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Skunk River Review

Volume 23

Image by Elizabeth Kunkel
The Skunk River Review is an annual publication of student essays and photographs. We encourage all DMACC writing students to submit to next year's competition, and we look forward to the creativity and diversity of style that makes this publication a proud celebration of student expression.

The photographs in this publication are not chosen by the authors. The front cover photograph was taken by a photography student from the Ankeny Campus and awarded first place by their peers.
Welcome to the 2010-2011 edition of *The Skunk River Review*!

As the new editor of this publication, I was excited to see the number of submissions and the overwhelming enthusiasm of the students. This year's publication includes work from Composition I, Composition II, Literature, and College Resources courses.

*Whereas The Skunk River Review* is academic work that begins in the classroom, it also reflects student's interests. The essays are not edited for MLA format or general errors because the publication is used as a teaching tool in many classrooms.

I would like to thank the following for their contributions to this year's publication:

- All of the DMACC students from the Ankeny, Urban, West, Carroll, and Newton campuses that submitted work.

- All of the writing instructors at all DMACC campuses for their support and use of *The Skunk River Review* in their classes.

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Nile Hartline  Judy Hauser  Michael Hubbard  Alan Hutchison
Randy Jedele  Jan LaVille  Seeta Mangra-Stubbs  Eden Pearson
Sarah Setnes-Dale  Sharran Slinkard  William Thompson  Sarah Waddle

Sincerely,

Troy Bishop

Troy Bishop
Editor

The Skunk River Review reserves the right to edit for minor corrections and clarity. Works Cited pages have not been edited.

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Composition I
Zachary Gardner

Zach Gardner is married and father of three. He is also a working student, has a full time job, so he attends school at night. He really enjoys writing, and it has become a therapy of sorts. When he gets inspired, he does his best to capture his thoughts on paper.

Zach Gardner

English 105-E3

Narrative essay

Love Exhausted

Lazily walking home from school I followed my brother down the snake-like sidewalk. His golden blond hair sat on top of his ears, and I gazed at the back of is head which bobbed up and down like a carousel. Birds whistled songs of cheer; spring had sprung, and the trees were a vibrant green. A long day at school stifled my youthful spark, and I yearned for a good hug from my Mom and a soda pop, both of which would give a jolt of life to my drained spirit.

My brother and I rounded the corner of our block, and trekked towards the small house we called home. In view was the outside of our home; made of maroon brick faded by years of frigid Colorado winters, and the sultry unforgiving summers. As we approached the front porch, as usual, I was able to see into the house through the storm door, and the smeared hand prints that painted the glass. With a
creek of the door my brother and I ventured into the house, and from that moment I felt emptiness, and I really missed my mother.

With a spirit that needed tending to I prepared for my daily ambush of love. Mom was supposed to be standing there with her unique smile that would reveal a dark gap between her brilliantly white teeth, which always captivated me. Plenty of hugs and kisses would follow, that would cause an instant need to bury my head into her shoulder. With my face smashed, and my nose planted, I would inhale all of her sweet scent, and at that moment I knew, and I felt true love.

No hugs and kisses, and no therapeutic scent this time, only the echo of the door slamming shut behind us. Brownie, our chocolate lab, did not rumble down the hall to love on us either, which usually consisted of slimy licks, and peaked yelps of excitement. I noticed an un-familiar metallic smell in the air that crept into my nostrils’ that sparked my curiosity, “Mom”, I yelled. No answer. “Mommy”, I yelped, “where are you”? Still no response, my brother scampered into the kitchen and I followed, hoping she would be right around the corner. We both looked over the empty kitchen. Since she wasn’t there we turned back down the haul and into mom’s bedroom.

Sunshine cascaded through the window and over her bed, and down to the teal frizzy carpet. Mom was not there, and her bed was still a mess from this morning, and dirty laundry sat on the floor near the closet. As we turned around and dashed out of the room, I noticed a distant rumble. We both headed towards the steps that lead downstairs to our dark and dank basement. Peering down the steps and into the darkness I noticed the rumbling sound again, and this time it was louder than before. I headed down the steps; with quickened thumps I reached the bottom. “Mom”, I yelled, “where are you”? My brother stayed at the top of the stairs, and did not follow me down. I looked back up at him, and with his back towards me he stared at the door to our garage. I climbed back up the stairs quickly; fully interested in what he was staring at, and about half way up, I noticed silvery gray duck tape covering the crack at the bottom of the door. Once I reached the top I peered behind my brother’s shoulder, and gawked at the door; my eyes fixed on a thin white sheet of paper duct taped to the brown stained door. Which read, “Do not open this door call 911!” at that moment my heart fluttered and tears welled up in my eyes. I
whimpered, “Brandon what is going on?” He shouted, “Go call 911!” so I ran as fast as I could to the phone. Tears seeped out of my eyes and down my cheeks; I was confused, scared, and panicked all at once.

“911 what is your emergency” the lady said. “Please help I think my mom is trying to hurt herself,” I pleaded. “What is your name honey, and what is your address?” she replied. I gave her my name and the address, and I asked her to hurry. With one swift motion, I slammed the phone down, and turned to find my brother; he was gone. I sprinted towards the front door, and ran as fast as I could towards my neighbor’s house; the green grass, leafy trees, and the faded blue sky melted into a translucent blur, and with out knocking I burst into their living room. “Wendy” I gasped, “I think my mom is trying to hurt herself”. “Where is your mom now?” she exclaimed. “In our garage”, I sobbed. She jumped up and shot out the door, I followed her down the sidewalk and back towards my house.

My brother found a way to open the garage door, and turn off the car while I was calling 911, and fetching our neighbor. As Wendy and I approached the driveway of our house; car exhaust barreled out of the garage, as if a small explosive erupted, emitting a mushroom cloud into the air. I cautiously approached our yellow sun faded Datsun hatchback. My brother stood by the passenger door, and looked down into the seat. I crept up behind him, and looked as well. There on the seat sat someone I didn’t fully recognize, her skin pale and pasty, and her mouth open wide, with cracked lips crusted with bloody scabs. In shock we all stood there, staring, hoping she would move. I turned my head, and looked down in the back seat, and noticed what seemed to be brown carpeting spread out on the back seat. Then I noticed something strange; pink in color, and textured with small dimples and cracks. I focused my eyes, and examined further, and I noticed that the brown object on the back seat was my dog, and the pink textured thing was her tongue protruding from her mouth and resting on the seat. Around her head was a leash that chained her body to the door handle. Wendy quickly pulled us out of the garage, and led us to our front yard.

I did not notice the chirping birds and the sounds of spring anymore; only the creeping whine of police cars and fire engines. I burst into tears, and looked at my brother, and noticed his arm was
bleeding. I tried to piece everything together, but my mind was spinning; I refused to believe that the person in our car was actually our mother. An ambulance pulled up and two men rushed into the garage without saying a word to us. I asked Wendy what was going to happen, she did not answer me; she just stood there weeping. After what seemed to be hours, the men rushed out of the garage with my mother on a stretcher. Her chest fully exposed, she lay lifeless with an oxygen mask covering her face. They loaded her into the ambulance and sped off. A police officer came walking towards us, his eyes focused on the ground in front of him. That day our family was dismantled, we lost our mother’s love, it seemed to escape us and dissolve into the warm spring air.
Sondra Householder

Sondra Householder spends most of her time taking photographs, driving with the top down, and playing with her cats and chickens.

Sondra Householder

ENG 105 WA

The Five-Year Marriage Contract

Barbara and Kenneth’s marriage license is due for renewal this year. For 25 years, they completed the classes necessary to keep the license current, but the kids are now grown and on their own. Ken would rather be on the golf course, and Barbie’s product line has gone mainstream. They decide to let the contract lapse and move on with their lives separately, no hard feelings.
Today’s society encourages marriage; statistically, married people are better citizens. They commit fewer crimes, are more likely to be employed and pay taxes, and are, in general, more responsible. However, almost fifty percent of marriages end in divorce (“The 2011 Statistical Abstract”), causing emotional scars that can take years to heal. Though marriage still benefits society, the lifetime commitment is no longer necessary; these social benefits also come with age. Requiring premarital classes before entering a five-year marriage contract (Duggan), and continuing education classes before each renewal, would give the couple some communication tools and allow them to revisit their relationship at regular intervals, deciding if they want to continue being married or separate civilly.

In the early days of marriage, women and children needed protection and provided for (dksuresh), and the planet needed populating. A till-death-do-us-part contract ensured protection for a woman on into old age. But life expectancy was in the mid thirties. When a couple married for “life”, it was expected they would live together for another 20 years or so, just long enough to raise children to marrying age. In today’s society, life expectancy is in the mid 70’s. Twice as long as it once was, allowing a young couple to be married three times longer...not only raising their own children, but many times their grandchildren, to marrying age.

In the middle ages, marriages were arranged by parents to solve power struggles and form alliances with other families (Beast FCD). Into the twentieth century, society set clear rules and positions for the married couple. The man worked an outside job; the woman worked in the home and raised the children. Each was expected to fulfill
their particular roles and if disagreement occurred, the woman usually became subservient because there was no way for her to support herself and the children without a husband. Time has changed these roles. Women have careers, just as men do. Sometimes, the man raises the children and takes care of the home or both parents may work. But, because of changes in society, both people could survive on their own. In America today, couples marry for love and not survival.

Love is one of the most intense emotions humans feel. It can overshadow everything else in a person’s life, including reason and common sense. The “in love” phase lasts approximately two years (Chapman), where the object of one’s affection can do no wrong. When this “blindness” wears off, many couples are left wondering what they ever saw in the other. If they are unable to replace the “in love” feeling with a more lasting type of respect and friendship, the relationship may be doomed to failure.

Most young people are not aware of what it takes to make a partnership survive a lifetime; being in love is not the main ingredient. A driving test and driver’s education classes prepare a new driver to safely navigate America’s roadways, but there are no classes required for marriage. Various degrees, certificates, and board exams ensure nurses, lawyers, and even hairdressers are qualified to perform their jobs. Taking a class on some tried and true methods of making a relationship healthy and functional before the contract is legalized would allow a less emotional and more informed union.
According to certified life and relationship coach and founder of TUG Relationship Coaching, Ernest Phillips, the number one cause of divorce is poor conflict management. For example, it is not fighting over money that ends marriages; it is unresolved conflicts about money that ends marriage. Improving this one area could not only save many marriages, but also make relationships healthier and more enjoyable. Society does not teach this properly, the method most often taught is avoidance, not resolution. This would be a large portion of the class curriculum.

In the current lifetime-marriage system, many couples never revisit expectations or communicate their needs with their partners. They get busy with the day-to-day routine, perhaps taking their spouse for granted or accepting as reality their own need to feel loved is not necessary. The self-sacrificial person may fall deeper and deeper into the proverbial depreciating hole, hoping their spouse will magically notice their unhappiness and fix it.

With the requirement of continuing education and counseling prior to renewal of a marriage contract, every five years each married couple wishing to renew their contract would revisit their relationship, what is working, what needs improvement, what problems they see, and if their needs are being met. This requirement will force couples to look at themselves and each other in a manner that is consistent with making sure all affected person’s needs are openly visited.

With the current method of marriage, it is a conscious decision to file for divorce. With the five-year contract, it would also be a
conscious decision to renew the license, requiring thoughtful, rational decisions from the couple. This is beneficial to both of them.

Granted, there are still times when a couple should end the marriage before the five year contract is fulfilled; cases of spousal abuse in its many forms, if a parent is abusing a child, sometimes infidelity cannot be moved past. Divorce would still exist; however, these cases are not as common as the “irreconcilable differences” of needs not being met and not feeling loved.

Six months later, Barb meets a Marine named Joe at a trade show. His product line is in a bit of a slump, but he invested well during the peak years. They hit it off and are on their way to class to learn how to communicate with each other and resolve the new set of conflicts a new pairing will create.
Works Cited


Roger is a writer, artist and lover of the outdoors, especially when he is backpacking/hiking the mountains of Colorado. When he is not hiking, biking or anything else outdoors, he works with brain-injured adults in a rehabilitation facility, writes and produces art.

Roger Vasey

English 105

On With Life: Brain Injury Rehabilitation Specialists

The front door swung open, as sunshine poured onto the faces of the boy and his father. With great effort, the boy took steps to begin the next phase in this journey that began unexpectedly almost one year before. The leg brace creaked with each labored step, as the camera’s flashed and the boy, smiling from underneath his ball cap, pumped his arm in victory. Initially after his accident, he wasn’t expected to live or surpass a vegetative state, if he did. This was not to be the case...

Settled on twenty acres just south of the DMACC campus within the city limits of Ankeny, Iowa, On With Life has been serving persons with brain injuries for the last 20 years. Founded by a group of survivors and their families, On With Life was incorporated in 1987. It was named by one of the
survivors who consistently stated, “I just want to get on with my life.” In August of 1991, the doors opened to the facility, which currently has 26 beds in which to serve persons with brain injury.

One of our persons served recovering from his brain injury told me one day, “I used to drive by here everyday on my way to work and never gave it much thought, thinking I would never be there… now look at me… here I am.” According to information provided by On With Life employee resources, brain injury can happen to anyone at anytime and it does. Once every 23 seconds, someone in the United States experiences a traumatic brain injury. In Iowa alone, over 2000 persons experience a traumatic brain injury each year and over 5,300,000 Americans live with disability from traumatic brain injury. There are two types of brain injury, traumatic and acquired (non-traumatic). Traumatic, as the name suggests, result from physical trauma to different area’s of the brain. Acquired, result from injuries such as stroke, aneurysms, brain tumors or anoxic brain injuries.

On With Life offers its persons served a dedicated staff and wide complement of services. Services include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, recreational therapy, music therapy, massage therapy, case managers, quality care coordinators and now outpatient services including the same therapies.

As I enter the building each day for work, I am usually greeted with a number of people from the OWL team, as well as a number of our persons served going to or from their therapies. The place is bustling with activity, as workers, family and persons being served are attending to their business. From day one, when I enter OWL I rarely, if ever am greeted with that “smell” so common with some nursing homes. I credit this, with OWL’s strict policies on maintaining cleanliness throughout the facility and our dedicated staff of environmental specialists.

Doctor’s are doing their rounds, therapists are diligently carrying out their treatment plans for rehabilitation, quality care coordinators are busy following up with various agencies and family to coordinate appointments and ensure the best care possible for our persons served. Nursing staff, is busy
attending to the persons physical and emotional needs, and case managers are following up with insurance companies and other facilities to help the families make the transition from OWL in-patient care to home or other long term care facilities. Some of our patients return for our outpatient therapy services.

As I enter the nursing department on the north end of the building, I approach the hub. The hub is the center of where the east, west and north halls join together. Call lights lit up and beeping, feeding pumps blaring, door alarms sounding, persons served waiting, people talking to one another, behaviors, and persons being transported to and from therapies, give validity to the name “hub.” I work in nursing and find it to be challenging at times, yet very rewarding. I find it very moving each time I have to say good-bye to one of our persons served. Given the average length of stay is eight months, you become attached and develop a bond with the persons served, their friends, and family, as you share in their journey of rehabilitation from a traumatic brain injury. As each day goes by, there are moments of uncertainty, gains and losses in progress, victory, depression and elation, as I and other’s in the nursing department tend to each persons physical and emotional needs.

