A perspective view of a long, empty school hallway. The hallway has a tiled floor and lockers on both sides. The ceiling is a grid of recessed lighting. The hallway leads to a door at the end. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

**Rhinebeck High School
Anthology of
Student Writing
2018-2019**

RHS Anthology of Student Writing 2018-2019

“A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit.” ---Richard Bach

With an emphasis on nourishing growth mindsets in our young writers this year, RHS faculty encouraged students to see the challenge of writing as the chance to grow. More than innate capacities, effort and the right attitude create strong writers---writers who are receptive to feedback, resilient when they stumble, and always ready to revise.

In the diverse pieces of academic writing collected here, it’s easy to see that students at RHS are following their curiosities and finding their voices. With greater access to technology in our classrooms, students are learning how to navigate the wealth of resources available to them, and they are becoming more informed and engaged writers as a result. In addition to highlighting our students’ growth as academic researchers and expressive writers, this anthology also reflects the students’ increasing ability to approach their own environment and popular culture with a critical eye, analyzing their own experiences in an academic context with candor and sophistication.

The English Department hopes these pieces will serve as models in the classroom, inspiring students to write with courage, clarity, and creativity in the future. As always, the Writing Center in Room 140 welcomes students from any grade or course to visit an ELA faculty member at any stage of their writing process. Sincerest thanks to our students for sharing their ideas with us!

With appreciation,

The RHS English Department

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4 March 2019

Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as Metaphor

Franz Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* is a metaphor for alienation, as stated by Ramón G. Mendoza in his article "The Human Vermin: Kafka's Metaphor for Extreme Alienation." In it, Mendoza argues that Gregor "...still has human sensibility, human feelings, human senses, but they are invisible to all. This is precisely what makes Gregor's condition so pathetic, and his isolation so total." Gregor still has human feeling and the ability to think, but he cannot communicate that, nor can anyone interpret him. So, he is in complete isolation, even though he is surrounded by others.

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Build-a-Baby: Researched Argument on Genetic Engineering

It's been proven time and again that most parents want to do what's best for their children. But where do they draw the line? In past as well as current scientific endeavors, embryonic scientists have developed a way to completely tailor-make a forthcoming child to the parents' utmost desire. From hair color to I.Q., and then to personality, these embryonic experts have complete control over these future human beings. So how exactly do biotechnologists create a "designer baby?" Genetically enhanced beings are created by embryos outside the womb in vitro, where genetic screening takes place with CRISPR-CAS9 technology. Genetic screening involves the manipulation of DNA, while CRISPR-CAS9 splits the DNA at distinct points. This allows DNA to be added or disregarded. By the end of the procedure, the offspring would carry only the desired traits of the parents. Be that as it may, it is unethical for scientists to play an omnipotent role in such an innate process like evolution because the offspring never granted them its consent. In addition, the uncertainty along with the effects that genetic editing entails, could, as a consequence, produce a two-tiered society.

Because the offspring never give their compliance to be manipulated, scientists shouldn't be permitted to alter their DNA. It's so much more profound than whether it's all right or not for

parents to choose their child's hair color without their permission; however, it's essentially an encroachment on human rights. In her article "Humans Have a Right to Be Born Without Genetic Manipulation," author Marcy Darnovsky, associate executive director at the Center for Genetics and Society, claims that according to the Genetic Bill of Rights, genetic editing of human beings is a violation. Darnovsky asserts, "Furthermore, it would be impossible to obtain what bioethicists call 'informed consent' from the person to be cloned or modified, since the procedure would have to be carried out well before birth....since his or her life would have been controlled in an unprecedented manner by the parents, fertility doctors and biotech companies involved" (Darnovsky). Since obtaining consent from an unborn fetus is insurmountable, that should be an acceptable enough reason for scientists to understand that it is erroneous to change genes for really just obscure benefits. It is partially because CRISPR-CAS9 technology is irrevocable and can be inaccurate. Secondly, Hemmy Cho, global program manager at Google claims that genetic modifications would possibly forestall learning experience. Although Cho is all for genetic editing, she does consider the following, "Would the advantages the parents endow upon the fetus, in fact, stop the child from experiencing character-building trials"(Cho). The "advantages" bestowed upon the child by the parents and scientists would undeniably have a negative impact on their lack of human experience when they're being developed. If all the flaws or imperfections were extracted, then the child wouldn't be capable of learning from experiences. Newborns should be able to come into this ever-changing world naturally and untouched.

Genetic editing is a science that to this day is still being tweaked. New breakthroughs happen sporadically. But what exactly can genetic editing edit, as opposed to what we as a society want it to edit? Genetic editing is incredibly finite, costly, and sometimes inaccurate. Cecile Janssens, a

professor at Emory University, discloses that genetic editing doesn't just work because scientists program it to, but there are two crucial steps that must be met. Janssens observes, "First, the traits must be predominantly determined by DNA, which means heritability needs to be close to 100%...second, the 'genetic architecture' must be straightforward. Traits must be caused by a single mutation" (Janssens). Recently, a review compiling almost 50 years of heredity study displayed that traits like intelligence, athleticism, and personality did not have a heritability rating of approximately close to 100%. The offspring's environment is actually another factor that interprets what traits the child displays. According to Janssens, there needs to be a balanced combination of the two, meaning how they were raised, their education, and their stress levels all affect their dominant traits. Ironically, some traits just aren't involved enough with genetics. Dartmouth College professor, Bernard Gert, mentions briefly the risks of gene editing in comparison to the benefits when discussing the matter of future generations. Gert warns, "Genetic enhancement, not only is permanent during the entire lifetime of the affected individual, the transgene becomes inheritably transmitted to countless members of future generations" (Gert). Obviously, the risk ramifications are to be considered more than the benefits. Genetic editing has the potential to corrupt gene pools. Society has made genetic editing out to be more adept than in reality, and it could quite possibly be more adverse than advantageous. Non-supporters believe that this new technology could produce societies only written about in science-fiction, like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and George Orwell's *1984*. Even though it is still improving and getting more technologically advanced, it hasn't quite yet reached the ability to completely design an individual at the snap of a finger.

We must also consider the repercussions of genetic editing if all goes well. Life would be forever skewed, and society would be divided between non-genetically enhanced individuals and

genetically enhanced individuals; a two-tiered society would emerge. Eventually, genetic editing will be capable of producing offspring with traits that exceed the natural limits of human capacity. There will be a genetic disadvantage for those who don't undergo the procedure.

Gert continues to say, "Technology can not justifiably be used to provide benefits to only a few, even if such benefits are great. In cases where no great harm is being prevented and a large number of people may be put at significant risk, caution must prevail" (Gert). And that's exactly it. A "superhuman" race would only be a motive for complications and dilemma. Society as a whole would take an immense step backward. It would be inhumane to have only the smallest portion of the population awarded this life-changing gift. Discrimination would occur greater than it has in a long time. People who either couldn't afford the procedure or even just didn't want it would feel abnormal and inferior to their genetically enhanced counterparts thriving around them. An article entitled "Designer Babies" claims that the government would seize this new technology and use it at their expense. The author writes, "Other critics fear that gene-editing technology could be misused by governments to create a superhuman race with improved strength and endurance for military purposes." In this scenario, the genetically modified would only be pawns in the government's larger game. It always comes down to the same conclusion: the risks outweigh the benefits tremendously when even considering a genetically enhanced human race.

On the other hand, genetic editing has gained a lot of positive recognition as well, like in the movement known as "transhumanism." According to their understanding, transhumanists believe that the human race can evolve even beyond our natural restraints, both physically and mentally. They believe in science and technological advancements. So, genetic editing is right up their alley. The article "Designer Babies" again explains that "Proponents claim that genetic enhancement is

another tool for people to use to select or improve upon certain traits in their offspring. They argue that creating designer babies should be a personal choice for parents to make without judgment from society” (Designer Babies). Transhumanists make valid points when they say that they want to improve the quality of living because with the technology now and the technology soon to come, supporters claim it will eventually be a commonly thought idea, and it will be possible. Proponents of transhumanism are right to argue that there’s always room for improvement in almost every matter. Nevertheless, they amplify the truth when they claim that genetic editing is just “another tool for people to use” aimlessly, only because it is presented before them. Genetic editing should only even be contemplated as a last resort in dire situations solely dealing with disease and not genetic makeup. Professor Bernard Gert agrees when he insists, “The present lack of knowledge should restrict genetic engineering to genetic repair. Such a limitation allows the prevention of all the evils of more expansive forms of genetic engineering while not incurring any of the risks... allowing any more expansive form of gene therapy or genetic enhancement does not seem morally acceptable” (Gert). The regulation of genetic editing is critical for our future as humans. It shouldn’t be taken lightly but with great solemnity.

When it’s all said and done, genetic editing is an idea that will grow and grow. However, it’s our obligation to regulate that growth because it’s irresponsible for scientists to have so much authority in the natural course of evolution since the benefits are heavily outweighed by the consequences. Although points have been addressed in favor of genetic editing, it shouldn’t be used to shape the attributes of future offspring. For now, a genetically modified civilization should be left to works of science fiction.

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The Dangers of Embryonic Sex Selection

“A mind set in its ways is wasted,” stated Eric Schmidt, business intellect and Executive Chairman of Google then Alphabet Inc., encouraging his followers to be understanding towards their surroundings and those they encounter. Although bias is inevitable to us as humans, society has taken great strides towards a more accepting atmosphere. However, with new technological advancements such as embryonic sex selection, this is all subject to change. The manipulation of human embryo for sex selection poses a serious threat to society. It reinforces gender stereotypes, jeopardizes women’s rights, leads to genetic trait engineering, and creates unfavorable demographics.

Sex selection reinforces gender stereotypes. After many years of gender bias, society is moving towards acceptance and equity; however, these new technologies have the potential to reverse all the effort and progress achieved to date. According to Generations Ahead, a California-based nonprofit that works to promote the ethical use of genetic technologies by bringing together social justice advocates and organizations,

“The use of sex selection seems inexorably linked to gendered expectations about what it means to have - or be - a boy or girl; gender discrimination and the preference for one gender over others; and to a belief that sex and gender can be classified into two distinct male and female forms, rejecting the idea that gender is fluid” (“Sex Selection Can Lead to Gender Discrimination”).

When parents explicitly request a male or female embryo, it implies a yearning for gender clichés, perpetuating gender binary stereotypes in future generations. This idea is confirmed by the response of one of the first mothers of a Microsort, a device that allows the separation of X- from Y-bearing sperm, baby. When asked why she wanted a female child rather than male, the woman replied that “She wanted to have someone to play Barbies with and go shopping with; she wanted a little girl with long hair and pink fingernails” (Darnovsky). This supports a trend of heteronormativity, the idea that “there are only two legitimate sexes—male and female—which are determined at conception/birth and are determinative of particular behaviours and properties which are ‘natural’ to that sex” (Shavisi). By legalizing embryonic manipulation laws for sex selection, officials are severely endangering children of the future by perpetuating an antiquated idea and fostering a close minded atmosphere.

