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Articles

Gender Reimagined

Crystal Lopez

In traditional European and Native American societies alike, women contributed mightily and in distinctive ways to the livelihood of their families and communities in terms of production and reproduction. Yet there are a multitude of differences in how this similar contribution was valued within their respective cultures. These differences illustrate how the ways we conceive of gender confer status and shape society, for better or worse. Modern day ethno-historians have proposed differing theories on how gender roles impacted power dynamics between Native men and women. The lives of Iroquois women provide a case study for exploring these ideas about the nature of women's roles in Native society prior to the arrival of European settlers. A combined consideration of all these things reveals that Native women wielded considerable influence through informal means of power which served to complement, and arguably may have rivaled, the formal authority of Native men. This informal power was predicated on a combination of factors which varied among different tribes, and on the principle of autonomy that was universal to them all.

By studying the lives of women in the Iroquois Confederacy we see how the advantage of owning the fruits of their labor and overseeing their distribution is a critical difference that translates into political power. The French Jesuit missionary Father Joseph-Francois Lafitau eloquently describes the breadth of their advantage and the dividends paid when he said in 1724 of the Iroquois, "nothing, however, is more real than this superiority of the women...The land, the fields and their harvest all belong to them. They are the souls of the Councils, the arbiter of peace and of war. ...The children are their domain, and it is through their blood that the order of succession is transmitted." Indeed, for all their lack of institutional authority the women of the Iroquois Confederacy exercised the power to select and depose of Chiefs, gave sage council on matters great and small, managed the distribution and rationing of food, supplied clothing, and bore the responsibility of deciding when to go to war and why. The sustenance their efforts provided during the harsh winters when hunting was not an option was crucial to their survival and demonstrates both the complementary and essential nature of the roles they inhabited. In light of all this it is hardly surprising that theirs was a matrilineal society where lineage trumped marriage. Detractors point to their lack of a vote in councils as evidence that their power was in truth still limited. Yet the outcome of a vote taken in the Iroquois Confederacy was non-binding and both the autonomy of tribes within the confederacy and the autonomy of individuals within the tribes were sacrosanct.

Ethno-historians who would likely contest Father Lafitau's assertion of Iroquois women's superior status would still credit Native women with having at least a degree of informal power and certainly greater status and power than their European counterparts. Ruth Landes pioneered the notion of "Separate Spheres" to explain the division of labor within Native

cultures and how it impacted the status and authority of women. Native women, Landes argues, perform work that is distinctly private in nature and lacking in structure. Their contribution is largely ignored due to its invisibility whereas Native men's work of hunting and institutional governance falls within a public sphere, and so too its accolades and acknowledgements. This public/private binary is the root cause of what she claims is an imbalance of power skewed towards Native men. Anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, agreeing with Landes on the public vs. private nature of the spheres men and women inhabit, argues further that these separate spheres necessarily result in men having "near universal dominance", not just in Native American society but in any society, and that only by eliminating class distinctions can egalitarianism be achieved between men and women.

Enter Eleanor Leacock, who criticizes the aforementioned approach to understanding gender roles for imposing Western ideas on a pre-capitalist society. Separate spheres and the inequality they create, according to Leacock, were a consequence of the rise of Capitalism. Native societies, which were pre-Capitalist, had no basis for these separate spheres as envisioned by Landes and Rosaldo. Rather, in applying Marxist theory to gender roles in Native cultures, Leacock posits that the division of labor along gender lines is a function of expediency and that these lines may indeed be crossed by members of the opposite sex as needed to provide what their tribe requires for survival. Unfortunately, Leacock's arguments are undermined by her criticisms of Landes and Rosaldo, which can just as easily be made of her own reliance on Marxism.

What is not disputed by any of the above arguments is the fact that in Native societies, the work people did and the contributions they made were determined by gender. Generally speaking, responsibilities of bearing and raising children placed women in their homes where they assumed adjacent duties. Native men were hunters and warriors and they alone held formal positions of power, with only the rarest of exceptions. Must these gender roles necessarily result in a social imbalance of power between men and women?

Within Nancy Shoemaker's anthology "Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women" a true reimaging of gender takes place. Foremost among Shoemaker's arguments is that gender roles in Native American culture were crucial to organizing their societies. Their view of gender was that of a socially constructed and changeable identity rather than a biologically determined absolute. Shoemaker points to the gender fluid concept of "berdache", the "two-spirited" individual who willingly chose to live as the opposite sex as part of a spiritual quest or perhaps simply as a personal prerogative. Consider also the "manly-hearted woman" who was idealized for her warrior-like bravery, courage, strength, and resourcefulness. These variations in gender expression were certainly outside of what was typical. Still, they are illustrative of the fundamental importance of autonomy and choice within Native American culture, which allowed for a more egalitarian relationship between men and women.

While we would do well not to overly romanticize Native American culture, it is hard to deny that Native women enjoyed a greater degree of status and power within their societies than European women did in theirs. Unfortunately, European settlement upended and displaced Native American societies, with disastrous consequences for the status of Native women. For a brief period, Native women enjoyed a surge in status as the conduits for communication and trade with their new neighbors from Europe. Their work not only kept their own villages alive, it began to play a critical role in the survival of early settlers who found themselves in a strange new world they were ill-equipped to thrive in. These circumstances were situational and temporary, however, and when this so-called "middle ground" collapsed so did the heightened status it conferred on Native women. Later, as Native Americans were moved onto reservations and compelled to assimilate, it was Native men (who held formal positions of power) who took over negotiations with colonists. And yet once the land was gone and the wars were over, it was likewise men who had the most difficult time adapting to the new realities of life. No matter how great or small women's power was, it was always informal. Perhaps this was good training for a time when they would need to improvise new ways to assert themselves and provide for their families, displaying admirable adaptability and resilience in the face of these hardships.

In contrast to the ways gender was utilized in a complementary fashion as an organizing principle by Native Americans, European gender dynamics were highly authoritarian and infantilizing of women. As the destiny of European settlers manifested itself across the country, they replicated these oppressive gender dynamics to effectively subordinate Native Americans via racialized distinctions. There were other complex factors in the long and bloody history of conflict between these two cultures, to be sure. Yet the study of Native American gender roles offers an alternative way of defining gender. In a day and age where the concept of gender fluidity is gaining acceptance in spite of the controversy surrounding it, we'd do well to look to the Native Americans for insight and inspiration. Reimagining gender roles as complementary and mutually empowering just might be the key to realizing fuller equality in our own society.

The Cruel Game

Ciara McBroom

South Africa, land that is home to over 20,000 different plants and animals, including the well sought-after lion ("South Africa"). The lion has long been considered a fierce and majestic animal, which attributes to their name "Kings of the Jungle." Now more than ever before though, they are being targeted through a form of novelty hunting known as trophy hunting. People are hunting lions for a variety of reasons; some do it for their fur, others do it for the bones, and some for the mere recreation of it. Lions may be hunted in the wild or in captivity, however, the hunting of captive lions is a fast-growing industry that many hunters are becoming involved in. From the time these captive lions are born they are mistreated, abused, and taken advantage of purely for the benefit of man. This is a cruel and inhumane way to hunt an animal, and is fueled on by nothing but greed, and it needs to be stopped. Hunting and killing captive-bred lions for the sheer thrill is inhumane because the animal undergoes an agonizing death, psychological and physical damage is done from birth, and cubs are being used as a tourist attraction which then leads them to be placed in a canned hunt when older. While the South African economy may benefit from this practice, the negative consequences are too great to be ignored.

Canned hunting, also known as captive hunting, is a type of trophy hunt where animals of all kinds are specifically bred to be killed by a hunter in an enclosed area, leaving them with virtually no chance of escape. It is an extremely popular sport that is done in numerous countries, as well as the United States. Matthew Scully, an American author and journalist, explains just how popular this industry is from the chapter "The Shooting Field" in his book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*:

Every year thousands of deer, wild sheep, boars, big cats, wolves, or even larger game like grizzly bears and moose are tracked down by helicopter, shot with a tranquilizer, caged, and transported hundreds or thousands of miles to a game ranch, all so that they can be cornered and shot again by trophy hunters. (64)

Captive lions are typically bred on farms or private reserves in South Africa, and within three days of being born they are forcibly separated from their mother. This is done to keep the female lions reproducing at a faster rate. Normally, a lioness will produce litters once every two years, but due to the cruel nature of breeding farms they are forced to produce a litter once every six months. This causes the lioness to suffer, and as a result she becomes frail and weak in a matter of years. Thereon after, cubs are used for tourist attractions, raised in cages, and eventually placed in a canned hunt to be shot and killed. Once a lion reaches the trophy hunting age, (4-7 years) they are taken from their enclosed area to another fenced in space to be hunted. Ranch owners will either drug them for a faster kill, tie them to a stake, or simply let

them wander around till the hunting begins (Pacelle A31). Often times there are feeding stations to lure the lion out (usually by a dead animal hanging from a tree), or ranch operators will use themselves, as these lions are tame. Lions are normally hunted with a bow and arrow in canned hunts which leads to an agonizing death for the animal, but more thrill for the human. Captive hunts are also much cheaper than safaris because there is no searching for the animal, or 'fair chase.' Many companies that have these hunts have a "No kill, no pay" policy, as a kill is almost always guaranteed. In fact, the success rate for killing a lion is 99.2% (Lindsey et al 18). These hunts are purely for convenience and pleasure with no remorse for the wellbeing of the lion.

A major contributor to the lifelong suffering of captive lions is tourist attractions. Breeding farms promulgate themselves to be 'ethical' and 'loving sanctuaries' for lions, when in fact the very opposite is true. They publicize for volunteers to come to these "sanctuaries" to bottle feed, play with, and care for lion cubs so that they learn to trust and become accustomed to humans. This is a marketing tactic employed on unaware animal loving volunteers, as well as tourists. Breeders sell the idea that lions will be taken care of in conservation reserves and will be given a good home in the future. Naturally, volunteers sign up and people pay for this "once in a lifetime opportunity." Little do they know, they are being misled by deceptive propaganda and contributing to a cruel industry. Thousands of people travel to pet and take photographs with cute lion cubs; and while this may be all fun and games for the tourist, it is not for the animal. The constant human contact of petting, posing, and picking up is extremely stressful for them which results in loss of fur or diarrhea ("Cub Petting") This unnatural nourishment is psychologically and physically damaging for young cubs to be enduring, but the mistreatment doesn't stop there. Once they become too big to hold, they are then used for another popular tourist attraction known as 'Walking with Lions.' World Animal Protection rated this activity to be in the top five for world's cruellest attractions ("The World's Cruellest"). The lions are trained to walk with humans for hours at a time, day in and day out, and cooperate for treats as if they were a pet at home.

I have personally seen cub petting on lions and selfies with a donkey. I was disembarking a cruise ship at the port of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and at the end of the gangway there was a tent set up for photos. As I am approaching, I notice the small, weak, and most certainly fragile frame of a donkey. Everyone leaving the ship was granted a photo with the animal, as it was included with the cruise line. This is an image I will certainly never forget. People sat down on a bench, and the man responsible for the donkey, grabs him by its front legs and swings him on top of the people's laps. Not even a minute later, more people have filed onto the bench and the donkey is swung on top of them. To accommodate all the cruise goers, the men had to work at a fast pace. This cycle of grabbing, posing, and swinging was evident in the donkey's almost limp body and eyes. This is exactly what is happening to the lions in South Africa. They are being abused and mistreated for human pleasure whether it be for photos, walks, or sport.

Opposing views claim that breeding captive lions helps to keep the wild lion population from decreasing, helps fuel the South African economy, and that even though the animal is in a confined space, they still have plenty of room to roam. Admittedly, breeding ranches along with their tourist attractions are a contributor to the welfare of the economy, but only to a certain extent. Many that are there for captive hunts believe that if canned hunting was to cease, then poaching would only increase. Yet, there is no scientific evidence supporting the claim that captive hunting helps the wild lion population. Lastly, according to one source, "The canned hunting issue is blown out of proportion... animals are released into enclosed areas that mimic the animal's natural habitat, with enough space and cover for it to evade capture" (Tsui TR10(L)). Whether the animal has enough space to roam or not is quite frankly, irrelevant. The final outcome remains the same. Therefore, captive hunting is doing more harm than good.