As you leave the nursing department, you travel down a long hallway to the other end of the building. Down the hall, which I affectionately think of as the hall of hope, persons are transported to their therapies and meals. As I stop to glance in a speech classroom, the speech therapist is diligently working with a person served to help them learn how to swallow again. Each bite gingerly put in their mouth, as they coach them on how to chew, use their tongue to sweep and clean out the mouth, swallow, tipping their chin forward to help facilitate the food traveling down the right path and how to clear their throat. Another aspect of the speech therapists job is to assist the persons served on a wide variety of language skills. As I watch them patiently work with a person day after day to form a few simple words, help them learn to communicate in other ways when their ability to speak verbally is lost forever, and
assist them with coping with their challenges, I am in awe of their professional demeanor, patience and compassion they have for what they do.

As I pass on by the speech classrooms, turning to the right, I enter the therapy gym on the left. There are two doors actually, one to the music and recreational therapy gym and the other where occupational and physical therapy takes place. As I enter the music/recreational therapy gym I am greeted with the sound of guitar playing, as Amy, our music therapist helps a person play the guitar, holding the notes for them as they strum. I smile as I see Amy, beating a hand held drum as she works in conjunction with physical therapy to help a person to learn how to establish a normal cadence and gait, as they learn to walk again.

As I turn to see Kim, our recreational therapist she is getting ready to take a person served on an outing to one of the stores in the area to buy something. From outings to fish, ride horses, state fair, advocating brain injury at the capital; where we bring the most powerful voice in the form of our persons served, shopping, painting t-shirts, gardening and a host of other activities our recreational therapists help to return a sense of normalcy and break from the hours of painstaking rehabilitation.

Walking next door to the physical and occupational therapy gym, in a strange way I feel like Sitting Bull saying, “bury my heart at wounded knee.” In the rehabilitation world of brain injury, this is where, in my opinion, the physical battle begins and ends and is an area of therapy close to my heart. Every time I have a chance to volunteer and spend time learning more about physical and occupational therapies, I am grateful. Wheelchairs, parallel bars, canes, walkers, stretch bands, balls, easy stands, light gait, braces, gait belts, and weights are just a few of the things you will see in this gym. Whether it is teaching someone to walk again, laying them on a mat to work on strengthening, balance training, transfers, learning to cook, tie their shoes, do their laundry or use the bathroom, figuratively, these gentle giants that make up our team of physical and occupational therapists are some of the best around in my opinion. Day after day
they push our persons to regain as much of their physical lives as possible, empathize with them during their struggles to overcome their limitations and rejoice with them in their victories.

I would be short sighted not to mention lastly, but not least our persons served who are the reason we are all there. Every one of them, their lives and their families inexplicably changed overnight in ways that no one can really understand, unless you’ve travelled this road. Each day they are awakened early to get their medicine, vitals, showers, and breakfast and begin a day of therapies. A large percentage of our persons served come directly from hospitals or long-term care facilities, after being evaluated by one of our admissions coordinators. Generally in order to be accepted a person must have suffered some type of brain injury and be medically stable so that they can benefit from the therapies as soon as possible. All are in various stages of recovery, some still in comas, some just waking up, others getting “fine tuned” and many phases in between. They work hard, experiencing both physical and emotional challenges beyond comprehension. They end their day with dinner and activities some evenings, and then it’s to bed, to begin all over again the next day.

A few of the therapist’s took a few moments from their busy schedules to answer a few questions for me. I have included some of their responses.

Jacque from physical therapy says, “Every day is a new day. There is never a dull day. Brain injury rehabilitation isn’t found in a book, it makes me think on my best and outside the box every day. The progress they make is remarkable and inspiring to see.”

Tammy from occupational therapy says, “I am motivated to get up and come to work everyday, because I am honored and blessed to work with individuals that have been dealt a life changing blow, impacting what they knew as normal. Yet they are here everyday fighting with all they have with grace, determination, faith and hope. I hope that I can make just a little bit of difference in one of those lives.”
Kim, from recreational therapy says, “After my brother, who had Leukemia, spent many months in the hospital following a bone marrow transplant, I always loved what the Child Life Specialist did with him. They made the really bad stuff okay, and found a way for him to have fun while going through “not fun” stuff. When I went to college, I remembered those days with my brother, went to my advisor and changed my major from education to therapeutic recreation.”

Amy, from music therapy says, “I enjoy coming to work everyday because I get to be creative and no day is the same. I get to help people target all aspects of their rehabilitation experience including physical, cognitive, speech, self-expression, community, spiritual, etc.”

Theresa, from Speech Therapy says, “I became motivated to work in speech therapy because I wanted to work in a field where I could work with people one on one and I like Spanish so it was a good fit for me.”

On With Life is a unique place to work, and a place I am grateful to have the opportunity to be employed. I am fortunate to work with some of the very best in brain injury rehabilitation. Each one of them has unique strengths, caring spirits, and an intense desire to help people. It shows everyday in their patience, hard work and dedication to the people they serve. Volumes could be written on the many ways they help the persons served outside of normal working hours, from taking families to their homes to get a hot shower, to filling a families temporary apartment with their own furniture, visiting their patient in the hospital when they had a setback, or bringing them in things to help pass the time are just a few.

At the beginning of the story I told you about a boy who walked out with his dad. A few months after that moment, he returned to our annual reunion without the brace, walking without much effort and smiling from ear to ear... and ready to get on with life.
Zach Morgan

Zachary James Morgan is a full-time student and a part-time “everything” else. He hopes to be a psychiatrist after graduating. In the meantime he’ll just make sure everyone around is wearing a smile, and will “someday” write a novel on his pursuit for everyone’s happiness.

Zach Morgan

English 105-L

Afghanistan: The NATO Project

On November 12, 2008, nine men circled a newly built Afghanistan school for women. The men were encompassing with jars, spray bottles, and squirt guns. They’re intent was not to have some summer fun, but rather to teach the women attending the school a lesson. The men used these containers to spray acid on the girls. In specific, eleven students and four teachers were hit, sending six to the hospital (Filkins 2). These actions had a direct correlation to the work of the North Atlantic
Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. This is just one of many issues the NATO task force has, and still is creating in the country. When the question of whether NATO is positively bettering the lives of the Afghan citizens is asked, a few issues need to be addressed to answer. These three inconclusive problems include: increased violence, digression of women’s status, and poor overall operations of NATO.

The first reason for the gradual failure of NATO in Afghanistan involves the rapid increase of violence. According to resolution 1510 of the Security Council of the United Nations, NATO took over for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan on October 13 2003. The specific duty of the NATO task force is to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement. (United Nations 2)
NATO’s efforts are clear, to maintain peace and create opportunity for the Afghan citizens. Since taking over in 2003, trends have shown that attempts for increased peace are actually causing the opposite to occur.

According to a counter terrorism report from the U.S. Department of State in 2007, terrorist acts in Afghanistan almost doubled from 491 in 2005 to 749 in 2006. In the same years, the number of kidnap, injuries, or causalities also nearly doubled from 1,540 to 2,943 (3). In 2008, the numbers became even more astounding. According to a report by Mike Mount, CNN senior Pentagon producer, attacks by the Taliban and al Qaeda increased thirty-one percent. Civilian casualties increased sixty percent and from January 2008 to 2009 Afghan security forces deaths were up over sixty-four percent (1-2). These numbers are not just coincidence. A document from the UNAMA estimates that by the end of 2010 the average increase of civilian casualties since 2006 is twenty-eight percent per year (1). Although the numbers do show a trend of fewer casualties per year, the primary point is that under NATO’s security care, the country is digressing from intended peace.

The second reason for NATO’s failures in Afghanistan stem from the proposal of women’s rights. Before NATO or U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan women had little to no rights whatsoever. The current status of NATO’s fight for women’s rights can be
seen by many as a leap in the process. However, in reality the suffrage has just been covered up. A specific example is the acid incident with women attending school. Although NATO has promoted the creation of these schools for Afghan girls, their duty in security has failed. After the schools were built, Taliban groups began posting posters in mosques stating: “Don’t let your daughters go to school” (Filkins 2).

Although the new Afghanistan constitution now ensures women twenty-five percent of the seats in their Parliament, the laws continue to discriminate against them. According to writers at The Associated Press in 2009, the Afghan government passed a law, now known as the “rape law”, which undermines women’s rights extensively. This law allows for Shiite men to hold back food or other provisions from their wives if they don’t agree to sexual desires of the men (2). Twenty-five percent of the Parliamentary seats are not enough for women to protect themselves from discrimination such as this. NATO operations are not effective enough to better these helpless lives. NATO is failing with their operations.

This brings me to my final reason for why NATO is failing in Afghanistan, its overall operation. According to the Brookings Institute in July of 2009, between 2008 and 2009 the job availability for Afghani citizens dropped from thirty to twenty-one percent (8). As quoted before, one of the specific
duties of the NATO task force is to see this number rise. NATO continues to show negative numbers on almost all statistics involving their mission.

The most drastic statistic against NATO’s operation involves casualties. Civilian casualties caused by NATO forces continue to occur. According to a CBS report in February, twenty-seven civilians were killed in an airstrike by NATO forces. The report also noted that the convoy of vehicles attacked had forty-two people in them, all which were civilians (1). Casualties such as these should never happen when the operating forces are also the cause of the deaths.

When NATO provides an option for Afghanistan women to attend school and doesn’t provide protection from the Taliban, they apologize and change nothing. Although NATO has provided options for the countries citizens to better their lives, they have failed to walk with the citizens through the changes and due to poor operations, are causing excessive civilian casualties. Going back to the question of whether NATO has actually bettered these lives, the answer is as conclusive as the problems. NATO has failed to secure the citizens rights and protection, meaning as of today, no. Only time will tell whether some day the citizens will be happy and secure. As of today, NATO will not provide these outcomes.
Works Cited


Liquid Gold

Gear up to go into battle with the killers, Killer Bees that is. The Killer Bees are responsible for already 12 deaths in the U.S this year and we’re about to face off. Sitting in a little wooden 10’ by 15’ dark shed with nothing but a dim 40 watt light bulb for light, I look around. This may be the last building I ever see alive. On the walls I see hammers and saws much like an old wood shack. I’m reminded of a knight going into battle; I’m putting on layers of clothing to face my foe: a million soon to be angry Killer Bees. I’m thinking how did I get myself into this situation?

By my side is my dad Mikhail Ilyenko senior. He’s 5’ 10’’, bald, with a mustache, and has gold teeth, as you would expect a Communist Beekeeper to look like. He’s dressed in casual clothes, a pair of black sweat pants, a Hawaiian shirt half way unbuttoned, and some old worn out red sandals. As I’m putting on my armor, he’s filling the smoker; a smoker is basically a metal circular tube with a hand pump on the side that you fill with wood and set on fire. The smoke is supposed to knock out the bees as you rob them of there precious honey. As I finish suiting up, I notice there is only one face mask. Seeing this as my way out, I point out that we only have one mast. He smiles and says, “Pashlee pussy.” which means “let’s go pussy.” and heads out the door. I give out a nervous laugh. Thinking this guy has been out in the sun to long, as I put on the face mask and follow him out the door.
After a short walk we approach the alfalfa field. I can see the bee hives in the distance. As we get closer they start getting bigger and the noise of buzzing bees’ gets louder. My natural instincts tell me to turn round and run but I push on. Half way there sweat starts dripping down my face and into my eyes. Not sure if it’s from the sun beating down on me or from me just being nervous, I quickly take off my mask and whip myself dry.

When we finally get there I’m amazed. Finally, I understand where the world’s so called “missing bees” are; they’re not mysteriously disappearing. They’re all at my dad’s house. There’s about 30 hives in all with up to 40,000 bees in a hive. Doing the math, that’s roughly 1,200,000 bees, enough to make anyone wet their pants. The hives are 2’ long rectangular boxes made of wood. They’re neatly stacked on top of each other up to six foot high, with only a two inch long and a quarter inch high hole on the bottom box so the bees can get in and out. The hole is small to keep mice and other rodents out. The hives are on stilts and nicely painted in bright blue, yellow, and orange colors, with a nicely constructed tiled roof. I’m thinking these bees’ are living large.

Now the hard and dangerous part: getting the honey. The bees don’t really mind you walking by, but when you start tearing there mansions open they get pissed. Luckily for us, the honey is located on the very top of the hives. Keeping a distance, I watch Mikhail senor slowly remove the roof. In the process he crushes a couple bees. He shrugs and says, “There males, and they don’t make honey so it’s ok.” Once the roof is removed he gives a couple puffs from the smoker and the bees drop instantly. So far so good.

Working quickly to collect sheets of honey comb before the female bees, which carry the stingers, wake up, my dad starts barking out orders. Exasperated by his yelling, I start hoping he would get stung. Surely enough he gets distracted when he finds the queen bee, the biggest and most important bee. Carefully he puts her back in the hive. He tells me, “If you accidently kill the
queen the whole hive can perish.” By now the bees that got smoked wake up, and like bats from
hell they descend on his head. Getting stung repeatedly, senior is dithered and retreats.

After a good laugh, I put back the roof and head home, thinking to myself: Was it worth
it? I find out that pure organic honey is worth about $20 a pound, not bad for the 5 pounds we got
in twenty minutes. With honey being so expensive, there are a lot of fakes out there. One sure
way to check for real organic honey is by sticking a match into it and if it’s the real deal you can
light the match with the honey on it.
Laura Lawler

Paper One

Media and the Promotion of Teen Pregnancy

Ten years ago, teenage pregnancies were looked down upon. Now, today’s society seems to encourage sexual promiscuity, whether it is through sexual lyrics in music, provocative movements in a movie, or showing sex scenes on television shows. According to Seventeen magazine, “31 percent of girls say television and movies make teenagers want to have a baby” (Khidekel 153). In recent years, there has been an increase in movies and shows that focus specifically on teen pregnancy: 16 and Pregnant, Teen Mom, One Tree Hill, The Sweet Life of the American Teenager, etc. Considering their detail, it is easy to see the growing number of movies and television shows focusing on teen pregnancy have inappropriately affected the rate of which teenagers are becoming pregnant.

Movies and television shows such as Juno, 16 and Pregnant, and Teen Mom inappropriately affect the rate of teen pregnancy by sending the message that teen pregnancy is normal. A Seventeen magazine poll resulted that “20 percent of teens say television shows and movies make teen motherhood seem normal” (Khidekel 154). Shows focused on teen pregnancy provide a varied array of young girls who become pregnant to appeal to a wide range of girls. For example: Glee, the most popular girl becomes pregnant; Juno, a young and self-confident girl is impregnated by the school nerd; The Secret Life of the American Teenager, a girl in the school marching band is impregnated. Not only are teen pregnancies taking over television shows, sexual content between young adults is part of almost every episode. Shows such as 90210 and Gossip
Girl are based on beautiful people having sex and “hooking up” with one another. The Secret Life of the American Teenager is about teenage pregnancy awareness, and yet, the show has a high focus on sex, who is having it and who is not. A psychologist at the National Institute on Media and Family, Dave Walsh, says, “If I’m a 15-year-old kid and no one’s really talking to me about sex and I’m watching a lot of sex on TV . . . over time I start to think, ‘That’s what people do. That’s the norm” (qtd. in Toppo 1). Television and movies give an altered sense of reality. It is often forgotten that the characters are actors, or reality stars who are, most often, outrageous. They are paid to play a part, a part that someone specifically wrote.