The popularization of sex selection could impose threats on women’s rights. Society is already constructed in a fashion that suppresses women both openly and discreetly, not only nationally but globally. This subjugation can be demonstrated through “the global pay gap, the limited range of employment, educational, and leisure opportunities afforded to women as compared with their male counterparts, the undervaluing of female babies (consider female foeticide), the violence and control exercised over women, and the way in which women’s sexual autonomy is limited or denied” (Shavisi). Eugenics has a history of targeting women as well; with the implementation of these new genetic technologies, not only will society have the power to restrain woman on a social level, but it will be empowered with even greater control over women’s bodies (Jesudason). According to Sujatha Jesudason, the program director on gender, justice, and human genetics at the Center of Genetics and Society, “Women’s bodies are increasingly medicalized

in these processes now, and women are under increasing pressures to produce particular kinds of children, whether they be of a particular sex or ability.” Therefore, by legalizing sex-selection, officials will be infringing upon females’ body autonomy by allowing society to urge them to undergo medical procedures that they may not be ready or willing to take. Lawmakers will be stripping females of their rights to body privacy and fertility and placing them into the hands of others. This is of extreme concern in countries such as China and India, where abortion as a means of sex selection already exists. Women from these countries as well as from an array of other communities “who do not bear sons may be coerced into using sex selection or subjected to domestic violence and other forms of discrimination for not having a son” (“Sex Selection Can Lead to Gender Discrimination”). If the United States chooses to accept said policies, it would legitimize these abhorrent practices in other countries as well, thereby undermining rights on a global scale (Darnovsky).

Allowing parents to choose their child’s gender opens a gateway to other reproductive technologies such as trait selection. The ability to pre-determine desirable DNA traits could be particularly dangerous towards widening the socioeconomic gap and essentially creating a “superhuman race” (Jesudason). Lee Silver, molecular biologist of Princeton University, predicts that this could lead to a world of genetic castes and human subspecies: “The GenRich class and the Natural class will become... entirely separate species,” he writes, “with no ability to cross-breed, and with as much romantic interest in each other as a current human would have for a chimpanzee” (Darnovsky). Silver’s comments further proves the disparity that would be created by gene manipulation. Due to the costliness of these technologies, only the rich will have the ability to access them. The creation of a superior species would further inhibit underprivileged society from gaining

wealth and a higher, more comfortable status for their families. Not only will they be at an economic disadvantage, but the new technological implications also have the potential to subject them to a physical and intellectual disadvantage. A baby's worth should not be based upon the amount of money his/her parents were able to spend on genetic modifications; similarly, the general public should not have the power to deem certain characteristics more valuable than others. Kevin Schmiesing, research fellow for the Center for Academic Research at the Acton Institute perfectly articulates that,

"Parents' desire for healthy, beautiful, talented children is perfectly understandable. But that urge is taken too far when children with "less desirable" features are weeded out at the embryonic stage. The implication is that a child is not worthy of love and acceptance unless he or she fits the imagined profile."

A child's value should stem from within; all children should have an equal chance to reach greatness through hard work and grit. By accepting the concept of embryonic trait enhancement, society is rejecting these very principles.

Finally, the legalization of sex selection leads to skewed gender ratios. Edgar Dahl, spokesman for the German Society for Reproductive Medicine and supporter of sex-selection, claims that, "almost all couples seeking sex selection are simply motivated by the desire to have at least one child of each sex;" however, his reasoning is deeply flawed. Many countries that have utilized abortion as a means of sex selection have actually done so in order to increase their male populations. China and India are two among these countries. As a result, their female populations are suffering from a steady decline: "Generally, any variation in the sex ratio exceeding 106 boys born per 100 girls born can be assumed to be evidence of the practice of sex selection." In China and India there is currently a ratio of, "117" baby boys born per every 100 baby girls born ("Sex

Selection Changes the Meaning of Procreation”). Some researchers speculate that as a result of the increasing gender imbalance,

“In parts of China and India, there will be a 12–15% excess of young men. These men will remain single and will be unable to have families, in societies where marriage is regarded as virtually universal and social status and acceptance depend, in large part, on being married and creating a new family” (Hesketh & Xing).

The impending imbalance between the sexes will have a negative societal effect. Many studies have shown a strong correlation between unmarried males with low socioeconomic status and violence. In China, about 94% of unmarried people are males aged 28-49, 97% of which have not completed high school. Given these statistics, the potential of violent outbreaks are quite apparent (Hesketh & Xing). These threats extend to United States citizens as well. Scientists and salespeople are targeting South Asian American ethnic groups to market new embryonic sex selection technologies because of their awareness of the South Asian cultural inclination towards boys. Ultimately, gender selection is most commonly used to increase the male population in countries that culturally value men over women, not as a means of balancing the male to female ratio within a family. The alarming threats of this practice make it critical for the prohibition of its use (Schmiesing).

Manipulation of human embryos is a dangerous path to follow. Although new scientific breakthroughs may sound enticing, one must analyze their costs on society before allowing themselves to be blindsided by potential profits. The dangers of embryonic genetic selection are evident and alarming. Legalizing their use will send society towards a downward spiral of inequality, injustice, violence, and misunderstanding.

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Transition vs. Tradition: In Defense of Hormone Therapy and Sex-Reassignment Surgery

In 2017, nationwide elections demonstrated the first signs of a wave of diversity reaching American politics. One sign was the election of Danica Roem to the Virginia House of Delegates, who won against the incumbent Bob Marshall. The win was notable, not because of where it took place or the parties involved, but rather because Danica Roem made history as the first openly transgender person serving in a legislative body in the United States. Among issues like Virginia's traffic and pay for teachers, she ran on the promise that she would make sure that insurance covers hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery for all transgender individuals (Smith). While the Affordable Care Act prohibits insurance companies from discriminating against trans people, 55% of them are refused sex-reassignment surgery, and 25% are refused hormone therapy - medically justifiable strategies for people with gender identity disorder, or GID ("Because they identify"). In order to ensure the rights of transgender people, these statistics must change to reflect the values and virtues of modern society. In the long run, hormone therapy and surgery are defensible because they allow personal expression of transgender people, they are medically necessary for many people, many transgender people are willing to take the almost-nonexistent risks, and the main argument against these procedures is ignorant, intolerant, and transphobic.

When transgender people are allowed to partake in hormone therapy and surgery, they are able to express their personal gender in a way unlike before. The American Psychological Association says that hormones and surgery are perfectly normal in the transition from one gender to another: "While there is no "right" way to transition genders, there are some common social changes transgender people experience that may involve...using hormone therapy treatment...and/or undergoing medical procedures that modify their body to conform with their gender identity" (APA). Hormones and surgery are quality methods of transitioning between genders, and they should be easily attainable for transgender people in order to help them transition in their own way. The director of the National LGBT Health Education Center, Alex Keuroghlian, theorizes that one way to make these treatments more accessible is to make sure that insurance companies and doctor's offices are prepared to handle transgender cases: "We have a workforce of clinicians who, for the most part, don't know the basics of how to care for transgender people" ("Because they identify"), he says. By educating and accepting transgender people and allowing them to transition in the way they see fit, including hormone therapy and/or sex-reassignment surgery, they are therefore able to express their true selves.

For transgender people who are transitioning with hormones and surgery, the processes are medically necessary for their physical and mental well-being. Yet many healthcare providers don't agree, as many are denied service as insurance providers and doctors believe that these procedures are cosmetic and don't truly matter. According to Jennifer Olson-Kennedy, the medical director of the Children's Hospital Los Angeles Center for Transyouth and Development, "These are lifesaving procedures, and to deny somebody a lifesaving procedure is malpractice. And it's incredibly problematic to put your own feelings and needs and opinions above the needs of the patient"

("Because they identify"). The essence of her argument is that healthcare professionals need to understand that hormones and surgery matter to those who receive either of them. Her feelings are in line with those of WPATH, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, which states that "The medical procedures attendant to sex reassignment are not 'cosmetic' or 'elective' or for the mere convenience of the patient. These reconstructive procedures are not optional in any meaningful sense, but are understood to be medically necessary for the treatment of the diagnosed condition" (Legal). WPATH makes a valid point in saying that these processes are medically necessary for people with gender identity disorder; they help transgender people with their transition, which can be a difficult time. In the end, those who require hormone therapy and/or sex-reassignment surgery actually *require* it, and the procedures do, in fact, make a difference.

There are consequences to the decision to go ahead with these methods, but many transgender people are willing to take the risk. While the systems do not preserve the person's fertility, that doesn't matter to most people: "Five percent of 66 young people and 33% of 52 parents surveyed during a visit to a hospital-based gender clinic agreed with the statement: 'I would choose to delay hormone therapy to undergo fertility preservation (for my child) if asked today'" (Beck). In other words, 95% percent of transgender youth are willing to take the risk of losing their fertility due to hormone therapy. Another potential risk is the possibility of increased blood clots or cardiovascular disease; however, new research suggests that these risks aren't issues, either. According to a recent study, "hormone therapy for transgender people increases the risk of blood clots less than birth control pills and does not increase the risk of cardiovascular disease at all" ("Studies Find"). Therefore, many of the potential side effects that have led healthcare professionals

to deny transgender people these procedures are barely a problem. Ultimately, the only true risk is that of lost fertility, and to many transgender people, that risk is one that they are inclined to take.

Some people, however, are less inclined to provide hormones and surgery to transgender people. For example, John Rohan, a United States Intelligence Army officer, believes that these procedures are nothing more than a waste of tax dollars - for one simple reason: "I hate to break it to many of these "experts" but sex-reassignment surgery does not actually turn a man into a woman, or vice versa. All it can do is make a person superficially appear as another gender, and changes their legal status on paper. But this is an illusion only. It does not change DNA or hormones (which must be supplied for life) and it does not allow a person to ever have children as a member of the new gender" (Rohan). While it can be conceded that the procedures do take away a person's fertility, people should be clear that for transgender people, these points of view have been the justification for prejudice and discrimination for years. To say that transgender people aren't actually their desired gender is the exact definition of transphobia. For those who do believe this, it would be wise to remind them of the definition of transgender; according to the American Psychological Association, "*Transgender* is an umbrella term for persons whose *gender identity*, *gender expression*, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth" (APA). Therefore, the actual sex of a person has nothing to do with their gender identity, which is what determines whether someone is transgender or not. Rohan's belief that surgery and hormones only change a person's gender "superficially" is thus proven false.

When all is said and done, hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery are medically and ethically defensible as a way of personal expression and treatment for gender identity disorder. Although this might seem trivial, in an age when public discrimination against transgender people is

running rampant, it is important to support them in their transition whenever possible. By providing these services, healthcare professionals can prove, once and for all, that they care for all people, regardless of gender identity.

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5 April 2019

Catharsis Essay: Lost In The Supermarket™

This is the time I got lost in the grocery store, sort of, but more on that later. It was only a year ago when I experienced the greatest moment of catharsis in my life. Impacting not just me, but my whole family. We all know that stereotypical childhood story. You're focused on the shiny new packaging of your favorite cereal; now with extra sugary marshmallows, just how you like it. Your eyes dance around the wrapping, focusing on each colorful nuance. Childhood joy in a box. Seconds pass, five, maybe ten. Suddenly it's been three minutes, and you turn around to an empty aisle. You panic. Your pulse spikes. Without another thought, your feet race you through the surrounding aisles, searching for something familiar.

That's what happened last Father's Day, except I was fifteen, and nowhere near the grocery store. In reality, I was sitting on my living room couch, the sun was beaming down onto my lap, warming my skin. A family meeting was called, usually entailing directions on chores for the day, I thought nothing of it. I was distracted by the cereal box and its extra sugary marshmallows, the comfort of the usual. What I learned next I could never have been prepared for. The shiny box became dull, no longer holding my attention. The joy disappeared. In front of me now was nothing more than a cardboard box full of artificial sweeteners, but that didn't stop the panic of realizing the aisle was empty. My dad had cancer; Van, the unbreakable man, had been broken. Surgery was the

next morning. This was the start of the race. My mind racing for answers like your little feet did that day in the supermarket.

