadic individual that experiences all the world has to offer. Hirschberg confirms this type of psychological connection, proposing that "In purchasing a certain product, we are offered the chance to create ourselves, our personality, and our relationships through consumption" (Hirschberg 293). The second component to the greater meaning found in "Let's Dream Places" is the notion that it creates a sense of responsibility within the Toyota brand. To the viewer of the advertisement, Toyota is not necessarily encouraging their consumers to go out and purchase a Toyota or leave their home in search of adventure. Instead, they encourage their consumers to merely "dream" of such things, staying safely put, in hopes that they remain cognizant of Toyota as a brand, so that when stay at home orders are lifted, perhaps potential buyers will pick up a new Toyota instead of a Honda or Ford. The text below this new tagline reads "Stay home now. Go later." This further hints towards the perceived moral goodness of Toyota, as such orders present a sense of altruism towards the human race. Certainly, it would be irresponsible to promote that people should go out and live their lives as they did before COVID-19 shutdowns became the new reality for most, but encouraging measures to slow the rate of infection will stick with consumers when it comes time for them to consider their next automotive purchase, or at least Toyota hopes it will.

While most industries have been impacted in one way or another by COVID-19, the transportation industry and all of its ancillaries are particularly in disarray. Because people are staying at home and not traveling, airlines are struggling financially. Roads are much emptier than before quarantine was implemented, resulting in gasoline prices being dramatically lower than they previously were. To put it simply, people are just staying put. Presumably, their next auto purchase is likely not something that is currently a pressing issue for most consumers, whereas concern over issues of health and finance might take center stage. Despite this, the auto industry wants to make sure that consumers are still thinking about them, while expressing to their consumers that they are "thinking about them," too. This phenomenon of expressing unity in the face of adversity is not exclusive to auto manufacturers, but is present throughout most contemporary advertisements. To some extent, it is true. While some people groups may have a greater risk of being impacted by COVID-19, no one is necessarily immune to it, as exhibited by its presence in the White House. However, it is important that consumers recognize that this messaging, while comforting, is ultimately a technique used to sell a product. As much as large corporate entities want consumers to view them as their friend, one must remain cognizant of the power dynamic that exists between the two groups and thus spend their dollar accordingly.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Hart's essay discusses tactics employed by advertising companies to convince consumers that they are "thinking about them." Can you think of other media (outside of advertising) that uses similar tactics to persuade consumers?
2. Because of COVID-19, marketing tactics and strategies within the automobile industry have shifted to appeal to a new way of life. Consider other adjustments that have been made to everyday life during the pandemic. Are there any adjustments that you think will be lasting or permanent? Why or why not?

Style

1. How does Hart establish and use the theories of Hirshberg as a framework for his own essay?
2. Which rhetorical strategies does Hart identify and analyze in both the Land Rover and the Toyota advertisement?

Contributor Notes

Dalton Blackwell is a communication studies major with a film emphasis. Dalton hopes to one day teach English in South Korea after graduation while working on screenplays. He plans on continuing his studies on advertising, Marxist theory, and capitalism independently after graduating. (Taught by Dr. Steven Melling.)

Gina Dwyer is a senior transfer student at UMKC. She is pursuing a degree in psychology to hopefully go to graduate school to become a medical social worker. One of her main interests outside of social work is animals, and especially endangered animals and what can be done to protect them. (Taught by Mary Henn.)

Lee Francis is a sophomore at the University of Missouri in Kansas City majoring in biology and psychology. They are a lifelong volunteer for Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri, and they are currently working as the Managing Editor of Lucerna for the 2020-2021 school year. In their free time Lee loves caring for plants, playing RPGs, and spending time with their cat, Gizmo. (Taught by Dr. Henrietta Wood.)

Lindsey Gard graduated from UMKC in the Fall of 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She is working as a Paraprofessional with the Fort Osage School district until she continues to graduate school. Lindsey expresses appreciation and gratitude to her professor and mentor, Dr. Jessica Magaña. Lindsey says, "Her [Dr. Magaña's] willingness to give of her time, support, and feedback were invaluable to me. Her guidance helped me throughout my research and writing process. I could not have asked for a better mentor." (Taught by Jessica Magaña.)

Jesse George enjoys writing short stories and poetry in his free time. After always writing with background music for years, he decided to see if others write under similar conditions. Outside writing, he enjoys food, travel, and health and fitness. (Taught by Dr. Crystal Doss.)

William Hart was born in Providence, Rhode Island, and currently resides in Kansas City, Kansas. He is a senior at UMKC, studying English. (Taught by Dr. Stephen Dilks.)

Lara Makhoul is from St. Louis, Missouri, and she is currently a third-year student in the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Six Year B.A./MD program. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree with a minor in Chemistry. Lara has always enjoyed writing both recreationally as well as academically, and she hopes to incorporate her passion for writing into her future career as a physician. (Taught by Dr. Steven Melling.)

Mason McGregor is a Junior at the University of Missouri-Kansas City who's currently studying Biology and Political Science, and plans to become a high school teacher upon graduating. He grew up in Grain Valley, Missouri, but currently lives in Kansas City. As the President of the local chapter of the College Democrats as well as Political Director for the College Democrats of Missouri, Mason is also highly involved in political discourse and supports many progressive organizations around the Kansas City area and the country as a whole. (Taught by Sheila Honig.)

Morgan Rogers is a freshman at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She will be continuing her academic journey as a Computer Science major next fall and is planning on pursuing a Master's in Computer Science with the goal of becoming a software engineer. Morgan is also a member of the UMKC Honors College and is excited to volunteer as an Older Wiser Learner next fall, which involves mentoring a new Honors College member for the school year. When Morgan is not busy writing computer programs or studying, she enjoys playing the drums and performing around Kansas City, reading, and hanging out with family and friends. (Taught by Cody Shrum.)

Audrey Seider (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner: Advanced) is a second year English student with a Creative Writing emphasis. She cares strongly about promoting the power and significance of the written word. She believes writing is the most powerful method of human interaction. Being included in this journal encourages her to push harder to achieve her literary goals. (Taught by Ashley Mistretta.)

Anahid Shook (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner: Intermediate) is a pre-medicine student with a history of working in health care as a respiratory therapist. She has had contact with many different patient demographics from all walks of life. Having witnessed some of the best and worst of humanity, she has developed a personal mission statement: To be of the best service possible to others in need while maintaining a solid sense of humor. (Taught by Amir Baratijourabi.)

Adrienne Simmons is a senior at the University of Missouri-Kansas City majoring in Liberal Arts and minoring in History. She enjoys all things creative, using mediums such as writing, poetry, crafting, and digital design to express her artistic spirit. When she isn't studying, she works full-time in marketing and also runs her own small business, Creative Elevation. She enjoys spending time with family, gaming, and traveling. (Taught by Sheila Honig.)