Many people would disagree that movies and televisions shows tied to teen pregnancy increase the frequency of which teens are becoming pregnant. Teen pregnancy and sexual content has been a part of culture for some time now, but with the mass media the prevalence of teenaged pregnancy only seems to have increased. In reality, “[the] majority of teen births are eighteen-and-nineteen-year-olds: 73 per thousand in 2006 (down 26 percent from 1991)” (Sternheimer 163). The number of pregnancies may be down from previous years, but in today’s society birth control is much easier to access. In addition, in 1973 abortion was legalized in the United States. Since abortion was made legal, “about 46 million abortions are preformed every year” (Arthur 104). Teenage girls are amongst the groups receiving these abortions causing the teen pregnancy rate to decrease since the fetus is aborted. Magazines don’t promote abortion and they do give sex advice in a more socially accepted manner. Magazines describe simple items such as lip gloss as “sexy,” discuss the Pill, and say, “There’s no such thing as too much masturbation” (Feldman 9). Those who say sex in the media does not promote pregnancy
are paralleling the abstract with reality, two concepts that cannot be crossed. Giving sex advice can be used as an education tool, but bombarding young adults with sexual content puts the idea that “everyone is doing it” into a young person’s mind.

Shows tied to teenaged pregnancy convey an unsuitable message that teen pregnancy brings popularity and celebrity status. Through an interview, Andrea, 16, said, “When I [got pregnant], I told myself it would be like it is in the movies. When I’d seen Juno . . . I thought that pregnant girls could handle being young moms. . . . I had to drop out of school and get my GED. I needed to . . . [work] as many hours as I could at Quiznos to pay for all the stuff my baby would need. I wish I’d done research or talked to real people, like family and friends, about what it’s like to be a teen mom, before I listened to my television” (qtd. in Khidekel 154). Andrea was mislead by the provocative messages sent by the media. She was lead to believe that life would be made easier and she would become popular because she had an adorable, little child. Unfortunately, this 16-year-old girl found the consequences of her actions the hard way and now has to live with her decision.

Teenage pregnancy focused media is inept because it distorts the reality of a pregnancy and projects an image that teenage pregnancy does not have hardships. In 2007, the movie Juno was released around the world. The movie is about a 16-year-old girl, Juno, who becomes pregnant and chooses adoption. Juno has a supportive family throughout the pregnancy process: initial confrontation, carrying the baby, and throughout the decision process of finding an adoptive family. Deborah Roffman, a human sexuality educator, says that “[Juno] is atypical. She’s also atypical in that she has a support system” (qtd. in Jayson 2). Many teenage girls who become pregnant do not
have a support system, nor can they make one. Young women on the MTV show, 16 and Pregnant, often drop out of high school and move in with their boyfriends or fiance. Dropping out of high school makes it much more difficult to find a job that pays above minimum wage in order to pay for all of the expenses of raising a family. The income of teen mothers is half that of those who first gave birth in their twenties (Farrington 3). By waiting to have children until later years, women can finish high school and attend college to allow for a greater stability in life. Television shows edit out the hardships that occur when a young couple, or in most cases, a single, young girl initially has a child. In an interview, a 16-year-old teen mother says, “[N]o one tells you how much gross stuff happens during pregnancy: I gained 65 pounds and got crazy stretch marks and the worst heartburn. And labor was two days of excruciating pain. No TV shows or movies tell you how you get hemorrhoids and poop while you’re pushing the baby out, and how you bleed for weeks later” (Khidekel 154). The long running television show One Tree Hill is a prime example of showing a false reality of teenage pregnancy. One of the story lines in the series is about a young couple who fall in love and marry as juniors in high school. By senior year, the couple was expecting a baby boy. The season ends as the baby is about to be born and the next season starts four years later, the critical (and often most difficult) years are skipped. By not showing the difficulties of pregnancies, young people don’t see, nor understand, the consequences of their actions until they themselves experience the consequences.

To take control of the inappropriate messages sent by the media and the increased teenage pregnancy scare, parents should take an active role in their children’s lives and talk more openly about sex. Life is a precious gift that should be given only when care
can be adequately given to the new life. According to Roffman, a sexual educator, “[talking about sex] allows the child to understand that not everyone is having sex like television makes it seem. [We] need to teach kids to think about consequences and emotions of their actions” (Roffman 81). Having an open communication line between parents and children minimizes the pressures that children feel that parents have placed on them. By open communication, both parties clearly know what is expected of one another. Instead of blocking every uncensored website, television show, or movie, parents can actually use the media as a sex education tool (Clemenson 2). Using the media as a medium for education teaches kids to acknowledge that sex occurs, but the way the media portrays the act is a false reality. A study was conducted and teen girls were asked why they got pregnant, and “about 75 percent of the girls list lack of communication with their parents as a major factor” (Farrington 3). People are only as intelligent as the information known to them. Many young adults are ignorant of the consequences of teenage pregnancy because they are never told of the consequences. By the time they are told the consequences, it is too late. Indeed, the media does have an impact on the rate of teenage pregnancy, but with an open communication line between parents and children, the rate of teen pregnancy can decrease. Teenage pregnancy does not bring popularity, but rather hardships between friends, family, and school. Sex is a part of today’s society and it is not fair to send kids out into the real world without the proper knowledge of sex, temptation, and societal pressures.

Teenage pregnancies can be controlled with proper knowledge, understanding, and communication between parents and teens. The media is the greatest resource to
educate young people about the dangers of teen pregnancies and the hardships that follow. If the truth was told, people would listen.
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Savannah Wood

Savannah Wood is a liberal arts student from rural Colfax who enjoys music, history, literature and spending time outdoors. In her free time, she volunteers as a historical interpreter, plays piano and spends time with her family.

Savannah Wood

Composition 1

Electronic Media and Children

I’m a child of the 1990s. I’m not that old, yet the ten year olds I know today are living very different lives than I did at age ten. Books and Barbie dolls were my constant companions. My ten year old sister spends her free time with her IPod touch or laptop. She can run my phone just as well, if not better, than I can. Children and electronic media seem to go hand in hand. Most kids are computer whizzes who are never seen without a video game in hand. Are these “plugged in” kids missing out? Electronic media use prevents children from developing the skills needed to become successful adults and has damaging effects on children’s development.
Technology changes the brain. Our brains are very moldable, especially at a young age. Our brain cells wire up according to our environment. When our environment changes, our thinking patterns change as well. The human brain can only work on one thing at a time; when a person multitasks, it causes their brain to constantly switch from one thing to another. This switching causes a decrease in efficiency. Multitasking doesn’t make us more efficient; it slows us down and spreads us out thin (Blakeslee). Research by the National Institute of Mental Health suggests that, ”Extensive exposure to television and video games may promote development of brain systems that scan and shift attention at the expense of those that focus attention.” Dr. Thomas Armstrong says that,” By creating high-impact audio and visual information in short blasts, television (and also video games) may be secretly undermining some natural attentional mechanisms in the human mind” (“Children TV Video Games and ADHD”1). By allowing children to use electronic media regularly, we are encouraging them to not develop long attention spans, and then wondering why they can’t concentrate in school. More meticulous tasks, such as reading, encourage a child’s brain to focus on one thing for long periods of time and to process and to ponder the given information; the use of electronic media devices encourage children’s brains to hop from one thing to another.

The use of electronic media does not encourage children’s imagination. Video games and television don’t engage ones imagination; the brain doesn’t have to do any work to enjoy them. When children play with toys, other children, outside, etc., they have to use their imagination and create the game, plot and characters. Playing also can teach social skills and conflict resolution. Engaging in art, such as playing a musical instrument or drawing, stimulates a child’s brain and can lead to a lifelong activity. Reading engages
the mind. Sports teach teamwork and provide exercise and fun. What does *The Suite Life on Deck* teach?

Most young people spend more time on electronic media than any other activity, with the exception of sleeping. Media is no longer part of children’s lives; it is their life. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation and CDMC study, fifty-three percent of children ages 0-6 watch more than an hour of TV a day; thirty-six percent have a TV in their bedroom (“Zero to Six”14). Thirty-three percent can use a computer by themselves (“Zero to Six”18). Eight to eighteen year old children spend an average of nearly 6 hours a day on electronic media (“Children and Electronic Media”22). Even if we assume children are using age appropriate media that are not “harming” them, think of what they could accomplish if they devoted those 6 hours a day to constructive hobbies, volunteering and/or homework.

Consider text messaging. Everywhere you go, children are texting. The amount of children who use text messaging is growing drastically. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, thirty-eight percent of teens sent text messages daily in February 2008, by September 2009, the number of teenagers who text daily had risen to fifty-four percent. According to the Nielsen Company, the average American teenager sends 3,339 texts a month. If each text takes an average of 30 second to send, that equals to nearly 28 hours spend texting a month! Teenagers text when they’re with their family, hanging out with friends, doing homework, and in the middle of the night. Their phones buzz constantly, diverting their attention from the people they are with, the activities they are doing, and taking them out of the real world. Instead of enjoying where they’re at, teenagers escape real responsibly and expanding their social horizons through texting their select social network.
Media desensitizes children. The Bobo doll experiment, conducted by Albert Bandura in 1961 at Stanford University, showed that children copy what they see in the media. Bandura showed preschool aged children short films. Half of the children saw a man beating up a plastic clown; the other half saw less offensive images. After watching the films, the children were allowed to play with toys, including the clown doll. The control group of children who saw the violent film went around beating up the clown doll, copying details they had seen in the film (“Mind-Altering Media” para. 18). When children see violence in the media, they will copy that violent behavior. According to the National Television Violence Study, two-thirds of television programming contains violence (“Children Adolescents and Television”). News programs can traumatize children and/or lead to nightmares. Children have a hard time differentiating TV from reality. Mainstream television contains lots of drugs, alcohol, and sexual imagery and innuendo. When children see these things on television, (often glamorized) they come to believe that they are normal and acceptable. It is estimated that by the time they are 21, a person will have been exposed to more than 250,000 acts of violence through electronic media (“Media Exposure, Addiction”).

Media introduces children to stereotypes. Take the Nickelodeon show *The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*. His parents are portrayed as being stupid, irrational, absent and Jimmy disrespects them. Around his friends, he flaunts his mental superiority and never listens to anyone. The show concentrates a lot on dating relationships and kissing, even though the main characters are only 10 years old. It also has a very strong “boys versus girls” theme. Since children have a hard time telling the media from reality, they will take the stereotypes they see as the truth.
Since 1980, Childhood obesity rates have tripled; the increased use of electronic media is largely to blame for this (“Role of Media in Childhood Obesity”1). Since the 1980s, there has been an explosion of availability to and use of electronic media for children. The time children spend using electronic media displaces many physical activities children used to do; plus children often overeat when playing video games or watching television. While watching television, children’s metabolic rates are lowered below the levels of when they are sleeping. According to a study from 1976-1980 (before the rise of electronic media) by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of five point seven five percent of children ages 6-19 were obese. A study from 1999-2000 found that an average of fifteen point four percent of children in the same age category were obese. Eighty percent of people who are overweight as children carry it into adulthood (“Role of Media in Childhood Obesity”2).

It is clear that electronic media affects children in a negative way. It changes their brains, it stifles their creativity, it can become an obsession and take over their life, it desensitizes them to violence, it introduces stereotypes, and encourages an inactive lifestyle. Although electronic media can be a great tool for education and fun, more often than not, the negative effects outweigh the positive ones. The children of today will soon become leaders in society. We need to prepare the children in our lives to be responsible, caring, informed, creative, and hard working adults. They are the future. Is spending an average of six hours a day using electronic media preparing them to lead and change the world?
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Shawn Armstrong

Shawn Armstrong is 34 years old, married and a mother of two young children. She has a 6 year old boy and a 5 year old girl. She wanted to go back to school to show her children and prove to herself that school is important and can help everyone succeed in life. She really hates to write and was surprised she was chosen... She added “enough said.”

Shawn Armstrong

Composition I- Eng 105-Q

Crohns Disease

I woke up one morning and the muscles in my body were a little stiff. As each day went by, it got harder to get out of bed or even walk to the bathroom. It started to feel like my body was beginning to lock up. Then the diarrhea started. There were times I was going to the bathroom up to twelve times a day. I was beginning to lose a lot of weight due to the pain of eating and extreme diarrhea. It got so that every time I ate, it felt like I was digesting razor blades. I was seeing doctors during this time and every one of them seemed to be baffled by my symptoms. Due to my severe malnutrition, my surgeon
decided to do an emergency exploratory surgery. That's when I found out that I have Crohn's Disease. I knew nothing about the disease, so I tried to learn as much as I possibly could about it. In this report, I plan to explain some of the main symptoms, diagnosis and treatments of the disease.

Crohn's Disease is an auto immune deficiency disorder, which means the cells in your body attacks itself, that causes chronic inflammation of the digestive tract or (GI) gastrointestinal tract. In severe cases, the disease can cause your internal organs to shut down (Jonathan). It commonly affects the small intestine and/or colon, but can involve the GI tract from the mouth to the anus. This disease can affect other parts of the body like the joints, eyes, skin, and liver. Crohn's Disease has no known cure at this time, but there are medicines that can control the symptoms ("About Crohn's Disease"). Because there is no known cure, there are more and more people worldwide with the disease.

It is estimated that 350,000 Americans have Crohn's Disease. The disease was fairly uncommon, but in recent years doctors have seen an increase in the disease. Males and females are affected equally. It primarily affects 15 to 35 year olds. According to Brenda, a nurse for Crohn's patients, "I have treated patients as young as five years and as old as 72 years of age." They also say that American Jews of European descent are more likely to develop Crohn's. Hispanic and Asian people have a lower chance to develop this disease than caucasion and African Americans. They are still learning about this disease and are unsure if there are any specific genetic markers ("About Crohn's Disease").

As I have previously stated, there is no known cure, only the management of the disease. There is no known presumed causes as of yet. The only thing the scientists seem to agree on is the disease is more prevalent in the highly industrialized nations and very
little occurrences in underdeveloped nations with poor sanitation. One theory explains this fact by saying in those underdeveloped nations, there are possibly parasitic worms that settle in the intestines and those worms can cause the body to mount an immune response to those parasites. They believe it is that immune response that does not let the disease affect the body (Faseb).

Other theories include a genetic factor, but not all people with Crohns disease have a family history of it. Another theory is an environmental cause to the disease. This theory suggest that the disease is caused by something we consume or an infection is a factor in the disease. But they cannot pinpoint it down to anything specific. Another theory is a combination of the two previous theories. Some people possibly carry the gene for Crohns, but it doesn't get turned on until some environmental factor presents itself ("Crohns Disease-Causes"). Once a person develops the disease, the body starts to rapidly show the symptoms of the disease.

The main symptoms of the disease can occur from the mouth to the anus. The symptoms may include mouth ulcers. Those ulcers can follow your digestive tract through to your anus. You may also have abdominal pain which occurs mainly in the lower right quadrant of your abdomen. Bloody diarrhea and rectal bleeding are quite common. Due to all the diarrhea, you can also get rectal fissures and rashes. Other common symptoms are fevers, bloating, vomiting, malnutrition and joint pain. Even though these are the most common symptoms, each individual may experience symptoms differently ("Conditions and Treatments").

If you have any of the symptoms of Crohns, they would start out with a blood test to rule out anemia. The doctors will also most likely examine a sample of the patients'
feces. This option is done because when a Crohns patient is flaring, ulcers can develop and break open in the intestines. When they break open, there would be trace amounts of blood that the test would pick up.

There are certain tests that doctors use to look for inflammation of the intestines. They will usually perform an upper endoscopy which takes pictures of your stomach and small intestine. They might also do a colonoscopy which takes pictures of your large intestine ("Conditions and Treatments"). By doing these tests they can tell if you have inflammation or a blockage of your intestines. They will usually take a biopsy of the tissue to see if you have the specific chromosome for the disease.

