

# WRT 150

## A Guide to First-Year Writing at Grand Valley State University

6th Edition  
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# First-Year Writing at Grand Valley

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Writing's first-year writing program at Grand Valley State University. As a department, we strive to create a consistent program for all students taking the required first-year writing course, Writing 150. It is our hope that the skills and strategies you attain in this course will be carried over into the rest of your university curriculum.

Although our faculty members have the flexibility to teach WRT 150 using various pedagogical methods, there are important elements that remain consistent across sections. We have standardized many foundational elements such as course objectives, grading criteria, and departmental policies—all of which are included in this book. In addition, each semester we, as faculty, meet once a week in portfolio groups to discuss papers and to support an ongoing dialogue about course goals and expectations.

We also realize that quality research skills are key to being a successful writer on campus. Therefore, we have included a section in this text that highlights important documentation issues. And, during the semester, we work closely with the Zumberge librarians, who can tailor research strategies that will help students locate and utilize high-quality professional sources for papers.

In addition, we have published here our criteria for evaluating writing at various stages. You will find process- and product-skills checklists as well as guidelines for responding to student writing. Because we know that students appreciate writing samples that spur classroom discussion and guide revisions, there is a section that showcases quality portfolios from last year's WRT 150 students and a section that displays good student writing from a range of academic courses around campus.

To help you understand your course requirements, we have included our WRT 150 portfolio submission guidelines and answers to frequently asked questions about the portfolio grading system.

The goal of *A Guide to First-Year Writing at Grand Valley State University* is just that—to *guide* you in your writing endeavors. As a community of writers, we have worked to create a text that is both consistent and enjoyable and that celebrates student writing at all stages.

### **Writing Course Selections**

After considering information about our departmental requirements and consulting with advisors during orientation, you determine which of the three first-year writing courses you should take first:

**ESL 098** is for second-language students making a transition to standard written English.

**WRT 098** is for students who need more practice and instruction to develop fluency and fullness in their writing.

**WRT 150** is for students who write fluently but who need to be introduced to college-level academic writing, including writing with sources.

About 85 percent of freshmen entering GVSU place themselves into WRT 150—a four-credit course designed to prepare you for the writing you'll be doing in your college classes. Below you will find a more detailed description of the primary departmental writing courses: WRT 098 and WRT 150.

### **WRT 098**

WRT 098 focuses on bolstering students' confidence, assisting them in gaining agency and control over their writing and education, and encouraging them to value a lifelong engagement with writing and reading. WRT 098 features peer workshop groups with trained writing consultants from The Fred Meijer Center for Writing leading those groups for an hour every week. The course invites spontaneity and discovery, seeking to develop in students the kinds of habits and writing strategies that will enable them to succeed in WRT 150 and beyond.

WRT 098 emphasizes immersion and invention as well as revision. Students are expected to write continually, generating new drafts all semester

long, building their confidence and sharpening their skills by immersion in the act of writing. Fluency—one of the course goals—is best accomplished by continual practice (immersion) and an increased awareness of invention techniques. WRT 098 emphasizes strategies to get papers started, keep the writing process going to produce a substantial volume of writing, and develop positive attitudes toward writing in addition to introducing students to global revision and proofreading.

In WRT 098, students can expect to develop:

- Greater confidence as writers.
- Greater fluency in composing.
- Greater awareness of their strengths.
- New strategies for tackling writing problems.
- Experience with “writing to learn” techniques, using freewriting and drafting to discover what they know and what they want to say.
- Experience with global revision and multiple drafts.
- Familiarity with the Fred Meijer Center for Writing in LOH 120 and the resources available there.
- Awareness of how useful Writing Consultants can be during the drafting stage of papers in any discipline.
- Awareness of a variety of types of academic writing.
- Basic research skills, including use of the Internet.
- Understanding of the value of peer feedback.
- Increased skill at providing helpful feedback to others.
- Comfort using computers and word processors to generate and edit drafts.

## **WRT 150**

As the single writing course required of all students, WRT 150 focuses on academic writing informed by scholarly research. Instructors assume that you can read, summarize, and analyze a variety of college-level published material. They also assume that you have experience with narrative, descrip-

tive, and argumentative writing. Typically, you write four or five four- to six-page papers, at least one of which involves significant research.

Half of all WRT 150 class meetings take place in a computer classroom. Each computer is connected to the library, the Internet, and electronic mail. WRT 150 instructors assume that you have a basic familiarity with computers, web browsers, and word processors.

By the end of WRT 150, you should be able to:

- Read and understand material written for college audiences.
- Demonstrate an understanding of written material through clearly focused written summaries and analyses.
- Develop ideas using a variety of prewriting techniques, which may include brainstorming, freewriting, journal-keeping, consulting with others, conducting library research, and analyzing audience.
- Develop writing from early, writer-oriented drafts to later, reader-oriented drafts.
- Produce effective writing in a variety of modes, ranging from narrative to expository to argumentative.
- Demonstrate the ability to build supportable generalizations using selected details that are suggestive, concrete, and relevant.
- Revise writing with the expectations of particular audiences in mind, including academic audiences.
- Conduct library research and integrate facts and opinions from a variety of sources into your own writing.
- Edit writing so that it conforms to the general conventions of academic prose—that is, so that academic audiences can read the writing without having their attention and understanding diverted by numerous problems in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and format.

In WRT 150, you are exposed to challenging reading material—whether you find it in assigned readings or in your own research materials—and you practice discussing, summarizing, and analyzing that material. You also learn to develop a writing process that helps you take on new writing tasks, from prewriting, planning, and drafting to revising, consulting, and editing.



You must pass WRT 150 with a grade of C or better to satisfy the university's Basic Writing Skills Requirement. A description of the departmental criteria for determining A, B, C or D papers can be found on pages 21-24.



## University and Writing Department Policies

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We as a program strive for consistency across sections of WRT 150. We want Grand Valley students to have a shared first-year experience and to carry into the general university curriculum a common set of writing-related skills and strategies. Our primary means of achieving the desired consistency across sections is to establish and publicize the outcomes of the course. That is why we publish this book: to be as clear as possible about our goals, our evaluation methods, and our grading criteria; and to offer examples of what we view as successful student writing.

As part of our effort to ensure consistency across sections, all WRT 150 teachers adhere to the following university and departmental policies.

### Course Design

WRT 150 teachers are free to choose their own texts, design their own syllabi, and create their own assignments. But all teachers and all sections of WRT 150 aim to achieve the stated goals of the course and program, particularly those summarized on pages 4-5 of this book.

### Attendance

Regular attendance is required to succeed in WRT 150. According to the GVSU catalog, “In case of excessive absences, the instructor may refuse to grant credit for the course” (94). Missing class (and coming unprepared may also count as an absence or partial absence according to the teacher’s discretion) more than four times constitutes “excessive absences” in WRT 150. Your instructor will send you an email warning (to your student account) after the fourth absence. If you miss class or come unprepared after the warning, you will be ineligible to submit a final portfolio for the course, which means you will fail and have to retake WRT 150 another semester.

### Midterm Evaluation

The GVSU catalog requires midterm grade reports “for all freshmen and for any undergraduate student in other than good standing” (87). Mid-

term grades are mailed to your local address but not recorded on your official transcript. Because WRT 150 grades are based on the quality of your writing at the *end of the term* (see pages 21-24), midterm grades are a general assessment of the overall quality of your work in the class up to that point and have no direct bearing on your final grade as determined by your teacher and the portfolio grading group. For a full explanation of your midterm grade, please consult with your instructor.

### **Learning or Physical Disabilities**

If you have special needs because of a learning or physical disability, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at 331-2490. Writing faculty work with the OAS to accommodate students' special needs.

### **The Writing Labs**

WRT 150 classes generally meet twice a week, once in a traditional classroom and once in a computer classroom, referred to as a writing lab. We use several labs, both in Allendale and on our other campuses. The personal computer you use in the lab is connected to a hard drive (the "R" drive) that is shared by everyone in your lab. You also have the option to save items to a personal drive (the "N" drive), also known as your network account. Items saved to your network account can be accessed from various campus locations, such as your living quarters, as well as from other GVSU campuses. However, you cannot retrieve items on the N drive from your home computer unless you use FTP (see [www.gvsu.edu/it](http://www.gvsu.edu/it) for help).

We use Microsoft Word, which is different from Microsoft Works, as the primary word-processing software in the lab. This means that Microsoft Works documents do not open in the writing labs unless they have been saved in rich-text format (.rtf).

The labs are sometimes used simply for writing drafts, but your instructor may introduce a range of activities—brief in-class writing exercises, peer-review sessions, and research assignments, for example—to help you gain expertise in a range of writing skills and strategies.

### **The Fred Meijer Center for Writing**

The Fred Meijer Center for Writing (LOH 120) provides assistance to writers at all stages of their writing processes: brainstorming ideas, developing and supporting an argument, organizing a paper, or even polishing a final draft. Students enrolled in any courses at Grand Valley State University—including WRT 150—can work one-on-one with a trained undergraduate or graduate consultant at the center during walk-in hours. Consultants are available to work with students Sundays through Fridays at the Allendale, downtown Grand Rapids, and Holland campuses.

Walk-in hours are as follows:

- Allendale, LOH 120
  - Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
  - Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
  - Sunday, 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Downtown, DEV 101B
  - Monday through Thursday, 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Holland (see [www.gvsu.edu/wc](http://www.gvsu.edu/wc))

You can also visit the website ([www.gvsu.edu/wc](http://www.gvsu.edu/wc)) for handouts and other resources you'll find useful as you write and revise your papers for WRT 150 and other courses.

The center also sends undergraduate consultants into all WRT 150 classrooms to work with you one-on-one or in small groups. The consultants are there to help you think about how you might revise your papers throughout the semester and as you prepare your final portfolio. The consultants aren't teacher assistants; they don't create assignments or grade your writing. But because they undergo quite a bit of training to learn how to respond productively to your writing, the consultants are great resources for you. Talk with your consultants often about your writing!

### **The Library Research Skills Program**

The goal of the WRT 150 Library Instruction Program is to help you become an information-literate, lifelong learner. In order to reach this goal, you will learn how to:

1. develop and implement a research strategy;
2. locate the resources necessary to meet your information needs; and
3. evaluate the information found.

To meet these objectives, you may want to work through the web-based Research Skills Tutorial ([www.gvsu.edu/library](http://www.gvsu.edu/library)) designed specifically by the library faculty to assist you.

Your teacher might also ask you to complete a virtual tour of the Library. This online tour is a guide to the services, resources, and equipment available in the Zumberge Library. The tour is available on the web at [www.gvsu.edu/library/tour/](http://www.gvsu.edu/library/tour/) (or click on Zumberge Tour from the Library's home page at [www.gvsu.edu/library/](http://www.gvsu.edu/library/)) You can speak with your instructor for additional information.

### **Working with Sources**

As academic writers, we work in a world of information and opinion, so it's very common for us to refer to facts and ideas originally published in other sources. Consider this passage from Stephanie Hehemann's essay, "You're Getting Sleepy: The Effect of Sleep Deprivation on Young Adults":

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) have identified adolescents and young adults (ages 12 to 25) as a population at high risk for problem sleepiness (U.S., "Problem" 2). Adolescents require at least as much sleep as they did as pre-adolescents (about 8.5 to 9.25 hours each night), but according to Franklin C. Brown and colleagues, only about 11 percent of students are obtaining this (33). Dr. Meir Kryger, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Sleep Disorders Centre, St. Boniface General Hospital, Winnipeg, Manitoba, asserts that in its place, teens are getting little sleep during the week (approximately 6.5 to 7 hours a night) and sleeping in large quantity during the weekends, which is termed rescue sleep. For students, indicators of sleep deprivation include difficulty getting up for school, falling asleep at school, and struggling to stay awake while doing homework (U.S., "Problem" 2).

Citing outside sources accomplishes several things for a writer. First, it shows the reader that the writer has researched her topic and become some-

thing of an expert on it, thus establishing the writer's authority and credibility. Stephanie Hehemann has clearly done her homework on sleep deprivation. Citing sources also builds the reader's confidence in the material itself, which is why most academic writers try to find good, reliable sources. In the passage above, we feel confident that a professor of medicine and director of a sleep-disorder clinic should know quite a bit about teenage sleep habits. But what if Stephanie had written, "My friend Gina says that teens get little sleep during the week and large quantities during the weekends, which she calls rescue sleep"? Stephanie's friend Gina may very well know what she is talking about, but most of us would probably rather listen to Dr. Meir Kryger on this subject! Finally, citing outside sources clearly and correctly gives the reader a chance to explore the topic for him- or herself. Because Stephanie tells us where she got Dr. Kryger's information, we can go directly to the ABC News website and read up on the topic ourselves. In other words, the works cited list at the end of Stephanie's essay works as a kind of guide for further reading.

Academic writers use any one of a number of documentation styles, depending on the field or discipline in which they are writing. Most writers in the humanities use the documentation system of the Modern Language Association (MLA), and this is the system used most in WRT 150 classes. Writers in the social sciences typically use the documentation system of the American Psychological Association (APA). In the natural sciences, many writers use the documentation system of the Council of Science Editors (CSE). Many other styles exist, and you are likely to learn several during your college career. Here, we briefly discuss the two most common styles in WRT 150 classes: MLA and APA.

Regardless of what documentation style you are using, when you cite a specific bit of information (a fact, a quote, a paraphrase), you need to let the reader know where he or she can find that same bit of information. In general, this is done in three ways: in the text of your writing; in parentheses after references to source-based information; and in lists of sources attached to the end of your paper.

### MLA Style:

- 1) *Textually*: This tells the reader who or what is responsible for the cited information. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) have identified . . .
- 2) *In parentheses*: Immediately after the reference in the paper itself, the specific place where that information can be found—usually a page number—is included, so the reader knows where to look for more information. For students, indicators of sleep deprivation include difficulty getting up for school, falling asleep at school, and struggling to stay awake while doing homework (U.S., “Problem” 2).
- 3) *Works cited page*: At the end of the paper, all works (books, articles, interviews, TV shows, etc.) that have been discussed in the paper are listed in alphabetical order. This is where the reader can look if he or she wants to look those sources up:

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute of Health National Hearing, Lung, and Blood Institute. “Problem Sleepiness.” Public Health Service NIH Publication 97-4071 (Sept. 1997): 1-4.*

### APA Style:

Consider this passage from April Miller’s “Privacy in the Workplace”:

Since the dawn of new technology, genetic testing, although not very common, has become an employee monitoring issue. According to Doyle (1999), if there were no longer a federal law preventing genetic testing, it would become widespread if the cost continued to decline. The results of a 1998 survey conducted by the American Management Association showed that approximately 10 percent of employers are commonly testing employees for genetic predisposition to diseases (Repa, 2001c).

- 1) *Textually*: This tells the reader who or what is responsible for the cited information, along with the year in which the information was published. According to Doyle (1999) . . .
- 2) *In parentheses*: Immediately after the reference in the paper itself, the specific place where that information can be found is included. The results of a 1998 survey conducted by the American Management Association showed that approximately 10 percent of employers are

commonly testing employees for genetic predisposition to diseases (Repa, 2001c).

3) *References page*: At the end of the paper, all works (books, articles, interviews, TV shows, etc) that have been discussed in the paper are listed in alphabetical order. This is where the reader can look if he or she wants to look those sources up.

Doyle, R. (1999, January). Privacy in the workplace. *Scientific American*. 107(3), 46-60. Retrieved March 1, 2001, from FirstSearch database.





## From Process to Product: How We Write

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### Writing As A Process

When we think of writers, we might imagine people who possess some magical talent that allows them to sit down and instantly put their thoughts in writing. But after observing experienced writers working from start to finish through real writing projects, researchers have concluded that writers do not simply sit down and “put it in writing” in one magical step. Rather, real writers work through a fairly complex process, or series of steps. Different writers follow different steps depending on their needs and personal preferences, but in general all writers experience a writing process.

For instance, when faced with the need to communicate to an audience, writers begin by exploring their own knowledge, feelings, and beliefs and often consult the knowledge, feelings, and beliefs of others, searching for something specific to say; then they explore their communication options—the various forms available to them—before sketching out, reconsidering, revising, and polishing their message, making sure they are sensitive to their audience. Often, at several points during the writing process, writers ask friends or peers to take a look at their drafted material and give advice or feedback. Finally, when satisfied with their efforts, writers deliver their writing to their intended audience.

The example above illustrates five basic parts of the writing process:

- **Prewriting:** generating ideas; collecting information; identifying possible subjects, purposes, audiences, and forms
- **Drafting:** trying out ideas and approaches; zeroing in on a single focus and a single form
- **Revising:** considering additions and deletions; reshaping and refocusing existing material; editing for smoothness and mechanical correctness
- **Consulting:** talking with people about preliminary ideas, plans, and drafts; soliciting oral and written feedback from friends and colleagues concerning content, structure, audience appeal, style, and correctness
- **Publishing:** delivering the final product (paper, letter, proposal, report, article, etc.) to its intended audience (teacher, relative, client, committee, editor, etc.)

Although the steps are unique for each writer, these five areas comprise the general “process” of writing.

Because writing is a process, or activity, you need to develop effective ways of going about the physical and mental acts of writing. As instructors of WRT 150, we are not merely judges of your writing; in fact, we might best be viewed as coaches whose primary goal is to help prepare you for the writing “performances” you will be asked to do in WRT 150, in future GVSU classes, and on the job. We facilitate your exploration of the writing process through handouts, class discussions, stimulating writing assignments, and responses to your writing.

### **Process-skills Checklist**

Sound writers always have a system that works for them and that involves a series of steps. Below you will find a checklist that we have devised to help you question your methods when drafting ideas on paper. While engaged in the writing process, you should:

#### **Prewrite:**

- Use a variety of brainstorming techniques to generate, develop, and focus topics.
- Write informally in journals or notebooks as an ongoing writer’s activity.
- Use writing as a tool for learning as well as communicating.
- Analyze audience as a method of planning and focusing.
- Consider purpose, style, and form in relation to audience during the planning stages.
- Draw from a variety of formal and stylistic options during the planning stages.
- Sequence and initiate your own writing process to suit immediate purposes.
- Generate and select your own methods of development.
- Engage in prewriting conferences with your instructor and peers.
- Read as a writer; read published material “critically.”
- Write and speak about yourself as a writer.
- Use basic reference materials (dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia).
- Use research as a form of generating ideas and planning writing.

**Draft:**

- Translate prewriting activities into early drafts.
- Adapt your writing for specific audiences, including academic ones.
- Write for broad, public, academic audiences.
- Vary diction and tone according to audience.
- Establish and maintain a focus.
- Maintain a consistent style throughout individual pieces.
- Support ideas and observations with details.
- Integrate ideas and information from outside sources.
- Vary sentences for effect.
- Achieve “closure” in later drafts.
- Work productively in writing groups.
- Use a word processor to draft papers.

**Consult and Revise:**

- Write multiple drafts.
- Write and use self-evaluations.
- Use feedback from peers.
- Give feedback to peers.
- Engage in revision conferences with your instructor and peers.
- Survey and integrate audiences’ needs and interests.
- Adapt your writing style to suit purpose and audience.
- Revise for focus, development, structure, balance, and emphasis.
- Add, delete, change, or recast material to suit purpose and audience.
- Establish a clear focus throughout the paper.
- Align writing with the paper’s focus.
- Target completed pieces to a variety of audiences.
- Proofread all writing intended for public audiences.
- Use word processing editing software.
- Use a dictionary, thesaurus, and handbook for editing.

## Responding to Peer Writing

While reviewing the written “Process-Skills Checklist” can be instrumental in improving your papers, you will find that spoken feedback can be particularly helpful as well in the drafting process. Therefore, you will play a vital role in this information exchange. By offering valuable feedback on students’ papers, you will increase your ability to think critically about your own writing and at the same time receive valuable feedback to help you improve your paper drafts. As you consider this part of the process, you should avoid closing the door with negative or positive evaluations on students’ papers. If you judge early drafts by saying “Your opening is great” or “This is already an A paper,” you unwittingly encourage your peers to stop rethinking and rewriting their papers.

Here are three kinds of responses that you might find helpful when working with your peers in small-group workshops or in one-on-one feedback sessions:

- **Provide a window**

You can simply receive: “Tell me about your paper.” “Read it to me.” By serving as an audience, you can help your readers think about their drafts as pieces of communication. As you read or listen, you should let your reactions show—by laughing, shuddering, nodding in agreement, etc.

- **Hold up a mirror**

You can report back what you’ve received: “You seem to be focusing on . . .” “Your opening leads me to your topic by. . .” “One image that I kept hearing was . . .” By describing what you hear or read, you can help peers to see their writing from the reader’s perspective—particularly from the college-level reader’s perspective.

- **Open the door**

You can question or prompt: “What about . . .?” “Are you suggesting that . . .?” “How did you come up with the idea to . . .?” With questions, you can help your peers to see alternatives and possibilities for their writing without ordering changes. Writers need to learn to

make their own choices, but you can help them conceive alternative options.

### **Writing as a Product**

As you strengthen the writing process through self-exploration and critical thinking, naturally the product that you produce will improve in many ways; thus, the process is distinctly connected to the product. However, the end product—your portfolio—will be evaluated in terms of its quality, so as your instructors, we must serve as both “coach” and “judge” of the writing you produce. Team grading is one way we separate our roles. Like gymnastics coaches, we work with you, offering the best advice possible to help you create a quality product. Then we send your work to “officials”—the portfolio group—for evaluation. Whether we are judging your writing or the writing of other instructors’ students, we always keep in mind the general characteristics of “acceptable” college writing summarized below.

### **Product-skills Checklist**

By the end of WRT 150, your published writing should demonstrate that you have achieved the program’s goals:

#### **Content and Development:**

- Offer a purpose that becomes evident early on.
- Maintain a single focus through the entire paper.
- Present ideas and descriptions with a college-level audience in mind.
- Present a focus that is developed with details, examples, and discussions.

#### **Organization:**

- Establish an overall pattern for the paper to follow.
- Progress from one point, idea, or scene to another in a coherent, logical way.
- Demonstrate paragraphs that are generally well-organized within the overall pattern of the paper.
- Offer transitions to help the reader move from one part of your paper to another.

**Style:**

- Structure sentences in a variety of ways.
- Appear to have carefully selected words and phrases.
- Maintain an overall tone in your paper that is appropriate to your purpose and audience.

**Mechanics:**

- Adopt a format that is generally acceptable and appropriate.
- Make reference to outside sources that are introduced, integrated and documented.
- Illustrate few problems with regard to grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage.



## WRT 150 Portfolio Guidelines

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### Evaluation Procedures and Criteria

Many professionals use portfolios to show other people what they are capable of producing. Your WRT 150 portfolio represents your own end-of-semester writing capabilities. The portfolio includes three fully revised and polished papers, including at least one that integrates outside sources. Together, these three pieces of writing constitute the bulk of your final course grade.

### Submission Guidelines:

Papers should be printed on a letter-quality printer, such as the laser printers in the writing labs. Margins should be at least one inch all the way around the page. Papers can be double- or single-spaced (ask your professor). Fonts should be standard (Arial, Times New Roman, etc.), and the point-size should be close to standard typeface (11 or 12 points). Note: The default font and margin settings in Microsoft Word are fine.

Submit your papers in a standard manila file folder with your first initial, last name, and section clearly printed on the filing tab. Your portfolio is due to your teacher by the end of the last class before finals week. If your portfolio is late, you may fail the course.

Since the portfolio grading groups do not comment on portfolios unless they are graded a D, portfolios are generally not returned. You should keep copies of your work and wait for grade reports to see your course grades. If there are questions about your grade, you should speak with your instructor.

### Evaluation Procedures:

Your WRT 150 portfolio is read and evaluated by at least two members of a team of teachers, including your own professor. This group meets regularly throughout the term to discuss grading criteria and expectations. Each portfolio is given a grade based on the characteristics of A, B, C, and D

Papers as outlined in the evaluation section below. If the first two readers agree on a grade, the grading is complete. If the first two readers disagree, a third reader is consulted and the two matching grades are paired together as the final grade. For example, if your portfolio receives a B, you receive a B on your portfolio. If your portfolio receives an A and a B, and a third reader gives it an A, you receive an A on your portfolio. If your portfolio receives a D and a C, and a third reader gives it a D, you receive a D on your portfolio. Graders write brief explanations of grades of D so that students receiving this grade understand the graders' reasoning.

Your readers supply one grade per portfolio: that is, they do not grade the individual papers, but rather the entire portfolio. With this in mind, you should strive to strike a balance in your submissions, demonstrating the fullest possible range of your writing abilities. Your first priority should be to include your best writing, but your second priority should be to demonstrate your ability to perform a range of academic writing tasks, including the integration of a variety of reputable sources.

### **Evaluation Criteria—Characteristics of A, B, C, and D Papers**

Each week, your professor and his or her fellow portfolio group members meet to examine and evaluate several pieces of writing, identifying the characteristics of A, B, C, or D writing based on the criteria listed below. By continuing to discuss the criteria all semester, the portfolio group reaches a consensus or “norm” by which to examine and evaluate the final portfolios submitted at the end of the term. The characteristics are provided for you here so that you can identify precisely how your work is evaluated. Therefore, it is advisable for you to use these grade characteristics to help you determine the level of your writing as you progress through WRT 150. You can also use these characteristics as a guide for offering feedback on peer papers.



## Characteristics of A Papers

### Content

- The material challenges the intelligence and sophistication of a college-level audience.
- A single focus is emphasized through the entire paper.
- The writer appeals effectively to the intended audience.
- The focus is consistently developed with significant and interesting details, examples, and discussion.
- Relevant outside sources are clearly introduced and integrated into the surrounding discussion.
- The paper demonstrates a clear purpose.

### Organization

- The focus of the paper is clearly emphasized.
- The overall pattern is artfully conceived.
- The focus is developed through a sequence of related paragraphs.
- Paragraphs are purposefully organized and substantially developed with supporting evidence or detailed examples.
- The opening is inviting, challenging, and appropriate.
- Transitions between and within paragraphs are explicit, clear, and purposeful.

### Style

- Sentence structure varies according to the content, purpose, and audience.
- The sentences are clear, logical, and enjoyable to read.
- Word choice is precise, interesting, and appropriate to the writing task.
- The language is mature and idiomatic.
- The writer's tone complements the paper's purpose and suits the audience.

### Mechanics

- Format is appropriate.
- References to outside sources are cited and documented according to the appropriate style sheet.
- Problems in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage do not interfere with communication.

## Characteristics of B Papers

### Content

- The material is thoughtful and engaging.
- A single focus runs through the entire paper.
- The writer clearly acknowledges the expectations of the audience.
- The focus is developed with appropriate details, examples, and discussions.
- Outside sources are used clearly and purposefully.
- The paper demonstrates a clear purpose.

### Organization

- The focus is clearly identifiable.
- The overall pattern is clear and sensible.
- The focus is developed through a sequence of related paragraphs.
- Paragraphs are clearly organized, but some may lack richness of detail or evidence.
- The opening is appropriate to the focus.
- Transitions between and within paragraphs advance the writer's ideas.

### Style

- Sentences are varied in structure, only occasionally choppy or repetitive.
- Sentences are generally clear, logical, and readable.
- Writer demonstrates general control over vocabulary appropriate to the writing task.
- The language is idiomatic.
- The tone is consistent and appropriate to the writer's purpose and audience.

### Mechanics

- Format is appropriate.
- References to outside sources are generally cited and documented according to the appropriate style sheet.
- Problems in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage rarely interfere with communication.

## Characteristics of C Papers

### Content

- The material is reasonable, but may not fully engage the abilities of the audience.
- A single focus runs through the paper, although parts may wander from the central idea.
- The writer appears to present ideas and descriptions with an audience in mind.
- The focus is generally developed with details, examples, and discussions.
- Outside sources are generally relevant, although not always clearly introduced or integrated into the discussion.
- The paper has a purpose, but that purpose may need to be more clearly conveyed.

### Organization

- The paper has an identifiable focus.
- The writer establishes an overall pattern for the paper to follow.
- The focus is generally developed throughout the paper, although some paragraphs may appear out of sequence or slightly off-track.
- Paragraphs tend to lack richness of evidence or detailed examples.
- The opening generally matches the topic and focus.
- Transitions are evident, but may be abrupt or mechanical.

### Style

- Sentences tend to be basic, choppy, or structurally repetitive.
- Sentences are generally readable, but ideas may be hard to follow from one part of the paper to the next.
- Although most words appear to be well chosen, some may not be as precise or apt as they could be.
- Occasional lapses from standard idiom occur.
- The tone, though generally consistent, at times appears inappropriate to the writer's purpose and audience.

### Mechanics

- Format is generally appropriate.
- References to outside sources are generally cited and documented, but not always in the appropriate style.
- Problems in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage occasionally interfere with communication and damage the writer's credibility.

## Characteristics of D Papers

### Content

- The material does not fully engage the abilities of the audience.
- No single focus runs through the entire paper.
- The writer doesn't appear to have the needs of an audience in mind.
- Ideas are stated, but not developed with details, examples, and discussions.
- Outside sources, if used at all, are not clearly introduced or integrated.
- The paper's purpose is unclear.

### Organization

- The paper's focus is overly general, missing, or unclear.
- The writer hasn't established a clear pattern for the paper to follow.
- Attempt at development is evident but unsuccessful; paragraphs frequently seem unrelated or repetitive.
- Paragraphs are poorly constructed and contain little supporting detail.
- The opening is overly general, missing, or misleading.
- Transitions are weak, ineffective, or missing.

### Style

- Sentences are frequently basic, choppy, or repetitive.
- Sentence problems impede effective communication.
- The reader must reread many sentences in order to comprehend them.
- The writer displays inadequate control of diction; word-choice problems are frequent.
- There are many problems with standard idiom.
- The tone frequently appears inappropriate to the writer's purpose and audience.

### Mechanics

- Format is not always appropriate.
- References to outside sources are not clearly cited; documentation style is generally inappropriate.
- Many errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage impede communication and undercut the writer's credibility.



## Frequently Asked Questions About the Portfolio Grading System

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**1. Why is a group of WRT 150 teachers reading my papers and determining my final grade rather than just my own teacher?**

A group of five or six teachers (including your teacher) reads samples of your class's writing throughout the semester to discuss and agree about what are A, B, C, and D papers. The goal of the instructors in the group is to set fair and accurate grading standards for this university-wide course requirement. The standards begin with those established by the Writing Department and develop more specifically as your teacher's grading group discusses samples from your class and other classes throughout the semester. This agreement between two or more writing professors constitutes your letter grade in the class.

**2. Does my teacher have any say as to what grade I get on my portfolio and what grade I receive in this class?**

Yes. Your teacher will always be one of at least two portfolio readers of your work at the end of the term. If the second reader in the group agrees with your teacher about the grade for your portfolio, then that agreement will determine the grade you receive on the portfolio. If the second reader does not agree with your teacher, then a third reader will be asked to read your portfolio. If the third reader agrees with your teacher, then the grade stands. If the third reader agrees with the second reader, then your grade is based on the agreement of readers two and three. The goal is to arrive at a "community" grade rather than a grade based solely on one teacher's preferences.

**3. What happens if one person in the portfolio group grades much harder than the others? Doesn't this mean I'll probably get a low grade if that person reads my portfolio?**

No, not necessarily. If the second reader does not agree with your teacher, a third reader is asked to read your portfolio and decide which of the first two readers is closest to the standards that the portfolio group has agreed upon during the semester. (See question #2.)

**4. I think each teacher should grade his or her own students' work.**

Each teacher does have a hand in grading their students' work, but the portfolio groups assure students that their grades are a reflection of community standards—both departmental and university-wide. Teachers of WRT 150 also have the option of adding a “plus” or “minus” to the final letter grade based on other aspects of a student's performance—class participation, effectiveness of peer-review work, completion of reading assignments, and so on.

**5. How can the portfolio group grade my papers if they haven't seen the assignment?**

WRT 150 is a course designed to give you practice and instruction in the various kinds of writing that you will be asked to do throughout college. The portfolio group therefore wants to be general in their assessment of your writing. They want to look at three samples of your writing and describe the group of three as “excellent,” “good,” “average,” or “below average.” The ideal is that this grade reflects what most professors would say if they picked up your portfolio and read it. We want your grade to be based on the general quality of your writing, not on how well the writing satisfies teacher-specific instructions. Readers of the portfolio assume that the essays they read meet the basic requirements of each teacher's assignments.

**6. My teacher said that I have to type single space, have fewer than two sentence fragments, and underline the thesis statement in every essay just to get a C. If the portfolio group doesn't know this, then what happens?**

Teachers often have “minimum requirements” that they want every paper to meet. For example, some say that a paper can't be handed in more than one day late. When teachers have such requirements that may not be the same as other teachers in the portfolio group, they will enforce those requirements by making sure you meet them before you submit a portfolio to the portfolio group at the end of the term. This way, everyone who reads your portfolio will assume it has met any teacher-specific minimum requirements. If you don't meet minimum requirements that your teacher sets, your teacher

won't allow you to submit a portfolio at the end of the term. Again, the portfolio graders are interested in how your writing matches up against the general expectations of a college-level reader.

**7. Could two people in my portfolio group agree that I deserve a B and then my teacher give me a C anyway because of absences or class participation?**

No. The portfolio grade is the “bulk” of your grade for the semester. You should not expect your grade to be adjusted beyond a plus or a minus for the grade the portfolio group (which includes your teacher as first reader) gives you. If your grade needs adjusting down a whole letter grade, you probably didn't meet the minimum requirements (e.g., too many absences) and you should not have been allowed to submit a portfolio in the first place and been given an F. Teachers across campus should be assured that your WRT 150 grade reflects how well you write, not your attendance, your improvement, or your attitude.

**8. Just looking at my portfolio at the end of the term doesn't show how much I've improved. Shouldn't my grade be based, at least in part, on my improvement?**

Your grade in WRT 150 is based on the quality of your writing at the end of the term. Our intention is that what counts as A, B, C, or D be roughly the same for every student. Teachers can adjust grades (usually with a plus or a minus) based on your participation, improvement, or other factors. The grade of F is generally reserved for students who do not meet the minimum requirements of the course.

**9. I like to have grades during the semester so that I know how well I am doing. I don't want my grade at the end of the term to come as a big surprise.**

We agree. Your teacher should be reading your writing throughout the semester and responding to it with comments, personal conferences, and suggestions for revision. Most WRT 150 classes have consultants from the Writing Center that work with you and point out

strengths and weakness in your writing. And many teachers will have you read and comment on other students' work. For most students, a grade is not necessary for early drafts because the proper focus is on what the paper could be, not on what it is. But if you want a grade on an assignment and your teacher has not given one, just ask. The teacher will be able to tell you where she thinks the paper falls within the range of A to D. The teacher will probably tell you what the portfolio group has been saying about writing like yours. Don't be surprised if the teacher says, for example, that some in the group might say C and she, or others in the group, might say B. Group members often disagree, especially early in the semester, about what is an A, B, or C. If the teacher says your paper is probably a low B or a C, your next question should be: "What could I work on in this paper that would improve it?" But it's important to remember that all grade estimates—whether they are by your teacher, your Writing center tutor, or your Uncle Lou—are just that: estimates. What you really need to do is just keep on working. It's a 15-week course. Improve your writing until the very last day.