As of current, there are no laws protecting the African lions from canned hunting, but governments and organizations are starting to take action. Since the premiere of the documentary *Blood Lions*, a film exposing the unjust acts of the breeding and canned hunting industry, the Professional Hunters Association has promised to remove any members connected to canned hunting. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has put two subspecies of lions on the Endangered Species Act, and the Australian government has banned the imports of animal trophies into their country (Carnie). These may be minor changes, but progress is being made.

The practice of breeding and killing captive animals is essentially unethical, inhumane, and powered by pure greed. The misuse of a magnificent creature for one's own pleasure is abhorrent. There is no skill involved in slaughtering an animal that was nurtured by humans its entire life, just to be killed by another one. The hunter is merely looking for an easy trophy with limited effort involved, and a dead animal to show off. In the chapter "Deliver Me From My Necessities," Scully puts it best, "The treacheries begin on the day they are born. From the start they must feel they are in the hands of an enemy" (286). Hunting is a cruel game, yes: a sport with one player, and always the same winner.

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Advertise Selfie Love: The Negative Effect Ads have on Teenage Girls' Self-Image

Elizabeth Provencio

As she moves her phone around to get the perfect angle, she is trying to suck in her stomach and stick out her behind. She will then upload the selfie to a social media site and slide through different filters to see which one clears up her skin the best. After all this time spent, she has twenty different selfies, in twenty different outfits, and at twenty different angles. Yet, this vulnerable teenage girl, feeling defeated, decides not to post the photo because none of them look like Kylie Jenner in her 2015 *Teen Vogue Magazine* cover. A teenage girls' selfie should be the least of her worries, but the pressure of appearing perfect on social media and the flawless women in popular advertisements go hand in hand. Advertisements have dictated beauty standards for decades. We would never see women who were on the heavier side, or who had blemishes on their faces in popular magazines such as *Cosmo Girl* and *Seventeen*. Certainly some can argue that beauty standards in advertisements have become more realistic in recent years, but the ideal image set by companies in the beauty industry is still too perfect, manipulating and creating a negative effect on teenage girls' self-image, eating habits and mental health.

Marketers know exactly what catches the eye of the public when they promote a product such as clothing and makeup. They also know exactly who to use in these advertisements and how to use them. Lawrence Rubin, an author and a book editor with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, said in his article "Merchandising Madness: Pills, Promises and Better Living through Chemistry," "Common to all of the advertising campaigns was their ability to capitalize, if not prey, on deeply entrenched popular culture archetypes" (Rubin 411). In this article, he discusses the negative impact of advertising medication to the public and how manipulative marketers can be. Marketers will take something normal and alter it to appeal to a certain demographic to get people to buy a product. In doing so, they convince their audience that they need to buy a fifty-dollar make-up product that will rid of pores and make it seem as though they have perfect and beautiful skin. Pores are normal to have, everyone has them, so why is it that a marketer will use a seemingly normal thing and advertise that we should cover them up as if they are a flaw? Advertisements in pop-culture alter society's view of what is considered acceptable of the ideal image, such as not having any blemishes on our faces. We as a society, sometimes fall prey to manipulating television commercials, images in magazines and social media ads.

In a social media obsessed society, we are exposed to many photoshopped images of models and celebrities. Social media is not only a place to share thoughts and connect with family

members, but it is a newer platform to display advertisements, aside from magazines and television. Instagram is a social network where users share photos and videos of whatever they want. It is also a place to “follow,” or befriend others to view and like what they post. Many people take advantage of this networking app to advertise. Celebrity Khloe Kardashian advertises her *Great American* clothing company to her followers on Instagram. Not only does she post advertisements, she also models for her own clothing company. Kardashian will post photos of herself in her *Great American* jeans with her tiny waist and her huge bottom; she will receive millions of likes on her heavily filtered picture. She is not the only one to do this; many companies strive off of social media sites to drive sales. So, not only do young girls face the adversities of a perfect image on advertisements in magazine ads and television commercials, they now face this new form of advertising on social networking sites. Being exposed to all of the altered images on social media has negative effects on teen’s mental health. Anjali Chandra, an author with a Master’s degree in education, says, “Though a clear relationship between [social networking site] use and depression has yet to be established, researchers have found that adolescents with poor mental health are generally more frequent users of social networking sites” (Chandra.). There is not much research on the effects social media has on teenage mental health, but with the research that we do have, it can be said that there is definitely a connection between the two.

Like a young girls’ mental health, self-esteem is fragile and it can be easily broken. Mary Pipher, an author with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, who is best known for her writings on young girls, said “Girls stop thinking, ‘Who am I? What do I want?’ and start thinking, ‘What must I do to please others?’” (Pipher 283). In her article, she explains the transition that adolescent girls experience once they reach puberty, and the changes to their thought process toward their self-image. Life for girls becomes less about what makes them happy and more about what makes society happy. Their self-love becomes self-doubt and they become more dependent on advertisements’ definition of beauty. In a world full of photoshopped models and celebrities, the teenage girls’ mind is vulnerable to these images. In a survey conducted by *Aol.com* and *Today.com* researchers found that, “Eighty percent of teen girls compare themselves to images they see of celebrities; among those who compare themselves to these images almost half say it makes them feel dissatisfied with their own appearance” (“Ideal to Real”). Seeing the Kardashian sisters get tremendous amounts of attention for their “break the internet” photos, can play a huge part in young girls’ self-esteem. They believe they are not viewed as beautiful because they do not look like the altered photos in magazines and on social media, not knowing the extent of just how altered these photos are. A young girl will see these images that are edited by professionals and stand in front of a mirror comparing her differences to the models in advertisements, but what she does not know is that different does not mean ugly.

Although, there is no denying that recently advertisements have become more diversified and less digitally altered. For example, companies, such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Fenty Beauty* and even *Nike*, have recently begun to promote their products with women of different sizes and skin color. By doing this, they have created a broad spectrum of what is now accepted as beautiful. Writer and editor for *The New York Times*, Jada Yaun, discussed in her article, "Now this is a Super Model," the accomplishments plus-size model Ashely Graham has achieved in the modeling industry:

Through some alchemy of beauty, luck, and sheer will, Graham became the first model with clothing tags bearing numbers like 14 and 16 to show off her glistening, spray-tanned curves on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. This March [2017], she broke similar ground as the first model of her size to appear on the cover of *Vogue* in the magazine's 125-year history—a one-two punch of commercial and high-fashion dominance that not even [Americas Next Top Model] creator Tyra Banks in her heyday could claim. (Yaun)

Graham speaks confidently when vocalizing her body insecurities to her fans and is not afraid to speak freely about having cellulite and belly rolls. She is a face for the self-love movement and has been featured on *TED Talk*, a media organization built to inspire and inform people, discussing her struggles as a plus size woman. She is paving the way for future plus-sized models and leaving an imprint on pop-cultures ideal image by continuously being selected by different companies to advertise their products.

Though Graham has made a huge impact in the way companies promote their products, there is still a seemingly unattainable standard created by advertisers. Young girl's diets and eating habits are being disrupted by the influence of advertisements with models that are already thin, being photoshopped to be unrealistically thin. Jean Kilbourne an author and filmmaker, known for speaking on the way women are portrayed in advertising, explains in her *TED Talks* video presentation, that advertisers will go to the extreme when they digitally alter a photo of a model. She presents the audience with a photo from Ralph Lauren and in the photo the models head is abnormally bigger than her waist creating an "anatomical impossibility" (*The Dangerous Ways Ads See Women.*). The model, who was already thin before being photoshopped seen in the Ralph Lauren ad, has since been fired because they considered her to be too fat. What is that saying to young girls today? When young girls are constantly exposed to models that are photoshopped, such as the model from Ralph Lauren, they begin to feel the pressure to be thin as well. Researcher at Brown University and doctor of science, Allison Field, claims that "girls who were frequent readers of fashion magazines were two to three times more likely than infrequent readers to diet to lose weight because of a magazine article and to feel that

magazines influenced what they thought was the ideal body shape" (Field.). This proves that young girls will change their diet to attempt to look like the models in these magazines. Although not a big percentage of teen age girls will practice an extreme diet, such as bulimia nervosa, many will still implement unhealthy ways to lose weight. Many girls starve themselves, eat a very low amount of calories, or even smoke to become thin or remain thin (Kittler.). With the platform that magazine companies have, they could promote beauty at a healthy level and not an unrealistic and damaging image.

There has been a positive movement in the advertising industry. Companies are being more open to models that normally would not be seen in ads, but there is still work to do. Society should be working toward creating a world where a teenage girl does not think about her physical appearance, but thinks about her self-love. When a teenage girl picks up a magazine, turns on the television, or signs into her social media account, she should not feel like she is not beautiful. Marketers need to stop removing women's unique physical attributes because the reality is that everyone's body is different.

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Was That Burger Transgenic?

Lauren Silvis

In 2010 the first transgenic animal was approved for human consumption. It grew full size in half the time due to a growth hormone, which caused deformations and early death (Brookes). Simply explained by biotechnologist Elisabeth Ormandy, "Transgenic animals are genetically engineered animals that are produced by the introduction of a foreign gene/s of interest into their genome" (Ormandy). Transgenic animals are either genetically engineered or in some way genetically modified. This testing quickly transferred to chickens, cows, pigs, and other farmed animals (Jeong). In 2017, over two million animals were involved in genetic mutation experiments (Perzigian). Genetic engineering of farm animals needs to be made illegal because it is inhumane and cruel. Genetically engineered animals suffer from deformations, the experiments are grossly expensive and the products from these animals are dangerous for consumers and the environment. With any issue, there are cons as well as pros. I cannot deny the beneficial ideas of genetically engineered farm animals for humans, such as faster reproduction rates, less food consumption, and medicinal advancements. However, in this case, I believe the factional cons, outweigh the imaginary pros.

Twisted guts, limb and skeletal deformities, liver abscesses and ulcers are just a few tortures piglets, calves, chicks and other transgenic animals are forced to endure from their time of birth (Hagedorn). Does anything about that sound humane? These experiments have the possibility of human benefit. However, they create animals destined to a life of pain. Specialist Suzanne Pope revealed her findings in, *Genetically Engineering Farm Animals, The Unseen Toll:*

There is a similarly high death rate during pregnancy and soon after birth in genetically manipulated cattle, and some calves are born weak or deformed. An Australian team reported that overall only 6% of their implanted embryos resulted in calves. A subsequent experiment produced 22 fetuses going to term, of which 17 were born alive and 5 dead. A further 2 calves died within 24 hours, 2 were destroyed at 3 weeks due to ill-health, and 1 died at 3 months. So, the survival rate of fetuses going to term was similar to 55%, not taking into account the many embryos that perished before this time. (qtd. in Knight)

Genetic engineers are continuing these experiments today, the results are not improving. Does the human need for more animal consumption completely override their rights as living beings? No. Genetic engineering of farm animals needs to be made illegal because it is inhumane and causes horrible lives for all animals involved. I agree with People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), in their explanation on their point of view, "We believe that every

creature with a will to live has a right to live free from pain and suffering" ("Why Animals Rights?"). If the ethical side is not enough to prove the severity of this issue, let's focus on how much tangible money is spent on these experiments.

Subject matter expert, Louise Keogh frankly stated, "In the US at least \$3 billion is spent on [the experiments focusing on] genetically engineered animals" (Keogh). Reports done by the USDA, show the annual cost of a large farm is forty-two million dollars a year ("Farm Production Expenditures"). After doing a little bit of math, I have discovered with the three billion dollars spent on transgenic farm animal's experiments, seventy-one new farms could be opened. Those seventy-one farms, in one year alone, could feed over a billion people (Perzigian). After extensive research, I have found absolutely no information published for public knowledge where this money is coming from. Claims have been made the payment is by donation only. Yet, there are no records of said donations. I speculate either companies are involved and ashamed of their involvement, or US citizens tax dollars are being spent on experiments resulting in no benefits for humans. With 42% of the entire world starving every day, does it seem ethical and justifiable to waste three billion dollars to torture animals and see no benefits? Can any of the products even be consumed by humans safely? Human consumption is the proposed benefit behind all of these torture tests.