Once a person is diagnosed with Crohns Disease, the next step is now treatment of the disease. There are several different ways this can be treated. Those treatments are drug, diet, and surgical. One treatment isn't necessarily better than the other, because some drug treatments have severe side effects.

Through drug treatment, they usually start you out with a anti-inflammatory drug, like a steroid, to help stop inflammation and help relieve pain and diarrhea. They need to be taken multiple times per week and can be in pill form or an injection. If the steroid treatments does not keep the disease in remission, then they need to go to more extreme drug treatments. In those severe cases, you may need to take Remicade or Humira, which are very powerful infusion drugs that are given to keep the disease at bay. The use for these drugs are to knock a person's immune system down so the body won't attack itself. These drugs are not steroids and have their own severe side effects. Some of the side effects are, tuberculosis, lymphoma, liver problems and unusual forms of different
cancers. So, taking these medications should be carefully considered before taking this route ("Medication Guide").

In some cases, the disease can also be treated through diet. There are no known foods to cause injury or inflammation to the bowel, but there are foods that can cause irritation to the bowel for a Crohns patient. Some examples are greasy foods, fruits, vegetables, popcorn and milk. These foods can make your diarrhea and abdominal pain worse. Some foods that may help would be yogurts that have a probiotic in them. A probiotic is a live microorganism that seems to be beneficial to a humans digestive tract (Paul).

As a very last resort, they may have to go in and remove the infected intestine. They do not like to do this, because the disease can come back in the same spot. If they have to remove too much colon, it could cause you to need a colostomy. A colostomy bag is a small bag that is worn over an opening in your stomach to collect waste ("What I Need to Know" 7-12).

There is no set way treatments are to be administered. Some people do not respond to the diet and need to be put on medicine. Most are put on a combination of medicine and diet treatments. When the treatment isn't effective, a Crohns patient is constantly looking for bathrooms or in constant pain. When the treatment is effective, a Crohns patient can live a normal life with the occasional flare up.

There are side effects that can happen with Crohns disease. One major side effect is the increased occurrence of colon cancer. The higher chance for this cancer, the doctors believe, is due to the constant scarring and remission cycles of the disease in the colon. A Crohns patient needs to have colonoscopies every one to two years to search for growths
or unusual changes to the colon. The doctor will remove the growths and take other samples so they can find any initial signs of colon cancer (Ullman).

I found out through surgery when I was pregnant with my daughter that I had Crohn's Disease. It came on suddenly without any warning. There is no known cure, but I am able to keep mine in remission with the medication Remicade. I knew nothing about this disease before my diagnosis. This is why I like to educate people about this disease to make more people aware of it. I would like to thank you for giving me the chance to inform you about this disease.
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<http://www.acg.gi.org/patients/livingwithibd.asp>.

Composition II
Logically Protecting Life

When it comes to a woman’s body and the rights that she’s given to remain in control of it, we find ourselves on a slippery slope when it comes to abortion. Should abortion become illegal in all but a few circumstances? Or would that be violating a woman’s civil rights? Some would say there is no middle ground to this, however, I disagree. The rate of abortions could be lowered if every student was required to take sex-education and a human development course before leaving high school. It
would educate those who may have made an uninformed and uneducated decision to get an abortion.

**When Do We Begin Living?**

As most people know, abortion is an ongoing debate. Many arguments and physical actions have been taken against organizations like Planned Parenthood that make abortions readily available. Even drastic measures have been committed by people who are against abortion, such as when Scott Reoder, stalked and then killed a prominent abortion doctor in Kansas in 2010. According to an article in *The New York Times*, Reoder spoke out during his hearing, saying God “will avenge every drop of innocent blood.” In this case, Reoder was justifying murdering the doctor with his religious views.

As an American who supports the First Amendment that says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” I agree that law should have nothing to do with religion. Therefore, religion is not a factor in my being pro-life. I would label myself as “pro-life” because I believe that life begins at conception. In other words, as soon as the sperm fertilizes the egg, there is life.

The reason I firmly believe that this is when life starts is because if it didn’t start here, when would it start?

Some people would argue that a baby’s life begins at the start of the second trimester. Many say this because the fetus cannot exist independent of the mother in the first trimester. Therefore, it is argued that the fetus cannot be considered a separate entity because it depends on the mother’s body. However, by the time of the
second trimester the baby will, for example, be developing its own organs, growing
ingnails, and forming feet. This is also the time when a baby’s gender can be
determined. So, let me ask again, when does life begin? Doesn’t the existence of a
beating heart, a developing brain, and the presence of fingernails, feet and eyes
signify life? If it doesn’t, what does?

**What about Civil Rights?**

In a journal questioning the meaning of human equality, Leon R. Kass refers
to Eric Cohen, the Director of the Biotechnology & American Democracy program, in
one of his recent essays. Kass says,

Cohen criticizes those who think that there is some kind of magical
moment in the process of development where humanity somehow
enters... There is no particular place or moment of discontinuity one
can locate if one doesn’t start at the very beginning. And yet, is it really
the case that because each stage is virtually indistinguishable from the
one right next to it, that the beginning point and the end point—the
zygote and the newborn baby—are morally indistinguishable in terms
of what counts? [Cohen] assumes... that the rational argument from
continuity requires accepting that the earliest embryo is our equal—a
small, young, vulnerable human being. (Kass 115)

In other words, Cohen is saying it is not an argument of whether or not a
zygote, fetus, or baby is a living human being. Instead, he implies that life
begins at the moment of conception, not at some “magical moment in the
process of development” like some would argue. In addition, Cohen is saying that although it is a woman’s life, it is also a baby’s life and unless in a situation where the mother’s life were in danger, which in that case, an abortion could be considered justifiable homicide, abortion is simply just homicide.

However, some would argue that a woman is justified in aborting if pregnancy and childbearing will prevent her from pursuing the life she wants to live, the expression of her own autonomy. In addition, it is also argued that a pregnant woman’s body is her own property, one she can dispose of if she wishes. In other words, she should have property rights to her own body (Markowitz 2). However, I would argue, and I believe Cohen would agree, that a pregnant woman’s body is not only hers, because during pregnancy it is a home to a life other than her own. Although it may seem unfair to the woman to share her body unwillingly, another life shouldn’t be disregarded simply because she wants her own life and independence. If she had an eight-year-old child and one day she decided that she had lost her youth and wanted her independence back, would she abandon or kill her child? That point may sound drastic, yet we are talking about a life in both circumstances. Let’s not forget adoption as an alternative to abortion.

**Doing What Works**

Although I’m not expecting everyone to agree when it comes to their stance on abortion, I do have hope that people will realize there is a lack of sex-education in
our schools, which could be preventing the number of unwanted pregnancies, which in turn would lower the number of abortions. An article in *Time* magazine explains that South Carolina is the only state in the U.S. that mandates schools to have a certain number of hours devoted to sex education. Not only are most of the students from the schools in South Carolina more educated on safe sex, benefits of being abstinent and the availability of birth control, but the sex education has proved to be effective. South Carolina has reflected the overall trend of falling teen-sex statistics: birthrates in the state fell 27 percent from 1991 to 2006 (Sullivan 43).

Not only do I think sex-education would lower the number of abortions, but it could also teach the basics of a healthy relationship. On top of a sex-education program, it would also be extremely beneficial to students if a human growth and development class were required before turning 18. Taking this class before leaving high school and before turning 18, which is the age two thirds of teenage pregnancies occur in the U.S.A., would teach students when and at what rate fetuses develop. I hadn’t learned the process of fetal development until my first semester in college when I chose to take Human Growth and Development as a course. I feel that learning the development of humans at all stages in life during my first year of college, after 18 years of life, is way past due. If all students were required to take this course and learned the stages of development, it would educate those who end up getting pregnant unexpectedly. Hopefully, it would influence their decision of whether or not to get an abortion.
Yet some people may challenge my view by insisting that sex-education will encourage sex. However, it would not encourage sex; it would encourage teens to be safe when and if they become sexually active. It is a natural part of life, and no one can completely get rid of teen, premarital sex that is normally frowned upon by those against sex-education. Therefore, promoting safe sex is the next best option.

In sum, I would make no assumption that abortion will become illegal anytime soon and I certainly do not want women going back to the days of “back alley” abortions. However, I do believe that if people were required to take sex-education and human growth and development, they would become more educated and the rate of abortions would decline. In contrast to people who believe life doesn’t begin until later in the fetal development stages, it is my firm belief that life begins at conception—the only logical place for life to begin.
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Republican Representative Ron Paul once said, “In a free society we’re supposed to know the truth; in a society where truth becomes treason, we’re in big trouble” (Doee par. 3). Ron Paul was addressing the topic of the online media source Wikileaks and editor in chief Julian Assange. In this statement Rep. Paul is claiming that Wikileaks is immensely valuable to our society. For a democracy to function, the people need to know what their government is doing “behind the curtains”. The debate on the controversial information released by Wikileaks involves whether Julian Assange has actually done anything illegal or unconstitutional in releasing classified documents. The United States Government should not put Julian Assange on trial for three reasons: he is promoting democracy, he is promoting a more transparent government, and the information he released has no threat to national security.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution states: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. The first adjustment to the Constitution has a singular purpose. The people of America fought for their freedom from oppression of the British. This Amendment was put in place to never allow the government to repeat the past. In a democracy, the people are the government. Freedoms of speech and of the press are the two most identifiable aspects to a free society. For a democracy to function there must be a way to get the
information to the people, especially if the government tries to hide it. A self sustained and free society must be accompanied by press; otherwise it will lose functionality and become corrupt.

According to a CBS report in 2010 the New York Times published some of the same documents Wikileaks did (Sundby 2). The primary purpose of Wikileaks is to spread information to the people. The New York Times is no different from Wikileaks on this matter. On the topic of Wikileaks in contrast with The New York Times Rep. Ron Paul said, “This is media isn’t it? I mean why don’t we prosecute the N.Y. Times or others who have released this” (Barr par. 6). Julian Assange wants the people of America to recognize the closed side of our government. Freedom of the press is the final cog to the democratic cycle. If Wikileaks is in breach of any laws then soon enough, every “middle man” will have been removed from the tiller for information. On January 22nd 2007 Time Magazine was quoted as saying, “[Wikileaks] could become as important a journalistic tool as the Freedom of Information Act” (Schmidt par. 2). In able for America’s democracy to continue, news sources like Wikileaks need to be allowed. In able for the United States to function like intended in 1776, the people need to be aware of the government’s actions.

The second reason why it is important for Wikileaks to be allowed the same rights any other media sources have is the transparency it brings to society. The government of a democracy should never hide information from its people. The idea of a free society is that the people get to decide what the government does. A transparent government allows for the people to have that right. One example of poor transparency the U.S. Government has shown involves information released by Wikileaks over civilian casualties. It reported that a huge cache of secret US military files revealed how coalition forces have killed hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents (Davies 1). One specific incident actually involved a U.S. attack chopper gunning down a group of peaceful civilians. According to the pentagon report the civilians had weapons and were engaging the helicopter, but with the release of the video by Wikileaks the opposite is clearly the
case. In fact, one of the so called “weapons” was merely a Reuters reporters camera. One of the gunners was quoted as saying, “Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards” after the massacre occurred; to which another responded with “nice” (McGreal par. 7). This kind of information should never be hidden from the public. The soldiers who engaged these innocent civilians along with the Pentagon workers who decided to hide the video should be the individuals being put on trial, not Mr. Assange.

Another example of the transparency Wikileaks brings to the table can be seen internationally. Domestic transparency develops democracy and international transparency develops strong allies. According to a CNN report in December of last year Hillary Clinton had to apologize to some 52 European diplomats for negative comments she made and Wikileaks revealed (Dougherty 1). The internal damage that this causes can be catastrophic to diplomacy. It can be argued that the release of these diplomatic cables has caused the problems, but the real issue lies with Hillary Clinton’s comments themselves. This is basic elementary school philosophy. One person tells a story about another person behind their back and the fights begin. Again, Wikileaks exists to promote democracy and diplomacy. The information that Mr. Assange is obtaining and releasing is for the world to see what’s behind the curtains. The government claims that Mr. Assange is threatening national security, but in all reality he wants to promote democracy and the rights of the people.

The final reason for Mr. Assange’s innocence is the fact that there is no threat to national security. The claims against Julian Assange and Wikileaks are that the data he has made public, specifically the Iraqi war logs, have threatened U.S. troops and homeland. On the topic of the Iraqi war logs Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates said, “…the consequences for U.S. security will be less to none. To start they are like every other news station” (Sundby 2). In reality, Wikileaks release of the Iraqi war logs have had no impact on safety in the battlefield. Much of the information posted was old, considering the documents were dated from 2003 to 2009 and
they were released in mid 2010. Of the some 90,000 documents released by Wikileaks, none of them have had any feasible backlash on the security of this nation.

As Ron Paul said, “In a free society we’re supposed to know the truth; in a society where truth becomes treason, we’re in big trouble” (Dooe par. 3). Julian Assange is no more than a helping hand in spreading information to the public. From domestic morals to international diplomacy, Wikileaks is designed to bring truths to light. None of the documents released have had an impact on our security and the information has allowed the people of this democracy to see the negativities our government is capable of. Mr. Assange should not be punished for being the middle man in the situation. The true criminals sit in the Pentagon, hiding stories of U.S. troops demolishing civilian bodies with 30mm cannons or blasphemous slander towards our own allies. They are the problem, not the media source bringing their wrong doings to light. On the case of Mr. Assange and Wikileaks there can only be one verdict. Julian Assange is only promoting the definition of a free society, a free nation, and a free democracy.
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Kevin Cramp

Kevin Cramp is a 23 year military professional serving in the Iowa Air National Guard. He is a single father of two teenage daughters and enjoys the great outdoors and traveling. Kevin is a part time college student working towards a degree in Management Information Systems.

The Need for Identity Theft Countermeasures

In recent years and at an alarmingly increasing rate, identity theft has become the fastest growing crime in America (Pierce). According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, unauthorized use of an existing credit card account, the most prevalent type of identity theft, was experienced by about 15 million households in 2009. Chances are that you know someone, or have yourself been the victim of identity theft. With all the available identification technologies at our disposal, why is identity theft still so rampant? Is it the responsibility of the individual to safeguard their information, or should the government take a larger role in preventing identity theft? Should credit card corporations take broader measures to insure that a client’s confidential information remains safe? I believe the answer is yes to all these questions. It is the responsibility of individuals, government and corporations to find a solution to identity theft.

How many times have you been through a check out register at a local retailer and swiped your debit or credit card? Odds are hundreds of times a year, yet how many times are you asked for identification? From personal experience, it would be safe to assume hardly ever. I have had
my girlfriend, who in no way shape or form looks like a guy, use my debit card and she has never been questioned about the name appearing on the card. This is most likely because the retailer has some assurance of being paid by the credit card company regardless of whether or not the card is used legitimately or as a result of identity theft. The lack of vigilance and deterrence against identity theft and fraud displayed by retail merchants when it comes to using a debit or credit card can be annoying. Not so long ago when consumers wrote checks for most purchases, the merchants would require positive identification, most of the time; they required two forms of identification before they would honor an individual’s check. This simple little control technique helped ensure that the individual writing the check was genuine. In today’s environment, however, all an identity thief needs is a pin number, or the ability to sign someone else’s name to a receipt.