**10. It seems to me that the portfolio grading system is all about judging final products. I thought we were supposed to be interested in the writing process.**

At GVSU we use portfolio grading groups to respond to the need to develop community standards and to respond to the university's desire for a "check" on how well students can write before they move on to the upper-level courses. One aim (there are others) of the portfolio system is to protect students from being misled by "easy" graders and being treated unfairly by "hard" graders. Nevertheless, our writing program is very much concerned that you are learning strategies and skills that help you develop your own writing process. In fact, because the portfolio group grading system focuses on what you can do at the end of the semester, as represented by your portfolio, it encourages and gives opportunities for many papers to be revised throughout the term. How well you develop your writing process will largely determine how well you do in your final portfolio. Revision is the heart of the writing process. And final written products are the result of the writing process.



**11. The portfolio group read my paper but didn't give me feedback. Why not?**

The portfolio groups are chiefly concerned with grading—an end-of-semester form of feedback. You need more substantive feedback throughout the term. Your teacher is part of a portfolio group and his or her feedback on your drafts and revisions should be counted as feedback from the portfolio group. Your teacher is helping to set standards in the portfolio group, so his or her comments will be particularly helpful. Don't overlook the value of getting help from the writing center tutor and other students in your class, as well. It is your teacher's job to assure that you receive feedback and help on your writing throughout the term. If you aren't getting it, ask again.

**12. What is supposed to be in my portfolio?**

Every student submits three papers, one of which must include citations and references. Keep in mind that the three papers represent your abilities as a college-level academic writer—so you probably don't want three very short papers, for example, since that would fail to “represent” your ability to write a longer paper. Ask your teacher if you are not sure. Your teacher and other students should help you make good choices about what goes in the final portfolio. Also, read the five full portfolios published in this book and, together with your teacher and classmates, try to generalize from them what constitutes a strong WRT 150 portfolio.

**12. One of my portfolio papers must integrate outside sources. How many?**

The quantity and nature of outside sources required for your papers will be determined by your individual instructor in consultation with the portfolio group.

**13. Can I include a paper in my portfolio from another class?**

No. All papers in your portfolio must have been assigned and seen by your teacher in draft form. Students who submit work from another college class, work from high school, or work that is not their own may be failed and the dean of students will be notified.



## Good Writing in WRT 150

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When we set out to choose portfolios to be published in this handbook, we don't try to anticipate which ones will serve as perfect models for future students. So what are we looking for when we begin the portfolio selection process? Our goal is to select writers that understand their papers' purposes, know what it is they are trying to accomplish in their work, and we look for authors that keep their audience in mind as they write. No matter what your assignment may be, the keys to good writing remain consistent—a solid sense of purpose, focus, and audience.

But there are many portfolio essays that meet these requirements that are submitted for possible publication, so we try to choose pieces from writers that tackle diverse subject material. In showcasing work from previous WRT 150 students, we hope to open up classroom dialogue about the content as well as the writing. We have chosen six writers to showcase in this year's edition of the book and each has something special to offer.

In **portfolio one**, *Emily Pradko* in "Tracking Down a Dangerous Path" discusses various tracking devices that parents can utilize to monitor their children's whereabouts, even sometimes unbeknownst to their kids. Emily's subject is well researched from a variety of sources and she presents a piece that will get everyone thinking and talking about the capabilities of such tracking technology. As you read Emily's portfolio, you might want to think about what kinds of sources you use to gather your research. Strong portfolios will often demonstrate a variety of sources such as quality internet sites, academic database articles, books, newspaper articles as well as other sources. Emily's next paper, "Most Valuable Lesson," focuses on a defining moment in her life—again another essay that will really make you think about your choices. She moves from her personal realization into "Selling Sickness," a response to Chelsea Backe's "America's Dependency on Pills" where she agrees that even though medicines can be helpful, they can be abused by some Americans. She nicely integrates her sources to advance her points that follow Backe's article.

Continuing with detailed research, *Melissa Wehner*, in **portfolio two**, gives her readers a pretty good indication of her paper topic with the title “Wal-Mart: Always Low Morals. Always.” Here, she presents the research that highlights the allegedly improper treatment Wal-Mart brings to its employees as it systematically squashes the small town communities it inhabits. In her next essay, Melissa moves into a very touching piece, “The Everlasting Song,” where she descriptively recreates a very difficult time in her life. As you read her piece, think about how you can use vivid narration to engage your readers. Melissa final piece, “The Color of Money,” discusses the outrageous costs students incur while trying to gain a college education. Not only is her essay well-researched, but she offers results from a GVSU student survey she conducted which draws readers in to her presentation. How might you personalize your research to make students and faculty feel connected to your topics? It’s important to keep your audience in mind as you craft your essays.

In keeping with audience awareness, *Nora Chamberlin*, in **portfolio three**, shares her witty intellect and passion for humanity. Her essay, “The Creative Mind,” offers a provocative response to Isaac Asimov’s five criteria of the creative mind, developed in his essay “Those Crazy Ideas.” Although Nora claims to lack creative brilliance, it’s clear that she is truly a sparkling gem. Nora’s ability to be able to poke fun at such a serious examination of intelligence unveils her creative intellect. We roll out of this essay into another witty piece, “The Mud-Cruiser Fixation,” where Nora comically recreates her father’s addiction to ATV video-clips. The real learning here comes as Nora uses her witty style to describe her father’s “fixation” on a product she knows he will never buy because of his anti-capitalistic view of American “corporate beasts.” Even Nora’s light piece leaves the reader with something heavy to think about. As you create your essays, remember that academic writing embodies purpose. In keeping with her father’s definition of capitalistic greed, Nora propels her readers into a serious examination of the economical injustices of “disadvantaged farmers” in third world countries—a direct result of corporate capitalistic greed. She passionately strikes out at rich nations that undermine life itself in order to save some money. Style is one category on which your portfolio will be evaluated. It’s not just what you say but how you say it that will keep your readers engaged in the

value of your ideas. When you feel passionate about a subject, that energy is conveyed through your diction and style. Nora's writing clearly illustrates her passion and intellect as she plows through her well-researched subject with poise and grace.

*Lyndsey Whitton* captures our attention with her title, "Calling All Robots," which kicks off **portfolio four**. As a student pursuing a medical degree, Lyndsey explains the personal importance of learning about robotic assistance in the operating room as well as the hospital hallways. Lyndsey unravels her research in such an exciting way that even someone not interested in the medical field can enjoy reading the paper. Continuing with her career theme, Lyndsey moves into her next paper, "Allow Me to Mend Your Bones." In this occupational interview analysis, Lyndsey shares her insights gained from talking with a second-year medical resident at a Ohio hospital. It takes skill to craft an essay from an interview and make all the parts feel connected and Lyndsey makes it look simple as she uses narrative elements to move us from point to point. She also offers very specific detail about the profession—another difficult trait of the interview paper. If you get assigned an interview analysis, be careful not to generalize the interview responses. What keeps the readers going is the specific detail that truly offers a glimpse at the real profession. Whitton leaves an everlasting impression on her readers with her final piece, "A Part of Something Special," where she discusses her definition of family. She recreates what it was like to live in a South Korean orphanage since birth. Lyndsey demonstrates a real eye for detail as she vividly recreates a key moment in her life while flavoring her piece with memories of her life growing up in a Korean orphanage.

Keeping with the theme of children, *Adam Zahn* begins **portfolio five** with an interview with John Sheere in, "The Grand Rapids Children's Museum." Adam uses vivid detail to explain Sheere's role at the museum and how we as adults can really learn by watching children. Even though the piece is not lengthy, Adam accomplishes his goal. Keeping a tight focus, as demonstrated in Adam's piece, is an important part of constructing a quality essay. Then, in "Mixing Methods," Adam takes a very creative approach in analyzing how the educational techniques highlighted in Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* parallel the Indonesian martial art of Pencak Silat. His analysis is fresh and worth class discussion because having unique

ideas is an important part of a quality portfolio. Finally, in “Clean Coal,” Adam argues against Darrin Gunkel’s claims, outlined in his piece, “Improved Technologies Make Coal a Clean Fuel.” Like the other authors that are being showcased in this edition, Adam carefully researches his position and provides solid evidence to counter Gunkel’s position. He also offers an alternative, wind power, as a viable source of energy that would be completely clean for the environment. If you get an opportunity to respond to a scholarly article or a book, consider offering an alternative for your readers to think about as they evaluate your argument.

*Ariana Hendrix*, in **portfolio six**, stunningly engages her readers in “A Haunted Memory” as she recreates her experience of visiting the German Nazi concentration camp at Dachau. Her attention to detail paints pictures of the gruesome atrocities that occurred at Dachau. She also integrates research to complement her knowledge gained from her museum visit. In her piece, “Memoirs of a Dancer,” she continues to offer vivid detail as she talks about her tremendous commitment to dance while growing up. All of her pieces demonstrate careful planning and close attention to detail. It’s clear that Ariana worked hard on all of her essays as did the other authors showcased in this book. In Ariana’s final essay, “A Freshwater Paradise,” she paints a picture of warm summers growing up in Traverse City near West Grand Traverse Bay. Her exemplary use of language in this piece won her first place in the freshman category of the prestigious 2007 Oldenburg Writing Contest at Grand Valley State University.

We invite WRT 150 instructors and students to read and discuss these six portfolios as a way to generalize about what you feel characterizes good writing in the first-year writing program at Grand Valley State University. As you read, notice the similarities and differences from portfolio to portfolio—the kinds of writing included, the number and types of sources cited, the length of the papers, and so on. Keep in mind that hundreds of other students wrote quality portfolios last fall and winter and although they were probably as diverse in subject material as the essays exemplified here, all the writers understood the keys to good writing—composing with a solid sense of purpose, focus, and audience. -JW

## Tracking Down a Dangerous Path

A graying, middle-aged man sits with his eyes glued to a computer screen tracking a vivacious, sixteen-year-old girl. He has planted a global positioning device into her car, and from his computer he can trace her every move on a second-by-second basis, recording exactly where she is driving, the speed of her vehicle, any hard accelerations or braking, and the total distance traveled.

This man may seem like a crazed stalker, but he is actually her father who placed Alltrack USA's DriveRight Car Chip, or commonly called a black box, into his daughter's car. When using the black box, parents can not only track their teens via the Internet, but also by calling Alltrack USA. They hear an automated voice saying something like, "Terry is located at 120-125 Main Street, Miami, Florida and is traveling 35 miles per hour north east." Parents can set certain speed parameters and geographical regions, and every time the teen exceeds the predetermined speed or crosses a specified boundary, parents are alerted through email, on their cell phone, stationary phone, PDA, or beeper ("Real-Time"). Alltrack USA also offers the Road Safety Teen Driver Audio Monitor which is very similar to the Car Chip, except when teens surpass the set speed, acceleration, deceleration, and right/left turning force, the Audio Monitor gives an audible warning alert, and if ignored, a steady tone will sound until the car is back within the limitations ("Audio").

With the rapidly expanding technology and growing popularity of cell phones, it should come as no surprise that they can also be used as tracking devices. Verizon Wireless offers a plan called Chaperone, where parents use their cell phone or computer to locate their children's phones. An additional option is Child Zone, where parents can define a certain region, such as a school or friend's house, and whenever the child enters or leaves, an alert of the time and location of the child's phone is sent to the parent's phone ("Chaperone"). Disney Mobile has Family Locator which enables parents to view a map with the location of the child's phone from the Disney Mobile website or from their own cell phone ("Included").

At first glance, this new tracking technology certainly has its advantages. It not only keeps kids safe, but also eases parents' worry because they know the location of their children. However, if the use of car and cell phone tracking devices on children is thoroughly examined, many negative and harmful effects are revealed that outweigh the advantages.

#### Permanent Umbilicus

One of the major problems with tracking devices is they prohibit kids from growing into independent adults. Frank F. Furstenberg, sociologist from the University of Pennsylvania, performed a study and found there are vastly growing numbers of adults between the ages of twenty and thirty who "haven't become fully adult yet—traditionally defined as finishing school, landing a job with benefits, marrying and parenting—because they are not ready or perhaps not permitted to do so" (Marano 6). Using this definition of adulthood, Furstenberg found that in 1960, sixty-five percent of males and seventy-seven percent of females had reached adulthood by the age of thirty. By the year 2000, these numbers had dramatically decreased to only thirty-one percent of males and forty-six percent of females (6). These numbers will only continue to decrease as tracking devices become more and more popular because kids' developmental growth is being stunted by the constant contact with their parents.

For instance, parents call to say, "Slow down! You are driving way too fast!" or, "Why are you at Joe's house when you are supposed to be at home studying?" But it is not just the parents doing the calling. Since some tracking devices provide parents with a map of their children's location, the kids can now call up their parents and ask, "Will you look at my map on the computer? I am lost and do not know where I made a wrong turn? Can you direct me back on course?" This constant advising and control parents place on their children only makes them reliant. In the article, "A Nation of Wimps," Hara Estroff Marano writes, "The perpetual access to parents infantilizes the young, keeping them in a permanent state of dependency...They're not learning how to manage for themselves" (4).

A vital part of growing from a child into an adult is not only becoming independent from one's parents, but also being able to identify and take responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Twentieth century author, Norman Cousins, stated, "A human being fashions his conse-

quences as surely as he fashions his goods or his dwelling. Nothing that he says, thinks, or does is without consequences” (Huitt and Hummel 1). There is even a name assigned to the type of learning which results from the application of consequences. Theorist Edward Thorndike labeled it as “instrumental learning” (1). Researchers from the University of Minnesota conducted a study on learning methods in children. This study showed that children using the instrumental technique “...learn faster, have expectancies for outcomes, and can rely on these expectancies to solve new discriminative choice problems involving the same outcomes” (Maki et al. 45). But parents who use tracking devices on their children are preventing them from learning instrumentally because they are rarely able to see the consequences of their actions.

To illustrate, a mother who placed a black box in her son’s car observes his driving through her computer. When he takes a corner too quickly or starts speeding, she calls and tells him to stop, and he does only because she said so. The son does not truly consider why he should drive safely. Without the black box, instead of the mother stopping her son, a police officer might pull him over and give him a ticket. This way the son learns a consequence of his actions: if he drives recklessly, he is in jeopardy of getting a ticket.

#### Safe and Happy?

Proponents of tracking devices argue that they keep kids safe, and this is sometimes true, specifically for car trackers. Sixteen-year-olds’ lack of driving experience, risk-taking tendencies, and feelings of invincibility are a deadly combination, making them twenty times more likely than any other age group to be involved in a car crash (“Home”). Since the leading cause of death among teenagers who drive is traffic crashes, installing devices such as a black box or Audio Monitor can be a key in saving lives (“Home”).

For example, Donna Butler, mother of seventeen-year-old Danielle, watched the blue dot representing her daughter move across the computer screen. Danielle, 120 miles away from home, was driving an unsafe speed of eight-five miles per hour on an interstate with a speed limit of seventy, so Donna immediately called her daughter and told her to slow down (Colker). Teens who know their parents will be alerted every time they exceed a



speed of seventy or accelerate too rapidly will quickly become accustomed to driving within the safe limitations.

Similarly, some feel cell phone trackers also keep kids safe. With the Chaperone and Family Zone features, parents know every time their child enters or leaves a safe zone, such as school, practice, a friend's house, or the library. Parents are also alerted when their children venture out of the designated boundaries. Kids no longer run the miniscule risk their parents may happen to drive by and see them in a place they are not supposed to be. Now they are completely forced to stay out of "restricted" areas unless they are prepared to get a threatening call from Mom or Dad and be punished. Moreover, in the rare but very alarming instances where a child is abducted, the cell phone tracker could pinpoint the location of the child for the police.

However, parents must realize that this increased safety that comes with car and cell phone tracking devices is not infallible. Yes, teens may be forced to drive safely in their own car, but that does not mean they are safe when in their best friend's car. Plus kids know ways to game the system, causing the tracking devices to be completely ineffective. For instance, if Becky is not allowed to go to a dance club downtown, she can leave her cell phone at a friend's house for the night or simply turn it off. When it comes to car trackers, a teen can "safely" drive to a location deemed acceptable, such as the movie theater, and then go in a friend's car to the unsupervised party. The whole time parents are misguidedly satisfied their kids are at the friend's house or the theater. Furthermore, children might actually be less safe when tracking devices are used compared to when they are not. Massachusetts General Hospital child psychiatrist Steve Sholzman states, "When kids feel crowded, they tend to do things that they otherwise would not do. They take even greater risks because they have a desire to prove their independence and their individuality. There is something they need to get away with" (Smith).

Another reason some parents like tracking devices is they receive comfort and peace of mind from using them. For example, a mother pulls back the curtain and peers through the window to catch a glimpse of her kids pulling out of the driveway and turning the corner. She is left standing there with fingers crossed, hoping her kids will make good choices and return safely. When using tracking devices, this worry is alleviated. Parents

can look on the Internet or use their phone to find the location of their teen and the way in which he or she is driving. When the clock ticks five minutes past curfew then ten minutes past curfew and there is no sign of her child, a mother enters panic mode: *Why is Kate not home yet? Did she get into a car accident? Is she lying in a ditch on the side of the road?* However, parents such as Alltrack USA customer, Nancy R., do not encounter this situation: “When my son isn’t home by curfew time of 11:30,” Nancy explains, “I look on the Internet to see where he is. It makes me feel better” (“Home”). Many parents feel this peace of mind obtained from tracking devices is invaluable.

On the other hand, parents may feel comfort when their kids are in danger. Jim Katz, Director of the Rutgers University Center for Mobile Communication Studies, warns, “...all the new technology may give parents a false sense of security” (Smith). Parents should not trust and rely on tracking devices to tell them the location of their children and if they are safe since kids are capable of outwitting the devices.

### Big Mother is Watching You!

The invasion of privacy is another serious problem that comes with using tracking devices. Alltrack USA advertises, “With these products it’s as though you’re sitting next to your teen whenever they’re driving” (“Home”). It is more than a little scary to think that parents can monitor their child’s every move and in some cases without their child even knowing. This is what Mark Pawlick, stepfather of sixteen-year-old Jessica Fairbanks, did. Worried Jessica might get into trouble, Pawlick hid a black box in her car. He said, “There was no way I was going to let her in the car without some way to track where she was and where she was going” (Smith). Jessica reports that at first she thought her parents had people spying on her, but then a friend overheard their parents talking about it. Jessica said she was “livid” when she found out (Smith). Mark Frankel of the American Association for the Advancement of Science would agree Jessica had every right to be upset. He states, “It troubles me that someone would be tracked without their knowledge, outside of a criminal situation. When the child finds out about it, and there’s a good chance they will, it’s a betrayal. It carries the message, ‘I have no trust in you’” (Colker).

Even parents who do tell their kids they are being tracked are seriously restricting their privacy. Car and cell phone tracking devices adhere to the theory of panoptical control which was developed by Jeremy Bentham two hundred years ago. Panoptical control suggests that people will follow rules and standards when they know they are being watched (Strub 40). Bentham developed this idea as a way to control prisoners. He published a proposal for a penitentiary he called Panopticon, named from the Greek roots meaning “all seeing.” The main feature was a tall tower in the center of the prison where guards could monitor every inmate at all times (40). It seems harsh that parents use the same technique on their children as was originally designed to control prisoners.

The effects this constant monitoring has on children worries Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse: “They’re going to grow up with a picture of somebody watching them. Are they going to grow up less of a risk-taker? Not speak freely?” (“New”). George Orwell’s *1984* depicts this through a panoptical society which uses audio-video devices called tele-screens as the main method of control. These machines are placed everywhere in the city, including homes and workplaces, monitoring citizens at all times. Since every action, movement, and sound is scrutinized, citizens only do things the government considers acceptable, in turn creating lifeless beings stripped of all individuality (Strub 44). Although this is an extreme and imaginary example, parents’ use of tracking devices is a tiny step in that direction. Katz predicts, “...soon, tiny cameras—like the ones in most new cell phones—will enable parents to literally watch over their kids twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week—and even eavesdrop on their conversations” (Smith).

Not wanting to create a *1984* scenario, the middle-aged father does not even turn on his computer this time when his vivacious, sixteen-year-old daughter leaves for a friend’s house. He has taken the black box out of her car because he wants his daughter to grow into an independent adult who can predict the consequences of her actions. There is no sense relying on the device if she might not be in the location shown, and he does not want to monitor her with a technique developed to control prisoners. When she happily enters the house at 11:50, ten minutes before curfew, he is pleased with his decision not to track her.

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## Most Valuable Lesson

The Wright brothers' first airplane flight on December 17, 1903, the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944, and Man's first step on the moon on July 21, 1969 were all defining moments in American history. Defining moments do not only occur on a national level, but also happen to just one individual, usually revealing something about his or her character. From such a moment, one might realize what career to pursue or just learn a simple, but important, life lesson, which is the case with my defining moment.

As I open the heavy, high school door and step outside, the bright sunlight pierces my eyes, immediately causing me to squint. I do not mind because it indicates that summer, my favorite time of year, is forcing spring away. I look behind me to see my boyfriend, Jack, put his hand over his eyes to prevent the sting of the sun. Jack and I met a year and a half ago in government class. It was a small class of only nine people, so I could talk to him every day. Right away I could tell he liked me, and this mere fact immediately made me like him back. It took about three weeks of flirting until we were officially dating, and we have been together ever since.

Well over six feet tall, Jack towers over all the other students in the high school hallway. He has well defined arm, chest, and leg muscles that intimidate his football opponents as well as the freshmen. Unlike my poker-straight hair, his dark brown, almost black hair, ends in waves. Anyone who takes one look at him immediately notices his large, chocolate brown eyes. This is by far my favorite feature: although dark in color, his eyes are always bright and inviting. He has a mole centered over his right eyebrow that he hates, but I think it accentuates his eyes and makes them even more interesting.

We counter the theory that opposites attract and are attracted to each other because of our similar personalities. We are both very dedicated to our schoolwork, which is quite rare in the high school setting. We take advanced classes, complete all our homework, and study for all our tests. I am ranked first in our grade, and he is ranked third.

Jack and I are both passionate about a certain sport, and for Jack, that sport is football. Anyone who knows Jack also knows that he might not be the most naturally talented player on the field, but he is the hardest working player. He is the one who stays after practice is over to keep improving his skills. Being a senior, he just finished his final season in the fall. His years of dedication to the sport paid off, and during his senior season, he was the starting linebacker and captain of the varsity team.

My passion is not football; it is soccer. I started playing at the age of five and have continued all throughout high school. Like Jack, I am very dedicated and put in extra hours after practice to stay on top of my game. My many years of experience have been rewarded throughout my high school career. I am a four-year starter and have been a captain for three years. Tragically, my final season came to an end just a few days ago when we lost to our rivals in the district finals.

With our eyes finally adjusted to the bright sunlight, Jack and I head toward the school parking lot. As we are walking, I see my soccer coach, Ms. Borwick, coming towards me. She is a shorter woman with very distinct red hair which she pulls back in a bun and then covers up with a baseball cap.

She stops in front of Jack and me. "Hi. How are you two today?"

"Good," we both reply in unison.

"Good to hear. Emily, I have been looking for you. We just had the end of the season Coaches Association meeting to determine the players receiving awards. I'm very proud to give you this." She hands me a blue certificate titled "All-Conference Most Valuable Player." Instead of feeling the normal emotions of excitement and joy, my mind immediately reverts back to my defining moment which occurred last November.

Jack and I were walking hand-in-hand down the main hallway in the high school. The hall was jammed with students walking to and from class, so we dodged and weaved around people, trying to make our way to the cafeteria. Just as everyone began dissipating and we finally had room to breathe again, a loud voice called out from behind us.

"Jack!" We both turned around to see his football coach, Mr. Nuss, stumbling after us. He was a very tall man with a broad chest and thinning, red hair. His left eye had a mind of its own and constantly darted

from side to side, but it was hard to notice through his thick, Coke-bottle eyeglasses. He, too, was out of breath from dodging all the students.

"Hi, Jack. Hello, Emily. I have some exciting news I would like to share with you, Jack!"

"Really?" Jack asked in a surprised manner. I knew what he was thinking. *Football season has been over for two weeks, ever since our devastating loss in the district finals. What exciting news could my football coach possibly tell me?*

Coach Nuss handed him a yellow sheet of paper titled "Football All-State." It was completely filled from top to bottom with the names of high school football players.

"Let me find your name. There you are!" he exclaimed as he pointed to Jack's name about halfway down the paper. "You earned Academic All-State Honors! This is a huge accomplishment! You were one of only three players from our team to receive All-State honors, and you were the only one to receive it in the academic category."

"Wow," Jack replied in disbelief as he continued to stare at his name on the paper.

"I am going to make a plaque for each of you three that will be placed in the trophy case by the gymnasium. It will be bronze plated with your senior picture in the middle."

"Thanks," Jack muttered. His eyes were still glued to the paper.

Coach Nuss let out a little chuckle, flashed me a smile, and then headed back down the hall.

As Coach Nuss walked away, I broke Jack's trance by giving him a big hug and congratulating him. I was extremely proud and happy for him, and yet, I had this awful feeling of jealousy starting to creep inside of me. All I could think was, *I wanted to receive Academic All-State in soccer. I had worked just as hard as Jack in school and in my sport, and yet, I would not get it because, unlike Coach Nuss, Coach Borwick did not believe in All-State honors. She only participated in the conference awards which were not nearly as prestigious. How unfair.*

I tried to contain my terrible thoughts and emotions. A part of me was really happy for Jack, but another part of me, a part I had never experienced before, left me wanting to scream at the top of my lungs, start sobbing uncontrollably, and run away.



We finally made it to the cafeteria, and I managed to keep a smile on my face as Jack showed his All-State paper to some of his friends. One of his teammates, Matt, approached Jack carrying the same yellow paper. At first glance, Matt did not look much like a football player because he was so short and thin. At only 5'7", he looked like a little boy standing next to Jack. Yet, he was the starting cornerback and was by far one of the best players on the team. He had just broken the school record for the most interceptions in a season, so it was not at all surprising that he would be one of the three players to receive All-State.

Matt motioned toward Jack's paper. "Hey, Jack. What do you have there?"

"Oh, I received Academic All-State."

"Congratulations, man!"

"Thanks. I'm assuming you earned it, too," Jack said as he pointed to the paper in Matt's hand.

"Yeah, I received All-State Honors for my cornerback position."

Before I even knew what was happening, all of the jealousy and anger suppressed inside of me for the past few minutes exploded, and I started talking without even realizing. I stated, in a matter-of-fact fashion, "Obviously Matt's honors are based on his raw athletic talent, whereas Jack only received his because he gets good grades."

It took a few solid seconds before I fully comprehended what had just come out of my mouth, and once I realized it, all my jealousy and anger were completely gone. Now I felt nothing but remorse and guilt. My stomach tightened into a pretzel and my heart began to ache. I was in complete shock. I had never been so mean in all my life, and it scared me to death. How could I have said something with the purpose of hurting Jack? I had never tried to hurt him before.

I looked to see Matt's and especially Jack's reaction to my awful comment. Amazingly, they both laughed and took it as some sort of joke. They were both accustomed to making fun of each other in a joking manner, so they just figured I was doing the same thing. Still I could not believe they thought nothing of it. How come they did not realize how out of character my comment was?

My stomach remained in knots all day. I never once thought about how I wanted to get Academic All-State. It had meant so much to me before,

but now it was completely trivial. Instead, I kept wondering what came over me. Jack could tell I was bothered by something, but I just could not find the words to describe the envious monster which had engulfed me. Instead I just said I was not feeling like myself, which was not a lie, and then I told him I was very proud of him. This time I wholeheartedly meant it, and from that point, I vowed never to let my jealousy take over.

I am brought out of my reflection by Coach Borwick's voice. "Aren't you happy, Emily? You received the most prestigious honor awarded by the Coaches Association. You were named the most valuable player of the entire conference!"

A weak "wow" is all I can muster.

I glance over at Jack, and he flashes me a big smile and says, "Congratulations, Em! You definitely deserve this!"

Yet, I do not even care about my award. Instead I look deep into Jack's brown eyes and see that he is sincere and truly proud. A wave of happiness rushes through my body and I smile, not because I am the most valuable player, but because Jack is not feeling the awful jealousy that overpowered me last November.

Even though my horrible comment did not affect anyone else, it has impacted me greatly. I recently came across a quote from Aphra Behn, an English dramatist, poet, and novelist: "Nothing is more capable of troubling our reason, and consuming our health, than secret notions of jealousy in solitude." If my defining moment had never occurred, then I would not truly understand the meaning of this statement. However, I realize it is exactly what I experienced, and I can now identify with it. I learned when I start to feel jealous, I must immediately recognize these feelings and decide why I have them and if they are justified. This has proved effective because I have not had another jealous incident. Even though my defining moment was not as extreme as creating the first flying aircraft or taking the first step on the moon, it still taught me an important lesson that will stick with me for the rest of my life.

Emily Pradko  
WRT 150

### Selling Sickness

Open the medicine cabinet of an average American family and one will most likely find the shelves jam-packed with pill bottles, such as Claritin to treat allergies, Tylenol to alleviate common aches and pains, or Lunesta to ensure a good night's sleep. Perhaps one will find even more powerful agents, such as Adderall for managing Attention Deficit Disorder, Xanax to treat anxiety disorders, or Prozac used for depression. In "America's Dependency on Pills," Chelsea Backe states, "There are numerous new medicines for almost everything imaginable. These days America depends on medicine for almost every illness" (2). She adds that there are even medications to prevent hangovers, enhance one's sexual life, help balding men grow hair, and of course, aid in weight loss (5). I agree with Backe that even though medicines help patients fight disease and live longer, healthier, and more productive lives, they are abused by some Americans.

Backe suggests that the expansion of illness categories is attributing to America's dependency upon pills. One's severe sadness and grief over losing a loved one used to be considered a normal part of life, but now it has progressed into a depressive disorder that should be treated with medication. She alludes to the media's contribution to the reliance on medication, but she fails to expand upon it (4). I feel the media, specifically direct-to-consumer (DTC) prescription drug advertising, is the foundation of America's dependency on medication, and therefore should be thoroughly examined.

For decades, drug manufacturers advertised only to physicians, and it was not until the 1980's that a push to advertise to the public began (Wilkes, Bell, and Kravitz 113). Finally, in 1997, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allowed manufacturers to advertise both the drug's name and the condition it treated without revealing all of the associated risks. This caused a soar in DTC advertising, the promotion of drugs or medical equipment by pharmaceutical companies or other medical organizations to the public through the popular media (114).

According to IMS Health, the main provider of information in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries, over nine hundred million dollars were spent on DTC advertising by drug manufacturers in just the first

half of 1999, a forty-three percent increase from the previous year (110). This spending just keeps on increasing. In 2000, pharmaceutical companies invested 2.5 billion dollars in advertising and over three billion dollars in 2003 (Fillon 75). What kind of advertising is all this money supporting?

By far the most popular DTC advertising is on television. Anyone who has watched television is almost guaranteed to have seen a drug commercial. Probably the most well-known one is for Pfizer's depression medication, Zoloft, which features an animated, oval-shaped sad face with tears streaming down. But after a voiceover explains Zoloft and some symptoms of depression, the face is suddenly happy, bouncing around, and following a colorful, fluttering ladybug (Kowall). Another well-known commercial is for Paxil, used to treat anxiety disorders. A woman sadly walks by a house with a lively party inside. Once Paxil is described, the woman rings the doorbell, and with a huge smile, she enters the party (Veracity).

These commercials may seem cheesy, but they definitely are effective. Prescriptions for the fifty most heavily advertised drugs of 1999 and 2000 increased at six times the rate of all other drugs (Greider 30). When Vioxx invested 160.8 million dollars on DTC advertising in 1999, even more than Pepsi and Budweiser spent, its sales quadrupled (Fillon 77). One might wonder why advertising is increasing the sales of drugs which can only be obtained by a prescription from a doctor.

To illustrate, the average person who has no medical background watches the Zoloft commercial and hears a few of the symptoms of depression, such as having trouble sleeping and feeling sad, hopeless, or anxious. The person thinks: *I have some of these symptoms. Maybe I am depressed and need to take Zoloft.* This marketing strategy is just one example of "...the widespread phenomenon in which pharmaceutical companies market diseases, then convince naïve consumers that they have the disease and need medication for it" (Shuchman 819). The commercial viewer then visits his or her doctor and says something like, "I saw an ad for Zoloft, and now I realize I am exhibiting some signs of depression. I think I need to take Zoloft to help." This is where the major problem occurs. Doctors are giving in to the pressure from patients to prescribe a specific drug. A recent survey found that when patients ask their doctor for information about a medication or actually ask to be put on it, doctors prescribe that particular drug seventy-five percent of the time (Wilkes, Bell, and Kravitz 111).

Therefore, patients may be getting drugs they do not actually need or are switching from well-studied drugs to brand-new ones all because of advertising. This is exactly why the American Academy of Pediatrics opposed legalizing DTC prescription drug advertising. It felt DTC advertising would "...encourage demand for treatment not medically indicated and boost inappropriate requests for specific medications" (120).

DTC advertising is also changing the dynamics of the discussions between patients and doctors. Conversations during appointments were once geared toward the patient's actual illness, but now they are turning into discussions about specific brands of medication. Problems can arise because advertisements usually fail to mention whether a condition can be treated without medication, such as a change in lifestyle. Wilkes and his colleagues state, "Patients may become angry when their physician insists on discussing a low-fat diet, stress management, or allergen avoidance rather than writing a prescription for Pravachol, BuSpar, or Flonase" (121).

