

# Writers Place Awards 2021

The Writers' Place Awards Chair is pleased to announce the winners of the 2021 awards.

A big thank you to the judges who volunteered to read entries:

Laura Cruser  
Valerie Fazel  
Elizabeth Hamm  
Heather Hoyt  
Sarah Hynes  
Kathrine Keller  
Jeremy Meyer  
Sean Moxley-Kelly  
Sam Ruckman  
Jennifer Waters

On the left menu, you'll see the papers of the winners who chose to have their papers published here.

## 2020-2021 Writers' Place Awards Winners

### **ENG 101**

1. Jacqueline Morales, "Literacy is communicating in a way that effectively conveys your message" (Instructor: Christie Louie)
2. Jaylynn S Jarrett, "Cardboard Box" (Instructor: Seher Shah)
3. Iudith Nichescu, "Class Division and Gender Bias in Snowpiercer" (Instructor: Kerry Fine)

### **ENG 102**

1. Elena Sloboda, "Proposed Amendment to the ESSA: Gifted Student Success Act" (Instructor: Michael McVeigh)
2. Stephanie Albers, "The Controversial History and Current Reception of the Word, 'Queer'" (Instructor: Sarah Hynes)
3. Saba Aafrin, "Evaluating My iRobot Roomba" (Instructor: Valerie Finn)

### **WAC 101/ENG 101 stretch**

1. Jordan Parsell, "Four Peaks" (Instructor: Kathrine Keller)
2. Evan Barr, "Plan for Success" (Instructor: Lance Graham)
3. Hayley Hoenes, "An Analysis of We Are The Weather: Saving The Planet At Breakfast" (Instructor: Sarah Hynes)

### **ENG 105**

1. Alex Pho, "Rhythmic Algebra" (Instructor: Corri Wells)
2. Peyton Osha, "With Love, Comes Loss, Comes Love" (Instructor: Nate Bump)

3. Nathan Harris, “A Cowboy’s Lessons in Love and Tennis” (Instructor: Corri Wells)

**ENG 107**

1. Shrey Garg, “The Play Station: The millennial version of the arcade games” (Instructor: Steffi Sin)

**ENG 108**

1. Shrey Garg, A Blog on the Honeybee (Instructor: Avrajit Dey)

2. Tejal Tripathi, “Rhetorical Analysis: Jubilee- “Pro-Life vs Pro-Choice” (Instructor: Daeun Shin)

**WAC 107/ENG 107 stretch**

1. Vy Minh Chu, “What can we do to help with Climate Change?” (Instructor: Sarah Hynes)

2. Ning Wei, “What Jonathan Safran Foer Really Wants To Tell Us In The We Are The Weather?” (Instructor: Sarah Hynes)

3. Qi Zhou, “Reduce meat consumption for climate change” (Instructor: Sarah Hynes)

**ENG 215**

1. Sarah Bond, “Inclusive Classroom Literature: Empowering Female Students” (Instructor: Kristin Bennett)

2. Brisa Ramos, “An Analysis on Immigration Detention Centers Impact on Immigrant Children’s Mental Health” (Instructor: Kristin Bennett)

**ENG 217**

1. Ashley O’Dell, “Life of The Eldest Female Family Member” (Instructor: David Moody)

Literacy is communicating in a way that effectively  
conveys your message

by Jacqueline Morales

For as long as I can remember, my cousin Joshua has always been different from me, not because he’s four years older than me, or not because he’s a boy and I’m a girl, but because my cousin Joshua was diagnosed with severe autism at age three, you could not tell by looking at him, and you might attempt to strike up a conversation, but you’d get no reply. There wasn’t a time when you could speak to Josh and get a response back. Joshua’s always been mute. Fortunately, Josh can understand us, we just don’t always understand him. For instance, sometimes when we go to the grocery store and someone tries to talk to Joshua, they don’t realize he’s unable to answer them. Thus, after not getting acknowledged, they’d usually get frustrated, and we quickly have to explain the severity of his autism. You’d be surprised how often this response happens. It should be noted that it took many years for me to eventually learn the type of literacy I needed to relieve Joshua of his social anxiety when

communicating with me, but we finally have a mutual understanding of one another and can effectively communicate with each other.

I remember when I was five years old my Nana would pick my brother and me up from school and bring us to her house where Joshua lived. We'd do our homework at their house, eat, and play with our cousin Josh. Sometimes when you'd play with Josh things would be going smoothly, and in a matter of seconds, things would go downhill. Josh would get emotional and often violent. For instance, we loved hot wheels; Josh, my brother Daniel, and I would play with Josh's toy cars, and all of a sudden he'd get upset with you, grab your wrist very hard, dig his nails into your skin, and take the toy from you. I could never understand why Josh would behave that way, especially when we were all having such a good time playing together. My dad wasn't very fond of the scars I'd come home with after playing with my cousin, but my mom didn't want us going to daycare either so he let us continue to be babysat by my Nana. My Dad would get very angry and say I shouldn't play with Joshua, I didn't understand why not, Josh was my cousin, and I loved him very much, he's not dangerous. I knew he didn't mean to hurt me, I knew he was different from me, I just didn't understand how or why. I used to think he could talk, but he was just too upset and stayed quiet. I didn't get why he chose to hurt us when we could just as easily talk things out. I always felt like I was missing key information like everyone knew something I didn't. A year later, after my parents split up when I was 6 years old, I was spending a lot more time at my Nana's, even more so than before. I was much younger than I am now and I couldn't understand why my cousin Josh wasn't going to school like my brother and me, instead, he'd stay home with my Nana and learn from her instead. Around that time, I was starting to read a lot more, and that's when Josh took an interest in my school work. Whether I was sounding out words, formulating sentences, or adding and subtracting, he was sitting right there alongside me. I always liked the time we spent together when I was doing my school work because he didn't seem to get violent with me then, it's like he was trying to figure me out. After that, Josh moved on from his violence to writing on everything. I'd sit and watch Josh write all over things he wasn't supposed to, like important documents or mail, sometimes he'd dig his pen so deep into my Nana's wooden table there'd be a little hole filled with blue pen ink left indented in the table... she ended up replacing it. I could never understand why he'd do anything he did, so I'd just watch him inquisitively.

In my girlhood, I had asked a lot of questions to my mom about my cousin Joshua, and she answered the best she could given that she doesn't know everything (which at the time I would've never believed), but that's the thing about being a kid and growing up. You ask a lot of questions that can't always be answered with a black or white answer because things are never that easy. More often than not, it's all grey spots. By this time, I was about 14 years old, and I was babysitting Josh all by myself. During this time I'd stop thinking so much about myself and more importantly, about other people and how the things I did would affect them, but it still wasn't enough. I was always kind of an outta pocket kid, asking weird brutally honest questions about things I had no right bringing up. If I wasn't being quiet and shy I was being brutally honest with people, which usually got me into trouble. When I started being responsible for Joshua, someone who's got ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and is nonverbal, I quickly realized I had to be quiet and be attentive. I recognized and started categorizing his behavior, for example, I can specifically remember when fidget spinners were a fad and how I decided to get Joshua one. I'd always see him playing or stimming with something random like maybe a bottle cap. When I gave Josh the fidget spinner and he immediately started playing with it, I knew something was different, not about him but about me. I had stopped being selfish and asking immature questions and started observing what types of things brought him joy and made him comfortable. I had taken notice of what made Joshua stressed out, or what made him smile. When I stopped flapping my gums I was able to notice things I never had before about Josh, when I stopped using verbal communication and started effectively using visual communication I was able to connect with Joshua on a deeper more meaningful level. I immediately took notice of all the little things he did when he was happy, like shaking his foot to music, I figured out what he did to calm himself when he was having anxiety, or what made him laugh. By visually communicating just as Joshua would, I was able to fully gain his trust, and demonstrate how much I care about him. It was then that I really started to feel like I was close to Josh similarly to when we were children and I was doing my homework while sitting with him. I gained literacy by learning how to helpfully communicate with Joshua in a way I wasn't familiar with.

As we got older, I felt increasingly worried about his well-being and how Joshua's treated. Luckily, I wasn't the only one. Joshua has a great caseworker who lives nearby and swings by often to check up

on him. Furthermore, a caseworker's job is to evaluate the child's needs, listen to their concerns, and help them make plans. I met his caseworker once while I was over at their house. They were having a meeting, I got to listen in and hear what type of plans they had for Joshua, some goals, and how he was doing. More than that, I was able to notice the caseworker's genuine concern for Joshua. Sometimes, I selfishly felt like I was the only one in the whole world who could ever take care of Joshua, the way I believe he should be taken care of. I thought I was the only person who had his back. Seeing his caseworker's dedication to him, and his well-being really helped me understand how far my cousin's come and how much he's gone through with special needs. By observing the type of relationship Joshua has with his caseworker who is someone outside our family, I was able to identify his understanding of Joshua's method of communication, literacy as visual and non-verbal communication. When I saw the way they communicated with each other, I was determined to try it out for myself. After that, I immediately knew I had to change the way I interacted with Joshua. Before that, I had never realized how flawed my approach was. In addition, I was biased and extremely selfish, I never thought my way of communication could be wrong for Josh, I was only thinking about myself. I only cared about what was easy for me. I tried to view things as if I was an outsider like I wasn't myself and Josh wasn't my cousin. When you shift your perspective you're able to see new possibilities you can conquer your hurdles, our being the communication barrier. A few years ago, over summer vacation he'd spend the night at my house, which meant I'd have to help take care of him for the time being, and of course, I was happy to do it. This time I was ready to try out what I had noted his case worker doing during their meeting. Believe it or not it worked, instead of asking Joshua questions and having him get stressed out because he can't answer you back verbally, I thought of a different way. For instance, Joshua is surprisingly a super picky eater, so instead of asking him "Hey do you wanna eat pizza?" I'd show him some different options and let him pick out his own food. It wasn't easy and it definitely took some time, but it's safe to say that Joshua and I have a much more peaceful relationship. Because I stopped being so stuck in my ways, I was able to relieve some of his frustrations, which led to Josh becoming a lot more comfortable around me. It should be noted that comfort is imperative, especially when you're around someone who has a hard time with social interaction, which is why taking care of Josh requires your utmost attention and patience, and it's a big responsibility, you don't want anything to go awry while he's under your supervision. Not only did I have to set aside my selfish ways, and began anew, but I also discovered literacy pertaining to visual thinkers and their alternative, yet effective way of expression. Subsequently, being around Joshua that summer really helped me understand the kind of treatment he deserves, and what every range of an autistic child and adult deserves. They deserve someone who is willing to step outside their comfort zone instead of expecting them to. Someone who can accommodate them to alleviate their stressors.

Consequently, the more time I spent with my cousin the more it showed me his personality, and how he can die of laughter over something silly just like me or even enjoy the same music I listen to. Seeing Joshua happy is like a warm blanket on a cold night, you just need it in your life. Our time together demonstrated that there's more to people than their disabilities and that their disabilities do not define them. I was shown that no obstacle is too hard to overcome, that taking the easy way out isn't always an option. I learned that verbal communication isn't the only type of communication. Before I tried his way of communication I was just an inconsiderate child, asking inappropriate questions that often didn't have a simple yes or no answer. Josh has opened my eyes, now I see that I don't have to always ask questions instead I can use my surroundings to get the answers I need. Joshua, who like many other people doesn't use the typical form of communication by being verbal, has helped me grow into the person I am today, someone who is able to look at problems from different angles and proceed in a way that might seem foreign to others. I learned how to look at things through others points of view and try things their way instead of the easy way. I set aside the faults I had in my personality to begin my journey with literacy. I learned how much of a warrior Josh is, he doesn't have it as easy as everyone else, but he doesn't let that hold him back, he can find joy in the simplest things and learns to overcome everything thrown his way. He is an inspiration to me and everyone around him, and our time together is something I wouldn't trade for the world, if it weren't for him I would've never realized that I want to pursue a career in law as an advocate for disability rights, or how to effectively observe my environment. I'll forever be grateful for my cousin Josh. I'll spend a lifetime trying to repay Josh for the unexpendable lessons I've learned from him. I'll do my best to protect him and any other person like him who doesn't have a voice of their own.

# Class Division and Gender Bias in *Snowpiercer*

by Iudith Nichescu

A TV show which portrays a political allegory can make viewers suspicious regarding its actual meanings. The reason why can be perceived as the considerable gap between the fictional and real world in people's minds; and bringing the sci-fi genre in the equation certainly does not make things more favorable for the analogy the show presents. However, *Snowpiercer*, produced in 2020 and based on the 2013 movie with the same name, manages to exquisitely merge the two worlds together by presenting issues viewers can relate to in real life. Moreover, it does this in a post-apocalyptic context, in a confined setting which only goes on for a few hundred feet: a train. *Snowpiercer* acts as an analogy for class division and workplace gender inequality in our society, suggesting a change in leadership perspective as a potential solution for these issues.

The show takes a political stand when discussing class and gender, portraying class stratification and gender authority gaps as harmful for society. The train, which is highly divided by the presence of four classes, stands as a symbol for capitalist society nowadays. The engine of the train never stops running, which is the reason why its passengers can enjoy life while the world outside is an ice age. Here, the engine represents the means of production of capitalist society, and the inequalities present within the train are meant to be an allegory for an unjust form of capitalism. As Rob Wilson supports in his analysis of Korean-Global film, which includes the 2013 *Snowpiercer* movie, "with its class warfare-ridden train driving headlong through a frozen earth of climate-change apocalypse and immanent planetary disaster", the movie "haunts the contemporary moment of consumer pluralism (...) and technooptimism (...) as some doomsday allegory of *killer capitalism*" (201). The show means to convey that this form of capitalism fosters financial hierarchy, which inevitably leads to a highly stratified society where the gender bias is present. The restricted access from one car to another, the social boundaries and limitations defining each car which holds a particular class, the gap in living conditions are all consequences of a wrong perspective of the "engine eternal", which is meant to provide, not divide. The social stratification fosters a rigid view on people's identities and their place in society, completely disregarding their nature as humans and rather seeing them as a mere product of their class. This mentality influences the way the train approaches leadership; the whole society praises the founder of the train, Wilford, unaware of the fact that the head of Hospitality and the engineer who build the train, Melanie Cavill, is the one in charge of all operations. Her reluctance to make her identity known and the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Mr. Wilford clearly show a gender bias in authority. In a perfectly stratified world, it is not possible for someone, especially a woman, to exceed their assigned place and ruin the foundation upon which the train's way of life was built: the persona of Mr. Wilford. Society's refusal to accept Melanie Cavill in the highest position of authority, despite the qualifications which make her more competent than Mr. Wilford, leads to more chaos being unleashed. Therefore, the show's view on class and gender is tied to the outcomes of a "killer capitalism", as Wilson rightfully defines this environment based on inequalities (201).

*Snowpiercer* means to present class division as an analogy to present-day society, implying that it is anchored in the practice of capitalism through income inequality. The issue leaves the fictional sphere as it is given credibility in the real world, due to viewers' personal experiences. Zhou and Wodtke, two university professors specialized in Sociology, class structure and income inequality, have conducted research and analyzed this aspect within an extended time frame, from 1980 to 2016. Their results reflect the following: "Among men, aggregate class stratification increased by nearly 40 percent, from 0.29 in 1980 to 0.40 in 2016. Similarly, among women, aggregate class stratification increased by about 20 percent, from 0.39 to 0.47". Moreover, to determine class stratification, the authors compared these findings to data drawn from 2016 and 1950 of income stratification between blacks and whites. As Zhou and Wodtke conclude, "These comparisons indicate that, at present, the level of aggregate class stratification is relatively extreme. It is about three or four times as high as the current level of income stratification by race" (958-959). These conclusions clearly show the existence of class division as fostered by income inequality in our own modern society, over the course of a couple of decades. The link between the reality of the issue and the way it is presented in the show is evident: income inequality can be perceived in the universe of *Snowpiercer* as the considerable difference between the passenger's lifestyles, all due to one ticket bought before entering the train. One ticket, or the lack of, determines the rest of their lives at the board of the

engine, implementing boundaries and divisions that ultimately represent the train as a whole. An entire group of people is defined by a ticket that here stands for financial power – the sole aspect which decides the level of how “humane” one’s living conditions are. As a member of the lowest class on the train, a character called Old Ivan gives a fair description of the reality in which he is forced to live: “Wilford’s train is a fortress to class” (*Snowpiercer*). The allegory portrayed by *Snowpiercer* regarding class might seem a little extreme at first; however, it is just an emphasis of an issue already existent in real life: economic status which creates class division is, in fact, income inequality that influences social stratification in our own society.

*Snowpiercer* doesn’t just successfully tackle the issue of class as seen in capitalism. It provides an allegory to the concept of gender bias in workplace authority, as a result of the financial hierarchy of power. This reality has persisted in our society, being seen and perhaps even experienced by the show’s audience. Two experts in social and gender injustice, Mintz and Krymkowski, analyze this issue in a conducted study on differences in workplace authority over the course of time, between people of different genders and ethnicities. Their research supports the show’s purpose: to emphasize the downfalls of the current practice of capitalism by discussing concepts which belong to reality, such as gender inequality. According to Mintz and Krymkowski, the “percentage of women in an occupation accounted for nearly 40 percent of the authority differential between white men and women, and more than three-quarters for Hispanics”. Therefore, consistent to their assumptions, “these findings demonstrate that occupational gender segregation and authority deficits go together” (35). The gender gap in workplace authority is, thus, an issue anchored in present-day society that impacts people’s lives in a similar manner income inequality does. *Snowpiercer* goes on and expands it by attributing it to the deficiencies of our economic system. A financially stratified society functions based on the concept of segregation, which creates a hierarchy of power that influences every aspect of life, including the way society perceives and accepts authority. In the plot of the show, Melanie Cavill acts as a shadow for the alleged leader, Mr. Wilford. He represents order, and his authority is felt and respected by the entire population of the train despite his prolonged absence and lack of mechanical expertise. When the truth is revealed and society realizes who has been holding the authority all this time, they instantly reject the possibility and condemn Melanie to death, being more preoccupied with Mr. Wilford’s disappearance than her abilities as an engineer who built and helped the train function all along. The show is trying to communicate the idea that in a society where financial hierarchy dominates and divides, people are more prone to discrimination because of the inequalities to which they are exposed everyday.

*Snowpiercer* acts as an analogy to issues embedded in our political system in order to support a transformation in the practice of capitalism, through a change in leadership perspective. All throughout the show, the “tail” of the train which is not even considered a class and lives the most degrading lifestyle, strives to overcome their condition and advance to the top of the train. The only way in which they can do this is by taking over the engine; with the help of detective Layton who has been working up-train with Melanie Cavill, they can finally go through with the plan that has failed every previous year and has sacrificed precious lives striving for freedom. The “tail” allies with the third class and overcomes the system which has only been fighting for the first two classes, seizing the engine and leadership towards the end of the show. What is to be noted here, is that the engine never changes – the political system for which the show offers an allegory is never disregarded. *Snowpiercer* advocates for a shift in mentality from those in charge of the engine, in order to fight against the downfalls of current-day capitalism that revolve around inequalities. In doing so, the show supports a better democracy, and Layton’s approach to leadership proves this transition. The show does not presume to have all the answers – Melanie may have perpetuated Wilford’s system, but she saw no other choice; and though Layton is a good leader, implementing his ideas on the train’s way of life proves to be more difficult than thought. However, the “democracy” Layton installs clearly stands here as a suggestion for a better practice of capitalism in our own society, a prospect which has been supported by different scholars over time. Chassagnon and Guillaume are two research-specialized authors who discuss Albion W. Small view’s, a sociologist with an expertise in political economy, whose perspective completely matches the show’s output: “the treatment of inequalities is a necessary condition to build a reasonable capitalism, improving both the global well-being and the democratic functioning of the society for the benefit of all” (79). Thus, the solution the show provides to the diminishment of inequalities which define the world of *Snowpiercer* is made credible not only through the show’s plot, but through its foundation in real society.