Because of the relative ease at which perpetrators can steal identities, every individual should foster a culture of information safety. We have all heard stories of people who have had their lives turned upside down after having their identity stolen and subsequently used to open lines of credit. The frustration and aftermath of trying to clean up one’s record is costly and time consuming. Betsy Broder, Chairman of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission stated that consumers spent in excess of 5 billion dollars in 2009 in efforts to clear up bad credit as a result of identity theft. It is nearly impossible to safeguard every piece of personnel information, but with vigilance and by adopting the Federal Trade Commission’s “3D’s of Identity Theft” (Detour, Detect, and Defend) individuals can take measures to protect their personal information. Unfortunately in this day and age, a subscription to a credit protection service that provides notification of suspicious activity may be required. These credit protection services can cost around $120 to a $180 per year (Federal Trade Commision). However, it is “buyer beware” even with these services’ it is important to do your homework when shopping for these services and check with a reputable institution such as the Better Business Bureau or Consumer Reports before subscribing. A few simple steps to take include investing in a $25 paper shredder, requesting...
your free annual credit report at www.annualcreditreport.com and going paperless when paying your monthly bills.

The government also shares a responsibility to ensure that its citizens’ rights to privacy are enforced. With current available technologies, I believe the government should replace social security numbers with “Biometric” data. Biometrics includes DNA, fingerprints, retina scans, or anything that is physically a “part of you.” The implementation cost would be enormous, about $132.50 per person to help offset the cost (Steinmetz). But with identity theft currently a $50 Billion dollar a year crime, how could anyone not justify safeguarding the most sensitive piece of information a thief wants: a victim’s social security information. With an individual’s social security number, name and address, an identity thief can wreak havoc on an unsuspecting individual long before anyone is aware their identity has been stolen. According to the Federal Trade Commission, having a person’s social security number is the easiest way a thief can steal your identity. If this number could be replaced by an individual’s unique fingerprints instead of a nine digit number, it would go a long way in ensuring positive identification.

In recent years, the U.S. Government has taken great strides in trying to protect private identity information from would-be hackers. However, the flood of new technologies and sophisticated methods developed by hackers are proving to be too much for the government alone to handle. At present, the government’s jurisdiction rest primarily with the legislative branch and justice department, who mainly deal with identity theft deterrence and prosecution. As stated on the Department of Justice’s website

The Department of Justice prosecutes cases of identity theft and fraud under a variety of federal statutes. In the fall of 1998, for example, Congress passed the Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act. This legislation created a new offense of identity theft, which prohibits knowingly transferring or using without lawful authority, a means of identification of another person with the intent to commit, or to aid or abet, any unlawful
activity that constitutes a violation of Federal law, or that constitutes a felony under any applicable State or local law. (U.S Department of Justice)

This deterrence act provides a legal framework with which to prosecute federal cases involving identity theft. However, it doesn’t provide much in the way of techniques and tactics to catch identity criminals, nor does it do much in the way of regulating and standardizing security of an individual’s personnel information.

Lending institutions and credit card companies typically have the most to lose at the hands of an identity thief. However, current in-use technologies such as a “token” could be easily adapted to commerce applications and thereby reduce the risk of identity theft. A token is “something you have,” such as an embedded chip on a credit or identification card. Tokens can contain personal information such as finger prints, address, age, height, weight, eye color, race, and literally hundreds of details about the holder to verify their identity. Tokens are typically used in conjunction with a pin (personal identification number), which is “something you know” to allow access to information on the token and information systems. This double security measure helps ensure that only authorized individuals can access information. The token lends itself to cryptology, by providing a public, and private encryption “key,” that when paired with the information system’s encrypted “lock,” allows a specified level of access. Throw in a color photo similar to the ones found on most drivers’ licenses, along with a holographic coating from the card issuer and individuals would have the most secure credit and/or identification card available.

Positive identification systems are in wide use in many government institutions and the military, and I believe that lending institutions could and should leverage this technology to incorporate safeguards to protect their clients’ identity. Through the use of a “Smart Identification Card” which nearly all divisions of the federal government now have and use, personnel access to critical networked information systems is now controlled and monitored. These cards are required for access to internal government networks, can be coded to provide access to secure facilities, and support up to 32k of memory into which a host of positive
Identification data can be encrypted and stored. The military variant is referred to as the common access card or “CAC.” The CAC card has been in wide use in the U.S. Military since 2003. The CAC card allows users to digitally sign documents and encrypt e-mail traveling on the World Wide Web. Research shows that many credit card transactions in the United States are not encrypted (Selby). The number of industries that have not yet adopted encryption security is alarmingly high. Currently there is no set standard or regulation forcing encryption of credit card transactions. Merchant service vendors and payment processors have not yet embraced a set standard to protect information, nor has one been instituted by regulatory agencies. This leaves both vendors and cardholders vulnerable to hackers (Daughtery). Looked at from the standpoint

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(Image courtesy of Defense Information Security Agency)

The CAC card allows users to digitally sign documents and encrypt e-mail traveling on the World Wide Web. Research shows that many credit card transactions in the United States are not encrypted (Selby). The number of industries that have not yet adopted encryption security is alarmingly high. Currently there is no set standard or regulation forcing encryption of credit card transactions. Merchant service vendors and payment processors have not yet embraced a set standard to protect information, nor has one been instituted by regulatory agencies. This leaves both vendors and cardholders vulnerable to hackers (Daughtery). Looked at from the standpoint
of investment, banks need to invest in both high-tech fraud detection systems that include better tools for monitoring emerging threats, online reputation and sophisticated, multi-stage account takeovers. Even today, the "technology" being used in too many small banks comes down to some guy named Phil in the wire transfer room, acting as the bank's RED team - as in "Raised Eyebrows Department." It is not that Phil is obsolete; it is just that banks need new procedures and technology to cut down the number of transactions that come to Phil's attention (Selby).

Corporate America also has a responsibility to protect your information. I, myself, have been notified by the Veterans Administration, that a laptop being used by an employee was lost and may have contained my personal information. This is an unnerving occurrence that doesn’t have to happen. Again, there are technologies available that could help prevent unauthorized access to personal information. Telecommuting is here to stay, and employees often have the need to take work home to complete. Sometimes employees take home work that may contain your personal or sensitive data; there is no getting around this in a digital world. However with the use of cryptology, tokens, pins, and a strong password, access to sensitive data could be minimized and more secure. There are numerous software programs available that use an encryption algorithm to secure data. These programs make the data unusable unless you have the proper combinations to unlock and use the data. These technologies are in wide use on many corporate computer networks. By migrating and applying these existing security technologies to personal identification, I believe we could take enormous strides in preventing identity theft.

Identity theft is a rampantly growing crime and has no international borders. The more global financial institutions become, the greater the risk for identity theft. I believe a global standard of digital security is needed that goes past the current norm of using just computer port 443 or (secure socket layers) for communication. The only assurance anyone has when buying an item online is the hypertext transport protocol (http://) address line changes color and adds an “s” at the end that indicates it is secure (https://). This is the current procedure for most online financial transactions. However, given the sophistication of hackers and the sheer volume of
traffic on the World Wide Web, it is almost inevitable that hackers can and have cracked this security measure. With all the available technologies currently in use in similar “positive” identification applications, it seems to me that financial transactions should have the most stringent security available. I believe government and lending institutions could do much more in the securing of individuals identity information, and should spearhead efforts to that effect. Perhaps an international standard governed by IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) could help stop the flood of international identity thieves. Security isn’t cheap, but the cost of weak security is a crime. In the meantime, I would be happy if the clerks at the local convenience store would ask to see my identification before they process my purchase transaction.
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Lara Vogel

Lara A. Vogel is a college student from Switzerland. She has lived in four different countries and knows four languages. Besides writing, she enjoys painting, cooking pasta, taking road trips and simply going out with friends.

Lara Vogel
Composition II

The Weimar Era: Ghost of a Lost Generation

Partying, drinking, smoking, having fun... forget about the past. This was the motto of the youth in the 1920's, the Weimar Era in Germany. The Weimar Era started in 1920 and ended in 1933, with the rise of Hitler. The paintings I am analyzing in this essay are the work of Jeanne Mammen. She immortalized, with water colors and pencil, the crazy Berlin nightlife and whith it, the emancipation of women in the 1920's. Thanks to her, the “lost generation” of the 1920's will never be forgotten.

In Germany, the 1920’s were known as the Weimar Era. In 1918, After the Great War, Emperor William II abdicated and Germany became a republic. Germany, that was hold responsible for the Great War, lost some territories and owed great debts to the rest of Europe. Germans had been humiliated by losing the war, and young soldiers, who also
lost their soul in the trenches, came back home suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (Thompson).

Weimar was the city where Germany’s first democratic constitution was signed and where the National Assembly use to meet and vote. As shown on these four paintings from Jeanne Mammen, the Weimar Era was a time of important cultural change. After the Great War, the young generation of Germans was poor and rebellious. The cost of life was extremely high. During the Great War, Germany, borrowed a huge amount of money to pay its war costs. This led to inflation. 1923 was the worst year for the German economy. Often prices doubled in a few hours (Thompson).

Therefore, young people preferred to spend their money in bars and nightclubs rather than struggling to live a life conforming to the rules of society. On the bright side, with the Weimar Era was born the German Modern Art. The Weimar Republic also granted women the right to vote, which allowed their emancipation, as shown on Mammen’s art work.

The Weimar Republic ended in 1933 when Hitler was made chancellor, then Führer in 1934 and took control of Germany. Hitler’s third Reich was the complete opposite of the Weimar Republic: a conservative and strict government. Under Hitler's regime, books, modern art and other symbols of the Weimar Era were destroyed. In a bitter irony, the Nazis built "Buchenwald", a concentration camp, in the city of Weimar (Thompson).

The four pieces I'm analyzing in this essay have been painted during the 1920’s, as Mammen was travelling around Europe, with a freedom only male artists had previously enjoyed. Mammen was born in Berlin in 1890. At age five, she moved to Paris
where she spent most of her childhood. She studied drawing and painting in different art schools until 1914, when she had to flee France as the war started. Her father, who was a wealthy merchant, lost all his financial resources and Mammen's family had to struggle to survive. Losing her wealth opened Mammen’s eyes to social problems and she expressed her sensitiveness and compassion in her art work. During the 1920's, she traveled around Europe as an illustrator, and realized paintings with water color and pencils for different magazines. She translated on paper what she saw during the Weimar Era: parties, drinking, men and women of all classes, happy and sad faces. In 1933, after Hitler was named Chancellor, Mammen’s art was accused by the Nazi Press to be “too Jewish-like” and “too provocative”; her work was banned from publication.

Jeanne Mammen’s paintings are not only beautiful pieces of art, they have a deep meaning. To me, they represent the emancipation of women in the 1920’s. In two of her paintings, *Karneval* and *Sie Representier* (Miller), Mammen used warm colors: shades of red, dark orange and bright yellow. The sunset colors translate the happy and exciting side of the Weimar Era. The Berlin nightlife was colorful and glamorous. In the foreground, the two female subjects pose gracefully. They both have “Garconne” haircuts, which means boy-like in French. They wear short dresses, sleeveless, loose and simple, which was very provocative at the time. The woman with rusty red hair is wearing bright
lipstick and dark eye shadow. The use of makeup became more popular during the 1920's. The girl on the right is wearing a kaki dress opened in the back. Women did not want to hide behind long dresses and big hats but arouse sexual interest.

The fact that they are standing so close from each other might be a sign of mutual attraction. The 1920’s was a decade of social experimentation; women were seeking sexual adventure and bisexuality became “chic”. The two women on Karneval make me think of Marlene Dietrich or Josephine Becker: strong-minded, independent and scandalous. To me, they are a symbol for this generation of rebellious women who made history.

The background of Karnaval is blurry, which gives the viewer an impression of movement but also drunkenness and smoke in the atmosphere. The vagueness of the background can also represent the confusion of this time period. Young people had witnessed the atrocities of the war; they found refuge in parties, drug, sex and alcohol. They did not know what to expect from life, their future was uncertain: they were just seizing the day.

Sie Representiert (Miller) shows a woman dressed in very manly clothes: dark grey pants, a white vest and white cuffs, a light scarf, and a black top hat. I have noticed she is probably not wearing a corset or bra under her vest, which was a revolution in the 1920's. She looks androgynous, skinny with no feminine shapes, which was the trend of the 1920's. Women tried to resemble men, to
be respected by them and mock the rules of society. This was a proof of courage and
determination; I admire these women for opening the way to feminism for the next
generations of women.

_Sie Representiert_ is an excellent portrayal of women's attitude during the Weimar Era. The main character's position, standing up with her hands on her hips, and the way she's staring at the viewer, indicates she is proud and fearless. _Sie Representiert_, the title of the piece, speaks for itself: she represents. In the background, another woman appears to be enjoying the music, dancing with her eyes closed. Her right hand is on the main woman’s shoulder. She seems to say: "Dance with me. Life is good. Do not worry about anything."

On the other hand, _Langweilige Puppen_ and _Der Grosse Wagen_ (Miller) represent the somber side of the Weimar Era. Mammen used cool colors: different shades of grey, purple, dark blue, and black. These images have a darker theme: along with women's emancipation came drinking and smoking, bad habits reserved in the past for men.

_Langweilige Puppen_ shows two young German girls from the Weimar Era. They both have short hair and makeup, following the 1920's fashion. In the background, I have noticed a doll; it is grey with a sad look on its face. The young girls are not interested in playing with the doll; Children’s games bore them. Their childhood has been murdered by the war. These two girls personify the state of mind of the German youth during the Weimar Era. Young people
have lost all hope during the Great War. They have witnessed too much horror. Drugs and alcohol are ways to escape the reality. The expression of the girl with dark purple hair is depressed and dull, uninterested in the world. Trying to act like an adult, the girl with black hair is smoking a cigarette, letting her life fly away like smoke. The insignificant doll, symbol of youth and innocence is left alone, dying in the background.

Der Grosse Wagen, shows a man and a woman dressed up for a party, standing on a balcony, under a dark sky full of stars. The man seems to be looking up, contemplating the universe. Next to him, the young woman's seems lost in the horizon. Her facial expression indicates a total disinterest in the world. Her eyes are half closed, and seem to lack pupils and irises. She is half frowning, and standing slightly hunched over, as if she was bored and fed up with life. Her coat is falling from her shoulders; she does not seem to care. The man next to her is smoking a big cigar and wearing a nice tuxedo. He looks wealthy and older than the woman. Money is probably the reason why she's with him; she does not seem to be in love. Even though women started to emancipate during the Weimar Era, men still viewed them as sexual objects. Women tried to act like men: having multiple partners, partying, drinking, smoking... but all this did not bring them equality. This wasn't the life they had dreamed of; reality hit them in the face after the
Great War. The woman in Der Grosse Wagen is probably lost in her thoughts, trying to imagine a better life.

When Hitler came into power in 1933, the positivity of the Weimar Era was destroyed along with piles of books and modern art. The sexual revolution went into reverse; Hitler even banned all nudism in Germany. The youth quit partying and women's emancipation slowed down. Artists like Jeanne Mammen were reduce to silence. The soldiers who survived the infamous trenches of the Great War were called to fight in World War II, and the lost generation was killed a second time. Thanks to Mammen and other artists of her generation, the German Youth will always live in her paintings.