The answer is no, none of the genetically modified products can be consumed, according to a Harvard Professor, Therese Phillips, studying genetically modified food. Her explanation for why includes the examples of growth hormones: "Growth hormones placed in animals by genetic engineers commonly cause humans changes in metabolic rates, oral toxicity and disruption of intestinal microflora" (Phillips). Growth hormones are one of many harmful results in transgenic farm animals made by scientists, commonly done in an effort to make the meat grow full-size, faster. This information on faster growth thus nullifies the first pro-genetic engineering argument. Growth hormones, unfortunately, are not the only issue. Animals who are produced through genetic engineering, are placed under such dreadful conditions their entire life they present other issues when consumed by humans. With newer experiments, growth hormones have been removed, only for new issues to arise. Cases of deathly allergic reactions, decreased nutritional value and increased toxicity are a few of many issues (Phillips). Consumption is not the only factor negatively affecting all of us. The act is also harmful to the environment/ecosystem. Scientist Maria Rodale spent the majority of her research studying how these experiments are contributing to global warming. It is not necessarily only the animals themselves causing the issues, the food eaten by these animals require certain chemicals in order to keep them alive. Rodale explains transgenic animals "require synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, which are responsible for approximately 60 percent of total emission of nitrous oxide" (Rodale). So, genetic engineering of farm animals destroys their livelihood, costs billions of

dollars, is dangerous to anyone eating the result and assists in destroying our world. In my opinion, these three facts alone prove why this act needs to be illegal. No matter these facts, arguments are still made defending their “right” to continue their practices.

The ideas of how genetically engineered farm animals are supportive for our livelihood include faster reproduction rates, less food consumption, and medicinal advancements. Beginning with faster reproduction rates, Antonio Regalado, a journalist for the New York Times, interviewed a farmer using genetically engineered animals and plants. The anonymous interview pleads his case saying, “I can grow plants and raise animals genetically modified 60% faster, almost doubling my income and products” (“Farm Production Expenditures”). What this anonymous farmer fails to mention is the fact 55% of all animals die in the womb, and at least 15% die shortly after birth when transgenic. Those who do survive face serious medical issues and as mentioned above cause issues for consumers, therefore, nullifying this side of the argument. Continuing with the claim of less food consumption, the anonymous supporter also spoke on this behalf “with animals growing in half of the time, they are eating half of the food. Saving money and food” (“Farm Production Expenditures”). Much like the faster reproduction rates, easy to observe issues arise on this side of the argument. These animals may be eating less however, they are dying. Are we really saving money/resources when the outcome is killed anyway? Charles Hagedorn, Professor and Biotechnology Specialist mentioned his point of view “money spent on testing and dead animals is more than money to all of the cows” (Hagedorn). Along with claims of less food consumption and faster reproduction, it is also proposed to benefit humans medicinally. Hagedorn addressed this assertion; “Recombination can occur between the plant-produced viral genes and closely related genes of incoming viruses. Such recombination may produce viruses that can infect a wider range of hosts or that may be more virulent than the parent viruses” (Hagedorn). The point he is attempting to prove is in an effort to learn more and make new preventions for viruses and illnesses, scientists are actually worsening the problem. I think it is scientifically clear, all attempts to make genetic engineering of farm animals seem like a good idea but since have all been easily proved false. With animals doubling in size, eating barely any food and experiencing diseases we have never seen according to PETA’s definition of animal welfare “... that every creature with a will to live has a right to live free from pain and suffering...” (“Why Animals Rights?”). All of these pros prove to destroy farm animal’s livelihood making it completely inhumane and justifying why it needs to be banned.

“Scientists are now capable of creating new species of animals by taking genetic material from one, or more, plants or animals, and genetically engineering them into the genes of another animal...” (Perzigian); Andrew Perzigian defined transgenic animals in his feature article posted by Michigan Law School. At this point, my bias is clear. Genetic engineering, particularly of farm

animals needs to be illegal. Nothing about destroying a life or livelihood is humane. How do we allow such cruel acts to take place? And of all living beings, the ones we farm for our own benefit, our own stomachs, and our dinner table. Unequivocally, and confidently, I can stand by my belief, genetic engineering of farm animals needs to be made illegal. When genetically made, the animals suffer, our pockets suffer and our bodies and planet suffers. Gren Reynolds in USA Today explained there are at least 300,000 laws (Reynolds). One law enacting the experiments and development of genetically engineered farm animals to be illegal would save so many of their lives. Animals are being abused by genetic scientists. Our animals are in pain, we are in pain, our planet is in pain. Change is a ripple effect, someone has to throw the first rock. Be a part of the ripple. A petition has been started trying to bring this issue to the surface; visit petitions.movein.org and search Farm Animals Cry Too. Once the maximum number has been signed it will be sent to The United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate. It is our responsibility to enact the change we want to see. Nobody can hinder our ability to speak out. Speak out or be outspoken.

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Factory Farming in Today's Economy

Wulfrano Zamora

Honey smoked ham, bacon lover's turkey, hot and spicy buffalo chicken, these are just some of the many flavors of meat that one can get at any local deli or grocery store, but has anyone ever wondered just how the animal gets from a farm to a package at the store? They start out at factory farms that are set up all over the world. Factory farms are basically a large, closed facility that raises animals in large numbers and confines them to small spaces to maximize the yield. The animals are fed many antibiotics to fight off disease and promote faster growth. The farms are set up on large plots of land and, due to the many animal's waste products, can cause issues with the environment. Using these methods, farming companies are able to produce a substantial amount of product in a very short amount of time. Factory farming has a number of negative ramifications, though, including inhumane animal treatment, detrimental effects on human health and a significant impact on the environment.

To begin, farms often treat their animals inhumanely. Music legend and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) advocate Sir Paul McCartney once said that "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian" ("Glass Walls"). The insides of a factory farm share a likeness to a slaughterhouse. Inside a factory farm, the animals are born and led to live a life in a small area; they spend their days standing in their own feces and urine. According to Jonathon Anomaly, a Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) professor at the University of Arizona, in his article "What's Wrong with Factory Farming", there are so many animals around them that they end up breathing and choking on the fumes from the accumulated waste. Specifically, Chickens are crammed in large pits where most of them do not have room to move around and end up becoming suffocated by the other animals on top of them. Anomaly states that "Egg-laying hens can be packed inside a battery cage, a wire cage so small that they cannot spread their wings." Being confined so closely together, the hens' peck at each other's feathers and bodies. This sometimes leads to injuries that will lead to infection. In addition, pregnant sows spend their pregnancies crammed in a gestation crate, a metal cage that is just a little wider and longer than the sow herself (Anomaly). Not being able to move around, they suffer leg problems and get skin lesions. Often, growing pigs are confined to slotted concrete floors, and, due to the stress of being confined and boredom, they end up biting and causing injuries to the other pigs (Anomaly). In order to prevent any further injuries, the animals are mutilated without anesthesia or pain relief. The chickens can be de-beaked, the animals with horns will be de-horned, and animals with tails can have their tails docked off (Anomaly).

Subsequently, because the facility is in the business to make a profit, they need to have these animals grow to their full size and quickly. They accomplish this by injecting them with growth hormones and antibiotics, which have been approved by the Federal Drug Administration ("Steroid"). The animals grow so quickly that their bodies cannot handle their weight and often become injured. The government calls these facilities "Concentrated or Confined Animal Feeding Operations" or CAFO's for short. Since the CAFO's are so crowded many of the animals are forced to stand in their own urine and feces while feeding or being milked. This leads to the animals becoming disease breeders, and, to prevent this, farmers inject the animals with many antibiotics to prevent the spread of diseases. These methods do not benefit the livestock, and the use of antibiotics actually creates meat that is harmful to humans.

When humans consume meat from factory farms, they may be exposing themselves to food that can harm their health. Laura Sayre, a freelance writer and animal rights activist, explains that "The many uses of antibiotics creates a drug-resistant bacterium that when consumed by humans can be harmful" (Sayre). Antimicrobial growth promotants (AGP's) were first introduced in the 1950's and, in small quantities, the antibiotics could be administered to the animals with positive results ("Battle of the Bugs"). For many years these practices were looked highly upon, and it was not until years later that the negative side effects started showing. Scientists found that AGP's were creating hard to treat and drug-resistant bacterial infections in humans ("Battle of the Bugs"). Many more people are getting sick and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "estimates that each year, nearly 2 million people in the United States acquire an infection while in a hospital, resulting in 90,000 deaths. More than 70 percent of the bacteria that cause these infections are resistant to at least one of the antibiotics commonly used to treat them" ("Battle of the Bugs"). The process of injecting animals with antibiotics to keep them healthy in the inhumane factory farm conditions has a direct impact on human health.

Furthermore, in his article "Factory Farming and Human Health" Tim O'Brien explains:

It is not small food production, but large-scale factory farming, that presents a threat to our health. Mad cow disease (BSE) and vCJD ('human BSE'), with its potential to lead to the deaths of thousands of people in the UK, and who knows how many more around the world, are the terrible consequences which have followed from the apparently innocuous practice of feeding dead cows to live ones. The disaster has brought home the impact that 'industrial' animal husbandry -- viewing animals as production machines -- can have on human health. *The Ecologist*. 31.5 (June 2001): pS30.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or most commonly known as (Mad Cow Disease) has been shown to come from the farming process. O'Brien, an animal rights activist, and American novelist describes the process about how humans can get BSE: "The parts of a cow that are not eaten by people are cooked, dried, and ground into a powder. The dried powder is then used for many different purposes, including as an additive in animal feed" (O' Brien). A cow gets BSE by eating feed contaminated with parts that came from another cow that was sick with BSE. When humans ingest the meat tainted with BSE, they can contract Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), and it can be fatal. The FDA has been working closely with the farms to make sure that no high-risk part of the cow will be used to make animal feed ("A Win").

Moreover, growth hormones are also given to cows in the dairy industry to help increase their milk production. Once they can no longer produce milk, they are slaughtered for their beef. Sayre reports that the top six growth hormones frequently used by the U.S. dairy industry have been shown to drastically heighten the risk of breast, prostate, and colon cancer. Producers are not required to list the use of hormones on product labels, so many people do not know what hormones they are ingesting (Sayre). Human health can be negatively affected by the consumption of factory farm meat. A further aspect of human health being affected by factory farming is through the environment.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took a study in 2010 to examine the pollution generated by large factory farms, the study showed that the air around the CAFO's, "Maybe unsafe, with levels of particulate matter, ammonia, or hydrogen sulfide at many sites [being] well above federal health-based standards" ("Hazardous"). With over a thousand animals at a farm, it's not hard to imagine how the environment can be affected, surrounding areas may have to deal with the dust and gasses from the livestock manure. According to a 2006 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, "The animal agriculture sector emits 18% of global, human-induced greenhouse gas emissions. The majority of these emissions emanate from pig and dairy cow manure, from which methane emissions increased by 37% and 50%, respectively, between 1990 and 2005" ("An HSUS"). A 2004 Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) report stated that the total area of forest lost increased from 41.5 million hectares in 1990 to 58.7 million hectares in 2000. In just ten years, an area twice the size of Portugal was lost, most of it to pasture for farm animal production.

Furthermore, in the U.S. factory farms remain as the number one source of water pollution in the country. Ronnie Cummings the Director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), writer and activist explains how "Factory farms contaminate surface waters, community water supplies, and aquifers with billions of pounds of chemical fertilizer overflow, pesticides, and animal compost every year. Frogs, Fish, and other organisms that depend upon clean water

and marshes are slowly being wiped out" (Cummings). In addition to this, factory farms are depleting the topsoil at a fast pace. Factory farm meat production is a major factor in the environmental devastation, in part because feeding grain to farm animals to produce meat, instead of feeding it directly to humans involves an unsustainable amount of land, as well as a large loss of energy. It takes ten to twenty times as much land to feed people meat as it does to feed them with the grain ("Introduction"). These procedures significantly impact the environment but can also benefit the environment and economy.

Although many may view factory farming as negative, it can also show some positive effects. Some people may view the products to be a bit costly, factory farming products can cost less than others because the industry can produce a vast amount of meat in a fraction of the time. Organic or free-range farms tend to charge more for the product because it takes more time and effort to tend to the animals; also, organic food supply is not such a high demand (Why). David Leyonhjelm an Australian politician and self-employed veterinarian illuminates on how factory farming is not inhumane "Livestock farmers do not make money unless they take proper care of their animals. In many ways, factory farming is more humane than the small-scale farming of old. If the animals were suffering from the unspeakable cruelties so often attributed to factory farming, they would be dying like flies." (Leyonhjelm). Many factory farms ensure the livestock receive a perfectly balanced diet to which they have constant access. They also have plentiful water, are protected from wind, rain, heat and cold, and are safe from outside predators. (Leyonhjelm) Factory farming can be beneficial to the economy because it promotes technology development. The farms heavily rely on automation and personnel to operate the machinery.