There is overwhelming evidence suggesting that Americans are dependent on medication. Both Backe and I agree with this, but I feel that the main reason is due to DTC drug advertising. Wilkes and his colleagues continue on, "...DTC advertising may cultivate the belief among the public that there is a pill for every ill and contribute to medicalization of trivial ailments, leading to an even more 'overmedicated' society" (121). The next time a DTC drug advertisement is on television, do not automatically submit to the pharmaceutical company's plan by grabbing a pill bottle out of the overflowing medicine cabinet or rushing to the doctor. Instead, take a step back and consider, *Is this really something I need?*

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## PORTFOLIO TWO

Melissa Wehner

WRT 150

## Wal-Mart: Always Low Morals. Always.

A desperate mother of five waits impatiently to be seen by the Wal-Mart manager in a town just outside of Las Vegas, Nevada. She feels hopeless and ashamed, knowing she is applying to work at the business that single handedly shut down her last place of employment. She and 1,400 other workers of the 18 California-based Raley's in the area lost their jobs when a Wal-Mart supermarket was built. She had no degree to fall back on and her only working experience was at local restaurants and markets around town. She earned \$14.68 an hour at Raley's with a pension and family health insurance and was now applying for a job at Wal-Mart, where the typical grocery worker makes between \$7 and \$8 an hour and receives no benefits (Cleeland and Goldman). She had heard on the news about Wal-Mart's pollution of lakes and streams and the sex-discrimination lawsuit currently in the courts and could not believe she was about to work for such a company. It seems as though she has no choice but to try to get a job at the new supermarket, knowing that any other neighborhood business will soon be shut down anyway. The manager greets her and asks her to come into his office. She smiles shamefully, wishing there was another way.

As of March 31, 2007 there were 1,063 Wal-Mart Discount Stores, 2,285 Wal-Mart Supercenters, and 116 Neighborhood Markets in the United States and 2,701 stores in 14 countries outside the United States ("Investors"). Wal-Mart has been known throughout the nation, and many other countries around the world for its alleged unbeatably low prices. People love that they can walk into a Wal-Mart store and find anything from a plasma television to cookies and milk at amazingly low prices. However, the Wal-Mart Corporation is now becoming known for its unfair wages, discrimination against women, poor treatment of the environment, outsourcing and closing down competitors. What these Wal-Mart shoppers are not seeing when they are buying these products is the controversy that is going on behind the scenes. The 100 million people who shop at Wal-Mart's 3,400 American stores every week are not realizing that they are helping this thriving corporation to grow and hide behind the devastating hardships it causes everyday ("Wal-Mart at a Glance").

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*Melissa wrote her portfolio in the class of Professor Dauvan Mulally.*

In a PBS Frontline documentary, *Is Wal-Mart Good for America?*, both sides of the issue of Wal-Mart's reputation were looked into and debated. Jon Lehmen, a former Wal-Mart store manager feels that Wal-Mart is bad for America, along with millions of people around the nation. When he worked at Wal-Mart he felt sorry for the people with families coming into his Wal-Mart store for a job, knowing they were about to make between "\$7 and \$8 an hour, work over 30 hours a week, pay into a meager health plan, receive no pension and gain no future" (*Is Wal-Mart Good*). The side of Wal-Mart that customers aren't seeing when they look at the low price tags and the bright yellow smiley faces around the store is the work that goes on behind closed doors. Wal-Mart's penny-pinching extends to its own 1.2 million U.S. employees, none of which are unionized. By the company's own admission, a full-time worker might not be able to support a family on a Wal-Mart paycheck (Cleeland and Goldman). Wal-Mart's average full-time hourly wage in the U.S. is only \$9.68 an hour ("*Wal-Mart: Merchant*"). In comparison to their competitors, Wal-Mart is far behind. Few Meijer stores are non-union operated: less than ten as of December 2006. Full-time Meijer employees make up to \$16.50/hour ("*Meijer*"). Many Wal-Mart stores give their employees between 35 and 39 hours a week, keeping them part-time to save the corporation money. In 2006, Wal-Mart posted \$245 billion in sales – nearly twice as much as General Electric Co. and almost eight times as much as Microsoft Corporation (Cleeland and Goldman). When Wal-Mart's Chief Executive, H. Lee Scott Jr. is making nearly \$18 million a year in salary, it is ridiculous to think that the stores over 1.2 million workers are making just over minimum wage (Cleeland and Goldman). In 2004, his salary was \$17,543,739 per year. While H. Lee Scott Jr. is making his \$8,434.48 per hour, his workers cannot even afford to support their families ("*Wal-Mart: Merchant*"). When they are making this much money, you think they would treat their employees better, giving them benefits and paying them the wages they deserve.

Wal-Mart is currently involved in the largest private civil rights case in U.S. History. Wal-Mart is being sued for allegedly creating a system that pays its female workers less than their male counterparts for comparable jobs and bypasses women for key promotions (Kravets). On February 6, 2007 a federal appeals court ruled that the largest sex discrimination



lawsuit in U.S. history could proceed as a class action against Wal-Mart (Joyce). As many as 1.6 million current and former female employees are represented in the suit. This is a very critical lawsuit and is being taken very seriously by everyone involved. In June 2004, the case had already generated 1.25 million pages of evidence and 200 sworn depositions (Kravets). The National Organization for Woman (NOW) has named Wal-Mart a "Merchant of Shame." A brochure they produced informing the nation about Wal-Mart's bad habits claimed that in 2001 alone, female employees of Wal-Mart earned, on average, 22 percent less than their male counterparts. However, wages are not the only issue being reviewed in the case. Discrimination against women for promotions is also part of it. The documentary, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* uncovers a retail giant's assault on families and American values. The film dives into the deep personal stories of many people, including Edith Arana, a six year Wal-Mart employee who imagined that she had a bright future with the world's biggest retailer. She had her heart set on becoming a member of management and was sure she was on the fast track to achieving her goals, working extra long hours and putting the store before everything, in order to support her two children and dying husband. After several attempts to apply for management training and positions, she was told by the general manager, "There's no place for people like you in management." She asked, "What do you mean people like me – that I'm a woman, or that I'm black?" He replied to her, "Two out of two ain't bad" (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost*). The ruling will allow almost two million women who have worked for Wal-Mart since 1998 to seek compensation for discrimination as a group (Kravets). This is a case that is clearly going to take many years, but until a ruling is made, a very large dark shadow will remain on the leaders of the Wal-Mart Corporation.

A Pulitzer Prize winning story from *The Los Angeles Times* done on Wal-Mart, zeroed in on the reason they are able to make their prices so low. In the story they talked about a 20-inch box fan marked at \$10, for instance, that was made in Chicago at Lakewood Engineering & Manufacturing Co. and originally priced at \$20, but that was not low enough for Wal-Mart to sell (Cleeland and Goldman). Knowing that Wal-Mart was the most thriving corporation in the nation, Lakewood owner Carl Krauss cuts costs at every turn, where it once took 22 people to put together a product, it

now takes seven (Cleeland and Goldman). In 2000, he opened a factory in China where his workers earn 25 cents an hour, compared with \$13 an hour in Chicago, to make his products just so he can afford to put them on the Wal-Mart shelves (Cleeland and Goldman). On average, Wal-Mart subcontractors in Bangladesh and China made less than 17 cents per hour in 2004 ("Wal-Mart: Merchant"). All the retailers he supplies – including Home Depot and Target Corp. drive a hard bargain, Krauss says, but none nearly as tough as Wal-Mart (Cleeland and Goldman). "You give them your price," Krauss says, "If they don't like it, they give you theirs. Your price is going to be whittled down like you never thought possible" (Cleeland and Goldman). Wal-Mart is driving businesses like Krauss's to rely on workers in other countries just to get their products on the shelves of Wal-Mart stores. Since Wal-Mart is able to demand these low prices from merchants, how far will it go? It seems as though these businesses will stop at nothing in order to get their products in Wal-Mart stores.

As big as the problems with pricing may seem, it is only the beginning of the devastation Wal-Mart allegedly causes. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) caught Wal-Mart illegally discharging pollution from 17 construction sites located in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Massachusetts ("U.S. Reaches"). Wal-Mart was forced to pay a \$1 million fine for their acts and the EPA and Wal-Mart came to an agreement in June 2001, committing Wal-Mart to establish a \$4.5 million environmental management plan to improve compliance with environmental laws at each of the construction sites ("U.S. Reaches"). When these pollutants are illegally discharged, the runoff from the sites causes silt and sediment build up in lakes and streams and kills off their aquatic life. In 2004, Wal-Mart Stores were accused of illegally storing toxic chemicals in the parking lots and outdoor garden centers and allowing these poisons to leak into storm drains connected to the Catawba River. Donna Lisenby, the Catawba Riverkeeper and a leader in the Waterkeeper Alliance, an international environmental organization that supports the protection of local water bodies and stands up for clean water said, "I read Wal-Mart's enforcement record. They had one of the worst environmental records in the nation." Donna also said, "Of all the industries I have worked with as Catawba Riverkeeper, including power and oil, I have never found a company to be as blatantly non-responsive and unconcerned about the public health as Wal-Mart"

(*Wal-Mart: The High Cost*). How far is Wal-Mart willing to go just to cut costs?

As much as it may seem that Wal-Mart helps the towns it comes into to the naked eye, the truth is just the opposite. Emek Basker, an economist with a Ph.D. from MIT and an undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina, wanted the answer to a simple question about Wal-Mart: What effect does the opening of a Wal-Mart have on the availability of jobs in the immediate area? (Fishman 137). She found that in the years between 1983, when the Wal-Mart was built, and 1993, small Iowa towns lost 47 percent of their total retail sales, apparently as people simply drove to Wal-Marts to shop. And during that same period, as Wal-Mart grew from no stores to forty-five stores in the state, 43 percent of all stores selling men's and boy's clothing went out of business (156). Nearly half of an entire retail category in a state was wiped out, and due entirely to Wal-Mart coming into the towns. Many people think that Wal-Mart creates jobs, and again, the opposite is true. The typical Wal-Mart store employs 150 to 350 workers, however, even as the store is just opening; it is putting other people out of business. Wal-Mart may employ 300 people in a new store, but after five years, 250 people working at nearby retailers have lost their jobs – and four stores have gone out of business all together (144). Basker also found that wholesalers, the companies that supply goods to retailers, lost 20 jobs after five years (144). So in jobs across retail, five years after the opening of a new Wal-Mart, employing hundreds, a county had gained only thirty jobs when you look at all of the loss. When a Wal-Mart moves into town, competitors often are wiped out, taking high-paying union jobs with them. Not only are businesses around Wal-Mart closed down, but those who stay open pay the price. All of this research was only done on retail, so think how many other businesses and jobs were lost due to a new Wal-Mart being built. John Hunter, a business owner said, “When I got an appraisal on the business and the building, the appraiser devalued the building. He told me, when Wal-Mart comes into a town, they knock the values down” (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost*). Are the low costs that Wal-Mart offers really worth it? Is saving a few dollars on groceries really worth the loss of so many businesses and jobs?

In spite of the devastation Wal-Mart's seem to cause when they roll into town, some people still find the low prices worth while. Glenn Miraflor, a

religious Wal-Mart shopper says, "Where else are you going to find a computer for \$498? You can't beat the prices; I come here because it's so cheap" (Cleeland and Goldman). Wal-Mart's prices often are lower than other retailers surrounding it, and people feel that is enough to ignore the effects these low prices have on the surrounding businesses and the wholesalers who provide Wal-Mart with their products. The large array of household items also helps its customers to make fewer trips. Customers that shop at Wal-Mart are thrilled with the prices they see on the shelves and love the extra money they save by shopping there. Many people also feel that competition is what makes the United States the wonderful place that it is. They feel that competition constantly keeps businesses around the nation on their toes and makes them what they are today. Wal-Mart does employ many Americans, but compared to other stores, like Meijer, which employs over 400 Americans and creates very minimal competitor job less when it comes into town, the corporation still looks bad ("Meijer"). Despite the low prices, the large selection, new jobs and the competition it creates, I cannot look at Wal-Mart as a good thing for America. No matter what people tell me about how much money they saved, all I can think about are all those people that lose their businesses and great paying jobs and the horrible things that go on behind closed doors.

The negative effects that Wal-Mart has on America are looking almost endless at this point. Thousands of businesses close down every year due entirely to a new Wal-Mart in town. Women are paid more than 20 percent less than men and are prevented from getting promotions. They give their employees unfair wages and no benefits and admit that they do not pay them enough to support a family. The list of horrifying actions could go on forever. How could anyone form and run a business so poorly? There are no signs of Wal-Mart admitting to any of their problems, while millions of people in America are becoming more and more aware of how bad this corporation actually is. Millions of people around the nation find Wal-Mart's prices irresistible, but many refuse to shop there because of the negative effects it has on the United States and the devastating way they treat their workers. In writing this, I hope that more people will be informed of how bad Wal-Mart really is and that eventually American shoppers will look deeper into what they are supporting when they shop at Wal-Mart. Horrible wages, discrimination against women, bad environmental treatment,

outsourcing and closing down competitors are just a few of the things that make Wal-Mart bad for America.

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## The Everlasting Song

The day came for my mom to drop me off at the YMCA Storer Camps in Jackson, Michigan. Greeting us was an old, scratched up wooden arch displaying the word “Pathfinders” written with the most welcoming shades of pink, green and orange. The gentle smell of smoking fire and evergreen leaves filled my lungs. The camp was covered with wooden cabins and trees that went on for miles. There was a rock enclosed fire pit surrounded by huge logs, making a beautifully calm fire circle. I saw before me four wooden cabins that I instantly assumed were outhouses. “Tell me those are the bathrooms!” I said to my mom. She laughed and answered, “No, that is your new home.” As I walked into my assigned cabin, Vega, the smell of must and rotting wood came over me as the rickety door slammed behind my back. It was very dark and extremely dirty and I had no idea how I was going to survive with absolutely no electricity. I was surrounded by torn screen windows, eight rusted metal bunks and a measly ten foot by ten foot space. The camp was a far cry from the beautiful photographs they showcased in the brochure.

The summer before my eighth grade year I had gotten a brochure in the mail from the YMCA Storer Camps about all of the summer programs they offered. My mom and I looked through the packet and found out more about the camps. It looked like a beautiful place to stay and was unlike anything I had ever seen. We decided on a few two-week summer camps that would work for me. I was sitting next to her bouncing up and down on the bed when she called; just thinking of the adventure I was about to experience. My mom got off the phone and told me I was enrolled in the Pathfinder Camp, my second choice because my first choice was full, but I was still very excited. The Pathfinder’s program was an all girls, Christian summer camp where I would be in a very small cabin with no electricity. I didn’t know anyone going to the camp, which made me very nervous, but thrilled to be getting away for two whole weeks. I was in middle school and a towering 5 foot 4 inches above almost everyone in my class. I had a couple friends, but only the kind you say, “Hey!” to and, “How’s it goin’?” in the hallway. My parents had recently gotten divorced and because of

my father's alcohol and drug problems, the court banned my sister and me from seeing him. I had no true friends, no one to confide in and no one to trust. At the time in my life when I needed a friend the most, I was alone. Little did I know that I was about to meet not only a true friend, but the most amazing person I have ever known.

I was one of the first people to arrive at the camp, so I had time to unload my things and set up my bunk area. I was scared, but excited at the same time. As I was unloading my things, other girls were slowly trickling in and I could hear them quietly talking. Suddenly this amazingly spirited and happy girl walked through the door to the cabin and yelled, "HEY GIRLS! I'M HERE!" She was the most genuinely beautiful young woman I had ever seen. Her naturally luminous blond hair, her beaming smile and her dazzling confidence lit up the entire room. It was obvious that she had been at this camp before and knew almost everyone there. She was the first person out of all the girls at camp to talk to me. She introduced herself to me in a song that I will never forget. She sang, "My name is Katie, this is my address, 2315 Chancery Road, Toledo, Oh Hi Oh Oh Oh." I introduced myself, less creatively, and she started telling me about the camp and introduced me to the other girls. I think she could tell that I was new and offered to show me around.

As we walked down the dirt path she told me about all of the incredible things that went on during the two weeks. I learned about her amazing life, her family and the devastation of losing her father. I told her about my life, having no friends and how I had lost my father as well. We had this instant bond that I knew was going to turn into an incredible friendship. As we were walking, I could not help but notice the astounding natural beauty of the camp. The leaves were blowing ever so gently and the sun was slowly setting beyond the trees. The distant voices and gently swaying trees filled my head and memories of camping as a little girl came over me. We came to the lake at the end of the path and stepped our feet into the delicate, silky sand. I saw before my eyes the most beautiful shades of pink and orange reflecting over the water. I felt the chilling water at my feet as it rippled onto the shore. It was absolutely breathtaking. Suddenly, all of my anxiety and fear washed away. I knew, in that moment, that this was going to be the most incredible experience of my life.

Katie and I got to know a lot about each other on that walk, and by the next day, she and I were inseparable. She had become more of a friend to me in a day than anyone I had ever met. We spent every second of everyday together. One activity we did together was high ropes. As we approached the high ropes area, a forest of challenging, high endurance courses surrounded us. The counselors told us to choose a partner we could trust, and of course, Katie and I stuck together. We put on our safety gear and slowly climbed a tormenting 90-foot pole for our first course. There was another pole across from us and two long metal wires, starting very close together and progressively getting farther apart, connected the two poles. Katie and I each stepped onto our line, facing each other and holding hands. My fear of heights washed over me, making the ground seem millions of feet away and forcing my body to lock up. Katie slowly talked me through my fear, calming my raging nerves. We had to balance each other's weight and slowly move down the lines as they grew farther and farther apart. Our bodies became more separated by the second and eventually we ended up being almost completely flat in mid air, holding on only by each other's hands and pushing against the metal wires with our feet. Knowing it was almost impossible to go any further, Katie and I counted to three and let go. The instructors were amazed. They told us that we had gone farther than anyone had ever gone on that course. We were ecstatic. The experience brought us closer by conquering our fears together and trusting in each other.

The next two weeks were unbelievable. Each camper could only shower every four days, we were not allowed to shave, and we loved it. Campers were forced to break down our walls and become very vulnerable through talking about our heartbreaks, failures, successes and dreams and everything in between. On our last day, the camp counselors made a fire and everyone gathered around the glowing flames, singing songs about saying good bye. Leaving that amazing camp was one of the hardest things I have ever done, but I knew that Katie and I would be friends forever. We exchanged phone numbers and addresses and promised to get together soon. Her parents got there first and I watched her drive away into the sunset, knowing that everything was going to be okay. Unfortunately, Katie lived in Ohio and I lived in Michigan, but nothing could tear us apart. She and I talked on the phone almost every day and got together as often as we



could. We promised each other that we would become camp counselors together so we could help kids to form the friendship that we did at this wonderful camp. Katie and I ended up going to camp together for the next two years. Throughout those three years, we experienced life changing moments and made memories that would last the rest of our lives. Katie and I grew to become more than friends, we became sisters. I loved Katie more than words can tell and little did I know that I was about to lose the best thing that had ever happened to me.

The summer before my 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, I was officially aged out of the Pathfinder Camp. Katie, being a year younger than me still had one year left. She knew attending the camp would not be the same without me, so she decided not to go her last year. Instead, we planned to meet up and spend a week at my house, just being together. It was the middle of July and she had a two-week family trip to her cottage in the northern part of Michigan. She was going to leave a couple days earlier than her family with her sister's friend to come and stay with me for a whole week. In two days I was going to see my best friend! I was ecstatic. I was at work the day before she would arrive and I couldn't concentrate on a single task. I knew it was going to be just like camp. My mind was racing with ideas for activities for Katie and I to do. Just then, my boss called me into the office. He told me that my mom called and I needed to go home right away. My heart sank. I could just feel that something was wrong. I was worried, scared and confused, but I listened and left immediately. I hesitantly walked through the front door only to see my sister and mother crying on the couch. My mom took a deep breath and slowly said, "I'm so sorry Melissa and I don't know how to tell you this but, Katie passed away at 9:46 tonight." My throat closed up and my mind became blank. It is just a dream; it has to be just a dream.

A wave of terror spread quickly through my blood, numbing my entire existence. My body became my worst enemy. I walked slowly into my room, digging through all of my belongings to find a bracelet she had made me the previous summer. I needed a part of her with me; I needed to feel her close to me. My search turned into a sudden, nonsensical rage and I was tearing my room apart, it was as if something had taken over my body. Without warning, the rage disappeared and I immediately broke down. Tears were streaming down my face and my body was slowly sinking to the floor. I curled up into a ball and held on for dear life just to keep myself

sane. After a full night of tears and broken hearted emotions, my mom told me what happened. It was dark and rainy on their way home from the cottage and the car got rear ended, forcing them into oncoming traffic. Katie's side of the vehicle was hit directly by a truck, killing her instantly. I could hear the words my mom was saying, but my mind couldn't process a single detail. There was no way that my fifteen year old best friend could have died, this is all a dream; it has to be just a dream.

The days following the accident were unbearable. I could not eat or sleep, knowing that I would never see my best friend again. I would never again see that smile that lit up my life or hear that voice that comforted my soul. Katie was gone, and I was left alone in this world without a sense of what was to come. The funeral was in Ohio, about 2 ½ hours away. As I looked out the window, the world around me was a blur. The drive to Sylvania was the longest and most dreadful ride of my life. When we arrived at the funeral home, I slowly walked through the door greeted by the numbing funeral home smell of old furniture and musty air. I had never seen so many people together in one place. Every chair was occupied and each inch of the room was full. It was strikingly obvious that Katie had touched the lives of everyone she met. I saw her mom out of the corner of my eye. She quickly walked up to me, hugged me in her loving arms and didn't let go and we just cried in each other's arms. She held me in front of her and said something to me that I will never forget, she said, "Katie loved you more than words can express, look around Melissa, you were her world." I looked around and saw all of the pictures displayed throughout the funeral home. The tears crept up as I noticed that I was in almost every single one of the photographs on display. Chills ran through my body as memories of Katie flashed rapidly through my mind. I could hear people quietly talking and crying and the sound of Katie's radiant voice through a TV set near by. Just then, my heart sank to the ground. Surrounded by a sea of beautiful flowers I saw Katie lying still in her elegant silver casket lined with pink silk. I slowly approached her, realizing for the first time that she really is gone and knowing that this would be the last time I will ever see my best friend. She was wearing a bright pink t-shirt that read "I ROCK," radiating her unique personality. I kissed her forehead and told her that she was my angel, and that I would never forget her.

The next year was extremely difficult for me to endure. I had finally found the friend I needed so desperately and in a split second, she was taken away from me. Facing the reality of her death was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Just the thought of her made me break down and cry. After a year of pain and grief, I slowly began to realize that this isn't how she would want me to live. I gradually was able to look at pictures and remember times that we spent together and replaced the tears with joy. Katie made me a better friend, a better person, and a stronger woman. She made me the person that I am today. I now have friends, none of which compare to her, but still true friends. I was able to follow through on our dream of becoming camp counselors, even though she wasn't there with me. Katie was killed in a car accident, but my memory of her will last forever. I know she would have been proud of the things I have done and the person that I have become. As someone once said, "Friendship is like a violin; the music may stop now and then, but the strings will last forever." The music may have stopped for now, but the strings will truly last forever, and someday, the music will play again.

Melissa Wehner  
Writing 150

### The Color of Money

A frustrated young woman closes the cash register of the St. Clair Shores Burger King and looks up to the next customer in line. "What can I get you," she sighs to a man in a pressed black suit.

"The number five minus tomatoes and mayo, and make it fast; I have a meeting to be at," the impatient man says.

She presses the buttons on the register that she knows all so well and says, "That will be six forty-nine." The man hands her a ten dollar bill and she opens the register and gives him his change, not realizing she missed a penny. As the man points this out to her, his voice gets louder and louder in the restaurant, but slowly fades away from her attention, becoming just a murmur in the distance. She thinks to herself, just one more year and I will have the money to get out of here. Just one more year and I will be able to afford to start working on earning a college degree. This is the case for millions of people around the nation. As college costs become higher every year, high school graduates are forced to wait years to save up for college, go to their second or third choice schools, be buried in debt for years after graduation, or worse, not go at all. Increased government spending on Pell Grants and financial aid may be our only chance at ensuring that all students have equal access to higher education.

As much as a degree rewards students after college, for those who can afford to attend, the road to and through college years can be an extreme damper on one's bank account. According to the College Board, an association of colleges and universities, the average tuition at a public four-year college in 2004 was \$5,132, twice what it was two decades ago, after adjusted for inflation ("Update"). In 2006, Michigan's average in-state tuition cost was one of the highest in the nation. With only seven states having an average higher than our \$7,661 per year, that makes Michigan the 8<sup>th</sup> most expensive state for college tuition (Sayre). This doesn't even take into account the costs of room and board. Here at Grand Valley room and board costs between \$3,300 and \$3,800 per semester depending on what style dorm you live in ("Grand Valley Housing"). Grand Valley's tuition is \$3,294 per semester for undergraduate students, making the price of

attending Grand Valley State University between \$13,188 and \$14,188 per year (“Quick Facts”). This means that it is going to cost me over \$70,000 to get my degree, not even counting the cost of textbooks. Personally, I already have \$6,000 in student loans to pay back just for this year. If I have to take out \$6,000 in loans every year, by the time I graduate, I will owe \$30,000, not including interest! Student loans are a great resource for those who cannot currently afford school, but this is an enormous debt for someone to face when they are just getting into the real world. Many people feel that it is just not worth it to have to repay all of that money when they are just starting their lives. When students are first getting their degree, the stress of finding a good job and starting off making little money is hard enough, without the additional stress of tens of thousands of dollars of debt. I think it is very important for the government to realize that more money needs to be given to students for schooling, or cuts need to be made in the current costs. Student loans help, but I do not think a solution to the problem should involve a 23 year old being buried in tens of thousands of dollars of debt. If college costs continue to increase at the current rate and no additional help is provided, more and more students will turn down college due solely to the costs.

It is a devastating misfortune that the dreams of many students to go to college and get a degree are coming to a screeching halt due entirely to those pretty green bills. To our dismay, money is becoming the driving force of success, rather than true passion and intellect. Like the young lady at Burger King, many students work one, two, even three jobs to afford school, making their ability to excel very difficult. Thanks to rising costs, many of today’s college students are hitting the job just as hard as they hit the books. Over 30 percent of the 40 Grand Valley students surveyed had a job during the school year just to pay for tuition, all of them claiming to work over 20 hours per week (College Tuition Survey). However, this is very minimal compared to the national average. Fifty-seven percent of all college students have jobs, according to Sebago Associates. In 2000, one in 10 college students attended classes full-time and worked full-time (Lazarony). When students are forced to work many hours during the school year, less studying and school work are getting done. Thus, wealth and access to superior education – not performance – dictates who succeeds in college and in life (“High Cost”). Is that really what we want for the students of

this nation? On July 10, 2003 the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the U.S. House of Representatives met to discuss the problems and possible solutions to the costs of higher education. According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, cost factors prevent 48 percent of all college-qualified, low-income high-school graduates from attending a four-year college and 22 percent from pursuing any college at all. Students from moderate-income families do not fare much better—43 percent are unable to attend a four-year institution and 16 percent are unable to enroll at any college. At the rate we are going, by the end of the decade, more than two million college-qualified students will miss out on the opportunity to go to college (United States 5).

“A college diploma may be the most expensive piece of paper you ever buy – and it’s getting pricier” (Sayre). Parents and college-bound students are faced with the pressures of college costs and the dreaded decisions of what to do about it. According to Census Bureau statistics, a college graduate typically earns about \$23,000 more a year than someone who has only a high school diploma, making the expenses of college clearly worth while in the long run (Sayre). But what about those students who cannot afford college costs at all? What about families with multiple children attending college? What about the millions of young adults who only make minimum wage? Students such as me who pay for college independently need additional help and if the government wants a generation full of knowledgeable adults, something needs to be done. As college costs are rising by more than six percent each year, more and more people are cut short of the benefits of college and missing out on the opportunities that higher education institutions present to their students (Sayre).

Millions of college-bound students are not only missing out on opportunities by not going to college at all, but many are forced to attend their second or third choice schools. The rising costs of public universities are driving low income families to settle for the “cheaper choice.” A national survey that was released by U.C.L.A.’s Higher Education Research Institute says half of this year’s freshmen attending a second-choice school were accepted by their top pick. For about one-third of those, money was the reason they did not go there (“Rising”). Proving this to also be true here at Grand Valley, 26 percent of the students I surveyed chose to come to Grand Valley because it was the cheaper route (College Tuition Survey).

If the cost of college tuition continues to rise faster than inflation, it is probably safe to assume that more and more people will continue to miss out on educational opportunities. In order for everyone to receive a proper college education, universities need to lower their tuition costs all around the nation. Four-year universities need to be readily available and affordable to anyone who wished to attend.

As college tuition costs are on the rise every year, the national government and several state governments are looking for solutions to this overwhelming problem. Throughout the last 40 years or so, the government has come up with solutions that help, but now seem to not be doing nearly enough. In 1965, Congress passed the Higher Education Act and the Guaranteed Student Loan Act, under which the government pledged to participate in student loan activity and agreed to pay the interest on the loans while students were enrolled in college ("Update"). Another important source of government student aid came with the establishment of the Pell grant program in 1973, which provides college aid for low-income students, but unlike loans, they do not have to be re-paid ("Federal Pell Grant Program"). These options help many students with very low income families, however, what about students whose families have a decent income and receive no assistance from them? Students like Lorraine McNeil, a junior here at Grand Valley are forced to be buried in tens of thousands of students loans because of assumptions the financial aid institutions make. In a personal interview with Lorraine, I asked her what she thought about how the financial aid system works and these were her feelings:

Personally I find the financial aid system very frustrating since financial need is based on your parent's income. My parents do not help pay for my tuition, however, the university expects a certain amount of family contribution based on household income. My income is far less than that of my parents, but my financial needs are not taken into consideration.

Lorraine is not alone in her feelings about the financial aid system. Over 57 percent of the students I surveyed felt that they did not receive the financial aid they deserved. Even worse, an unfortunate 40 percent of the students said they received no help from their parents to pay for school (College Tuition Survey). Higher education is becoming a scary issue to

millions of parents as well as students around the nation and is going to continue to get worse unless something is done.

For students like myself, the solution is not something that can be found or fixed entirely by us. The government has to be the one to step forward on an issue such as this. There are things that can be done personally, but only to some extent. Parents who can afford it can start saving for college the day their children are born. State-sponsored 529 plans are becoming more popular to parents around the nation. In a nut shell, they are education savings plans operated by the state or an educational institution designed to help families set aside funds for future college costs. These savings plans are a great option because all of the investment earnings are tax free, you can use it at any school in the country, it can be transferred to any child in the family and if your children end up getting scholarships or not going to college, it's the only program that allows the parents to take back the money, minus some taxes. There are many different kinds of 529 plans, all with different yearly requirements, but Jeffrey Shull, a certified financial planner says, "\$100 to \$150 a month can do it" (Francis). Although this seems like a wonderful option to many, this is just not an option for many more. Many families struggle just to get food on the table, so an extra \$100 per month is not realistic for them. When the problem is affecting millions upon millions of people around the nation, a major change needs to take place.

I think that many people would agree that the best solution is to increase government spending in higher education. When the government withholds funding from public colleges, then their only choices are to raise tuition or make cuts in areas such as faculty and curriculum ("Update"). More government spending needs to go not only into the colleges and universities themselves, but into the Pell Grants, where the money does not need to be repaid and the students get the most benefit. Since 2003, the maximum need-based Pell Grant award has been \$4,050. Last year, the maximum Pell Grant covered only about one-third of tuition and fees at a four-year public college. Two decades ago, the top grant was large enough to pay for 60 percent of college costs, according to the College Board (Dervarics). If the government is able to put more money into the Pell Grants, I believe that will slowly help to put more deserving students through college. The only solutions are in the hands of the people who control all



things in education, the government. It is up to them whether this devastating problem comes to an end.

When people think about college education, the thoughts going through their minds should be exciting and inspired, not fearful and stressed. We continuously hear that our generation is made up of the future leaders of America. So shouldn't the nation be working to give the future leaders of our country the best opportunities possible? Every college-bound student deserves the highest quality education and the very best opportunities. Students should not be forced to work many hours while attending school just to afford the outrageous costs of tuition, nor should they be buried in debt the second their lives are starting. Until someone finds a way for the costs of higher education to go down, the amount of government assistance needs to increase. The government needs to give more money to students through Pell Grants and Financial Aid. If our nation is to have a fighting chance at a thriving future, we need to ensure that all students have equal access to higher education.

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## PORTFOLIO THREE

Nora Chamberlin  
WRT 150

### The Creative Mind

I have never, not even once, had a breakthrough of any sort. Not have I once felt creative scientifically, mathematically, philosophically, nothing. Perhaps I am uneducated. Perhaps I am unintelligent. Perhaps I lack intuition. Whichever of Isaac Asimov's five criteria of the creative mind, developed in his essay "Those Crazy Ideas," I have not met; I am depressed to admit my mother has been wrong about me all these years. I am not the creative, brilliant girl she had always claimed me to be.

It is difficult to put into words exactly how this makes me feel: disappointed, misled, cheated, jealous, unsettled, upset. Asimov's criteria, his consistent references to his very own "crazy ideas," his Charles Darwin description, all have left me with a bitter and unpleasant taste in my mouth. I want to have a creative soul. I want nothing more than to be brilliant. It's true, I said it. Why is it that I am not one of the lucky ones, chosen to be creative and handed absurd amounts of the intuition? Why have I not been able to see the light at the top of the well like Charles Darwin or Asimov, himself?

I suppose it would be self-involved of me not to consider the billions of other uncreative souls habituating this earth with me. None of them are creative according to Asimov, either. None of us have anything important to contribute, discuss, discover, and who can blame us? No one can fault the unintuitive bloke, sitting in the back row of the annual "Creative Minds/Crazy Ideas" seminar as he tries his hardest to fit in, pretending his mind is just as busy connecting important "bits" of information at excruciating speeds as the men and women occupying the front ten rows, minds wrapped intently around the speaker's words, tongues at the ready to "permit" him to continue sharing his crazy ideas to the natural world. None of these exceedingly intellectual men and women can fault us for not possessing the ability to cure cancer, aids, world hunger, social stratification and what have you. What can we do other than listen along with that bloke in the back row as he fiddles his thumbs, wishing he too were of a creative seed, able to create rather than simply listen?

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*Nora wrote her portfolio in the class of Professor Mary Jean Lotz.*

In his essay “Those Crazy Ideas” Isaac Asimov, renown for his outlandish contribution to the realm of science fiction, answers the question, posed to him by a Boston consultant firm representative, “Where do you get your crazy ideas?” (133) by developing what he considers to be characteristics of the creative mind. Asimov splits these characteristics into five basic criteria and it is this criterion that has been the cause of my jealousy-driven and uninspired uneasiness. To be creative, Asimov insists, one must be educated, intelligent, intuitive, courageous and lucky.

The first of his demanding requirements is education. One must be educated, formally or otherwise, in order to have acquired, as Asimov says, a good amount of “bits.” These “bits” can be anything from facts, theories, observations, opinions, associations, basically knowledge of any sort (135). A want for knowledge, this is not difficult. One simply needs to be inspired to learn. If with learning came brilliance, I would be brilliant. However, it is never so easy.