Work Cited


Sherry Hayes

Sherry Hayes has had several careers since graduating from Papillion LaVista High School in Nebraska in 1990. She has been a soldier, dental assistant, equipment coordinator, veterinarian technician, rural letter carrier, and is currently a student at DMACC. She enjoys traveling and spending time with her friends, family, and furry, four-legged friends.

Sherry Hayes

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Corn Ethanol: Why the Subsidies Should Stop

In 1908, Henry Ford’s Model T became the first mass produced vehicle that could run on gasoline, ethanol, or a combination of the two. Ethanol’s appeal has come and gone many times since then. Every time ethanol usage has increased in popularity something has happened to suppress it. Wars, prohibition, the high prices of producing ethanol, and the decrease of oil prices by OPEC (The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) to keep oil competitive have squelched demand for ethanol for over a century now.

In recent years, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and severe unrest in the Middle East, along with skyrocketing oil prices, have had the United States clamoring for energy
independence. We finally see the need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Global warming and the environment have also become major concerns, not only for the United States, but for the rest of the world. Our government, as well as consumers and environmentalists, all had high hopes for ethanol to replace our need for oil so the government began subsidizing ethanol production in 1978.

Although VEETC (Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit) has been as high as $0.60, currently there is a $0.45 tax credit for ethanol blenders, which is given to the fuel producers to mix ethanol with gasoline. A $1.01 tax credit is given to producers of cellulosic ethanol. Finally, there is a $0.10 tax credit for small producers of ethanol. These subsidies were set to run out in 2010, but they have been extended until December 31, 2011.

In addition to government subsidies, the government did several other things to encourage the use of domestically produced ethanol. They imposed a $0.54 tariff on imported ethanol to keep cheaper Brazilian ethanol made from sugar cane out of competition with corn ethanol produced the United States. In 2007, the federal government passed the Renewable Fuel Standard, mandating that by the year 2011, the United States will need to use at least 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuel per year and by 2022; we will need to be using 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel per year. These numbers have been increased since then.

Currently, the national deficit is around 15.1 trillion dollars and we are spending six billion dollars annually on ethanol tax credits. Some politicians with strong ties to the Midwest, big oil companies, and corn producers are fighting very hard to keep these subsidies in place. Politicians from other regions, meat and dairy producers, scientists,
environmentalists and economists are all pushing for the government to stop subsidizing ethanol.

Although I’m from Iowa, and would like nothing more than to support local corn farmers, jobs created by ethanol production, and a renewable fuel source, I believe we should stop subsidizing corn ethanol because it is far from an ideal source of renewable fuel. Roger Pilon from The CATO Institute, in a recent article about global warming made a comment about former vice president Al Gore that says it all:

Let’s remember that Al Gore, who never missed an opportunity to expand government, was once an ethanol evangelist, a posture he’s recently admitted was connected mainly with presidential politics in Iowa — now that ethanol has been shown to have negative environmental consequences.

Here in Iowa and throughout the Midwest, we love our farmers. I personally have many fond childhood memories of spending time at my great grandparent’s farms. They worked hard and taught us the famous “Midwest work ethic.” I think we all have the idea that when we buy ethanol blended gasoline and pay the ethanol tax credits we are helping the family farmer, but this is not exactly how it works. The largest amount of tax credits, the $.45 blenders tax credit, goes to the big oil companies. The top four are Valero, Exxon Mobile, BP, and Conoco Phillips. These companies have all had record profits as the rest of the county has struggled with a recession the last few years. Do these companies really need government subsidies? The tax credits also keep corn prices high. This helps the landowners with vast amounts of land, not the smaller family farms. Many family farmers lease their land from the large landowners and end up paying higher prices because the corn prices are up. The tax credits help the big oil companies and
large agricultural land owners much more than they help the family farmer we want to support.

Many people that are against subsidizing ethanol are against subsidizing anything. They believe that in a free market, if corn ethanol were really a good renewable fuel source then it wouldn’t need subsidizing, fuel producers would see its value and potential to make money and support it without government subsidies and mandates. So far, no one except politicians and corn growers are touting corn ethanol’s value. Some, however, are looking to the future and hoping that cellulosic ethanol may be the answer. Adriel Bettelheim, in her article, *Biofuel Boom* written for CQ Researcher explains that “Many energy experts and scientists contend that a more energy-efficient solution is to produce ethanol from switchgrass, wood chips, crop residues or other widely available forms of cellulose, as is the norm in other countries.” She goes on to say, “Committing to another feedstock, or source, instead of corn also would undercut the current boom in corn-based ethanol production and possibly alienate an important political constituency in farm states” (Bettelheim).

Ethanol production is subsidized by the government partially because it is supposed to be better for the environment than burning fossil fuels. Some studies say that the energy produced by ethanol is actually negated by the vast amount of fossil fuel used to produce ethanol but most say there is a small amount of energy gained. The following is an Argonne National Laboratory ethanol study which was summarized by the U.S. Department of Energy and explained in Robbin Johnson and Ford Runge’s article, *Ethanol: Train Wreck Ahead*, published in *Issues in Science & Technology*.
It showed that ethanol on average uses 0.74 million BTUs of fossil energy for each 1 million BTUs of ethanol delivered to the pump. In addition, the total energy used to produce corn-based ethanol, including the solar energy captured by photosynthesis, is 1.5 to 2 million BTUs for each 1 million BTUs of ethanol delivered to a pump. That is a lot of fossil fuel that is consumed to produce ethanol. Combine this with the fact that vast amounts of water and fertilizer are used to grow the corn that is needed to produce corn ethanol and ethanol loses its environmental appeal.

Another down side to producing corn ethanol is we are using our food to produce fuel. Corn growers say there is plenty of corn and it is renewable, but the government subsidies are keeping corn prices at an all-time high. This is nice for corn growers, but the high corn prices have a heavy impact on other areas of agriculture. The livestock and dairy farmers that feed corn are paying twice the amount they paid 2007 to keep their animals fed. This price increase is then passed along to the consumer every time we buy meat or dairy products. It has an even more dramatic effect of third world countries that rely on U.S. corn as a staple of their diet. Maria Clemmitt, writer for CQ Researcher, in her report, Global Food Crisis makes a good point: “With 2.1 billion people worldwide living on less than $2 a day and another 880 million living on less than $1 a day, price increases of such magnitude have plunged hundreds of millions into malnutrition and starvation.” She goes on to say, “Some critics also blame the impact of globalization and the continued use of farm subsidies by industrialized nations, which they say undercut prices in poor countries” (Clemmitt).

We all know burning fossil fuels pose a health risk to Americans. We subsidize ethanol because we believe it burns cleaner and this is a myth. In reality, burning ethanol
creates more ozone (main ingredient of smog) than burning fossil fuels. It has been linked to lung disease, asthma, and even lung cancer. Aili McConnon, in her article *New Knocks Against Ethanol* published in *Business Week*, cites one experiment led by Mark Z. Jacobson, civil and environmental engineering professor at Stanford University:

The new study used a computer simulation to compare air quality in the U.S.--and specifically, in Los Angeles--in the year 2020 under two different scenarios. In one, the vehicle fleet is fueled by traditional gasoline; in the other, it runs on 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline, a blend known as E85…. this is the first such study to account for population distribution and the complex interaction of environmental factors like sunlight, clouds, and wind. Based on the simulation, he concludes that the switch to an ethanol fleet could result in a 4% increase in U.S. deaths overall, and a 9% increase in L.A.

Jerry Taylor and Harry de Gorter, researchers and writers for the CATO Institute recently wrote an article, *The Tax Credit-- It's Worse Than You Think* about the negative effects of the corn ethanol tax credit. They cite a recent report about the cost of ethanol. Here are those findings:

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently issued a report on how the corn-ethanol tax credit costs $1.78 to reduce one gallon of gasoline consumption and $754 to reduce one ton of greenhouse gases. The Wall Street Journal immediately noted that "to put that [latter] number in perspective, the budget gnomes estimate that the price for a ton of carbon under the cap-and-tax program that the House passed last summer would be about $26 in 2019."

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It is clear that ethanol is expensive. The only reason ethanol blended gasoline can compare to regular gasoline at the pump is because of the tax credits. We see those benefits here in the Midwest. Usually gasoline blended with ethanol is around $.15 cheaper per gallon than regular gasoline, but in other parts of the country, many gas stations do not carry ethanol blends. It is very costly to transport and they need specialized equipment and storage tanks to carry it. We also had high hopes for cars that could run on ethanol at a higher blended rate, E85. Manufacturers began to produce these “flex-fuel” cars but they haven’t been a success. Consumers found that once they bought the car there was no one selling the fuel. Consumer and government demands for higher gas mileage on vehicles have effectively eliminated the idea of using ethanol as a fuel source. Ethanol produces one-third less energy per gallon than gasoline making it a less than ideal fuel source to increase gas mileage. In spite of government subsidies to manufacturers to produce “flex-fuel” cars, production has fallen from 4% to 2% of the cars being manufactured in the U.S. today.

Proponents of the ethanol tax credit say that even though the cost of corn ethanol is high, and its performance has not lived up to our expectations, it is worth the price for our nation to be energy independent with less reliance on foreign oil. I agree with this, but had my hopes crushed as I read Robert Bryce’s book, *Power Hungry: the Myths of “Green” Energy and the Real Fuels of the Future*. He explains that a barrel of oil consists of 42 gallons, which yields around 20 gallons of gasoline. The other 22 gallons are used to produce a myriad of other oil products such as butane, diesel fuel, jet fuel, kerosene, petroleum used to produce different plastics, and even asphalt. Demand for
these products is higher than ever and ethanol cannot replace them. Therefore, our consumption of ethanol as a fuel really has no effect on our oil consumption (Bryce 185).

Another argument politicians use for keeping the corn ethanol tax credit is that the corn ethanol industry creates jobs. Just this month, writer for the Des Moines Register, Philip Brasher, reported on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack’s opinion. He says, “Vilsack cited industry estimates to claim that ethanol production supports 400,000 jobs nationwide, directly or indirectly” (Brasher). Many people believe this number is grossly inflated; it includes farmers, construction workers, truck drivers, gas station employees, and many other jobs that people would be doing, with or without ethanol production. No one can say exactly how many jobs would be affected if the ethanol tax credit ceased, but most experts agree that the number is much less than 400,000. The U.S. currently has 189 ethanol plants and 40 of these are located in Iowa. Most ethanol plants directly employ 16-75 people. The loss of these jobs would definitely hurt our rural economy, but so does paying 6 billion in taxes yearly on a fuel source that is not worth it.

Others argue that jobs would not be affected nearly as much as we fear. Although the big oil companies and big agribusiness would no longer be receiving tax credits for producing ethanol blended fuels, there is still the federal mandate that requires the use of biofuels. The Renewable Fuel Standard mandates that fuel refiners use 12.6 billion gallons of corn ethanol in 2011 and this number increases to 15 billion gallons per year by 2015. This would ensure production of corn ethanol would continue without the tax credits. The big oil companies might not produce any extra ethanol without the subsidies, but they would have to keep the factories open in order to meet the federal mandate.
I hope that one day we can find a solution to our fuel needs. There are high hopes for natural gas, cellulosic ethanol, nuclear, and battery powered vehicles. Scientists are also developing ways to burn fossil fuels cleaner and more efficiently. I believe our annual six billion tax credit dollars given to big oil companies and large agricultural land owners to grow corn that we need anyway, would be better spent developing options that are more environmentally friendly, less expensive, did not use our “food for fuel,” perform better than ethanol, and actually have an effect on our nation’s voracious appetite for oil.
Works Cited


Leslie McMullin

I am multi-faceted -- multi-interested -- multi-talented. I am WuShu, the art of Chinese kung fu -- a student, classmate, and instructor. I am the maestro of the distinctive hourglass shaped wooden beauty--the violin. I am an elegant ballerina, funky tap dancer, and jivin’ jazz dancer. Spattering mud and making rooster tails, I love zipping through the open fields on my dirt bike. I live in the city but love my 3 egg-laying pet chickens. I strive to achieve and do my best. I try to tackle every task and circumstance with a smile on my face. I am Leslie McMullin.

Leslie McMullin

Gun Control Is Not the Answer

One of the most on-going controversial topics in the United States today is that of limiting gun ownership. Gun control means the government controls what types of guns can be made or sold, and who can buy them. Guns have always been a part of the United States and were instrumental in the birth of this country’s independence. The Founding Fathers of the United States understood the importance of the use of firearms to establish
and secure this nation’s independence, and as a result, the freedoms people enjoy today. Gun control is a very divisive issue in the United States today. Most people have a definite viewpoint one way or the other and are willing to support it strongly. Gun ownership continues to expand, as was evidenced in the last presidential election when citizens went out and bought guns in record numbers fearing the new administration would severely restrict certain types of gun ownership. Estimates show “there are some 67 million handguns, 73 million rifles, and 63 million shotguns [privately owned in the United States]” (Streissguth 12-13). To try and limit gun ownership after 200 years will not work.

Gun ownership does not pose a threat to society. There are multiple reasons supporting this idea. To begin with, the threat of guns in households is exaggerated. Statistics show that “the accidental death from firearms rate for children has declined 56 percent, reaching the lowest levels ever recorded in American history, according to the National Center for Health Statistics” (Roleff 28). The rate of firearms accidents, including children of all ages, is at an all-time low. Granted, any death of a child is tragic, however, the number of “toddlers who die from gun accidents is far less than the 2,700 children who die in motor vehicle accidents, 3,600 from burns, 500 children who die in swimming pools each year, and most alarmingly, 12,100 children that die annually from accidental poisoning” (Roleff 30). To suggest that cars, matches, and household chemicals should all be controlled is ridiculous; the same holds true for firearms. Gun ownership does not pose a threat to society and, in fact, reduces threats by everyday citizens using firearms in self-defense situations to actually reduce crime. A 1993 national survey “obtained an estimate of 2.5 million annual defensive gun uses, excluding
military and police uses and excluding uses against animals. Gun users in 400,000 of these cases believe that the gun certainly or almost certainly saved a life” (Roleff 46). In addition, many states have variations of laws allowing citizens to carry concealed weapons. Many states have “shall-issue” and “nondiscretionary” laws. These laws allow officials to issue permits to people who meet specific qualifications, which include a clean criminal record, paying a fee, meeting a minimum age requirement, and/or completing a firearms safety course. Governor Chet Culver signed legislation to let Iowa become the most recent “shall issue” state. It has been verified that laws such as these that allow concealed weapons protect society. Studies have been completed and found that when law-abiding citizens are allowed to carry concealed weapons, criminals do not know who has a gun and who does not and so are less likely to commit a violent crime for fear of getting shot (Roleff 48-50). A man conducted a personal study to see what it was like to carry a concealed handgun. He went through the application process, bought the necessary equipment, and began his analysis. At first he found carrying a gun somewhat awkward, but he found that carrying a concealed gun every day was no different than carrying his wallet. The man believed that he would be able to protect himself if he were ever in danger (Owens 67).

One of the major arguments against gun control is rooted in the Second Amendment. The Constitution governing the United States ensures the right of the people to keep and bear arms. The Amendment states, “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.” The question of interpretation of the Second Amendment has bewildered legal scholars for many years. The Second Amendment refers clearly to “the
right of the people.” The original intent of the Second Amendment to protect individual rights has been too often ignored by federal courts. History shows that an armed citizenry has been an accepted or even necessary part of American society. The belief has been upheld in various courts in which an individual’s right to bear arms was protected. However, the tyranny of regulation continues. Gun control laws betray constitutional freedoms by maintaining ill-gotten government powers at the expense of individual rights. The Constitution contains the Bill of Rights written by James Madison and he believed that “the Bill of Rights was intended not only to tell rulers the limits of their powers, but also to inform the citizens of their rights so that they will know when they are violated” (qtd. in Halbrook 111). The Second Amendment is a guarantee that the federal government will not interfere with the individual’s right to bear arms and the American people certainly will not forget or abandon this fundamental right.