*Snowpiercer* exquisitely manages to transfer a vast economic system into a few hundred feet of metal in order to reveal two realities: the practice of capitalism nowadays causes social segregation and gender inequality. At the same time, through the allegory it presents, it advocates for a change that would help instore a “reasonable capitalism” (Chassagnon and Guillaume 79), one that would fight to eradicate inequalities while supporting the self-development of each individual. *Snowpiercer* provides a bridge between the fictional and real world by taking issues founded in our own society and expanding them in a fictional universe in order to spread awareness that would ultimately lead to a course of action.

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# Proposed Amendment to the ESSA: Gifted Student Success Act

by Elena Sloboda

The current gifted education system in America is failing our students. I am a first year Teacher's College student at Arizona State University, and thorough research has revealed a gaping hole in how gifted education is handled in America. I am proposing that the US Department of Education make an amendment to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), specifically subpart 6, section 5464 part b; use of funds, in order to ensure that education systems nationally are meeting the needs of their students. This would be accomplished through a multistep amendment to the ESSA that raises the standards of gifted education nationally by requiring testing and retesting be conducted at a third grade level, alongside requirements that students must be retested every three years. Gifted programs can also no longer have firm number cutoffs, if a student is gifted or bright they cannot be denied access to a gifted program. The process through which students are tested and recommended for gifted programs must be reevaluated and made more equitable, by switching to the four step process proposed by Jean Gubbins in her 2020 journal article "Promising Practices for Improving Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs", restructuring identification

procedures that handle pre-identification, preparation, identification, and acceptance of placement (338). Gifted education programs affect the best and brightest of America's students. Their needs are not being adequately met at the state level, it is up to the Department of Education to amend the national laws to protect the educational standards of all students. By raising the standards nationally all of America will prosper.

A large part of the problem with gifted education systems is the lack of national standards. The National Association for Gifted Children and The Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted (NAGC/CSDPG) reported in their 2018-2019 study on the state of gifted education in the US that "Gifted services are provided in 49 states and the District of Columbia. While South Dakota reported that they have no state requirements or full-time equivalents for gifted education, there are some districts in the state that provide gifted services" (2). Gifted education has long been left for the states to deal with, yet some states still lack statewide requirements to provide gifted services. The NAGC and CSDPG further report that only half the states have state guidelines and programs, and only half of those states provide funding to local schools and educational facilities for gifted education. (3). It is clear that states are failing to adequately meet the needs of students on their own, although 38 states have legal mandates to identify gifted students, the majority do not have universal screening procedures (NAGC CSDPG 3). The current national law lacks clear definition of how programs will be constructed, nor does it require programs to be created, it simply allows for states to create programs. This needs to change, as states have shown a clear failure to adequately handle this on an individual level.

Leaving definitions of giftedness up to the districts creates a disparity for students. In a 2019 survey of 1284 gifted and talented educators conducted by Education Week Research Center found that fifty-five percent of districts created their own policy of giftedness, and "Relatively few educators say that their districts' definitions of giftedness are as broad as the U.S. Department of Education's" (6). States and districts are currently not required to meet national standards, meaning some districts may go above and beyond, while many districts fail to meet the basic standards laid out for students. This creates further socio-economic disparities for students, as only twenty-five percent of the respondents said their district's definition accounted for cultural and ethnic diversity (Education Week Research Center 7). Even beyond that some districts have difficulty funding gifted programs and dedicating trained gifted staff. The lack of funding and support also accounts for why twenty-one percent of students who are identified as gifted do not participate in a gifted program (Education Week Research Center 9). By raising national standards and requiring districts to meet them students would face a more equitable education system designed to give them the best education possible.

Another barrier to parent's placing their students in gifted programs is concern over social emotional development. The Education Week Research Center found that of the thirty-two percent of students identified as gifted that did not receive services, thirty-nine percent of those were due to parents and students opting out (9). Not all gifted programs have the same efficacy and there has been concern over the impacts of different programs on the socioemotional health of students. In a meta-analysis of enrichment programs Mihyeon Kim refers to Robinson's 2008 study that found "gifted students tend to be more mature than their age peers and tend to have issues related to the gap between their educational development level and educational environment in school" (qtd. in Kim 113). This suggests a need for focus on socioemotional impacts of programs on students. When students are made to feel outcast by gifted programs their socioemotional health may be impacted, and they may associate negatively with gifted programs. If a gifted program has a negative impact on their social and emotional well being parents may hesitate to place students in gifted programs, meaning student needs may not be met. However, certain programs improved socioemotional well being for students, as Kim found in the enrichment program meta-analysis, "Social networks and social supports are important elements for gifted students, and enrichment programs provide unique experiences with academically challenging coursework and social support from gifted peers, which allow students to express their capabilities more in enrichment programs than in regular school classes" (113). By creating more guidelines for gifted programs, the negative impacts can be negated, and by emphasizing education on gifted programs for parents more students can have their needs met.

Another problem plaguing the current gifted education system is testing. Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman interviewed Dr. Lawrence Weiss, a vice president at the company that owns the WPPSI gifted test commonly used by schools, for their book *NurtureShock* where he explained that his company



does not track or assess future student performance (98). Analysis of early testing shows it to be a wildly inaccurate predictor of future performance. Bronson found that “if a school wanted the top tenth of students in its third-grade gifted program, 73% of them wouldn’t have been identified by their IQ test score before kindergarten... Many wouldn’t have even come close” (100). So much of gifted education is based on early test scores, despite the fact that it’s completely unreliable. Research shows that gifted testing is wildly inaccurate until the third grade. The research shows that third grade is when kids are developed enough to show future achievement abilities, due to the increased difficulty of third grade curriculum, due to the shift to reasoning and comprehension (Bronson 101). This leads to many problems as out of the 20 largest school districts in the US none of them wait until third grade to identify gifted students (Bronson 104). Districts are making decisions that have huge impacts on students’ futures against the tested and proven research and it is locking deserving kids out of programs, while locking students who are not gifted in. This creates hardships on both groups, as students who aren’t gifted will be expected to do work far beyond their abilities.

The first step in my amendment requires a complete shift in when testing is conducted. Districts would still be allowed to test at young ages, but all students would need to be retested at the end of the third grade, and students would be required to retest again, in the sixth grade. Districts would also no longer be able to make decisions to place students in specific gifted academies until the third grade, for younger students, they would simply be given supplemental classroom instruction, or special enrichment activities once a week. One example of this is highlighted in *NurtureShock* in the Dallas public school system, “the children identified as gifted remain in their classrooms, and once a week get to slip out and attend a two-hour enhanced class just for the gifted” (104). While this may not be the perfect setup a similar program would work well for younger students. Districts would be given a grace period in order to phase in these new testing and program measures. Districts would also no longer be able to set firm cutoffs for gifted programs. In an interview with Bronson Dr. Cecil Reynolds, author of the Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales, said “Firm number cutoffs are ridiculous, if we were doing the same thing for identifying special-ed students, it would be against federal law” (102). When you look at the statistics of why students who tested into gifted programs, but did not utilize it, twenty-one percent did not receive services due to lack of resources (Education Week Research Center 9). This can no longer be the practice, as it actively harms students. Access to a proper education should not be based on socio-economic status, and firm number cutoffs for gifted programs must be made illegal at a federal level.

Beyond that there needs to be a big change in how gifted students are identified, as current practices wrongly lock out many twice-exceptional students. According to the National Association for Gifted Children a twice exceptional learner is “gifted children who, have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement and give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria” (1). In her paper on State law and twice exceptional learners, published in *Gifted Child Today* in 2015, Julia Roberts discovered that eighteen states included twice exceptional learners in gifted or special education legislation, while thirteen states included it in gifted or special education policy (216). Students deserve to have all educational needs met, and identification standards for gifted education need to account for a diverse range of students. The best way to address this is “in the case of gifted and talented students or twice-exceptional students, programs need to address student potential rather than adequate progress. Potential, the gap between ability and achievement in this case, must be the gap explored rather than accepting adequate progress for state accountability assessment” (Roberts 217). Students should not and can not be denied adequate accommodations simply because they are meeting adequate levels on standardized testing. The Education system has a responsibility to give tools and resources to all students so that they may reach their highest potential, and since that is not being done at a state level it is up to the federal government to ensure student needs are met.

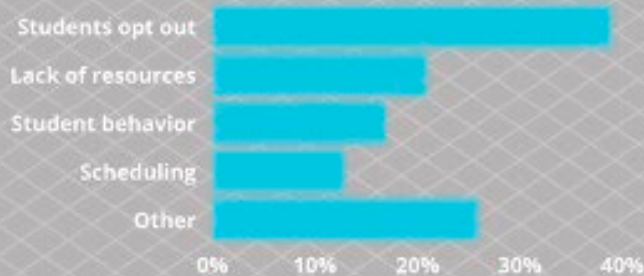
The way in which students are recognized as gifted needs to be updated and standardized. Current systems rely heavily on teacher recommendations and test scores. But, as Jean Gubbins points out in her 2020 academic journal article “Many of the student nomination/referral checklists used by teachers tend to favor students from the dominant culture. Up to one quarter of the items on commonly used teacher checklists include behavior skills not necessarily related to academic giftedness” (341). When a student is learning English as a second language, and is an ELL student their giftedness may not show up on the standard tests and exams given to gifted students. This is due to the fact that “although students may master oral English proficiency in 3 to 5 years, it often

takes 4 to 7 years for them to master academic English proficiency" (Gubbins 339). This leads to many gifted and talented students going unrecognized, due to the lack of adaptability in testing and recognition methods.

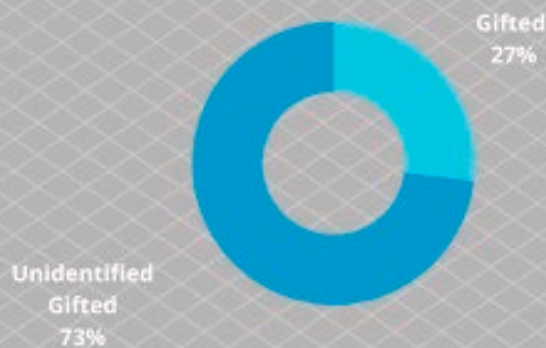
By changing the methods in which gifted and talented students are identified, the underrepresentation of ELL's and minorities in gifted programs can be improved. Gubbins lays out a 4 step process for improving the representation of ELL students by "(a) adopting universal screening procedures, (b) creating alternative pathways to identification, (c) establishing a web of communication, and (d) viewing professional learning as a lever for change" (355). The first part, adopting universal screening procedures is very important, as this essay has proven the issues that arise from different procedures across districts and states. The second step is a huge part of this solution because some students will show giftedness in different ways, whether students are twice-exceptional learners or ELL students. By allowing ELL students to take gifted assessments in their native language they are able to show their true abilities. The third part is equally important, as it creates communication between all staff who work with a student, as well as the students parents and family. Parents opting out is one of the largest reasons students do not receive the help they need, and an ELL student may need additional assistance. By communicating with everyone involved parents can be more informed of what is going on in their child's education, as well as how to best assist them at home, and teachers and staff can work together to build the best education plan for their student. The final step requires active learning and training from staff and teachers. There is a constant flow of new research and data relating to education and it is important to stay up to date and informed in order to meet student needs in the best possible way.

I am asking the Department of Education to pass the Gifted Student Success Act, an amendment to Subpart 6 of the Every Student Succeeds Act, in order to meet the needs of gifted students across America. It has been thoroughly proven that leaving such an important educational standard up to states and individual school districts creates a massive educational disparity for American students, and it is up to you to create a national set of guidelines and standards to ensure student success. By setting requirements on when gifted testing occurs, eliminating firm number cutoffs, and adapting screening procedures you will ensure that every student in America is able to receive the best education and the resources to help them achieve success.

## Number of Students Wrongly Locked Out of Gifted Programs



According to a 2019 Education Week Research Center Survey, these are the five main reasons students did not receive support



"If you picked 100 kindergarteners as the 'gifted' i.e. the smartest, by third grade only 27 of them would still deserve that categorization." Po Bronson *NurtureShock*

**By: Elena Sloboda**

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## The Controversial History and Current Reception of the Word, "Queer"

by Stephanie Albers

"Queer" is a word with a controversial and debated meaning. The nuanced history of this word is important for everyone to know about as to avoid using it in an improper context by mistake and accidentally hurting an LGBT person one may know. While in the past, it was widely used and seen as a slur, today I have almost exclusively seen the word used in LGBT positive settings such as in LGBT

supportive memes or even in the titles of tv shows. However not all LGBT people think alike, and some will probably dispute my claim that the word "queer" has had an ultimately positive impact on the world and may argue the damage outweighs the positive. On the one hand, I agree with them that the term has damaged many lives. But on the other hand, I still insist that it can be seen as ultimately positive as it has been recognized as an identity which helps give more self expression to those who may not have had a word to describe themselves before, and because of its history involving protesting homophobia. Despite having negative origins, in an increasingly LGBT accepting world, the word "queer" has been used to protest for LGBT rights, and has even been recognized as an identity, but does this mean the term's overall impact was positive? In this essay, I will discuss the history of this term's use and argue that its ultimate effect could be considered positive.

The use of the word "queer" as a slur towards gay people began centuries ago. An author, Jake Hall, on *Dazed.com* discusses the history of the word "queer" in his article "Tracing the history of the word 'queer'". According to Hall, "queer" was first used as a slur in 1894 when John Douglas, 9th Marquess of Queensberry found out his son was involved in a gay sex scandal with Oscar Wilde, and felt he had to make Wilde seem solely at fault. Hall further writes that Douglas

achieved his mission, launching a lengthy court case which argued the iconic playwright was a sodomy-obsessed old man that lured gay prostitutes into a lifestyle of degeneracy. It was throughout this court case that the original letter surfaced – Douglas had used 'Snob Queers' as a descriptor for gay men, establishing 'queer's reputation as a gay slur. (Hall)

In other words, Douglas successfully branded Wilde as a degenerate homosexual predator and coined "queer" as a slur towards LGBT people in the process. Douglas' goal in using the word was to paint Wilde as a disgusting and abnormal person due to his homosexuality. The original audience was people involved or interested in Wilde's court case, which one would assume was large as Wilde was a high profile person and the case was controversial. This audience latched on to the phrase quickly and as Hall writes, "American newspapers used 'queer' as a derogatory term almost immediately" (Hall). Due to John Douglas, the word "queer" became known as a slur throughout the world and for a long time, even in one instant being publicly used as a slur on a nationally televised debate between William Buckley and Gore Vidal. Stephen Rutledge writes about this instant on a website called *The Wow Report*. Rutledge writes that Gore Vidal was openly bisexual and progressive, which was controversial in the 1950s and 60s, but as a writer he was a public figure and was often asked to appear on talk shows. This led to him being asked along with William Buckley Jr to do a series of 10 televised debates hosted by ABC during the Democratic and Republican national conventions (Rutledge) An article on the website *Britannica* states that William Buckley Jr. was a conservative author regarded as an important influence in conservative politics. However, the debate devolved to insults with a CNN transcript showing this interaction,

GREENFIELD: While "Firing Line" stressed civility, one of Buckley's most famous TV appearance was anything but. At the 1968 conventions, Buckley was paired with liberal writer Gore Vidal, who called Buckley a crypto-Nazi, eliciting this response:

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP, 1968)BUCKLEY: Now, listen, you queer, stop calling me a crypto-Nazi or I'll sock you in your goddamn face. And you'll stay plastered. (CNN)

In this excerpt, Buckley is using the word "queer" as a slur in response to being called a "crypto-nazi" during a debate with Gore Vidal. While it was unprofessional for Vidal to insult Buckley, in using Vidal's sexuality as an insult through the use of the word "queer", Buckley perpetuated the use of the word "queer" as a slur. The audience, which was the American public, likely had mixed views, but may have supported Buckley's use of the word at the time since this was in the 1960s and homosexuality was still considered an illness. While today both people in this instance would be frowned upon, my own view is that Buckley's use of the word "queer" in a televised debate only escalated the term's use as a slur. However, the term's use was soon to experience a drastic change.

In an increasingly hostile world, LGBT people began to use the word "queer" as a way to fight against homophobia, one of the first instances being through the organization, Queer Nation and in the middle of the AIDS epidemic. Wikipedia states that Queer Nation, which was formed in March 1990 circulated an anonymous flier at the New York Gay Pride Parade in June 1990 called "Queers Read This". Though just a flier, it contained a powerful message as well as an explanation of the choice to use the word "queer". The flier explains

Well, yes, "gay " is great. It has its place. But when a lot of lesbians and gay men wake up in the morning we feel angry and disgusted, not gay. So we've chosen to call ourselves queer. Using "queer" is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives discreet and marginalized in the straight world. We use queer as gay men, loving lesbians, and lesbians loving being queer. Queer, unlike GAY, doesn't mean MALE. And when spoken to other gays and lesbians it's a way of suggesting we close ranks, and forget (temporarily) our individual differences because we face a more insidious common enemy. Yeah, QUEER can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homophobe's hands and use against him. (Queer Nation)

In this passage, Queer Nation writes that while the word "gay" could have been used, it doesn't express the discomfort LGBT people face everyday like "queer" does. "Queer" is way of reminding yourself that you should not have to hide your identity and it doesn't strictly mean male the way gay does. The flier further states that using "queer" would be a way to "close ranks" and unite. Queer Nation's use of the term "queer" demonstrates the turning point of the word "queer" from slur to reclaimed word by the LGBT community. This flier shows the reader one of the first large scale examples of "queer" being reclaimed. The creator is the pro LGBT organization, Queer Nation, and their purpose is to unite all LGBT people in the year 1990 and to take back the word "queer" to use against homophobia and so it can't be seen as a slur. One reason I think that Queer Nation's message was so effective was that the AIDS epidemic was between 1981 and 1995. The AIDS epidemic impacted LGBT culture so incredibly to the point that a lot of young LGBT people today do not have very many older LGBT people to look up to. From the beginning, the AIDS epidemic caused a huge wave of homophobia as shown by AIDS being referred to as the "gay plague" and the rise of anti gay hate groups. An article by *NBC*, "LGBTQ History Month: The early days of America's AIDS crisis" by Tim Fitzsimmons describes specific instances such as "On March 22, 1980 ... evangelical Christian leaders delivered a petition to President Jimmy Carter demanding a halt to the advance of gay rights". This widespread homophobia and nothing being done to help LGBT communities fueled how many LGBT people would "wake up in the morning [and] we feel angry and disgusted" and gives insight to how the LGBT community would react to a message such as "Queers Read This". LGBT people reacted very strongly to this message and began to use the word "queer" frequently in protests as a rallying cry for LGBT rights, with Queer Nation also proceeding to popularize the use of "we're here, we're queer" based slogans used especially in protest, furthering this term's use for LGBT people instead of against them. These instances of "queer" being reclaimed emphasize the argument of how the word could be seen as having a positive impact. "Queer" became a force of unity and the response of using the term in a pro LGBT sense was felt nationwide. It was also around this time that "queer" also began to be thought of as a possible identity of its own.