I spent the next six months running from aisle to aisle, trying to catch my breath. Chemotherapy was next, and it wasn't going to be easy. It's sole purpose is to kill the last particles of cancer, flush out your body, and prevent it from coming back. Despite it usually only taking one good grocery store scare before most kids learn their lesson, chemotherapy is a process many members of my family have experienced; we are no strangers, but it never gets easier to comprehend. Each empty aisle leaves me with more anxiety than the last, looking for an answer to whether the chemotherapy or the cancer will win.

Panting, I come to the last aisle; the moment is full of suspense as I round the corner. I turn to see them looking for carrots to put in my lunch. After minutes of racing around the grocery store and months of chemotherapy, all is serene. Cereal boxes are back to being shiny, and I can safely become entranced in the colorful packaging once more, knowing they remain nearby in the produce section. The monthly check-ups are only a reassurance that he is healthy, and the cancer is remaining at bay. My heart rate slows. The panic breaks. The gist of it all: they were only a few aisles down.



A homemade sign welcomes my dad back home.

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2 December 2018

Criminals Can Be Heroes Too

“We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts.”
---Martin Luther King Jr.

Doesn't it sound pleasant to achieve a peaceful community in a nonviolent way? Blood wouldn't be shed and lives wouldn't be lost. Since the beginning of my education I've been taught to use my words, never my fists. And it's always been an undisputed fact in my mind that this was the right approach. After all, sitting down with a counselor to resolve issues is in comparison much easier, and in our modern society there is little room for anger to burst out. It simply seemed better to fix existing pathways instead of tearing down old ones. But creating a final product community in a peaceful way began to sound like a fairytale to some people in our nation's past. The United States has been in need for immediate change before, and peaceful protest, although proven effective within some boundaries, was not always a viable option.

On October 28th, 1967, a period of civil strife and inequality, Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the infamous Black Panther Party, was convicted of murdering a police officer during a vehicle stop. Police brutality had been an ongoing dilemma for most African Americans, and Huey Newton sought to bring an end to this. He was clearly a rebel activist, and opposed the new method of peaceful protest commended by Martin Luther King Jr.. But it wasn't just about dismantling white agents of

the government. He also rebelled against the lasting effects of racism in a constructive approach, one focused on the well-being of the African American community as a whole (Bassett).

Well-being throughout black society was achieved in two different ways. The first way being an implementation of social services in black communities by Huey Newton and his Black Panther Party. A Ten Point Program was developed, which on point ten dictated the desire for basic liberties. Free breakfast for school children, food aid for families, education for both adults and children, childcare, medical care, ambulance services, and free clothing were just a few of the many services provided (Pope). These reforms were a result of Newton's belief that in order for an individual to possess potential, and thus be able to contribute more to society, a certain degree of safety, nourishment, and health care must prevail (Pope). His programs also served as a foundation for impoverished towns to find new light and gain power to fight for equality. Newton believed that it should be the duty of the government to enact some of these services, such as providing free medical care (Bassett). But this wasn't the reality during the 1960s. The white majority wasn't in need of most of these services, and as racism was still deeply rooted in society, the government was satisfied with maintaining slave-like customs for African Americans. Newton therefore rebelled against the dominant white attitude that there was still an inferior black race, even if they had been afforded many new liberties. He imposed social services that the government refused to make available to an oppressed race, and was in turn able to constructively provide more equity to black communities.

The second way that well-being was achieved was through Huey's work to empower the black society by increasing mental health and the understanding of their situation (Pope). As said by Newton, his hope was that "the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot

of their oppressors” (Pope). This presents an interesting idea, as Newton aimed to provide the means for rebellion, but then wanted to allow the people themselves to fight back, instead of conducting a rebellion all on his lone. The white majority in the United States, however, would have been opposed to this. In theory, it was generally agreed upon that black people should have rights and equality, but in practice, this wasn’t the reality in America. And as African Americans remained an oppressed race, the white population actually benefited because there were more financially rewarding jobs available to them. In order to raise consciousness about inequality, Newton began to offer education. The Black Panther Party offered classes on how to be economically self-sufficient, the importance of African culture, and also on politics (Pope). As members of the American black community became better educated they in turn felt more empowered and comfortable with their situation. Another positive byproduct of infusing communities with education was that they were extremely grateful for the aid they were receiving, and in turn, mental health would have been better. Some white people, especially police who were violent, would have been threatened by this empowerment, as they were often trying to put down the black community and enjoyed wielding power. So even with all of these constructive approaches, brute force was sometimes required in order to resist police brutality.

The violence and criminal activity committed by Huey Newton is what proved to remain in the spotlight. Newton had believed that the civil rights movement failed to show police the wrong in using brutality (Pope). In the 1960s, during the midst of the movement, Martin Luther King Jr. pushed for the rejection of violence and advocated for the adoption of peaceful protest. He argued that society would further be divided through acts of violence (Amnesty International). Part of Newton’s plan to dismantle white supremacy, however, included acting against the dominantly

white police force in a violent fashion. Open carry was allowed in the state of California (Morgan), as shown through the famous picture of Newton holding multiple weapons and dressed in the all black attire of the Black Panther Party. So Newton, along with his other party members, used the full force of this law as a way of instilling constant fear among police. They did this to provide a constant reminder that they were able to fight back at any given moment and to provide defense for the oppressed (Pope). As another way of threatening cops Newton would patrol local towns and ensure that any police stoppings involving a black individual were handled accordingly (Morgan). If a scenario was treated improperly there was a chance for shots to be fired. This is what eventually lead to Huey murdering a cop in 1967, when he himself was stopped and felt threatened. By using violence Huey provided defense for black communities and limited police brutality. He also reversed the wave of peaceful protest, as he showed that violence could in fact be beneficial.

When it came to Huey Newton, criminal activity was all I was ever taught about. He always seemed to be an evil man who needlessly killed cops. This persona is what contributed to my wrongful accusation that Newton's rebellion was for nothing. It's quite easy to look down upon a violent soul, and within our modern society it's simply wrong to commend the work of a murderer. Therefore it's easy to come to the conclusion that Newton's violent actions were part of a wrong course of action. But in fact it was the white police who were really at fault. They were the people attacking innocent African Americans, while Newton was simply providing defense to unarmed citizens (Pope). In addition, Newton was only violent when needed. He, along with other Black Panther members, would attend police stoppings and simply watch. They would remain at ease, but their presence and possession of weapons was threatening enough. When they did finally jump into violent action, it was mainly to stop the improper handling of African Americans. If faced with an

oppressive life in the modern day, this protective, although violent, nature that Huey Newton exhibited would be something cherished and praised among the extremely oppressed. In fact, the Black Panther Party's commitment to carry weapons was seen as an act of compassion, protection, and love throughout oppressed communities (Pope).

Huey Newton will undisputedly live on forever as both a murderer and villain. He will be seen as the man who attacked white agents of the government without much purpose, and rather with anger. In sacrificing his reputation, though, he achieved a system of defense and a feeling of safety and family within an oppressed black community. Unknown to our modern day "educated" generation is how Huey P. Newton did more to rebel against racism and inequality in a constructive manner than in a violent way. He broke through barriers within society that had been previously deemed indestructible and empowered the next generation of black people to stand up for themselves. In itself, maybe Huey has continued to rebel against our stereotypical view of what we consider to be monsters. This "monster" is what used to be seen within the black community as an icon of hope.

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28 May 2019

A Raisin in the Sun: Beneatha's Feminism

During the mid-twentieth century African American women were one of the most oppressed groups in America; pressure to fulfil their feminine role as well as discrimination from white America burdened African American women with widespread oppression. Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* portrays an African American Family in Chicago and their lifestyle and path to a new home in the suburbs. One remarkable character illustrated in Loraine's play is the sister and daughter of the family, Beneatha. Beneatha stands out from her family and peers in that she challenges traditional roles at that time. By embracing her African heritage and being career oriented she is challenging both white oppression and traditional roles for women at that time. Author Maya Angelou's poem "And Still I Rise" and singer Beyonce Knowles-Carter' song "****Flawless" depict a similar attitude carried by the characterization of Beneatha.

Beneatha struggles with the image that society has pushed on her; as an African American woman she faces the pressure to fulfil her role as a woman: working domestic jobs or acting "womanly." Instead Beneatha finds her own self-actualization by embracing her African heritage, and holding bigger goals for herself such as wanting to be a doctor. Predictably, Beneatha is met with the disapproval of her family and her boyfriend; despite the opinions of those around her, Beneatha stands as a symbol for African American feminism. Beneatha uses her hair as a tool in expressing herself and denying traditional

culture. In act II Scene I, Beneatha reveals her “close-cropped and unstraightened” hair. This reveal is followed by the shock of her family and boyfriend. By cutting her hair she is going against popular culture of long, straightened hair: an ideal for women and a pressure to appeal more white. When asked why she chose to cut her hair, Beneatha remarks that she “hates assimilationist Negroes”(Act II Scene I 81). Beneatha is demonstrating her African heritage in her curly, short hair. Beneatha speaks about how she will not conform to the “oppressive culture” of white America. At the same time she is rising against the oppression of the patriarchal society.

Beneatha also demonstrates her desire to become more than the traditional role for women with her goal and passion to become a doctor. Most African American women, including her mother and step-sister, have taken on domestic work such as house cleaning. Yet, Beneatha pushes the limits of society's standards by having the goal to be a doctor, a job mostly taken on by men. In the discussion of marriage with her mother, Beneatha explains that marriage is not a priority for her. Beneatha is career orientated unlike women of her time, “but first I’m going to be a doctor” (Act I Scene I 50). Lorraine’s characterization of Beneatha depicts a character that is new for her time as she challenges the mold of society with her passions and her image.

Poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou portrays a similar theme of resilience in her poem “And Still I Rise” (1978). The strong attitude to stand up against the oppression of society in Beneatha is also demonstrated in Angelou’s poem. The poem is directed towards an oppressive audience: white America. The narrator explains to the audience that despite the harsh oppression, they will rise. The narrator goes on to ask the audience a series of rhetoric questions that challenge the feelings white Americans have towards African Americans. This same attitude is carried by Beneatha when faced by the disapproval of those around her and the oppression of society. Beneatha’s boyfriend George shows the

most disapproval towards Beneatha's actions and attitude, he explains that he does not want a strong-minded woman but instead "I want a nice –(*Groping*)–simple (*Thoughtfully*)–sophisticated girl" (Act II Scene II 96). Despite the toxic pressure of her boyfriend to conform to society's standards, Beneatha does not let the pressure consume her and instead she *rises* by continuing to defy the limits of traditional culture and striving towards furthering her self-actualization. "And Still I Rise" demonstrates that same attitude of resilience throughout the oppression: "You may cut me with your eyes,/ You may kill me with your hatefulness,/ But still, like air, I'll rise." Both Beneatha and the poem "And Still I Rise" reject the toxic pressure of society; "Still I rise" is repeated in the poem in order to demonstrate how the world cannot affect the attitude of the narrator. Again and again, Beneatha rises despite the walls she faces, standing as an independent feminist who only appeals to herself. Angelou's poem "And Still I Rise" shows how *A Raisin in the Sun* did not stand alone in its ideas of self-actualization and resilience of women during the mid-twentieth century.