However, the opposition argues the translation of the Second Amendment is frequently misinterpreted. Challengers argue the purpose of the Second Amendment is to guarantee the states’ ability to maintain independent militias composed of state residents available to be called upon to defend the country should its security be threatened. The National Guard was established in 1903, and gun control supporters contend that the National Guard was created to eliminate the need for citizens to arm themselves (Valdez 34). Those who also favor gun control perceive that handguns are the cause of fatal accidents, fierce crime, and tragic suicides (Streissguth 14).

Creating more gun control laws will not reduce crime and violence. John C. Moorhouse and Brent Wanner wrote in an essay their perspective of gun control laws:
Gun control laws are complex, inconsistent, and have no impact on crime. State data reveals a lack of consistent enforcement at the state and local levels. Paradoxically an increase in crime leads to an increase in gun control regulations. The reasons gun control is not effective include the lack of influence that regulations have on criminal behavior. And there is no effective means to regulate the transfer of guns between non-dealer private parties. 

Americans believe existing gun laws should be enforced and there is no need to pass new laws controlling gun ownership. Currently, there are over 20,000 laws on the books regulating gun ownership. More than three-quarters of Americans oppose amending the Constitution to ban individual gun ownership (Jost 5). John Moorhouse completed a study on gun control laws. His study factored in 30 facets of gun control into six categories which were weighted. The results of the in-depth study found absolutely no support that gun control laws, or their absence, had an effect on crime rates. These results are consistent with the findings of additional studies that were completed in the 1980s and 1990s. There just isn’t any hard evidence that gun control affects crime rates (Roleff 141-144). Wayne LaPierre, CEO of the National Rifle Association, stated, “Gun ownership doesn’t cause crime. Criminals do. Whether a firearm has a long or short barrel, fires single or multiple rounds, its capacity for ‘good’ or ‘evil’ rests solely with the user. No gun ban has ever kept guns out of the hands of criminals- only prisons do” (qtd. in Crooker 25).

It is the right of the people to keep and bear arms. The Constitution governing this country ensures this right. The elected officials and the judicial system should fully
uphold the laws we currently have and to prosecute anyone who uses a gun in the commission of a crime, to the fullest extent of the law. The criminals who use guns need to be punished and leave the other law-abiding gun owners alone.
Works Cited


Ross McInteer

When Ross C. McInteer is not off exploring Mother Nature’s bounty, he is trying to educate and inspire today’s youth. In his down time he works selling outdoor products to people that love the great outdoors as much as him.

Ross McInteer

American’s Right, North America’s Necessity

Ever since our distant ancestors landed on the continent of North America, people living here have relied heavily on its bountiful wildlife for survival. As European settlers mixed with Native Americans in the region, they learned a new way of life, a life that relied heavily on hunter/gatherer techniques. Eventually European settlers ventured out west where their newly acquired skills aided in their survival and helped form this great country that we reside in today. With regulated hunting in North America, responsible humans can control or avoid a multitude of problems that occur from either hunting not
being practiced or hunting seasons being regulated too strictly. There are many problems along that stem from no hunting along with some very positive effects that come from regulated hunting. Topics such as over population and its effects, wildlife causing detrimental damage to commercial agriculture, mankind’s well being, wild game as a food source, and the vast revenue that hunting brings into state income will all be discussed.

One of the biggest potential problems that occur when there is not regulated hunting is an explosion of wildlife population. An explosion of wildlife would cause a trickle down effect which in turn would affect many of the other issues concerning hunting. The wildlife that would feel the worst effects would be larger mammals such as the whitetail deer and black bear. Populations could explode, causing not only famine from extreme herd size but also starvation within specific herds. This would contribute to the size of most ecosystems which the deer reside in being too small to hold a larger quantity of one species. Each ecosystem already has a very strict carrying capacity and once certain species have exhausted all the resources in one area, they will either keep over consuming or disease will move through the existing herd. One example of what can happen occurred in New Jersey in 2000. That year New Jersey lost their black bear season. The effects that the lost season had on the state is still being felt to this day. People in residential and rural areas alike lived in a state of constant fear for their young children and house pets. This all happened because a group of people decided to take it upon themselves to dictate what is best for Mother Nature. New York, for example, does not want to go down the same path that New Jersey has chosen. Gordon Batcheller is a wildlife biologist with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and
believes that “Man has done such a fantastic job of managing these animals, they are flourishing. That isn’t to say that certain conditions don’t have good and bad effects on bears but they must be responsibly managed. That means making adjustments to populations” (Remington par.6). Regulated hunting can help maintain the balance mother nature requires to stay healthy.

In the American Midwest commercial agriculture is king, and each year farmers lose vast amounts of money from their crops being ravaged primarily by whitetail deer and raccoons. Lance Gegner describes the effects that deer can have on commercial agriculture by stating “The USDA estimates that total deer damage from auto collisions and crop and timber losses reaches at least $1 billion a year” (par. 4). Gegner goes on to say that in a state such as Iowa it is not uncommon for individual farmers to lose approximately $20,000 a year from wildlife damage. In the year 2009-2010 it was recorded that Iowa hunters harvested 108,000 deer (“Iowa Deer Harvest Approaching 110,000” par. 1). With populations of whitetail deer state wide to be estimated in the 400,000 range, you can only imagine how quickly the population could become totally out of control. Crop damage will never stop as long as there is wildlife in the area. The deer’s main source of nutrition lies within farmers’ fields. Most farmers are fine with it and realize that it is inevitable, but obviously don’t want the problem getting any bigger. However, regulating the deer population through regulated hunting seasons will help keep the population at a reasonable level saving farmers crops.

One other large problem that livestock ranchers face is harm to their livestock and pasture land from predatory and invasive wildlife. It should come as no surprise that the mountain lion has the capability of bringing down an adult horse or heifer. The mountain
lion’s capabilities go way beyond just livestock, with several cases of house cats and
domestic dogs being victims. Most western states allow the harvesting of mountain lions,
but it is strictly regulated the majority of the time. Iowa State University did a study on
the effects that the mountain lion damage have on ranchers and discovered “Mountain
lions cause about 20% of the total livestock predation losses in western states annually”
(“Mountain Lion Damage Assessment” par. 3). This could be corrected by boosting the
number of issued tags for the mountain lion and lowering the price of non resident tags.
Controlling the mountain lion population will benefit not just livestock owners but people
who live or enjoy recreation in the country.

One of the largest problems facing the American south is the invasion of feral
hogs. These wild hogs are escapees from hog confinements and are literally destroying
the south, slowly working their way northward. Annually it is estimated that feral hogs
cause nearly $52 million in expenses to agriculture owners. With nearly 4 million feral
hogs located within 39 states in the lower 48, feral hogs will destroy North America in no
time (“Facts on Feral Hogs” par. 1). The largest problem is there is no simple answer for
controlling this invasive species that is totally out of control. States such as Texas, which
harbor nearly half the feral hog population, have implemented laws that allow the
harvesting of these nuisance animals any time, day or night without the use of tags or a
restriction on weapons. These tactics are practiced to try and eliminate the species
making hunting a necessity.

In addition controlling wildlife is vital because the impact that wildlife has on
human health and well-being is greater than one might initially think. First and foremost,
wildlife constantly comes into contact with the human race; it is inevitable. When certain
animals do contact humans they leave a less than desirable impression. There are several sicknesses and diseases that spread through humans and wildlife alike. It has been well documented that “approximately two-thirds of the infectious diseases that affect humans are of animal origin” (Friend par. 1). One such disease that can be controlled with well managed hunting techniques includes Lyme disease which is primarily carried through deer ticks. “Lyme disease has reached epidemic proportions in Connecticut, Rhode Island and in coastal areas of Massachusetts” (“Animal Damage Control” par. 17). This disease, if not treated relatively fast can be fatal. If a population explosion of whitetail deer were to take place, we as humans would have a real problem on our hands because of the repercussions of an astonishing number of deer transmitting Lyme disease. Other potentially fatal diseases would be: hoof and mouth and rabies just to name a few.

Regulated hunting can help limit exposure to infected animals, keeping people from contracting diseases carried by animals.

Wildlife can also be dangerous to humans by causing automobile accidents. An instance that most rural Iowans know all too well is when wildlife and humans collide on the road. “The Humane Society of the United States reports that over a million animals are struck by vehicles on US roadways each day” (Weir par. 1). Every day, not every year! This is an astounding fact and should not be taken lightly. “One and a half million people are estimated to be involved with deer/vehicle collisions annually in North America. That number along with 29,000 human injuries, $1 billion in insurance claims and tragically the loss of life is what makes the whitetail deer the most dangerous mammal in North America” (Murphy par. 3). Human fatalities outside of the Midwest are not out of the norm; in areas where elk and moose live the consequences of colliding
on the roadways escalates from dangerous to fatal. If you compound the above facts with taking away hunting privileges in North America, it is no doubt that within 10 years those destructive numbers will all double. It is dangerous enough to drive in America we really do not need more animals on the roads.

Now to a real positive that hunting game animals in North America allows. Several families throughout America rely heavily on what the land will provide for sustenance. The average mature deer, for example, will yield nearly 75 pounds of venison. If you have an entire family hunting the family will have enough meat in the freezer to last until next hunting season. Not only is venison delicious, but it is also much better for you than beef or pork. Along with being extremely cost effective, it is a renewable food supply. One large contribution that hunters make that goes unnoticed is donations. The majority of hunters throughout the country hunt not only for the food but also for the thrill of the chase. Several hunters will harvest more animals than their family can consume, so the fortunate hunters will donate their bounty to HUSH (Help Us Stop Hunger) deer donation program. This is an Iowa program that has been in existence for six years. Founded by Ross Harrison, last year alone HUSH took in 7,300 deer for needy families. Harrison stated “Iowa is second in the country in terms of donated deer. And we’re not even close to number two in total number of deer, but our hunters are just cooperating real well” (“Donations of deer to HUSH program” par. 3). In times of economic despair, having a cheap, healthy food source is important to many people.

Regulated hunting is also beneficial because of what hunting does for state and local revenue. Each year states in the Midwest such as Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio bring in millions of dollars in revenue from state tags and tourist revenue. Iowa
is known as an American Mecca for big buck hunting. Annually 195,000 residents and non-residents go hunting in Iowa. From those 195,000 participants, local communities within Iowa generate $137 million in retail store sales. For the state this generates nearly $214 million in total economic output and creates more than 2,800 jobs for Iowans alone. Outside of Iowa the numbers even get larger. In all of America, retail stores generate $300 million, $470 million in total economic output and are responsible for 6,200 jobs nationwide all because of hunting (“Deer Hunting by the Numbers” par. 1-2). Take those vast amounts of money out of the equation (money that all stays stateside), and America from an economic standing is worse off than we already are and those numbers were from 2006. Clearly hunting is a good idea economically.

The debate whether or not to hunt will never be laid to rest. There are several different organizations and many individuals in North America that don’t believe hunting should be practiced. However, these people may not understand the many benefits of regulated hunting, especially how it can help struggling individuals and support the American economy and environment. We as humans can control a multitude of problems that would surely arise from a non existent hunting season. Americans love the great outdoors, and no one loves it more than an avid hunter. Even if you do not hunt, support those who do. They are helping you even if you do not agree with it.
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Angel Corbin
Angel Corbin wanted to be a nurse from a young age and still dreams of doing just that. She loves to travel and is constantly amazed by the beauty and wonders of nature. When she’s not enjoying nature, she is working hard to make her dream of being a nurse a reality.

Angel Corbin

Composition II

Attachment in Adoption: The Negative Impacts

Attachment has a multitude of meanings and many implications. There isn’t simply one way of defining what attachment is, but it is something that everyone deals with in one way or another. Jean Mercer has her Ph.D. in Psychology and has studied the development of children and attachment since the late 60’s. Essentially, attachment is the emotional ties between people, and these ties guide our thoughts, feelings, ideas, and actions; they change with experiences and age (Mercer, 2006). When it comes to adoption, children’s attachment is affected negatively because it disrupts the attachment process.
There is a secure attachment style and then an insecure style. It’s important to understand what a secure attachment style looks like in order to recognize when a child has an insecure attachment style. Children with a secure attachment will play and explore freely with parents. They become upset when they are separated from parents but are happy and actively look for affection when their parents return (Cherry, para.7). These children “seek proximity” (Benoit, 2004) and stay in contact “until they feel safe” (Benoit, 2004). When secure children are frightened, they will seek comfort from their parents and know they will be cared for, comforted, and reassured (Cherry, para.7).

The attachment style is made from experiences had and people known. As babies, it’s the people who play a big part in the upbringing that shape the attachment style. For children who are adopted, this process is much harder to deal with. Adoptees report more problems with insecurity than non-adoptees (Feeney, Passmore, and Peterson, 2007). Feeney, Passmore, and Peterson conducted a study in 2007 looking at the relationships of adult adoptees and their attachment styles. The participants (adoptees and non-adoptees) of this study read descriptions of each category, including secure, and chose the one they felt best fit them. Few of the adoptees fell into the secure category. In fact, only 49 adoptees compared to 80 non-adoptees fit this category (Feeney et al., 2007). There was actually a much higher percent in the 3 insecure categories: preoccupied, dismissed, and fearful (Feeney et al., 2007).

As mentioned before, secure children are very comfortable with their parents and know their needs will be met. Insecure children are not so lucky. Children of this nature generally fit into two categories: ambivalent or avoidant (Howe, 2006). Ambivalent children often do whatever they can to heighten the likelihood they will be noticed. These children have little confidence in themselves or their ability to make changes or get what they need. They have a “drive to be noticed, valued, acknowledged, and recognized” (Howe, 2006). Avoidant children are almost the opposite. These children rarely display signs of dependency, weakness, or
vulnerability in order to make it easier for others to accept them. They do this in hopes that it will increase the availability of their new parents. Often times these children “become emotionally self-contained but astute observers of other people’s feelings and behavior” (Howe, 2006). These children may be very quiet or even shy, but they can easily tell you about other people, how they are feeling, and even their behavior. In 2006, Howe conducted a study dealing with attachment styles in adopted and fostered children and found that these children commonly had problems with avoidance and anxiety.

Adoptees also report higher levels of anxiety and avoidance than non-adoptees (Feeney et al., 2007). Adoption can be a very long, drawn-out, and expensive process which can cause anxiety for all involved. Participants of Feeney’s study took a questionnaire in respect to their relationship with their parents (be they biological or adoptive). The questionnaire dealt with questions on dimensions of care and over-protection (Feeney et al., 2007). Feeney et al. found that participants who felt their maternal relationship were poor were negatively linked to avoidance (2007). Participants who felt their paternal relationship were poor were also negatively linked to avoidance, as well as anxiety (Feeney et al., 2007).