One of the first people to talk about the idea of "queer" as an identity of its own was Eve Sedgwick. Her website states that she is best known as one of the originators of Queer Theory itself and has contributed a lot of valuable written work to the LGBT community as a literary critic as well as an author. Her non fiction work, *Tendencies* is a collection of essays with a wide range of topics, that aims to ultimately discuss a vision of new queer politics. In *Tendencies*, she writes about the openness of the word queer. On the subject of the word "queer" and the idea of it being an identity, a quote taken from *Tendencies* reads,

That's one of the things that "queer" can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically. (Sedgwick)

In this passage, Sedgwick defines queer as "open mesh of possibilities". Right around the era this word was being reclaimed, Sedgwick's writing introduces the idea of using queer as an identity since not everyone's identity can be described "monolithically". This idea gave many people options to identify with "queer" as there were not terms before this that were so open and up to personal interpretation. Sedgwick's audience was likely educated people who were interested in studying gender or sexuality. Sedgwick seems to be very respected, and her interpretation of queer as an identity likely interested a lot of people and connected with them deeply as this idea of queer as an identity became popularized. People I know identify as queer today and usually describe it as

something very personal to them because when you identify as queer, it could mean really anything and this was seen as a kind of freedom other terms such as "gay" did not have. Eventually the idea of queer as an identity gained so much support, it made its way to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, or GLAAD. In 2016, GLAAD added the word "Queer" to their mission statement, further cementing its use as an identity. GLAAD's statement reads

GLAAD today also renewed its commitment to working on behalf of queer-identified people, updating its mission to include "queer" in the organization's work to accelerate acceptance for LGBTQ people. GLAAD's powerful media programs will continue to share stories from the LGBTQ community that lead national dialogue, build understanding, and drive acceptance forward.

In this passage GLAAD shares their decision to include "queer" in the organization's work. By including "queer" in an updated mission statement, GLAAD signifies another important step against "queer" as a slur. GLAAD's website "informs the style guides of the world's leading news organizations". The audience for GLAAD is very vast and includes LGBT people as well as straight or cisgender people who are curious about being good allies to the LGBT community all the way to news organizations. This action by GLAAD shows their audience that "queer" is a word being taken back and demonstrates this changing standard of the word. However, despite all this progress in the use of the term, homophobes still try to use this term, but to little avail.

While I have noticed that queer is less likely to be used as a slur, some people still try to bring back the use of this word as a slur but on a much smaller scale than the 1960s. For example, "queer" can be found as a slur in a FAQ about "homosexuals" from a heavily homophobic religious website that believes gays should be put to death and is run by Pastor Steven Anderson of the Faithful Word Baptist Church. Anderson writes that

"The word "queer" is a very Biblical description of the homosexual since here God refers to them as "strange." God did not send a preacher or soul-winner to Sodom, he sent two angels to examine the situation and to remove Lot from the city. His only solution to the problem of homosexuality was to pour out literal Hellfire and destroy the city as an example of what he thinks about sodomy." (Anderson)

Anderson's purpose is to encourage the use of the word "queer" as a slur in order to combat the term's acceptance by saying that it is "a very Biblical description of the homosexual" and threatening with "literal hellfire". Spreading his message of bigotry to a church likely captured the views of a small audience, seeing as they are still active today and still have this very outdated view up on their website. Anderson's views gained many followers, as he relates homosexuality to defying the beliefs of God, however a vast majority of people do not support his rhetoric. This is seen as according to CNN in an article called "Ireland bans US anti-gay preacher Steven Anderson" when Anderson was scheduled to preach in Ireland he was promptly banned. CNN writes However his scheduled appearance sparked controversy and an online petition calling for a ban gathered 14,150 signatures. Irish Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan barred Anderson from the country using an exclusion order under the Immigration Act 1999 on May 10. 'I have signed the exclusion order under my executive powers in the interests of public policy,' said Flanagan in a statement. (CNN)

The fact that he was instantly banned from Ireland as well as Ireland being the "latest in a string of countries to ban the controversial preacher, who was previously barred from visiting the UK." (CNN) show that the world does not respond positively to his hateful rhetoric. In spite of small efforts to bring back the use of "queer" as a slur, the term has shown itself to still be a term of power in LGBT positive scenarios.

Carrie Evans, the first lesbian elected senator in North Dakota, used the term "queer" both publically and in a way that defends LGBT people. When confronted about hanging a pride flag on a building by a man in a city council meeting, Evans responds saying me having a flag flying doesn't take anything from your rights and freedoms, but you know what it does for me? it shows me i live in a city that appreciates and embraces me and the people of my community. And that I can live here and feel safe, that's what it does. I'm sorry it doesn't make you feel comfortable, but we're here, we're queer, we're not going away (The Independent)

Evans's purpose is to use the word queer as a rallying word against homophobia, particularly echoing the historical LGBT rights movement and the various slogans based off "we're here, we're queer" used at various times and places in the history of the movement. While her audience was just the city council and one homophobic man, the footage of this exchange went viral with many people voicing their support for her. Evans's use of the word resonated especially in online LGBT circles. This use of the word "queer" especially shows the impact of all the protests and efforts to reclaim "queer".

Overall, I believe the word "queer" has had an ultimately positive impact on the world. However, having knowledge of this term's history is what will truly help one to not accidentally offend an LGBT person as well as show them you care about their culture, which matters especially since everyone can have a different opinion. While I believe that its overall impact on the world has been positive, listening to the LGBT people in your life and having an understanding is what helps them to feel heard and accepted. Though "queer" has a history of being used as an anti-LGBT slur, my view is that the efforts to reclaim this word were successful and that it has helped give LGBT people a word to latch on to as well as provide people with an identity when there may not have been one before. Despite some people trying to bring it back as a slur, more people use it in positive contexts, so much so that people I know who identify as "queer" identify so with pride, determination, and confidence.

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# Evaluating My iRobot Roomba

by Saba Aafrin

Being born and raised in India, I have a lot of sentimental connections to India and Indian culture. Those memories and experiences shaped me as a person and ingrained values that I take with me wherever I go. These childhood values that I have learned always encouraged me to work towards making this world a better place in whatever way I can, even with the simplest idea. When I last visited India, I got to meet countless people and visited rural and small towns. It was so painful to see children who were hardly ten years old working in a factory and household for many hours. Despite all the tremendous growth India has shown in terms of education, GDP, and technology, child labor is a problem that puts children's health, education, and childhood at risk. An article from the *Journal of Industrial Ecology* states that, "According to the latest estimate by the International Labor Organization, child labor affects some 168 million children worldwide, the majority of which are in hazardous work" (Gomez, et. al. 1). Child labor is prevalent in society, if these children do not work, they cannot eat.

Mira Kamdar, a World Policy Institute Senior Fellow who has written several articles and books on India witnessed more than one child servant in upper class household during her visits to India: "These people can't afford to have their children work. A child in these families who doesn't work basically doesn't eat," (qtd. in Kamdar, 2). In many factories, children are easy to manipulate as "children are seen as 'more efficient workers' because they do not form trade unions, demand minimum remuneration, or breaks; or, to put it simply, children are employed because they are easier to exploit" (Gomez et al.2). The mindset of people as stated by Gomez is to exploit poverty. Although issues are complex, iRoomba can be equally efficient because it is reachable 24/7, runs on battery and like children it does not form trade or union and does not demand anything. Hence, when I see the popular trend of buying autonomous robotic machines such as the Robotic Roomba, and even seeing it work in my own home, this gives me hope for these children. While some may see the Roomba as a household companion and time saver, I see it as a technological advancement that is a symbol for hope to alleviate child labor and many other inequalities in countries such as India. As I moved from a small city in India to America, I have seen the world change greatly with the progression of science and technology. Many advancements such as the use of artificial intelligence by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Artificial Intelligence Lab to build iRobots to perform household chores have occurred. As stated by Schelar, the iRobot Roomba is a robotic floor vacuum that uses artificial intelligence in the motors and is a self-regulated, disc-shaped device with sophisticated sensors for navigating the areas. The uses of Artificial intelligence in the Roomba's motors are based on machine learning, neural networks, and sensors to vacuum without human supervision. In his article, Lev Grosman states that "the smart motor acts as an eye that allows the Roomba to follow walls without bumping into them, charge sockets, and turn away from obstacles that it hits" (Grossman). Furthermore, Grosman explains that vacuum cleaners consume large amounts of electricity, so a new vacuum that could run on rechargeable batteries was created. After 12 years of experimentation the "Roomba was born: Turn it on, and it springs to life with a surprising sense of alertness, almost as if it had a personality" (Grossman). These ideas deepen my understanding about the functionality of the Roomba. It is autonomous and can vacuum, mop, and recharge by itself. Therefore, the vacuum does function as a human would in this situation, implying that Roomba serves as a symbol of hope to be used in a household because it can do jobs autonomously that child laborers are forced to do.

While iRobot Roomba could be very effective, the cost is a big factor that plays an important role. For the creation of Roomba, as Grossman mentioned in his article, "cost was the factor that played the role of roboticist Rodney in designing the robot." This further acknowledges the insight that "You go

into robotics thinking you're going to change the world,' says Angle. 'You're not going to change the world with a million-dollar robot.' In 1990 Angle, Greiner and Brooks founded iRobot hoping to build practical, affordable robots for everyday life." Furthermore, the author also explains that iRobot wanted to market robots as household appliances at affordable prices, so it had to be cheap, simple, and reliable. The cost of my Roomba is \$299.00, if it were priced \$1000, I could not afford to buy it. Furthermore, many Robotic vehicles are being used in coal mines, where child labor was used. Generally underground mines are dangerous for humans. Hence, As stated by Nadimpalli, "Mining companies have been able to create machines that can operate underground without being manned by people" (3). In any accidents, the equipment could be damaged instead of people's lives. In the future, if these robots are mass-produced and demand increases, there is hope the cost will go further down. Therefore, these ideas give me hope to see the iRobot as an omen for the hope that factories in India will be able to use machines that equalize the economic gap.

It is worth discussing the functionality and effectiveness of the Roomba, whether it would be able to do the job efficiently, as child laborers do. One can program this robot with when to clean and what to clean and based on that feature, it is a time saver. Patrick Lin, et. al., from California State University, the polytechnic department state, "Nearly half of the world's 7-million-plus service robots are Roomba vacuum cleaners, but others exist that mow lawns, wash floors, iron clothes, move objects from room to room, and other chores around the home" (Lin, et. al.). In some countries like Japan, robots are human replacements, where, due to the growing elderly population and "shrinking birth rate means shrinking workforce," robots are "filling that gap" (4). Thus, the article by Lin, et. al. expands the idea that although the iRobot feature at this point is only limited to mopping and vacuuming, with time it could progress to add more features to do more jobs like ironing, folding laundry, clean the dishes, etc. It can be a symbol of hope to solve inequality issues in a country such as India because of the job it can do that the child laborers do in a household such as picking up dirt, mopping, cleaning the dishes, etc.

Some may argue that the affordability of these Roombas is easier to afford by many in a developed country like the USA, and that it is not a viable option to use in a country with so much poverty. I asked 7 family members about the payment a child can receive for their work. The average cost reported from these 7 family members is about 2,000 rupees (Aafrin). That amount equals an annual salary of about 24,000 rupees. This means that each individual in India would make about \$320 a year. From above, I have mentioned that the Roomba costs about this price with tax. Therefore, this concludes that paying a one-time fee for this technological device is more cost-effective than paying wages every month. Therefore, the Roomba is, in itself, a symbol of technological advancements that can equalize the wide class gap.

In conclusion, the Roomba serves as a symbol of hope and technological advancement. It is a cost-effective option for many Indians to afford this technological advancement as with the hope and its scope to do many more household chores and works, iRobot can help solve geopolitical issues like child labor.

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## Four Peaks

by Jordan Parsell

Despite wanting to escape the heat, my favorite time to adventure in Four Peaks is in the summer, which is insane because the temperature could get up to 116 degrees and there was hardly ever a nice breeze out. For as long as I can remember my dad and I have been going to the Four Peak mountains on the weekends to ride and hike the tricky trails. Only two of the peaks have official names, the one on the far left (north) is named Browns Peak and the one on the far right (south) is named Amethyst Peak. The two in the middle don't have official names, but are nicknamed brother and sister peak (Summitpost). The mountain wilderness was established in 1984. When the weather is nice and there are no clouds the mountains can be seen from Downtown Phoenix, 60 miles away (Summitpost). Some of the hiking trails there are classified as class 4 climbing trails because of their complicated, rocky, twisting trails (Summitpost).

Four Peaks is in the middle of Arizona and because of the lack of rain, it has experienced many devastating forest fires. Toronto National Forest announced that "more than 61,000 acres had been burned by the largest fire known to have occurred in Arizona's history". This fire happened on April 27, 1996 and lasted for eleven days (Toronto National Forest). It doesn't help that the plants there are dry and can be easily engulfed by devouring flames. Forest Rangers say it would take decades for the vegetation to grow back. The fire was a long time ago now, but the area is still trying to recover. Not many plants grow there successfully before eventually dying from the blazing heat and drought. Even though I was a kid that couldn't help the area, I felt bad that it was suffering and there was nothing I could do. It bothered me that the place that was important to me went up into a devastating blaze. I don't like to think about the innocent animals that didn't survive either.



Brush fire in Four Peaks  
(Photo from azcentral.com)

I remember the hot scorching sun and the dry heat on my arms after I would get out of the car. If we got lucky there would be a slow breeze that day, but most times it would be very stale. At the time my face was too small for adult sunglasses, but too big for kid sunglasses, so I had to keep my head down because the sun was so bright it would make my eyes water profusely. Anytime I looked at the ground, no matter what trail or shooting spot we were at, it was glittered with shiny bullet casings of different kinds of ammunition, including the multicolor shotgun casings that were made of



Four Peak Mountains (Photo from goodfreephotos.com)

plastic.

The sides of the roads would also be littered with soda/beer cans, shattered glass bottles and anything that was a big enough target to shoot at. Near popular shooting spots the road signs were destroyed by bullet holes that you couldn't read the words anymore. I could smell faint gunsmoke and campfires. Even though it was hot during the day and most of the time there would be fire restriction, it was common for campfires to be burning at night. My dad would pack supplies for s'mores because he always said "a night trip to Four Peaks without roasting marshmallows can't be called a trip" and I will always agree.

I could hear the loose dirt and rocks as my dad and I started on the trail that we decided to take. Sometimes if I was breathing too hard I would inhale the dirt that was in the air. When that happened

I would cough so hard from my throat being dried out by the dirt. On our hikes, I would ask my dad about his past because I loved to hear stories about my parents' youthful years. On these hikes, I got to know the most about my dad. I never knew that my dad once got to drive a semi truck before legal driving age while on a secluded highway with his dad, until I had asked him if there was anything that he did as a kid that was illegal. He said looking back his dad probably shouldn't have let him drive on the road in a semi truck because of how dangerous it could have been. He would tell me about how he met my mom and all the full things that they would do before they got married. When my dad decided to propose my mom said no the first time, but said yes after my dad proposed two weeks later. His favorite memories to tell me were the stories about my brother and I as babies. One of the memories was my brother dressing up as Spiderman and trying to climb the wall because I told him that it would work. For obvious reasons it didn't. I also learned that when I got in trouble, my parents would make me sit in a corner and I would fall asleep with my head against the wall. I wasn't surprised at all, I have been able to fall asleep anywhere since I was a little. Another memory was when I was seven and bawling my eyes out because I got stuck in a lion costume that was meant for a two year old. My dad couldn't stop laughing at me because it reminded him of when he also got stuck in the same costume he wore in his childhood. Not only did I get to learn about my dad, but he also told me what my grandparents were like. Both of my grandparents on my mom's side passed away before I was born and my dad's father passed away when I was in third grade. He said I got my musical talents from my mom's mother and my love for driving from my dad's father.

Out in the desert was when I was able to be carefree and relaxed. The lack of noise from being far away from the city made the mountains quiet and a serene place. Even though I was a kid, I didn't have to worry about anything important like adults do, it was nice to get a break from school and homework. All I had to worry about was if a snake was hiding in the bushes that I was standing near or if the trail was too rocky to hike up without rolling an ankle or if we had brought enough water for the day. Just driving there, I could feel everything lifting from my shoulders and my mind clearing. I associated the desert with freedom; I was never forced to go and never forced to do anything that I didn't want to, it was all by choice. We didn't have to stick to a schedule or rush home. I was the happiest when I was hiking under the beating sun. In the desert no fighting, bickering or crying were allowed, only smiles and heart-warming moments.

If I were to go back there now, I hope it would have the same effect that it had when I was younger. Now that I am in college and had a preview of what adulthood is like, it would be nice to have a reminder of the good times before I was bombarded by long, tedious assignments and projects that pile up fast. It would be nostalgic to go back to the exact shooting spot that my dad and I would stop at all the time and see if there were more bullet casing glittering on the ground and if the air still smelled like smoke. If any new trails were there that went down the hill or if any of the spots weren't used anymore and went back to bald spots of nothing. I would want to see if it was just like I remembered or if it had changed over the years like I did. I would be heartbroken if the trails weren't filled with hikers like they used to be. I haven't been back in five years and I am long overdue for another adventure.

While reading more about the place where I spent most of my time at, I learned about amethyst mining in Amethyst Peak. Four Peaks in Arizona, has sporadically produced fine-quality amethyst since the early 1900s (Lowell and Koivula). From their observations and research, many of their gems are found in different sizes, textures, and variations of color. They also came to the conclusion that because of the narrow trails that "gem material is taken out on foot or by helicopter"(Lowell and Koivula). From all the years that I had been hiking there I had no idea that it was an amethyst jackpot. Maybe that is what secretly started my love for gemstones. I now have an abundant amount of gemstones sitting on my window sill that I often find myself gazing at them. I like the way the glow when the sun hits them just the right way, especially in the morning



Amethyst stones in the mines  
(Photo from [experiencescottsdale.com](http://experiencescottsdale.com))

sunlight.

Unlike the geologists in the mines, I wasn't finding any amethyst or clear quartz, but I liked to collect small rocks that were in weird shapes or had intricate patterns. If my dad found a big rock that he liked he would ask me if it was worthy to go with the rest of our rock collection. I would always say yes because I thought all the rocks we saw were worthy of being displayed with the rest of our rock collection. Some of my favorite rocks are from Four Peaks. My dad and I both know that we shouldn't be taking rocks from the area, but it is hard to not want to take a physical reminder of the great time we had there.

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## Plan for Success (Writer's Inventory)

by Evan Barr

What are your general attitudes about writing?

My General attitude towards writing is unfavorable, I am not very good at putting my thoughts onto paper and have a dislike for writing. Though writing is inevitable, I personally prefer to speak over writing a paper or report. When writing it is easier to get off topic or add unnecessary detail, that potentially distracts the audience from the main topic verse when speaking.

What kind of writing do you most enjoy, explain why?

When I must write the most enjoyable writing for me, is a short response to a set topic. The reasoning for this it helps keep my thoughts on track and mostly prevents me from over analyzing the main topic of the assignment. Short response writing also reduces the brainstorming aspect of the writing and allows more time to invest in the main topic.

What kind of writing do you least enjoy, explain why?

The writing I least enjoy is research papers, this is because I personally have never been in a class that taught methods of proper and reliable research. The class just focused on the outcome of the paper, when the research is the main focused of the paper, but the tools are untaught, the paper misses the main focus and filled with mostly common knowledge and missing reliable and enhancing statistics.

Briefly describe your best experience as a writer.

In my opinion my best experience as a writer would be writing brief introduction response. This is because I consider myself to be an open book and am willing to talk about mistakes from the past to help other people grow. I also use my experience from my military background and how it sparked interest in my hobbies and the way I organize my belongings.

Briefly describe your worst experience as a writer.

My worst experience as a writer would be my first persuasive essay, I wrote back in freshman year of high school. This was partly because I picked a topic on the fly, and it was a topic that I did not have any interest in. With not being a huge fan of writing, choosing a topic with no relation or no interest, deterred me from investing the amount of time I should of.

How would you define "good writing"?

I would define "good writing" as a Bob Ross painting. A clear focus, with a lot of detail but not too much to drift from the focus of the writing. Every little detail has a purpose and not just there as a fill in or place holder. Every word enhances the story or topic regardless of the "vocabulary level" using common words here and there, because it makes the flow better.

What are your strengths as a writer?