According to Asimov’s second appeal for the creative mind, one must be intelligent (136). This was a shock to me. I always assumed intelligence spawned from an education. On the contrary, Asimov makes his point very clear. One can be educated, having read all the wonders in the modern world, listened to inspirational lectures one after another until the end of time and still fall short of intelligence. For one to be considered intelligent, according to Asimov, not only must the important “bits” be accounted for, gained through education, but one must have the ability to organize, arrange and remember, and combine these “bits” into meaningful arrangements, putting two and two together in a sense (136). Just having facts somewhere in the brain does not determine intelligence. As Asimov explains, “the ability to combine ‘bits’ with facility and to grow consciously aware of the new combinations is, I would like to suggest, the measure of what we call intelligence” (136). In a sense, a person needs to develop the brain into an effective labeling and organizational system, keeping track of each “bit” as it is acquired and recalling its contents frequently and accurately when needed.

Asimov developed one last criterion on which I would like to have my say; the last two, courage and luck are indifferent regarding my unhappy mindset. In the third, he insists one must not only be gifted enough to see and be aware of the connections made in the brain (intelligence), but also

be able to recognize the connections, digest the connections and see result in the connections quickly and without much labor—this is intuition (137). Without intuition, one may be quite intelligent but lack the propensity to yield from “bit” connections, to create something new. The intuitive mind must see what is deep in the unconscious and be able to stir it up. I imagine it as a tornado of “bits” spiraling about the gray, spongy brain until two “bits” are connected and a breakthrough occurs. At this point I envision an animated Albert Einstein head, extending his hand into the brain and picking out two “bits” from the funnel cloud. These two “bits,” after being called together by intuition, in the form of Albert Einstein, create a “new idea,” a breakthrough of numerous sorts.

It is up to the intuitive mind to figure out which of these many “bits,” making up the whirlwind of the unconscious, when strung together, will make something brand new, something “extraordinarily rich in consequences” (Asimov 137). This sounds like a marvelous event. As the amount of knowledge a person has increases, be it by schooling, by experience, or a combination, the chance must be very slim that two tiny “bits,” perhaps the only two in that whole mess of a mind that would do any good together, find each other in that funnel cloud. The odds of this have got to be close to none. I equate this to be the reason why monumental accomplishments are not a common occurrence in an average person’s life.

However, there is still hope for me and my fellow unintelligent and un-intuitive companions. Come to find out, Asimov does not believe anyone to lack the capacity to connect “bits” into meaningful associations. In fact, Asimov argues the opposite in confessing, “Every mind is, more or less unconsciously, continually making all sorts of combinations and permutations of ‘bits...’ some minds just have a greater capacity for dredging the combinations out of the unconscious” (136). So that is it then. I may, in fact, be positively brilliant, the most intelligent person this world has ever seen. However, I am unconscious of this and without the capacity to engage and that too is dissatisfying.

How, then, is one expected to reach into his or her subconscious to determine whether or not mass amounts of intellect is gathering beyond the skull? According to F. Christopher Reynolds and Jane Piirto’s essay “Depth Psychology and Giftedness” the “soul,” as they say, holds the only key to unlocking the mind. They go on to explain when one is connected

to his or her soul the mind is freely able to transform whatever “bits” it has collected into the components needed to be creative. Reynolds contents that the higher orders of the human consciousness, “Namely contemplation, reflection, intuition, metacognition, knowing the true and the just, dreaming and imagining,” can only be reached and realized through listening to one’s soul, “With soul comes creativity and reverence for creation in its deepest sense” (4). Reynolds believes that it is necessary for not only the mind to process “bits” but the soul in conjunction. So, as I understand, the soul is what gives the “bits” worth in relation to the person. The soul has the ability to take the information and transform it into what the mind needs. It then no longer resides in the mind as information, or “bits,” but as a meaning specific to a single person. That meaning, whatever one takes that “bit” to represent or embody after reflecting upon it, becomes a part of that person. The meaning is his or her own to do with what he or she pleases. With intense meditation and interest, I assume that one thought has the propensity to develop into a vision completely original and individual. For this to happen, it seems Reynolds sees no combination of “bits” as required; one “bit” can live and breathe on its own, transformed by the soul into a remarkable thing, a new philosophy, a theory, a reason, explanation or endeavor.

Reynolds explains, individuals should be committed to a “task of perceiving and bringing into the world that which only he or she can bring” (3) and to do this we need soul. There is a reason why we are put on this green earth and that is to contribute, to have our say in matters that are important, to leave a mark or to write a book of thoughts with the hope that what inspired us will inspire someone else down the road. So, creativity, understanding and Asimov’s criteria are not about unlocking the mind, but rather tapping into the soul, listening to urges and imagining. That will spawn creativity.

And yet, it seems there must be a way to hurry along this process, to make its output exceed the time put in. There must be some way to hone the mind and its ability to create and connect with the soul, like brain-enhancing boosters or, so called, “brain food.” Isn’t it said that the human uses only a small percentage of the brain? Ten percent I remember the old grade school myth as being. By now, someone must have come up with a

multivitamin that I can take daily that will begin to activate the other 90 percent, right?

Here, I fall prey to the stereotypical American: lazy, wanting an easier way to get what I want, cutting the corners, complaining. However, to quench my American nature and be sure there is no shortcut to developing the creative mind, I will introduce you to Berry L. Begerstein of the Brain Behavior Laboratory at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Begerstein cites specific findings of the National Research Council, discounting any such form of brain boosting products on the market today. As Begerstein insists, “no ‘brain booster’ is a reliable substitute for practice and hard work,” (1) for using the brain, for actively thinking.

I was told once by an amateur source that the brain is a muscle (it is an organ, but just run with it) and like all other muscles in your body the brain must be exercised and stretched or it will lose all its strength. As much as this news is obvious and not exactly credible, it is a good “bit” to hold onto. Similar to the “ten percent” myth these sayings are told to, as Begerstein puts it, “motivate many people to strive for greater creativity and productivity in their lives—hardly a bad thing” (1). So, whatever it is you chose to do: meditation perhaps, brain stretching exercises, sudoku, a diet high in brain powering foods, crossword puzzles, vitamins, soy protein, classical music, whatever. At least we are striving to do better, to be more connected, to see into our souls.

Living in a nation such as the United States, it is not much of a surprise to hear the reason for much of society’s dry spell when it comes to creativity is a result of disconnectedness to the soul. Capitalist societies tend to preoccupy its people’s minds with seemingly important commitments and appointments rather than allowing time for their souls to create. When was the last time you saw a businessman sitting on the grass under a great tree, daydreaming? It is funny; with all the advancements and new technologies each year, supposed time-saving trinkets, we seem to find ourselves with less free time. It is a shame to think that because of our preoccupied lifestyles our souls are, in a sense, being left behind and following like shadows in the wake of minds too busy to hear the soul’s plea to wake up!

Well, I will wake up. I will not sit by and let my time pass without contributing my own thoughts to the thoughts of future thinkers. Asimov’s creative criterion along with Reynolds’ involvement of the soul seems to be

the perfect summation of the creative mind. With these impacting “bits” now residing comfortably in my mind, I suppose I have had, as Asimov has said, my own little “creative breakthrough about creativity” and with this I can accept my mind as how it is, how it thinks and how it perceives the reality around it, knowing that no other mind sees our world in the same way mine does. Reynolds tells me to think with my soul; Asimov tells me to constantly interpret and combine all that my soul sees in order to better myself and those around me. I may not be brilliant, but I am content in thinking at my own speed, wreaking the enlightenment and for this I am happy.

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Nora Chamberlin  
WRT 150

### The Mud-Cruiser Fixation

I am home from school. As we all do when we step into an environment in which we feel at home, I expect to be greeted by a certain aura: the smell of dinner perched atop a low burner; the day's mail strewn about the dining room table; a freshly brewed pot of coffee steaming on the counter aside a plate of nibbled after-work snacks; the sound of my mother rustling about the bedroom, changing clothes from work to casual. Of all the comforting sights that evening brings to my home, the one I love and can count on the most is that of my father, dirty from work and grinning, parked in his favorite space, the iron computer chair, staring deeply into cyberspace. His head lurches up as he hears the oak door whine, his smile widening a little bit more. His daughter is home and his mind alights with excitement. "Excellent, now, I can show Nora what the new Coot 2 can do!"

Before letting you in on the marvels of the Coot 2 and for that matter, every other all-terrain vehicle in existence, allow me to first tell you a little about my father. Endlessly passionate about the things he loves (and he loves a lot), my father can be too much for words. It has forever been amazing to me where all his passion comes from. Other than my mom and me—of course, he claims we always come first—the outdoors, the wilderness, the forests, lakes, swamps, mountains and everything involving survival while inhabiting these remote settings is where his heart lies. He goes through stages of mild obsession and desire, pursuing many machines, dreaming of all he could do and get done with their respective abilities to aide him: boats, guns, radios, generators, mud-cruisers (this term was coined by me when I was six), tools, inventions, boots, outerwear, anything that uses diesel, motorcycles, efficient wood splitters; the list goes on and on.

What is most peculiar about my father's many engrossments is that he rarely buys anything. My father will spend time on the computer every night, searching for new mud-cruisers and other spectacular semi-aquatic machines. He watches videos of these strange vehicles in action, running over tree stumps, slowly maneuvering through a bog, and driving up im-

possibly steep ravines. He absolutely loves it. I swear, if we were to get rid of that computer he would not know what to do with himself. I shutter to say it, but sometimes I get the feeling he would rather be at the computer, watching videos and researching machines than spend time with my mom and me. This is not true of course. I know where his loyalties lie, but I do sometimes get that feeling.

"Nora," he hollers from the computer room upon my entrance into the living room. "Come over here. You have got to see what the Coot 2 can do!" I drag myself over to the computer where he sits, eyes glazed over with utter amazement and excitement as he stares into the lighted screen.

"K, Dad. Show me," I say, trying to hide my own enjoyment in the upcoming amateur film. As much as these videos can be bizarre and ridiculous, they are actually quite hilarious. Imagine: a strange, boxy, seemingly instable and down right ugly machine caked with more mud than seems possible, rolling down a dirt path past a stationary camera man as the song "Wild Thing" or some equivalent plays on loop throughout. During the film, the vehicle displays its prowess as it barrels through an obstacle course of large tree stumps, gorges, piles of timber, stacks of hay, rivers (oh yes, they float), swamps and steep inclines. The vehicles knock down small trees and dilapidated barns. They pull hay, crops, logs, people, moose carcasses, machines, and fallen trees. They clear forests, make loud noises, save drowning infants and rescue helpless women from burning farmhouses. The men driving them often fish while precariously floating atop a man-made pond with about an inch of space between the rim of the vehicle and the water level. It is not uncommon for these machines to have an American flag flying in its wake or printed across its hood.

I chortle as the Coot 2 slowly maneuvers the left side of its frame over a huge boulder. As the ingeniousness of the pivoting alignment structure is demonstrated, I turn to my dad and ask him, "Dad, is it absolutely necessary for this machine to be driven directly over a huge boulder. Why can't that driver go around the rock? It just seems like excessive work."

"You don't understand," he grumbles, "you have to appreciate this for the machines unsurpassable abilities. Oh, and Nora, if you must ask you will never know." As I walk away, smiling at the seriousness my father displays, I hear the unmistakable windup of "Wild Thing" for what I know will not be the last time tonight.

He will never buy one of these machines, at least not while he is still living in the city, and yet, I am very confident he will continue to watch these videos for as long as he is able. Nor will he cease writing to the inventors, the manufacturers, and the salesmen of these godforsaken machines. I can count on, once a month, at least, to be called upon to edit a letter such as this. Each one begins the same. “My name is Terry Chamberlin and I am a huge fan of your (insert name of mud-cruiser).” Then he usually goes on to say, “I would be very interested to hear how you came up with the basis behind this machine and the specific details of its design. Have you tried it out around (insert name of desperately remote area, usually one with mountains or a swamp)?” Each usually ends with some sort of request for more information and footage of the vehicle in action.

Delighted, the manufacturers quickly attend to my father’s request, assuming he is a potential buyer. Yet another foolish assumption made of my father. I wonder, if these companies knew my father’s intention, would they continue to humor him, to indulge his fantasies knowing they were nothing more than that—fantasy? Nevertheless, when the response arrives, which is usually quite prompt (aside from my dad I am certain the companies do not have much fan mail to keep up with), my father will quickly transition from the computer desk to the kitchen table to better read and digest his new material. If he is lucky, the company will ship him a new video. This makes him positively gleeful. He monopolizes the television for days after the package arrives, watching the tape relentlessly. The movies wouldn’t be so unbearable if the producers would cut the audio. I can only stand hearing “Born to Be Wild” so many times a day. My mother and I have debated calling these companies and pleading with them, perhaps even unveiling my father’s real intention (or lack thereof), to quit sending him movies or at least to convince them to cut the sound, but we never have. “Dad, come on, be reasonable here. Turn it off.” Often, the best response he will give is a wide grin and a pat on the couch cushions beside him.

He is not a spender. He is not materialistic. He is not corporate. He is able to suppress impulse and desire. He has discipline and sense. For these attributes I am forever thankful. I shutter to think what the alternative would be: six mud cruisers sitting in the garage, seven rifles, five bows and arrows, eight fishing rods and a vintage musket arranged throughout the

house and four boats (three for fishing, one for leisure) docked in various harbors. Of course this is simply estimation, but I have my suspicions that it would go a little something like that. So why doesn't he just get along with it and buy something? If he did, I am positive each purchase would get a respectable amount of wear and care. I cannot comprehend how he can obsess over something until he is blue in the face with exasperation, but never buy it, nonetheless even mention the prospect of ownership. "A month only lasts for thirty days," he declares. "Then a new machine will come out, a better one, one with more abilities than the last, one that can not only go over large boulders but one that floats too, or one that can pull 500 pounds, 700 pounds, 1000 pounds, each with a little different design than the last."

Naturally I have to add "Each as ridiculous as the next." But for as much as I tease him for his lack of follow through and his distaste for purchase, in fact, it is he who has the last laugh. He may know something I and many others do not. Living in capitalist America where new versions of toilet paper, for goodness sakes, hit the shelves every few months, why should anyone bother investing a small fortune in something that will soon be outdated and off the market? Progression and innovation is a taxing thing, with one product comes its model two, with the model two comes the X-10, or something to that affect. As we buy new to replace old, a message is sent to corporate America and that message goes like this: Hello, I am an American and I love the newest and the best and I will drop whatever I am doing, grab my wallet from off my bedroom dresser at the exact minute you release a new product and buy five of them in all the colors you send to the shelves of Best Buy. Of course, corporate America, doing what it does best, sees this bid, this money being thrown at its over-polished, black leather shoes, and raises it. Next month a new model will be on the shelves and, much to the businessmen's delight, more money will be airmailed their way by all too eager consumers.

So what if we stop bidding? What if we withdraw from the game even just a tad? What if we stop buying new to replace outdated? Why can't we be happy with what we have? If consumers stopped raising corporate America's bid, if we could just be content with the cell phone we bought last year or the computer with just a little less memory space, will market prices dip down? Americans hold the power in the economy, my friends.

As in politics, we vote on how things should go. The market is controlled by and voted upon with our money, our green slips of paper, our wants and got-to-haves. We determine how much is made and the retail costs. My dad understands this. He also hates the business world to no end, but that's another issue. He doesn't buy on a whim because he knows what message it sends. He will do anything; believe you me, before he feeds the corporate beasts. "Let them beasts starve," he howls, "let 'em shrivel up, back down to size. No more corporate beasts, we want small little corporate chipmunks. That's what we want. Then, my Nora, then we will have the last laugh!" As I back away from his poised position at the computer, my father raises his hand to the mouse, clicks and the Coot 2 powers up, revs its engine and takes off on yet another familiar adventure.

## Fair Trade and Global Prosperity

For six kilograms of red coffee cherries, for weeks of hard labor, a farmer in an underdeveloped nation will earn eleven cents (Nolan). This farmer and his family are living in extreme poverty alongside over two million others across the globe (Watson). To work so long and hard—planting, watering, weeding, harvesting—and then be compensated with eleven cents for such an effort is not right. I am compelled to ask, why would any man or woman accept such injustice? The answer, I am afraid, offers no more comfort than the injustice itself. Farmers in developing countries have little opportunity to do anything but accept this reality and the accompanying disparity it brings. Powered by consumer demands, international corporations are sustained and prosper much from the disadvantaged farmers and because for the business the profit is high, these corporations find it morally possible to continue doing so. Until action is taken to prove that the betterment of lives is more important than wealth, exploited farmers will continue to suffer at our hands. To begin to correct economical injustices, fair-trading must be exercised by all parties—producers, consumers and the like.

## Economic Alteration: Where We Are and Where We Must Arrive

The allowance of fair trade is essential to the growth of a developing country and the happiness of its people. Without fair trading rights in the world market, farmers will be cemented into unequal relationships and prosper none. In such a narrowing and discriminatory world market, the farmers of developing lands have few allies offering them fair trade rights. We seem, however to my most heartened relief, to be balancing atop the cusp of a wave of global, economic alteration. Farmers of the “south,” a term used by those involved in global economics to speak generally of all underdeveloped nations, are slowly gaining strength and fair trading exposure. Alas, the future of the south’s people is still held firmly in the hand of the “north,” consequentially representing the world’s prosperous and developed nations. The choices are two: the north may decide to fall from the cusp of this wave, following the current to a shore of global justice, equality

and prosperity for all nations, or the north may chose to jump backwards to where we have just come from, back to the north's sound domination over the global economy, southern inferiority and poverty. Fair trade policy, if utilized, adhered to and followed through will give northern society the needed push towards shore rather than away from it, towards betterment of the global society rather than the continued oppression of it. As citizens of one of the most powerful and influential nations in the world, Americans must accept and promote fair trade policy and in doing so relinquish and sacrifice dominance of the world economy over an altar of global justice. If this is done, slowly this global justice will become a reality.

As I understand, fair trade policy currently includes primarily agricultural goods—coffee beans, cocoa, cereal grains, tea leaves—grown by independent, small-scale farmers and usually on family-owned and operated farms (Knapp). Slowly being incorporated into the fair trade market are hand-made commodities such as clothing, fabrics, baskets and pottery. These handcrafts are, like fair trade crops, usually made within a household by family members and in small quantities. Not yet affected by fair trade, however, are factory-produced items within mass industries.

As I see it, fair trade policy incorporates three prime objectives forging the way to global economic equality: 1) create a more direct route from the producer to the consumer to ensure producers are given fair living wages, allowing them to better provide for themselves and their families, 2) formation of long-term relationships between producer and consumer, creating sustainability and communicative alliances and 3) the marketing, labeling and incorporation of fairly traded goods into mainstream consumerism (Knapp 13). With these three fair trade goals guiding society, poverty and the third world as we know it may one day, one day soon, cease to exist, leaving in it's wake a truly globalized, interconnected and cooperative world based on equality, justice, betterment and eventual uninhibited free, fair trade for every nation and for each of its peoples.

#### Free Trade vs. Fair Trade

Currently, the vast majority of the northern controlled global market operates on a presumably "free trade" ideology rather than "fair trade." This free trade system encourages highly competitive, unrestricted access to the world market in which international corporations may trade freely and without penalty from tariffs or other importation taxes (Vander Weyer 22). This seems to be an incredibly advantageous approach to international

trade and possibly the ideal form; however, this can only be so when every country involved is essentially equal in terms of economic standing, power and knowledge. This is certainly not the case in today's world in which a large number of countries are defined to be "third world" and over two billion people are living off less than a dollar each day (Watson). When forced into a free trade economy, developing countries have no chance at survival. "For nations to develop in direct competition with countries with established industries," as in the US, contends George Monbiot, "Is like learning to swim in a torrent...you are likely to be swept away and drowned long before you acquire the necessary expertise" (43). Northern society must reach out a hand to these men and women to keep their heads above the water until their economies gain strength.

As much as the American government would like to deny corporate involvement and persuasion as a prominent presence in the White House, it cannot because it is true. As I see it, we are of a corporate nation and to most policy makers, corporate rights and benefits heavily outweigh those of its people and especially people outside its borders. With that said, it is not a surprise to me to see the US as well as the majority of the rich north as the biggest proponents of the free trade system. Free trade essentially enables international corporations, receiving the go-ahead from government, to enter a developing country with no restrictions, take the raw material it needs (for example: green coffee beans or pure cocoa), bring it back home, process it and sell it for one thousand percent of what it cost to obtain. As Martin Vander Weyer insists, free trade is nothing more than a "Conspiracy of the rich to get richer at the expense of the poor [by] stealing all the developing world's natural resources [ . . . ] and treating its workers like slaves" (22). Free trade essentially benefits only those already with the advantage and, at the same time, strips the already disadvantaged of their natural resources, allowing them little hope for a self-sustaining society and livelihoods.

Under the free trade system and without the use of protection tariffs, taxes or subsidies, developing countries have no ability to protect their growing industries from foreign competition. Come to find out, the US happens to be quite familiar with this concept. George Monbiot tells us how between the years of 1864 and 1913, a period of huge industrial growth and development, the most guarded economy in the world be-



longed to the US. It imposed huge tariffs on nearly every import entering the country in protection of its blooming industries. It was also at this time the US economy experienced blazingly fast industrial growth (43). Then, as Monbiot surmised “Only when these countries [the U.S.] had established technological and commercial superiority did they suddenly discover the virtues of unimpeded competition” or free trade, incorporating this mantra into the country’s very definition (43). While much of the powerful north established their economies in a similar protectionist fashion, they now prohibit such economic growth and industrial protection with free trade laws. For the south, this is ruinous. There seems to be no other way to build up an economy without market protection and barriers and yet convincing the north to make exceptions to free trade, allowing infant economies, as they had once been, to use moderate protection over their state is an almost laughable venture. So what are we to do? How can we help those who struggle day in and day out when our government does not seem to care?

#### Forming a Direct Route from Producer to Consumer

First and foremost, aside from protectionism, the most detrimental effect of the free market is the number of hands it takes to pass one crop of coffee beans, for example, from the pickers palm to your local barista’s. The main issue to address is the many unneeded hands mooching in on workers’ profits. These people are called middlemen whose basic job it is to act as a holding cell for the crop and then to facilitate the exportation to northern importers (Linton, Liou, and Shaw 228). Without middlemen, the laborers would earn a much higher percentage of the profit their crop yields as well as have the ability to communicate with the importer (Nolen). With the middlemen gone, farmers can then sell directly to the importer in the north, opening lines of communication and establishing a voice in the market. In dismissing the middlemen, farmers gain control over exportation transactions. To aide in this transition, farmers are encouraged by fair trade certifying organizations, mainly the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO) to “Organize into cooperatives and obtain and manage their own processing and marketing operations” as a unit to better promote efficiency (228). A cooperative is essentially a group of farmers, seeking out better and more just trading options. Through cooperatives, independent producers can

communicate with their peers, form alliances and discuss current problems, injustices or concerns each may have and then, together, work through them. In addition to encouraging and facilitating the formation of these initiatives, the FLO will oversee the cooperatives and later decide whether or not to include the group of producers into their organization. If so, once admitted the small group is officially protected from exploitation and can then sell their newly labeled “Fairtrade” goods for a fair set price directly to importers (Knapp 13).

This set floor price ensures farmers that the amount they earn will never stray below the cost of production. In other words, it is of no matter whether the stock price for coffee has dropped unreasonably low, with a set minimum price producers in the FLO must never suffer a consequential drop in earnings. Farmers will always profit to some degree from the export no matter what the market price for coffee is (Linton, Liou, and Shaw 229). For example, the current fair trade coffee price is \$1.26 per pound (229; Carter). Those not included into the FLO would earn much less than this rate if the stock value for coffee were to drop. Often times, farmers would be compensated so little for their commodity that continued growing would be made impossible and at times these farmers would be forced to sell their land to survive, leaving them with no form of income and submitting them to even harsher conditions. Acceptance into the FLO is imperative to better living conditions and adequate living wages for farmers of the south, most using their humble profits towards healthcare and schooling for their families. As of now, the FLO has certified 508 cooperatives in more than 50 countries, giving each worker a fair profit and just in these 508 cooperatives alone the certifications have benefited over five million people (“Figures”).

#### Formation of Stable and Communicative Relationships

As well as providing producers with living wages and directly connecting them to exporters, this Fairtrade system allows for a trustworthy relationship to develop between the cooperatives of the south and the consumers of the north (Knapp 13). By trading directly between one another, over time, a mutual trust can be developed. As stated by Don Wells, “Fair trade importers develop dependable, long-term relations with farmers, thereby guaranteeing them [farmers] stability of income” (8). Importers grow to

depend on the cooperative's consumer-demanded, quality commodities; while over time members of the cooperatives receive regular fair pay, a living wage, which before had never been. Both party's interests and needs are accounted for, making this a healthy, beneficial and ethical economic relationship.

As another addition to this dependable, long-term, fair trade relationship, importers often offer low-interest loans and credit to the members of their cooperatives when needed, "Thereby helping them to stay out of debt to usurious local lenders" (Wells 8). This allows farmers to become autarkic and able to sustain the things for which they work. Sustainability is the name of the fair trade game. By omitting the middleman, increasing the value of and committing to a living wage for each farmer, creating direct passage from producer to importer and developing dependable and long-term commitments to each other, producers are freed from dependency, dire poverty and can become self-sustaining contributors to their native markets as well as world's. Fair trade must continue to grow, stretching far beyond its current boundaries to include all impoverished farmers because without free trade standards, farmers will continue to be downcast.

#### Incorporation of Fair Trade Commodities into Northern Economies

This fair trade system's sustainability and cooperation would be discontinued were it not for a rising "Vigorous ethical consumerism and a growing sense of a need to be a more responsible global citizen" (Knapp 126). Consumers are starting to become aware of their economical sway. As stated by Steve Knapp, buying fair trade goods such as coffee, cocoa, soybeans, tea and sugar that are sealed with the recognizable Fairtrade stamp of approval indicates to ethically conscious consumers that the product in their hand can be traced directly back to the grower (13-14). In addition, Knapp concludes, consumers of fairly traded goods are guaranteed its producer was not exploited; his or her labor was compensated and voice heard (12).

Because fair trade farmers are paid a higher wage for their labor, it is not uncommon for fair trade goods to be priced slightly higher than those unfairly traded (Ransom 34-35). However, this difference is not great. The reason for this, as I understand, is because a large part of the farmers' new living wage comes from the money that once went to middlemen. Either

way any increase in commodity price can be a major deterrent for frugal American consumers, who will, to use an appropriate cliché, stop at nothing to buy the best bang for their buck. Perhaps this is the reason “Fair trade remains a niche market, concentrated on an overwhelmingly middle-class consumer base” (“Fair Trade” 36). According to April Linton and her colleagues, in addition to middle class, this niche market tends to include the younger generations, especially consumers between the ages of 25 and 40 who have already established some kind of monetary comfort and are willing to pay slightly more in return for ethical goods. Also, Linton, Liou, and Shaw insist fair trade buyers also tend to be college educated, of a liberal mind and live in the northern part of the US, which was where the American fair trade campaign initiated (231). This relatively small fair trade consumer niche may be beneficial, encouraging a number of lifelong ethically conscious buyers, however, if fair trading is to continue to expand, so must the market for fair trade goods.

#### Fair Trade: An Ethical Movement

By choosing to purchase a fair trade good over one that is not, consumers are voicing their disapproval of corporate exploitation and the unfair treatment of southern farmers. A larger number of Americans must realize that they have the ability to make this powerful statement. How could a person, after hearing of the injustices hawking the producers of the south and then that he or she has the ability to help—buy fair trade—possibly walk away, forget it all and never make an effort to buy fair trade or spread the knowledge of what it promotes. Maybe I put too much faith in people, but I cannot see the possibility of that happening. This is a powerful cause, one that calls for action: ethical grocery shopping, ethical purchasing and education, none of which are overbearing or time consuming. We do them anyway. The call for action is a slight change in ordinary life, something in which we all can take part.

The groundwork is already in place, to use Martin Luther King’s famous metaphor, for a newly constructed “world house” (314), in which all siblings are equal and represented, respected and appreciated. For this house to reach completion, however, brick by brick the walls must be raised. Purchasing fair trade goods will act as these bricks and with each one, a message is sent to our corporate-minded government: We the people of

the US cannot sit back and watch as the world is molded by governments acting to meet the needs of international corporations any longer, not for one more second. It is the people you serve, not big businesses. To prove to you our dissatisfaction we will buy fair trade goods so we know our money is going back to where it belongs and not into the pockets of corporations. As vowed by David Ransom, "Fair trade is not [and cannot be] a brand with passive customers but a movement with active supporters—a relationship of trust between people...offering respect to...producers whom unfair trade routinely humiliates" (35). More importantly society and its government must understand, Ransom asserted, "No one is ever exclusively a producer looking for the highest possible price for what they produce, or a consumer looking for the lowest possible price for what they consume; everyone is always both at the same time, with a common interest in mutual justice" (35). It is beneficial to give this theory some tangibility, as I believe it is an important notion. For example, a man out to buy a new stereo will search for the cheapest price he can find. However, while working at a used car lot selling automobiles, this same man undoubtedly strives to sell his cars for the highest possible price. We yearn to save the most and make the most and consequentially are blinded from the interests of the man on the other side of the table. Our government and its economic policies, drafted to benefit its major corporations, are morally wrong and unjustified to seek out the farmer desperate enough to sell his coffee beans for nearly nothing or the cocoa producer who will do the same, because we are producers too. If England ordered us to sell a new fleet of Ford Mustangs for less than the cost to manufacture, we would be outraged and offended. The difference between the two scenarios is we have the power and leverage to say heck no, we will not give you that deal, whereas the coffee and cocoa farmers by any means do not. It is shameful of our government to appease only corporations, thinking in money and gains that are acquired by hypocritical protectionism, neglecting the needs of others and shameless exploitation.

The United States may be one of the richest countries in the world, but to me, we may be the poorest. In his essay *The World House*, Martin Luther King affirms, "The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich" (324). It is morally exhausting and frustrating to live in a comfortable environment while so many, because of the powerful governments in this world, are unable to do the same. I cannot under-

stand why so many can live happily while this is true. Global poverty is no secret; people know of this pandemic, so how can one ignore the suffering masses? Maybe I just care too much and should become content in the rich, blind ignorance towards others. But then, what good does that do? I would rather think and hurt than disregard and feel nothing at all. Perhaps people ignore poverty because they feel irrelevant up against this international plague, justifying themselves by believing nothing they could ever do would dent the situation. Fair trade and ethically conscious consumerism challenges this apathetic approach because we can do something! Changing our buying practices will not end poverty tomorrow but it will work us toward a tomorrow that will.

Now, with the knowledge in my brain and in yours, my heart can begin to find solace in the fair trade movement. Being conscious of the ethical power that I as a consumer hold, I pledge to buy fair trade goods and honor the promise they hold, the promise of a better, fairer and more peaceful world, in which poverty and economic plight is nothing more than an unhappy memory. I may not live to see the day, but the day will come and I can rest in knowing I played a part in its arrival.

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Lyndsey Whitton  
WRT 150

### Calling All Robots

When thinking of artificial intelligence, the epic film trilogy Star Wars may come to mind. We envision C3PO and R2D2, two droids famous for their role as Luke Skywalker's companions, wandering about, communicating, fixing Luke's ship, and battling. As a child growing up watching the Star Wars trilogies, I could have never fathomed the idea of the walking, talking robots in real life. Now in the twenty-first century, human and machine are working side-by-side. The most up in coming robots in our society today are those in our very own hospitals. Ranging in doctor-patient communication, surgical needs, delivery and storage, and patient care, these medical machines are marvels to the world. As a student pursuing a medical career, I have realized that a vast knowledge of this technology is needed in expectancy that one day I will be working beside one of these robots in the operating room or in the chaotic hallways of a hospital.

Santa Barbara, California-based InTouch Health Incorporated, one of many companies geared towards providing products that use technology, namely robotics, to aid the medical community, has created one of the many robots that roam the squeaky halls of various hospitals, including facilities in the Detroit-area. According to Sheri Hall of USA Today, this five foot six inch two hundred pound mobile robot is named RP-7 (Hall). RP-7 is used by hospitals as a communication device between patients and their doctors. It allows a consistent interaction with the same practitioner, instead of a ranging amount of attendings that will each need explanation of the patient's health history and current health. InTouch Health's creation, having a flat tilt screen monitor as a head, is equipped with wireless telecommunication technology that allows the physician to operate the machine from his or her office or home with a wireless joystick and is able to see and hear his or her patient through rapid response cameras and microphones ("RP-7 System"). InTouch Incorporated states that this link between patient and physician also has the ability to bring up charts and x-rays, and video from medical and digital equipment, such as a digital stethoscope, can be plugged into the RP-7 enabling the doctor to "have remote capabilities" ("RP-7 System"). With the use of this technology, any



physician, including myself, would be able to sit comfortably after a long day of surgeries and talk to patients about their condition; giving them a diagnosis of the situation and the proceeding measures that will be need to taken, without stepping foot out of the office. I could have charts brought up instantly and have every x-ray taken at the tip of my fingers. There would be no need for stacks of patient files overflowing on my desk or the ache and tiredness from standing all day. I would be able to relax and let my feet rest before I continue on to the next surgical procedure.

To keep the robot up to date, Sheri Hall of *USA Today* reports that the makers of RP-7 allow the leasing of these machines for only three thousand dollars a month. This robot, with the ability to travel around at two miles per hour, includes computer software as well as training and technical support states Timothy Wright, vice president of marketing for InTouch (Hall). He then carries on to explain that because of the continuous updating of software, the RP-7 is not for sale by the company (Hall). Even though the cost of each robot a month is expensive, the time available to doctors would be used more efficiently because as the saying goes, time is money.

Where there is not enough time to travel across the country to share one's expertise the RP-7 can help. According to Sarah Karush of *Sci-Tech Today*, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital, where stroke specialists were able to use RP-7's technology to share their expertise with smaller area hospitals, spearheaded the use of these robots in Michigan. Neurosurgeon Dr. Richard Fessler, a helping developer of the stroke network that St. Joseph is a part of, felt that St. Joseph Mercy Oakland opted to use these machines due to their mobility and user-friendly capabilities (Karush). If the facility I was to work at utilized these robots, I would be able to resourcefully use the time I have. As a surgeon, I could make my rounds more effectively and not waste time going from one end of the hospital to the other tracking down patients. The RP-7 would only be a benefit to the hospital. There would be no need to replace healthcare workers with robots or cut down the amount of work hours per employee. Although the RP-7 acts as a middleman between patient and doctor, the communication between the two is more continuous and allows the physician to become more involved in the patient's health. No longer can a patient complain that they never see the same physician and feel neglected, or become frustrated over telling

each new doctor their new condition. This device will better the doctor-patient relationships in the hospital and aid in smoother communication.