In order to keep up with the world's growing population and high demand for animal products, the factory farms need to ensure that it is utilizing the most effective, safe and up to date machinery. This encourages jobs, jobs to run the machines and engineers to engineer them; also, labor workers to tend to the animals. Many economies can thrive off of the factory farms where they are located. More jobs mean a less unemployment rate and a higher rate of well-being in the area. In addition to some viewing the factory farms to be humane and introduce more jobs, factory farming significantly demonstrates negative results.

To sum up, factory farming has a number of negative consequences, though, including inhumane animal treatment, damaging effects on human health and a substantial impact on the environment. The methods being used to produce a large number of animal products has shown to not only be harmful to the animals; but also, to human health. Many Americans who consume the by-product from factory farming can develop a drug-resistant bacterium. In some cases, can develop (BSE). Factory farms are the number one source of water pollution and

some animals near the farms, are slowly being eradicated. Furthermore, factory farming only has one side that benefits from the whole process, and it usually tends to be the farm.

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Personal Essay

San Diego State University

Sims

There are a few things that are expected of seniors when they graduate high school: move away, go to college, and get a job. Some of us decide to listen to society's expectations and move away, while others opt to do what is best for them and stay home. I was one of the graduates that decided to leave Bakersfield to go to college when I finished high school in June of 2016. I got into every college I applied to, spanning from Northern Washington to San Diego, so I had a list of towns to possibly relocate to. My choice? San Diego State University. At seventeen, I had no idea that it would be the most self-teaching experience of my life, plus I received a pretty nice education all at once.

Lesson one of going away to college: learn how to get myself wherever I need to go. When I was roughly 244 miles away from home, I could not call my parents every time something went wrong, just as I could not rely on them to get me out of bed in the morning. If there is one thing I am glad to have learned, it is how to use public transportation. In Bakersfield, I drove everywhere outside of walking distance. Within a day of my family having left to go back home, I had already realized there were items I needed to go to the store and buy (locks, storage bins, etc.). There were over five miles between the college and the nearest Walmart, so I had no choice but to suck it up and learn how to ride the trolley. I had only ever been on a school bus, so it was a pretty big shock. I even got myself a bit lost at first by getting off one stop early; it took me about ten minutes to realize that the directions on my map did not match where I was, as I just kept thinking I was close since I could see the buildings from where I was at the base of a hill. From that point forward, I knew: always pay attention to my surroundings, and to know the names of my stops well. It would have saved me a lot of hassle.

Lesson two of going away to college: I will not always fit in, and that is okay. Majority of my time away at college was spent in three locations: the dorms, the gym, and the classrooms. I chose one of the biggest party schools in California, yet I only attended one party all year. That is okay though. I had a taste of the experience through the three roommates that I shared a tiny one-bedroom space with. I was making the Dean's list, while some of them were just scraping by the 3.0 GPA at a college where that was practically unacceptable, all because they wanted to have a good time. One of them happened to be in the top sorority on campus, so they were at parties almost every weekend. It is not any where near as cool as it is made to be; while I was enjoying watching movies in my dorm and talking on the phone with my friends and family back home, they were throwing up and falling into the bushes in front of one of the local fraternities. Now, for some, that sounds like a good time. For the sober roommate they come home sick to? It is

probably the worst; I spent half the year away listening to my roommates looking after one another as they got sick into trashcans. Then they got to do the walk of shame to the communal showers the next morning where they would get stuck hosing out the bins in front of everyone. Word traveled fast, so everyone knew who caused the entire floor to stink. Watching them made me okay with not having friends as much, as I know I would have been the same person I was judging if I had made friends with them.

I was not a loner completely by choice though in San Diego. I quickly learned that most of the people on campus were snobby. I did not come from money like most of them did, as many of them were paying the \$26,000 a year starting fee out of pocket, so I was rarely invited to do things. They did not want to spend their days relaxing by the pool or on the sand at the beach; most of the people on campus wanted to pay to go to the movies or go shopping at super expensive stores like Gucci each weekend. That is not what we do in the central valley, so it seemed like a waste of money to me. I was more interested in going to the beach and going hiking through the trails, but most of the people I met were uninterested. My biggest mistake was deciding not to go just because I'd be the weird girl by myself at the beach. I ultimately learned it is perfectly okay to do my own thing, just as friends are a bonus, not a necessity.

Lesson three of going away to college: separation anxiety is probably the worst part of going away, and it can easily become something much worse than normal social anxiety if ignored. There is so much about the emotional toll it takes on a person that is never discussed. I wish I had known how poorly I would react to being away from my friends and family, as no one even warned me it was a possibility. It may have been lessened by having friends to run around with, but I do not think even a friend or two would have changed it. No one mentions the fact that plenty of students each year have nervous break downs (or close to) over being away from their family. No one got personal enough to tell me moving away could land me in a therapy session, nor do they talk about anyone that moves back home when the school year ends. I was made to feel bad about my personal choice to move back home, as my roommates and classmates did not get it. While everyone else was scheduling their courses for the next fall, I was working with councilors to set up a schedule at Bakersfield College. I learned quickly why people turn to things like marijuana and drinking; I could not even listen to music for over a year. My anxiety and depression got so bad that music put me into panic attacks, and I could almost never sleep. Thankfully, I did not see drinking as a solution and knew my best choice would be to finish my contracted year and move back home. It took a long-lasting toll on me; I literally had to start going to therapy because the separation anxiety turned into full-blown anxiety disorder, and it has been determined to be a result of moving away at seventeen. One of the biggest lessons: know myself and know what I can and cannot handle.

Lesson four of going away to college: always make sure I am making the right choice for me, and not because someone else tells me what I should do. I did not want to go away to college; I had wanted to stay put and do my freshman and sophomore year at BC to save money. My older sister passed on Humboldt University to go to CSUB after chickening out, and she made sure that I knew how much she regretted her choice three years later. She told me that even if I only do one year, I would regret it for the rest of my life if I did not at least try. Big mistake. I ignored the feeling in my gut telling me to stay home because I wanted to trust my older sister and learn from her. Instead, I practically destroyed myself. I did not consider that at the end of the day, I was the one that was going to be living almost five hours away from my family. I was the one that had to spend hundreds of dollars in travel expenses to see my family; even if I only came home for the mandatory holidays, I would have spent nearly \$300 on bus fares alone. When I listened to all her regrets and advice, I forgot one thing: I am not my sister. The biggest lesson out of my entire SDSU experience was taken from this. I learned, no matter what, never let someone else dictate some of the biggest decisions of my life.

Looking back on the experience now, I do not know that I would call it a waste. My time at San Diego State taught me a variety of practical lessons. I now know how to create a financial budget, use transportation around and out of the city, and it taught me who my real friends are. It also taught me the major lessons I discussed previously, such as knowing myself and to make my own choices for myself. Despite all that I learned from my time away, it was still the most destructive and hardest thing I have ever had to do in my chaotic nineteen years of life.

Poetry

The Art of Knowledge: A Collection of Poems

Sims

"The Art of Knowledge"

There is nothing quite like knowing the answer;

Whether it be a question or an idea, knowledge always proves beneficial.

One must know themselves, or else they will begin to seem slightly artificial.

One must also know of love for those that matter most;

Though, one cannot forget to make sure to know a skill that will help them be a good host.

The art of knowledge is simple:

Work until knowledge about everything one knows has been obtained,

Then proceed to learn about every new thing discovered along the way, as

Knowledge is limitless.

"The Art of Making Candy"

The Karo was poured,

And then the sugar followed.

White as a dove in hue,

The confectioner waits for her que.

She waits for the mix to properly bubble,

One drop too soon and the candy will resemble rubble.

Pockets of heat embrace her like a hug.

She chooses her flavoring to be that of berry,

She adds the dye, red as the cochineal bug.

The sticky concoction takes on a bright red hue,

Then it's ready to be poured and its sweetness given its due.

The silicone molds were cold to the touch,

With a variety of shapes that to anyone else would have seemed a bit much.

Monkeys, hearts, and flowers galore,

The young confectioner still wished for more.

The molds after being filled looked rather nice,
But the candy is not done until it is as hard as ice.

When it comes time to pop the candy out,
The young woman lets off one big shout.

Her hand pulsates with burns of red,

She thinks of what her father would have said.

This is nothing new, she always burns herself.

She bags the candy.

“My Perfect Father”

He is the friend everyone wants;

He'll help in every way he can.

You'll never go hungry if he is around;

You'll never be homeless if he is made aware.

He is the perfect friend.

He is the husband everyone wants;

He'll treat you like gold every chance he gets.

He'll raise your children;

He'll hold your hand.

He is the perfect husband.

He is the employee everyone wants;

He'll work harder than anyone else.

He'll take the jobs no one wants;

He'll cover uncountable extra shifts.

He is the perfect employee.

He is the father everyone wants;

I'll never go unclothed.

I'll always be loved;

I'll always have a shoulder to learn on.

He is my perfect father.

"Knowing Yourself"

I am my own best friend.

I know how to bring my tears to an end;

I am the best shoulder I could lean on.

I am the quickest to get my own heart on the mend.

I know cookie dough is the answer to everything.

I am my own best friend.

I am my own best friend.

I know that I'm never truly alone when I'm by myself;

I can spend plenty of quality time all by myself.

I never choose the wrong movie to watch.

I always know when I want to relax or when I want to go out and enjoy life.

I am my own best friend.

I am my own best friend.

I buy myself the best presents.

I always remember what my favorite candy is.

I never choose the wrong color when I'm shopping for myself.

I know exactly what kind of help I could use at the moment.

I am my own best friend.

I am my own best friend.

I laugh at all my own jokes.

I know which book I have reread a hundred times.

I have experienced how fun and loving I can be.

I know most of all how I love to live life.

I am my own best friend.

Untitled

Salvador Vidaurri

I, swift Achilles, write this to my son,

Neoptolemus. Forgive me for this vice:

As Hector pierc'd the heart of my dear friend,

My passion begs for me to take his life.

By Hector's death my grief abates thenceforth,

Thus sealing mine own death, as those cruel Fates

Had once foretold in days gone by. Absolve

Not if you wish, for brief and shameful are

These parting words exchanged through ink and script.

I'll live not long enough to see you wed,

Nor spar with you to mold you as a champion.

The role of absent father I'll concede,

For faith in you lies heavy in my heart;

In absence of that love which Hector killed,

Your worth shall sate my need to persevere.

Come break of day, my mother Thetis, who

Despite failed pleas to yield me from my course,
Bestows upon me armor to replace
That which vile Hector looted from my comrade.
When dawn arrives and I've equipped my greaves,
Long chase I'll give to Priam's craven son.
With parting words, I beg thee to forgive,
And carry on my name through your bold will;
I understand if you should hold this 'gainst me,
To never grant reprieve for this haste end.
But even when I shudder my last breath,
To sink towards Hades's cold domain, I'll find
Warm comfort in your imminent potential.

Fiction

With the Chime of Wedding Bells

Sims

From the small room, Calliope could hear the church bells beginning to chime, signaling another hour had passed without her moving. She knew she needed to get up and continue to get ready, as everyone would be staring at her that day, but she could not bring herself to drag her body off the cold tile flooring. Instead of standing as she knew she should, she rested her head on the side of the bed, her pale blonde hair spilling around her face in messy waves. Pulling her knees closer to her chest, she attempted to calm herself from the panic that was beginning to bubble up inside of her chest.

Calliope did not even look up when she heard the hotel room door open, as she knew by the sound of the heels that it was her maid of honor. Only Presley would wear heels that high before she absolutely had to. Presley seemed to pause for a moment upon seeing Calliope's present state, the room falling silent.

At last, she asked, "Calliope? What's going on babe? Is everything all right?"

"I can't go through with it..." Presley began to notice the panic painted across her best friend's face, though she wasn't sure why she had suddenly changed her mind.

"You can't back out now. You know that. We need that money!" Frustration was beginning to roll off Presley in waves, but Calliope understood. She was the one that created this mess, therefore she was the one who had to clean it up. It just was easier said than done when Calliope knew that it was at the expense of her love life. Who wants to purposefully marry when it isn't out of love?

