

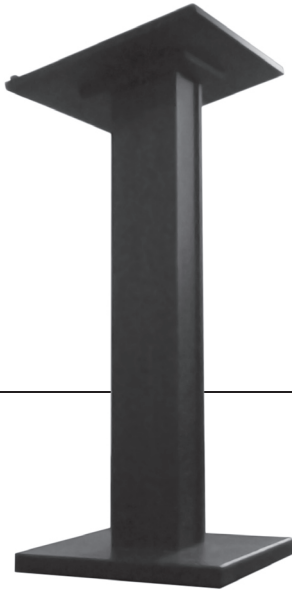
Christopher J. Manley, Editor  
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# FRESH WRITING

University Writing Program • University of Notre Dame

HAYDEN  MCNEIL



# FRESH WRITING

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2009 • VOLUME 9

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**University Writing Program**  
**University of Notre Dame**



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# Table of Contents

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## **Introduction**

Acknowledgements . . . . .	v
Foreword. . . . .	vii

## **Personal Narrative**

Motivation: This I Believe • <i>Kang Suhp Kim</i> . . . . .	3
---	---

## **Rhetorical Analysis**

Tissue Communism • <i>Alexa Arastoo</i> . . . . .	7
Defeating a Monster: The Segregationist Fight against the Civil Rights Bill • <i>Rachael Banks</i> . . . . .	11
Control Room: The Impossibility of Human Objectivity • <i>Caitlin Lynch</i> . . . . .	17

## **Definition Argument**

America. Amen. • <i>Stephen Lechner</i> . . . . .	27
Guns, Drugs and Hoes: Rappers Not Society's Foes • <i>Douglas Lim</i> . . . . .	33
Heightism: Short Guys Finish Last • <i>Ben Schoen</i> . . . . .	39
The Greatest Athletes in the World • <i>Laraque Stewart</i> . . . . .	45

## **Evaluation Argument**

Mighty Ducks: Inspirational Film or Breeding Ground for Violence? • <i>Maddie Buttinger</i> . . . . .	53
<i>Sophie Scholl—The Final Days</i> : History Without the Exaggeration • <i>Maria Capotescu</i> . . . . .	59
Dirty Bomb Detection Needs Some Cleaning Up • <i>Nancy Paul</i> . . . . .	65

## **Causal Argument**

Txtng n Ltrcy: A Communications Revolution and a Devolution of Language • <i>Veronica Stafford</i> . . . . .	71
---	----

**Rebuttal Argument**

Real ID: A Make-Believe Solution • *Dylan W. Krieger* .....77

The Unattainable Utopia of a “Progressive Vision  
of Education” • *Allison Vander Broek* .....81

Can Money Buy Happiness? • *Zhe Yang* .....87

**Researched Argument**

Pulling Out of NAFTA: The Right Course?  
The Right Message? • *Patrick Brown* .....93

Going Nuclear: Fusing the Politics and  
Economics of Nuclear Energy • *Joseph D. Dufour* .....105

After All, It’s Just War Theory: An Inadequate Model  
for Evaluating Modern Warfare • *John Helms* .....115

The ACLU and the Department of Justice on the  
Patriot Act • *Jeremiah Kelly* .....125

A God of the Gaps, or a Gap for God?: How We Should Interpret  
the Bible in Light of Evolution • *Daniel O’Duffy* .....135

A Greener Approach to Groceries: Community-Based  
Agriculture in LaSalle Square • *Nancy Paul* .....151

To Mandate or Not to Mandate?: The Controversy  
Surrounding Gardasil • *Anne Reser* .....165

Coca-Cola Crushes Colombia: A Critique of the Human Rights  
Violations Plaguing Coca-Cola Bottling Plants • *Tricia Stepanek* .....177

A Drug Promoting Society: How Our Culture of Competition Incites  
Psychostimulant Abuse • *Ryan Traudt* .....189

## Acknowledgements

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Arguing well is arguing responsibly. This is the cornerstone of the University of Notre Dame's First Year Composition course, and it provides students with an ethics for creating and judging attempts at persuasion. Key to this ethics are two principles: First, that writing is a communicative and therefore inherently social process involving more than just an author. Second, that credit for work be given generously and explicitly.

To employ these principles I'd like to thank a good many people for their help, guidance, and understanding during the production of this edition of *Fresh Writing*. More than anyone else, the instructors and students that make up the FYC courses are responsible for the pages that follow. Instructors spend months crafting classes. They spend their days teaching and nights commenting on subtle issues in papers. Students wrestle with challenging texts, discuss improving each others' work as much as their own, and write. And re-write. And re-write some more. This book wouldn't be possible without the dedication of hundreds of teachers and students to an intellectual culture that improves public discourse.