The struggle for complete equality and the elimination of discrimination still persists in our world today; many artists and authors, like those in the past, use their songs, writings, artwork, etc. to express their opinions. Famous singer and songwriter Beyoncé Knowles-Carter uses her songs to express her attitude on the issue of women's equality in society, racial discrimination, and many other rising topics in America. Beyoncé's song "***Flawless" discusses the oppression women face in America's society. Like Beneatha, Beyoncé is teaching her female audience to find their resilience and success despite the confining pressure of society, "We teach girls to shrink themselves/ To make themselves smaller/ We say to girls 'You can have ambition But not too much/ You should aim to be successful/ But not too successful/ Otherwise you will threaten the man' Because I am female." Beyoncé depicts the oppressive attitude of patriarchal society, yet opposes this attitude and supports female success. Beneatha rejected patriarchal society just

as Beyonce depicts in her song “***Flawless;” Beneatha stands as an image for feminism not only in the mid-twentieth century but a feminist of today.

Lorraine Hansberry, Beyonce Knowles-Carter, and Maya Angelou all depict feminism in its truest form. Beneatha stands out from all traditional values in that she seeks to redefine roles for women by being career oriented towards being a doctor, and incorporating her African background into her life. Even today Beneatha is an image for women to seek their own independence and to be self-driven despite the challenges they face.

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29 April 2019

Wilde's *Dorian Gray*: When Realities Collide

“Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming,” quips Oscar Wilde. The writer’s witty preface may seem a simple way to get the book going, but in it, he plants a seed that continues to grow until the last page. During the Victorian era, there were certain moral standards that every artistic piece was held to. These standards sought to censor the general public from themes that would be considered “wrong”: homosexuality, anti-religious sentiments, and so on. So when Oscar Wilde was brought on trial for homosexual behavior, it seemed just for the plaintiff to offer Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, containing homosexual threads, as evidence against his not-guilty plea (Purple). Little did those accusing or convicting Wilde comprehend that his novel explores the disastrous outcome of exactly what they were doing: mixing up Art, the representation of the *ideal*, with its opposite, the real. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde portrays the dangers of confusing representation for the real through each of his characters—Basil, Lord Henry, and Dorian— all reflecting different ways of being an Artist.

Basil Hallward, an artist in the traditional sense, becomes enthralled by Dorian Gray, a beautiful, innocent boy. Dorian acts as a muse to Basil’s paintings, enhancing his reputation and accolades. But one painting in particular, distinguishes his career: a portrait of Dorian Gray. This

portrait, as the title of the novel foreshadows, changes everything. Basil views Dorian through an artistic lens, revelling in his looks and translating them to canvas never wondering if Dorian is more than just a pretty face: “He [Dorian Gray] is a suggestion, as I have said, a new manner. I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours” (Wilde 14). In her piece *Wilde’s Parable of the Fall*, Joyce Carol Oates names Basil as the predominant cause of Dorian’s deterioration, citing his infatuation with Dorian’s physical appearance as evidence. Basil views Dorian as fictitious, out of his world, realm, and dimension. He truly sees him through an artistic lens, viewing him as if he were an animate painting. Dorian, as Oates herself emphasizes, comes to see Basil as the “diabolical agent” in his story (Oates 420). After murdering Basil, Dorian has a chemist dispose of his body: “What you [Alan Campbell] have got to do is to destroy the thing that is upstairs—to destroy it so that not a vestige of it will be left” (Wilde 167). The complete eradication of any remains of Basil is fitting because in ways, he has been completely eradicated for some time. He viewed the real Dorian Gray in the same way he viewed the representative one. For him, there was no difference between them because he didn’t care what Dorian was saying or thinking; it was all about his physical appearance. So when he sees the true Dorian Gray on the canvas in the latter half of the novel, there is nothing left for him but to die because he only lived through the fictitious, never-changing Dorian. Wilde uses the character of Basil to represent the danger of viewing people in reality as those in representation. It’s all a facade that will inevitably decay, and once it does, destruction becomes inevitable as well because the truth will be too disappointing.

Lord Henry, an unconventional artist, uses philosophy to create the Dorian he desires. During his first encounter with Dorian, Lord Henry remarks, “...youth is the one thing worth having...Some

day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it..." (Wilde 24). This idea serves as the springboard for the rest of the novel, resulting in Dorian's deal with the devil. Before Lord Henry, Dorian was innocent to the power of his good looks; he was paid compliments, but never thought much of them. Lord Henry makes Dorian see himself as everyone else sees him, beginning his downward spiral as he tries to hold onto his looks. Lord Henry's philosophies accumulate to a decent percentage of the novel, but every line addressed to Dorian is strategically planned with the hopes of total domination: "Yes; he [Lord Henry] would try to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait" (Wilde 39). In simpler terms, Lord Henry wants to be Dorian's muse; he wants Dorian to be so consumed by him that he allows him to determine the course of his life. The plot centers on Lord Henry's feelings of domination because in the witticisms he tells him and literature he shows him, he changes the once innocent and naive boy into a heartless, self-absorbed man. While it's not the traditional form, it is in this way that Lord Henry becomes an Artist.

Dorian is an Artist of the world, striving to alter the way of thought. From the second he trades his soul for eternal youth, he steps out of his body, serving as a spectator in his own life. When Sibyl Vane, his first love, commits suicide, Dorian is noticeably detached from emotion and his body as a whole: "And yet I must admit that this thing that has happened does not affect me as it should. It seems to me to be simply like a wonderful ending to a wonderful play. It has all the terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy, a tragedy in which I took a great part, but by which I have not been wounded" (Wilde 101). Dorian, like Basil, enlists an artistic lens at all times. He views Sibyl's death as a "play," in which he performs as a character, rather than reality. This mixing up of reality

with representation is essential to Dorian's character. He gives his soul to representation, simultaneously giving reality to that representation, and receiving in return objectivity. Dorian lives in a world of paintings, operas, and plays because in giving away his soul, he objectifies himself, and a person with no substance seeks substance in outside forms. He is able to detach himself from any wrongdoings when it comes to Sibyl's death because he never viewed her as a figure of reality. He always saw her as the heroine she was played that night in the theater. Dorian's actions cease to have an affect on his soul once it's transferred to his image on the canvas; he is eternally damned because of that one decision, so he has no capability to express or feel emotion. He can watch his life and play a part, but that's just it, he's playing a role in his life rather than he and his life being one. Without his soul, he can only ever be a spectator because eternal youth is only achievable in the artistic realm. And as Dorian's character conveys, confusing reality with representation can only lead to destruction because eventually one must return to reality and when he or she does, the disappointment will overcome him or her.

"Basil Hallward is what I think I am: Lord Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be—in other ages, perhaps" (*Letters* 352). Wilde wrote the aforementioned line relating each of the characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to himself, setting the scene for an allegorical novel. The fact that each serves as an Artist in his own right, further solidifies the connection between Wilde and each of the characters. Wilde believes he is Basil, one of the "good" characters and traditional Artists (Oates 421). However, it is much more than that. Basil lives through his art; he sees Dorian as a beautiful object, needing to be represented on the canvas. He is infatuated by Dorian Gray much like Wilde was infatuated with Lord Alfred Douglas, his lover whose father ultimately had Wilde convicted. Wilde goes on to say Lord Henry is what the world thinks of

him. Lord Henry's role in the novel is perhaps the most interesting. His fascination with dominating Dorian is morally concerning much like the Victorian era saw Wilde's fascination with altering or dominating the minds of the people through his novels as morally concerning. The Victorian world viewed Wilde as corruptive just as we, as readers, view Lord Henry as corruptive. Lastly, there is the statement that Dorian is who Wilde would like to be. The fascinating character of Dorian Gray starts off with an innocence that radiates authenticity; he holds that childhood innocence and possibility that disappears with age. By connecting himself to Dorian, Wilde is conveying that the Lord Henry and Basil within himself are in some degree a facade. In wanting to be Dorian, Wilde is saying he wants to be his authentic self. These parallels are not necessarily essential to understanding the novel, but in including them, Wilde's leaving no room for critics to devise their own links between him and his characters, and in doing so, he gets the last word.

Analysis of Art is a natural and commemorated part of the artistic process. Readers are supposed to look deep into the text or artwork and look for hidden meanings. Things only get complicated when the Art becomes more than representation. Wilde was convicted and forced into hard labor that ultimately killed him because the Victorian age failed to make the distinction between the real and the representative, viewing Wilde as not the author of the texts used against him, but as an animate form of those texts. To them, he was *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Oscar Wilde uses his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, to express that the closer one comes to Art, the closer one comes to destruction because as each of the characters—Basil, Lord Henry, and Dorian—shows, one cannot live through a piece of Art; one must see Art for what it is: Art and Art alone.

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AP Literature and Composition

4 October 2018

Flaubert and Joyce: Revolutions

Revolutions are a massively broad concept, one that covers just about everything and has been often-discussed by the world's foremost minds. A question often-asked is what truly should come after a revolution, and when one has truly failed, or if all revolutions are doomed to fail in some way. Both Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, through their historical context, describe revolutions quite cynically. Flaubert depicts French Enlightenment principles as in ruin and betrayed, with the common people gravitating towards the absolute power of old. Joyce, through his author surrogate, shows a lack of interest and even open hostility towards the nationalist revolution occurring in his native Ireland at the time. Both Flaubert and Joyce's novels can be read through an assessment of the political situation at the time as commentary on revolutions, specifically sending the message that all revolutions are doomed to fail in some way.

Flaubert's depiction of the ascendant middle-class in *Madame Bovary* demonstrates an erosion of Enlightenment values and a return to despotism. *Madame Bovary* was first published as a serial in 1856, eight years after the Revolutions of 1848, which saw the deposition of many European absolute monarchies in favor of democratic representative governments. One such monarch deposed was the July Monarchy, a constitutional monarchy headed by King Louis Philippe,

a liberal member of the House of Orleans. In 1830, Louis Philippe overthrew his cousin, the conservative Bourbon Charles X, and proclaimed himself “King of the French”, instead of the traditional “King of France”. Seeking a middle way between radical leftists and conservatives, he made heavy steps to cultivate an image of himself as a man of the people, wearing trousers instead of knee-breeches, using the republican tricolor instead of the traditional white standard of the monarchy, and walking the streets of Paris with no bodyguards, simply his umbrella. These traits endeared him to the French populace for some time, but over time his reign became more tyrannical, most infamously in their prosecution of journalists for satire. Between 1835 and 1835, 28 issues of the satirical *La Caricature* magazine were seized by authorities, and its editor-in-chief, Charles Philipon, was prosecuted nine times. From these Parisian literary circles Gustave Flaubert got his start, and when *Madame Bovary* was first serialized years later he similarly was prosecuted for obscenity. This led to a growing distaste for the king among the populace. In 1848, following an economic crash and mass protests, he abdicated.