Growing up, she had always pictured a small-town wedding where she would marry the man of her dreams. She imagined herself walking down a white makeshift aisle; sunflowers and daisies would surround her, none of that old traditional stuff. She wouldn't wear some poufy ballgown-like dress, instead, Calliope had dreamed of wearing a white sundress. The guests wouldn't be dressed in formal attire. Her friends and family would be dressed in button ups and blue jeans. Even her veil would be Calliope through and through, as she always imaged it being made from intertwined daisies instead of lace or tulle. She even pictured it all the way down to the groom, as she knew he'd wear a nice shirt with some blue jeans and Doc Martens. Fancy, overpriced balls weren't her style.

And now she got none of that. Instead, the groom wanted everything so over the top that she was doing all but riding in a horse-drawn carriage. Thinking of this, Calliope turned to look Presley dead in the face when she spoke and let the sadness show this time.

"I just can't do it Pres. I'm giving up my whole future. It's easy for you to agree with this wedding when you don't have anything to lose from it. The money would be bailing you out of your problems, not mine."

"You crashed the car. You ran the man over. You were the one that got us caught Calliope. You could have just moved on and left him there. Instead, you tattled to the police like the little girl you are. You have got to stop living in the fantasy world of yours!"

Anger sparked in Calliope's chest at her words. Was Presley ever going to forgive her for calling the police? Why would she not tell the truth? The man had a family. She should know that considering she had to face them while she testified in court. Presley didn't even get punished as harshly as she did. All she had to do is pay for part of the pain and suffering to the family and serve one year for the coke that the cops found on her. Calliope knows she will never forget the two years she did in a Texas state prison; on top of that, she's the one that can never forget that she killed a man.

"I can't help that you just wanted to leave him there! I can't help that you decided to deal drugs! I can't help that you brought your friend's stuff with us! Why wouldn't you just tell me that you were struggling so much? Or at the very least warn me so you could have left before I called 911?" Her heart broke with her last words, but not for the man she killed this time. She felt for her best friend of twenty-two years; she will never understand why Presley did not tell her that she had gotten herself into debt. She could have helped, even if it meant selling her mama's house.

"How could I warn you? You're a rat!"

Calliope didn't even realize that she had gotten up or moved towards Presley until her fist was connecting with her nose. Anger surged through her, insatiable no matter how many times she continued to hit her. Presley eventually managed to get a hand up enough to grab Calliope by her throat, although it didn't do much damage. Her eyes were swelling shut, making it difficult to see anything.

"Stop! Please stop! I'm sorry!" Presley choked out between blows. She could feel herself becoming tired, so she knew she had to act quickly if she wanted to stop Calliope from her

vicious assault. Dragging her hands across the floor around her, she searched quickly for anything that may serve as a weapon. Cutting herself on some unidentifiable sharp object, Presley figured the small tool was as good as any when she couldn't see. So, she brought the blade like item down with the intent of hitting whatever she could.

What Calliope quickly identified as a fallen letter opener plunged through the tissue in her thigh, causing her to shriek from the immediate pain. There was no amount of adrenaline that could make her numb to that. Still, reacting quickly out of reflex, she yanked the sharp blade from her leg in one quick movement. Without thinking, she quickly brought it back down, wedging the letter opener in between Presley's third and fourth rib.

It took a moment of Presley fighting to get air for Calliope to realize what she had just done. She could tell by the expression on her face that the blade had punctured a lung, meaning she most likely had limited time to figure out what to do.

Trying to move quickly, Calliope grabbed the thickest pillow she could find. There was only one thing left for her to do.

Quickly smashing the pillow over her best friend's face, she has thought of what to say as Presley's breathing begins to cease.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry this is how it had to end. I didn't want to do this twice. I wanted to move on. I wanted to live life with my best friend. I just don't want to sign my whole life away over one accident. Especially not when it got so bad because of your own crimes. I'm so sorry."

Her apologies to her best friend's corpse were not insincere, as she meant every word she said. Calliope wept for the loss of what was practically her sister, hearing another round of the wedding bells chime in the distance, signaling that her wedding is only an hour away. The rest of her family must be wondering where she is; she was due for photos over an hour ago. That's probably why Presley was sent to her hotel room in the first place; she had already been in all but her dress thanks to the hair and makeup artists.

Not having enough time to wait any longer, Calliope slowly stood up. Almost collapsing due to the flaring pain in her thigh, she made her way to Presley's feet. Grabbing hold, feeling her warmth for the last time, she dragged her into the suite connected to her room. No, the bathroom was not a permanent solution, but it would have to do since she had no other option.

Limping her way back into her bedroom, she quickly went for the nightstand. She knew there was a backup travel sewing kit in it, as the stylist had left it in case anything went wrong with the dress. That big, princess-like wedding dress that she had never even wanted. Pulling out a needle and some of thread, she prepared herself for the pain she knew would come next. With nothing to numb the bloody area, she quickly began the stitches. Calliope screamed bloody murder with every stitch, not knowing any pain like this. Even the pain of childbirth did not compare; she would give birth again to that little girl she would never know a hundred times over. There is no pain like stitching your own leg back together. Even in the case of Presley's death, she made a point of trying to make it happen as quickly as possible, so she would not suffer.

Not realizing that Presley had left the door unlocked, Calliope hears the door slam open. Her head jerks up and sees Thomas, her groom, staring at her with a gaping mouth.

"What happened to you? Why didn't you call me so we could get you to a doctor?" Nothing but love poured out of Thomas' words, clearly having more feelings for Calliope than she has ever had for him.

"It isn't really a big deal. I figured I could save time by just handling it myself..." She quietly trailed off, hoping he would let the subject drop. She sees his eyes drop to study her hands, as she had already finished her stitching.

"Wait. What happened to your hands? Were you fighting? Who did this to you?" The panic began to bubble up in her chest once more at the sound of his words, as there was no way of answering his questions. If she admits, then she will clearly be at fault when they find her body. If she lies, he will catch it.

"You need to wash that. It'll get infected if you don't sterilize it." Thomas left it at that, knowing Calliope would say no more. Before she could respond, he was hurrying towards the bathroom, probably in search of medical supplies or something to clean her wound with. Calliope sits on her bed, horrified as he opens the door, knowing all too well what he'll see.

She knows he has seen it when he sucks the air in through his teeth; the sound would be completely inaudible if one didn't know to listen for it. Thomas always reacts in the same stages when he is startled: take a breath, question the occurrence, and then respond.

Right on cue, he asked in his usual Californian accent, "What the hell happened? How the hell did she end up with a giant wound in her chest?"

Calliope knew that Thomas wasn't stupid. He knew what happened; he just didn't want to admit to himself that he was marrying a murderer. Making it all too official, Calliope responded the only way she knew how. With the truth as she knew it.

"I got mad. We fought over Texas. She pushed it to far, so I hit her. It escalated. She probably thought I was going to kill her, so she stabbed me. I didn't even think about what I was doing when I reacted." The look of pure disgust that crosses his face told her that they would not be moving forward with the wedding that day. She may have gotten what she wanted as far as marriage, but she wouldn't have fought it if she knew the cost.

"What should I do? I don't blame you if you call the police; I just don't know what to do..." Calliope trailed off with broken sobs, not able to control her own shaking. How could one fix this? The man in Texas is dead. Her best friend is dead. She's probably going back to prison. There is no bright side to the situation, except not marrying that man that adored her.

"I'm calling the police. You will wait here, if not, the hotels guards will detain you. As you can imagine, I have a bit of work to do to cancel everything for the wedding you just destroyed!"

There was so much venom behind his words that she knew it was over. There was no going back now; not unless going back means going back to jail. If that's the case, she seems to have done everything right.

Finally, unable to stop it anymore, as the adrenaline had exited her system, she began to fall asleep on the bed, waiting for the police to arrive to arrest her. She figured, why not enjoy one last good sleep? With that thought, her eyes drooped closed and her mind temporarily stopped spinning. Her mind fell into a sleep like she has never had before, finally accepting the toll the fight took on her body.

With a gasp she quickly sat up and looked around. She was no longer in the fancy hotel preparing for her wedding. She was looking at the same four-square walls she had been staring at for almost two years. Then it dawned on her; she never killed Presley. She had never even left the Texas state prison.

No Licking Allowed

Traci Ellis

What a morning. I had woken up with my friends on the bedroom floor of the keepers room. The sun was shining through the window, birds were chirping, and it smelled like maple syrup and fresh pancakes. The keepers must have been making themselves breakfast. My friends seemed to wake up at the same exact time I did. We all stretched and yawned, then mutually agreed it was play time. The strange thing is, sometimes my friends are here, and sometimes they aren't. I don't know where they go-I think the keepers send them away with other keepers. We don't ever talk about it much, but when they are here, it's on! Chasing the singing birds outside, digging in the dirt, playing tug-of-war, and endless running. The keepers usually let us play and then bring us all in for breakfast. But that morning was different. Something was off.

Only I was let inside. My friends were catered to outside and I just sat there waiting to be fed. I stared at my keepers and kept telling them I was hungry. Normally they understand and respond with sing-songy tones and things come out of their mouths that make me feel like I'm a good boy. Today they just looked sad. They grabbed the blue leash and harness that usually means we are going somewhere -like a walk or a ride! But still, they didn't seem enthused about it. I was so ecstatic I could barely contain it. My tail was wagging, I was waiting by the door, I was panting so hard I could have fainted. I even forgot that my friends weren't going to be coming with me. The keepers just kept petting my head and shuffled along to get me in the car.

I had my head hanging out the window, my tongue was flailing out of the side of my mouth and almost hitting my ear, and I was enjoying the fresh air. We started pulling into a parking lot when the keepers told me to get inside the car and rolled up the window. Once I started to pay attention I noticed this place was completely unfamiliar to me. I went in through the doors of the unknown building alongside my keepers where there was a room full of MORE FRIENDS! I thought my keepers might be crazy. How could they look so gloomy when they brought me to see all kinds of friends? Next thing I know, my keepers are kissing my head and telling me things I really don't understand. But it sounds like it's reassuring. Then they left. I was half going insane because there were so many friends to play with, but half confused that my keepers left me. They have never done that before. Before I could think about it too much, a woman walked me back to a separate room where I was thrown in a cage.

"Am I in jail?" I thought to myself. I had never done anything bad. At least not lately. I know when I'm bad because my keepers always spank me and point their fingers at me vigorously.

But that hasn't happened in months. A man in a funny green outfit that had a matching shirt and pants, with squeaky shoes got me out of the cage. I was taken to a room where I was put on a cold, steel table when it dawned on me where I was. The vet. I could smell the sterile emptiness of the room. It was not the normal vet, this one was different. I was about to panic when I felt a pinch in my neck. Everything went black.

I woke up who knows how long later with my keepers staring at me through another cage. I was relieved but upset. I also felt really weird. I could barely walk to make it out of there. I felt like my legs wanted to go in all different directions at once. My keeper picked me up and laid me in the car where we headed back home. I was so stressed I was making all kinds of involuntary whining sounds. This deeply concerned my keepers. The woman, who is always so considerate and caring, started watering from her eyes and kept one of her frail hands on me the whole ride home. Again, the man keeper picked me up and took me inside the house. My friends were gone. All remnants of us playing were gone. The toys, bones, the dirt we tracked along the floor: Everything was gone.

I couldn't figure out what was happening. It didn't help that every time I turned my head there was this annoying cone hitting everything in sight. I came to the conclusion that I did not care. I was so exhausted I felt like my legs were going to buckle right under me. My keepers seemed to be ushering me to my bed on their floor and sleep never sounded better than it did in that moment.

I woke up later that night. I was starving and dying of thirst. My keepers seemed to read my mind because they brought me food and water at my bed side. Their moods seemed better, too. They were not as sad as before, they just seemed very concerned with my comfort and needs. I mean, they always spoiled me but never like this. The two of them stared at me and then started discussing something that it seemed like they didn't agree on. The woman eventually just came over and took that horrid cone off my head. Then she whispered something to me, kissed my nose, and waved her finger in a light manner.

Immediately I got the sensation to lick myself. The man keeper shouted at me and then looked at the woman with an expression that said, "I told you so". It startled me so bad I almost peed right on the floor. I decided to try this again. Evidently, the same things happened. Why do they care so much if I lick myself? The man showed me the cone and said some words before placing it on the counter. It was a hideous thing. It was tinted red and resembled a lampshade you'd see at the woman keepers mom's house. But, I gathered that if I kept licking the cone of shame was going back on. I found that out the hard way...