As for individuals, it's difficult for me to imagine this journal outside the legacy of Dr. Connie Snyder Mick, former Assistant Director of the University Writing Center. She edited the series for eight years, so skillfully that by the time I took it on I had only to maintain a status quo. Dr. John Duffy, Francis O'Malley Director of the University Writing Program, has also been a dependable source of advice for all things rhetorical. His curriculum is grandfather to every argument contained here, and the entire FYC program owes him a debt of gratitude for the ethical foundation mentioned above.

Special thanks are owed to the instructors whose students authored the material published here: Denise Ayo, Daniel Citro, Joel Dodson, John Duffy, Robert Garcia, Ed Kelly, Nicole MacLaughlin, Rebecca McCumbers, Connie Snyder Mick, Stephanie Pocock, and Anne Snellen. Their guidance was undoubtedly crucial in turning great papers into outstanding ones. Tutors at Notre Dame's University Writing Center were also instrumental in the writing process. Readers of submitted essays included Patrick Clauss, John Duffy, John Hess, Kimberly Lander, Nicole MacLaughlin, Stephanie Pocock, and Anne Snellen. Administrative details were

facilitated by Terri O'Bryan. I would also like to offer huge thanks to Lisa Wess and the incredibly accommodating people at Hayden-McNeil.

Finally, this journal would have stalled out in pre-production had it not been for the work of the Assistant Editor (read: Real Editor), Rebecca Gannon. Rebecca found time in a schedule filled with classes, a senior thesis, and a job tutoring at the Writing Center to line-edit every single page of argument that appears in this book. She sent me finished essays while she was on Spring Break. In Mexico. Don't even pretend that's not impressive.

Please read responsibly.

Christopher J. Manley  
Notre Dame, IN  
March 2009

## Foreword

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Writing is a process. The act of creating a well-crafted essay is, in itself, a process. But, once completed, the piece of writing also allows the author to engage in a greater process by entering into a dialogue. The compositions selected for this publication of *Fresh Writing* exemplify the purpose of writing as dialogue and, more specifically, of writing as a form of engagement.

Reflecting the current highly charged political climate, many first-year students chose to address topics of international concern and in doing so utilized writing as a form of civic engagement. Patrick Brown composed an essay on the current state of NAFTA, Joseph Dufour researched political and economic issues concerning nuclear energy, and John Helms analyzed just war theory in light of the current war in Iraq. Each student took the opportunity to educate himself on a specific topic and in the act of writing, entered into the larger debate surrounding each issue.

Other students also approached writing as civic engagement, choosing to immerse themselves in national concerns and pressing social issues. Allison Vander Broek responded to an article on education, Ryan Traudt explored the “drug culture” at the collegiate level, Dylan Krieger looked at an issue pertaining to immigration, and Anne Reser discussed the Gardasil vaccine from a public policy perspective.

For other assignments, students formed arguments concerning truth, value, and differing belief systems. In these essays, the students entered into philosophical engagement. Stephen Lechner wrote an essay on how Americans define religion and urged for a reevaluation of the term. Daniel O’Duffy addressed the debate between evolution and the Bible and how the two viewpoints may be integrated. Kang Kim composed a paper on how specific experiences from his past have informed his personal belief system. These essays deal with how people define concepts, what systems belief is founded on, and what constitutes truth. These ambitious first-year authors, among others, chose to tackle concepts pivotal to human existence.

In evaluation arguments and rhetorical analyses, the writer addresses a particular subject, choosing to analyze speeches, critique artwork, and study film. Caitlin Lynch analyzed the movie *Control Room* and used the movie to set a foundation for making larger claims regarding the impossibility of complete objectivity. Alexa Arastoo evaluated the persuasiveness of an advertisement from the time of the Cold



War. Madeline Buttinger focused on connections between violence in film and the effects on youth. The writers of these essays focused on the medium through which people engage each other—be it art, oration, or film—and crafted arguments concerning persuasion and intent.

From rap music to alternative energy, the essays comprising this year's publication of *Fresh Writing* span a wide range of issues and interests. However, taken as a whole, this collection shows a surprising move toward national and global concerns. Essays developed during the first year composition classes are by nature issue-based and often very meaningful to the writer. However, these writers truly have chosen to tackle issues from a wide variety of political and social perspectives.

These first-year students have devoted significant amounts of time to composing well-crafted and persuasive essays. In writing these pieces, the authors have demonstrated writing as a way of entering into a larger conversation in order to fully explore the complexities of an issue. Now that their pieces have reached publication, these students have one final responsibility: to engage you, the reader.