Not only is the communication between a physician and his or her patient important, but also the procedures that occur behind the closed doors of the operating room. The da Vinci Surgical System, created by Intuitive Surgical, has benefited the medical community as well as various hospitals around the United States by offering a “helping hand” during surgeries. Consisting of a patient-side cart with four interactive robotic arms that hold specialized instruments and a surgeon’s console that uses a high-tech vision system, Intuitive Surgical’s robotic surgical system allows a surgeon’s job, my future job, to become much easier (“The da Vinci”).

In creating ease for the operating surgeon, Intuitive Surgical’s da Vinci allows a physician to sit and operate from the surgeon’s console using pedals and hand controls that accurately mimic the movements of the surgeon’s hand, wrist, and fingers (“The da Vinci”). These controls then translate into precise movements of the unique surgical EndoWrist instruments and camera attached to the three or four robotic arms of the patient-side cart. Creators of the da Vinci System clarify that these distinctive instruments are specially produced to impersonate the dexterity of a surgeon’s hand and wrist (“The da Vinci”). From there the EndoWrist instruments perform on the operation at hand through a small port, one to two centimeters in size (“The da Vinci”). Controlled by the foot pedals on the console, the camera attached to one of the robotic arms displays a three-dimensional image of the operation area onto the surgeon’s console allowing the doctor a clear view of what he or she is operating on (“The da Vinci”).

This advanced technology and exceptional machinery used in the surgical system will create great benefits for the healthcare industry. Intuitive Surgical states that with use of the da Vinci system the walls of a patient’s body would no longer be needed as leverage, as it would be in an open surgery. This cause of tissue damage during surgery will be eliminated by the robot. Paula Francis and Howard N. Winfield, authors of “Medical Robotics: The Impact on Perioperative Nursing” state that “medical robotics is an ideal technology for minimally invasive surgery procedures that require a very fine dissection” such as on infants and small children. In fact, accord-

ing to Jennifer Barrett of *Newsweek* and Carol Marie Cropper of *Business Week Online*, these robots perform many surgeries including numerous prostatectomy procedures, heart-bypass surgeries, kidney transplants and hysterectomies. Jennifer Barrett's article "Cutting Edge: Robots and Surgery" for *Newsweek* states that nearly seventy thousand robotic procedures are predicted to be performed this year and nearly all prostatectomy operations are carried out by robots. As a surgeon, if I were to perform a prostatectomy or a heart bypass surgery, there is the likely chance that I will be using this Food and Drug Administration approved 1.3 million dollar surgical system.

In addition, the benefits of the da Vinci Surgical System does not stop there. As recorded in Jennifer Barrett's article for *Newsweek*, there is research shown that with use of the machine "patients have less blood loss and pain, low risk of complications, shorter hospital stays and a quicker recovery time than those who have open surgery." Eight-inch gashes become one-inch incisions and a six-week bed rest turns into a one-week mini vacation. For the surgical community, the da Vinci Surgical System would aid in decreasing the tiredness and body exhaustion most doctors experience due to the long hours of standing. It would allow surgeons to eliminate most body fatigue in the operating room. During the endless work hours, I know I would want to conduct an operation or two while seated. For the future of healthcare, I hope that sometime in my career when I open the doors to the operating room I will be able to use the da Vinci Surgical System. This robot would help in my future surgical endeavors and allow for no mistakes to take place that would otherwise happen in an open surgery—ensuring better health and recovery for my patients.

Although the RP-7 and the da Vinci are major players in the medical community, there are other hard working robots that aid in the numerous jobs in hospitals. Joseph Manton, author of "The Next Generation Robots", describes a "Tug", an Aethon product that acts as a courier robot. Costing one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars per month, this one-foot long, half-foot high robot attaches itself to the bottom of a specially designed cart and acts as the delivery boy on hospital floors (Manton). Joseph Manton goes on to explain that a Tug is able to navigate its way around a hospital by using a built in map of the floor plan. By following this programmed map of the hospital, a Tug is able to scoot around the

halls from the storage room to its destination with ease and at the end of the day return back to the robotic station to charge for the night (Manton). A Tug is not the only courier robot that is being used in hospitals today. In Joseph Manton's article he found that California Research's "RoboCart" performs the very same task of delivering as a Tug but it travels in a specific path laid out and marked with sensory tape (Manton). He also states that another robot, the Helpmate, which stands four-feet six-inches tall and weighs six hundred pounds, has a twenty-four by twenty-six inch storage capacity that allows the robot to eliminate the use of an attachable cart, like one used by the Tug (Manton). These delivery robots would allow specific medical supplies and medications to be delivered from one end of the hospital to the other, without requiring the use of a nurse. They would also help reduce overtime costs in hospitals and keep the storage rooms of each floor well stocked allowing an endless amount of supplies to be at my every whim in the operating room.

When the courier robots deliver medications to the hospital pharmacies there is one robot that aids in the shelving, organizing, and retrieving of these prescription medications. Designed by McKesson Corporation Robot-RX travels a fixed path along a centralized drug distribution system retrieving medications by scanning bar codes located on the shelving (Manton). If I were to prescribe need a specific medication, my patient would be able to go to the hospital pharmacy and tell the Robot-RX what they need and it will fill the prescription promptly.

Although courier and pharmaceutical robots aid in the area of supplies, there are many other robots geared towards a different aspect of the hospital, patient care. These robots are able to assist the elderly as well as the chronically ill and monitor a patient's health. Joe Fernandez of E-Health Insider, an online periodical, found many robots that are used for these purposes. Primo Puel, a robotic doll, talks, giggles, and asks to cuddle while closely monitoring the patient's vital statistics and relaying the information back to the caregivers (Fernandez). Fernandez also describes rivals Honda and Mitsubishi as developing their own patient care robots as well. Honda developed the ASIMO robot, which stands 1.3 meters tall and uses sensors, as well as cameras, to ensure the patient's health is okay (Fernandez). ASIMO also helps patients with mobility problems by allowing them to walk, supporting themselves with an arm of the robot (Fernandez). In his

article Fernandez also states that Honda's creation can bring medication and meals directly to the patient. Rival Mitsubishi, created the guardian Wakamaru robot. This robot stands one meter tall and can be used to guard a house, monitoring a patient whenever needed (Fernandez). The Wakamaru robot, with the capability to understand ten thousand words, is able to speak to patients as well as walk and run according to Joe Fernandez's article in E-Health Insider. Patients who are often infected with loneliness and isolation because of their illness are able to use these "care robots" as a friend or "big brother" to avoid these feelings. This would make the lives of any patient including one day, my own, happier and more enjoyable.

These medical machines have helped countless people around the United States, even the world, with minimal invasive surgery, communication between the patient and his or her doctor and the ability for many patients to view technology and robotics as a buddy. As I pursue a future occupation in healthcare, I may one day work with any one of these machines and learn to accept them as one of the employees of the hospital. Although the use of robots in hospitals is not widespread, most every facility who utilizes these machines have nothing but positive feedback. As healthcare is advancing, it is apparent that robotics will be part of its future.

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Lyndsey Whitton

WRT 150

## Allow Me to Mend Your Bones

Passing through the notably squeegeed revolving door I glanced to my left, then my right as I looked for the waiting room. Ahead I noticed a teal and grey sign labeled: WAITING ROOM THIS WAY and my feet began to move forward, jerking my body in that direction. As I rounded a corner, a short, scrawny man wearing baby blue scrubs with pictures of little rubber ducks scattered about, jumped out of the oversized and worn love seat and welcomed me with open arms. This overjoyed man was my close friend, Ben Taylor, a second year resident at an Ohio hospital. I had the opportunity to follow Ben throughout a morning and afternoon to see what a typical day as an orthopedic surgeon was like. After the hugs and how-are-you's we traveled down the tiled halls, stopping periodically at patients' rooms to check up and see how they were doing. Each time, Ben would go into the room and greet the patient with a calm, soothing voice and inquire as to how he or she was doing and if anything was needed, and every time the patient would have a look of content and comfort as he or she listened to his voice. My only hope for this experience was that through my acquaintance I would be able to make sure being a surgeon was the right thing for my future.

Currently enrolled in the Biomedical Science program at Grand Valley State University, I realized that a hands-on experience was the only thing that would aid me in a decision for a potential occupation. *WebMD*, an online physician's dictionary, defines an orthopedic surgeon as "medical doctors, who specialize in bone, muscle, and joint surgery" ("A-Z Health Guide"). Before job shadowing, I had preconceived notions of what surgeons do on a day-to-day basis. My generalizations of the job led me to believe surgery upon surgery was performed, day-to-day, with an occasional check-up on a patient. I was completely taken back when I saw how much more a surgeon does outside of the emergency/trauma room. The U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* states that before surgery begins, surgeons may examine the patient and perform a diagnostic test to search for any abnormalities in the body. After the test is completed, there is a full examination and analysis conducted followed

by an explanation of the results to the patient. With this, a surgeon may counsel a patient on the preventive healthcare needed in dealing with his or her own unique situation ("Physicians"). Not only would I be able to operate on someone, but I would also have the opportunity to act as a primary care physician, in the sense that I would be able to spend one-on-one time with a patient discussing his or her own specific health issue(s). I felt if this was the case, I would be able to form some type of relationship with my patients other than being seen as the person who is cutting and sewing up their body. This is what I wanted. I wanted to be able to hold some sort of connection, even if it may be temporary, with each person I operate on.

As we continued to stroll down the bland halls of white and light beige, Ben led me into an empty conference room where we could both sit down and talk about some of the questions I had for him. Now sitting, I first began to inquire about how he knew the medical community was right for him. "I started to consider medicine back in middle school, but I don't really have a great reason for that. I guess it just was a culmination of an interest in science and dealing with people. I like the hands on aspect of surgery and the often 'carpentry' work we do on people," Ben proclaimed. His expressions lit up as he began to go into even more detail about his passion for his job. Still sitting comfortably in the patterned chairs, he listened intently, not glancing at his watch once as I finished each question. There was no rushing around or scrubbing up for one operation and then suiting up again for another. I could not understand why he held such a relaxed manner. I wanted a job where I would be constantly doing something, perhaps sprinting from one end of the hospital to the other, as seen on the television shows of *ER* and *Grey's Anatomy*. Ben could see I was contemplating something and asked if I had an opinion so far on what the job entailed. I asked if the Ohio area hospitals were as bustling as hospitals many see on television. Ben stated that the big cities such as New York and Los Angeles have a lot more people coming in and out of the hospital doors due to the high population rather than a small rural area with a low person count. So if I were to want a constant jog in my step I would need to move to the bigger cities, which could possibly open more doors of opportunity and allow me to have that busy atmosphere I crave.

After a quick reflection of questions asked, Ben began to tell me his "daily routine." He went on to explain that there really is no set agenda



that he follows day to day. Each month he is on call six to eight times and during this period his duties entail taking care of any orthopedic issue in the emergency room or trauma bay. This can range from a small incision and drainage of fluids to taking an open fracture(s) to the operating room. Besides being on call, Ben must attend conferences and lectures pertaining to the medical community, regularly. In addition, sometime during the month Ben spends half a day in an attending surgeon's office observing the execution of operations as well as assessing problems. On Wednesday afternoons he habitually volunteers his time at the resident clinic caring for the uninsured population (Taylor). Due to being on call at any six to eight times during the month, Ben's work hours are all over the place. According to the *Occupation Outlook Handbook* many surgeons and physicians work sixty or more irregular hours a week ("Physicians"). Ben goes on to explain that there are days where he might only be able to perform six surgeries and have no one in the clinic or emergency room, to no surgeries and fifteen people in the clinic and thirteen people in the ER (Taylor). As he talked of irregular hours, my thought of having a life outside of work was questioned. With irregular hours it would be difficult to go out with friends or start a serious relationship. This brought uncertainty to the appeal of the job and the drive of wanting work hours like this. Although the hours would be different from the "college" lifestyle I live now, it would be a needed adjustment to further my life. Ben was able to start a family including a brand new addition, a baby boy, take back a few beers with his buddies and still deal working with these hours.

We continue to chat as we step out of the conference room into the bright florescent lights, passing rooms full of patients and the nauseating aroma of Lysol and mothballs. We had found an empty, but small, table to finish discussing the pay, hours, and employment outlook for an orthopedic surgeon. "The long, intense hours put into the hospital pays off in the end," Ben begins to say as he adjusts himself, finding a comfortable sitting position. For a second year resident in any program the salary averages to about 42-45K a year with full health and life insurance, food, parking, travel and book expenses, all of which is varying depending on where one trains (Taylor). As stated by the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the total median pay for general attending surgeons ranges from 200K to 300K per year and the outlook for employment has increased due to the advance-

ments in the health sciences and technology (“Physicians”). When thinking about what I wanted to go into I took into consideration the outlook for employment in the field. With the promising employment in the medical community, I was overjoyed. After my residency I could be making a good deal of money for all of my hard work. My effort would be recognized and the money I earn can go to paying off all the cumulated college loans.

Ben could see the excitement in my eyes and quickly sent me back to reality as he reminded me of the competition and hard work I must put forth to become successful. In order to be prepared for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) I must complete various classes that will help me succeed on this rigorous test. Grand Valley State University states that under pre-medical studies one full year of biology, physics, and organic and general chemistry, along with six credits of a writing course compose of the prerequisites for the general education needed (Science). Pre-med adviser, Dan Gerbens, adds that among the basic requirements, a student can take other science related courses to help prepare even more for the MCAT (Gerbens). Ben strongly emphasized that volunteer work is one of the most important things you can do during your undergraduate career along with doing well on exams and classes. Looking back, Ben thought he could have done more volunteering than what he already did, which was spending a half of day a week assisting at a nearby clinic. It allowed him to experience the field before having to commit to it (Taylor).

Following Ben’s lead we start a mini tour of the rest of the hospital to cap off the day, I watched as sickly people hobbled down the hall and the almost corpse like bodies lay motionless in steel framed beds lining the corridor. Each time we passed another patient, Ben continued to talk about the hospital and the experiences until his voice began to fade as thoughts raced through my head. I wanted to fix people, but what if I could not do a thing to help? Just then Ben’s small voice came back into hearing as he voiced the appreciation that many patients show towards him and the other residence and surgeons. Ben stated, “I take the time to explain stuff to my patients and either draw things out for them or show them their x-rays to explain what is going on and the options, including my recommendation for what we need to do. I have been complimented on the time I spend with people.” I believe that part of becoming a doctor is being personable. Doctors deal with all sorts of people on a day-to-day basis and they

must communicate with each effectively. I would want my patients and colleagues to think well of my work and the way I go about dealing with each of my patient's needs. With Ben's words of how his own patients had complemented him, I was looking forward to having my own who felt the same about me.

After observing the tasks and talking to Ben for an afternoon, I came to the conclusion that I would continue my education in the medical program and study to become a surgeon as a future occupation. Yes, it would be many years of schooling, hard work, and mounds of stress but the smile on a patient's face as they are finally able to walk once again will be incomparable and outweighs all the above. As the short tour ends at the front doors, Ben parts with words I will remember forever, "You can do anything if you have enthusiasm. Just believe in yourself, work until your knuckles bleed, and you will come out on top" (Taylor). I know that being a surgeon is for me and now nothing can change my mind.

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## A Part of Something Special

Bits of grease pop and slide from one side of the pan to another. The sound of bacon sizzles on the hot coils of the corner stovetop, and the sweet, gentle voice of mom shouting, "Breakfast is ready!" rings through the walls of the quaint home. Together, we sit down and gossip about the week we all endured and the expectations for the following days to come. I look around the table and realize, although I may not have the same skin color or eye shape as my parents, we are a family, something that I had been yearning to have for a very long time.

For years I had yearned for a mother and father that I could call my own. My young birth mother had abandoned me at the nearby hospital in Seoul, South Korea shortly after giving birth and since that day, the only family known to me were the cheerful, perfect households seen on television and those who surrounded me-- the other orphans and the social workers who looked after us. At the time, those who were with me in that red brick orphanage were my family. Although we each had come from a different mother, we accepted each other and took care of one another. A small, round and balding man from the Korean Social Services would come to the house every now and again to see how we were doing. He would first stop in the office and make small talk in Korean with the social workers, then would proceed outside to where all the children were usually playing, jumping around on the metal jungle gym, swinging on the worn seat of the swings, playing with the numerous spinning tops, or joining in on Noll-ttwigi, Korean see-saw. Out of the thirty or so kids living in the orphanage, he would pull a handful of the children aside and ask questions in both Korean and English to see how each child was improving in both languages, especially English. The workers of the Korean Social Services made a point of teaching each child a basic level of English due to the fact that the agency dealt with adoptions to the United Kingdom and the United States. These kids who I woke up next to each and every day were a part of me as much as my birth mother's blood and every time the small, round, and balding man would come to visit I was faced with the fact that that day I could lose a family member. On his visits the man would occasion-

ally stun one of my brothers or sisters by announcing that they were finally leaving this place we called home. Little did they know, they were about to meet their new and hopefully permanent families. Each now with his or her own mom and dad, each child would be able to take on a real family environment and start a new life, together. I wanted to be one of those kids he told the extraordinary news to. However each and every week I sat there, filled with anxiety and fear; and he would repeatedly pat my head, squat down, and whisper to me, "It will be your turn soon."

The man kept his word. Almost two months after my fifth birthday a new chapter in my life began to evolve. A couple in America wanted to adopt a little South Korean girl to complete their new family. The agency sent a photo of me, along with details pertaining to the correct measures of adoption to their home. Upon seeing my photo they instantly said yes. Suddenly before I knew it, I was shooed to my room to pack my belongings. The fear I once held was now masked by a combination of delight and sorrow as my clothes were neatly folded and placed into a small pink Hello Kitty duffel bag. I was now leaving my only home to go to somewhere unfamiliar. Hopefully, my new home would lead me to a better life. I gave warm, lasting hugs to each and every one of my "brothers and sisters" and awaited that small, round, and balding man to come and take me away.

Somewhere along the hour and a half journey through rolling acreage of lush, green plains and soaring mountains to the airport with the balding man, my stomach began to stir and the fear returned. At that moment it hit me. *Who really were these people? I'm flying hundreds of miles to meet them for the first time and after the introductions I'm supposed to stay there for the rest of my life.* I found myself pulling out a small picture of the couple, and studying it, trying to find some flaw, any flaw that could cause me to return back to where I was from. As we approached the airport, the metal terminal, sunlight glinting off the windows and planes roaring overhead; the palms of my hands began to sweat and tears began to fill my eyes. I slowly wiped away the rolling beads of water and pulled myself together before approaching the gate.

"Hey sweetie, do you have your ticket?" A nice lady in an all navy blue suit asked. The round, balding man shook his head in answer to her question and handed the lady both of our tickets. As if in slow motion, I

watched the ticket exchange hands and I realized the life I had in Korea was just going to be a memory as I started a new chapter in my life.

"Thank you and have a safe flight!" As we boarded the large plane I saw around me that there were not only business men and women but other orphans, like me, on their way to meet their new families. I realized I wasn't the only one who was frightened and excited at the same time. There were others who felt the same way. The plane began to rumble and shake as it left the runway. Sitting in the oversized seat, I began to think of memories from the orphanage, the way I had more brothers and sisters than anyone in the books read to us each Tuesday, and how normal it was for thirty children to sit down for meals of rice, kimchi, and *bolgoli* all at one time. I peered out the window to see the land, buildings and people of what was being left behind until the one day that I would return to see it all again.

The flight seemed like it was never going to end. I became restless and tired of being wedged into a plane with no one but strangers and the gentleman from Korean Social Services. There was a sudden jerk then rattling as the plane hit hard onto the ground. *We must be here*, I thought to myself. Butterflies began to engulf my stomach. The now, tired looking man leaned over and whispered, "Don't worry little one; we are almost there. We just had to make a quick stop so the plane could refuel." As the fluttering began to slow, I knew it would only be a matter of time before it would return. After the plane had refueled, we were back in the air on our way to meet my new family. All I could think about was: *what are they going to be like? Are they going to like me? Am I going to like them? And what happens if I am nothing like what they expected?* I was so nervous and just wanted my new caregivers to take me in as if I was their own.

Finally, the moment had come. The man told me that we were only a few minutes away from our destination. Instantly, I could feel my stomach start to stir once again. Those few minutes turned into an eternity as I squirmed and twisted in apprehension. Abruptly I felt the plane start to descend; shortening my time as an orphan as each second passed.

I slowly lifted my sleeping body out of the indented cushion and walked hand-in-hand with the small, round and balding man down the ramp. The rate of my heart quickened, and beads of sweat started to form on the flattened bridge of my nose. Anxiety began to fill my body as I took each small step closer and closer to the exit. Ahead, I could see a sea of people, all who

looked like the couple in my picture, waiting. In the center of the crowd were two people, a woman with gorgeous brown hair, and a man with a thick mustache. Together they held a vibrant decorative sign screaming WOON JUNG BAE—LYNDSEY. I stood there stunned; my eyes as big as grapefruits. There they were, my soon-to-be parents. As I neared them, their faces became clearer and they realized who I was. They jumped in excitement and welcomed me with open arms. Before I could stop myself, my feet took off, straight into their warm bodies. A sensation no one can describe jolted through my body as they held me. All the memories of days visiting the Seoul Grand Park Zoo to see the tigers and drawing hopeful pictures of our dream family to decorate the main hallway as well as the dreams of having money to buy presents during the holidays started to fade. I no longer was that poor Korean girl without a mother and father; I was now part of a real family, part of something I had longed for a great amount of time. My preconceived notions flew away as did the butterflies, vanishing into the air.

Since that late July day, I count my blessings for what God has provided for me, a family. Yet, I still wonder what my life would have been like if I would not have been adopted. Would I still be in the orphanage waiting for that small, round man to come? I can always wonder what could have been or what could have happened, but I know that I am happy with the life that I am leading now. Being adopted has allowed me to appreciate the memories I had back at the small orphanage in Korea, and the values and importance of the word “family.”

Adam Zahn  
WRT 150

### The Grand Rapids Children's Museum

As I open the door a wave of laughter and screaming pours over me. A young boy runs by me, intent on catching up to his friend. Their parents lag behind looking very tired, like they have been chasing the kids for some time. I walk past the front desk and over to the glass elevator. As I wait for the door to slide open I see more children playing with bubbles, balls, fake food, fake mail, fake money, fake teeth, and a train set. I see kids dressed as bees, penguins, dinosaurs, ballerinas, and firemen. All of this is packed into just one area of the building. This is the Grand Rapids Children's Museum, a place where playing and working are the same thing.

As I step off the elevator onto the second floor, I see a middle aged man playing with some kids in front of the funny mirrors. The propeller on his colorful beanie spins as he turns and walks towards me. John Scheere has more experience with the museum than anyone else on the floor. This is the tenth year the Children's Museum has been open and John has been working, or more appropriately, playing here the whole time. The museum debuted at Woodland mall fifteen years ago, and John was volunteering his time there when he could. With his receding hairline and moustache he appears to be in his mid to early forties. I asked him about his age, but he would only say, "If you ask each of my children, they give a different age, and if you add them all together you get 236."

We wander over to the Lego table where a girl is building something. John asks what it is and she answers without looking up, "It's a tower. It's going to reach the ceiling." The look on her father's face says that they will be leaving in about ten minutes, but he silently lets her continue to play. John takes a seat at a stool and offers to help make it taller. Sure enough, in a few minutes, the father is ready to go and the tower remains far short of the ceiling. She resists leaving at first, but gives in once we assure her that we will save what she was working on for the next time she comes. Years before, John had built a tower that actually did reach the ceiling. He constructed it in sections and hid them from the operations manager who thought the endeavor was unsafe. After three weeks of play and the help of



numerous children, John managed to make a red, white, black, blue, and yellow tower that stretched up almost twenty feet.

I look around at the museum and see bright colors everywhere. The walls are rounded so there are relatively few right angles. From a pragmatic point of view, the building uses space inefficiently. From a child's view, it is an exciting place filled with adventure. Looking over the balcony, you can see down to the front door. As they walk in, you can tell which children have been here before and which ones have not. Those who are first-timers walk in wide eyed, trying to take in everything all at once. They are usually holding their parents hand and wait to be led to the first exhibit. The ones that have been here before run in already heading for their favorite exhibit. Their parents come in shortly after and tell them to slow down and wait for them to pay. The eager children bounce up and down while their parents pay in plastic. "Would you like a stamp on your hand?" the parents ask their impatient child, hoping to distract them for just one more second.

On the wall opposite the entrance is the stage. Kids dress up in costumes and act out plays here. They do their absolute best to hold the attention of their parents. John recalls a time when the museum staff put on a rendition of *Where the Wild Things Are* on the stage. Most were dressed as monsters, and one lucky person got to play Max, but John had a special part. With a pizza box on his head and breadsticks for arms, John played the role of Max's dinner. He only had to remember a single line for the play. "Max! I'm so glad you're back; I missed you so much."

Unfortunately, there is more to being a floor manager than just playing. Every day John cleans messes, deals with disgruntled customers, and keeps track of the floor staff. He greets field trips, finds lost children, finds lost parents, prepares activities, and writes up break schedules. He carries a portable phone while working so that he can be reached by anyone at any time. The next time it rings, there are hundreds of things that the person could be asking for, and he never knows what one will be next. Despite the constant requests for some obscure bit of information or a task that involves being in too many places at once, John appears remarkably happy. Given the slightest chance, he will complain about the many difficulties of working at the Children's Museum, but his demeanor assures everyone that he is truly happy with what he does.

John does not claim that he works but that he plays. It seems that the difference between the two is just a state of mind. Having fun in any given situation is really more about how you think about your actions than what those actions are. Many parents that come into the museum seem to believe that play is a specific set of motions and that by going through these motions their child will be happy. These parents say things like, "You are playing with that the wrong way. You need to do it like this." Fortunately, most of the children already know, and those who forgot have people like John to remind them, that play is about your attitude toward the situation, and not what that situation actually is.

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WRT 150

### Mixing Methods

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire distinguishes between teaching through lecture, which he calls the banking method, and teaching through dialogue, which he calls the problem posing method. He claims that the problem posing method is superior to the banking method which he advocates eliminating. In his bias for one teaching method over another, Freire modeled education as consisting of only two methods. This model ignores that the problem posing and banking methods are extremes on a continuum of different teaching styles, all of which have value in the correct context. An Indonesian martial art called Pencak Silat incorporates these different teaching styles in an effort to provide the best learning experience for students.

Paulo Freire's main argument is that "Education is suffering from narration sickness" as a result of the banking method of education. "Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher." Freire focuses on the negative aspects of learning through memorization, the banking method as he calls it, and the benefits of learning through discussion, which he calls the problem posing method. He says that by having a dialogue amongst equals, the teacher and the student "become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow." According to him, arguments based on authority cannot work in the problem posing method because the students are obligated to question their instructors. This leads to rational discussions that are based on reality and not the opinions or biases of the teacher.

In Pencak Silat, the terms used for what Freire refers to as the banking method and the problem posing method are soft work and hard work, respectively. Soft work is characterized by its lack of resistance. At this level of training, there is nothing that prevents the student from performing correctly other than their internal limitations. According to Guru Mushtaq Ali al Ansari, head instructor of Pencak Silat Zulfikari and practitioner of various martial arts for over forty years, soft work helps to train sensitivity, flow, relaxation and precision of movement. The main limiting factor here

is memory. In Silat, the student must remember the correct movements; in traditional education, the student must remember dates, formulas and quotes. Hard work, by comparison, has as much resistance as possible. The student's partner does everything he can to prevent the student from performing his technique correctly. This includes tensing up, going limp, hitting, kicking, and generally doing whatever the student is not expecting. In traditional education, this would be similar to having a debate. This type of work builds toughness and endurance in the student, as well as provides a means for reality testing. Reality testing is important because what can be done with soft work may not work during hard work without modification and refinement (al Ansari). In between the extremes of soft and hard work, there exist many different levels of resistance.

Each learning tool used in Silat exists somewhere on the continuum of soft work to hard work. The most extreme example of soft work is the juru. Jurus are flowing chains of movements that are practiced individually. They contain a collection of motions that can be applied in various different situations. The correctness of a juru is decided by a guru, or teacher, who evaluates the student's form. In a way, it is as though they are a Platonic form, an abstract concept that we can only try to replicate.

The next level up on the scale of soft work and hard work is static drills, which are performed with minimal movement and at a very slow speed. These drills are practiced with a passive opponent to learn an application of motion from the juru. One possible static drill could start with one player extending their arm to strike, and the other player responding with a block or parry. The attacking player will only extend and retract their arm, making no attempt to disrupt the form of their partner. Once the student can perform the technique adequately, he moves on to a flow drill.

Flow drills are similar to static drills in that they still are performed slowly and with the intent to practice a specific technique or techniques. The main difference is that flow drills have an increasingly resistant opponent and allow for greater variation of motion with some experimentation. To continue with the example above, when the attacker strikes, he may change the angle that the punch comes at, step to the side at an unexpected time, or do anything else that he feels is appropriate. The defender must learn to tweak his technique and recognize the ways that the technique makes him vulnerable.

The last type of drill is the slipping drill. In a slipping drill, any technique may be used at any time and the goal of the student is simply to hit his partner and not get hit himself. The key to a slipping drill is that both students move at the same speed. They start slowly, around one eighth speed, and move progressively faster as their skill increases. Initially they will take turns attacking and defending, but that fades away at higher levels. Once a student has become advanced enough he can move onto free sparring, the extreme example of hard work. Well trained Silat players should be able to spar at full speed without any risk of injuring one another. Before a student can be expected to have the skill and self control to engage in sparring, he must have months or years of practice with the prior learning tools.

To see how this applies to banking or problem posing methods, imagine the jurus as a lecture. While practicing jurus, the students' goal is to mimic the guru to whatever degree he can. The guru shows the students the juru the same way a teacher would make a speech to a group of students. He goes through the material exactly the same way each time, and the students must memorize the material word for word, move for move. Much like it is not an option for a student to decide in what order to recite the Gettysburg Address, it is not an option for them to decide in what order the jurus should be practiced. This may not teach the student to write great speeches, or be a proficient fighter, but it will teach them the basic elements of these things that they must first learn.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we can model sparring as a dialogue. Sparring, the physical dialogue, is the best example of problem posing education in Silat in that "Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge" (Freire). Verbal argument and debate challenge students mentally because they must think quickly and find solutions to the problems in their position. Sparring is similar in that students are challenged to respond quickly to threats that their opponent puts forward. A punch or a kick could be compared to bringing up a piece of evidence to support your argument. A block or parry is similar to pointing out the fallacies in an opponent's statements. At this stage in the learning process, the teacher and the student disappear and become partners who teach each other. This may sound like an enjoyable

learning experience, but it should be clear that full contact free sparring can be very painful if the student is not ready. For this reason, Silat bridges the extremes of banking and problem posing methods with other learning tools.

Static, flow, and slipping drills close gap between soft work and hard work by progressively blending characteristics of each other. The distinction between different types of drill is very fuzzy in practice. During class, a static drill often becomes more like a flow drill and a flow drill often becomes more like a slipping drill. This steady increase of resistance eases the student into more and more difficult situations and trains the student “to work past the fear response.” If a student is pushed to fast, they will become afraid, tense up, and move without control. By advancing a student slow enough, they learn to move closer to full speed without becoming rigid or panicked. How quickly a student can be advanced to moving at full speed will vary from person to person and adds another challenge to a teacher.

Not only are gurus required to know the material and be able to convey it in multiple ways, but they must also know to advance the students at the proper pace. Advancing a student to a new level of learning too soon will inevitably result in failure. That failure may take the form of the student injuring his partner, the student being injured by his partner, or the student injuring himself. At best, the student will simply be unable to perform the requested action which leads to feelings of inadequacy. Advancing a student too slowly can discourage learning just as easily as advancing them too quickly. If a student is never challenged, he may believe that his guru is holding him back. This leads to the student either trying to advance on his own, which can be dangerous, or becoming apathetic and giving up. These problems force gurus to have a great understanding of their student’s abilities so that they will use the proper teaching tools at the proper time. One student may take months to be able to perform a slipping drill without becoming panicked while another new student may be ready for slipping drills in a few weeks.

Of course, not all martial arts or all instructors follow this sort of a progression. Some martial arts try to teach only through the banking or problem posing methods of education. Some forms of karate that rely heavily on kata work, which is comparable to jurus, claim that the student learns to apply technique from the kata by having an imaginary opponent.

According to this philosophy, the student can improve their technique by visualizing an opponent and using their technique on that opponent. The problem with this is that the student will likely not have an accurate understanding of the ways that people outside their school of martial arts will move. This leads to an overconfidence of ability and a lack of understanding of what it is like to work with a resisting opponent (al Ansari).

Martial arts that exclusively use the problem posing method might do so because they do not believe that soft work is realistic, and so should not be used at all. In a martial art using only the problem posing method there would be no room for theory. Any possible technique would only be considered valid if its application could be demonstrated at full force with an unwilling opponent. Still, just because a technique can work at full force, that does not mean that it must be practiced that way. Many techniques, such as chokes and joint locks, could severely injure students if they were practiced at full force. Practicing in such a way tends to cause students to become habitually fearful and tense (al Ansari). Only through a careful balance can an instructor avoid the pitfalls of both extremes.

By properly blending banking and problem posing styles of teaching together, the student can get the best of both worlds. First, the student's physical wellbeing will be assured since he will not be advanced past the point where there is a great risk of injury. Second, he will be taught the body awareness and sensitivity that come with practicing slowly. Third, the student will learn how to apply the skills that he has banked in a way that will assure him that they can work in the real world.

Perhaps the best part about blending the problem posing and banking methods is the versatility. There is no one perfect method for teaching that will work with all students. The best teacher is one who is able to recognize the abilities and needs of her students and craft the class to meet their needs. Modeling the lesson plan as a spectrum of different teaching methods is one way to do this. By having multiple teaching tools, the teacher can focus on what will be most conducive to each student's learning.

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## Clean Coal

In the article “Improved Technologies Make Coal a Clean Fuel,” Darrin Gunkel advocates the increased usage of coal for electricity generation. He claims that the negative side effects of doing so can be reduced to a negligible level through newer and better technologies. After briefly downplaying the negative effects of using coal, he provides an exaggerated, inaccurate account of the benefits of “clean coal” technologies. This paper will break down Gunkel’s argument with a focus on carbon, sulfur, and nitrogen oxides and then compare the benefits of coal with those of wind power.

Perhaps the greatest problem with Gunkel’s argument is the belief that such a thing as “clean coal” could exist. Coal, as it is mined from the earth, contains sulfur, nitrogen, carbon, and mercury. Burning coal releases a tremendous amount of mercury into the atmosphere, causing an increase in birth defects in neighborhoods downwind of coal fired plants. Sulfur, nitrogen and carbon all combine with oxygen in the atmosphere to produce a variety of different pollutants. Sulfur and nitrogen oxides produce acid rain and smog (Fields A890). They also cause people to suffer from more respiratory illness in areas that burn lots of coal (Pope, Bates, and Raizenne 472). Carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming according to the consensus of the scientific community (Oreskes 1686). Coal is an inherently dirty fuel that pollutes the environment and damages communities.