I would say my strengths as a writer right now is, I have a lot of interest and the willingness to learn of new topics, and this will allow me to brainstorm ideas faster. If there is no interest in the topic the quality of writing will decrease. Another strength is the willingness to take advice and constructive criticism on any work I do.

What are your weaknesses as a writer?

I have a lot of weaknesses when it comes to writing like; vocabulary, staying focused on the main topic, transitioning between ideas and paragraphs. I feel like I use the same words to many times verse knowing where I can fit in a synonym to keep the flow of my thought going. I also tend to drift from the main idea by including detail that my writing could be the same or better without. I have been informed, and I also agree with one of my major weaknesses being able to transition between sentences and paragraphs without my piece being choppy.

### **Writer's Inventory Reflection**

The first reflection I want to expand on is my comparison of "good writing" to Bob Ross paintings. Being a more visual learner myself I truly believe that "a picture is worth a thousand words" That by looking at a detailed painting you can fully comprehend the scene without any words. Also, like Bob Ross practiced painting, people become better writers, with practice.

To expand more on, what kind of writing do you most enjoy, explain why? When I must write the most enjoyable writing for me, is a short response to a set topic. I consider myself an inexperienced writer, so when I have a prompt that requires a sort response, it allows me to work on my writing skills, unlike open-ended questions with a broad topic that requires brainstorming and more steps to get to the response part. I tend to focus more on the brainstorming to the point I am still too broad to answer the question efficiently.

Finally, to expand on, what are your general attitudes about writing? Writing even though it is inevitable I still do not enjoy doing it, I much rather give a presentation. This came about when I hit freshman year of high school, my teacher did not interact with the students and their preferred writing style, it was either this set way, or you are wrong. There are many styles to writing and I believe if an individual's foundation is limited and they do not have the opportunity to express their self, it develops a bad taste.

#### **Writer's Inventory Goals**

My first goal is to develop my researching and brainstorming habits to enhance my writing.

My second goal is to enhance my vocabulary, so I can utilize synonyms to spice up my writing and to make it less monotonous, so all levels of readers stay engaged to my topic.

My third goal is to practice writing styles to find my best fit, then expand from there. This is because no matter what I do, writing will be involved.

My fourth goal is to increase the amount I read, writing, and reading go hand in hand. If I read more, it will help me achieve my other writing goals.

These goals are not in priority order, I find them all valuable to improve my writing technique.

## **An Analysis of We Are The Weather: Saving The Planet At Breakfast**

**by Hayley Hoenes**

Climate change can be a hard topic to discuss, especially when we don't know what we are talking about in the first place. In the book, *We Are the Weather* Johnathan Safran Foer argues it can be easy to discuss, we just don't have the right tools for it, whether that be; not feeling emotionally attached to the planetary crisis, our own personal struggles when thinking about changes, hiding our own knowledge of the subject from ourselves and it is just hard to digest. Jonathan Safran Foer is the author of two best-selling novels, *Everything is Illuminated* and *Extremely Loud*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. *We Are the Weather* is not just a book of statistics about climate change, but also a book that tells us what we need to do to bring the statistics down, he further persuades us that all of our actions can either be a consequence or change to climate change. *We Are the Weather* is a non-fiction book that focuses on what is climate change, why it is a problem, and what we can do as a collective to bring change, that change being stated in the title *Saving the Planet at Breakfast*, which is translated into eating less meat and animal products. Most readers would explain that nonfiction is showing the numbers and the numbers only, but this book is different because it shows the numbers, but gives us easier-to-digest stories at the beginning to help us understand how important collective action is even in situations that have nothing to do with climate change. Before reading *We Are the Weather*, I didn't really know anything about climate change, and to be honest, I really didn't care. I would most likely not even pick up the book because I never felt the need to change my actions, which I think a lot of people feel about climate change, it's not just that we don't look up the information about the planetary crisis, but that no one talks about it in the first place. I believe that I am Foer's target audience because it helps me understand more clearly about the consequences of climate change.



Safran Foer begins *We Are the Weather* by setting up a series of stories that do not pertain to climate change but rather showing collective actions made. A story of a man with hysterical strength, "One summer night, eighteen-year-old Kyle Holtrust was riding his bicycle against traffic on the east side of Tucson when a Chevy Camaro struck him and dragged him beneath it for thirty feet. A witness in a nearby truck, Thomas Boyle Jr., leaped from the passenger seat and ran over to help. Flooded with adrenaline, he gripped the frame of the Camaro and lifted its front end, holding it aloft for forty-five seconds while Holtrust was pulled free" (26) and then stating that from Thomas Boyle Jr.'s action that "One amazing person lifted the car off Holtrust's body, but then many people pulled their cars to the side of the road to make the ambulance's journey quicker. They were every bit as important in saving the young man's life" (26). Another story being about the collective action of "Honeybees perform a wave to ward off predatory hornets. One after the other, individual bees momentarily flip their abdomens upward, creating an undulating pattern across the nest-the phenomenon is called 'shimmering'. The collective act fends off the threat, something no individual bee could do on its own" (40). Thirdly, in a story of a wave at a baseball game, Safran Foer writes that "I have never started a wave at a baseball game. Waves do not require any more initiative than participation. I have never experienced a wave reaching me at the precise moment of my feeling roused by enthusiasm. Waves do not require feeling; they generate feeling" (40). By telling us these stories of people and animals using collective action, it shows that we as readers can more easily digest harder information when given easier information at first. It can also be interpreted that collective action, whether being small or big, is important for society as a whole. Safran Foer could've started this book by stating that we need to act together and not give us any examples of how people could/would do this, but, would readers continue reading if told what to do and when to do it? Most likely not, we as humans don't like to be told what to do, and we especially don't like when people tell us to change the lifestyle that we have had for years. Readers would most likely not want to read the rest of the book because of this, so I believe that Safran Foer made the right choice in giving us a warm-up to the topic instead of going straight into it. The way he said it affected me by showing me that collective action doesn't have to be hard, by telling us these tiny stories helps us realize that we make acting collectively harder than it seems. It helps us understand more in detail not only *how* later on, but *why* it is beneficial to work together to end climate change.

One way Safran Foer puts his own personal experience is by opening up to the fact that he doesn't care about the planetary crisis to the point of belief, he does everything in his power to try and make himself believe but he can't. Foer says "The truth is I don't care about the planetary crisis-not at the level of belief. I make efforts to overcome my emotional limits: I read the reports, watch the documentaries, attend the marches. But my limits don't budge. If it sounds like I'm protesting too much or being too critical-how could someone claim indifference to the subject of his own book?-it's because you also have overestimated your commitment while underestimating what is required" (34). By putting his own personal struggles in understanding climate change and wanting to have that belief in it, gives us something to relate to. Most climate change books or reports can be all statistics, information, and the cause-and-effect but we do not, as readers have an emotional tie to evidence. Stories we can relate to, or even look up to, in a book can help the audience see how important a certain act can be. When Foer puts his own experience with how hard climate change is to stop and have the knowledge, it helps us by having someone to relate with and even show us that we have similar traits to him that we have been hiding from ourselves. Another way he could've done this is by not putting his personal struggles and putting in other people's struggles with climate change he has heard. This would only be beneficial to some extent. Yes, we can relate our struggles with those other people but in the back of our minds, we would believe that Safran Foer doesn't have any personal struggles and is perfect in his end to stop climate change or that he is hiding his own struggles because he is ashamed. This can cause us to feel bad because he is so amazing that there is no flaw in his way of ending climate change or it will make readers want to hide their struggles because he did. I believe that we wouldn't have an attachment to what he is saying if he didn't confide in the readers and say that even though he has all this knowledge and still has a hard time having an emotional tie to climate change. But, by him showing he has this knowledge and showing that he too struggles, readers can feel undermined because they can believe that even though they know, they will still have trouble. The effect Safran Foer's words had on me was that it helped me realize my personal struggles with climate change, having someone I can relate to, and realizing that if I did have as much knowledge about climate change as he, that I can still struggle.

In the second part of the book he does a 360, from his stories to information he has found about climate change, he explains that we are given wrong information about climate change and then gives us the information that we do need. "With respect to climate change, we have been relying on dangerously incorrect information" (70) and "Without identifying the thing that we have to do, we cannot decide to do it" (70). The second part of the book is solely based on numbers and what climate change is negatively doing to our planet, he begins this section by saying that we have been given the wrong information about climate change and without knowing the right information, we cannot be starting an end to climate change. A way he could've written this differently is by blatantly stating that we are doing it all wrong and we need to change the way we change. I think if he did it this way, a lot of readers would be on the defense and say that they are doing the right thing because it was told to them previously what to do. I think this would also lead to readers thinking that all sources for climate change, whether they have the right or wrong information, would make people believe it is all the wrong information. This would harm his audience because they will believe that the things they are doing right are not helping and that any new knowledge they get from climate change could potentially be wrong as well. I think the way he says it affects me by showing that you can't always trust sources, reliable or not, because they could potentially tell you wrong things, I think it's also important to note that you should be researching multiple sources when trying to gain new knowledge because repeated information is most likely correct and oddball information can be easier to find by doing this. Safran Foer could've made the rest of the book about these stories that were laid out in the first part of the book, but would readers continue to read it if there wasn't any statistical evidence of the negative impacts of climate change? Yes, they probably would, they want to hear the stories of people just like us becoming heroes, but I believe that would differ from the real meaning behind this book, that we are the cause of climate change. It does make us feel good and we don't want to hear the real truth, but the truth is what we need, we can't go looking at life like it's a cake-walk and not seeing the bigger picture here. Yes, readers would most likely continue to read, but it defeats the purpose of the book and doesn't show what is really going on in the world we live in.

In Part 4 of Safran Foer's *We Are The Weather* he narrates the chapter with inner conflicts he has with himself and climate change. He repeats in the conversation when talking about climate change of "I don't know" (147) and his soul responding with "What's not to know?" (147). He keeps doing this to show the reader that he does know he just would rather put it off to the side and pretend he doesn't know it. It shows that confrontation of your own knowledge can be hard to come to terms with. From this back-and-forth you can clearly see that he is not open to the idea of knowing that disasters are happening to us, and it helps us relate to what he says more by trying to cover up his knowledge of climate change. He could've done this differently by openly saying that we don't want to acknowledge what's happening to us but I believe that the readers would have been on the defense more if he said "we" are the problem instead of using his own dialogue. But I also think if he said it that way we would've come to terms with the hard truth, that we are the problem and we just don't want to admit it. By him saying it this way it showed me that not only I prevent myself from learning more about climate change because I don't want to think about our own deaths, but it has also shown me that I say a lot of "I don't know's" when in reality I do know. Another point he addresses is "Making this about individuals is naive in terms of what needs to be done, while letting politicians and businesses off the hook" (150), that we put the blame on larger companies, yes they do cause a big portion of climate change, but we are the ones fueling the climate change because they do these things for us. "But companies produce what we buy; farmers grow what we eat. They commit crimes on our behalf" (150). This is another example of us blaming other people and at this point it is hypocritical. We ask and ask for our own benefit, whether that be food, transportation, etc. and we don't see a problem with it, but asking for more of something when you already have enough benefits only for you. Another way he could've told us the same message would be if to straight-up say that we are the problem but I think this would create more conflict between the readers and Safran Foer, just like the first quote. The way he said it affected me by showing how to deal with our own conflicts, whether that be climate change or something else, we tend to blame others instead of ourselves. We don't want to see ourselves as the problem when we should see all the negative impacts we've done on climate change. Safran Foer's *We Are The Weather* Part 4 shows a lot of inner conflicts he has with himself, and it shows that we can relate to him more because we are going through the arguments with ourselves, even if it isn't climate change.

In conclusion, climate change can be hard to digest, our deaths can be hard to digest. I think Safran Foer's book *We Are the Weather* can help people understand the importance of collective action, our own

inner conflict with the topic, and how we can prevent ourselves from learning, reliability of information about climate change and that we are all in this together. When thinking about how to change our actions to help decrease climate change, Foer states that the planetary crisis is not as hard as we see it as, learning to help educate people around us, because as we know, we are greater in numbers.

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## Rhythmic Algebra

by Alex Pho

I'm not the biggest fan of pop music. And this isn't because I'm some Asian immigrant that grew up with some "exotic" music overseas. I was born and raised in America, and if I know anything about our culture, it's that we love our pop music to hell, tour the nine circles, share tea with Lucifer, and come back blasting pop music the whole time. Billboard 100 stations stifle the airwaves; film and TV directors chuck their playlists into soundtracks; companies litter their ads with recent hits. And we Americans absolutely eat it up. The same three core parts of pop, despite replication among major artists (or perhaps because of it), make the genre mass-producible and mass-enjoyable. Something about that constant 4/4 time signature pleases us, that I-V-vi-IV chord progression sings to us, that verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus structure calls to us.

I've grown weary of pop. Sure, the occasional bop puppets my fingers to the beat, and I'm a sucker for nostalgia (Katy Perry's "[Firework](#)" is ingrained into my memory no matter how hard I try to repress it), but as a whole, it doesn't engage me as it does many people. The core that made pop an industry powerhouse put me to sleep. Hits from Taylor Swift to Shawn Mendes follow the same predictable structure, and their ubiquity discourages experimentation beyond a few chord changes in the bridge. Yet American culture keeps pushing it, establishing American pop as the industry standard around the globe.

I once followed rock bands like Imagine Dragons and Against the Current, but got bored when their later releases made their formulaic pop structures painfully clear. My guilty pleasure, Japanese rock, is inspired by the same core that makes up American pop; the instrumentals set the style apart, with some killer solos luring me back despite following the generic formula. (Yorushika's "[Say It](#)" is one of my favorites.) And though I'm not a fan, what I hear of Korean pop seems to follow these tropes as well, differentiating itself with dramatic electronic backgrounds. Love it or hate it, American pop has warped the international music industry around itself.

I'm not here to preach "pop music bad" like my contemporaries; musical taste is subjective and many people like their music simple. But for those wanting to try something different—or just looking around for new obsessions—I suggest the underground movement of math rock. Yeah, it sounds silly (its inception even allegedly arose from a joke, as Chavez's guitarist Matt Sweeney quips in a [Pitchfork](#) interview), but it's been my favorite genre of music ever since I first heard it in high school.

The name itself brings up images of nerds crunching numbers at a blackboard. To be fair, that's almost a part of the experience. And that's what makes it so fun.

Thanks to the magic of the internet, it's easy to find once obscure music through your streaming platform of choice. To get a feel for the genre, take a quick listen to Covet's "[Charybdis](#)," Invalids' "[General Sherman](#)," and Tsumiki's "[Watercolor/Umbrella/June/Dryflower](#)." Having trouble keeping up? They're written unconventionally by design—I'll get to that shortly. These samples should showcase the genre's diversity, from Covet's calmer instrumentals to Tsumiki's vivid vocals. What ties them together?

The genre itself is as chaotic as music can get, but Theo Cateforis' "How Alternative Turned Progressive: The Strange Case of Math Rock" offers a succinct generalization: "The most prominent of [its features] is the extensive use of asymmetrical or 'odd' time signatures and shifting mixed meters" (244). And he really does mean extensive. Pop music, as a point of comparison, can be easily measured by counting to four. Put on your favorite song and try it for yourself. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. It's hypnotic. You can do this with pretty much any Billboard 100 song; some artists deviate with measures of three (one, two, three, one, two, three), but these are far from the norm. Pop songs are built on consistency, delivering an easy listening experience where audiences can focus on each artist's voice and lyrics without worrying about anything complex under the scenes.

Math rock takes consistency and yeets it out the window. Chaotic signatures of five, eleven, or even insanity like seventeen are perfectly valid. And unlike pop artists, its writers rarely linger in such meters, switching back and forth to throw listeners off track at arbitrary points, be it in the middle of a song or even between every bar of music. Try these counting exercises without stumbling:

- Constant 5: One-two-three-four-five-One-two-three-four-five...
- 3-3-4-4: One-two-three-One-two-three-One-two-three-four-One-two-three-four...
- 6-7-6-7: One-two-three-four-five-six-One-two-three-four-five-six-seven...

They might seem simple in a vacuum, but try counting out Chon's "[Suda](#)" and see how you fare (the section at 18 seconds is a constant 7, if you need a hint). Other enthusiasts like [Fecking Bahamas](#)' Nikk Hunter and William Covert layer on additional characteristics like "'angular' melodies and polyrhythms," but I consider these to be an artist's stylistic choice rather than common features. Math rock's foundation is built on the controlled chaos of its time signatures and the rhythms that can be pulled off knowing these restrictions.

You can easily see how the genre's moniker relates to its inspiration. Music on its own is already intrinsically linked to math—just look how pop music is divided into 4s, how every octave of music is separated by exactly 110 Hertz, how rhythm is time given form. Math rock only takes that and dials it up a couple hundred notches. Its untamed signatures seem to tap into some yet undiscovered part of the universe, daring listeners to piece together something tangible from musical anarchy. Here is your equation: solve for X. Yet the instrumentation and homemade nature grounds the music back to reality. The music isn't some abstract concept decided by some coincidence of the universe; it's crafted by a few passionate people in their garage having fun with their songwriting.

Math rock perplexed me when I first stumbled into it in high school. But the deeper I looked into the genre, the more I loved it. I found myself engaging with the music in a way I could never do with pop, struggling with each song to make foreign rhythms, chords, and structures familiar again. I studied each song I listened to in the same way Matt Sweeney's friend "[took] out his calculator to figure out how good the song was." Hell, I even created a rhythm game level out of Sajjanu's "[Dazzling Rules of Solar System](#)," a task that deconstructs every part of the music and reassembles it into a playable form. Math rock didn't just give me something to listen to as a backdrop to my life. It gave me an entirely new hobby.

All this easily intimidates newcomers, and I get why. Western music, classical and modern, has conditioned us into predictable rhythms and 4/4 signatures. This isn't just an issue with pop music—ask a band kid to play the Mission Impossible theme (5/4) and watch them struggle to keep time. This preconditioning has been exacerbated by pop's prevalence and the dispersion of its tropes throughout modern music. (Check out Sideways' video essay "[4 chords](#)" to see how the signature chord progression has leaked into film scores.) We already have enough trouble adapting to rising styles like

rap's subgenres (I, for one, don't get the appeal of mumble rap at all), and categories like math rock disrupt classical theory so rudely that they sound alien. You almost wonder why artists would screw around with their music so much if they know it drives listeners away.

Math rock's rebellion against pop music is more reminiscent of its distant cousin jazz than its closer rock siblings. Jazz was born of a desire to "do something different," as jazz scholar Gerald Horne puts it. Math rock is just the same. The anarchic signatures, odd solos, and unique riffs break away from societal norms, denying listeners of the effortless listening experience offered by more popular forms of music. In exchange, it presents an experiment designed to keep listeners on their toes.

Hunter and Covert explain the math experience best. They describe it as "the approach the listener must take to parse the complexities of the music, to use problem-solving skills to unravel the sound and unlock its secrets, much like a mathematician uses logic to unravel the puzzle." The artists act as sadistic math textbook writers, devising problems to test their listeners' skills, daring them to solve the musical equation in front of them. For people like me, such a puzzle is too good to resist. And a gratifying reward awaits with each success: an understanding of the artist's musical intentions, a sense of participation and accomplishment in the music itself. This challenge—to analyze the music or leave in defeat—isn't a disadvantage of the genre; it's an active feature that requires listeners to engage with the medium. If you glazed over the tracks from the earlier samples, I extend this challenge to you—pick one, and try analyzing it. If you enjoy the experience, I hope these songs set you off on your own hunt for math rock; these are just an introduction, and there's a whole lot more the genre can offer.

I don't get this kind of interactivity from many genres, let alone pop music. Pop's main goal is simplicity for the sake of easy consumption (and production), but that leaves a mishmash of weak characteristics better executed elsewhere. Looking for meaningful lyrics? Rap artists have that covered. Catchy melodies? Instrumental and electronic genres do them in much more interesting ways. The only trait left is the individual styles and voices of each artist, but that's already a given in music. I love math rock because what it offers is completely unique among other genres.