Rebecca Gannon  
Notre Dame, IN  
March, 2009



PERSONAL  
NARRATIVE

## *Author's Biography*

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### KANG SUHP KIM

Kang believes that if humanities are disciplines that study the achievements of the human race, then science is a discipline that studies the achievements of God. Therefore, at the University of Notre Dame, he chose to devote his academic life to science and eventually decided to pursue medicine through Preprofessional Studies. Kang, originally born in South Korea, came to America when he was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. He did not have much knowledge of the English language before coming to America. In his Multimedia First Year Composition class, one of his assignments asked him to compose a narrative as if he were submitting it to National Public Radio's "This I Believe," program. He took this opportunity to write about the hardships he faced because of the language barrier during his first six months in America. The essay is written in colloquial language, keeping with the spirit of the aforementioned radio program. With the help of Professor Connie Mick, he was able to refine and polish this piece of writing.

# Motivation: This I Believe

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KANG SUHP KIM



My first step onto the concrete floor of the Dulles International Airport was heavy under the weight of the realization that I was far outside of my comfort zone. Everything and everyone around me was unfamiliar and even scary. However, as my family tried to tell a cab driver where we wanted to go in a language that bordered on sign language, it hit me that, above all, I must learn English.

My family arrived on U.S. soil on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and I must admit that the following few days and weeks were filled with hardships. We were faced with a language barrier from when we went grocery shopping to when we paid the bills. I, for my part, was having a hard time in school as a 7<sup>th</sup> grader. It was not just my inability to understand what any of my teachers were saying that I was having trouble with, but getting along with my classmates. As one of a handful of minority students, I was constantly laughed at and made fun of for basically being me. The fact that I could not differentiate the letters “R” and “L” when pronounced caused a roar of laughter in class. Moreover, my classmates in my homeroom never saved a seat for the foreign student who could not even strike up a conversation with them. So there I was, eating lunch in the corner of an empty table in the back of the cafeteria with no dignity, no self-esteem, and no friends. However, I am a hopelessly optimistic person, so I mustered all my courage and strength and persuaded myself that it was God’s challenge that I must overcome. Thus, I slowly started to see all the unfortunate things that happened to me because of the language barrier as the greatest motivations to learn English that one could have.

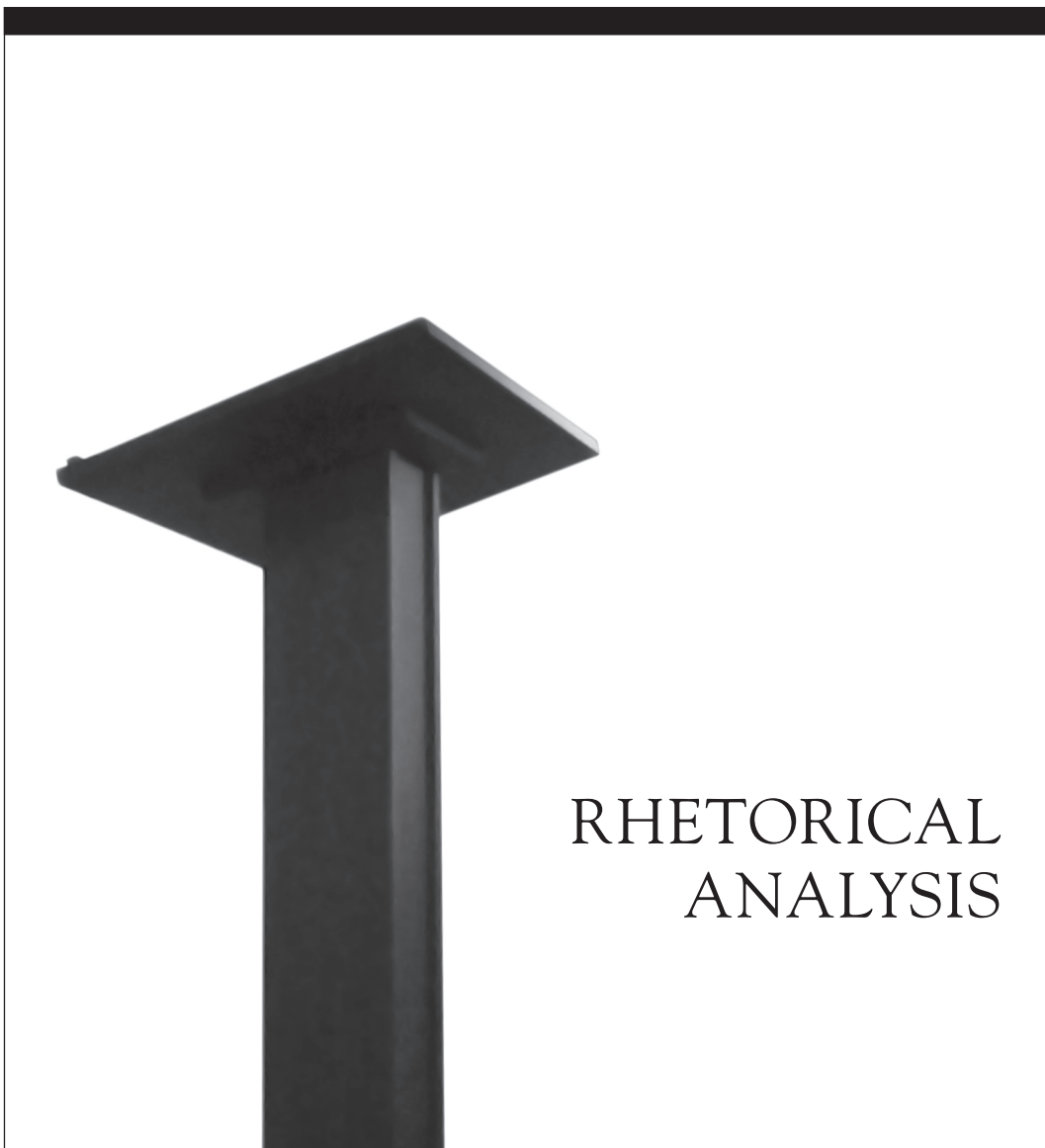
During the months that followed, I diligently learned English. I watched “Arthur,” on PBS. I looked up every word I could not understand in “Clifford the Big Red Dog.” I spoke out loud every word Big Bird said on “Sesame Street.” Although it sounds easy on paper, in reality, it took painstaking efforts and will power; not to