Gunkel would prefer to not mention how dirty coal really is. This is made clear by the way he describes the above elements. “Sulfur is a yellowish substance that exists in tiny amounts in coal.” “Nitrogen is the most common part of the air we breathe.” “All living things—even people—are made up of carbon.” The language he uses is designed to convince the reader that these elements are mostly harmless, everyday substances. He mentions acid rain and smog, but he omits the many health problems and damage to the environment that they cause. Although his presentation of the argument is unbalanced, he admittedly does a fine job of explaining the ways in which coal can be improved.



One method to reduce the amount of sulfur in the coal that Gunkel mentions is to grind the coal and wash it in water. The coal floats on top while the large globs of sulfur, in the form of pyritic sulfur, sink to the bottom. Mixing limestone in with the coal as it burns removes sulfur from the air and creates calcium sulfite and calcium sulfate. These solids can then be collected and reprocessed to form more limestone, for reuse, and sulfuric acid, which can be sold to other industries (Gunkel).

Gunkel continues by describing how, unlike sulfur, nitrogen oxides are mostly not caused by nitrogen in the coal, but by heating the nitrogen in the air. Nitrogen from the atmosphere, which naturally exists in a benign state, and some nitrogen from the coal, breaks its chemical bonds and reforms with oxygen when it reaches very high temperatures. The result is a family of noxious pollutants, commonly referred to as  $\text{NO}_x$ . The problem with this is that in order to produce less  $\text{NO}_x$ , boilers must burn at a lower temperature. Fluidized bed systems are one attempt to create a low temperature coal furnace. In a fluidized bed system, ground up coal particulate is suspended in the air by an updraft as it enters the combustion chamber. Because the coal is very fine and exposed on all sides, it burns faster and at a lower temperature. These lower temperatures significantly reduce the amount of  $\text{NO}_x$  produced (Gunkel).

There is a strong argument that these new technologies are an improvement on a bad situation, but they do not solve the root problems. Sulfur and nitrogen oxides are still being released into the atmosphere. As energy demands increase, more coal will need to be burned, which will cancel out the benefits of the technology. Plus, each technology that is used to clean the coal adds additional costs. Using a fluidized bed combustion system and washing the coal will make the coal cleaner, but will also make burning coal more expensive, thereby reducing its profitability (Newton). And even with the reduced releases of sulfur oxides and  $\text{NO}_x$ , coal still has unresolved issues with carbon dioxide.

In his article, Gunkel attempts to assure the reader that coal will not have an impact on carbon dioxide by claiming, "We also have new technologies that cut back on the release of carbon dioxide by burning coal more efficiently." He argues that if the energy efficiency of burning coal improves, less carbon dioxide will be released. Of course, this does not really stop carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere, it just delays

the process. The main element within coal is carbon. When coal burns, the carbon breaks its bonds and merges with oxygen to create carbon dioxide, releasing heat in the process. This can not be avoided. When it is incinerated, the majority of coal's weight converts from solid carbon into a greenhouse gas. This poses a significant hazard to global climate change.

Gunkel admits that, "Many scientists believe [carbon dioxide] is causing the earth's temperature to rise, and this warming could be altering the earth's climate," but this is still an understatement. A search of the Institute for Scientific Information's database from 1993 to 2003 found 928 articles with the keywords "climate change." Of these 928 scientific, peer reviewed, published papers, not a single one took the position that global climate change was unrelated to human influence on greenhouse gasses (Oreskes 1686). This is not just "many" scientists. This is a consensus by all scientists who actively run experiments and publish results in the field of climate change. With unanimous agreement amongst the specialists, it seems that less investment should be made in methods that can not avoid releasing greenhouse gasses and continuing global climate change. Instead, more funding should be put into sustainable technology that will not release carbon dioxide or other pollutants.

One such clean technology is wind power. Wind power produces no hazardous byproducts and has an unlimited supply. Gunkel was happy to mention that, "There is still enough coal underground in this country to provide energy for the next 200 to 300 years." What he does not say is that there is enough wind in this country to power it forever. Not only is it abundant, it can compete on with other forms of energy generation. According to Mark Jacobson, given typical building and operating costs and typical wind conditions in much of the United States, large wind turbines can generate electricity for between 3 and 4 cents per kilowatt hour (1438). The cost of producing energy from coal is approximately 3.5 to 4 cents per kilowatt hour. Jacobson says that if all factors are counted, such as the rising costs of health care because of air pollution and the damage to the environment, coal costs between 5.5 and 8.3 cents per kilowatt hour. It is not surprising that Gunkel does not mention the comparable costs of wind power anywhere in his article.

Wind power does not create carbon dioxide. It does not release sulfur oxides, mercury, or NO<sub>x</sub> into the environment. All technological improve-

ments in the area of wind power will increase its benefits, while improvements in coal technology will need to focus on solving its problems. The argument to invest in coal as a source of electricity is extremely weak. "Improved Technologies Make Coal a Clean Fuel" contains many arguments that are based off incomplete information. Only by advancing truly clean technology will we ever be able to solve the problems that we face with energy demands and environmental safety.

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Ariana Hendrix  
WRT 150

### A Haunted Memory

“Ernnern das ist villeichtdie qualvollste Art des Vegessens und  
villeicht die freundlichste Art der Linderung dieser Qual.”

“Remembering, that is perhaps the most painful way of forgetting  
and perhaps the most gentle way of soothing that pain.”  
-Erich Fried (qtd. in Marcuse)

As the bus slowed down and turned onto a narrow road surrounded by tall pine trees, I reached my hand up and wiped the steam from the window. Through the dewy glass, I could see a long, low white building ahead, blurry and ghostlike through the fog and drizzle. The bus stopped and the other dozen or so passengers and I stood up, and in a single file line made our way down the steps and onto the puddle-drenched parking lot, where drowning worms lay bloated and motionless. As we walked uneasily and silently through the dense fog toward the entrance, the buildings ominously began to come into focus, like phantoms rising from dead. And suddenly, there it was. This was not an amusement park or shopping center, or any kind of tourist attraction that people visit seeking enjoyment. There was nothing fun or aesthetically pleasing about this. I stared ahead at the concrete fence topped with jagged, tangled barbed wire silhouetted against the dark gray sky, and suddenly I felt as if something thick and cold was sliding down my throat, landing heavily in my stomach. People lived here, suffered here, and died horrific deaths here. This was a real life German Nazi concentration camp. This was Dachau.

I was sixteen years old, and was visiting Europe for the first time. At sixteen, I was at what you could call the height of my “teenagedom.” I was on a trip with my dance company, and, traveling with a large group of teenage girls and their equally gossipy mothers, we’d been traveling, performing, and shopping all over Austria for the past week. The side trip to Dachau actually hadn’t even been on our itinerary. We were supposed to tour Munich that day and do...yes, more shopping. But my mother and my friend’s mom decided that we needed to do something that would leave

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*Ariana wrote her portfolio in the class of Professor Arlene Hecksel. Ariana was also the first-place winner (freshman category) in the 2007 Oldenburg Writing Contest.*

us a little more cultured, so they arranged to have a bus go to the concentration camp for the day. I, of course, was thrilled to go, partly because I enjoy history and had always had a morbid fascination with the Holocaust, and partly because I was running out of money. So, there I stood, with the aggressively condescending fence separating me from what I would soon discover was the silent, haunting skeleton of what was once hell on earth.

Ironically, the town of Dachau, which is located about fifteen kilometers outside of Munich was known, previously to 1933, as a picturesque 1,200 year-old medieval town with a rich culture and history (Feig 43; Marcuse 15). After 1933, the town was given a new identity. Now, when someone mentions “Dachau,” they are likely not to think of the scenic Bavarian village, but of the preserved Nazi concentration camp that the town houses, where thousands of prisoners were murdered during the years of the Holocaust, and which now attracts thousands of visitors every year. In the decades following the camp’s liberation in April of 1945 (*Dachau Concentration*), efforts were made by officials to avert visitors from going to the camp, but in 1965 the Bavarian government established a museum on the site (Feig 44). In 2001 the redesigned memorial site and updated museum that exist today were completed in an effort to respect and remember those who suffered and died there, as well as educate and enlighten those who visit (Marcuse 7).

Inside the gates was a white, governmental-looking building, in front of which stood a menacing black iron sculpture, an artistic approach to a pile of tangled skeletons. The rain pounded harder onto the gravel ground, and, seeking shelter, our small group headed for the white building. We stepped through the doors, and despite the fact that the inside of the building, clearly a museum, was quite crowded, there was an eerie silence. No one was talking, and the only sounds were of people’s feet shuffling around on the polished wood floor and of the rain drumming on the roof above.

Dachau was the first “official” concentration camp during the reign of the Socialist Party. According to Konnilyn Feig, author of *Hitler’s Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness*, at Dachau “the SS created the models of incarceration, organizational structure, codes and policies, medical experimentation, and officer/guard training that served as the basis” for the other camps that would follow (48). The camp was opened on March 22, 1933 about three kilometers from the town of Dachau, Germany, on a site

that had previously been a factory (Zamecnik 26). Being the first camp established, Dachau was in a way a trial camp, an example of the “ideal” concentration camp; its design and methods were replicated by the camps that would follow it. One of the most horrifying specifics that I learned was the extensive medical experiments that were performed on prisoners (Feig 47). At the museum I watched a short documentary about the severely inhumane research performed by scientists and doctors who traveled to the camp for these investigations. Included were research on malaria, in which the disease was studied by infecting some 1,100 prisoners with malaria and studying their symptoms (Zamecnik 255). Another was the tortuous high-altitude experiments. With need for more advanced information on aeronautical medicine due to the large amount of aircraft being used by the Germans during World War II, prisoners were put under conditions of high-altitudes, and their body’s reactions, which often resulted in death, were studied (257). Other experiments included the effects of hypothermia, hepatitis, and sea-water drinking experiments, which provided the scientists information on preventing fatal thirst in airmen and sailors stranded at sea (267, 273, 280).

Another way in which prisoners were used was for the demolition of the factory that had previously stood on the grounds and construction of buildings for the camp. So, disturbingly, the prisoners were actually building the way to their own deaths. Although Dachau opened in 1933, it was not actually completed until August of 1938, by the forced labor of prisoners. They were also utilized as slaves in building roads, draining marshes, and working in gravel pits (“Dachau”). And through all of this, along with severe malnutrition and starvation, horrific diseases that spread throughout the camp, suicide, and physical and psychological torture of prisoners by the SS guards, of the 225,000 prisoners who came to Dachau between 1933 and 1945, a recorded 32,099 perished (Zamecnik 377). However, due to poor record keeping by apathetic guards, it is likely that the total number of deaths was closer to 50,000: from 1942 onward the deaths of Jewish people were not recorded, and from 1943 the deaths of Russians and Poles were not recorded either (Feig 47; Zamecnik 377).

As I roamed through the museum, gaping at the ghastly photos and reading the headings and documents describing grisly details of the camp’s history, I was sickened with nausea and heartache at the gruesome reality of

it all, but was too compelled to stop looking. I was fascinated; I think that perhaps I learned more about this concentration camp and about the Holocaust in general in one afternoon at this museum than I would have in a semester-long class on the topic. If only young people were given more opportunities like this one, we might perhaps be given a greater meaning and relevance to the importance of understanding history and how it so directly affects our present and future. For instance, I had generally assumed that it was mainly just European Jews who were sent to concentration camps to be exterminated as part of Adolf Hitler's "Final Solution" to eradicate those who were not of the Arian race. But during my time at Dachau, I was intrigued and surprised to learn that this camp, as well as many of the others, was filled with other "undesirables" such as homosexuals, the physically and mentally disabled, Polish citizens, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet POWs, and others who didn't "fit in" in society (*Dachau Concentration*). In today's world, the issues involving prejudices and racism in our society are constantly addressed, but from my experience they have usually only involved people being orally or suggestively ridiculed. But at this death camp, those who were deemed "different" weren't just discriminated against. They were innocent people who were actually tortured, starved, made to endure disease and severe depression, experimented on, and often murdered merely because of their "differences." The Holocaust was, in a sense, the ultimate example of racism, and my experience at Dachau, learning of these "outsiders" who faced such terror because of their eccentricities or even simply their nationality, has made me vastly more aware of the potentially disastrous effects that can be caused by discrimination, a newfound awareness that I might not have ever made had I not, with all of my senses, physically experienced the disgusting scars of this evil.

After a few hours of reading appalling statistics and gawking at heart-breaking photographs, films, and relics from the camp, through the hazed windows I could see that the rain had finally let up, and we ventured out onto the grounds of the camp. I was told that the building that we had just been in was called the "Jourhaus," which was the entrance and exit to the camp, and included the headquarters of the SS, the bathhouse for prisoners, the "shunt room," (where the admissions processes occurred), and the

bunker, which was the camp prison, used to punish (*Dachau Concentration*). Today, the Jourhaus has been completely renovated and serves as the memorial museum. What instantly made me uncomfortable about the camp as a whole was its disturbing sterility. The damp grass was cut perfectly level, all of the buildings were freshly whitewashed, and there wasn't a single piece of litter or other blemish anywhere on the ground. The cleanliness and perfection of it all seemed so strange and almost mocking after hours of looking at photographs of the camp as a filthy, disease-ridden, corpse-littered camp that probably had emitted an unimaginable stench and an atmosphere of utter agony and constant terror.

To add to the bizarre tidiness, the long, gravel road that cut through the center of the camp was lined perfectly on both sides by the rectangular-shaped leveled foundations where thirty-two barracks once stood (Marcuse 9). The original barracks, which served as the prisoners' the living and sleeping quarters, were torn down in 1965 along with a few other buildings. However, as part of the memorial site, two barracks were reconstructed in their original design (4). We wandered inside one of these long, wooden buildings, which contained narrow bunk beds stacked three high, each bed only centimeters from the one next to it. I was told by the British woman's voice speaking in my ear (we wore headphones from the museum in place of having a tour guide as we explored the grounds) that while most of the barracks housed prisoners, organized into buildings by usually by nationality, two of them served as infirmaries, one was a camp office (9), and another was a morgue, where the dead were housed before being taken to the crematorium (10).

Beyond where the rows of barracks once stood were the crematorium grounds, including a brick building with a large chimney, blackened at the top from the smoke that once poured from it. We went through an open door, and entered into a gray, cement room. At one end of the windowless square was what looked like a shower-head. But it wasn't water that was meant to come out of it. We were inside a gas chamber. I was relieved, however, to read a sign on the wall that stated that the gas chamber was never used. In fact, Dachau was the only camp whose gas chamber was not used (Zamecnik 352). We left the room and walked back outside, entering again through a different door. Inside was an open area. In the center stood two large ovens (Marcuse 170), their doors propped open. Long, tarnished,



human-sized metal stretchers stuck out of the brick openings. Due to the rapid rate of fatalities at the camp, this crematorium was used often to destroy the bodies so that, lest the people of Germany know the truth, the evidence of the mass genocide occurring here was destroyed (Zamecnik 352). The crematorium is one of the only original structures, and it was at this moment, standing in the exact same place where all of this brutality and gruesomeness had occurred only a few decades ago, that I was stuck with the raw, stinging truth of it all. My mind wandered back to a photo I had seen only minutes earlier at the museum of this very room, which showed an enormous heap of stiff, pale, and skeleton-thin corpses dressed in nothing but make-shift loincloths, piled in the very place where I currently stood. Suddenly the dumbfounded numbness that had been concealing my sickened repulsion relinquished as if I had been plummeted into a pool of icy water. The hairs rose on every inch of my skin, my entire body became chilled, and a lump rose in my throat, followed by tears that began to well in my eyes. The hot tears were not of grief, but of intense anger that this atrocity had been allowed to occur. As my presence in this cold, disgustingly clean building began to overwhelm me I swear that I could smell the putrid scent of decomposition, charred flesh, and chimney smoke in the air and hear the piercing, almost unworldly screams of pain and suffering echoing across the flat grounds of the camp. I suddenly couldn't breathe, and gave my mother a look that told her I had to get out. I stepped outside and gulped in the fresh, dewy air, as the suffocating weight that had been crushing my lungs began to lift off of my chest.

We made our last stop at the memorial stone that stood a few yards from the crematorium, next to which was a surprisingly charming creek, whose babbling water seemed like inappropriate laughter at a funeral. After a quick look in the museum's bookstore, we made our way back to the parking lot where the bus idled, waiting for our return. I collapsed into the seat and leaned my forehead against the window, watching the gates of the camp grow smaller and finally disappear as the bus backed out and drove away.

Although my experience at Dachau was one of the most emotionally excruciating and exhausting days of my life, I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to see the camp and grow from it. While I cannot say that having this one experience was responsible for the maturity and under-

standing I have gained since the age of sixteen, I think that a large amount of my naïveté was lost in that one day. Since my tour of the concentration camp and having been taught about the tragedies that occurred there, some of my perspectives have been challenged and changed. Not only do I treat issues involving racism and discrimination with much more seriousness, but, having witnessed first-hand an example of the horrific cruelties of the past, I have become more aware and concerned about the wide-ranging human suffering and modern genocides in the world today. I have also become a strong believer in the immense importance of keeping history, whether horribly saddening or wonderfully exciting, alive and in the minds of people now, especially in those of my generation. I know that if I had simply read a book about Dachau, I would have learned the same facts, seen the same pictures, and been shocked by the same statistics. But even though I would have been saddened, I would have put the book down and gone on with my life, without being truly affected by its meaning as I have by actually physically immersing myself in the history of Dachau.

There were approximately 30,000 survivors upon liberation by the U.S. Army on April 28, 1945, and I have such an immense respect for these survivors and the German government for persisting to ensure that the camp be preserved and the memorial site and museum be established (Feig 47; *Dachau Concentration*). It would have been easier, and probably a lot less painful, to simply bulldoze the camp, thereby demolishing the memory of the innocent, brave souls who perished there after enduring so much evil. But by creating Dachau as it is today, out of something so terribly negative has come something positive- a place for visitors to find individual growth and understanding, to make discoveries about the past, and to apply these messages to the present and the future, in hopes that someday events as like the Holocaust will cease to occur, and that it will forever remain only as a terrible memory.

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## Memoirs of a Dancer

If you ask the average five-year old girl what she'd like to be when she grows up, she's likely to say that she dreams of becoming a ballerina. And why wouldn't she? Ballet is the ultimate illustration of feminine beauty and intrigue. The ruffled, sparkling costumes that accentuate everything that is female, the fancy hair and make-up, the delicate grace and poise of a dancer, and of course the overabundance of the color pink. And because of this early fascination with ballet, many young girls decide to take creative movement and ballet classes, wishing to someday twirl across the stage on pointe in a beautiful tutu, just like their treasured "Ballerina Barbies." But it isn't long before these young girls are disappointed to find that the idea of ballet has lost its magical quality, that a five-year old attention span cannot handle a weekly hour of slow piano music and a seemingly ancient, wrinkled teacher demanding that they memorize difficult French words that name the roughly 200 ballet steps (Archetti). Especially disappointing is when they discover that without signing themselves over to a life of dance, they probably won't go very far. In other words, it's a world a lot less glamorous and a lot more demanding than the delightful illustration on the inside of Barbie's box. So, with the loss of inspiration, it is easy to become discouraged enough to throw away the leather ballet slippers and leotards for something more exciting and rewarding, something like more like sports.

Maybe I should have done that. Maybe these were the smart girls. It would have saved me hours that probably add up to years of my life, my parents would have been saved thousands of dollars, and I would have been spared the heartaches and harmful psychological effects that have come as a result of the obsession that plagues every serious ballet dancer: the impossible goal of absolute perfection.

In the beginning, ballet really was a five-year old girl's dream come true. I made lots of friends, I got to wear a beautiful white tutu in my very first dance concert, and at home I practically lived in my ballet slippers, always prancing and twirling around the house, beaming with pride as I showed my parents the new steps I'd learned in class. As with most young dancers,

at about the age of eight was when I decided that I truly wanted to pursue this hobby, so I began signing up for multiple classes and studying different disciplines such as tap and jazz. And it was at around the age of ten that the first winds of the hurricane to follow began to blow.

This was the year that I “went on pointe,” that is, I was fitted for my first pair of pointe shoes and learned to dance in them, an overwhelmingly thrilling milestone for a ballet dancer. I also joined a youth ballet company, performing with them in a tour of elementary schools and a full-length ballet, and I attended a two-week session at a fine arts camp, a miserable experience to say the least. But just as things were getting serious for my life as a dancer, things were also getting serious in the ways of cliques and my desire for acceptance at school. I could no longer relate with many of my girlfriends, who had taken the sports route. It seemed that all of the “cool kids” were into athletics, not the fine arts, and I desperately wanted to be included in their activities. I constantly felt excluded and insufficient when I had to respond, “No, I can’t, I have dance class,” when invited to attend an athletic or other school event. And the other kids just didn’t understand what it was that I was doing all the time. I was teased for not playing a “real sport,” and was constantly having to defend the fact that dance is extremely physically rigorous. And this didn’t stop at elementary school; it followed me all the way to high school. It was junior high was the worst however, for this was the age when my entire life revolved around fitting in and being accepted. I idolized the popular girls, trying to dress like them and be like them in every way. But there was one dramatic handicap that prevented me from ever being friends with them. Even though I wore the athletic name brand clothes and shoes that they did, I knew that would never play sports, nor did I possess the abilities or enthusiasm involving athletics, which was their whole livelihood. Always too busy with dance classes and rehearsals, I didn’t have the time to even attend a game let alone play on a team, leaving me to be a desperate and miserable unknown, predictably damaging to my already delicate self-esteem.

At this point in time, all of the girls in my dance classes, myself included, still had the signature pre-pubescent stick-like arms and legs, a tiny waist, flat chest, flawless skin, and baby-soft curls. But when I reached the age of twelve, my body began to change. It is a natural, healthy, and biologically unavoidable characteristic of the development into maturity, but

in the world of dance, it is the moment of truth that is to decide whether the dancer will develop into the ideal ballerina's body (medium height, extremely thin to the point of being utterly bony with no curves or breasts, long limbs, a short torso, unnatural flexibility, "good feet," and pleasant facial features) or not. This revelation of the end product after puberty is finished results in the determination of whether or not the dancer can even attempt to go on to become a professional, most young dancers' dream. Anna Aalten, author of "Listening to the dancer's body" states, "...dancers are confronted with two bodies: one, perceived and tangible; the other, aesthetically ideal." I developed earlier than most of the other girls in my classes, and while I kept the long legs and high arches in my feet that are desired by dancers and choreographers, my sudden height surge, weight gain and addition of new lumps and curves made me suddenly feel awkward, fat, and out of place. It also completely disrupted my center of balance and strength and the years of training with my other body suddenly meant nothing; I had to completely retrain myself, and for years struggled with the adjustment. Eventually of course everyone else experienced their own version of puberty, but now that we all looked more like young women than little girls, we began to compare ourselves, resulting in negative and overly critical body images at an abnormally young age.

It is universally known that self-confidence is already difficult enough for an adolescent girl. The media is constantly whispering mixed messages in our ears ("Eat this, it tastes great!" or "Don't you want to look thin and beautiful?"), the magazines we read and the young women we idolize send us messages that we have to be unhealthily thin to be attractive and desired by men, and insecurities derived from the physical and emotional changes occurring are of course dramatic and uncomfortable. But to be an adolescent girl who is also a serious student of ballet, the obsession with being thin takes on an entirely new meaning. I spent my teenage years standing in front of a wall-size mirror four days a week for hours at a time, in nothing but a leotard and tights, which hide absolutely nothing. And if it wasn't discouraging enough to have to stare at myself in the mirror, I also had to stare at and compare myself with the dozens of other equally exposed girls standing around me, most of whose bodies I greatly envied. Rarely will you find an instructor who will do anything but encourage the "skinniness," mine included. In fact, it has been found that 87 percent of underweight

ballet students' teachers fail to ever address their unhealthy behavior, a painfully sad but very true statistic (Vaisman). There is no avoiding the fact that for a ballerina to be visually and artistically pleasing to watch, she must have the ideal body to properly execute and make beautiful the art of ballet, causing instructors, choreographers, enthusiasts, and the dancers themselves to continue to be blind to the tremendous health risks involved (Aalten). While my teachers rarely would bluntly say to a dancer 'you need to lose weight,' they made their expectations clear in a more abstract way.

Often being the tallest and biggest girl in class, choreographers constantly placed me in the back row for every piece, so that 'everyone could be seen.' I worked equally as hard as the girls who always were placed in the front row, but because of my body, I was shunned to the back, very frequently forced to stand behind them in the shadows while they basked in the spotlight. And when it came to dancing with male dancers, it was almost always the thinnest, shortest, most petite ballerinas who were given the lead roles because they were easiest to for the boys to lift. As they rehearsed I mournfully looked on, nursing the blisters on my feet that never seemed to heal and putting band-aids over the patches of skin where toenails used to be, watching the same "perfect" girls being rewarded over and over again. I had all of the effort, all of the passion, and all of the determination to be a star and finally be praised for all of my sweat, sacrifices, and ambition, but I knew all along that because of my body, I would never achieve my goals as a dancer.

Finally, at the age of sixteen, I knew I needed a change. I had no desire to stop dancing; it was my passion and I would not have let myself come that far just to give up and surrender. Instead, I began taking classes at a different dance studio in town and joined their performing company, hoping that in a new environment I would be more fairly recognized and rewarded for my hard work. The new studio had an entirely different atmosphere than the one I had been with. While my old studio concentrated heavily on classical ballet, this one was more jazz, lyrical, and modern dance-based, and I struggled in the beginning to learn to move in ways that I was unfamiliar with. At first, it was wonderful. I had to put in more hours and the teachers worked us harder and expected more of us, but for once in my life I was getting the attention from the instructors that I craved, and my dancing improved exponentially in a very short amount of time. I made

new friends, learned a great amount, and discovered a new joy in dancing that I had forgotten was inside me.

I felt as if I was finally in the place I needed to be, and that my happiness had reached an ultimate high. Everything about this new studio and company seemed perfect for me. We even were given the extraordinary opportunity to perform in Austria at a dance festival, which is an experience that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. But we were also a competing company; we went to regional and national conventions and competed for medals while attending classes taught by professionals. And as time went on, the competition aspect of our group began to cloud the real reason for dancing, which was that we loved to do it. Suddenly it seemed that it was all about winning. Our costumes became more revealing and gaudy with colors and sparkles, our philosophy behind the reasons for hard work changed, and our choreography was no longer about emotions, expression, and aesthetic quality; it was about showing off and doing as many flashy movements and tricks as possible, striving no longer for personal enjoyment and accomplishment, but for the gold and platinum awards. At the conventions, during class we wore numbers and were watched by judges, who chose individual dancers for scholarships and the title of winning at the competition. The disturbing thing was that the only way that the judges' attentions were caught was by wearing dance clothes with the amount of fabric comparable to that of a bikini, and by pushing to the front of the room full of around two-hundred dancers. I do not have an aggressive or a competitive personality, so once again I lingered in the back of the room, unseen. And in our dances, because we didn't have the unnatural flexibility or small body that was easy to throw around in the air, the other taller or larger dancers and I were placed in the back, never to be seen by the audience. Although I was grateful that I had changed studios, for I had improved immensely, learned a great deal, and had many valuable experiences, I was right back to where I had begun. Feeling fat, worthless, unrecognized, and now, bitter.

It came to the summer before my senior year of high school, and one afternoon I decided that for once in my life, I wanted to be in control of myself, rather than letting dance control me. It controlled how I spent my time, how much effort I put into my academic classes, who my friends were, my lack of dating, and even what I ate. So, with great confidence



in my decision, I wrote a letter to my dance director, explaining why I would not be joining her company that year, and I signed up for two dance classes, rather than the usual ten or eleven. After fourteen years of training, six full-length ballets, nineteen dance concerts, three competitions, and five summer intensive programs, I finally realized that yes, I needed to perform and dance to be happy, but that I was sabotaging my love of it and letting it erode away my happiness in every other aspect of my life in the process.

During my sophomore year in high school, I had joined choir and become involved in musical theatre, and as I sat down to type the letter to my dance instructor, I realized that while singing, dancing, and acting on stage with the most wonderful people I had ever met, I had found a venue for my dance training that actually brought me joy. On the theatre stage, I no longer had to be a nameless, faceless clone dressed in the same costume as everyone else, doing the same steps, and having my expressive abilities smothered. In the musicals I was one of the few trained dancers, and I was valued and praised by everyone for my abilities. I no longer felt overweight, but instead had a sudden surge of confidence for my body and for myself in my newfound talent. So during my senior year, I performed in not only the high school's production, but also with the community theatre, became much more involved in school by auditioning into the most advanced choral ensemble, taking college-level academic classes, having time for girlfriends and a boyfriend, and actually being able to dress up in school colors and go to football games instead of just hearing about them on the evening news. By joining choir, I was fortunate enough to go to Europe with our ensemble, performing in world-renowned cathedrals in Italy, France, and England. Had I not drastically cut back on my dancing during my senior year, it would have been just one more year of time spent working toward a future goal that I knew I didn't have the body or the desire for. Instead, I made memories, had fabulous experiences, and for once in my life I could be identified as Ariana, and not just "a dancer."

Now that I'm in college, although I am working toward a degree in writing, I have not forgotten about the part of me that is a performer. I've become involved in musical theatre at Grand Valley, and dance is my minor. I still enjoy dancing, and want to keep my body familiar with it, but as I come out of one of my two dance classes, take my hair down, grab my things, and go off to a different class or to meet friends for lunch, I over-

hear the dance majors fussing about whether or not their tummy looks fat or why whoever got what part didn't deserve it, or whose arabesque looks the best, and I smile to myself as I calmly walk away, thankful that that is no longer my life. But not a day goes by when I am not grateful for the positive impact that the struggles of my life as a dancer have brought me. The discipline that it demanded has taught me dedication and determination, and because of my decade-long struggle with finding the strength to be proud of who I am and what I look like, I have gained a strong self-confidence and self-respect that I don't think I would have obtained in any other way. Dance is no longer what defines me, and has been responsible for some of the negative and difficult aspects of my childhood. But I know that the struggle has made me a stronger woman, and that despite everything, I will always be a dancer.

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Ariana Hendrix

WRT150

## A Freshwater Paradise

My boots shuffle along the opaque sidewalk, and I raise my arms up slightly off of my body, fighting to keep my balance on the icy surface. Thick clusters of snow fall silently around me and finally land, dissolving into the untouched white blanket that covers the ground. Suddenly a loud crash interrupts my thoughts, and I sharply turn my gaze over my shoulder. The waves are getting bigger, more powerful. Stretched out before me is an immense bowl of churning navy blue water, decorated with scattered puffs of whitecaps. The quiet skyline of Traverse City embraces the curve of West Grand Traverse Bay on three sides, but directly to the north, the water reaches out to meet the gray horizon, which seems to stretch to the end of the world. It's hard to imagine, as my ears ache from the arctic wind that tears through them, that this sky filled with clouds and snowflakes, this beach whose pearly sand is frozen like stone, and this angry, frigid, dark water is the same West Bay that it was six months ago. The same West Bay where I stood on this sidewalk in flip-flops and cut-off shorts, let the hot rays of the sun kiss my skin and I could hear the calls of seagulls and the laughter of people on the beach of this paradise. Because that's what summertime in Northern Michigan is—an absolute paradise.

It is now a hot afternoon in late July at West End Beach, a popular beach on West Bay. At last, it is summer, glorious summer! The sun is shining brilliantly against its wallpaper of a pure, pale sapphire sky. The freshwater of Lake Michigan is a dazzling shade of turquoise, and the sparkling water winks at me as sunshine reflects on the gentle waves. I run out of the water, the soft white sand burning like fire on my bare feet, and collapse onto my towel. My body feels weak with exhaustion and elation and my chest heaves, gasping for air, as my tangled wet hair drips onto the sand and the moisture begins to bead and evaporate off of my browned skin. I close my eyes and let the heat warm my cheeks. Around me, the sounds and smells of summertime are intoxicating. The pattering of a boat motor. The calls of a seagull. The repeated thuds of a volleyball that some teenage boys are spiking over the net. The hum of a radio nearby. The distinctive smell of Coppertone and the mild scent of algae fills the air. On each side of me,

my girlfriends lay stretched out in the sun, tanning oil glistening on their skin, their freckled noses buried in *Harry Potter* and *Glamour* magazine. All afternoon we alternate between splashing and swimming in the crystal clear water and lying on the beach, letting every last ray of sun soak in. Finally, the sun sinks a little lower in the sky, and we begin to pack up our things. But for a bunch of local girls on summer vacation in Traverse City on a beautiful day in July, going home is not on our agenda.

We pile into an open-top Jeep and cruise downtown to get some snacks. Even though it is a weeknight, Traverse City is bustling and pulsates with the energy of tourists and locals, mingling in and out of shops on the tree and streetlamp-lined Front Street. Next to the old State Theater, its sign lined with running light bulbs, people sit under umbrellas sipping wine and eating fresh whitefish on the patio of a tiny French restaurant. Further down, the rhythms of live jazz music can be heard through the open door of another popular eatery. The warm smell of baking pizza wafts out of a different door. Every so often, as we pass an alley, a glimpse can be caught of fisherman standing pole in hand on the docks along the Boardman River. Lovers embrace on the peaks of the parabola-shaped bridges that stretch across it. Beyond the river, convertibles and cars with their windows down cruise along Grand View Parkway, and finally beyond that is the stunning brilliant blue that is the Bay, spreading across the earth, spotted with white sails silhouetted against the unblemished sky.

My friends and I finally stop at a small store. I pause to drool over the glass counters full of every kind of fish imaginable, as well as shrimp, crab, scallops, and lobsters. Growing up on fresh Great Lakes fish has made me something of a seafood fanatic. But they drag me away to the potato chip aisle, where we fill our arms with the cheapest snacks we can find, and we head off. Once in the car, the girl in the driver's seat turns down the radio and glances in the rearview mirror.

"Hey guys, which beach should we go to?" We all chime in at once.

"Oh...I dunno...how about Otter Creek?"

"Nah. We went there last week."

"We could go to Good Harbor."

"Maybe. A lot of old people go there though."

"What about Leland? Or North Bar?"

"Yeah I guess North Bar sounds good. I just hope it's not crowded."

It's a bit of a private joke among locals in Traverse City and the neighboring Leelanau County that we are so snobbishly fussy about beaches, because we have so many to choose from. Truly, one cannot drive more than a few miles in any one direction without running into a body of water of some kind. So, a relaxing day at the beach in town is simply not enough for one day. The summers in Northern Michigan are agonizingly short, and every last hour of warm weather and warm water is precious. Now, we are driving westward to the Lake Michigan shore, the "big lake."