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## With Love, Comes Loss, Comes Love

by Peyton Osha

In Queen City Racquet Club, it is calm. There is energy if you know where to look, but upon first glance, it is tranquil. The lobby is dark, with muted lights hanging over the couches, the TV, the fireplace, the front desk. The windows are heavily tinted to minimize outside light. It's June. Late June, actually, and the morning is warm. Not hot quite yet, but warm enough that the sunshine envelops you like an embrace from an old friend. The TV is showing a replay of the 2008 Wimbledon final, the greatest match in history. Amid the subdued sounds of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal hitting the ball back and forth, you can hear murmurs from the front desk as Kathy and Doug answer the phones, and the far away sounds of the cash register as Robyn rings up breakfast orders. It smells like popcorn and tennis ball fuzz, a unique combination, but one that is comforting. The cafe doors have just been propped open. The tables are clad in tacky vinyl tablecloths, the exact same ones that have been there since I was an infant. The stools are neatly lined up at the counter, no doubt the handiwork of Jean. All around the cafe walls hang pictures of some members, only a few of whom I recognize. The newest picture was taken in 2002; all the others outdate me by at least five years. Everyone in the frames looks happy, but not in a posed way, happy in a way that radiates true joy and thankfulness for being together. The bulletin board down the hall spotlights the "junior of the month" and the Hall of Fame Room photos of my coworkers and I are a newer, but well-loved element of that ancient place. The lights on the courts aren't on, making them like a black hole beneath, the freshly painted blue and green unable to be seen. If you sit on the counter above the courts, you get a feeling that you might fall off the edge of the world entirely. The lobby carpet, though actually only a few years old, looks like it probably saw the Berlin Wall fall. There's a small red vacuum behind the front desk, but it doesn't work. Neither does the cordless navy blue one. Only a select few know about the green and black one that Billy keeps hidden in his maintenance closet, the only one that actually stands a chance of winning the everlasting crumb war instigated by the camp kids. This place was built a long time ago, vaguely resembling a bomb shelter, but I also know that one bad storm could wreak some serious havoc and give the insurance company quite the headache. It's by no means Globo Gym, it is positively Average Joe's. It's old and dilapidated, but otherwise well-kept, and you can always tell that it is frequented by a plethora of people who love it dearly. The regulars and the employees are all on a first name basis and greet each other enthusiastically, even if they just saw each other yesterday. Jean knows all about our plans for the fall, the schools we're off to, the internships that have fallen through, and exactly what we like to watch on the cafe TV when we come in for work in the morning.

Ryan sits in the chair at his desk, the chair that squeaks in the same place at every rotation, the chair that takes a lot of convincing to raise or lower, that has a few chunks mysteriously missing from the foam in the left armrest. He's the camp director this year, which is a big promotion for him. He's twenty-one and trying to grow out his beard because he thinks it'll make him look older and more authoritative in the eyes of the campers and their parents. He's always been self-conscious of his young-looking face and his lanky build. He's bored right now; the campers won't be there for another half hour, so he hangs out with me until we need to work. He and I have known each other for about five years, dating back to when we both played in the juniors program here. I've always looked up to him as a tennis player, friend, and coworker, now boss. We chat about stupid things for a few minutes, killing the time. He sits in his chair and I stand leaning against the wall next to him, creating a scene like that of Michael and Dwight in *The Office*. As we talk, I notice him idly fidgeting with the orange wristband that he wears on his wrist. He runs his fingers over the words "Sure Strong," a typo, actually, but the bands were already printed, so the misspelling stays. The off kilter phrase is the subject of many questions that can really only be answered with a shrug. Ryan turns the band over in his fingers, clearly a motion that he's unaware he's even doing, more a force of habit than anything. The bright orange rubber stands out against his pale skin, but is more a part of him than anything else he wears. He's dressed in a white Queen City shirt, black shorts, and black shoes with purple soles that I know are a half size too small for his liking, but hey, they were free. Leaning on the desk next to him is his racquet, the all-black Wilson Prostaff, with yellow Luxilon string and no shock absorber. I know he doesn't really like it, feels it doesn't give him enough topspin, but hey, it was free. As he continues to fiddle with his wristband, I look down at my own wrist, which sports an identical one, smooth from all the times I've idly touched it, too. Bright orange isn't exactly my favorite color, but still I wear the band every day. It's the color of leukemia awareness, I learned a while ago. 23,000 people die each year from leukemia and all I have is a wristband.

As soon as I touch it, my head immediately floods with memories. A montage of images clouds my thoughts. I show up to the visitation in my school tennis uniform after crushing a girl from the

neighboring school 6-2 6-0 an hour before. I was underdressed, but everyone understood, especially when my opponent from that afternoon showed up, also in her uniform. The Cincinnati tennis community is rather small, after all, and everybody knows everybody. I walk over to my people, the last one of us to show up, and at first I can't put my finger on what looks so different. Then I realize it's that I've never seen them in such formal, muted clothes. I also realize I never want to see it again. It doesn't seem right. We're all happiest in comfortable athletic clothes and tennis shoes. Clare immediately brings me into a big hug as soon as I walk up, but then again, she's always been my most affectionate friend. Sierra, who I haven't seen in forever, comes up next to me and grabs my hand. She goes to college forty-five minutes away, but I'm not at all surprised she came back for this. Kyle and Abby, my best friends, smile weakly at me and a silent conversation transpires through our eye contact. Logan, my boss, wraps me in a hug as soon as Clare lets me go, and I'm a little taken aback. I've known Logan for years, but I've never seen him this emotional or vulnerable. Makes sense, I guess. I get through that night by squeezing Kyle and Abby's hands as hard as I possibly can.

The next day, I'm leaving school after my first class, going home, putting on a dress and makeup, and driving to Kyle's house to meet up with my friends. We're getting in Kyle's car and driving west on Madison Road to St. Cecilia's Church. Seeing that name makes my mind go to a little girl named Cecelia Aure, who, at three, is too young to know exactly what's going on today. Her brother, Kiefer, isn't, however. He's six, seven tomorrow. As soon as he steps out of the car, he gets overwhelmed with emotion and his little body is wracked with sobs. His mom, Nicole, helps him back into the car, where he stays for the next few hours. I feel bad that so many people are watching, but all eyes are on the Aure family today. Not Sure, Aure. Kyle, Ronit, Abby, and I park and walk in as one unit. We look puzzledly at each other when we see the Stearns family show up. I mutter something unkind about how nobody wanted to see them again after they left Queen City, and my friends all roll their eyes and nod in agreement. I take a deep breath and put my hand on the cool metal handle of the massive wooden door that looms above us. The busy sounds of Oakley on a Thursday morning amplify behind me. Somehow, though I'm on the church steps and know the door is right in front of me, I feel like I'm watching myself from somewhere else. My head is blending into the hubbub of Madison Road and I don't remember the last time I blinked. As soon as I open the door, we're surrounded by seemingly everyone who's ever stepped foot inside Queen City Racquet Club. Close friends, older members, even people I hadn't seen in years. The sound of their abundant, albeit quiet, chatter overtakes the sound of the thoughts in my own head and I almost stumble backwards as my senses are flooded. There's a weird, almost metallic taste in my mouth, sort of like the one you get right before you throw up. It smells musty in the church, like formality and lifelessness, a scent that I am absolutely hating in this moment. I focus on what I can concretely feel: my feet in my wedges, my hair touching the back of my neck, my dress swishing around my legs, and Abby and Kyle's hands grasping mine. My eyes meet Ronit's and he nods. The four of us take a collective gulp and walk further into the sea of tennis fanatics. The next hour or so passes by hazily, a blur of weird Catholic rituals I don't know and songs that go in one ear and out the other. Standing, sitting, standing again. The next thing I know, we're being handed a purple flag, getting back into Kyle's Subaru, and driving down Gilmore Avenue before taking a right back onto Madison, making sure to stay right behind Logan's car.

At the cemetery, everyone's cars are packed together like a huge traffic jam on the highway. We're parked next to Dorianna, the intimidating owner of the club. We shy away, but today, her eyes are kind as she greets us, and there's even a hint of a smile. I'm grateful for this out-of-character showing of affection. We walk across the grass towards where everyone else is gathered, but stand together in the back, right next to Logan. Cecelia wanders through the crowd, saying hi to everyone she sees. The people look down at her with a face that conveys pity. A softening of the brow and a slight tilt of the head. Although I can't pinpoint exactly why, that expression makes me uncomfortable, so when she comes over to us, I bend down to her level and ask her to tell me about the doll she's holding, which she does with glee. As I stand back up, I see Nicole looking through the crowd at her daughter, and she smiles at me and mouths her gratitude. I nod and send Cecelia back over toward her mother, doll in tow. As she works her way through the myriad of tall adults, I'm struck by just how small she is, not even coming up to everyone's hips. I have the urge to reach out and bring her in close to me, protecting her from all the sadness and hurt in the world, keeping her at this innocent age forever. The rest of that day is a blur of cold food and tepid water, which does nothing to diminish the scratchy feeling in my throat, followed by a tennis match I hardly remember and which I had to be convinced

to play in. It'll take your mind off of it, give you something else to focus on today, I'm told. Little do they know, there's only one voice I hear in my head when I play, and it's not my own.

Later that night, after a victory that meant nothing to me, my phone buzzes with a text from Logan. He's planning a get-together the next night so we can "celebrate, remember, grieve, and connect in recognition of Alan's incredible and unique impact on all of our lives." My eyes well with tears by the time I get to the end and read "Alan loved all of you so much, and through that love he created a community unique to any other." I scroll through the list of recipients of that message. It's so weird to see everyone's names there together. Somehow it makes things not feel real, in the way that nothing on a phone screen feels entirely real or genuine. That next night, Friday the 13th, actually, our community got together. One notable member was missing, since Ryan goes to college four hours away and couldn't get away to come home. Months later, he would tell me that this was his biggest regret. That night is mostly a cloudy memory, all of us still thinking it didn't feel real. I sit on the couch just outside the Hall of Fame Room, the one closer to the rest of the lobby, not the fridge. I look up when it hits me that I've been staring at my shoes for at least a few minutes. I try to make my brain tune back into the conversation.

"And he'd always make fun of the bag I would bring my lunch in," Logan says. "Half the time we'd end up making Hags get us Chick-Fil-A and I'd put that bag right back in the fridge anyway." I blink, hard, and try to reorient myself. A second later, we're all of a sudden discussing nicknames. "You know, Peyton, I think you're the only person that he called by their nickname more than their real name, other than Hags, obviously." I can't help but smile when Logan says this to me, and my mind fondly drifts to all the kids that, because of this, legitimately thought my name was Posha when they first met me. Almost without realizing I'm even doing it, I open my mouth and share another memory, and we all keep laughing as we think back to the time Alan asked Ryan who had the most kissable lips. As the chatter continues, I look around the club and notice just how quiet and peaceful it really is. It's midnight, and I've never been here this late before. The doors to the cafe are closed, the lights are all dark, the computers have been shut off for the night. My eye is drawn to the bowl of orange wristbands sitting at the front desk. Right above it sits a picture of Alan, Nicole, Kiefer, and Cecelia in their Sunday Best, smiling from ear to ear. It fills me with the same eerie feeling I got when I first saw my friends dressed in their formal clothes two days ago. I continue my scan of the lobby, turning my attention to the counter, where all the old chairs have been pushed in for the night. If I focus hard enough, I think I can almost see Alan sitting on the counter, legs dangling as he overlooks the lobby. The skin on his legs is marbled from the skin grafts, and a tub of Aquaphor sits next to him to treat this very ailment. Though he is forty-two, his hair is sparse, and he is rarely without a ball cap. Under the hat, his face is pensive. His dark skin contrasts against his orange shirt. He also wears black shoes with purple soles and an orange bag, from which an all-black Wilson Prostaff sticks out. I blink and the once-vivid image is gone and I'm left looking at the all-too-familiar empty counter. As I turn my attention toward the other couches and TV, I notice the banner above the TV that reads "Come Visit Us on the Web at [queencityfitness.com](http://queencityfitness.com)!" I laugh to myself as I think about the absurdly outdated website that the club boasts. My heart sinks a little as I wonder how long it'll be until someone removes the picture on there of Alan and it becomes official that they're seeking a new Tennis Director. Logan comments that it's getting late, and we should probably all head home and get some rest after the stressful week we've had. We clean up and head outside, locking all the doors behind us.

The chill of the September night makes me shiver a little as I walk out through the doors. I look down at the familiar brick steps and note the tennis ball fuzz that always seems to find its way into the grout. The brown railing is cool under my fingertips and my footfalls are surprisingly soft. I turn around and look up at the massive building. It looms above me and I feel a little scared. Of what, I don't know, since I've been coming here for as long as I can remember. I feel behind me the presence of my friends, my community. A wave of appreciation washes over me, and I feel more connected to myself than I have for the past week, maybe even longer than that, maybe ever. I'm finally looking through my own eyes again, not watching myself from afar. Even though I just lost a big part of me, I feel whole, an effect of being surrounded by the best team of people I could possibly imagine. The people that tether me to them, to myself, to this building. I look up a little farther and see an almost full moon illuminating the night sky. The moon is ancient, full of the past and of memories I won't ever forget. Underneath it, I'm nothing but an ant, a blip on the radar. This building is ancient, too,



ancient and chock full of life, love, and learning. I stand underneath it after a day of reminiscing on the past, and I turn my mind toward the future.

"Posha, can you take their temperature?" Ryan's voice yanks me back to the present, where I'm still leaning on the wall next to his desk.

"Yep, got it Hags," I respond, as my hand drops from my wristband and I grab the thermometer and point it at the camper that just walked in. This is a particularly challenging year for summer camp, and for a while, we didn't know if it was even going to happen. Ryan and I have had to help each other through it now that Alan and Logan are gone, but it's built our little community up even further to rely on each other in such a way. I hope Logan finds what he's meant to do, even if that doesn't keep him here with us. In a place so static, where nothing ever changes, it's startling to look at how much has changed in the past year or so. We're all ready to go off and start new adventures this fall, and as I look at Ryan, nervous in his new position, but handling it well, I catch a glimpse of myself in the tinted window next to the desk. I recognize that neither of us would be here if not for this place and the people we've been lucky enough to surround ourselves with for so many years. No matter what other change lies ahead, we have this community, these experiences, and each other, and we'll always be Sure Strong.

## The Play Station: The millennial version of the arcade games

by Shrey Garg

It all started in 1988 when Sony along with the then gaming industry domination, Nintendo, was building the Super Disc. It was then Sony who thought of entering the market seeing the huge potential in the field, which is very evident today. Nintendo somehow gave away the partnership with Sony on the Super Disc and joined hands with Philips, a major electrical equipment manufacturer. Sony manufactured a set of two hundred demo models of the first PlayStation which could play the Nintendo game cartridges. It could also play audio CDs and CDs with computer and video information. These prototypes were scrapped. Kutaragi developed games in a 3D polygon graphics format. Not everyone at Sony approved of the PlayStation project and it was shifted to Sony Music in 1992, which was a separate entity. They further spun off to form Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc. (SCEI) in 1993(Bellis). The first Play Station was released in Japan on 3rd December 1994 and was named PlayStation X. Since then, it has built an empire in the console gaming industry becoming one of Sony's most profitable ventures.

In the first month of its release the Sony PlayStation sold its three hundred thousand units in Japan itself. When launched in the USA it pre-sold around one hundred thousand of its units in 1995. As predicted, it sold over nine million units all around the world in just a year and reached the hundred-million-unit milestone in the next eight years. It was the first console gaming device to do this. The effect of this small but really loved machine is vast and is now spread all around the world. Everyone from parents to children are hooked onto it. This is an artefact which has brought about a significant transition between the millennial generation and the Gen-Z. PlayStation is a unique gaming platform with consoles; it enables a user to play different games related to the interest of the user like Sports, Thrillers, Mystery, and the list goes on and on.

The Play Station became a popular artefact as soon as it was released into the market people even referred to it as the King of consoles. We have come a long way in the last two decades and so has this tiny piece of machinery (then), with time it has evolved to include the most stunning graphics, higher bytes of memory and has also got the ability to run the complex of games. When it launched it was Sony's trial effort to compete with then popular consoles like Sega Saturn and the Nintendo 64. But two decades later it has reached the pedestal standing at the top with hardly any competitors. The reasons the Play station has become such a hit is the parent company SONY. The people at Sony realized the change in view towards gaming in the future generations and made it a point to work in a way to develop a machine that was better than any other.

Though a little expensive than its rivals but way more advanced and efficient. The ability of the developers to constantly improve the machine to an extent which cannot be imagined has always attracted more and more customers. Play Station has become like a fundamental part of today's teen life. Not only boys but girls today are choosing to play the Play Station. From one end of the globe to the other it is available everywhere. The game developers have also played a good hand in promoting the popularity of the Play Station. The evolution of the E-Sports was a game changer, the FIFA EA series, the NBA 2K series are related to the games which people love to play on field and to be able to play as their favorite player in a virtual setup was even more exciting. Also, Sony developing its own games with the best story line-ups and the best graphics led to people buying Play Stations over the other consoles available. The X Box series from Microsoft has been its competitor for over a decade now and was somewhere taking away its glamour; this is when Sony released its magnificent PS5. The most supreme gaming console ever made, with a huge body (not at all tiny now) and the more advanced features that one could expect.

The Play Station is a part of a tech driven generation where it plays a very important role in people's life as a source of entertainment. It affects the social aspect the most as it promotes people to play games together and online being the new normal boosts the social ideology. People get together to compete on their consoles online and play one on ones, team games and even open world games with thousands of people online. The PlayStation is definitely going to be an artefact whose past generations are going to be loved and always talked about. This is because the newer mode is always going to be the best of the best, leading to the memory of the older model. Even as of now we see people posting on their social media platforms the stories and short videos which include all the older variants. People never forget the roots of objects that make a difference in the world and PlayStation is one of them.

The success of each of the previous as well as the current PlayStation models drives the Sony workforce to evolve and develop an even better machine the next time. This also increases the customers' expectation, but Sony has always been able to give us more than expected. The transition journey of the PlayStation is that it has evolved with the types of games that were being played to the games that are being played. The generation of the arcade games has sadly come to an end with hardly any gaming alleys left. We see that there has been a shift where people prefer to play games in the comfort of their homes rather than going to an arcade and waiting for a game. The gaming industry has changed itself. Earlier no one thought that playing games can be a source of income but, Ninja aka Tyler Blevins proved everyone wrong by achieving the net worth of 25 million dollars as a gamer (Ahmed).

This is a developing industry which can benefit a lot of people. The PlayStation gaming community today stands at ninety-four million monthly active users, which is more than the population of USA (Yaden).

The PlayStation brought about the revolution that was needed in the gaming industry. It made it a development sector as a whole in the tech companies all over the world. Today it has become such a big industry that if it shuts down it is going to cause a worldwide depression in the economy. The companies like Ubisoft and Naughty Dog Inc. were aimed specifically to design games for the PlayStation consoles. Something which was a section which was not approved by the higher officials at Sony is now standing at its most profitable venture. The PlayStation 3 selling over 86.15 million units and the PlayStation 4 selling around 114 million units till date and continuing to increase as we speak ("Supplemental Information for the Consolidated Financial Results for the Third Quarter, Sony").