It has been hypothesized by Francis Steegmuller, a Flaubert biographer, that *Madame Bovary* begins in 1827 and ends in 1846, lining up almost exactly with the rule of Louis Philippe. Through that lens, we can view Emma’s lust for social status as a parallel to the relationship between the French populace and the new king. Having attended her first ball, she laments that “she had seen duchesses with thicker waists and inferior manners, and she cursed God for his injustice (Flaubert 62)”, and her first affair is with an aristocrat, Rodolphe Boulanger. Rodolphe’s steady loss of interest in Emma and eventual abandonment of her is, through this historical lens, a judgment on the new aristocracy of France, having seduced the working class only to throw them to the wayside later on. In addition, the character of Homais is Flaubert’s way of looking, through a very cynical lens, the

aftermath of the French Revolution. Homais, the pharmacist, is initially presented to the reader as a classic Enlightenment hero, a bon-vivant who quotes Voltaire and challenges the church. As the story progresses, though, Homais becomes increasingly more self-serving and even conniving. Most strikingly, he pressures Charles into doing a risky surgery on Hippolyte, a club-footed man. To a skeptic he remarks that he is “baffled by such obstinacy, such blindness in spurning the blessings of science (Flaubert 162)”, cloaking his desire to see his rival fail in Enlightenment philosophy. Charles’ botching of the surgery costs Hippolyte a leg and sends him into a further downward spiral, that Homais directly profits from. As a postscript, the narrator notes that Homais is “doing infernally well, the authorities handle him carefully and public opinion is on his side. (Flaubert 327)”, implying that Homais’ rebelliousness never was an issue to the actual political system as he is happy to profit from and receive awards from it, accepting the Legion of Honor in the end. To Flaubert, Homais is the corruption of revolutionary ideals, repeatedly selling out his fellow man so he can advance in life, under the guise of some noble philosophy. This feeling is summed up by a *La Caricature* cartoon ran during Louis-Philippe’s reign, depicting a “phrygian bonnet, the premier republican symbol from 1789, lur(ing) republicans into the street where National Guardsmen meet them, guns ready. (Forbes 2)” Through these parallels, we can conclude that Flaubert believed the French Revolution to have failed, and *Madame Bovary* can be read as a commentary on the regression of French society since the days of the philosophes.

Joyce’s apathy towards revolutionary-minded people in his semi-autobiographical *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* sends the message that revolution, especially of the nationalistic sort, is rather pointless. In contrast to Flaubert, Joyce’s *Portrait* was written during a revolution, not after. Tensions and revolts had long since existed, but in the early 20th century, following the lead of the

influential Irish Republican politician Charles Stuart Parnell, the largely Catholic population of Joyce's native Ireland demanded more autonomy from their largely Protestant British rulers. These demonstrations often turned bloody, with atrocities being committed against the civilian population serving to further the Irish Republican cause. Joyce's novel was published on December 29, 1916, mere months after the Easter Rising of that year, an armed insurrection in Dublin that was crushed so brutally, with 260 Irish civilians killed and the execution of 16 rebel leaders, that it led to a major scandal in British politics and the beginning of the Irish War of Independence. The Catholic Church of Ireland was left in an odd place during this time, as despite the pro-Catholic leanings of Irish revolutionaries, the Church resisted the ongoing revolution, observing that "nationalist unrest was often cited by the authorities as a justification for anti-catholic repression (Mackey 9)". This growing conservatism alienated many more progressive Irish nationalists, including James Joyce, who left Ireland for Paris in 1904.

In these circumstances, Joyce's novel is decidedly very detached. He speaks of himself through his author surrogate, Stephen Dedalus, as a sort of world citizen, bogged down by Ireland if anything. In one of the first pages he mocks the sectarian nature of Ireland at the the time by viewing it through a childlike manner, when a young Stephen tells his family that he wants to marry a Protestant girl. Barely seeming to understand his family's shock, he morphs a threat by his mother into a meaningless little ditty that goes, "Pull out his eyes, Apologize, Apologize, Pull out his eyes (Joyce 2)", a demonstration on Stephen's very active literary mind and how it transcends the political climate. As Stephen grows, his Irishness seems to become more of a burden for him. Davin, Stephen's revolutionary-minded classmate, remarks, "One time I hear you talk against English literature. Now I hear you talk against the Irish informers. ... Are you Irish at all? (Joyce 227)" Joyce

is also keen to remark upon the repressive Catholic Church and its ties to Irish Republicanism. In Stephen's affairs with women, none of the women are directly named and all of them come with heavy guilt for Stephen. His brief spiritual awakening wins him the respect of elders and peers but leaves him feeling empty and unfulfilled. To Joyce, this revolution is not progressive but simply a shift from one master to a new one. Stephen himself remarks upon this, making clear his disdain for spoken Irish and claiming that "Ireland is the old sow that eats its own farrow. (Joyce 229)" In Joyce's mind, Ireland was split between the rigid Catholic republicans and the equally regressive Protestant unionists, so this book culminates with Stephen's self-exile to Paris, a place where he can let his creativity truly blossom, as Joyce did. However, Joyce does not see the Irish revolutionary struggle in completely negative terms. As a boy, Stephen spurns the symbolic red and white roses of English nobility and wonders if a green rose is possible: "But you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the world you could. (Joyce 8)". Joyce seems to have genuinely longed for an idealized version of Irish independence, yet he saw the modern struggle as poisoned by rigid cultural holdovers like language, religion, and hierarchy. Indeed, Joyce biographers' such as Theresa M. Mackey, maintain that Joyce was "never anti-Nationalist. He was anti-Free State. (Mackey 10)" In James Joyce's *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man*, his experiences in revolutionary Ireland served as a place for him to critique the Irish Republican movement through his author surrogate.

Written history began with the Neolithic Revolution, the switch from a nomadic lifestyle to a pastoral one. From the Protestants to the Americans, from industry to technology, revolutions have shaped our lives immensely. To ask if these revolutions succeeded is a harder question though. Did they accomplish their goals? What were their goals? Are we even better off for it? In Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, the old French Revolution is eroded away, and the working class is flocking

towards absolutism again. In Joyce's *Portrait*, the revolution is going on, but its ideals are poisoned by the hierarchy of Catholicism and Irish society. Both novels speak of certain aspects of social revolutions fondly, but the conclusion both come to is that revolutions are doomed to failure. Even with the benefit of hindsight, it's hard to tell if they were truly right or not. France is now a parliamentary democracy that waves the tricolor and extolls liberty, equality, and fraternity, but it also is a nuclear power that intervenes in African countries to the point of imperialism. Parts of Ireland are now free from British rule, but Catholicism and Protestantism still plays a major role in society, with abortion only recently being decriminalized. Every popular movement will inevitably have issues in execution, but whether or not these issues were endemic to the guiding philosophies is a rather nebulous question, and one that shouldn't be generalized. No matter your take on that question, remember that your actions could shape your descendants' lives, so try to take care of the world.

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Mrs. Giles
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21 February 2019

Katsushika Hokusai, Ukiyo-e Painter and Printmaker

Purple waves dance gracefully around the island of Japan. They push and pull against the shore, scrambling for any object they can before they recede back into the nothingness. Katsushika Hokusai was a Japanese artist during the 18th century who depicted the natural beauty that this earth holds. Born in Edo, Japan in 1760, Hokusai illustrated the rich history of Japan during the Ukiyo-e period, better translated as “Pictures of the Floating World” period (“Biography”). He died at the surprisingly old age of 88, in the year 1849, which allowed him to see the constantly changing world and culture of his nation. Hokusai is best known for his woodblock printing and his unique style of painting. Even though it has been over a hundred years, he is still widely regarded as the best woodblock artist who ever lived. His father was a mirror maker, and his mother was most likely a concubine, thus leaving her out of his life. Hokusai learned art from his father and attained a rich education due to being in the Japanese middle class. At age 12, he worked in a library, and at 14 he moved on to become a wood carver apprentice. The apprenticeship opened up new doors for him, and inspired him to study at the Katsukawa school to learn about woodblock printing. The early years of his life greatly influenced his artistic style and is seen through his art that is known and loved today.

Hokusai’s later life also had a significant influence on his art. After his first wife, Sunsho, died, he began to explore more Eurocentric art, which eventually formed the nationwide Japanese

movement to stop painting people and focus more on landscapes (“Biography”). His first wife wasn’t the only important person that had an impact on his art, a fellow artist and mentor, Hiroshige, was a great factor as to why he began to focus more on landscapes, and Hokusai even based many of his pieces off of Hiroshige’s. As he grew into adulthood, he was expelled from the Katsukawa school for taking classes at a rival school, Kana. This abrupt change in his life drew him further away from the artistic study of people, and led him to his more naturalistic study of mountains, oceans, and flora/fauna. Not only did the people around him alter his artistic path, but the general time period in which he lived did as well. The Edo period is the time period characterized by the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868) in Japan. This Shogunate is best known for the economic growth, strict social order, isolationist foreign policies, stable population, and enjoyment of fine arts seen by the Japanese people. These factors affected his art by pushing him to pursue the art of the land, his land, and paint it in the most beautiful light. Through these instrumental factors, Hokusai studied his land in such a depth in order to illustrate what he saw every day with the world around him.

Best known for his impressive woodblock prints, Hokusai created several hundreds of them through intricate hand carvings. “Rainstorm Beneath the Summit” is one of his pieces of Mount Fuji which was done entirely with the woodblock technique. This technique, however, requires a large amount of commitment because each time the artist wants a new color to be added, a new block of wood needs to be carved identically to the first. This piece was created in 1823 and is now housed at the British Museum (see Image 1).



Image 1: Hokusai's "Rainstorm Beneath the Summit." The British Museum.

This piece depicts the dark, flaming volcano of Mount Fuji, abruptly contrasted by the light blue sky fading into white. Puffy clouds line the center of the piece, and float behind the steaming volcano. Sharp lines of lava are also present in the lower right hand corner. The intricacies present in the piece don't seem overly impressive until you realize that the entire work of art took *days* to complete due to the detail-oriented carving and printing technique. The "Rainstorm Beneath the Summit" reminds me of a place I'll never go, a place that is an utter juxtaposition to my life and where I may or may not go in the future. In his work you can practically inhale the volcano dust, and appreciate the hours that he spent to make art in such a difficult capacity.

Not only was Hokusai a woodblock printer, he was also highly regarded for his unique style of painting. His pieces “Feminine Wave” and “Masculine Wave” are examples of his distinct, stroke-oriented painting style. The date that these pieces were painted is unknown, but they both possess the flood of cool colors associated with the ocean. “Feminine Wave”’s colors form a spiral surrounded by waves reaching their crescendo, then spiraling into space. The wave eventually melts into the dark purple galaxy. “Masculine Wave” paints a similar picture, but differentiates slightly from the feminine version. Cool colors form the caps of the waves, surrounding dark purple space, tunneling into the depths. These artworks are partnered with one another, demonstrating a unique contrast. This pair helps demonstrate the 18th century Japanese view on gender, because even though the waves are both part of the ocean, and have the same colors, they are so different and have extremely separate energies associated with each of them.

Hokusai’s art holds many common topics and yet are so contrary from one another. “Rainstorm Beneath the Summit” depicts an immensely different style of art than “Feminine/Masculine Wave”. Through the woodblock printing, less detail is available than if it were painted, but more soul is buried in the depths of the art as a result of the countless hours invested. However, all of these works are joined by a common theme: nature. Nature is illustrated in such a way that it brings light to the darkest parts of it. First, Hokusai creates a piece about an all-destructive volcano with lava and deep, cynical colors to accompany it. He then goes on to paint the waves of the ocean, merciless and never-ending as they are. Hokusai tries to paint nature in a brighter light than what could be a harsh reality, as seen through Japan’s harsh histories with tsunamis. Even though Hokusai could just as well have portrayed the ocean or volcano as evil and

vengeful, he decided to show the massive beauty to the neverending nature he witnessed every day, which is evident throughout most of his work.