Turning onto M-72, our still-damp hair flies behind us, tangling in the wind, and we laugh and sing to the radio. Blurring alongside us are cornfields and large barns with silos on the flatlands that lay between large hills in the distance. The air is still hot and heavy, but as the Jeep speeds on, we can sense the lake is near. The farmlands change to thick pine forests, and suddenly we are driving up and down steep hills, at the top of which you can see the land spreading out for miles. The wind becomes a little stronger and cooler as we near the shore and the late-afternoon sun slips lower, creating long shadows on the road. Finally after about twenty-five minutes we slow down as we enter the quaint village of Empire. With whitewashed storefronts and a tiny chapel, it resembles an old-fashioned town that might be pictured on a Christmas card. Heading down the dirt road that leads to the beach, we laugh as we duck our heads into the seats of the Jeep, trying not to inhale the dust swirling around us from the rough gravel road.

My friend pulls the car over to the side of the road and kills the engine, as we all jump out. The particular beach we've decided to come to, North Bar, is actually named for the small, but incredibly deep inland lake, which at one end trickles across the beach and empties into Lake Michigan. We are all surprised and delighted to see that there are only two other cars in sight, and they belong to the friends who we are meeting. When I was a child, North Bar was still a secret, and only locals and Empire's "summer people" came. Now it has been discovered by tourists, and while cars used to simply park haphazardly alongside the dirt road that led to the lake, there is now a large paved parking lot and a public outhouse. There has even been erosion damage done to the dune on the beach due to the larger volumes of people trampling over it. But at night, especially on a week night, it is still a quiet, peaceful, untouched treasure.

I lead the way, walking through the sand that is still warm from the day's heat. Lake Michigan's shore still hides mysteriously behind the large, beach grass-covered dune that separates it from the small lake. We walk the long stretch of sand that surrounds North Bar until we finally turn the corner around the dune.

Even though I have seen Lake Michigan hundreds, perhaps thousands of times, the visual feast of it still amazes me. A gasp catches in my throat as I let my eyes fall upon the seemingly infinite mass of water before me. Like always, I wonder for a second whether we might have taken a wrong turn and ended up on the Pacific Coast in California. I have seen the real thing, the ocean. Two different oceans in fact, and three different seas. And while they were all obviously and admittedly breathtaking, the spectacle before me was every bit as magnificent. There is nothing but water. No land. No nothing—just water, for as far as the eye can see. The pure, white sand and the churning aqua of the lake make a scene that looks nearly identical to that of any seashore, and I half-expect to see a dolphin come soaring out of the surf, or a pelican to swoop down for a fish. As the wind picks up, the waves are getting bigger, and I watch transfixed at the abundance of them. Each one is unique in shape and size as it slowly curves upward, gathers strength, and finally peaks in an arc, changing instantly and seamlessly from blue to white and crashing onto the shore. Finally, they turn to bubbly foam and soak the sand in perfect half-circles that overlap each other down the stretch of shore.

"They're over there!" my friend shouts over the pounding of the waves. She points to a small group of boys carrying logs to the orange glow that is the beginning of a bonfire. The sound of her voice snaps me out of my hypnosis. I follow, and turn my gaze to the sky. The sun, exhausted from its day-long radiance, is now resting on the line of the horizon, appearing blurry and quivering from the heat. The clouds above it glow with violet and peach, preparing for the sun's crescendo; its final slither out of the sky and melt into the horizon. My attention is grabbed once again by my friends, who are peeling off shorts and t-shirts, revealing their already sandy swimsuits underneath. By the time we are all running toward the water, the sun has disappeared. From where it once was is a mystical glow that illuminates the sky and the sherbet-colored clouds. We dive into the waves, and I laugh and pant as they heave me around in the churning water. I

look down at my feet, and even in the darkness of dusk above and the swirling water below, I can see the pale pink polish on my toenails through the transparently clean water. I dive under again and let my limbs go limp as the silky liquid washes over my skin and envelops my body. Exhausted from the beating of the waves and chilled from the sunless sky, we all retreat back to the beach, walking slowly over the rippled sandy bottom and onto the shore. Looking both directions down the coast, I see massive sand dunes looming in the distance, against the backdrop of the colored sky. Spotted with patches of vibrant green, the sandy hills and cliffs seem to soar.

It is late and our fire has burned down to glowing embers. I am lying flat on my back, my eyelids feeling heavy as I stare upward. The sky has turned to velvety blackness, dotted with millions of brightly sparkling stars. The most brilliant ones seem to pulsate, and the creamy streaks of an arm of the Milky Way reaches across the sky. The moon is almost full, and every detail of its silver Swiss cheese surface is visible. It shines onto the water, creating a pool of light and illuminating the waves that still break rhythmically onto the sand. It seems strange that only a few miles away are the buildings and lights of Traverse City. Out here, with nothing but miles and miles of untouched water and rolling hills of sand, I feel so tranquil and free. I scoop up sand in my cupped hands, letting the grains sift between my fingers as I observe the grandness around me, and am overcome with a sense of being so incredibly miniscule and infinitesimal as the stars and sky stretch to eternity, and the water meets it, reaching to its own eternity. I finally close my eyes, let my muscles relax into the soft sand, let the music of the waves fill my ears, and let my skin absorb every ounce of balmy warmth that still lingers in the air.

My eyes jerk open and I realize that they are beginning to tear from the whipping wind. My molars tremble uncontrollably against each other, and I wonder how long I have been standing here, lost in a dream. The sunset and the stars are gone- the sky is now gray. The waves are no longer inviting and peaceful. They are violent and cold. It is still February. I take one last mournful look at the frozen world around me, the core of my body quivering beneath my jacket. But suddenly, as I turn to leave, the sun bursts out from behind a cloud. Its reflection off of the fresh white snow is blinding, and I squint in pain. But under the basking sunlight, the water shifts to a

few shades of lighter blue. The snow begins to sparkle, as if someone had spilled a million diamonds on its surface. A bright red cardinal swoops down and lands on the snow-lined branch of a pine tree, knocking the snow off of the needles and creating a miniature white flurry that flutters to the ground. The bright bird stands out against the grayness like the one smear of color on a blank canvas. And is that...? Yes, there it is. Barely noticeable, but on my face I can feel the tiniest trace of warmth coming from the sun. I pull my fur-lined hood up tighter around my ears, but before I finally turn to leave, I take one last glance at the glorious winter wonderland. And, surprised at myself, I feel the corners of my freezing mouth raise into a smile.



## Good Writing Around Campus

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The main purpose of the first-year writing requirement is to prepare students for the academic and professional writing they will do after their freshman year. In this section, we highlight some quality writing completed in classes beyond WRT 150. However, there is one outstanding selection written in a WRT 150 course that we decided to showcase in this section simply because of its interesting topic and professional style. By examining some of the other pieces that were written outside of WRT 150, you will observe a wider variety of topics, styles, and forms.

The following section contains pieces written by students in GVSU courses, some of which required WRT 150 as a prerequisite. **Sherrissee Thomas** wrote, “The Importance of Higher Education in Criminal Justice” in Professor Kathleen Bailey’s course, “Issues and Ethics in Criminal Justice” (CJ495). **Kyle Koenigsknecht** composed, “Google Books: Is It Legit?” in “Strategies in Writing” (WRT 150) under the guidance of his professor, Sister Lucia Treanor, F.S.E.. **Rachel Kubiak** wrote, “Owning Life,” in Professor Carolyn Shapiro-Shapin’s course, “History of Medicine” (HST 370). And finally our last selection is by **Christine Marfia** entitled, “What’s in a Name: Causes and Casualties of the First Crusade” written in Professor Patrick Shan’s course “World History to 1500” (HST 203).

As you read, think about the form and content of each piece. How do the writers organize, develop and support their essays? How have these writers learned to manipulate purpose and focus to convey information in an informative and meaningful way to their academic audience?

## The Importance of Higher Education in Criminal Justice

### I. Introduction

For those individuals looking to make a difference in the lives of people, either through professional service in law enforcement, corrections, probation or parole, the decision to invest in higher education, with the completion of a degree in criminal justice, is becoming increasingly common. Higher education represents, for many people, an opportunity to invest in their future; this is also true for those people interested in a career in criminal justice. The obvious results of increased professionalism are clearly supported by a recent study. This comparative study, between police recruits and members of the public, has shown police officers to be more conscientious, intelligent, and emotionally stable than the citizens they serve (Carlán & Byxbe, 2000). The significance of this finding supports foundational ideas that as society becomes more educated the need for a greater number of educated criminal justice professionals must also increase (Leef, 2006).

Having educated professionals working in the criminal justice field ensures a certain degree of professionalism. Higher education, for those in the criminal justice system, serves as a foundation for acquiring specific job-related skills and understandings. Involvement as a criminal justice professional requires that a person possess not only the skills necessary for such an energetic task, but also the insight into the laws and policies required in administering those services justly. Additionally, criminal justice professionals are required to develop more specific skills necessary including the ability to care for, rehabilitation, and discipline offenders. It is important that criminal justice professionals are able to incorporate not only the skills learned in their training, but also the theory and practice of the criminal justice system gained from their undergraduate studies (Cotton, 2003).

As one of the four largest industries in the United States, higher education has become a large contributor to the increased professionalism of the criminal justice discipline (Calhoun, 2006). One of the benefits of higher education is the opportunity to learn about philosophy and the role of ethics required in the criminal justice field. Ethics, according to Scott (2004), is a common thread that runs throughout various disciplines within

the higher education system. In particular, ethics allow criminal justice personnel to view higher education as it relates to a variety of academic disciplines, rather than specifically geared to some professions and not others (Calhoun, 2006). Although higher education plays a role in numerous professional positions, this researcher has chosen for the sake of this assignment, to focus in the area of the criminal justice field, and on the matters most relevant to the criminal justice profession.

## II. Personal Perspective

As a strong supporter of higher education in the criminal justice field I have come to believe that learning, in terms of getting an education, is not only something we *do*, but something we live and experience as a result of that learning. We are forever gaining knowledge through our experiences and encounters with the outside world and its people. The desire to learn and to continue that learning stems from that person's desire to move forward in an area in which he/she has found success in their studies. What we often times neglect to acknowledge is the fact that just because we have taken a class or two, or because we have worked in the field for years, does not mean that there is no room to grow. In fact, some of the most influential people, the people who have made a significant difference in the world in which we live today, have been those who have persisted in their pursuit for success by continually striving towards obtaining a greater capacity for learning (Hermanowicz, 2005). Learning, for those who seek to be academically enlightened, represents a sense of fulfillment that enables them to benefit from the learning that takes place throughout the college years.

In an article titled "The Overselling of Higher Education", (Leef, 2006) the idea of higher education and the benefits that result from having that education, were looked at and challenged by individuals who believed that the value of a college degree today, is far less than that of a college a decade ago. This prior stated notion might be attributed to the view that many individuals have of what they consider to be of today's typical college student. According to a professor at Montana State University, the average student, on today's college campuses, lacks the ambition needed to warrant investment in higher education. The author spoke of students as having little interest in improving anything other than their social lives, accusing students of making the minimum amount of effort at acquiring any form of

knowledge and skill (Leef, 2006). All of this comes from the same author who labels students as lazy and unwilling to prepare for classes and tests; labeling these students as being mediocre and as people who see education as nothing more than an intrusion on their lives (Leef, 2006).

As a student who values education wholeheartedly, I have taken it upon myself to prove that the desire to learn still exists within many individuals looking to broaden their knowledge base and indulge in their learning experiences. Making the most of one's college education requires, that as students, we are provided the opportunity to be great learners instead of being reduced to nothing more than idle beings looking for the easy way out. In all honesty, I find this professor's outlook on student performance to be very one sided and lacking in the amount of support needed to make the argument that a college degree is indeed less valuable today, than it was ten years ago. If anything, I find that students today are simply overwhelmed by the five and six classes that many have to take in addition to the 30 to 40 hours that some have to work in order to afford college in the first place. In my opinion, higher education means more than just the grades students achieve in the courses they take; it is unfair to assume that students today value learning any less than students of the past. In terms of the amount of preparation that goes into mastering an area of academic study, higher education provides individuals the opportunity to excel in matters related to the academic discipline itself, but also in the *collective* identity that education promotes within a society dedicated to continued learning.

Higher education in the field of criminal justice has had a tremendous impact on the type of people entering the field. More than anything, students themselves are witnessing an ever-increasing need for experience in working with people of different backgrounds including: race, ethnicity, gender orientation, and religion among others. Students have made the connection between what it means to be educated and the opportunities that come as a result of having an education. It is impossible for an individual to go through college, do the work, and graduate having learned absolutely nothing from the experience. College, in itself, is a means for acquiring knowledge. More than anything, college represents a chance to expand on the educational experiences that have been provided during the college years, all within an atmosphere conducive to learning. More important than the four or five years of undergraduate work associated with

earning a degree in higher education, it is what we do with that four or five years worth of education after graduation that makes the biggest difference. Higher education accomplishes tasks that job training or lack of training altogether fail to accomplish. It opens doors to lifelong learning and promotes an ongoing commitment towards using that knowledge to better oneself within the community (Blackstone, 2001).

## II. Social Perspective

The value of having an education in today's society far exceeds any efforts made to discredit higher education in its contribution to society. Education promotes within people the desire to learn and the ability to apply such learning in the areas of job performance, personal work ethics, and tolerance for others (Scott, 2004). It has only been within the last decade or so that the practitioners in the criminal justice field have begun noticing the benefits associated with the hiring of college educated applicants. Prior to the development of criminal justice studies, many areas of the criminal justice system, such as corrections, probation, parole, and even policing, were often neglected, especially in terms of advancing the level of professionalism exhibited through their training (Finckenaue, 2005).

It is important for future criminal justice professionals to acknowledge the benefits that having a college degree can have on society's ability to progress further in its efforts to make the world a safer place to live. In this field, especially, there is an additional responsibility to uphold the values and beliefs that serve as the foundation of our constitution, and the reason for our existence as justice providers in society. What many people fail to realize about the criminal justice discipline is that it has only been in recent years that higher education has become a foundational requirement to work as a criminal justice professional (Southerland, 1991).

Prior to the twentieth century, and even at its start, an academic discipline specific to the field of "Criminal Justice" did not exist (Flanagan, 2000; Finckenaue, 2005). Other than a few courses in sociology and criminology, students looking to study the impacts of crime on society and justice, as it pertained to the involvement of citizens with the law, were limited in terms of course selection (Finckenaue, 2005). It was not until 1968, with the passing of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, that police officers and other criminal justice personnel began taking

advantage of higher education and the opportunity to partake in advancing their knowledge in the criminal justice field (Finckenauer, 2005). Shortly after the passage of the Omnibus Act, the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP) initiative came into existence and provided criminal justice practitioners the financial means to attend college, and further their training in whatever part of the justice system they were in (Finckenauer, 2005). Taking into consideration the growing number of criminal justice personnel within the student body, colleges and universities had no choice but to accommodate those students with a curriculum encompassing a course selection relevant to the demands they faced as criminal justice professionals (Finckenauer, 2005).

Today, the criminal justice discipline has become well-established as a college degree program. Students entering the field of criminal justice are doing so fully aware of the expectations that will be placed on them by the communities they will soon serve. Those who choose to embark on a career in corrections, policing, or even within the juvenile justice system, will do so knowing that they, as instruments of the criminal justice system, have taken an oath to serve the best interests of the people. As employees of the people, criminal justice practitioners owe it to themselves and to the rest of society to be knowledgeable in the area of the system that they work and in the services they provide. Such knowledge, regarding the criminal justice system, can only be obtained through specialized training in the areas tailored towards the job they will obtain. Training provides a person with the *skills* necessary for performing a function, and can only take a person so far in their ability to perform well in their profession (Finckenauer, 2005). *Knowledge* in an area, in terms of higher education, serves a less job-specific function. According to Finckenauer (2005), the act of receiving an education is “intended to inspire curiosity, to ‘develop a general spirit of inquiry,’ and to ‘cultivate/enhance a mental attitude of probing exploration’” (p. 415). Curiosity provokes, in a person, the desire to learn from training, to ask questions, and to explore deeper into issues that concern them and their ability to perform their function in society (Finckenauer, 2005).

It is important to acknowledge the role both training and education play in creating a well-rounded professional. Finckenauer (2005) used fire arms training in the academy to demonstrate the relationship that exists between training and education, and the impact that education can have on

a person's training experience. In his example Finckenauer (2005) showed that simply knowing how to clean the weapon, to maintain the weapon, and even knowing how to shoot the weapon means little in terms of fully understanding the use of such firearms training. A trainee learn to become a perfect shot, but unless he or she demonstrates an understanding of the usefulness of such firearms training, than training means little in terms of what they *know*. Having exposure to such issues as police discretion, the use of force, and the impact that police shootings can have on the community will promote much more of an understanding for when and under what circumstances the use of a firearm is warranted (Finckenauer, 2005).

### III. Criminal Justice Perspective

In a study looking to assess the goals, expectations, and satisfaction associated with students' coursework in criminal justice, Tontodonato (2006) set out to question graduating seniors' regarding, the reasons for choosing a criminal justice major, satisfaction issues, and future career plans. Among the top five reasons for selecting criminal justice as a major, were; 1) an interest in the subject, 2) future career plans, 3) an interest in the law/law school, 4) an interest in policing, and 5) to help others (Tontodonato, 2006). Although it is not surprising that most students are attracted to the field because of a personal interest in the subject matter, it was however, interesting that of the 135 students who completed this section of the survey, eleven percent said that they planned on working in another field after graduating (Tontodonato, 2006). It was not specified as to which field these students planned to work; it might make a person wonder to what benefit a degree in criminal justice would serve a person not planning to work in the field of criminal justice.

This is a legitimate inquiry considering the fact that not everyone who majors in criminal justice works in the justice system after graduation. For many people, a criminal justice degree fulfills the desire they have to learn about the criminal justice process and to become knowledgeable in certain areas pertaining to the juvenile system, the costs and benefits of rehabilitation, or maybe just to become familiar with the criminal justice system as a whole. Having a degree in criminal justice means having an understanding of how the system operates, and then putting to use that understand-

ing; this may or may not always equate to working in the criminal justice system.

A criminal justice degree represents achievement in a number of different areas. Not only do criminal justice majors learn about policing, and the study of crime, but student are given numerous opportunities to investigate areas of the justice system involving corrections, juvenile justice, crime control and policy, and even constitutional and criminal law. As defined in the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences' Certification Standards for College/University Criminal Justice Degree programs, the conditions for under which a criminal justice education must fall are strict (cited in Finckenauer, 2005). According to the standards as presented by Finckenauer (2005), a quality criminal justice education is one that encourages students to think both critically and analytically about the issues being addressed in their studies.

Programs should strive not only to familiarize students with facts and concepts but also, more importantly, teach students to apply this knowledge to related problems and changing situations. Primary objectives of all criminal justice programs include the development of critical thinking, communication, technology and computing skills; qualitative reasoning; ethical decision-making; and an understanding of diversity (p. 421).

The criminal justice field has come a long way in terms of the level of professionalism exhibited by those serving in the system. The professionalizing of such areas as law enforcement, corrections, and even probation and parole, has led to a much needed increase in the standards set forth to assess the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (Finckenauer, 2005). The criminal justice degree helps to ensure that a certain level of professionalism will be demonstrated, by an individual in his or her role as a criminal justice practitioner (Cotton, 2003). Being a relatively new concept in the justice field, professionalism has become the goal of many departments looking to enhance the quality of services provided, while also creating standards for the type of people hired in to serve (Southerland, 1991).

Higher education in the criminal justice field has had a tremendous impact on the efforts being made to professionalize the practices and policies within this line of work (Finkenauer, 2005). As more and more individu-



als make the decision to attend college, prior to entering the field, many criminal justice agencies and have turned to higher education as means for improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (Belvins, 2004). Having a degree in criminal justice implies that a person has the ability to demonstrate the characteristics that employers look for in potential criminal justice employees. According to Belvins (2004), it is reasonable to expect that a college graduate, entering the criminal justice field, will be equipped with certain knowledge and skills. Prior to being employed, students are expected to be exposed to certain information that will later lend to the overall success of the student in his or her job. Those entering the field, following participation in a program of higher education, are believed to possess skills that make them a marketable asset for those looking to hire qualified applicants (Blackstone, 2001 & Becker, n.d.). Agencies, looking to hire criminal justice professional, often seek entry-level employees who demonstrate the ability to problem solve in the situations that call for such strategies, as well as employees who are effective in their communication skills (Blevins, 2004). More than anything, potential employers are looking for individuals who have a basic understanding of the criminal justice system and are able to incorporate that basic knowledge into the training programs upon entrance into the field.

Higher education promotes learning in every aspect of the criminal justice system. Those entering the criminal justice profession have the critical thinking skills and the ability to apply those skills, especially when working with high risk populations (Belvins, 2004). It is important to encourage students to strive towards bettering the criminal justice system and the profession for which they will soon be part of. If progress on the part of these students is not made by *them*, then progress will not be made at all. Often times the role of corrections officers and police officers, as well as probation and parole officers, in society goes unacknowledged. Considering the level of pay, working conditions, threats to personal safety, and lack of professional status, students who are otherwise qualified to fill these positions as police officers or corrections officers, choose not to, due in part to the lack of public recognition by society (Blevins, 2004).

## V. Conclusion

Criminal Justice, as an academic discipline, has become an increasingly popular area of study across many college campuses today (Flanagan,

2000; Finckenauer, 2005; Blackstone, 2001; Remington, 1990; & South-erland, 1991). The increase in college attendance by those seeking a degree in criminal justice can be attributed to the shift being seen in the field's level of professionalism, and its desire to be recognized for its professional achievements (Remington, 1991). Over the course of this assignment I have encountered authors whose views have lent support to the increased use of higher education in the criminal justice field, but I have also been exposed to numerous studies devaluing the very existence of higher education as a requirement for certain criminal justice positions. What I have learned most from my research, concerning the issue of higher education in the criminal justice field, is that without educational standards or commitment to a future in higher education, the status of the field as a profession is unlikely to improve.

Criminal Justice, as a discipline, has overcome numerous obstacles and has prevailed as a newly professionalized line of work. Throughout the years we have witnessed the beginning stages of police professionalism, and have continued to watch as the criminal justice system has expanded and included in its efforts the professionalizing of corrections, probation and parole (Remington, 1990 & Blevins, 2004). Despite the level of optimism, created through the acknowledgement of such success thus far, it is important that criminal justice professional do not lose sight of how far the criminal justice system has yet to go. As an academic program, criminal justice is a relatively new addition to the college curriculum and is seen, even to this day, as occupying a marginal position within the field of higher education (Flanagan, 2000).

My hope for the criminal justice system is that by the year 2010, a paper such as this one is no longer needed to convey to others the importance of higher education in the criminal justice field. I look forward to the day when all those who work with juveniles and adults offenders on the streets or within the walls of correctional facilities are college educated, willing to expand their knowledge to account for the changes occurring in society. According to Becker (n.d.), any money spent on education, training, medical care or any other service lending to the economic growth of humans in society, is considered to be by many, an investment in human capital; the two most important being education and training (Becker, n.d.).

The impact that higher education has had on the professionalizing of the criminal justice field is undeniable, and is without question, the direction that we must continue to go in order to see further improvement. I believe without a doubt, that education is the key to overcoming the difficulties faced by criminal justice professionals within the justice system and with those in society. Although education is not the answer to all financial hardships experienced within law enforcement and the corrections fields, it *does* have the potential to make a difference in the criminal justice system's ability to protect, serve, and possibly rehabilitate the offenders in society.

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Writing 150

### Google Books: Is It Legit?

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. When I wanted to read these works, I used to go to Barnes and Nobles, Wal-Mart, Zumberge Library, or order the book from an online store. However, a new electronic age is coming. In fact, it is already upon us. The information inside of books is just a mouse click away. Many are trying, but few have the audacity of Google Inc., which plans to scan every single book ever put into existence, and then put it on its website for everyone to use. This endeavor<sup>6</sup> is not without its critics or opponents. As an avid reader, a self proclaimed computer geek, and a law junky, I am excited and supportive of Google's ambitious project to scan all of the books ever written and assembled, even with the legal controversy swirling around it and the debate over design flaws with functionality on the site.

Amazon.com Inc., the Universal Library headed by Carnegie Mellon, the Open Content Alliance created from a joint venture entered into by Microsoft Corporation and Yahoo Inc. along with several major libraries are scanning anywhere from thousands to half a million books for their perceptive projects (Toobin 35). Once Google entered into this pursuit, its program went to the lead of the pack by following the company's mission: "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful" (Stone par. 3). In the chase for Google's proposed goal, it has begun to attract a storm of controversy.

Google's intended goal is to "scan every single book ever published, and to make the full texts searchable, in the same way that web sites can be searched on the company's engine at google.com" (Toobin 30). Google's cofounders, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, were asked why they are doing this? For them, it is all about having first-rate information available. All of the information recorded in books is not widely accessible to people, which is "just too big an omission" (31). In attempting to accomplish this ambitious feat, Brin and Page are beginning to run into opposition and obstacles.

Acquiring all of the books ever published is going to take time and partnerships. There is no comprehensive list of all the books ever published, so there is no official timeline for finishing or estimation of total cost. In her article for *EContent*, Jessica Dye notes that some of the estimations have been “\$200 million to scan and index 15 million books by 2015” (par. 7), but this is neither a complete list of books nor the total cost of the project. Another projection has Google paying around ten cents per page it scans (par. 6). The ambition of the project is distinguished by its magnitude.

The first hurdle Google has to clear is the acquisition of all of the texts ever published. The company has gone about this in two ways: publishing companies and libraries. First, the publishers have setup agreements with Google to have new material put on Google Books. Second, Google has teamed up with libraries around the world to scan their collections. Harvard University’s Library, Oxford University’s Library, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, University of Michigan’s Library, among others all agreed to supply Google with either full or partial portions of their collections. The libraries are not giving their collections away for free; they are getting a full digital copy of their collections in return, along with whatever other agreements are in the contracts (Dye par. 6). Legal controversy is swirling around these deals.

With the publishers there is less debate, because of the direct dealings between Google and themselves. Allowing Google to have a legal copy of the work, with the understanding that the work will be put on the Internet under the restrictions set by the publishing company. With the libraries, there are storm clouds forming around copyright concerns. According to Kenneth W. Clarkson and his colleagues’ *West’s Business Law* from the amended copyright law of 1978, “Copyright is an intangible property right granted by federal statute to the author or originator of a literary or artistic production of a specific type” (150). What is and is not copyrighted is the driving force of the controversy. Then the fuel for the debate is what can and cannot be done with a copyrighted work?

The controversy begins to take form with the libraries because their collections do not only have public use books, but copyrighted books as well (Toobin 32). The heart of the argument against this expansive project is the question of whether Google should be able to scan works from library shelves and put them on the Internet. Something that everyone seems to be

in favor of is the scanning of works in the public use category: books never copyrighted, government publications, or publications that the copyright has expired. Being able to preserve the information these works contain tends to be considered a genuine reason for scanning the books. In addition, the information held within these works can now be more easily and widely accessible via the web.

When I went to Google Books, I found that the books in the public domain are available for full viewing, downloading, and printing. Looking up *Tom Sawyer* by using the “Full View” Option, I was able to view Mark Twain’s classic on my computer. No going to the library and no buying the book. I had access to all of the literary delight of *Tom Sawyer* right on my computer. Classics by Mark Twain and Shakespeare and public government documents and archives can now be found at Google Books in their full content. However, the ambition of Google Books is not for just non-copyrighted books, but for every book ever created. At Google Books, copyrighted and non-copyrighted books are treated differently.

To get access to all of the books including the copyrighted ones that Google has, I have to enter my search in to the “All Books” option. A work that has a copyright still attached to it is treated differently because I cannot just view a copyrighted work in its entirety. When I entered Harry Potter, for instance, I got results of copies of the books, along with other books that have some things in common with the search. In looking up a copyrighted work, I could be provided with chapter and page excerpts, bibliographic information, the index, the book’s copyright information, a link to the book’s Table of Contents, and possibly a window of pages to view. In addition, a link to buy the book redirects me to websites to purchase or to find book in a library. The library option locates libraries that have the book available with an address and estimated distance in my area using a zip code. The innovations of the library features and the ability to purchase the copyrighted book are unique aspects of this pioneer project. Even with this direction that Google has taken, a storm of debate about legality is still raging.

Google Books, formerly known as Google Print, has been sued by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) and the Author’s Guild. In response to the pending lawsuit, Pat Schroeder, head of the AAP has stated, “The law does not say you can take my stuff because you’re going to do something that is going to be really good for humanity” (Stone par. 2).

What she is referring to is the use of an author's or publisher's work without explicit permission. In the lawsuits, Google is accused of producing a copy of a copyrighted work, without getting approval from the copyright holders: the authors, the publishers, among others. Moreover, the utilization of this copied work does not fall within the exemptions of copyright law (Ganley par. 14). This is not a clear-cut crime of copyright infringement by taking an author's work and benefiting, at least not directly.

Google will not be directly benefiting from the use of the works, because it will not make a dime off of the sale of the works. Google's profits come from advertising. The lawsuit mentions that Google plans to "derive revenue from [the] program by attracting more viewers and advertisers to its site" (par. 14). Both sides are seeing this as an argument for their side. Google feels that it is not doing anything wrong, because it is not selling the books. The AAP, among others, feel that Google will be using the program to increase its profit, thus indirectly making money from the use of the books. In the end, one must remember that Google is a corporation that has obligations to its shareholders. These shareholders are investing in Google, which is spending money for this program. Because of this, I consider the fact that Google could presumably increase its profit margin is acceptable, because Google is spending money to make this all possible. With pending lawsuits, it now has to defend itself in the courtroom and in the battle of public opinion over this revolutionary program.

In response to the Author's Guild lawsuit, Susan Wojcicki the VP for Product Management wrote, on the corporate blog about the disappointment that Google feels towards those who have brought suit against the program to make lesser known works available to a world of readers, especially when the major benefactors are authors of "backlist, out of print, and lightly marketed new titles" (Ganley par. 14). Google sees itself as providing a benefit to authors by getting their works out into public eye, thus opening these books to a completely new market. If authors or publishers do not want their work to be on Google Books, they can request their works not to be used (par. 14). In doing so, Google believes that it does not need to have the author's permission to scan and make the works searchable.

Google assumes it is doing nothing wrong, based on the Fair Use Rule, which is defined as "an exemption to liability for copyright infringement



is made under the 'fair use' doctrine. In certain circumstances, a person or organization can reproduce copyright materials without paying royalties" as stated in *West's Business Law* (Clarkson et al. 151). When Fair Use exemptions of the copyright law are used in court, four factors are considered: the purpose of the work, the make-up of the work, how much of the work is used, and how the use affects the future market of the work (par. 25). Of these factors, the effect on the market has more influence in the court's decision-making process than the others (par. 25). In a court of law, lawyers spend time and resources looking for a precedent, or "a court decision that furnishes an example or authority for deciding subsequent cases involving identical or similar facts" (Clarkson et al. G-25). Google's lawyers are searching case files, which ruled in the manner that they would find beneficial and include copyright, Fair Use, and the Internet.

Paul Ganley, an associate in the IT/COM Group at Baker & McKenzie LLP in London, has located a couple of cases that could be used as possibilities in support of Google's case. One of them, *Kelly v. Arriba Soft* involves photography being published on a website without the photographer's consent. In the *Kelly* case, photographs done by Kelly were put on the Arriba Soft's website in thumbprint form, greatly widening the access to the photographs (par. 27). The website was set up to direct people to his personal website if they choose Kelly's photographs, therein increasing the business for the photographer. The court ruled in favor of Arriba Soft (par. 30). Therefore, Google's attorneys can draw strong parallels between their own case and this case.

In Ganley's article for *Journal of Internet Law* in November 2006, the author simulates the arguments for Google's Fair Use case. With the purpose of the use, he finds that the *Kelly* case and the potential Google case are similar in nature. One major difference is the change in medium that Google is undertaking; from print to data. Ganley's article shows the purpose of the use is similar to *Kelly* because "it does not recreate the artistic experience of consuming a work" (par. 41). Google is adding to the functionality and accessibility of the work not in the original copy (par. 41). Google is not even gaining revenue on the pages because they are "ad-free" and does not receive any revenue from the *Buy this book* link (par. 41). With the purpose of the use, Google would be found in favor of this Fair Use Rule exemption.

With the nature of the work being done, Ganley argues that the court would probably side with the publishers and the authors (the plaintiff), because Google is clearly copying the works. However, concerning the amount of the work used, he finds that the court would be only slightly in favor of the plaintiff or a non-factor in the end in the court's eyes. It could be possible to copy only certain portions of copyrighted books (par. 44). However, that would detract from the project's validity and goal of having a complete copy of every book ever created. According to Alex Macgillivray, senior counsel for Google, "Often publishers don't even know who owns the rights to their older books. 'The idea behind making an index that is comprehensive is defeated if you have to go door to door to ask permission'" (Stone par. 5). The reasoning that Google would only copy part of the book would go against the fundamental goal of the project; besides this would only be a minuscule victory for its opponents against the Fair Use Rule.

The most important factor of Fair Use Rule exemptions is the market impact. In Ganley's opinion, this should go in favor of Google. In the end, it will be difficult to predict a negative effect of the libraries supplying books for Google Books on overall book sales. Works that are more popular may suffer in sales, not by Google Books, but by the sale of lesser-known works (Ganley par. 45). By opening up the world to the lesser known books, people may now buy books they had never heard of instead of the mainstream bestsellers. This is backed by the Amazon's Search Inside element of its website. Ganley reports that Jeff Bezo, Amazon's founder, "has remarked that sales of searchable titles have increased 9 percent relative to non-searchable titles" (par. 45). All of the debate about Fair Use in the end may just be speculation, because Google will probably settle the cases out of court.

Surprisingly, Google has welcomed these lawsuits against it. As Toobin explains in his article "Google's Moon Shot" in *The New Yorker*, "being taken to court and charged with copyright infringement on a large scale might be the best thing that ever happened to Google's foray into the printed word" (30). This extensive project is already set into motion and the lawsuits that have been levied against Google are a speed bump in process. Google is treating the settlement as a contract negotiation and may be willing to pay more than an actual court decision against it would (30). At

first glance, this does not make sense for Google until it is looked at from a strategic business positioning. Generally companies do not wish to be put through a trial because it generally is costly, in both the actual cost and also in the public's opinion of a company. Additionally, with this lawsuit, Google Books can stay in the forefront of the digitisation movement.