The PlayStation a piece of art, many people will not consider it as one, but it has influenced people a lot and has achieved the status of an artefact. PlayStation has also been a part of the revolution which is helping people to interact with people in a way that they never could. People who are scared and are introverts are using this as a platform to burst their bubbles and enter this new age of technological social interaction with a bang. PlayStation is not just a piece of gaming console for the gamers now it is now synonymous with people exuding excitement and wonder. It is no longer just a machine but also an emotion. Its emotional value is far greater today than other devices. People keep using their consoles for years (at least five years). The smoothest and graphically a super machine that Sony gives to the people all around the world every few years has become a popular culture which keeps on evolving with time and the technological advancements we see all around the world. This gaming console is something which is the most relevant popular culture artefact which adapts itself from generation to generation. It is something which every teenager wants and is the only Christmas present one wants. The PlayStation is truly a device which is the millennial version of the arcade games but instilled with the play at home feature and modern graphics and state of the art user interface designs.

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Please visit Shrey Garg's blog entries below:

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# Rhetorical Analysis: Jubilee- “Pro-Life vs Pro-choice

by Tejal Tripathi

Jubilee is a YouTube channel based in Los Angeles, California that creates videos involving a group of individuals from two opposing perspectives, joining together for a discussion to meet a common ground. Jubilee's video "Pro-Life vs Pro-choice: Can they see eye to eye?", presents two groups of individuals, one supporting the legalization and outreach of abortion and the other opposing the same. As the video manifests the perspectives of common people belonging to the American society, the intended audience for this video would primarily be the American audience as they would most closely relate with the aspects brought up in the video. As legalizing abortion for the general public is a topic of controversy in American society, the purpose of the video is to educate the audience on both perspectives of abortion. The format of the video is such that both groups of people are prompted with different questions related to abortion and the related rights and they express their views on the same. This paper will be analyzing how the individuals convince their audience on their stance on the topic by using logical arguments, personal experiences, or emotional appeals. The groups presented in this video are introduced as the 'Pro-life' and 'Pro-Choice' side. According to Cambridge Dictionary, being pro-choice means "supporting the belief that a pregnant woman should have the freedom to choose an abortion (the intentional ending of a pregnancy) if she does not want to have a baby". Being Pro-life, however, is essentially the opposite of pro-choice, which means seeking for reduced public access to abortion holding a fundamental belief that abortion is immoral in most situations. Some of the women in the video share their personal experiences with abortion as a way to build ethos and pathos. Liz, a pro-choice woman, expresses "I have had two myself. The first one, I was not emotionally stable, I was not financially stable, I was on drugs. And recently, I had a miscarriage in which, because it was incomplete, I had to go for a DNC, which is an instant abortion procedure." Another woman, Kimberly, shares a similar experience. "I was 18 when I had my first abortion and at that time I was living with my grandmother. They were very conservative-raised as Catholic Christians. They would probably kick me out of the house if they found out I was pregnant. I was fresh out of high-school, did not have the monetary needs to raise a child and no place to live", calling attention to the restrictions and strong hostility that some pregnant women face due to the stigma associated to pre-marital sexual intercourse and pregnancy in certain cultures. Furthermore, highlighting their personal struggle at the time, such as lack of family support and finances appeals to the pathos of the audience. The experiences of these two women highlight an important aspect of the discussion; the financial, physical, and emotional condition of the pregnant women while they consider abortion. These women effectively appeal to the audience as they illustrate the state of pregnant women who do not feel confident in bringing a child into their lives when they are unable to support themselves appropriately.

Timmerie, a woman who is Pro-Life and hence, against abortion, uses her experience of working with women who have had abortions as a way to build her ethos and appeal to the pathos of the audience by referring to the emotional struggles of dealing with the aftermath of an abortion. "I have had both friends and extended family members who have had abortions and it is a decision that you carry with you for the rest of your life, and I have seen people two years later and I have seen people thirty years later still struggling with the aftermath of abortion and that's why, I think that us women deserve so much more than abortion." Timmerie demonstrates ethos as she conveys that she has worked with multiple women who have undergone abortions and hence has the credibility to speak on the negative consequences. Timmerie alludes to "post-abortion symptoms" by saying that "we as women deserve so much more than abortion", indicating that the emotional pain of going through an abortion is detrimental to women's well-being, appealing to pathos. This highlights the fact that women face the negative consequences of abortion long after the procedure. Timmerie's use of appeals is effective as she is able to highlight "post-abortion symptoms" and its inimical impact, and communicate her credibility through her ethos, providing the audience with a compelling perspective to dwell on.

Jolene, a pro-life college student builds ethos for herself and appeals to pathos by speaking from a

place of family experience and the birth of an “unwanted child” in her family. She does so by saying, “I have two little brothers and when my mom was pregnant with the youngest one, he was not planned. And he was at that time, an unwanted child... But my baby brother has impacted every single one of our lives in such a positive way, that I just could not imagine him not being on this planet, and that made me think that when life is born, life is beautiful.” She appeals to the audience through pathos as she mentions being grateful for her brother who could have been aborted, and alluding to the joy that children bring into families. Jolene hence substantiates her argument against abortion by emphasizing on emotional aspects. Jolene’s choice of words such as “life is so much more beautiful than there not being any life at all”, makes her appeal to pathos an effective one through her eloquent narration, and urges the audience to think about the creation of life from the time a fetus is created. Furthermore, her expression of gratitude towards the birth of her brother supports the same.

Along with pathos and ethos, logos was also used to justify the perspectives of both sides. Natalie, in support of abortions, questions “People who don’t have a family, who don’t have a partner, who don’t have stable housing. Is that going to be the right circumstance for the child or is that going to be more damaging?”. She therefore asserts unfavorable socio-economic situations of women being the reason of widespread abortion, which establishes a strong correlation between a woman’s background and the need for abortion in current American society. Timmerie, who is Pro-Life, responds to the lack of financial and familial support for women being a major factor for abortions being needed as “There are crisis pregnancies centers across the country who are waiting with the financial needs to help women who are facing crisis pregnancies” and establishes ethos by asserting that she has worked with hundreds of women who have received these benefits. Furthermore, Timmerie uses logos by making solution-oriented statements, exemplifying that pregnancy crisis centers can be an alternative to abortions for women struggling with pregnancy. Liz, a pro-choice woman, opposes that by saying, “I previously have had to be on food stamps, I previously have received unemployment benefits. I have had to be able to get that kind of assistance, and it’s not as much money as you think. And a lot of these individuals are still struggling to be able to provide for not only their baby but themselves. And I think that it is really unfair to put a woman and a baby into that situation against their will.” She establishes ethos by stating that she has had to receive government benefits for the underprivileged, and can speak on whether or not they help individuals. Liz uses logos to assert that people should not be forced to be put in a situation where they financially struggle to care for their baby. This particular aspect of the conversation sheds light on a significant social issue, which is the government benefits provided to women who financially struggle to raise a child. According to Improving State Medicaid Programs for pregnant women and children, NCBI, “A substantial proportion of women do not receive adequate prenatal care in the course of their pregnancies. Thirty-four percent of pregnant women receive what is considered insufficient prenatal care. The rate is highest among unmarried women (58 percent), teenagers (56 percent), the least educated (53 percent), black women (51 percent), Hispanic women (47 percent), and poor married women (47 percent)”. Hence, practically, current American society does not have adequate resources to provide for a large amount of people who are in dire need of financial assistance and security. Liz effectively communicates to the American audience through her appeals as she speaks from a place of experience with government assistance.

Natalie establishes ethos and her credibility as a speaker who prioritizes the legal and physical rights of a woman while speaking on abortion by asserting that “I want women to have the right to make a choice”. Additionally, Natalie makes a pressing statement by saying: “There are states that are saying that we will make the choice for you, and that is problematic to me on an equitable level, attaching jail-time and all these things for women, I don’t see the same thing happening for men.” She highlights a crucial conversation about the legal rights associated to abortion. Some states in the US such as Alabama have highly restrictive abortion laws, where abortion is outlawed in almost all cases, including rape and incest. Strong legal restrictions such as these leave women with essentially no choice to terminate the pregnancy, hindering their bodily autonomy and the right to make the decision to not give birth. By saying that “I don’t see the same happening for men”, Natalie conveys the unfairness of the possibility of legal punishment being imposed upon women for opting abortions when the baby is a result of a man and woman. Her coherent argument and use of appeals may resonate with a large section of the audience, as According to Public Opinion on Abortion, Pew Research Center, “Currently, 61% say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 38% say it should be illegal in all or most cases.”

Furthermore, she asserts that “One of the things that I always think about in the conversation of

abortion is education, education around our bodies. Or just consent, or just rape, all of these things are not conversations that are widely happening. I think about my own experience of Sex-Ed in high school was taught by the gym teacher who was also teaching us driver's training. And that makes me think about the quality of education. Natalie establishes ethos through her personal experience with the U.S. educational system, and demonstrates the connection of the widespread need for abortion to the lack of effective sex education at a younger age. This connects to the American audience as according to The State of Sex Education In the United States, NCBI, there have been periodic "declined in formal sex education from 2006 and 2013", along with "critical gaps exist in the types of information (practical types on "where to get birth control" and "how to use condoms" were lowest) and the mistiming of information (most adolescents received instruction after sexual debut) received." This reflects the need for better education on consent and intercourse in the American society, as many can avoid unwanted pregnancies if they have the knowledge on how to do so.

In conclusion, both sides of the group were able to make effective arguments using appropriate appeals along with personal experiences. This video by Jubilee is impactful as it expresses multiple perspectives from people of different perspectives and backgrounds, and shows how people coming from different experiences view a common social issue in drastically different ways. Videos representing conversation such as these are important and impactful as not only do they educate the audience on the various experiences that people have with certain issues, but also encourages the audience to gain a broader perspective on common societal subjects.

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## What can we do to help with Climate Change?

by Vy Minh Chu

Many people assume that an individual action cannot help with preventing climate change and it's futile for everyone to try. Jonathan Safran Foer has a strong disagreement on this as he states: "the impotence of individual action is a reason for everyone to try." Safran Foer is a well-known American novelist who wrote the one popular book about climate change called "We Are The Weather". The book was written in order to raise people's awareness about climate change, and interestingly in this book Safran Foer has included many affecting thoughts that I can't stop thinking about.

The standard way of thinking about climate change is it is real - people over the world know and accept that climate change is happening. However, to Safran Foer, when you know things without believing it and it doesn't move you to do something about it then you know nothing. Many people know that we're experiencing climate change, yet not much responds have been made since. Knowledge is different from belief, and belief inspires action. It is said in the book, "I am incapable of

the belief that would move me to do something. So I know nothing.” (23) It reminds me about my current love life (of course, what is more passionate to an eighteen year-old girl than love). I got to know this boy through social media that lived 119 miles away from me, we started talking and things went well. Two months later we confessed our feelings and made promises to come to see each other. Things started going downhill as I kept asking to meet and he eventually stopped putting effort into our conversations, arguments took place and lack of communications happened, we ended up drifting apart. I once talked to my cousin who flew across the country during the pandemic to see his loved ones afterwards and asked him what made him decide to take the risk and go there, simply he said "I know I have to. It was risky but I know I would regret it if I didn't. So I did." Same with the idea of knowledge and belief of Safran Foer, I acknowledged my worth and I believed that I had my own value to work on and I deserved better, it lead me to make my decision to leave and move on, so as my cousin - he knew he have to do it, and he did.

Common sense seems to dictate that when something bad happens, we can just do what we think is good. Due to Safran Foer, it is not okay when you do things to make you feel good instead of actually being good. In the book he said "It can be dangerous to feel better when things are not getting any better" (37). There's actually a lot of things we all do or had done at least once to make ourselves feel better about something. Perhaps saying sorry without feeling sorry, or wishing someone a happy birthday but don't truly wish them happy. When I was younger, that one time my grandma got sick and it went badly. I didn't come to visit her as I made up excuses that I was having too much homework and things to do when apparently I was not that busy. Instead, I went on my social media and posted about her, I felt like that was enough to show that I did care, and I thought I could come visit her later when she got better. A week later my grandma passed away. She left, and I still feel regret every time I think of it, as I could've done better than just some words on those platforms that couldn't even reach her. It was clear to tell that me posting on my social media did not help my grandma with her sickness at all, it only made me feel good at that moment. And it's dangerous, also helpless and regretful.

Speaking of taking actions, I cannot help thinking about one thing Safran Foer writes in his book - we don't do things only when we have feelings, feelings are built by the things that we do. According to him, "Waves do not require feeling; they generate feelings." (41) I agree with him that taking action creates feelings, because I remember that one time I went to an orphanage to do charity with my mom. I was sad since I failed my earlier exam, I didn't want to go in the first place as I thought I didn't have the feelings to do it. Yet my mom still wanted me to go to help her with stuff. Looking at the kids' faces lighten up as we gave them toys and candies, I eventually felt better and ended up dancing and singing with them all till night. As I feel better after visiting the orphanage, even though at first I thought I didn't have feelings to do it, I find out that it is true that the things we do create the feelings in us.

Before reading this book, my understanding of climate change was something out of my concern and that I can't do anything about it. But Safran Foer has brought me a whole new perspective on climate change by giving out ideas I believe any of us could feel related to and that such things as saving the planet is a task that needs not one not two but all of us actions. Safran Foer thinks that it needs not just one but collective actions in order to cause a radical change, and that every individual participant is important to make changes. I was impressed to read: "When a radical change is needed, many argue that it is impossible for individual actions to incite it, so it's futile for anyone to try. This is exactly the opposite of the truth: the impotence of individual action is a reason for everyone to try." (51) I live in a four-people household with mom, dad and my twin sister, and cleaning around the house is something I believe that most of us cannot resist. As soon as I remember, my mom was always the one who did the cleaning. Since we were growing up and eventually needed a bigger place, my mom started working to help afford it and then we moved. Bigger place means more cleaning needed to be done, yet because of work my mom's already too tired when she got home to do the cleaning. So we came with a solution, which each of us started to clean after ourselves and our own things such as plates, dishes or bathrooms and bedroom (since we were growing up used to have my mom taking care of everything, this was pretty much a life changing step for me!!) and then on weekends, we would help her with cleaning other stuff. It is said that it's important to have individual actions to make changes and I believe that if it was just my dad's decision himself or my own, we couldn't make it so much easier and more convenient for cleaning work. We successfully put a smile on my mom instead of a head shake every time she comes home now.

Safran Foer says when people acknowledge that climate changes caused by human but is unable to believe it to actually act on, they are nothing better than those who deny it. Along with it he also says, one thing preventing people from making significant progress in solving climate change is mistaking actions that make them feel good for action that actually accomplish something. Fortunately, he offers a solution when he says instead of waiting for the feelings to respond, feelings will eventually be produced as we started putting into practice. He elaborates on his solution by saying that collective actions are required in order to make such social changes. It was smart of Safran Foer to bring up all the ideas above to encourage people to act up, since they are the common reasons for them to refuse to do something about the main purpose of this book - climate change. What was new to me is the author instead of just making statements of what we should and should not do, he tells stories of his personal life and uses common point of view to reach out to us readers as he gives out his opinions. Reading this book has changed my way of seeing problems in life and inspired me to work on solving climate changes, begin with changing my breakfast ingredients.

## What Jonathan Safran Foer Really Wants To Tell Us In The We Are The Weather ?

by Ning Wei

We Are The Weather is a book about environmental crises, but unlike other books on environmental crises, the author of this book, Jonathan Safran Foer did not directly tell the reader his purpose. Jonathan Safran Foer cleverly avoided some topics that people don't like to talk about, he introduced readers to the subject of this book through his argument: reducing meat food can help people fight climate change. I think Jonathan Safran Foer used some smart moves to persuade some readers to reduce meat and animal products. The first move proposed by Jonathan Safran Foer was his attempt to convince readers by what happened around him. In the book, he uses the story of his grandmother in World War II to encourage readers to take relevant actions. His second move was when he confessed to the reader that he had eaten meat in an animal factory. His third move is he chose to use bullet points as evidence to present the information. Last move he used the dialogue between him and his own soul to write about the difficulty in making this choice. At the same time, he cleverly used the struggle between him and his soul to tell the reader that he understands everyone's situation, especially giving up meat. He is a novelist, but this book is a non-fiction book. It is really happening in our real world. Through this book, the author makes people rethink that saving the planet can start from the small thing of reducing meat consumption every day. He knows meat is important to some people, but he didn't make people give up meat altogether, however, he encourages people to reduce meat in food during their dinner. Even if people take a little action to reduce meat, it is an improvement for the whole group.

The first move that Safran Foer made is to use his grandmother's story metaphor climate change. According to Safran Foer's first part. "If a few factors had been different around the time that my grandmother left—if she had been ill, or if she had just fallen in love with someone—maybe she would not have been lucky to be leaving. Those who stayed weren't any less brave, intelligent, resourceful, or afraid of dying. They just didn't believe that what was coming would be so different from what had already come many times."(22). He used his grandmother's story in World War II to compare the relationship between people and climate change. People do not believe that climate change will bring great changes to human beings and the earth, just as some people did not believe that war would



happen to them in World War II. Perhaps some people will be aware of a series of problems brought about by climate change, but they have not taken any action to save the planet. Safran Foer used his grandmother's story as the beginning because he wanted to generate readers' interest in this book and attract readers' attention. An alternative move he could have not told the readers about his grandmother's story, and directly told the readers that his purpose was to reduce meat consumption. But this alternative move would not be as touching as his original move. He used real events around him to remind people that many times people were aware of the problem but did not take action. If he doesn't do this or tells readers directly about the harm that climate change brings to people, it will make some readers feel boring and impractical.

The second move that Safran Foer made is he used a confession method to confess his true thoughts and actions to readers. According to Safran Foer's first part. "I ate meat a number of times. Usually burgers. Often at airports. Which is to say, meat from precisely the kinds of farms I argued most strongly against. And my reason for doing so makes my hypocrisy even more pathetic: they brought me comfort. I can imagine this confession eliciting some ironic comments and eye-rolling, and some giddy accusations of fraudulence." (57). He confessed to readers that he had eaten meat countless times. Safran Foer used his personal experience to explain to the audience that he was not a complete vegetarian in the early years. And the process of his transformation into a vegetarian was because he discovered that animal agriculture caused great damage to the environment. Such a move dispels readers' doubts about this book and makes more readers believe that the information in his book is true and reliable. Often these real information can arouse readers' thinking and attention. The reason why he didn't mention this topic directly at the beginning is because topics such as meat products, dairy products, and eggs can make people defensive. Another alternative move that he could do is hide from the readers his own experience of eating meat, or tell the readers that he has been a vegetarian since birth. But if he can't tell the audience honestly, the audience will think that what he said is unrealistic and has not happened in real life. This alternative move would not be able to show his true side will make some readers question his belief in the climate crisis.

The third move is he chose to use bullet points as evidence to present the information about animal farms effective to climate change. In the book second part, his evidence is scientific data to support his argument. For example, in the second part called "Why Deforestation Matters" the whole chapter is made up of ten bullet points, including these ones:

- The more forests we destroy, the closer we come to plugging the drains.
- Allowing tropical land currently used for livestock to revert to forest could mitigate more than half of all anthropogenic GHGs. (76).

Safran Foer chose to interpret the information in bullet points in the second part, each section uses a title to summarize the topic of this section. The reason for this not only allows readers to quickly know the main content of each section, but also analyzes the reasons for climate change from different angles, such as temperature changes in ancient times to human population growth, from animal farming to deforestation, which introduces global warming that is not formed overnight. In addition, the author used these shocking data to cause readers to pay attention and worry about animal agriculture. An alternative move he could make is there are no bullet points in the second part, this alternative move would not allow readers to more intuitively understand the harm caused by climate change. Overall, as one of the readers, when I read the second part, I will first pay attention to those bullet points information. That's why Safran Foer uses these bullet points because this data makes the content of the article easier to understand and does not mislead readers. After all, the author's goal aroused people's awareness of global warming, and used a very clever move to turn the reader's attention to his real theme—meat food is the main cause of global warming.