Here I am, a day later, with that stupid cone on my head. The keepers seem like things are back to normal with their moods. I'm observing them from the yard while I try to do my business. It is unusually uncomfortable trying to go to bathroom now that I'm thinking about it. But the keepers don't look like they are entirely depressed at the sight of me. I get fed like regular, and lots of attention. However, I still don't feel quite like myself. I am lethargic, unmotivated, and constantly sleepy. Not to mention that tense feeling when I go to the bathroom. I don't feel at all sick so I still am not sure what is going on with me. What I do know is that I am very sick of bumping into anything and everything I come across. I hate this cone. I wish they would just understand that if they took it off I would never lick again. Even though the desire to lick myself is strong, it's so itchy on my low stomach! Maybe that is what all of this is about. Maybe, the keepers are trying to teach me some sort of lesson. I cannot be sure, but that has to be it! Their over exaggerated mood switch, an unnecessary trip to the vet, a horrendous cone, hiding my friends from me, probably sneaking sleeping pills in my breakfast to make me feel tired, and all of it to teach some silly lesson: no licking allowed.

Opinion

Erase Handwriting

Michael Rawlins

Handwriting really needs to be a dead art. I find myself in this darkened classroom full of my fellow grade seekers, their thick perfumes and body sprays wrapping my nose in an unpleasant flurry and feeding me with every breath of this humidity I take until I can't stomach any more. During these retching times, I tend to just sit quietly at my desk and listen to the fury of leads quickly grinding their way down to Gaia's wooden bones and their plastic mechanical casings rattling faster than a viper's strike. Well, at least to me seems this way. I've never been great with handwriting by anyone's account. I'm not a fast writer, I can't spell, and I certainly don't make beautiful calligraphy.

Over the years, I've known many individuals who have had troubles with their handwriting and never outgrew it. I, for one, have issues writing. Any teacher of mine that has tried to refine my penmanship knows this. I am so bad that the school system has essentially tossed in the proverbial towel and admitted defeat. I won the right to not use hand writing skills, because neither the school system nor I want to keep going in this pointless fight. When I think back to high school and grade school, I catch myself rubbing my fingers. I can still feel the stiffness in my fingers from teachers making me write out the same sentence across a paper dozens of times as punishment because I couldn't write as fast or legible as they thought I should. I guess my win was though my own painful attrition.

We are starting to step back from pen and paper and heading more and more into the sticky confines of the world-wide web. We have replaced love letters with texts, and dinner dates with Skype. I honestly can't go a morning without checking the subplots of my friends' everyday lives on social media. Oh, today she got a new cat, found a shady piece of pizza in the back of the fridge with some strange tasting blue fuzz, and is finally going to replace her kidney with a built-in coffee maker? Awesome! Point is we just don't need penmanship anymore.

I ask myself all the time why couldn't we just use type. It is a much better use of our time. I remember the first time coming across a computer. With wide eyes, I gazed upon the keyboard. I knew it had the keys to all my problems. Each letter was lifted from the marble-white plastic keyboard. It was the most beautiful for one to feel a word form with just a light couple of taps. Perhaps one day we will all come to our senses and completely replace the pain of dreary hand writing with type.

Who would miss writing by hand? The world certainly wouldn't. It wouldn't miss the act of fresh-air-producing trees being cut from their roots, grinded down, shipped off, and given back in filth and stink of putrid, oozing trash. We can't keep on treating the planet like our personal garbage can, and any amount of reduction we could have would be for the better. Writing by hand wastes paper, plastics, and wood. The world is finite, all we can do is keep it healthy and alive as long as we can. For after it dies in the foul that we've created, we won't be far behind it as species.

When all is said and done, I know there are many circumstances where handwriting is necessary. Let's face it, no one wants to type up a grocery list. Maybe when we are getting our dance on in those bright flashing rooms filled with sweaty grinding strangers and the faint smell of vomit, but we forgot our convenient pocket printer to type out that beautiful blue-eyed person's number, we pick up the pen to write out those digits, for our future children's sake. So, there is times when writing by hand can useful.

From the challenges writing by hand, to the internet, to the superiority of typing, and to its effect to our only planet. We should erase this black mark created by our handwriting and embrace better devices.

The Positivity of Guns

Bailey Whitt

Dear Editor:

As a part of the Bakersfield College community, I appreciate the college's commitment to "fostering a learning environment that respects and supports the diversity of people, ideas, learning styles, and instructional methodologies" (one of the core values of the college, according to the institution's website). Both the faculty and students are able to learn in a creative environment that embraces how sharing different viewpoints can help people refine their own worldview and define their own beliefs more clearly. Although this is still the beginning of my education here I find that I am learning a tremendous amount of knowledge from communicating with people within this community. However, I recently have read and viewed on the news all the negativity about Guns and the issues with gun laws, so I wanted to invite you to an enlightening conversation on these topics.

As a proud gun owner and enthusiast, I have learned that safety is number one. The media has distorted gun safety in a way that makes it seem as it is non-existent or ignored. A man named Gus Kenworthy has shared in a twitter post "Places you are not safe from guns: churches, concerts, restaurants, schools, stadiums, malls, movie theaters, nightclubs. We need gun control". Now, let me assure you that guns do not go off by themselves. People kill people; guns do not kill people. I too agree that people who have not taken a training course or have criminal records should not have access to guns, but unfortunately, there is no way to read a person's mind for their intent to use guns. People like myself and my family use guns with the intention of protection and recreation. I encourage you to attend a Skeet Shooting event and inquire on the level of safety at these events that are rather large. Safety is always number one in recreation. Skeet shooting is a personal passion of mine, and safety is always a huge importance on the line of fire and when returning your gun to the rack. Safety courses are a requirement to purchase a firearm. Those who eventually disregard another's safety with the intention of taking a life is not determinable. However, there are safety precautions in place, when an individual goes to purchase a gun, they are not allowed to take the gun at point of purchase. They are to purchase the gun and wait until their background clears to have the firearm released to their person. If a background does not pass, the purchaser is refunded.

If someone wants to commit a crime, a gun is not a requirement. According to theblaze.com an article they wrote includes mass killings that were not committed with guns. For example, On March 25, 2008 in Sitka, Alaska: an 18-year-old killed 4 people with a knife. On June 8, 2001 in

Osaka, Japan: a school janitor killed 6 children with a kitchen knife. Additionally, on July 1, 2008 in Shanghai, China: a man stabbed 6 police officers to death with a knife. Many other mass killings included, machetes, knives, airplanes, poison, ax handles, and other uses of weapons or everyday uses in houses to kill multiple people. The misconception that guns are always used isn't true. Guns do not kill people, people kill people.

Furthermore, proper use and knowledge of guns can help save lives. For example, Alton Nolen of Oklahoma gruesomely beheaded an individual, but his rampage was halted by Mark Vaughn a reserve Sheriff Deputy who used his personal fire arm to wound Nolen. Additionally, an 18-year-old mother named, Sarah McKinley, saved her and her child's life in Blachard, Oklahoma, where an intruder with a knife attempted to enter her home. McKinley fired and killed one suspect while the other fled. Finally, a 69-year-old Ethel Jones fired three shots, wounding and scaring off her intruder who was later arrested.

In addition to protection, guns also provide food for everyday Americans. In remote villages in Alaska, there are people who rely on guns in order to provide food for their families during the winter months. In other places in America, you are able to hunt for food for your families. Once a year, my family goes hunting for deer or birds to provide meals in our household. Without the ability to use guns freely in these areas of hunting, people would not have food to feed their families.

In the end, guns should not be recognized in a negative way, but in a positive way. Having safety, precaution, and food are just a few ways that guns have positive effects. Negativity has blown guns and the use of guns out of proportion. The right to bear arms provide protection and recreation for our families and ourselves is a given right, and we as Americans should honor that.

Sincerely,

Bailey Whitt

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2018 English Colloquium Winners

The Day My World Stopped Turning

Rhianna Horn

My life used to be so simple and normal for any girl my age I did good in school, followed the rules, and was respectful towards others. Just like anyone my age I had always dreamed I would have a family of my own and be successful. However, that all seemed to change when my doctor gave me my death sentence, at just 19 years old I was diagnosed with Stage IV Ovarian Cancer and that was the day my world stopped turning.

Ovarian Cancer is considered a 'silent killer' due to its symptoms mimicking period symptoms.¹ Ovarian Cancer goes unnoticed until it has become advanced due to them being so subtle. The warning signs including; Abdominal Pain, Indigestion, Loss of Appetite, Bloating, Urinary Frequency, Feeling Full Quickly, Altering Constipation and Diarrhea, Lower Back Pain, Sudden Weight Loss, and Vaginal Bleeding.² These symptoms usually do not make most people jump to the conclusion of Ovarian Cancer because sometimes these are normal to one's menstrual cycle.

When I first began experiencing the symptoms I had no idea other than my period of what could be the cause, I began to realize I was experiencing this annoying and painful feeling even without a period. I began to have trouble eating or maintaining weight, but I had just assumed it was because of my new medication. Then I began to spot and constantly feel like a whale because I was so bloated. I finally stopped feeling stubborn and gave my gynecologist a call wanting to switch my birth control because I had just assumed that was the cause of all my worries.

I was able to get an appointment relatively close and I discussed with my doctor all my symptoms and I asked if she could switch my birth control because I was tired of constantly feeling an annoying sensation all the time, instead of doing so she began to question me about all my symptoms thoroughly. I began to explain everything and tell her when I began to notice when it had started in as much detail as possible and she immediately suggested to do a pelvic exam and asked when I had developed the lump, as soon as she asked I was confused for I had never felt a lump. She immediately ordered a Pap-Test, a Pelvic and Transvaginal Ultrasound,

¹ www.activebeat.co/your-health/women/10-warning-signs-of-ovarian-cancer/10/

² <https://www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm>

and told me I needed a CA-125³ Test and she would call me back immediately as soon as she would get the results, to say I was scared was an understatement.

My life had changed on November 20th, 2017 when my doctor said those eight words, "I'm sorry you have Stage IV Ovarian Cancer", I had absolutely no idea how this had happened. She went on to explain how my prognosis was not the best due to how my cancer was advancing and spreading quickly, she said at this point my only treatment option would be chemotherapy because the surgeries would be extremely invasive and harsh on my body.⁴ When I got home I locked myself in my room and began to do my own research, which sadly increased my need for an emotional breakdown. The website stated how the cancer was genetic, that I will never bear children, and that it was extremely rare for girls my age to develop this disease at such a young age⁵, I lost hope of trying to beat this cancer with my survival rate only being 17%⁶, every dream I ever had of having my own family and growing old legitimately turned into a dream because I will never get to experience it for myself.

When I was only 12 years old I had major knee surgery and had to learn how to walk again and I thought that was going to be the hardest thing I had to overcome, but I never thought that it would change when it came to breaking the news to my family. When I first sat them down to tell them they did not believe me but when I showed them my lab results it became quiet all you could hear was the sound of my mother crying. My mother tried to comfort me and tell me that I was going to be fine and that I would overcome it, sadly I had to burst her bubble and tell her it was Stage IV. Life at home changed drastically; my brother stopped annoying me and would refuse to leave my side, my mother began to baby me by making my favorites and staying home, and my father threw himself in his work so he could try to forget my impending death. However home began to not feel like home due to my parents constantly fighting and my brother began to fail all his classes and I knew I was the one to blame. I became angry at God and myself for making me be so stubborn and letting my disease get so out of hand, I just wanted things back to normal.

Eventually my family began to realize that my time was running short and they should stop fighting and spend their remaining time with me in peace. My cancer soon became to much to handle that I had to be admitted into the hospital, my family and friends refused to leave my

³ <https://www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm>

⁴ <https://www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm>

⁵ <http://www.healthline.com/health/cancer/ovarian-cancer-and-age#overview1>

⁶ <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/ovarian-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/survival-rates.html>

side which brought me a warm and comforting feeling, I began not to feel so alone. As time went on my doctor had given me even more bad news; I had at least three days left on earth. My world then had come crumbling down as reality hit me square in the face. As sad as I was about dying, I was somewhat relieved that God was going to end my suffering. They began to discuss counseling and other options for the time being. They talked about Physician Assisted Suicide, but I kindly rejected the idea for it was against my beliefs and I felt that I wanted to die when my body was ready and I wanted as much time with my family as possible.

As sad as my family and I were about my diagnosis and poor prognosis we began to understand not to take our time together for granted. I learned life is short and is not always simple, I might never live out my dream to have a family of my own but I have come to terms that it does not matter. As long as I have my family and friends close, death does not seem so bad after all.