By paying more to authors and publishers, Google will be able to set the price it will cost a company to digitize copyrighted works and then place those works online, thus, allowing Google to be able to keep its rivals, Amazon.com and the Open Content Alliance, at a competitive disadvantage. If its competitors want to keep up, then they will have to pay up, too. In the competitive market, the best company survives, and those who have the most innovative ideas, the best services, and the best products last. Google has not always been known for having the cutting edge when it comes to ideas. Toobin makes note that in the past Google has not perfected the art of the search. Tim Wu, a professor at Columbia Law School provides evidence that, "Google didn't get video search right-YouTube did" (35). Google's Solution was buying out YouTube for 1.6 billion (35). Google is a corporation on the rise and is continuing to improve the quality of the work it does. Not everyone, however, has been completely enthralled with the progress of Google's work.

Mick O'Leary, director of the library at Frederick, Md, feels that Amazon's "Search Inside" is better than Google Books is. According to him, Amazon has up-to-date books from authors and Google is normally a few books behind. Google Books right now only allows for 300 hits on the search and Amazon does not cut them off at 300. Google is limited in how much you can view because of copyrighted materials. Google limits its users to a three-page window of the work, but Amazon allows for five-page window (O'Leary par. 5, 7). There is one key factor to remember, Google Books is far from finished. Right now its project is still in beta, or testing, form; it is not the finished product. Amazon.com is just scanning the books that it sells, but Google is scanning every book ever put into existence, including the public use books, so the information can be widely available.

Even though a majority of people are in favor of scanning the public use books because of the access to the information that it gives, not everyone is a fan. Michael Gorman, head of the American Library Association, is

attacking librarians for becoming too involved in technology (Caldwell par. 2). Not speaking on behalf of ALA, but from personal view, Gorman believes that Google Books and all other digitisation projects will reduce "books to a bunch of paragraphs" (par. 4). In his opinion, "Free text searching [is] the very worst kind of searching" (par. 4). Gorman seems to be in the minority. The head of the German Library, Elizabeth Niggermann, has stated, "More digitisation is needed. If things are little used, they will be used less if they are available only in print" (par. 6). This movement seems to have wide spread support, which is excellent for Google. The goal of Google is not to scan the books of the United States, but every book ever published worldwide.

Issues have arisen in both France and United Kingdom over Google Books. La Martiniere Groupe, an international French publisher, sued Google Inc. along with its French branch, alleging that they have "produced counterfeits of its books on the Book Search site" (Gautschi par. 1). La Martiniere feels that showing only small portions of the books is misrepresenting the books, the authors, and the publishers. Importantly, marketing designs are being interrupted by Google Books (par. 2). In the UK, the International Publishers Association and Google have not entered a lawsuit yet. Instead, they are attempting negotiation to solve their issue at this point, but legal action is still an option (Bone par. 1, 5).

When I originally heard of this idea, I thought that all books would be fully viewable online, and I would never have to buy a book again, especially those expensive textbooks. If this had been the truth, this project would never have been possible, because copyright infringement would have been inevitable. But as it is now, Google Books is in the process of obtaining its goal to "scan every single book ever published, and to make the full texts searchable" (Toobin 30). Without Google's resources for this project, the University of Michigan realizes how difficult it would have been to do on their own. Professor James Hilton, associate provost at University of Michigan, feels that without Google's aid, "it would have taken over 1,000 years to digitize our current collections" (Dye par. 7). With the support of Google, the project should be done within six years (par. 7). Overall, Google is trying to stay true to its unofficial company motto, "Don't do evil" (Toobin 35), because as Google Books grows, more people will use it (Quint par. 12). Even though Google will inevitably profit from this

venture, I also will benefit from having access to books of the past and links to books of the future.

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HST 370

## Owning Life

As the Human Genome Project swung into full force in the late 1990s, the pursuit for the rights over the newly discovered genes and DNA sequences in the human genome began. For the first time the race to own human life hit the world, and hit with a force large enough to change the biotechnology world forever. Both proponents and opponents of gene patenting quickly sprung up and began an argument that has continued through today. The history of gene patenting is brief, yet convoluted. This paper will briefly investigate the appearance of gene patenting, arguments from both sides on the criteria for a gene patent, court cases and international debates that shaped the present conditions of gene patenting, and the result that gene patenting has on the economy, in the field of research, and on the future of medical discoveries in general.

The Human Genome Project, begun in 1990, was a 13-year effort between the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institutes of Health with Eric Lander as its most well-known researcher (and first author of the genome paper published by the Project), and a second private company called Celera Genomics founded by Craig Venter (Herper). The project goals included identifying all of the approximately 20,000-25,000 genes in human DNA, determining the sequences of the 3 billion chemical base pairs that make up human DNA, storing of the information in databases, improving the tools for data analysis, transferring of related technologies to the private sector, and addressing the ethical, legal, and social issues (ELSI) that may arise ("Human Genome"). Little did researchers know when they first embarked on this project of the enormity of the final goal listed. The Human Genome Project opened up a brand new territory of investigation, and land-grabbers appeared in full-force to claim rights over whatever they could find, regardless of what it was or what it did. In an interview with Matthew Herper, news analyst for Forbes magazine, Venter is quoted as saying, "The natural tendency I have found in the business community is to block things, to keep things secret, to try and tie up everything whether they understand it or not for commercial advantage. That's what drove the patent craze on genes" (Herper).

Gene patenting and the right to own parts of DNA that belong to every human is anything but a simple black and white idea. There are those, scientists and laymen alike, who fall heavily on one side or the other, but the majority of people, especially those learned in this topic, fall into the huge grey area in the middle. The belief that science should be free to all means that those researching would recoup little of their investment, and the belief that science should be paid to the researchers raises the expense of all those who are consumers of the products of research. This is where the main problem lies, and the future and checkbooks of mankind are dependant upon the reality of the gene patent problem.

To understand the arguments better, the criteria for granting gene patents must be identified. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) requires that all inventions must be novel, non-obvious, and useful, and these three traits must be fully described. This patent would then give the inventor the rights to the invention for about twenty years by creating a "social contract between an inventor and his or her government" (Goldstein and Golod 1315). The question to be answered now is how the criteria are defined and some small steps taken to ensure the criteria are met.

The patenting of natural occurring substances seems far from natural to many, especially when the criterion for a patent calls for a novel invention, not purely a discovery. How is it then, that natural substances can become novel? The answer: by isolating or purifying the substance. "Courts have long recognized that purifying or isolating materials from nature makes them novel and, thus, patentable" (1316). This includes purified proteins as decided in the *Parke-Davis and Co. v. H.K. Mulford & Co.* case of 1912 based on purified adrenaline, purified prostaglandins as decided in *In re Bergstrom* in 1970, or purified microbial cultures as decided in *In re Bergy* in 1977 based on a pure culture of *Streptomyces velosus*. In the *Diamond v. Chakrabarty* case of 1980, the Supreme Court decided that any human-made non-natural microorganism was patentable, with this case focused on genetically altered crude oil-consuming bacteria. The Court stated that, "anything under the sun that is made by man" is patentable (1316).

This, of course, led directly to purified DNA patents, which the PTO will allow only if the sequences have been isolated and purified. It is not, however, just the gene sequence or DNA sequence that can be patented, but also the use of the gene product and the method of purifying the gene



product ("About: Biotech/Biomedical"). An example of this is Taq polymerase, a naturally occurring enzyme in *Thermus aquaticus*, bacteria found in hot springs, which is used in a process called Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). Patents on Taq polymerase claimed the purification of it, the PCR process, and a recombinant form of it ("About: Biotech/Biomedical"). Of course, in order to patent the application of the mutant or recombinant gene, the novelty, utility and non-obviousness of it must be shown.

The need to fit the non-obvious portion of the criteria is where much argument takes place. Many claim that finding a new gene has become too obvious and too easy due to the increasing amount of technology in the field. Barbara A. Caulfield of Affymetrix, a leading company in biotechnology, wrote in an IP Worldwide article entitled *Why We Hate Gene Patents*, "powerful supercomputers have replaced the lab bench as the source of discovery of genes, so the patents issued are really on information" (Caulfield). Lee Bendekgey and Diana Hamlet Cox of Incyte Genomics wrote a rebuttal in IP Worldwide claiming that Caulfield made too much of the distinction between discovery and invention, responding with, "the discovery and characterization of a gene requires significant invention in both the design of experiments and the analysis of data" (Bendekgey and Cox). Opponents of gene patents also point out, "that with modern automated gene analysis techniques, the non-obviousness of genes is becoming doubtful," to which supporters respond, "gene *function* is not obvious" (Meek). The supporters go on to argue that genes that are patented are useful and worthy of a patent because, "genes are not mere discoveries because the genes are patented together with inventive descriptions of how they can be used for diagnosis or therapy" (Meek).

It appears that the obviousness of a gene is in the eye of the beholder, and novelty is decided simply by purifying, isolating or elucidating a natural substance, but the last criterion to be satisfied still remains: how much utility is enough for a patent? In an interview with a news analyst from BioSpace, Dr. William Haseltine, Chairman and CEO of Human Genome Sciences, stated:

Absolute utility is not necessary. Rather,

society has come up with a compromise which is: If you have a good reason to believe that this chemical or this gene or this human pro-

tein will be useful, and you can teach somebody how to use it, then you're issued the patents. You don't actually have to go through a full FDA trial and show that it's safe and effective in order to fulfill patent utility requirements. You fulfill your utility requirement far short of that. ("Gene Patents")

Haseltine also explains later in the interview that the majority of patents are given not for the utility of the gene or the protein as a drug itself, but rather, "to the gene or the human protein as a method to find the drug" ("Gene Patents").

In January 2001, the PTO became stricter with utility requirements for human gene claims by issuing the "Utility Examination Guidelines" under which examiners will apply a three-way test of the utility (United States). "To be acceptable" under the new guidelines, "a utility has to be 'credible,' 'specific' and 'substantial'" (Goldstein and Golod 1318). The PTO will, however, consider homology similarity to be sufficient of credibility, specificity and substantial utility, meaning that, "an applicant can obtain a claim to DNA and deduced protein sequences based purely on bioinformatics" without having to do any "wet chemistry" (1318). The American Medical Association Genetics section wrote of the new guidelines, "these regulations have put to rest any question about whether genes can be patented at all -- making it clear that companies may indeed patent both whole genes as well as pieces of genes, though genetic sequences (known as ESTs) are not patentable" ("AMA Science: Gene Patent Guidelines"). "Although a court has not as yet followed the PTO's Utility Guidelines to invalidate a patent on a gene sequence for lack of utility," Beth E. Arnold, partner at Foley Hoag LLP in a Bio-IT World article says, "it is only a matter of time" (Arnold).

The gene patent issue does not affect only the United States, but also incites arguments worldwide. One major example of international issues over gene patenting and the beginning of a fierce debate involved the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes which are used to test for a very malignant form of breast and ovarian cancer. A United States biotechnology company, Myriad Genetics, was awarded nine U.S. patents on the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes (from late 1990s to early 2000s), giving them exclusive rights to commercialize laboratory-testing services, diagnostic kits, and therapies and therapeutic products based on the gene sequences (Mayor). However,

BRCA1 was discovered as the result of an international collaboration, and a UK patent on BRCA2 was held by Cancer Research Technology because much of the BRCA2 gene work took place in Britain at the Sanger Center in Cambridge and was first published by Mike Stratton's group at the Institute of Cancer Research, London (Mayer). The researchers who worked at the Sanger Center and the Institute of Cancer Research still today claim that they discovered the gene first; "BRCA2 gene was first published by the British group in *Nature* in 1995; Myriad simply issued a press release announcing they were patenting it" (Mayer).

Britain's National Health Service was in dispute for awhile with Myriad over licensing and royalty payments, and others got involved in the debate as well. The French Ministry of Health said, "Myriad has an excessive monopoly and threatens basic research," asserting that Myriad's tests cost nearly \$2,500 and still failed to identify ten to twenty percent of all mutations, while a test developed in France cost only \$680 (Mayer).

In February of 2004, the controversial patent was revoked by the European Patent Office (EPO), ruling that the patent holder, Myriad Genetics of Salt Lake City, Utah, US, "can no longer levy a license fee for European screening tests that use the gene" (Coghlan). This decision also eliminated Myriad's patent on the BRCA2 gene (not just the test), because the charity Cancer Research UK had filed its patent first, and in May of 2004 the BRCA1 gene patent was revoked as well, following claims that it was not "inventive" (Coghlan). "It locks Myriad completely out of Europe on this," said head of clinical programs at Cancer Research UK, Richard Sullivan (Coghlan).

On February 11, 2004, almost immediately after revoking the U.S. patent on BRCA2, a Europe-wide patent on BRCA2 was granted to charity company Cancer Research UK, allowing for publicly owned laboratories to use the gene free of charge. Susan Mayor, news analyst for *The Scientist* magazines notes that "any laboratory wanting to investigate the gene would usually have to pay a license fee to the patent holder, but Cancer Research Technology has agreed in principle to waive the fees for all public laboratories that apply to it" (Mayor).

Peter Rigby, chief executive of the Institute of Cancer Research in London, in response to the welcome of researchers of the charity assuming the patent stated, "this patent means that the discovery of the BRCA2

gene, which was made here at the Institute, will be freely available to our colleagues throughout Europe to research" (Mayor). Researchers were thrilled that the genes were now free to use and were thankful for both the government's and the charity's decision. Gert Mattijs, head of molecular diagnostics, University Hospital, Leuven, Belgium, and a representative of the European Society of Human Genetics said, "On behalf of many European genetic diagnostic laboratories involved in the opposition procedures against the patents on the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes owned by Myriad Genetics, we wish to express our strong appreciation to Cancer Research UK because they have chosen to offer royalty-free licenses on its patent on the BRCA2 gene to public health services in European countries" (Mayor).

So how might the U.S. benefit from this decision? Sullivan thought "it might be an important precedent-setter," perhaps increasing the pressure on the US PTO to reject or revoke "obvious gene patents" (Coghlan). It certainly seemed to have some impact, as an April 19 report on patents by the US National Academies of Science urged to US PTO to be more careful the patents it handed out for gene sequences.

Since it is obvious that gene patents are a part of biotechnology, at least for awhile, it is important to consider when a patent is infringed, what or who is exempted from patent infringement and how to avoid infringement, in order to understand the arguments for both sides. "Generally speaking, infringement occurs when someone makes, uses, sells or offers to sell a patented isolated or purified human gene or a construct containing such a gene. In addition, it is considered to be a patent infringement to import an isolated gene made by a process patented in the United States" (Goldstein and Golod 1319). That is the definition of direct infringement. Of course, there is always indirect infringement where a person aids in any of these activities.

With a definition covering such a broad variety of activities, the Congress-enacted and judge-enacted exemptions to patent infringement are essential for many researchers. The first, and perhaps most important exemption, is that for clinical research. This congress-enacted exemption allows for a person to obtain regulatory approval under the FDA statute "for the manufacturing of a protein drug using patented recombinant DNA technology" while being immune to infringement under Section 202 of the Hatch-Waxman Act (1319; Arnold). Another is the "medical procedures

exemption” which exempts any ‘medical practitioner’ or ‘related health care entity’ from infringement when carrying out a medical or surgical procedure on a body, or a genetic diagnostic or susceptibility test (1319; Arnold). This exemption applies mostly to surgical operations and in vivo diagnostic procedures, but does not cover the use of patented instruments, whose use could lead to patent infringement (1320).

There is also a judge-created exemption, although it is very narrowly defined “for anyone to makes, uses, or sells a patented invention purely to satisfy scientific curiosity or for philosophical reasons” (1320; Arnold). This exemption, however, is hard to come by because of the very general definition.

Dr. Jorge A. Goldstein and Dr. Elina Golod explain how one general group is almost always exempted from infringement by explaining that “the test used in the United States today for determining whether an activity is actionable patent infringement is whether the activity is carried out with commercial interest” (1320). It is therefore assumed by most that when a corporation is involved, it is involved with commercial interest and therefore must be infringing on one patent or another, yet many universities are automatically considered to be faultless because much of the laboratory activity is done merely for learning and not for commercial reasons. Although there have been many court cases dealing with universities, since many are now getting involved in biotechnology, there has been a lack of patent litigation on universities because “the legal boundaries between commercial activity and bona fide research are unclear when it comes to universities” (1322). There is also a public relation problem to be dealt with apart from strictly legal issues, in that the person or group charging the school with infringement “could be depicted in the press as squelching scientific research on the altar of commerce” (1322).

Andy Coghlan, news analyst for NewScientist.com writes of his opinion on the best defense for patent infringement, “If you’re infringing on a gene patent, can’t develop an effective design-around, and are unwilling or unable to obtain a license, the best strategy may be to lie low.” Barbara Caulfield addressed the question of what could be done when scientists receive letters demanding them to stop their research unless they pay fees and obtain licenses from patent holders, by noting that they could “negotiate

the license” or try to “invent around a patent.” She strongly notes, however, that “scientists shouldn’t have to research around a discovery” (Caulfield).

Another way to avoid infringement is the same as can be found in any other industry: trade secrets. A trade secret in the biotechnology field is the withholding of confidential information, as opposed to putting all information on the research done and discoveries made out to the public in order to receive a patent. A writer for the biotechnology section of About.com notes that, “An alternative to patent protection is to keep an invention as a trade secret” (About: Biotech/Biomedical). Haseltine says that the decision of whether to file a patent or not is based on, “the following bet that the discoverer makes: Will I get more protection by revealing my information and filing a patent, or do I keep it a secret?” (“Gene Patents”). He says that if the medical use of a gene is known, his company will generally file for a patent, whereby if the medical use is not known, it may better be kept as a secret for awhile (“Gene Patents”).

Apart from legal aspects of patent holder’s rights, infringement rules and exceptions, and meeting criteria for a patent in the first place, the result of gene patents and an outlook on the future with patents is one of opinions based in facts. One of the strongest arguments against gene patenting is that genetic patents result in, “cost blow-outs” in health care and stifle research, said Australian Law Reform Commission president David Weisbrot, speaking of widespread anxiety in Australia amongst researchers (Smith). The American Medical Association notes that physicians in particular fear that if too many patents are given on genes, genetic testing may become prohibitively expensive due to license fees associated with the use of each tests (“AMA Science: Gene Patenting”). He also notes that due to these fees, along with many companies owning many different genes, “this technology may never be used effectively to help patients” (“AMA Science: Gene Patenting.”). Caulfield writes, “Creating exclusionary rights in a few companies or countries will inevitably lead to a disparity between those that can and cannot afford the advances that are emerging from genomics research. Sue Mayer, writing for Strategic Insights legal services on *Bio-IT World.com* noted that patents on genes, along with other natural products like plants and seeds hurt not only those in developed countries strong in biotechnology, but also on developed countries, writing that, “two new reports from eminent bodies undermine the assertion that patents on genes

are good for innovation and highlight the detrimental effect that patenting drugs, crops and seeds can have on developing countries (Mayer).

Craig Venter agrees with the opponents of gene patenting when it comes to blocking essential research. He was noted as saying, “blocking another biotech or a pharmaceutical company from trying to come up with a cure for a disease really does block research and the public loses” (Herper). When doing research on diagnostic tests of haemochromatosis, a progressive iron-overload disease for *Nature Magazine* in 2002, four scientists, Jon F. Merz, Antigone G. Kriss, Debra G.B. Leonard and Mildred K. Cho acquired data that shows that “patents inhibited development and validation of clinical assays” (577). They found that nearly 30 percent of the laboratories that had previously been a part of genetic testing for haemochromatosis reported “discontinuing or not developing genetic testing in the light of the exclusive license granted on the patents” and that testing was compromised due to the limiting of laboratories to a single testing kit, “as developing better or cheaper tests is not encouraged” (579). Helen Wallace, deputy director of GeneWatch, a not-for-profit public interest group, “suggested that the only solution was a total ban on patents for genes” (Mayor).

In light of all of this animosity, how do the supporters respond? Haseltine simply responds with, “No one would develop a drug if you didn’t have a patent” (“Gene Patents”). He further goes on to explain, “a gene patent protects their investment by allowing them to use those proprietary tools to discover drugs. That company would not exist and the investments and discovery of those drugs would not exist, in that form at any rate, if those patents did not exist” (“Gene Patents”). James Meek writing a special report on the ethics of genetics for *The Guardian* in 2000 states that patents are important for innovative companies in order to allow them to recoup their investment, and an article from the AMA agrees that without a recoup of research and development costs, which can oftentimes be huge, the incentive for investment will be greatly reduced (Meek). Others stand on the same platform, stating that not only do patents foster innovation, but also “revenues from licensing of patents can recover the costs of developing the patent and support future research (“About: Biotech/Biomedical”). Lee Bendekgey and Diana Cox wrote in their rebuttal “Why We Need Gene Patents” that, “patents protect against free rider. It is expensive and risky to discover and characterize genes, but easy to copy those discoveries.”

Rolf Hoemke, spokesman for the German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies stated, "Drug companies must invest heavily in research and the "patent rights should go to those who have done the work" (Stafford). Finally, both Eric Lander and Craig Venter seem to agree on the fact that in such cases where genes can be made into useful and known drugs, "gene patents are essential" (Herper).

Gene patenting has deemed acceptable by the U.S. government and those in charge, yet complete agreement among the masses has still not been reached. The arguments from both sides are justified and valid, as both opinions contain truth in good and bad form. It no longer seems to be a question of whether the patents existing today deserve to be in existence, as the criteria for patenting is strong, but rather what this existence means, and what it holds for the future. Perhaps this dispute is a necessary evil, for where there is disagreement, there is a fight for progress. And progress is all we can ask for in drug research and the betterment of medical care.

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What's in a Name: Causes and Casualties  
of the First "Crusade"

When we mention a "crusade," what are we talking about? Most Americans know—or think that they do. President Ronald Reagan called for a "crusade for freedom" in a 1982 address.<sup>1</sup> His wife, Nancy Reagan, "crusaded" against drug use later in the decade.<sup>2</sup> To the average American, a "crusade" has positive and even romantic connotations: the quest of stalwart heroes for justice. Even when historians trace the word back to its origins, they tend to concentrate on the good intentions of the First Crusade. Scholars expound upon the piety of those who, with swords in hand and God in heart, set out to free the Holy Land in His name. However, this rosy emphasis misses the war's darker side: the agony and wholesale slaughter of thousands. To grasp the full meaning of the term "crusade," we need to understand the First Crusade (1096-1099 C.E.) not only for its allegedly pious motives, but also for the suffering of its victims.

Though the First Crusade began in 1096 C.E., the events that laid its foundation were unfolding much earlier in the century. At the heart of everything was the latest and greatest Middle Eastern power: the Seljuk Turks. These Central Asian nomads started out in the Islamic empire as indentured mercenaries. A formidable fighting people, they specialized in mounted archery and served for years under the Abbasid caliphate, a religiously-based government infrastructure which had been weakening for decades. After a steady accumulation of power, the Turks conquered Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, and assumed control of Muslim territory.<sup>3</sup> This territory would later include the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was and remains a pilgrimage site of unique importance to Muslims, Jews, and particularly Christians, containing many of their most sacred objects and locations. Since Christian pilgrims spent money as they traveled, the Muslims, with few exceptions, had left them alone until the eleventh century C.E.<sup>4</sup> In the first few decades of the new millennium, however, the Fatimid caliph Hakim (who held sway over Muslim lands in Egypt and Palestine) declared himself "god incarnate" and trashed several Christian landmarks in Jerusalem, including the Holy Sepulcher and the Church of Constantine.

Tensions continued to run high when the Seljuk Turks wrested control of Jerusalem from the Egyptian Fatimids in 1071.<sup>5</sup> As zealous converts to the Islamic faith, the Turkish potentates were horrified to discover that Christian pilgrims were passing freely through their lands and practicing heathen worship in a city sacred to Islam. Crusades scholar Thomas Madden reported that the Turks “destroyed some churches, murdered clergy, and seized pilgrims,” but also remarked that “it was not long... before the new conquerors realized [that] Jerusalem was profitable only by virtue of its pilgrims.” State-sanctioned violence was quick to stop, but widespread unrest along the pilgrimage routes—which crisscrossed territories that the Turks were still attempting to subdue—still made a trek to the Holy Land a risky endeavor. Even so, the Crusades as we know them today might never have happened were it not for the other catalyst: the encroachment of the Seljuk Turks upon Constantinople, gem of the Byzantine Empire.

The Byzantine Empire, whose capital straddled the Bosphorus Strait between Europe and Asia, had not been doing well since its Macedonian dynasty died out in 1056.<sup>7</sup> During the ensuing political scramble, the empire’s neighbors had eagerly attempted to snap up chunks of Byzantine domain; the Seljuk Turks were among them.<sup>8</sup> Alp Arslan, the second ruler of the Seljuk dynasty, wished to encourage expansion after consolidating his holdings in Persia, and started pushing his way into Byzantine territory in 1068. In 1071, the Turks demolished the Byzantine army at Manzikert and even captured the emperor himself.<sup>9</sup> After that, there seemed to be no stopping their progress across Anatolia. Closer and closer they came to the Bosphorus until a firm hand finally appeared at the Byzantium helm: Alexius Comnenus I, inaugurator of the Comneni dynasty. Crowned in 1081, he led the few forces that Byzantium had left against the Turks and halted their approach somewhere around Nicaea, a city less than fifty miles from Constantinople. On clear nights, the citizens could probably see Turkish campfires flickering across the Bosphorus strait. This was an unbearable situation, but Alexius did not have sufficient forces to beat the Seljuks back any further.<sup>10</sup> He needed help... and he would seek it in Europe’s knights.

In 1095, Alexius wrote to Rome and implored Pope Urban II for assistance against the Turkish threat. Urban responded by calling to arms the men of Europe in a famous address to the bishops of southern France.

Contemporary Fulcher of Chartres recorded some of the more stirring passages:

For, as most of you have been told, the Turks, a race of Persians... have killed or captured [Christians], have overthrown churches, and have laid waste to God's kingdom... O, what a shame, if a people, so despised, degenerate, and enslaved by demons would thus overcome a people with the trust of almighty God... O how many evils will be imputed to you by the Lord Himself, if you do not help those who, like you, profess Christianity! Let those who are accustomed to wage private wars wastefully even against Believers, go forth against the Infidels in a battle worthy to be undertaken.<sup>11</sup>

Though Urban mentioned Byzantine Christians needing defense, historians seem to agree that the Pope focused more directly on the need to "cleanse" Jerusalem of its evil Turkish presence. For those uninspired by his tales of Turkish barbarity, Urban played his trump card: spiritual absolution for all those who died en route or in battle.<sup>12</sup> This was enough for Europe. When Urban declared, "God wills it!" in Latin, the hills rang back with an echo from the mob: "*Deus vult!*"<sup>13</sup>

Of course, there was more to becoming a crusader than simply agreeing with God's representative in Rome; one also had to promise to journey to the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and sew a cloth cross onto one's clothing.<sup>14</sup> Otherwise, however, anyone and everyone could join the crusading bandwagon—and, to a great extent, they did. As the message spread across Europe, men, women, children, and the geriatric all pledged their lives to the crusade together. Some mortgaged their homes and possessions to prepare for the journey. Others set out without provisions of any kind. Many had no skill in fighting; in fact, Thomas Madden has noted that, of the hordes who participated in the First Crusade, "only a small minority" were the knights that Alexius had requested.<sup>15</sup> Most of the others were poor, unsupplied, and undisciplined commoners. Having no preparations of equipment, money, or mortgage to make, tens of thousands of them set out early on what has come to be called the Peasants' Crusade.<sup>16</sup>

Two charismatic men known as Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penitens were leading this advance party, though at first they split it into two groups (which thus managed to do twice the damage). On April 12, 1096,

Peter the Hermit paused with his assemblage at Cologne, where would spend the next eight days preaching to more potential crusaders, but Walter, unwilling to wait, left immediately.<sup>17</sup> By May, he and his followers had arrived in Byzantine-controlled Hungary. They were greeted at the Hungarian border city of Belgrade with confusion. No one had been given orders as to what to do with the ragtag mob, so the garrison decided to play it safe and refuse them entry. Having virtually no supplies, the mob began pillaging the country for food.<sup>18</sup> This, predictably, led to violence with the locals, and ended with atrocity. Fed up with looting, the garrison at Belgrade “fell upon Walter’s forces and scattered them, burning alive [sixty men] who had taken shelter in a chapel.” The rest survived only because of intervention by Alexius, who conveyed them under escort to his capital.<sup>19</sup>

By the time that Peter and his twenty thousand arrived at Belgrade, an argument over the price of shoes was enough to start a riot between the crusaders and local citizens. Storming the walls of Semlin, the crusaders butchered at least four thousand Hungarians before hastily scuttling out of the area, fearful of retribution, with armloads of supplies. The citizens of Belgrade were so terrified by this news that they abandoned their city for the woods as the crusaders approached; this turned out to be a wise choice, given the army’s recently stoked cravings for loot and blood. Marching onward, Peter’s crusaders killed captives taken from the local troops, and, upon arriving in Belgrade, looted and then burned the village to the ground.<sup>20</sup> Next to suffer the Peasants’ Crusade was Nish. The town gave them food in return for a promise to depart as soon as possible, but on their way out, a few of the crusaders decided to set a group of mills ablaze in retribution for an argument. This time, however, Peter’s forces paid a price for their belligerence. Nish deployed its entire garrison against the intruders; when the carnage was over, more than a quarter (five thousand) of Peter’s entourage lay dead in the fields. Peter and the other survivors were escorted with grim severity by Byzantine troops to Constantinople. There they rejoined Walter’s people and were ferried hastily across the Bosphorus by Alexius Comnenus I to be enslaved and slaughtered, almost to a man, by the Turks on the other side.<sup>21</sup>

Other divisions of the Peasants’ Crusade did not even make it as far as Asia Minor; too pressing to them was the issue of all the Jews left to

be slain in Europe. Solomon bar Simson, whom we know only from his chronicle, gave this as the contemporary rationale for Jewish persecution:

As they passed through the towns where the Jews dwelled, they said to one another: 'Look now, we are going a long way to seek out the profane shrine and to avenge ourselves on the Ishmaelites, when here, in our very midst, are the Jews—they whose forefathers murdered and crucified him for no reason. Let us first avenge ourselves on them and exterminate them from among the nations so that the name of Israel will no longer be remembered, or let them adopt our faith.'<sup>22</sup>

In other words, some of the crusaders wondered why they should trek all the way to Palestine to defend their faith from the Turks when large populations of Jews, who were not only unbelievers but also responsible (on a genetic level) for the murder of their Messiah, were residing casually in their midst. Such crusaders were usually led by one of three men—Volkmar, Gottschalk, or Count Emicho—and together they initiated a wave of stark terror and bloodshed for Jews across the Rhine. The knight Volkmar led a German band of ten thousand against the Jews of Magdeburg and Prague; the knight Gottschalk orchestrated the mass murder of the Jewish community Ratisbon.<sup>23</sup> However, Count Emicho's campaign was indisputably the worst. Killing eleven in the city of Speyer (and only stopping there because of a bishop's intervention), he moved on to Worms, where he and his men butchered the trapped Jewish people despite having received protection money. Solomon bar Simson recounts the scene in emotional terms, praising the bravery of those who chose death over defilement (baptism): "The Jews... exposed their throats for their heads to be severed... they slew one another—each man his kin, his wife and children."<sup>24</sup> Some of those who did convert and accept baptism later committed suicide out of grief and shame.<sup>25</sup> Emicho's troops buried naked all of the Jews killed at Worms, a number which Solomon bar Simson puts at eight hundred, and in Mainz, they slew a thousand more. Vigorous looting accompanied every pogrom.<sup>26</sup> All totaled, it is estimated that the First Crusaders murdered several tens of thousands of Jews in France, Germany, and along the Rhine before their anti-Semitic vigor fizzled (typically upon encountering strong resistance to this behavior in Hungary).<sup>27</sup> Most historians trace the real origins of this medieval holocaust to greed. Many Jews at the time were

money-lenders, and many money-lenders were rich individuals; the sudden need for cash to finance a journey east most likely galvanized the crusaders' anti-Semitic zeal.

Lest it be imagined that the "true" crusading force—composed primarily of those who journeyed east under the banners of the famous First Crusade leaders, and with full preparations—was more benevolent than its peasant counterpart, let us examine the highlights of that quest. In Constantinople, while waiting to be ferried across the Bosphorus Strait, one group of crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon plundered and burned a suburb of the great city for supplies.<sup>28</sup> More than one in seven crusaders died of starvation, skirmishing, or disease during a ghastly two year siege of Antioch that drove some Christians to cannibalism.<sup>29</sup> Fulcher of Chartres recorded that when the Christian invaders finally took Antioch, the "rabble" set about plundering everything in sight while the "proved soldiers" kept to the "killing [of] Turks."<sup>30</sup> No prior horror, however, could top the massacre that ensued upon the capture of Jerusalem. Six thousand Jews were burned alive as they sought refuge in a synagogue.<sup>31</sup> Thirty thousand Muslims flocked to the al-Aqsa mosque for sanctuary, but they, too, found no respite once the crusaders broke inside. Michael D. Hull hypothesized that it was "not insanity but policy," with no recorded instances of rape amidst the otherwise indiscriminate slaughter. Not even the children escaped the axe. According to Hull, the First Crusade killed a grand total of about forty thousand humans upon its triumphant arrival in the Holy City. The priests, lords, and peasants who had come so far were finally able to fulfill their oath: walking barefoot "across the bodies and body fragments as if they were a carpet for their convenience" and "through the blood flowing around their feet," they made their way chanting and singing to the Holy Sepulcher. Raymond of Aguilers, a chronicler of the First Crusade who followed Raymond IV of Toulouse to Jerusalem, declared, "This is a day the Lord made. We shall rejoice and be glad in it."<sup>32</sup>

The crusade's hideous casualties were a product of the times, say the historians: commonplace in that day and age, and not to be dwelt upon. This is the preferred perspective, allowing Westerners to feel pride in their past. Romantics to the core, we as a people prefer to remember the "holy cause," and not the casualties—the beauty of spiritual devotion, and not the ugliness of death. However, no intentions, no matter how pure, could have



justified the cumulative misery and slaughter wreaked by the First Crusade. To have so much human desolation tied to a single endeavor is horrible; to have that endeavor live on as a byword for intrepid heroism is worse. I ask you now to remember the casualties, not the cause, and to think twice before calling your next noble project a “crusade.”

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# Department of Writing

The Department of Writing offers instruction in academic, creative, and professional writing. Academic writing courses, which are designed for all students in the university community, include first-year composition and junior-level writing. For students who choose to major in writing, the department offers emphasis areas in creative and professional writing. The department also offers a minor in writing for students wishing to enhance their writing abilities for personal or professional reasons.

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The department has 48 faculty and approximately 180 majors and minors. Altogether we offer about 250 sections a year in academic, creative, and professional writing.

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