Art is always a large contributor to culture and civilization. During Hokusai's time, the Edo period and the Tokugawa shogunate were at their heights, and he was able to portray that through his artwork. His art represents the changes during his life, both personal and general environmental changes that he illustrated. Through studying Hokusai, I was able to learn more about Japanese culture and art than I ever did in my other classes. I was also able to experiment with a very different and one-of-a-kind art style that I never would have tried otherwise. This study gave me a broader understanding of how artistic style is a very important part of differentiating artists, and how it is important to find the one that is *yours*. Hokusai is one of the most timeless Japanese artists, and no matter where you are, you can always appreciate the techniques and ideas that he brought to the table years ago.

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Caroline Voorhis

Ms. Wheeler

English 101

October 5 2018

How To Get Granola: Becoming a Hudson Valley Hipster

Are you having an identity crisis? Honestly, me too. Like millions of others, you're probably looking for a way to find yourself, to connect with who you are on the deepest level. Whether you want to do this through reconnecting with nature, refining your tastes towards the more eclectic, or both, going granola is probably the best solution to your existential crisis (aside from solving the obvious, deep-seeded issue, which honestly sounds like a you problem, so we won't discuss it.)

If you're unsure of what it *really* means to "go granola", look no further than *Urban Dictionary*, where user Granolahead (clearly an expert on the subject!) says that someone who is granola is

A new-age/more civilized hippie who can usually be found journaling in an Eno [a portable hammock] in the middle of the forest, wearing Chaco's or Birkenstocks and athletic shorts (always ready to hike or go on an adventure at any moment), a backpack with a CamelBak water bottle attached by a carabiner, and with dreadlocks (all over or just one or two). The phrase "save the world" in their vocabulary is interchangeable with "travel the world and meet cool people from different cultures."

Although not included in this nifty definition, people who are granola tend to be uber health conscious; much like the Venn diagram for vegans and people who tell *you* to be vegan, the Venn

diagram for people who have adopted a granola lifestyle and people who tell you to adopt a granola lifestyle is one, big circle.

Considering taking the jump into granola/hipster culture? As it turns out, you live in the BEST place to do it: The Hudson Valley. That's right. You heard me. The good, old HV has a poppin' hipster scene, and it's right at your fingertips, my friend.

If you're not sure where to start, I've compiled a list of ideas to speed your granolification along. What are you waiting for? Read on.

1. Take a Hike

According to the New York State Department of Conservation, spending time in a forest can "lower blood pressure", "reduce stress", and "improve mood", among other things. Hikes will literally diffuse your nasty attitude, bringing you back to your wonderful self (or your regular state of rude, I guess).

This is great news for anyone wanting to reconnect with nature because, if you've somehow gotten this far without knowing Hudson Valley geography, the Hudson River is surrounded by the Catskill "Mountains" (hate to break it to you, but they're actually plateaus), *and* the Berkshires! Both!!

Strap on your Chacos and break out that Hydroflask! It's time to complete step one of my four step program and reconnect with nature through a nice walk in the woods. (Extra Special Bonus Tip: write some poetry about this bound-to-be-transformative experience.)

2. Take a Dip

It'd be a real shame if I didn't encourage you to check out the star of the show here in the Hudson Valley: the Hudson River herself.

I'm going to pause to acknowledge that the Mighty Hudson isn't as cute as she was pre-Industrial Rev., because, you know, millions of pounds of pollution, but she still deserves a place in this program.

What should you do here? Just looking isn't enough. If you were still paying good attention, you'd have seen that I wanted you to take a dip in our Hudson River before you can become certifiably granola.

I know, I know. *Caroline, that thing is disgusting.* Mother Nature can't love you if you don't love her back, though. And your success in granolification relies on that.

The worst thing that could happen really isn't *too* bad in the grand scheme of things. After all, I'm not asking you to jump into a *concentrated* sewer or a *live* PCB plant. That would be silly!

Yes, the Hudson does have indicators that it contains sometimes over thirty times the amount of excretory matter allowed for swimming, and yes, at least 1.3 million pounds of carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were dumped right in within the last century, but are you committing to this program or not? Or are you backing out now? I didn't say that you had to do it for more than a second. Go get that bathing suit on!

3. Take Your Pals to a Festival

A festival? Oh, yes! The Hudson Valley has SO many more than the ones held at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds (those are a little too basic, anyway). I've got a list within a list for this section, so buckle up as I take you through a tour of three festivals that you need to get your newly granola self to.

- Wine, Veggies, and Kombucha Festival

- This bad boy takes place every year in Warwick. If you're under 21, enjoy your veggies and some of the kombuchas, but if you're legal, go off, sis! A festival like this is really hard to find, so make sure you can get your fill of all things local and hipster this coming year! Kombucha, if you've been living under a rock, is the health drink of the century. The fermented tea has a strange taste that takes a while to get accustomed to, but once you do, you can enjoy all of its bubbly, probiotic benefits.
- Hudson Valley Vegan Food Festival
 - The city of Newburgh hit the nail on the head with this festival, beginning three years ago. If you're ready to talk to vegans about vegan food (Spoiler alert: you are. Do you remember that Venn diagram??) this is the place to be.
- Porchfest
 - Probably the best of ANY festival to have EVER been in the Hudson Valley, Porchfest will hit that cultural aspect of the hipster scene that you've been lacking thus far. A bunch of talented singers playing (mostly) classic rock on the porches of historic Rhinebeck homes? It's incredible and you already KNOW that you're going to be bopping along there next September.

4. Take a Long, Hard Look at Yourself

Congratulations! You're granola! Now it's time to think about the consequences of your actions.

Let's be honest, this whole stint probably didn't change who you were, or who you thought you were, or whatever you wanted to get out of it, but, I can almost guarantee that you tried some fun and unnecessary things to get to know the Hudson Valley a little better at its core.

Maybe I'm being pessimistic, and maybe this "program" made you more apt to appreciate both the natural and the local, and if that's true, I'm beyond happy for you. As much as I often want to leave, I love the Hudson Valley because it's a funny little place between the mountains whose culture is, as I hope you've discovered, quite unique.

Match yourself up to a line on the Granola Scale---somewhere between Plain Oats (disinterested) and Full-On Crunchy Granola (the ULTIMATE HV Hipster). And, Extra Special Bonus Tip: if you don't find yourself to be the latter, it's time to repeat these steps until you do.

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College Composition 101

5 December 2018

Rethinking Pop Music

When people hear the term “pop music,” they think top charts: catchy, but ‘bad.’ Although this argument is valid in some cases of musical hits, the stereotype as a whole is not accurate. Pop music is a genre originated in its modern form in the US and the UK in the mid 1950s. Pop music as a whole changes, evolves, and includes a myriad of styles that need to be seen as more than just repetitive and mainstream. The terms “popular music” and “pop music” are often incorrectly used interchangeably, though the former does describe all music that is popular and includes many diverse styles. ‘Pop’ music is not equivalent to ‘popular’ music, contrary to popular belief. Something that adds to the incorrect definition is that some music consumers often think of ‘pop’ music as lowbrow, but the definition of pop music needs to be altered to encompass the melting pot of styles that it contains.

The central misconception about pop music that aids in the stereotype of it being solely “popular music,” is that pop is lowbrow. Anything classified as highbrow is usually thought of as intellectual in nature, and people who appreciate such things are called highbrows. The opposite of highbrow is lowbrow, which refers to vulgar and less sophisticated culture and people. Even pop music that is indeed popular gets rejected simply because millions of people are consuming it, its popularity, which does not mean it lacks substance. To not support a genre or artist for topping the

charts is extremely backwards. Commercial success does not equate to being lowbrow, and people who look down upon music simply for being successful, are exactly the problem. By focusing on these enormous umbrellas of categorization (lowbrow and highbrow), people who refer to pop music as lowbrow overlook the deeper definition of pop music and the fact that it is not solely the repetitive songs that haunt you on the radio fifteen times per day.

The majority of people commonly associate classical music and jazz with highbrow, and pop with lowbrow. The ignorance that surrounds looking down upon anything considered lowbrow because it's classified as such is staggering, particularly when the subject of pop music is a large genre of music to ignore because of its label. Serious, conscious and socially critical music should exist and be supported just as much as fun, uplifting music, which pop is often seen as is. In addition, enjoying it does not make you inferior (Harris). In recent times, the term pop music has dragged many negative connotations with it. Even I used to feel as though the coined term of pop music meant the popular music on the charts, and only that. Most commonly at the height of the charts are repetitive, lyrically bland, or inappropriate songs, and while some of those may be in the pop genre, this classification overshadows all other styles of pop that stray from this stereotype.

This misconception about commercial music being equated to pop music affects other genres as well. This issue in evaluating popular music further spreads the inaccurate concept that only pop music tops the charts. Take genres like Indie and Folk for example. Simply because they are not in the genre of pop, does not mean they are not popular. As a result, by excluding these genres from the 'popular' category of music, consumption decreases. These other styles are also viewed by the majority as lowbrow, or second tier. As a music fanatic, after lots of thought, I realized the extent to which this statement was true and could only brainstorm one example of a popular Indie song that

is widely known; “Mr. Brightside” by The Killers. If our society’s definition of popular music was not so strongly (and incorrectly) linked to pop music, we may all have a wider comprehension and knowledge of music genres, and popular music.

Take our nation’s musical history, as a reminder that pop was not always stereotyped as lowbrow. Michael Jackson, for example, is forever the King of Pop- and whether you agree or not- you know him by this sobriquet. Think about some of the songs that are widely-considered the best ever made: “I Wanna Hold Your Hand” by The Beatles or “Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson. Those were, and are, pop songs. Now let’s compare a modern artist with these past pop sensations. Take Beyoncé Knowles, for example, world renowned and beloved star. Talk of Beyoncé becoming the “Queen of Pop” began after Michael Jackson’s death, and some music media analyzed Jackson’s legacy and influence on the current generation of artists. Knowles, an involved fan of Jackson’s, was deemed the closest thing to Jackson in the industry, with her intense work ethic and dominance in pop music and culture. “Some music magazines referenced Knowles as “the female Michael Jackson”, and discussed how she is treated with the same respect and depth of thought we devote to anthems sung by bands of guys with guitars from the 60’s (Williams). Hearing Beyoncé’s pop music being referenced as ‘lowbrow’ is not at all common, nor expected any time soon. This is but one specific example of how pop music has not been seen as exclusively lowbrow for many many years. Simply because music differs, does not mean that one is more valid, more artistic, or more worthy than another.

“It’s popular music at its root...What makes a song a pop song is being at the top of the chart...The chart is what people are buying. It doesn’t matter if the song is the least cool thing you’ve ever heard. If it sells, it’s at the top” (Bob Stanley). Stanley’s opinion on pop music, held by many

other people in the world, rests upon the questionable assumption that other styles of pop that stray from the norm are not included in the genre. Stanley's claim supports the stereotype that pop music is lowbrow, and exclusively what tops the charts: good *or* bad.

What these claims do is correct the mistaken impression that pop music is just popular, lowbrow music. These conclusions will not only have significant effects on the stereotypical definition of pop music, but also the music industry and how consumers perceive the genres of music.