Section Paper

Priyanka Kumar

Dr. John Moore once said, "A tell-tale sign of an emotional affair is when a partner's emotional needs are met outside of the primary relationship" (Belieftnet). Infidelity is one of the most common reasons relationships may end. What may count as cheating is subjective to each individual and their values. Sex is the most painful and conspicuous form of cheating; however, engaging in an intimate and passionate conversation with someone other than one's partner is enough to create a rift. Now imagine all the activities that fall under infidelity, but instead of finding one's partner engaged with another person, they find them with a sex robot. Some might question whether sex robots are conscious beings while others may label them as another means for masturbation such as sex toys. The question also arises as to whether a sexual encounter with a sex robot is considered sex and if it is possible for one to cheat on their partner with a sex robot, with or without their knowledge. Using the scenario presented by Professor Williams, one in which my love, L, is engaged in a sexual activity with a human sized and shaped, highly, but artificially intelligent robot, R—with the intent to orgasm—I will discuss how a situation as such can be considered problematic to our relationship and explain my reasoning accordingly. Sex robots would not be a good addition to society because of the likeliness of its users to justify their actions of infidelity; thus, ensuing harm upon existing relationships.

Sex is the most conspicuous form of cheating; however, a physical act of sex is not the only way one can be considered cheating. First, it is important to understand the concept of sex. Sex is a way for two people to share a physical and an emotional bond while for others it may be merely a means for gratification or pleasure; however, it is important that both parties are consciously engaged for an act of sex to occur. Masturbation is the most accessible way of attaining sexual gratification and does not require more than one party's acknowledgement and engagement. When one is masturbating it is not assumed that they are having sex with themselves or with the people they are masturbating to, but rather they are sexually exploring their body and sexual tendencies. In a scenario in which one walks in on their partner masturbating to another person who is mutually masturbating through virtual means, Skype, video calling, etc...., this discovery might make one likely to accuse the other of cheating. Masturbation is not an act of sex, but what sets this scenario apart from masturbating alone, is the act of being sexual with someone who is reciprocating the same sexual thoughts. Without having touched one another, the exchange of emotions and sexual desire towards someone other than one's partner makes this an act of infidelity.

Considering the scenario of walking in on L engaged in a sexual activity with an artificially intelligent and human-like sex robot, the question rises as to whether L is masturbating to the robot or if he's engaging in sexual intercourse with the robot. While the person who was masturbating with another person through virtual means never touched the other, it was still considered an act of infidelity. However, L and R are engaged in sexual penetration, which is the insertion of his penis into her vagina even though it is synthetic. L's response might be that he was only seeking an orgasm, and that the sex robot holds no value to the relationship that we share. However, L was looking for more than a sexual release, but rather a sexual experience with something human-like which was not me. L sought an interaction in which the other could respond and adjust to his likes and dislikes so that he could achieve maximum pleasure. It might not be as disturbing to find L masturbating using a silicone vagina, a sex doll, or another method such as masturbating while watching porn since there is no reciprocation of body movements and sexual responses aimed at providing and receiving pleasure from the activity. Sex toys would not be off limits if we had discussed that the usage of toys would be something we agreed to use together or when the other was not available; that is, if its use enhanced *our* sex life. With a sex robot, the sexual interaction becomes something *they* are doing together, thus making it extremely unsettling to witness.

The artificial intelligence embedded into the sex robot allows it to function as a human would, retrieving information and responding accordingly, at an intelligent level. Even though R is an inorganic entity, it is still conscious and can engage in conversation, arousal, and foreplay; thus, giving it more value than a sex toy or a sex doll. If another human being were to engage in all three of these acts with L, it would cause the same amount of discomfort and indignation within myself due to the emotional components tied into these actions. The activity L and R are engaged in is considered sex due to the value that R holds and its ability to provide L a fulfilling sexual experience.

When two beings are both engaged in an act, the act holds the value of what they accept it has, that is if it is not implausible. For example, if two women engage in oral stimulation for the first time, this could mark the first time they are said to have sex if the sexual encounter signifies intimacy for the couple. So, a sex robot designed for more than providing sexual gratification to its user implies the possibility of both parties placing sentimental value unto the sexual activity taking place. For example, Harmony, an artificially intelligent RealDoll designed for sexual and conversational purposes, states that she would like to get to know her user and learn the meaning of love by sexually interacting with the user (Yeet Magazine). This indicates the possibility of a seemingly emotional relationship forming between the sex robot and the human user beyond the means of sex; thus, opening the possibility of an emotional affair to transpire between the user and the sex robot.

Others might argue that a sex robot is not a true person because of their inability to reciprocate love, feel genuine emotions, and their lack of autonomous choice in what they wish to pursue, thus making them a creation designed specifically to provide sexual pleasure like a sex toy. However, although the sex robot may not be able to form an attachment to its human user, the human can still very much develop a sentimental bond and infatuation with the sex robot. Harmony is capable of learning from each interaction that she has and can also remember several details which make up the user's identity. Also, sex robots may lack the initial decision of what they are designed for; however, they can still lead rewarding and pleasurable lives for themselves and for those around them. The way in which the sex robot is designed to be highly intelligent, human-like, attractive, and altruistic with intent of pleasing the user may allow the human to develop a genuine fondness for this seemingly conscious being. A creation as such may pique one's interest outside of their human relationship due to the uncanny abilities and resemblance it holds to that of a human; hence, uncovering sexual fantasies one might have never known they had. This opens the door for infidelity and indifference the user may apply towards existing human relationships.

There may also be couples that incorporate sex robots into their sex life to enhance their relationship. However, chances may rise of the sex robot conceivably replacing the human companion. There might be a possibility that one partner may prefer sex with the robot over their significant other. For example, a sex robot that can adjust to its user's needs during sex may provide more pleasure than the partner who is reveling in their own euphoria during sexual intercourse. The question rises as to what will set the robot apart from the human partner during sexual activities given that the sex robot is intelligent, attractive, and more compliant than the human. Not only will the robot provide physical pleasure to its user, but will also lend the user emotional support, advice, and be a confidant. Sex robots can cause a rift within a human users existing relationship, because their capacities of artificial intelligence and companionship open the opportunity for one to grow attached to them.

Sex robots would not be a good addition to society because of the harm they could create upon existing human relationships. Due to the artificial intelligence and humanlike qualities attributed to the sex robot, the act occurring between L and R is considered sex; thus, making it an act of infidelity. It isn't that the user is masturbating to the sex robot, but rather they are masturbating with the robot. This opens the opportunity for the user to place more value into interactions with sex robots as opposed to their existing human relations. When a partner in a relationship places more sexual interest and value outside of their existing relationship, this becomes a case of not only a sexual affair, but of an emotional one as well.

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Return to Eden: Humanity's Search for The Way Home

Steven Ledesma

When analyzing various cultures throughout human history, one common thread is the presence of religion or spiritualism. Humanity, as a whole, seems to almost be theistic by nature. Even though secularism is wide spread in the industrialized world, people are still pulled to the spiritual, whether it be an active, living religion or hearing stories of ancient mythologies. In these stories, a common idea is obtaining ultimate enlightenment or bliss. In the Judeo-Christian religion in particular, that bliss was once obtained by humanity in the Garden of Eden, but they were casted out. This starts humanity's quest to return to Eden. In fact, the majority of the Bible focuses on the purification required to reach Eden, mostly through symbols. It is the symbolic nature of scriptures that entrances followers, and subconsciously informs the readers how to find happiness. While a lot of Bible stories seem disconnected in many ways, most are ultimately pointing one way: back to Eden. Through purification symbology, the Bible aims to guide its readers back home to the Garden of Eden.

First, it is critical to understand subconscious symbology. Symbolic elements, like those found in holy books and mythology, tap into the human psyche to convey a deeper meaning that humans understand and use to explain the world around them. In his book, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Spanish mythologist J. E. Cirlot explains that "[all symbols] exist almost wholly in the mind, and [are] projected outwards upon nature" (xxx). In a way, symbols are another sense humans have for analyzing "[nature,] society, culture, [and] the universe" through the subconscious (Cirlot xxx). Cirlot argues that people share a collective subconscious understanding of symbols that unite humanity (xxx).

For example, water is one of the most complex yet reoccurring motifs in symbology. On the physical, natural understanding of water, it is used to clean and rinse; in its natural state it both provides life and can end it. Its symbolic meaning mimics this. Water serves as the "[...] mediator between life and death," and is often used to display the physical death of man and a revived spiritual form (Cirlot 365). An awakening is what religious texts tend to represent when conducting sermonizes involving water; they are hoping to separate the physical human form and the soul of man.

Water has symbolically been used to separate the sinful, physical world and the spiritual world in religion. Perhaps the earliest example of water as a cleansing force in the Judeo-Christian religions is located in Genesis. When God created mankind, they were placed inside the Garden of Eden, a place without sin; it was a perfect paradise. However, an often forgotten fact

is that “[...] God had not caused it to rain on the earth [...]” (*New Kings James Version*, Gen. 2:5). While this may seem like an odd detail, from a symbolic perspective, it never rained in the Garden of Eden because it did not need to; since there was no sin, there was no need for purification. The Garden was a place where the spiritual was manifested in the physical world, but with no first sin, the physical was not tainted yet. Since there was no separation needed, there was no rain in Eden.

Still, water played its role as a life-giver in Eden as well. While it did not rain, humanity still came from the water that was embedded in the soil (Gen. 2:6). While many credit mankind being made from soil, the Bible mentions that the soil is enriched with water before God creates man, which is symbolic of the meshing of the spiritual and physical worlds. Ultimately, mankind is meant to be a fusion of the spiritual and physical, which separate humanity from the other animals in the Garden of Eden.

Moreover, this pre-sin Eden is the original state of mankind in the Christian belief structure, and to return to that state is one of the subconscious goals of Christianity. Cirlot explains that after a “[...] fall of the soul into the material plane [a desire] return to the starting-point [...]” is created (294). After the fall of man, where Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell into sin, humanity was never whole again since it was now casted out of Eden, its natural home. Therefore, a large portion of the Bible from that point on is humans attempting to be able to return to an Eden-like state, which can only be obtain through purification.

The earliest example of humanity being purified in the Bible comes by way of the flood. Typically, people associate the flood with humanity being wiped out. However, when given a more symbolic point of view, the flood becomes more important to the Christian subconscious. In Genesis, God specifically states that “the end of all flesh has come before me [...]” (Gen. 6:13). The world “flesh” is used throughout the story of the flood, which, combined with the symbolic meaning of water, makes it clear that the flood is a purification of the physical realm of man, not so much the death of humanity. This is why Noah is instructed to keep some way of the physical world intact, like his family and the animals; life in Eden was not solely spiritual, but it involved the earthly side of mankind as well. The goal of the flood was not to kill humans, but to restore them to a pure spiritual and physical life. The flood is the first of many instances in the Bible where humans need purification to return to Eden.

Another large-scale purification effort comes from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When it comes to symbolic sacrifice, “[...] the spiritual energy [is] proportional to the importance of what is lost” (Cirlot 276). Whether Jesus Christ and God are one or father and son is largely irrelevant for the importance of the sacrifice. In the former case, then an essence of God is sacrificed for

humanity. However, in the latter case, a son is sacrificed, which, in a patriarchal worldview, is an extension of the father. In either case, the ultimate flesh is sacrificed. With Jesus' sacrifice, humanity's physical side is purified if they believe and follow Christ. This is why Christ's resurrection does not undo the flesh sacrifice; the sacrifice was for the physical world, so it needed a physical purification, but the spiritual purification is still needed.

Moreover, Jesus' death set the example for Christians to follow to achieve physical purification. It is after Jesus' crucifixion that baptism became a main focus of cleansing. In fact, prior to Jesus, traditional baptisms in the Bible are rarely, if ever, mentioned. Symbolically, baptism represents the death of "[...] man-in-nature [and the rebirth] of spiritual man" (Cirlot 265). This is similar to what Jesus went through; however, Jesus' physical death made it so mankind does not have to suffer its physical death to be reborn spiritually. Instead, the physical self only needs to be purified through baptism and maintained. This is through living as Christ did since he was mankind perfected. By allowing the physical aspect of humanity to be maintained through baptism, this brings humanity closer to reaching Eden, because it requires both the physical and spiritual parts of humanity.