Last move he used the dialogue between him and his soul to write about the difficulty in making this choice. In the book's last part, Safran Foer's soul says, "That you will change?" he answered "That humankind will figure this out" his soul says, "We've already figured it out." (122). This is a dialogue between the author and his soul. This dialogue describes the deep desire of the author and also reflects the two sides of ideal and reality. In reality, the author has different roles in society. He is a father, a writer, and an environmentalist. But in many cases, some real-life interference will hinder the author's intention to protect the environment. And deep in his soul, he hopes that the environment can be improved. This dialogue also describes that when the author encounters some obstacles, he asks his inner heart, and his soul answers his question on the other side, which guides and the

solution allows him to overcome various obstacles in reality. The author wrote this book for the original belief in his heart and called on more readers to save the planet. An alternative move he could do that he had no inner description, or he ended up calling everyone to protect the environment and reduce meat consumption. This alternative move can't truly express the author's sense of faith and reality, it is precisely his sense of faith that he overcomes obstacles in reality and finally wrote this book. So the author's true feelings show that he hopes readers can take action to reduce meat consumption.

In conclusion, I think Safran Foer made an effective argument. He uses some good moves to persuade readers to reduce animal products and meat consumption. Here are four moves that I think are useful: 1. His attempt to convince readers by what happened around him. In the book, he uses the story of his grandmother in World War II to encourage readers to take relevant actions. 2. He confessed to the reader that he had eaten meat in an animal factory. 3. he chose to use bullet points as evidence to present the information. 4. He used the dialogue between him and his own soul to write about the difficulty in making this choice. Overall, this book has given readers some inspiration about what should we do in the next step and some positive influence. Every action of people should be very important because it determines the future of this planet. Finally, for the future of the planet, please reduce meat products from every meal we eat.

Work cited

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## Reduce meat consumption for climate change

by Qi Zhou

Many people believe in climate change but they do nothing about it. I used to be one of them. However, after reading the book *We Are the Weather* by Jonathan Safran Foer, I realized that my previous thoughts were wrong. Safran Foer disagrees with most people's ideas. He is an American who writes many novels and also writes nonfiction books, including *We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast*. In fact, my entire article will focus on this nonfiction book. Safran Foer's target audience is not people who deny climate change, but he particularly targets people who accept climate change but don't take action on it. His purpose is to inform the readers that climate change is going to get worse and worse if people don't do anything about it. Furthermore, Safran Foer argues that diet is an effective way to tackle climate change and he appeals to the readers to eat less meat. In my opinion, Although Safran Foer had a hard work to do in persuading readers to reduce animal products, I consider that he was effective in making all of the arguments. I think some of the most effective moves he made include in the beginning of the books he share that Americans do collective action in World War II, waiting to tell the readers his argument until the part one of the book is ending, making a comparison between atmosphere and budget and have a conversation with the souls in order to solve the problem that readers may refute his arguments.

The first move, Safran Foer tells readers what "homefront actions" the Americans did during World War II and calls on readers to join in tackling climate change together. The reason that Safran Foer used that as an example is because the book is meant for an American audience. And it's a good way to readers that have a great idea and understanding about what Americans did in World War II. This way will make readers produce inspiration and let them do the same thing as World War II what

Americans do. According to Safran Foer, "As the war progressed, Blackouts were practiced in cities across the country, even those far from the coast, to immerse civilians in a conflict whose horrors were out of sight but whose victory would require collective action. On the home front, Americans needed a reminder that life as they knew it could be destroyed, and darkness was one way to illuminate the threat. Civil Air Patrol pilots were encouraged to comb the skies above the Midwest for enemy aircraft, despite the fact that no German fighter plane of the era was capable of flying that far. Solidarity was an important asset, even if such gestures would have been foolish-would have been suicidal-if they were the only efforts made "(8). In my opinion, Safran Foer could have written directly, "If people only knew about climate change without taking actual actions, it would be very stupid. Only people acting together are smart." instead of making a comparison to something in the past. But the author did not do so.

Why did Safran Foer describe that the American people achieved victory through collective action in World War II? The author is writing this book for American readers, these readers have a good understanding of what Americans did in World War II. In that case, the readers will use this example to generate inspiration and take collective motivations like the Americans in the past in World War II. I think the author's move is very effective because he made it clear to readers, including me, that our collective actions for climate change may not completely solve it, but if we do nothing or if we don't contribute to climate change with collective action, climate change will definitely get worse.

How would Americans react and respond to the "homefront actions" taken by the American people in response to World War II? Because when readers have read the performance of the American masses in World War II, they will consciously think that they should also take collective action to solve climate change. Safran Foer used the example of the American people's victory in the war through "homefront actions" in World War II to attract readers to take collective actions to deal with and solve climate change, so I think the author's writing style is very clever and intelligent.

The second move is that Safran Foer made is using numbers and percentages to tell people that climate change is increasing day by day and the author also tells readers that although human beings are a very small part of the animals on the earth, we have a huge impact on climate change. The author uses a lot of numbers and percentages on pages 75 to 90 in the book to tell readers that the development of human civilization and the development of animal husbandry emit a lot of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. For example, According to Safran Foer, "CO2 accounts for 82 percent of the greenhouse gases emitted by human activity. The majority is emitted by industry, transport, and electrical use." (85). The author also explained to readers how much animal husbandry accounts for human land use, population growth has led to the rapid growth of animal husbandry, why human emissions of greenhouse gases will not be emitted into outer space and the global warming potential of greenhouse gases. Because of the development of human civilization and the development of animal husbandry, many wild animals and plants on the earth have become extinct and climate change is having a serious negative impact. According to Safran Foer, "Humans represent 0.01 percent of life on Earth. Since the advent of agriculture, approximately twelve thousand years ago, humans have destroyed 83 percent of all wild mammals and half of all plants"(78). In my opinion, Safran Foer could have written directly, "People cannot eat any meat and people should immediately give up animal husbandry." But he didn't write it that way.

After the reader sees that the author used a lot of numbers and percentages in the second part, what do you think of the livestock industry, which has a serious negative impact on climate change? By author doing so, the reader can attain a direct sense of how much methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases livestock produce. And the reader is well aware that these greenhouse gases will contribute significantly to climate change, making it worse. Readers may well be tempted to take action on climate change.

In the second part of the book, the author cited data, is this move effective or invalid? The author's move is very effective. Because these numbers and percentages are more direct and concrete rather than abstract words like "many" or "large number", the author can make readers deeply aware that human-developed animal husbandry will emit a large amount of greenhouse gases and bring substantial damage to climate change, and let readers know that animal husbandry will affect climate change as a basis instead of not groundless.

The third move is that Safran Foer makes a comparison between atmospheric and the budget. The author compares the atmosphere with the budget is a very special and creative move. He does this which is better to let readers know why methane and nitrous oxide need to be reduced. The author also tells readers that greenhouse gases such as methane should be decreased. In this way, the author can let readers know that reducing meat consumption in the diet is an effective way to combat climate change. Safran Foer points out that "We can think of our atmosphere as a budget and our emissions as expenses: because methane and nitrous oxide are significantly larger greenhouse expenses than CO<sub>2</sub> in the short term, they are the most urgent to cut. Because they are primarily created by our food choices, they are also easier to cut"(90). In my opinion, Safran Foer could have written directly, "Society and the country should immediately issue policies and regulations to prevent the development of animal husbandry that will cause serious harm to climate change, and people should no longer eat meat." But he didn't do it.

Why does Safran Foer compare atmosphere and budget instead of telling readers that they cannot eat meat? Because if the author directly tells the reader that they must not eat any meat, the reader is likely to refute the author's point of view and stop reading the book. Therefore, through the comparison between the atmosphere and the budget, the author tells readers what effective measures are available to deal with climate change will allow readers to have the consciousness of independent thinking and take the initiative to think about whether they can also change their eating habits from breakfast first to deal with climate change. How did this move affect me when I read it? Because the author can effectively avoid the disgusting mentality of me seeing the mandatory suggestions and effectively make me think that I can also take effective measures against climate change through diet and I realized that I can also respond to climate change by reducing meat.

The forth move, Safran Foer has a conversation with his soul. Safran Foer represents the people who don't want to act because action is so hard. And his soul represents the people who want to act and who know that they need to act to solve climate change. According to Safran Foer, "What is the opposite of someone who eats a lot of meat, dairy, and eggs?" (127). and his other soul replied, "A vegan" (127). However, his original soul does not agree with his idea, according to his original soul, "No. The opposite of someone who eats a lot of animal products is someone who is attentive to how often he eats animal products. " In my opinion, Safran Foer could have written directly, " Humans must not eat any meat in order to solve climate change." But he didn't do that.

Why does the author talk to the soul? In this book, he chose to have a conversation with the soul. An alternative move would have been to directly argue with the readers and most of the people. He did it this way because he wanted to let readers know more clearly what are the problems with climate change and climate crisis and also to better answer readers' doubt. By doing this, Safran Foer can help readers clearly understand their own thoughts and, in this way, he can answer the readers' questions and tell them why they need to take practical actions on climate change and change their thinking on climate change and eat less meat. Safran Foer lets me know that if I don't take concrete actions for climate change from now on, climate change will get worse and worse. I used to like beef, lamb and chicken because there are many ways to cook them and they are delicious. But since I read his book, I rarely eat lamb and beef and I only eat a small amount of chicken twice a week.

Why don't the authors directly tell readers that their inaction on climate change is wrong? Because if the author directly tells the reader that their inaction is wrong, the reader will oppose the author's point of view. The author's move is very effective because he makes it clear to readers that they should also use correct and effective ways to address climate change. When readers see Safran Foer having internal conflicts, they will have a strong empathy with Safran Foer and understand through internal conflicts that they should take effective actions for climate change. I think many authors will relate to Safran Foer when they read this part because when they consider giving up some meat, they feel like the author, it's a little bit hard for the author to reduce the meat consumption at the beginning. But Safran Foer's internal conflict does not prevent readers from changing their lives. Because they will feel that other people also feel that it is very difficult to reduce meat consumption at the beginning, which will make them more determined to change their diet for climate change.

In conclusion, The author wrote a total of four moves throughout the book, which are the collective actions of the Americans in World War II, using a large amount of data to tell readers his views in the second part of the book, through the comparison of atmosphere and budget, his dialogue with the

souls calls on readers to reduce meat consumption. Before I read *We Are The Weather*, I knew about climate change but I didn't think it would have a serious impact on me because my understanding of climate change was limited to the warming of the primary school climate and the melting of ice in the Arctic and Antarctic circles seen on television. I hardly think about climate change, only when schools are promoting it and when documentaries are playing the polar circles. I remember planting trees in elementary school because of the school's activities to combat climate change, but I just thought it was for fun, not for climate change. I have not picked up this book on my own. But after I read this book, I consider that I am a part of Safran Foer's target audience. And I finally understand why the school organizes tree planting activities. I also took the initiative to tell my family to make changes in diet for climate change, for example, eating meat no more than three times a week and eating more carrots and other vegetables.

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## Inclusive Classroom Literature: Empowering Female Students

by Sarah Bond

### Introduction

In the typical high school English classroom, there are certain books that are “classics.” Many of the books that previous generations read in school are the same that are being read today. Although these “classic” novels have use and value in the classroom, many are lacking inclusive and representative characters and authors. The American classroom is much different now than it was generations ago. Unfortunately, this tradition leaves many students out of the current narrative being taught in schools, creating feelings of isolation, lowering self-esteem, and diminishing engagement with the texts.

Many studies have explained how harmful a lack of representation in texts is, and when schools continue with the way things have always been done, they unintentionally harm minority students' feelings of self-worth and acceptance in their community (Landt). Research has also been done showing the great benefits that come from students seeing themselves within the literature they read (Grasso). The great impact of literature on students' identities and self-worth means that educators have a responsibility to ensure all students feel included and seen within their classrooms through thoughtful choices in what literature is presented. Over the years, there has been some progress made. As teachers became more aware of the problem, many included more culturally- and racially-diverse literature within their classrooms. The benefits of these changes for students of color is well documented and acknowledged, but there are still more students being excluded from the typical classroom's book choices and research about inclusion in literature.

For the most part, studies done about the impact of inclusive literature focus on children of minority races or cultures. There is, however, one group that is often left out of research and conversations about inclusive literature, and that is the female population. Young women are rarely exposed to female authors or strong female characters. Think of how many "classic" classroom novels contain only men and boys as main characters: "Lord of the Flies," "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," or "In Cold Blood" are a few examples that come to mind. And even when female characters are included, they are often lacking in quality or serve as plot devices rather than actual characters- think the women of "The Great Gatsby" or poor Ophelia from "Hamlet." Just as classroom literature should include accurately and appropriately represented racially- and culturally-diverse characters, it must also include diverse female characters, not just plot devices in female masks. Study after study has shown that, when students read literature that features characters like themselves, there are major benefits such as helping the development of a student's identity within their community, improving self-worth, and greater engagement in classroom texts. Young women deserve the empowerment that comes through expansive representation in classroom literature.

This paper will examine the issues with typical female characters in current classroom literature, and what should be done to provide a more inclusive and empowering message to future female English students. I will explain the great benefits of inclusive literature that have been researched, the harm caused by lack of representation, and possible obstacles teachers face in trying to break away from classic, accepted literature. Much of the research into the effects of representative literature will come from articles focused on the inclusion of people of color, but the same principles will be applied to female students. Then, I will discuss how the current literature being presented can be harmful to female students and their beliefs about themselves. Finally, I will examine how educators can better empower their diverse classrooms through more gender inclusive literature.

## Literature Review

It is time for a change in the modern classroom regarding the types of books that are taught. It is time to read books that reflect what classrooms actually look like. Such a change could benefit students of all cultures and backgrounds in seeing themselves represented in literature and learning about different people's experiences. Students being able to see themselves and others in literature improves those students' self-esteem, increases engagement with the text, and promotes empathy and inclusion. There are many different scholars who have explained the important benefits of inclusive literature as well as the obstacles that face teachers attempting to incorporate such literature.

One benefit of supplying students with inclusive literature in the classroom is its ability to improve students' self-esteem. Grasso explained that inclusive literature helps teachers to "foster positive self-esteem and prevent students from feeling isolated" (Grasso). When students are able to see themselves represented as positive characters read in the classroom, they can become more confident within their identity. Grasso's article focuses specifically on how, as classrooms are becoming more culturally diverse than ever before, teachers need to expose students to various cultures so they do not become ethnocentric and so that students can see both their own culture as well as the cultures of others. Susan M. Landt in her article wrote something similar stating that "not seeing one's self, or representations of one's culture, in literature can activate feelings of marginalization and cause students to question their place within society" (Landt, 6). Both Grasso and Landt acknowledge the growing diversity within classrooms and emphasize the need for literature that accurately portrays various cultures. Although Grasso focuses more on the positive impacts of diverse literature, and Landt focuses on the negative effects of not using diverse literature, they both agree that students' exposure to multicultural literature allows students to feel included and accepted within their society, leading to increased self-esteem. By including various people and backgrounds within classroom literature, teachers are able to validate their students' identities and support them as they try to understand and develop themselves.

Another benefit of utilizing inclusive literature is greater participation and engagement in class texts. Grasso's article notes various studies showing that "when students see themselves reflected in the pages of literature, they are more likely to engage with a text" (Grasso). Using literature that focuses

on different cultures and experiences increases the likelihood that students will be able to relate with the text, and when students relate to the text, they are more likely to learn and be interested in the concepts being taught. Anderson makes a similar point anecdotally. She tells the experience of an eighth grade teacher who is introducing the class book list. While going through the list, a student begins to comment “this is lame” and “this is wrong” (Anderson). The conscious student then points out why they feel that way, saying, “all we’re reading are books about white people” (Anderson). It is obvious that this student felt left out of the class narrative, and thus did not want to engage in the chosen works when they cannot relate to any of them. Anderson found that many teachers are hesitant to stray from the literature they are familiar with, but when teachers are able to include more multicultural literature, there are better responses from the students whose ethnicities and experiences are included. Susan Landt confirmed this sentiment saying that “providing a multitude of perspectives through literature... is an effective way to help facilitate [students’] engagement in self and social understanding” (Landt, 3). Landt, similarly to Grasso and Anderson, points out that multicultural literature helps students to better engage with not only the texts, but “self and social understanding” as they learn about their own culture alongside the cultures of others. Each of these articles make clear, not only the detriment to students who are unable to read inclusive literature in the classroom, but also the great benefits that come from validating and honoring different students and their unique life experiences.

Despite these great benefits of diverse classroom literature, there are many teachers who struggle to implement this kind of change into their classrooms. Thus, another important aspect of the inclusive literature discussion that should be considered are the reasons many teachers do not have more inclusive literature within their classrooms. In a study done by Stallworth, Gibbons, and Fauber, there were a few reasons teacher gave for sticking with the “classic” literature typically found in English classrooms. They found that “certain obstacles to the implementation of multicultural literature in the secondary classroom including the teachers’ perceived lack of knowledge in teaching works by authors of color and a plethora of perceived impediments to teaching noncanonical texts” (Stallworth, 8). The researchers explain that some of these impediments include a lack of resources, a lack of expertise in multicultural literature, and even time constraints of adding more books to the “classic” literature that takes up much of the curriculum. Unlike the other articles, these authors attempt to understand why there is not more inclusive literature in schools, not just the effects that such literature could have. Although there are many barriers discussed, the main issue seems to be a lack of understanding on how to include and discuss literature that will be new to teachers and will require more time and experience to perfect.

It is obvious that including diverse literature in the classroom has wonderful benefits to students. There are some obstacles to be overcome, but it is certainly possible for teachers to have multicultural literature integrated into the regular curriculum. Unfortunately, there is another group of underrepresented students that are not so often discussed- female students. Not only is the classic classroom literature very white, it is also predominantly male-centric. Gender is another important factor of inclusion that needs to be considered within a classroom’s literature choices. In the next section, I will explain the current state of female representation in a typical American classroom, discuss gender schema theory and the effects of gendered representation (or misrepresentation), and finally I will provide questions to examine personal teaching practices and suggestions for creating a more inclusive literary environment for female students.

## Argument

It is clear that there are significant benefits to inclusive literature. When students are able to see themselves in the novels they read in school, they are more likely to engage with the texts and are aided in their development of identity and confidence. These benefits are shown in students who can see themselves in racially- and culturally-diverse literature, but what about female students? In many of the “classic” texts read in English classrooms, the major female characters are often nonexistent or problematic. One study done at Yale University found that the qualities of female characters are most often confining. Traits such as “passivity, incompetence, fearfulness, docility and dependence” are

allotted to female characters, while male characters are able to demonstrate “perseverance, achievement, adventurousness, curiosity, strength, heroism, imagination and mobility” (Savitt). How are young women going to perceive themselves, when the female characters presented to them in school are ascribed such limiting and sexist traits? These different qualities allotted to male and female characters are how male and female students will understand society’s expectations for them and their abilities. Furthermore, when female characters stray from these assigned traits, they are often portrayed as nags, old maids, witches, domineering, or even villainous. This only further restrains girls from being strong, outspoken, or confident for fear of being seen in the same negative light. Savitt goes on to say that “the subliminal message in these primers is that girls barely exist as real people while boys are multidimensional” (Savitt). It is no stretch to surmise that the same negative effects that come from literature lacking diverse races of characters holds true in the lacking of female characters, and even more damaging are the stereotypical and sexist representations of women in literature. It is vital that educators create an inclusive literature curriculum, not just for students of different racial and cultural backgrounds, but for the girls in their classrooms as well to ensure that each of their students feels seen and empowered.

There is a theory in the realm of psychology called the Gender schema theory that explains how limiting characteristics allotted to female characters can limit female students. This theory studies the idea that individuals become gendered by the society they live in. Under this assumption, it is painfully obvious how harmful stereotypical representations of females is on the development of adolescent girls. According to the gender schema theory as explained by Jacqueline Alderman, “sex typing derives in large measure from gender-schematic processing, from a generalized readiness on the part of the child to encode and to organize information – including information about the self—according to the culture’s definitions of maleness and femaleness” (Alderman, 13). In simpler terms, the gendered information that is presented to adolescents impacts their views of themselves and what they are capable of doing or achieving in the society of which they are part. So, if young women learn in literature that they can be heroes or scientists or independent people, that is going to help them form their own self-image and their beliefs about what they can achieve.