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College Composition

15 December 2018

Annotated Bibliography: Preliminary Step for Passion Project

“How Music Empowers the Brain | Lisha Lercari | TEDxNashville.” Performance by Lisha

Lercari, *YouTube TED*, YouTube, 24 Apr. 2017, youtu.be/_uDvIgdqpwE.

A music teacher since 1980, Lisha Lercari founded Music and the Brain, a hands-on program that teaches public school children to read and play music through classic keyboard instruction. Neurological research links music and cognitive development, so when children receive sequential music instruction, it impacts their proficiency in language, reading, math, etc. This will give me further insight as to the extent to which music affects and shapes the brain. It's very informative, dives deeply into music and the brain and gives solid examples.

“Your Brain on Music | Alan Harvey | TEDxPerth.” Performance by Alan Harvey, *YouTube TED*,

YouTube, 27 June 2018, youtu.be/MZFFwy5fwYI.

Neuroscientist Alan Harvey has written several books on the relationship between music and the brain, this TED talk focuses on how the brain interprets music. This will aid in my research in the science of music and our receptors. The source is engaging and interesting and has an abundance of evidence.

“Music as a Language: Victor Wooten at TEDxGabriolaIsland.” Performance by Victor Wooten,

Youtube TED, Youtube, 29 May 2013, <https://youtu.be/2zvjW9arAZ0>.

An American bass guitarist, record producer, educator, and recipient of five Grammy Awards, seeks to “enrich the lives of people of all ages from around the world by providing educational programs that foster connection with music.” The video analyzes how music connects to culture and how it speaks to us, “music as a language.” It provides the sociological perspective on the topic.

Sacks, Oliver. *Musicophilia*. London: Picador, 2018.

British neurologist, naturalist, historian of science, and author depicts “musical misalignments”, unbelievable (true) stories about supernatural connections with music. This source might help show how special music is (in addition to how the brain interprets it). Psychological, neurological perspective on topic.

Mannes, Elena. “The Power Of Music' To Affect The Brain.” *NPR*, NPR, 1 June 2011,

www.npr.org/2011/06/01/136859090/the-power-of-music-to-affect-the-brain.

Elena Mannes explores how music affects different groups of people and how it could play a role in health care. She discusses how music can aid in different types of diseases and neurological disabilities. Her talk will help build argument that music has incredible capabilities for healing.

Larissa Hilgendorff-Graf

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College Composition I

18 December 2018

Annotated Bibliography: Passion Project on the Financial Crisis of 2008

“Crash Course.” The Economist, The Economist Newspaper, 7 Sept. 2013, www.economist.com/.

The article, “Crash Course” published by The Economist, examines two causes/people to blame for the crisis. They break the article down into the following sections: From houses to money markets and regulators asleep at the wheel. This source provides in-depth information on two main causes that I will explain.

DePillis, Lydia. “10 Years after the Financial Crisis, Have We Learned Anything?” CNNMoney, Cable News Network, money.cnn.com/.

Lydia DePillis is a Senior Economics Writer for CNN. In her article, “10 Years after the Financial Crisis, Have We Learned Anything?” she examines the main causes of the crisis, the effects our country continues to feel, and the lessons we have and have not learned. The article includes several charts depicting the Dow, foreclosures, total household debt and more. This source will be useful in explaining the main causes of the crisis and the effects that continue to affect us.

Lenzner, Robert. “The 2008 Meltdown And Where The Blame Falls.” Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 18 Apr. 2013, www.forbes.com.

Robert Lenzner was an investment banker for over 50 years. He went on to write about Wall Street, specifically during 2007-2008. He has held the following positions: National Editor and Senior Editor of Forbes Magazine and New York Bureau Chief of The Boston Globe. In his article, he dives into the causes of the crisis more deeply than the other sources. One particular aspect that Lenzner address is the laws passed leading up to the crisis and the key players in keeping the crisis a secret until it was too late. He explains each group that can be held accountable for the crisis: deregulation, investors/bankers, and “rotten character.”

Michel, Norbert. "Government Policies Caused The Financial Crisis And Made the Recession Worse."

Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 26 Jan. 2015, www.forbes.com/sites.

Michel Norbert is a Research Fellow in Financial Regulations in The Heritage Foundation's Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies. He also has extensive research on monetary policy and other issues related to the Federal Reserve. In his article, Norbert focuses solely on his belief that the government is responsible for the crisis. He goes as far as to state, "Virtually every aspect of the meltdown can be traced to federal policies..." He also discuss the role nepotism played in creating the recession. This source will be useful in explaining the role government had in creating the crisis.

Morris, Charles R. *The Two Trillion Dollar Meltdown: Easy Money, High Rollers and the Great Credit*

Crash. Read How You Want, 2015.

Charles Morris is a lawyer, former banker and author. He has written over ten books and countless articles for the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In his book, he traces the 2008 recession origins and extensively explores how and why red flags were ignored. This source will be useful in explaining how red flags were ignored, which can tie into nepotism from Norbert's article.

Schoen, John W. "Financial Crisis of 2008 Is Still Taking a Bite out of Your Paycheck 10 Years Later."

CNBC, CNBC, 12 Sept. 2018, www.cnb.com.

John W. Schoen has reported and written about economics, business and financial news for more than 30 years. His reporting earned two Best in Business awards from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers. He is also an adjunct professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. In his article, he focuses solely on how the crisis affects us today. He uses numerous charts to visualize/support his claims. This source will be useful in explaining how the crisis still affects us, which can create a sense of urgency to ensure we don't recreate the crisis.

Weinberg, John. "The Great Recession and Its Aftermath." Federal Reserve History,

www.federalreservehistory.org.

John Weinberg was a professor of economics, the director of research, and the senior vice president. He holds a Ph.D, University of Minnesota, and a B.A., University of Pennsylvania.

When he wrote this article, he associated with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. In his article, he tackles the following subjects: the rise and fall of the housing market; effects on the financial sector; effects on the broader economy; and the effects on financial regulation. This will be useful because it focuses on regulation and the effects on the financial sector.

Emily Erlanger

Ms. Wheeler

English 101

January 2018

A World of Worriers: The Social Emotional Climate at Rhinebeck High School

I have always been a worrier, the type of person who perseverates over everything. Just thinking about whether or not I will arrive at school on time, finish my homework, or win my basketball game makes me want to bite my nails until they hurt. I get it from my mom, who always soothed my worries, about being a worrier, by saying this, "It's only a problem if it interferes with your daily life. If it becomes a problem, then we will do something about it."

But for a growing number a teenagers in America, worrying *is* a problem. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety affects nearly one-third of our population in the United States. Some may point to school social and emotional climate, while others blame cell phones and social media. Severe anxiety and stress are not far away issues; it's affecting our own students right here at home. At Rhinebeck High School, anxiety and stress is proliferating among students like the flu during January. In order to ease the discord, we need to set a new standard; students should be taught healthy habits to balance their school and home lives and prioritize their physical and emotional well being. We need to take a look inward and ask ourselves: how did worrier become the new norm? And when it comes to anxiety, what is normal?

About a year ago, *The New York Times* published an article called "Why Are More Teenagers Than Ever Suffering From Severe Anxiety?" When it appeared in her snapchat news feed, one of my friends sent it to our group chat, remarking at the accuracy of the article. The group chat contained

five other girls, three of whom were in the top ten percent of our class, the other two at least in the top twenty. All of them agreed: the author's conclusions were dead on. In his article, Benoit Denizet-Lewis detailed the story of a boy named Jake, who was in his junior year of highschool, taking three A.P. classes, running cross country for his school's team, and traveling to Model UN conferences when everything fell apart. Jake succumbed to crippling anxiety; under the pressure of perfection, he felt like he could never measure up. Despite their own innumerable successes, the girls in the group chat were familiar with this impending fear too.

In 2016, when surveying college freshmen, the Higher Education Research Institute at U.C.L.A found that 41% "felt overwhelmed by all they had to do," a drastic increase from a previous 29% in 2010, and 18% in 1985 (Denizet-Lewis). But why do teenagers and young adults who have the most opportunities at their fingertips, coupled with the highest barometers for success, appear so discontent? All the while, young people from abusive families or disadvantaged, impoverished communities have little concern over the menial issues of wealthier neighborhoods. The children serviced by the Youth Anxiety Center clinic in Washington Heights, predominantly poor and working class hispanic youth, have bigger fish to fry. The clinic's director, Carolina Zerrate says "Oftentimes their neighborhoods are not safe and their families can feel unsafe if there's a history of trauma and abuse" (Denizet-Lewis).

It's easy to believe that teenagers in well off communities should be well off when it comes to anxiety, as they deal with seemingly fewer hardships. After all, in a volatile political climate, they don't have to fear for their physical safety or the deportation of undocumented family members, unlike their less-fortunate counterparts. Yet Suniya Luthar, a professor of psychology at Arizona State University, who compared distress and resilience in affluent and disadvantaged teenagers, has

concluded that the privileged are the most “emotionally distressed” youth in America. She claims that “These kids are incredibly anxious and perfectionistic, but there’s contempt and scorn for the idea that kids who have it all might be hurting” (Denizet-Lewis). Luthar sites a never-ending need to do better as their biggest source of anxiety, saying “There’s always one more activity, one more A.P. class, one more thing to do in order to get into a top college” (Denizet-Lewis). This sentiment resonates for many in my hometown.

The high schoolers in our district are fortunate to receive a rigorous academic curriculum delivered by teachers who are highly invested in their students’ education. Our teachers and parents alike want us to reach our highest potential, and push us accordingly. But at what cost? The answer to this question lurks amidst the personal lives of the students at Rhinebeck High School. One doesn’t have to look very far to see the emotional distress of students here; it chases them down the hallways, comes to light in their voices, and keeps them up at night until the early hours of the morning.

To better characterize the experience of Rhinebeck’s best and brightest, I took my curiosity directly to the source: the students themselves. High school senior, Emily Miller exemplifies the high achieving, but highly stressed out profile that is prevalent in our school. When she graduates in June of 2019, she will have taken seven out of the ten Advanced Placement classes offered at Rhinebeck: AP World History, AP U.S. History, AP Biology, AP Language and Composition, AP European History, AP Spanish, and AP Literature. She fills her afternoons participating in Model UN Club, mentoring elementary school students through Culture Connect, nursing her creative side in Creative Writing Club, and serving as president of Debate Club. While Emily enjoys all of her activities, she also confesses that if she didn’t need to bolster her resume to appeal to colleges, she probably wouldn’t

be as committed. Who can blame her considering the toll it takes? “Last year,” she told me, “I would come home from school around 3:00 and work on homework for a few hours. Sometimes I would unintentionally fall asleep at my desk. Even after dinner I still had homework to do.” When I asked her why she wears herself so thin, her response was simple: it’s what the competition requires of her.

In the thick of junior year, which is notorious for being the most important, yet challenging academic school year, Emily averaged four or five hours of sleep a night. As a person who rarely found herself with an hour of free time each day, Emily “used to think six hours [of sleep] a night was really good.” She explained how tough it is to go up against other students, “There’s definitely a pressure to be the best so you can get into a top school. People here really judge your worth based on the quality of the school you go to.” But Emily’s own expectations of herself far exceeded those other’s place on her. Despite her extensive extracurricular activities and impressive academic performance, Emily still knows that it will be a challenge to afford college and enter the tight job market. While she’s aware that much of her stress is self inflicted, she believes there needs to be a systematic change in the way we approach emotional well being in schools. “In the week leading up to AP testing last spring, a debilitating combination of anxiety and too much coffee made me physically sick. I wish someone had told me it was okay to let my school work take a hit when my own mental and physical health was at stake.”