However, while the water baptism cleanses the physical side, there is still the spiritual aspect of mankind that needs purification as well. Living like Christ is no easy task for imperfect humans, so even though the spiritual man is reborn new, it can not maintain its purity. It requires purification by fire, which, symbolically, is like water, but acts "[...] as a unifying and stabilizing factor [...and] is ultra-life" (Cirlot 106). A rebirth through fire is necessary to create balance between the physical and spiritual. However, just like Jesus had to be physically sacrificed, the rebirth through fire must happen on the spiritual plane to "[transcend the human condition]" like fire allows (Cirlot 106).

The final rebirth takes the form of a fiery baptism. John the Baptist famously states that there will be a baptism "[...] with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mat. 3:11). For the spirit to be purified, it must be able to survive the baptism through the fire. The fire itself is likely God's judgment since God is later described as a "[...] consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). In a sense, God serves as the final, spiritual baptizer. It is with this last purification, the cleansing of the soul, that humanity can finally reach Eden.

Ultimately, returning to Eden is the end goal for humanity. However, mankind must have two purified aspects: the physical and the spiritual. This requires purification through water and fire. Even though baptisms were not a focus of the Bible until after Jesus' death, the story of Moses subconsciously told the readers a long time ago that purification was necessary to obtain bliss. After the physical side of humanity was saved, The Bible shifts to focus on the spiritual side,

which can only be purified with fire. While using symbolism and the return to grace is not a unique feature of Christianity, it undoubtedly helped reach readers on a deeper level than it other would.

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Cosmic Horror and the Impact of H.P. Lovecraft

Brian Melgar

A prolific author from Providence was once quoted as saying, "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." Howard Phillips Lovecraft, born on August 20, 1890 in Providence, Rhode Island, was a writer known for his ability to tap into the primal fear held by mankind, using it to tell stories that haunt the dreams and imaginations of those who seek horror even to this day.

However, it isn't simply existing in the genre of horror that has allowed Lovecraft's stories to remain present in the collective consciousness of readers who ingest and obsess over all the things that go bump in the night, nor is it Lovecraft's writing ability. The cause of Lovecraft's literature surviving, despite it being largely ignored both in its time and in current academic climates, is the theme found therein.

The idea of the mythical and supernatural has been an ever-present component of the human experience, with the question of humanity's place in the world occupying the center of mankind's consciousness. This question spreads outwards and branches into different disciplines that many can dedicate their entire existences to, including philosophy, storytelling and even science. However, an issue is presented when this question branches into science, a discipline that seeks to leave behind the supernatural in favor of the logical. In the article "Dreams/Fantasies of Science in H.P. Lovecraft's 'The Dreams in The Witch House,'" Fatime Gul Kocsoy states that "Although the United States was founded on Enlightenment ideals - mainly rational thought, mythical elements have been influential on its culture. Science rejects and excludes much of dreams, fantasies and mythical elements, but the interest in evil and witchery has its roots from Puritanism" (198). No matter how far the interest in science and the physical world around us progresses, the roots belong in the myth, and it is in myth that Lovecraft found his strength as a storyteller. Kocsoy continues in their article, "Howard Phillips Lovecraft, being one of the originators of *the weird genre*, which comprises the fantastic, the mythical, and the scientific, blends realistic contemporary settings with his own antiquarian and mythological interests" (198). Lovecraft did not seek to isolate the pursuits of mankind from their roots, but rather to blend them in a way that would elicit the horror of pondering that mankind's purpose was in fact nonexistent.

Lovecraft's work has been labeled as cosmic horror by many, but that label leaves much to be desired when it comes to defining the purpose and success of said work. The most concise explanation of how Lovecraft felt about the world around him, which inevitably bled into his

writing and formed the genre he would exist in, was written by the man himself in "The Call of Cthulhu," a short story found within *The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft*, "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far," (381). Lovecraft held a belief fueled by fear, that the species of man was insignificant and that their place in the universe was nowhere. Despite technological and scientific advances, Lovecraft, a self-described cynic, did not seem to believe that mankind could or should move too far forward from their primal beginnings. As he also writes in "Call of Cthulhu," "The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age," (381). The pursuit of knowledge and of finding answers to primitive but relevant questions is inherent to the nature of man. This pursuit is what has led the species to where it now resides, on a mountain built from the incredible inventions and advances achieved by sheer will and a desire to understand. Lovecraft isn't ignorant to this aspect of his species, but the man does seem to believe it will ultimately lead to doom. Man will continue to learn, and in doing so, will eventually learn too much and find itself in a position unenviable.

It is because of this belief that Lovecraft is often associated with the rejection of modernism during his time. In the article, "A Last Defense against the Dark: Folklore, Horror, and the Uses of Tradition in the Works of H.P. Lovecraft" by Timothy H. Evans, he states, "Motivated by an antimodernist rejection of industrial capitalism and everything that surrounded it - including commercialism, mass culture, and immigration - Lovecraft combined an antiquarian interest in folklore and historic material culture with the passions of a preservationist and worries about cultural loss and miscegenation," (100). It is possible, and likely, that these viewpoints were held in place by a fear of what could happen should mankind tread too far into the unknown, and that remaining firm in the roots of tradition was the safer course of action for the survival and sanity of humanity.

The importance of Lovecraft's literature doesn't necessarily rely on its success. Lovecraft went the entirety of his life as an unknown writer and it wasn't until after his death that his works began to be published and recognized on a grander scale. Regardless, Lovecraft still isn't as discussed or analyzed as the literature probably demands, with W. Scott Poole after describing a growing amount of scholarly interest in his works in the article "'Historicizing Lovecraft': The Great War and America's Cosmic Dread," saying "Despite this growing scholarship on the importance of Lovecraft in twentieth-century literature and film, historians of American culture have almost universally ignored him" (37). It is no stretch to say that Lovecraft was not a

successful writer in the way that critics recognize the term "success," but it can be argued that the author succeeded in other ways that can't be quantified by popularity or financial success.

In one way, Lovecraft's writing almost single-handedly inspired an entire genre of fiction fueled by the man's philosophies which have posthumously been collectively called Cosmicism. Another definition of success can be found within, as previously discussed, a largely ignored body of work being published and analyzed even to this day. It seems as though Lovecraft has held on to the focus of an ever growing and ever changing world with the constant risk of slipping away. This may lead many to ask what it is that keeps these works afloat despite the proverbial sinking ship that they reside in. The answer is simple and has been discussed above; it is the themes found within the works that have kept it going on for the past century. There is no emotion like fear, and few authors have had the ability to tap into that emotion in the way that Howard Phillips Lovecraft could. Within his stories, a fear that cannot be escaped can be found. While much of modern literature concerns itself with horror in a tangible and definable way, Lovecraft ignores that. If one were to think of horror icons recognizable in modern times, most of them immediately conjure an image, almost as if these icons were mascots. They become marketing tools rather than the horrifying creatures they were meant to be. And though this may have become true of the more known monsters of Lovecraft's works such as Cthulhu, an examination of his writing shows that he had no intention of giving his horrors form, such as his complete lack of description given to a certain creature within his works named Shub-Niggurath, a central figure in the mythos of his literature, with one of the short stories that discusses this creature, "The Whisperer in Darkness," simply referring to it as "The Black Goat of the Woods" (734).

Lovecraft is more concerned with challenging the imagination of his readers with something unthinkable. He believed that being incapable of imagining the horrors that could plague humanity would cause unrest within the mind. The horror in his creations is the simple fact that he did not fully create them. In a sense, the horror of Lovecraft is complete in its lack of completion. When one cannot possibly imagine the thing that goes bump in the night, that thing gains significantly more power, summoning the anxieties and worries of the mind that it haunts. It brings into question the importance and significance on oneself if something that escapes human comprehension can exist in the same space. Lovecraft asks his readers to realize that if something beyond their mental capabilities can exist and be an adversary, what implications that has for their own place in this vast and infinite world. Lovecraft asks his readers to stare deep into the unknowable abyss, and assures them that they will not survive the event.

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Untitled

Jaime

Change is a two-sided coin; it can elevate people to new heights, or it can throw them into a black hole. Throughout history, there have been various examples of people overcoming impossible tasks: Hercules slaying the Hydra, soldiers crafting a wooden horse to invade Troy, a young King Arthur pulling Excalibur from the stone, and landing a man on the moon. In the non-fiction book *Resilience*, author Eric Greitens - former Navy SEAL and one of "Forbes fifty influential people in the world" - uses examples from history to help his friend Zach, a fellow Navy SEAL, deal with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). The advice Greitens gives Zach in a series of edited letters, which comprise *Resilience*, can be applied to any personal obstacle. Greitens' words of wisdom changed how I perceived others and turned me into a more compassionate, caring person.

As a young, ten-year-old girl, I had the misfortune of losing my mother. After her death, most of my family members said I, the eldest, had to become a mother to my siblings and assume the responsibilities my mother left behind; consequently, I had little time to grieve the death of one of the closest persons in my life, and I had to figure out a way to balance school and care for my family. I could no longer be a carefree ten-year-old; consequently, I didn't learn typical childhood lessons; I had to be strong for my siblings and my father. Over time, people I was close to humiliated me, emotionally abused me, and abandoned me without an explanation. With my limited experience in relationships, I was taken advantage of. A past lover easily humiliated me in front of our friends and made me question this person's "love." Other close friends unexpectedly stopped talking to me. These events gave birth to the idea that everyone I loved would eventually leave and hurt me, so I built an emotionless fortress that protected me from the world.

Resilience provides advice that can be applied to any situation, and it has changed my life; however, when I began reading *Resilience* as part of my English B1A course, I thought "Great. Another self-help book; what a drag!" I didn't want help. As I read further into the book, however, I realized I had been gifted with one of the best pieces of modern literature. *Resilience* introduced me to the ideas that - even though people don't always experience the same issues - everyone can comprehend, to some degree, the things others go through as well as attain the power of forgiveness. Because of my past experiences, I didn't believe that people would be able to understand how it felt to lose a mother or be hurt by others to the degree that I was hurt. In *Resilience*, Greitens recounts the story of Philoctetes, a skilled archer "with a magical bow that never missed its mark," who was abandoned on an island for ten years because he

had a foul-smelling wound that would never heal; Philoctetes forgave his comrades when they came back and asked for his help to win the Trojan War because he realized he had a mission to serve - which was more important than his hurt feelings and bitterness (19-20). Furthermore, Greitens mentions the punishment Zeus gave Prometheus, a titan, for stealing fire from heaven to save mankind: "Each day, an eagle lands on him and devours his liver; each night, his liver grows back so the eagle can consume it again... Prometheus stays full of defiance" (34). These stories of resilience have helped me recognize my own resilience and see that forgiveness can change the world.

Greitens stories and concepts turned my views upside down for weeks as I battled with these new philosophies; somewhere along the middle of the book, I began to embrace Greitens' wisdom. A metamorphosis had begun. I felt myself becoming more caring and compassionate to those around me. I wasn't the bitter, angry girl whose mom didn't live to see her graduate middle school; I understood it wasn't her fault. Zach Walker needed someone to listen; I could be a listener too. Helping others has made my burdens lighter. Forgiving others, as Philoctetes did, has helped me find purpose. Greitens shares with Zach that his wife left him: "I came home to an empty house and just collapsed... I'd often fall straight into bed, and for the life of me I couldn't get out until the next morning... I think I'm more solid and more grateful in ways I might not have been had I never been hurt so badly" (6-7). Greitens shows that pain can build strength; the fortress I had built around myself began to crumble. As I let go, reached out, and forgave my heart began to spread the love I also needed. I now smile more and try to help others in need. My attitude continues to improve. I no longer think "Well maybe I won't be accepted to medical school because I'm not good enough, so I'll have to find a less desirable job and be miserable." I know that I WILL become a doctor and provide medical care to those in need. Applying Greitens' lessons and wisdom is healing my soul.

I used to believe my struggles were worse than others; however, after reading *Resilience*, I now understand that all struggles are the same in the core; they challenge people by providing two choices: give up, or continue to fight. Everyone has obstacles in life, but the stories in *Resilience* describe people who were pushed to a breaking point, but through their relentless determination to move forward and defeat their ordeal, they found meaning and purpose. Modern heroes don't fight Hydras or hide inside wooden horses to invade enemy cities; they decide to get up every morning and continue to fight for a better life, and - although I'm not a hero from a mythological tale - I've slayed my "dragons and three-headed dogs." I am resilient.