Another aspect of Feeney’s study dealt with relationships. The adoptee participants who stated there had been relationship deterioration in the past six months also had higher levels of anxiety and avoidance (Feeney et al., 2007). When one deals with high levels of these for an extended time, it can lead to more anxiety and/or avoidance later in life. Avoidance is typically associated with greater perceptions of intimacy risks, loneliness, and lower quality in their relationships (Feeney et al., 2007). It was found that anxiety predicted higher intimacy risks and more loneliness but had nothing to do with relationship quality. Adoptees grow up with problems in creating secure relationships because their attachment process was disrupted. The disconnection and anxiety created by this disruption spills into their adulthood and can cause problems of avoidance in later relationships.
Looking back at Howe’s study, it’s important to go back to the idea of the two categories of insecure children: ambivalent and avoidant (2006). Howe’s study looked at the attachment styles of adopted and fostered children. In ambivalent children, their biggest anxiety is being ignored, abandoned, or alone with their needs unmet. This can lead to problems of being overly preoccupied with other’s emotional availability. It can also cause anger problems, pleading, or a child who is extremely needy or overly demanding (Howe, 2006). Avoidant children are simply anxious, and as the name describes, avoidant. When distressed, these children will “avoid their caregiver” (Benoit, 2004) and negative emotions diminish. For these children, relationships where any issues with attachment are present can cause anxiety, distress, and even aggression. The problem with this is that not only does an insecure attachment have a psychological effect (insecurity, anxiety, avoidance, and intimacy problems) on the child; an insecure attachment can also cause growth failure and poor health (Howe, 2006).

In addition, the problems that come with insecurity lead to higher perceptions of risks in intimacy with people like parents and, eventually, significant others. As mentioned before, another aspect of the study done by Feeney et al. was the relationships of participants. The participants were asked what their relationship status was and how that had changed over six months. The number of relationships that had ended or formed was too small for analysis. Therefore, the researchers focused on the relationships that deteriorated or improved. Adoptees had a greater number of deteriorating relationships than the non-adoptees. The differences between the adoptees and non-adoptees who had an improving relationship were much smaller (Feeney et al., 2007). It’s important to note that the reasons for deterioration (withdrawal, lack of communication, and outside stressor) and improvement (increased commitment, more open communication, and less conflicted communication) were the same for both adoptees and non-adoptees (Feeney et al., 2007). The adoptees just had more problems pertaining to the reasons for deterioration.
Things need to be looked at from not just the parent’s perspectives but also from the adopted children’s perspectives. Steele, Hodges, Kaniuk, and Steele conducted a study in 2010 where they did just this. They used a tool called Story Stem Assessment to better understand situations from the children’s perspectives. This tool evaluates how children perceive the relationship between them and their parents as well as their ideas about affection, boundaries, and more. The group started a story (based in certain areas of family life) and then asked the children to tell them what happened next. When a problem was present, it was very common for the child to not acknowledge the problems.

In an example, the interviewer starts a story about a situation where the mom is making dinner and tells the child to stay away from the stove. The boy, Larry, demonstrates a doll knocking the pan off with the doll saying “Ow! I’ve burned my hand!” Then Larry says, “It didn’t burn” and shows the doll being put on the stove by mom. Larry shows the doll hitting the mom and says the boy’s bottom was burned. He ends with saying the boy’s okay. Larry starts out by avoiding the problem. He makes no effort to acknowledge the problems and lacks any signs of anyone caring for the hurt hand. Instead the problem and hurt are met with aggression (Steele et al., 2010). Aggression is just one of the few elements of attachment.

Intimacy is another very important element of attachment. “The closer the relationship, the greater the attachment and identification” the child feels with the parent (Groze & Rosenthal, 1993). The focus and quality of the communication and interactions between parent and child is crucial. As infants, the parent-child relationship is very intimate. The parents have to know what the baby needs without being explicitly told. Even children can have problems of intimacy with their new parents. When children are hurt and they turn away from a parent, the parent perceives this as meaning the children don’t want, like, or need care. This reaffirms the children’s belief that parents are not a source of nurturance (Mercer, 2006). As adults, adoptees continue to have problems with intimacy but typically more with significant others. The basic reasons for
Adoption does have a positive aspect; adoptees are better able to adjust to new settings because they have a history of dealing with many losses and upheavals. Adoption also greatly affects attachment in a negative way. Adoptees report more issues with insecurity. As children, they struggle with insecure attachment styles like avoidant and ambivalent, which if left alone can cause even more problems both physically and psychologically to children. Also, the constant movement and upheaval makes it hard for adoptees to really create a secure attachment. As adults, they continue to have problems with secure attachments. Adoptees were more likely to have an insecure attachment, and non-adoptees were almost twice as likely to have a secure attachment.

Adoptees deal with many losses. The children’s sense of identity and the feeling of being “biologically” tied to someone are the biggest losses they must deal with. Being “biologically” tied to another person is important. We all want to know where we come from, and who are ancestors were; adopted children often do not know the answers to these questions. They also deal with role changes. Before adoption, children rely on themselves only, but after adoption, these children are leery to give up that role. After years in a new placement, adoptees demonstrate more secure representations but there are still plenty of negative ones still in existence; “representations come to be formed, older ones remain” (Steele et al., 2010). If new parents are available and understanding, secure attachment can begin to be created and the insecure attachment will slowly take a backseat. This will positively affect relationships over the child’s life.
References


The Truth about Criminals

There are many thoughts and theories about why crimes are being committed. Parents, friends, and family have been blamed, as well as poverty, childhood experiences, brain damage, and an act of choice. I will answer why these theories are inaccurate and why; if we are to fix their criminal activity; we must fix the way they think first or our efforts will be in vane. I will also discuss briefly some other myths society has on why offenders act the way they do as well as how to successfully change an offenders behavior.

Many people believe peer groups and peer pressure are key for the reason people behave in a criminal manner but the question that often lingers in my mind to this theory is what causes them to want to be around these kinds of people? Or much more, what makes them want to impress these people so much that they are willing to commit crime to attain their approval. This is not a valid excuse for crime because the individual chose to associate himself/herself with those risk-taking individuals.
Some people believe parents make children become criminal but this couldn’t be farther from the truth. More often than not parents are the first victims of their child’s criminal behavior. As the story goes in chapter 2 of the book Inside the Criminal Mind by Stanton E. Samenow, the offender Bill would verbally abuse the parents if they didn’t do what he wanted them to do. He would steal money from their purse or wallet and when confronted, he would use reverse psychology to make them feel like the bad guy.

Some also believe that childhood experiences cause people to have a criminal behavior but this theory; along with poverty, makes one wonder if this is true. Why doesn’t everyone who experiences these kinds of events conduct themselves with criminal activity? Why is it only a small percentage of individuals that experience these circumstances that end up behind bars?

Stanton E. Samenow and Dr. Samuel Yochelson developed fifty-two thinking errors that pertain to why criminals behave the way they do. Some of those errors are blaming others instead of taking responsibility for their own actions. Their wants and desires are often more important to them than the wants and desires of others and they act in a way that emphasizes that fact. An example would be getting drunk or high instead of helping your parents clean your room, even after promising you would be there to help.

The offender often feels requests from parents, teachers, and others are burdens to them and often will put those requests off until the person does it themselves or gives up on it entirely. To the offender anger is a way of life and fun and excitement is their main purpose in life. They often have problems holding a job, or getting thru school because it is viewed as boring and unnecessary to their life as well as unbeneicficial. The offender often finds ways to make them feel in control. They have a major issue of feeling inferior so school work and responsibilities are out of the question. They often thumb their nose at the people that live responsible lives and want nothing to do with those individuals that would potentially be superior to them. The offender is often disgusted by being told what to do so though they could get a
legal job they would rather take an illegal means of getting money such as selling drugs for a feeling of superiority. ([www.criminology.fsu.edu](http://www.criminology.fsu.edu))

Some of the myths people have of why people subdue to criminal behavior are that the criminal does not know right from wrong but in reality they just push aside their conscience. In truth the criminal just has a lack of concern for those around them and a constant urge to be associated as “the bad boy”. The lack of responsible decision making and the thinking errors are the reason criminals behave the way they do.

The criminal knows that their acts are wrong and that society views them as criminals but rarely will a criminal refer to themselves as a criminal. The criminal knows right from wrong and even may be more knowledgeable of the law than most average citizens. In the criminals mind an act is wrong if it is too-risky or too petty. A big time operator may consider shoplifting wrong because it’s not worth the time. A lot of criminals know rape and molestation is wrong and despise it, but what they did is viewed as not that bad. What’s right for them is right for all. They are very self centered in their thinking and their behavior emphasizes that explicitly.

When Dr. Samuel Yochelson began his research at St. Elizabeth’s, Hospital he felt the same way about criminals as anyone else that they were victims turned victimizers by society. He felt he could give these patients insight to their past behavior and they would no longer commit crime, After years of probing he realized that theory was not correct, instead of turning away from crime they used the insight given to them by Dr. Yochelson about their past as an excuse to commit the crimes. Therefore Dr. Yochelson realized that these individuals must be held accountable for their criminal behavior, and that it was nobody’s fault but their own. Thus the only way to change a criminals behavior is to change the criminals thinking. We must focus on the here and now not the past, because the past only gives the offender more excuses for the crimes they commit. The offender must be taught a substitute for their crime. We must educate them in corrective thinking and show them how to live a crime free life.
Some of the components that need to be met before this method can work is that the criminal must hit bottom. They must accept that they will always be a criminal and they must be willing to change.

Childhood experiences, poverty, and peers might be the snap point but they are not the cause for the criminal behavior and under no circumstances are they an acceptable excuse. As Stanton E. Samenow said in his book “INSIDE THE CRIMINAL MIND”, the criminal makes enough excuses for why they commit crime, and society wants to give them more. The only logical explanation for criminal behavior is the thinking errors that make that behavior and the only logical excuse is that they chose to do what they did.

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Tony Guerra believes a paid siesta should be instituted as part of the normal workday - complete with kindergarten blue cots. As the new father of triplet girls, he has confirmed physicists’ view that the universe is moving towards complete chaos. His favorite authors include Malcolm Gladwell, Raymond Feist and Clive Cussler. He almost talked to Clive Cussler once at the Tempe Improv comedy club, but had no back book cover to verify the picture matched the author.
Mark Twain is Huck Finn

If a biographical literary lens is applied to Mark Twain’s life as student of human nature, it becomes clear that his experiences laid the foundation for his writing of the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Twain built this great inventory of characters from his perceptiveness.

According to the movie Mark Twain, “everywhere he went he stored up memories of places, scenes and people” says Keith David, the baritone voice of the PBS documentary directed by Ken Burns. By instilling this understanding of human nature into Huck’s inner conflict, monologues and interactions with other characters in the book, Twain creates a Huck that reacts to these big issues as he would. Readers, in using this lens, will see striking similarities between Twain’s and Huck’s adventurous lives. This biographical approach to literary criticism has value because it helps readers better understand the purpose of authors’ works. Twain uses Huckleberry Finn’s interactions with the characters pap, Jim and Miss Watson to extend his own opinions to the readers on matters of personal accountability, slavery and religion.

Huckleberry Finn, despite his age, has personal accountability and a mature moral compass that seems to point away from those influences in his life that would normally be established as role models. Huck’s father pap, for example, is supposed to take care of him. However, the father typifies the worst in humanity and is absent of personal accountability as he tries to take Huck’s money and lock Huck away. From Twain’s experiences on the river and the way people acted, he created the abusive pap character. Gladys Carmen Bellamy, in her “A Satire on American Institutions,” makes the following comment: “Into his satiric portrait went Mark Twain’s years of observation of mountain whites, piney-woods people, and river rats. Pap is completely revealed through his oration on ‘guv’ment’” (98). While Huck’s pap immediately and unthinkingly berates a government that allows slaves to walk free, Huck takes time to evaluate
Jim’s escape as it relates to breaking the law and his own moral standard. Weighing the options, he finds that while a law has been broken and his obligation is to write Miss Watson of this incident, that his personal accountability finds this law to be wrong. In this way Mark Twain makes logical arguments through Huck’s monologue about what is right. Why would Mark Twain feel that slavery was wrong if slaves were a normal part of the time period? According to the following comment, Mark Twain’s personal experiences with slaves as a young boy were positive:

Every summer, Sam spent several weeks on his uncle’s nearby farm. There, he and his cousins gathered in the evening, in the cabin of an old slave named Uncle Dan’l who thrilled them with ghost stories and introduced them to spirituals and jubilees. I think that race was always a part of his consciousness, partly because, black people and black voices were the norm for [Twain].

Twain also saw the evils that came from slavery. Forrest G. Robinson, in “Mark Twain 1835-1910: A Brief Biography” quotes Twain in the following words: “I knew the man had the right to kill his slave if he wanted to, and yet it seemed a pitiful thing and somehow wrong, though why wrong I was not deep enough to explain if I had been asked to do it” (34). Those childhood experiences and adult opinions manifest themselves in Huck’s interaction with Jim, the runaway slave.

Twain elevates Jim’s character to that of respected elder, possibly in deference to his childhood experiences with Uncle Dan’l. To make a further contrast, Twain adds Caucasian characters who are very self-interested, such as pap, the duke and the dauphin. Jim’s African American character becomes a moral standard for Huck as he recognizes the white men’s selfish interests. When Huck’s father fails him, Jim takes on the role of father figure to help him. It
comes as no surprise that Twain, around twelve years old, lost his father and longed for a father figure himself. Robinson makes the following comment, “the deaths of siblings and the gathering weight of poverty doubtless took their toll at home. So, in a more decisive way, did the declining health of his father, who died of pneumonia in March 1847. . . . it is difficult to quarrel with the view that his father’s passing marked the end of young Clemens’s childhood” (34).

In addition, Bellamy maintains that Huck looks at Jim as a person who is a loved family member whom he would not betray. Because of these sentiments, “Huck comes to regard Jim as a human being rather than a faithful dog. When he hears there is a reward for Jim, the money offers no temptation to him” (Bellamy 100). In the book, this is shown when Huck tears up the note he was going to write to Miss Watson. Twain’s positive experiences with African Americans in his own life and the loss of his own father mirror the emotional views of a young Huckleberry Finn.

And finally, Twain parodies religious values through Huck’s aversion to becoming “sivilized” by the pious Miss Watson. In the first chapter Huck says, “she was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn’t see no advantage in going where she was going so I made up my mind I wouldn’t try for it” (4). Twain’s religious underpinnings, through Huck, are based more on a logical perspective using what feels right in his heart, rather than a deity who will make everything right. Bellamy writes, “But if a man is not responsible to God or to society, and Mark Twain’s determinism holds that he is not, why should he be responsible for himself? The inner voice of conscience, the voice of God, always holds him morally responsible” (104). Huck has many instances where he does not know what he should believe and this follows Twain’s own search for spirituality. Harold K. Bush, Jr., in his work “A Moralist in Disguise: Mark Twain and American Religion” establishes the following:
Strikingly similar conflict marked much of American religion during Twain’s life. . . . Twain, a highly curious and widely read cultural observer, dabbled at various times in scientific theories that bore on religious belief . . . religious eccentricities ranging from the Mormon movement, to spiritism and the occult, to Christian Science, and scholarly breakthroughs in areas as diverse as astronomy, biblical criticism, and anthropology that directly related to issues of faith. (56). Just as Twain struggled in his own life to create a foundation for his own understanding of religion, Huck feels a similar turmoil in matters of faith.

Through Huck’s interactions with pap, Jim and Miss Watson, Mark Twain expresses his beliefs on personal accountability, slavery and religion. By looking at the biographies of Mark Twain, readers see that he had real people in his life who acted similarly to the characters in the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Putting these concepts together, the biographical lens shows us that Huck Finn begins where Mark Twain’s childhood was cut off with the death of his father.
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