Madeline Levine, founder of Stanford-affiliated nonprofit Challenge Success, notes this distinct change in stressors, “Teenagers used to tell me, ‘I just need to get my parents off my back.’ Now so many students have internalized the anxiety. The kids at this point are driving themselves crazy” (Denizet-Lewis). This shift is important; it indicates that teenagers are not taught proper

skills to handle the stress they are under. Consistently, diligent students are putting their basic physical and emotional needs aside in order to be the best. Though their parents have instilled in them high standards and expectations, they are not providing them with the guidance and support that is necessary to sustain them. But that's not to say that anxiety has failed to capture the attention of many parents, teachers, and school administrators.

The past two school years, Rhinebeck Central School District has conducted a survey of school climate in conjunction with The National School Climate Center. According to district webpage, "School Climate" refers to people's subjective perception of school life. School Climate sets the tone for all the learning and teaching done in the school environment, and is predictive of students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways." On a scale of 1-5, across the board students consistently rated social and emotional security the lowest, with a quarter of students giving it a score in the negative range. This designation transcended racial, gender, and age demographics, earning a median score of 2.83. Social and civic learning, defined as skills in conflict resolution, self reflection, and emotional regulation, came in second to last with a median score of 3.00, then social media with a 3.17. Responses among adults varied slightly; overall their score for all categories were higher, and they rated social media as the lowest, followed by sense of social and emotional security.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to pick the brain of Rhinebeck's very own School Social Worker, Megan Rodier, and asked her to tell me about her take on the current stress levels of high schoolers. In summary, she told me that over approximately the past seven years, she has seen a dramatic change. It used to be that students who experienced chronic, severe anxiety were a small minority and the general population experienced lower levels of anxiety, which was typically

situational. Now, she's seeing that a greater portion of the student body is under stress, and are having heightened reactions to it. There's intense stress surrounding academic status; the pressure to do well is affecting more and more students, and kids' standards for what that means are narrowing. "A lot of times it's actually the parents saying that they don't really care about their kids' grades as long as they try and they enjoy what they're learning."

When I asked her to speculate on why students are internalizing their anxiety, she pointed to a cultural shift in the way we approach our sense of self, which is woven through both our online and real lives. Though Ms. Rodier maintains that she's not strictly anti-social media, she concedes that as an avid pinterest user, she too has developed unrealistic expectations for herself. "We save all these ideas and pins, for who we could be but, I can't have my Pinterest life!" I think she make a really poignant point here; as a society we're unconsciously obsessed with designating a persona for ourselves. We're all encouraged to be the best version of ourselves we can be. It's never been easier to compare yourself to others at the click of the button, and its widely socially accepted to be constantly working on yourself, be it your intellect, your appearance, or your skills. At Rhinebeck High School, kids go to school and are comparing themselves to their peers all day long, and then go home and are doing it on instagram.

Our technology has changed our expectations of the world on a significant level: "Technology has made us so accustomed to instant gratification. It's not often that any of us have to sit with any uncertainty any more, and uncertain is one of the hardest places for someone with anxiety to be. You can't always just google the answer to a real life problem; we can't always have control. It's not necessarily that there's more uncertainty, we're just not as equipped to handle it."

Ms. Rodier breaks down coping strategies into two camps: our thoughts and then our body's physical reaction to stress. Which you try to control as a first step depends on the situation. Ms. Rodier frequently works with students to get perspective on the bigger picture, and break down our perceptions of upsetting events and setbacks. We tend to get hung up on the little things and let our negative thoughts get the best of us and spiral out of control. "We're all guilty of perseverating over the little things and only fixating on what's right in front of us. We focus a lot on what we don't have. That's why I like to talk about gratitude, learning to say here's all the things that I do have in my life and this is what fills me. With our vision always on the negative, we're not opening up to the possibilities of positive thinking."

Then there's the biological side "With a lot of students I focus on breath work," she explained, "because when we experience anxiety, our bodies are flooded with hormones, and our fight or flight response kicks in. But there's no fight or flight to be had when we're nervous for a test, so our body's firing and our minds are flooded and we can't think clearly. The first thing you can do is control your breathing because your breathing will slow down your heart rate and blood flow, neutralizing the reaction." Her strategy entails a "five point breath", where you count on your fingers five seconds breathing in, then five seconds out, five times. The beauty of this technique is that you can easily do it in front of others and you don't need anything. "It only takes a minute."

The theme of resilience that is echoed within Ms. Rodier's suggestions is one that Lynn Lyons conveys to teachers and counselors at professional-development training sessions on anxiety. A psychotherapist and author, Lynn Lyons is a proprietor of coping mechanisms that "retrain the brain, in order to create the message that says even though I'm uncomfortable I can do this" (Denizet-Lewis). Lyons criticises the use 504 plans that are avoidance based. She believes that,

despite their efforts to accommodate anxious kids, schools are worsening the problem. An Oregon school counselor is on the same page; kids are led to believe they shouldn't have to face anything that upsets or triggers them, and when they do encounter setbacks, they aren't "equipped to problem-solve or advocate for themselves effectively" (Denizet-Lewis). But often, schools are willing to do whatever it takes just to get a child to come to school. At Roxbury High School in New Jersey, "more fragile students" are separated into their own classroom to help students avoid anxiety producing obstacles such as gym class or the crowded cafeteria.

Allison, mother of anxiety prone high schooler Jillian, admits she sometimes doesn't know the difference between when her daughter is actually suffering from anxiety and when she is "manipulating me to get out of doing whatever she didn't feel like doing... The million-dollar question of raising an anxious child is: when is pushing her going to help because she has to face her fears, and when is it going to make the situation worse" (Denizet-Lewis). The therapist at a parent's workshop in Oregon, Ashworth, knows this struggle. He explains that families often enable their anxious kids by letting them stay in the car at the grocery store or ordering for them at a restaurant, and as a result they have lost the ability to tolerate distress and uncertainty (Denizet-Lewis). He teaches his parenting strategies with a healthy dose of reality, acknowledging the challenges of raising an anxious child.

Or maybe more appropriately, raising an anxious generation. In her article "Teen Depression and Anxiety: Why the Kids are not Alright", Susanna Schrobsdorff tackles tough mental health issues. In regards to Generation Z she says this: "They are the post-9/11 generation, raised in an era of economic and national insecurity. They've never known a time when terrorism and school shootings weren't the norm. They grew up watching their parents weather a severe recession, and,

perhaps most important, they hit puberty at a time when technology and social media were transforming society,” (Schrobsdorff). As so eloquently put by Janis Whitlock, director of the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery, “If you wanted to create an environment to churn out really angsty people, we’ve done it.” She acknowledges that helicopter parents and school can be sources of stress but Whitlock cites other factors as the main stressors. “It’s that they’re in a cauldron of stimulus they can’t get away from, or don’t want to get away from, or don’t know how to get away from,” she says (Schrobsdorff).

Social media has gone way further than simply connecting us to one another across the web; it allows us to stay in touch and up to date with the rest of the world 24/7. On the other hand it also ensures that every piece of breaking news about the latest tragedy, political issue, or natural disaster appears right before our eye. According to Alexandra Patillo’s CNN article “Too much bad news can make you sick”, “constant exposure to trauma can derail our ability to cope healthily and hinder our ability to return to a relaxed state” (Patillo). With the rapid rise of technology in our lives, it’s become impossible to avoid all of the stress hiding in your back pocket. Susanne Babbel, a psychotherapist specializing in trauma recovery explains that when you face trauma, your body goes into “fight, flight, or freeze” mode. After the perceived threat has been eradicated, the body returns to a resting state of homeostasis. But when the body is exposed to frequent or prolonged stress it interrupts its recovery. "Over time... our adrenal glands can become fatigued. Adrenal fatigue can lead to being tired in the morning, lack of restful sleep, anxiety and depression, as well as a multitude of other symptoms," says Babbel (Patillo).

It’s tough to refute; anxiety and stress can have detrimental effects on all aspects of our lives. The negative social and emotional climate that has pervaded Rhinebeck High School is demanding

our attention, as it has at many other schools across the country. To combat anxiety and stress in school and out, we need to investigate the problem and take steps to change the harmful culture that thrives here.

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Helen Fleming

Ms. Grande

AP Language and Composition

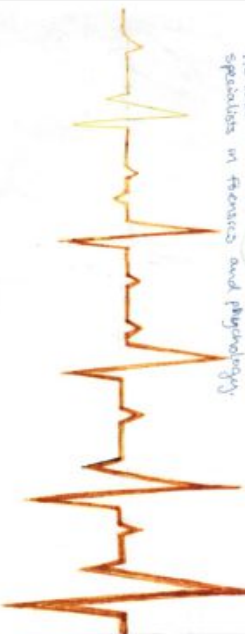
15 May 2019

One-Pager on *Columbine* by Dave Cullen

THEY SEEMED TO FILL
THE ENTIRE SKY.

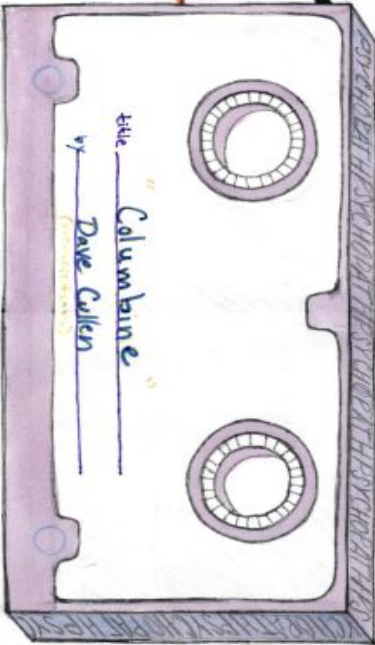
ETHOS

The Author's Note on Sources, included at the beginning of the book, establishes the syntax guidelines for the account, as well as the author's credibility as a reporter. Also included in the book are a full bibliography and thirty-five pages of notes citing specific details. He also includes the work of several specialists in forensic and physiology.



LOGOS

The author includes police reported data, along with step-by-step described events and forensic evidence. He also recounts the story quickly, moving backwards and forwards over and over again to slowly fill in details to create a cohesive picture.



Rachel
 Danny
 Steven
 Corey
 Kelly
 Isaac
 Daniel
 Lauren
 John
 Matthew
 Kyle
 were released

o diction:
 - informal + formal language
 ↳ avoids casual "report" tone
 ↳ colloquial phrases sets the mood, used to ground reader within the story and build tension

- irony
 ↳ pg. 353, paragraph 7

o description:
 ↳ pg. 652, paragraphs 1-3
 ↳ the bloody gory descriptions of it in their final moments impact on their parents
 ↳ all children - descriptions of the journals - descriptions of the journals - descriptions of the journals
 ↳ pg. 353, paragraph 7
 ↳ the bloody gory descriptions of it in their final moments impact on their parents
 ↳ all children - descriptions of the journals - descriptions of the journals



o syntax & structure:
 "For Eric, Columbine was a performance. He was the star in a new play and a single, complete, watery world."
 ↳ author includes main source and "single, complete, watery world" metaphor