Sadly, much of the currently-provided literature depicts just the opposite. Studies have shown that “although girls in the early grades are ahead of or equal to boys on almost every standardized measure of achievement, by the time they reach high school, girls score lower on standardized tests” (Alderman, 10). Something is happening between the early stages of girls development and their performance in later years. Perhaps, it is because of the limitations placed on them by outside sources, including the literature that is taught in the very schools that should be empowering and uplifting them. Alderman states that

Girls begin as confident, smart, capable individuals, and just at the time when they’re most fragile and trying to figure out their own identities, we (society, teachers, etc.) send them the message that they are not worthy of doing what they hope to do. We teach them what is expected, regardless of the effects and then act surprised when they don’t perform as well. (Alderman, 11).

Just think of the women of classic literature that we give our girls to “look up to.” Take Homer’s *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, for example. Both are in nearly every English classroom’s curriculum, but look at the women in these novels! They are all either temptresses distracting the men from their quest (Circe, Calypso, the Sirens) or prizes to be won by men (Helen, Penelope). Or take Daisy and Myrtle in *The Great Gatsby*, these two main female characters are little more than vapid objects of male sexual desire. The list could go on for ages citing works such as *Lolita*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Lord of the Flies*, and many more. It is clear to see how these representations of females could limit young women’s beliefs about themselves and what they can become.

Educators need to make the empowerment of all students a priority, and one way to do this would be through inclusive literature. In order for classroom literature to become more inclusive, educators will need to examine their current curriculum and practices and be willing to make changes to their pedagogy. The first step in that would be questioning the curriculum and practices in use. The following are some questions teachers can ask themselves about the material they are using in their curriculum:

- Are there any texts that omit female characters?



- “Are females or males presented in stereotypical gendered roles in any texts I have selected? If these are historical texts, how might I teach students to be critical of the limitations in the gender roles presented in these texts?” (Alber)
- Are the texts read in class written by both male and female authors?  
“In what ways do I encourage gender equity of voice and participation?” (Alber)

Questions like these can allow teachers to reflect on their current literary choices, as well as how gender and gender issues are presented in their classrooms.

After evaluating the current content, there are a few strategies that can aid teachers in creating a more inclusive literary environment for female students. An article by Beth Benjamin and Linda Irwin-DeVitis suggests the following ideas:

- “Establish an atmosphere in which gender issues are a valid and open topic of discussion.
- Choose literature that provides a variety of role models, avoids stereotypes, and promotes discussion of gender issues.
- Do not assume that providing a variety of role models and avoiding sexist materials will be effective without explicit discussion of the issues” (Benjamin et al., 8).

By providing various role models for female students and discussing gender issues, teachers can better empower their female students. Simple curriculum changes such as these could make a big impact on female students’ academic performance and their beliefs about themselves and what they can achieve.

Inclusion in the classroom is increasingly vital as the typical American classroom becomes increasingly diverse. But in the conversation of including students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, it is important that the inclusion of female students is not missing from the dialogue. Adolescent girls deserve to see a variety of strong, interesting female characters to whom they can look up. Such representation could have great benefits for female and male students alike.

In this paper, I was able to discuss the inclusion of female students in a general sense, but there are various complexities that I was unable to look into. One, for instance, is the even greater lack of representation of women of color in classroom literature. Further research could also be done into the representation of the LGBTQIA community to better include such students and reinforce acceptance and understanding of different sexualities. It is important that teachers be conscientious of the diverse student populations they teach, and choose literature that will reflect that diversity. By conscientiously choosing the literature read in class, educators can better foster inclusion and empower all of their students to reach their full potential.

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# An Analysis on Immigration Detention Centers Impact on Immigrant Children's Mental Health

by Brisa Ramos

Immigration laws in the United States have been present for years. Of course, they change from time to time but for the most part immigration laws have been consistent and are very strict on the process of coming to the United States legally. So out of desperation due to how long the process is, people take drastic decisions and attempt to come to the United States illegally seeking asylum.

Consequently, in the journey to the United States children experience horrible conditions that affect their mental health. Extensive research has been done on pre-migration stress which negatively affects immigrant children's mental health. Ellen Heptinstall argues that children have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression prior to immigrating. Meaning that the children were traumatized in their home country; all the killing and suffering they witnessed caused paranoia and an extreme fear of physical harm. Also, Sean D. Cleary argues that pre-migration stress causes anxiety in immigrant children. The children were constantly worrying about whether they were going to make it alive to the United States and were anxious of their family being separated. Previous scholarship notes that, by the time an immigrant child reaches the United States and is put in a detention center they already have various psychological issues.

However, the research does not take into consideration the effect being detained in immigration detention centers has on children with preexisting mental health issues. When the children's family are caught they are then taken to a detention center where they await immigration's decision on their case, whether they will be granted asylum and be given a visa or sent back to their home country. The amount of time immigration takes on their case is indefinite so children could be detained for days or months. Ellen Heptinstall and Sean D. Cleary alongside other researchers overlook the toll being held in detention centers has on children with and without preexisting mental health issues. By not including or at least considering the impact detention centers' factors have on a child's mental health makes their research unreliable.

Furthermore, immigrant children's mental health issues are caused or worsen by being held in detention centers. Although there are some studies on the impact detention centers have on a child's mental stability they always link those findings to pre-migration trauma. Factors that negatively impact a child's mental health such as: the harsh and intimidating environment of immigrating, children being separated from their family and forced to fend for themselves, and not giving children

the proper care and attention they need while developing. But those factors are not caused by pre-migration stress and are a direct result of being held in detention centers causing children to become depressed, develop separation anxiety, have PTSD, and lack social cues. Mental issues which can easily be mistaken as being caused by pre-migration factors.

In this article, I will examine the impact detention centers have on immigrant children's mental health. I will first break down the methods, main claims, and results of four studies on immigrant children's mental wellbeing regarding pre-migration trauma. Then, I will discuss how detention centers are to blame for the psychological issues within immigrant children. Lastly, I will provide a quick recap of key findings and allow you to make a conscious decision on immigration laws.

### Literature Review

The subject of immigration is a very delicate one, especially in the United States. Some people think that the immigration laws are fine the way they have always been while other people think that those laws are far too harsh and should be changed. The process of immigrating to the United States legally is quite long and exhausting. Multiple studies and research have shown the mental toll this process has on adults and children. But it has been proven that the mental health of children who have migrated to the United States is caused by pre-migration stress they experience.

Many scholars have noted that, immigrant children's mental health is affected by the violence they experience pre-migration. Ellen Heptinstall and her colleagues conducted a study on forty immigrant children ages eight to sixteen. Heptinstall conducted the study by interviewing the children's parents, with the help of translators, about their child's experience before being relocated. They also gave a questionnaire to both the parent and the children in order to evaluate their mental state and the factors that caused any disorders. The study found that the children had PTSD and depression before being relocated. Heptinstall, Sethna, and Tylor mention that "The latter were caused by general violent unrest or by threats of violence to the family in general or to a parent in particular." (2012, p.376). This shows how the mental health issues that are present in the children are caused by the violence they either witnessed or experienced themselves prior to immigrating. Sean Cleary et al.' study also shows similar results to Heptinstall and her colleague's findings. Sean Cleary's study found that more than half of the children experienced dramatic events in their home country. The traumatic events that the children experienced in their home country were mostly "fear of physical injury" to themselves and their family.

Furthermore, child asylum seekers mental health is affected by the constant worry of being separated from their family in their home country. Sean D. Cleary and his colleagues observed a hundred and four children living in the United States who had immigrated from a different country when they were younger. The children who participated in this study were between the ages of twelve to seventeen. They took a survey about their experience migrating to the United States in order to evaluate their mental health. Cleary and his team used The Traumatic Events Screening Inventory for Children (TESI-C) to determine at what point in their journey- pre migration, post migration or while being a member of the United States- did the traumatic event occur. The study found that a lot of the children's trauma occurred pre-migration. One of the biggest factors causing their trauma was the separation anxiety they developed due to the fear of their parents being killed in their home country. Similarly, Heptinstall's study found that "Several children endured the destruction of their homes, the execution of fathers and older brothers, or the rape of mothers and sisters." (2012, p.376). Proving how pre-migration stress plays a huge role in children's mental health since there was always a possibility of their family being torn apart in their home country.

Moreover, research shows that immigrant children's mental health is affected by the war trauma they experienced pre-migration. Samuli Kangaslampi, Ferdinand Garoff, and Kirsi Peltonen conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) on eighty children ages nine to seventeen. All the children were given five different tests during certain steps of the trial in order to determine the extent of the war trauma in a child. The study found that the events the children experienced during a war period in their home country resulted in concerning levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The PTSD was caused by the war but was more significant if a child lost a family member because of the war or had to partake in the war. Although all the children were negatively affected by the war trauma some children had higher levels of distress depending on their level of participation in the war. Similarly, Betancourt et al. study shows that "Trauma details for exposure to war experienced outside of the United States indicated that 47% of youth reported direct exposure, 47% vicarious exposure, 60%

witnessed violence, and 37% knew someone who was seriously injured or killed in political violence.” (2012, p.685). Both studies found that immigrant children suffered from PTSD because of the war trauma they experienced prior to immigrating.

Overall, we can see how researchers have proven and firmly believe that refugee children’s mental health issues are caused directly by the trauma they experienced pre-migration. The studies have shown that the pre-migration stress children experienced caused PTSD, depression, and separation anxiety. Yet, all the research conducted on the factors of children’s mental health have failed to focus on the toll immigration detention centers have on the children’s fragile state of mind. Detention centers have a huge impact on the children’s mental health by either causing psychological distress to children or worsening a child’s preexisting condition.

#### Argument

Many researchers have concluded that immigrant children’s mental health issues are caused by pre-immigration stress. Multiple studies have shown that psychological disorders such as: depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and separation anxiety are caused by immigrant children’s experience in their home country before they migrated to the United States. These studies have been trusted and relied upon to the extent that people expect immigrant children to have mental health issues upon arrival to the United States. People have become so used to child refugees having mental disorders that they do not question any other factors that affect their mental health. Although pre-immigration trauma does affect children’s mental health it is not the only factor that causes stress in a child’s migration journey. In order to help better the mental health and provide qualified resources to detained children one needs to realize that: immigrant children’s mental health issues are worsened and even caused by detention centers.

Mental disorders in detained immigrant children are caused by the detention center not by pre-migration factors. Multiple researchers correlate immigrant children’s mental disorders with experiences they have had in their home country (pre-migration factors). But, the mental disorders that immigrant children struggle with are actually caused by being detained in immigration centers. A comparison study was conducted on a group of refugee children who were not held in a detention center and were instead placed in a non-urban community versus a group of refugee children who were immediately placed in a detention center upon their arrival. The study results are that: “Children in the detention group had significantly impaired social-emotional wellbeing represented by higher strength and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) total difficulties scores than children in the community group, both in the respective samples as a whole and across all age groups.” (Zwi et al., 2017, p.7). Children in both the detention group and the community group are refugees meaning that they have all experienced pre-migration factors. Children from both groups lived in poverty, experienced violence, feared for their parent’s lives, and had lived in war zones in their home country. But only the children in the detention group had impaired social- emotional wellbeing because they were exposed to more factors that negatively affected their mental health in the detention center. On top of that, the children who were detained had to live in the immigration center’s harsh environment. The detained group suffered from multiple mental disorders because they were held in a detention center.

Furthermore, detention centers cause depression and worsen PTSD in children. Despite the violence children experience in their home country, causing PTSD, most children do not suffer from depression upon their arrival in the United States. In fact, the children are quite excited for their new life and are glad to be away from all the dangers they faced in their home country. But once they are detained and are prohibited from leaving the center, they get sad and eventually become depressed. A study conducted by MacLean and his colleagues found that all children held in immigration centers had high rates of clinical depression and PTSD. MacLean mentioned that, “The children of mothers who were interviewed at this detention center showed higher rates of emotional and behavioral difficulties, as well as PTSD, compared to children in the general U.S. population; notably, the mean emotional symptoms subscale and total difficulties scores for the participants were higher than those seen in U.S. primary care populations (Biel et al., 2015; Simpson et al., 2005; Youthinmind, 2004).” (2019, p.3). This proves how children held in detention centers had a much higher rate of mental health issues (clinical depression and PTSD) than children who have never been held in immigration detention centers. Even though immigrant children suffered from PTSD prior to being detained their symptoms worsened as a direct result of being held in a detention center decreasing the possibility of healing from their trauma.

Moreover, detained children develop separation anxiety as a result of being in detention centers. When a child and their family arrive to the United States they are separated. The parents are often put in an adult facility while the child is put in a juvenile detention center. The children are placed in a center full of strangers by themselves and do not know where their parents are, when they are going to see them, and what is going to happen to them. Children in immigration centers constantly worry about their parents and are scared that they are never going to see them again. Even if a child and their parent somehow manage to be detained in the same center it is as if the parent were not there. Newman and Steel state that, "In the face of indefinite detention, parents may lose hope, and depression contributes to their withdrawal from their children. Observations of children in detention environments suggest that rates of attachment disorder and indiscriminate attachment are high, reflecting parental unavailability." (2008, p.675). Although their parents are physically present, they are emotionally unavailable to their children. The lack of emotional support from their mother or father causes a child to feel like they must deal with everything on their own and have no support from their parent. This results in children developing separation anxiety since they fear that their parent does not care about them anymore and will leave them at any moment.

### Conclusion

As can be seen, immigrant children's mental health issues are worsened and even caused by detention centers and not by pre-migration factors. Being held in detention centers causes clinical depression, separation anxiety, and worsens PTSD symptoms in children. Detained refugee children's mental health deteriorates the longer they are held in detention centers. The harsh environment and living conditions of the immigration center negatively affects the overall wellbeing of children and decreases their chance of fully recovering from childhood trauma.

In order to minimize detention center's stress factors, which affect children's mental health, immigration laws should be changed. Instead of pouncing on child asylum seekers and their family they should relocate them in a non-urban community meanwhile they decide whether they obtain a visa. This way the children will not be separated from their parents, they will live in a safe environment, and will not witness cruel treatment of people. This paper discusses the effect detention centers have on immigrant children's mental health, but it discusses those effects on children as a whole and does not focus on a specific group of children. Future research could focus on the mental health of children in detention centers by specific ethnicity, gender, or age to be able to determine the exact damage detention centers have on children's mental health. To truly understand the psychological effect migration has on children future studies could also be done on post-migration trauma children experience. If such research were conducted non-urban communities could properly prepare for the arrival of child refugees since they are now aware of their preexisting mental disorders and would know what resources to provide so children's integration in the United States will not become another traumatic experience.

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## Life of The Eldest Female Family Member

by Ashley O'Dell

My life as a young adult female who is the oldest sibling of a low-income family has its ups and downs. The memories I have due to having these qualities contribute to how I feel about myself as a human being. The qualities that I feel have the most influence on myself are my gender, sibling status, socioeconomic status, and age. These have always been a part of who I am, but also shape my experiences in life.

My gender as a female has a connection with my age. One memory I have from an earlier time was back when my family and I went to McDonald's a lot when I was a kid. I remember that the cashier would ask if I wanted a boy or girl toy or would throw in the toy that best fit my gender into the Happy Meal bag. I loved collecting the different toy collections like My Little Ponies, Littlest Pet Shops, and Barbie dolls. Eventually, there came a time where I wanted the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles action figures. I already had some that my dad bought me from Toys R Us, and I wanted to boost my collection. Currently, I do not remember what the "girl toy" was at the time, but I remember hating it. I had asked the McDonald's cashier if I could trade my "girl toy" for a "boy toy". It seemed so natural to say at the time. Today I can see why McDonald's ultimately got in trouble for stereotyping their Happy Meal toys.

Another memory associated with my age and gender was when I got my first job right when I turned fifteen. I was a cashier at a local grocery store in Minnesota and the number of creepy customers I had at that age still disturbs me today. I would have older men hit on me and tell me that they could sneak me into a bar sometime. A group of college students came into the store one night and talked about how if I were their age they would "smash" me. Even adult women would try to set me up with their sons in front of me that were clearly above the age of eighteen. Even a coworker of mine tried to make me go in the back of the produce department with him. I worked there for two years and I remember being in tears coming home because of all the sexual harassment. It amazes me how I got prayed on more as a fifteen-year-old girl rather than when I was eighteen years old (and of legal age for sexual consent).

My sibling status and gender relate to one another. I am the oldest sibling of two and have almost always been the mother figure in my sister's life. My mom gave birth to me when she was nineteen years old and as the years went by, it became obvious that she did not want to raise my sister and I. She was a good mom until I went into first grade. My mom would take me on walks and spend time with me before I was old enough to go to school, but that changed. My sister was born when I was six and a half years old. My mom never wanted to spend time with me anymore, but my dad would always help me with my schoolwork and do activities with me. Once my sister was three years old, my mom started bailing on us. She would leave over the weekend which then turned into a week. My mom would never say where she was going or when she would come back. This was the point in when my life as a ten-year-old child would begin to be the life of a mother as well. I was and still am a female role model for my sister. I was always expected to have the answers regarding feminine issues and most times I did. It put a lot of pressure on me when I that young to help raise my sister, but I loved my sister with all my heart. I was the one that named her after all.

Now that my sister is thirteen years old, I experience some rebellion against the idea of me helping her with feminine self-care. Teaching her about pads and tampons has been a nightmare. She says that she would rather bleed through all her clothes than wear a pad or use a tampon. Shaving has been a difficult process as well. Her friends have pointed out to her that her armpits are very noticeably hairy. It is not that she does not desire to shave, but that she does not want to hear how to do it from me or anyone else. I taught myself how to use feminine products and to shave by looking at website like wikiHow. My aunt purchased an American Girl book for me to read about everything to know about puberty and that helped, but it made me feel uncomfortable looking at the strange images. I thought for sure that my sister would love having both the book I used to learn about puberty and having me as a firsthand resource, but nevertheless she is unappreciative and wants to live her life avoiding those topics. Balancing the role of the older sister and as a filler mom when I have never been a mom myself can be very difficult.

My socio-economic status and age apply to each other. Growing up as a kid on the free/reduced lunch program always made me wonder why there were some differences in what my friends needed to do to get lunch versus me. My elementary school friends would have to bring checks to the lunch ladies and their parents would get mad at them if they lost their checks. The lunch lady would stamp the kids' hands if they did not have enough money in their account to pay for their meal. As young children, everyone thought you did something really cool to get the stamp in line. Since I never got the stamp, I was always jealous of those who did.

In middle school, the cafeteria had optional foods available in line. They were not disguised with any signage though. Most of the optional foods were cookies, muffins, French fries, and pizza. I remember on the first day of sixth grade I foolishly went through the pizza line, got my slice of cheese pizza, cup of fruit, and went to the lunch lady at the cash register. She got mad at me saying I am not allowed to buy them unless I want to cause my family stress. I had no idea what she meant by that, but I remember her taking my tray of food and told me to go find a seat in the cafeteria. I did not eat lunch that day and I cried.

My experiences in my life have always been described by others as something that would be in a movie. The mistreatment, filling my mom's role as a parent at a young age, feeling like an outcast without knowing why all make up my memories and experiences. I never ask for anyone to pity me. Instead, I would rather be identified as an individual who has survived obstacles that life has thrown at me in every direction. I am an independent person that has goals that involve not repeating my

parent's mistakes. Overall, my intersectionality taught me a lot of good lessons and helped me navigate through the world we live in today.