mention that I had no dignity left after doing what toddlers do to learn English. All those hours flipping through the now tattered English-Korean dictionary and staying after school every single day to pester all of my teachers to ask them to repeat what they talked about in class are just memories, but they make up a big part of who I am now. I do not regret the tears that I shed and I do not blame all those who ridiculed me. In fact, I sincerely thank them for motivating me.

By the way, I realized the fruits of my labor when one day, after six months of studying, I clearly understood an announcer say on NPR, “This is ‘All Things Considered.’”

From my experience, I whole-heartedly believe that given the right motivation, one can do anything.

Motivation. This I believe.



RHETORICAL  
ANALYSIS

## *Author's Biography*

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### ALEXA ARASTOO

Alexa Arastoo, a Lewis Chick, had quite a lovely time in her FYC class. She is enjoying her time at Notre Dame as a (potential) Romance Languages and Arts and Letters Pre-Professional Major. When she is not doing schoolwork, Alexa works at North Dining Hall, participates in many cultural shows on campus, and tries to get some sleep.

Alexa's motivation for this visual analysis was her appreciation for outdated advertisements and propaganda. This poster simply embodies that idea in the best way possible. She suggests that all of you look at it online. Alexa is also mildly concerned with the lack of Scott toilet paper on campus and the possibility of Bolshevik breeding in Lewis Hall.

# Tissue Communism

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ALEXA ARASTOO



The 1950s was the big boom of mass consumerism in America, bringing advertising to the cultural forefront. During the height of the Cold War, Americans feared any leaning one may have had toward Communism. This “Red Scare” also brought an extreme need for conformity never again found in twentieth century America. Americans feared being isolated from the pack, which often led to accusations of Communism or spying. One poster in particular, advertising Scot Tissue Towels, exemplifies 1950s personality and morals in a form of blatant propaganda that many consumers today would find ridiculous. The creator of this poster employed several rhetorical appeals appropriate to the time to catch the audience’s attention.

The actual poster is quite startling for a paper towel ad. The main image is of an unhappy man in black and white with dark hair and a moustache wiping his hands on paper towels; the background is entirely black. In front of him it reads “Bolsheviks?” in red bold type, which is the end of the question: “Is your washroom breeding Bolsheviks?” Underneath this picture, there is a paragraph explaining the ad. The paragraph states that rough towels will make employees grumble, and “employees lose respect for a company that fails to provide decent facilities for their comfort.”

The illustrator of this ad fed off the fears and thoughts of the time to portray people who do not buy high-quality Scot Tissues as Communist sympathizers. The poster relies heavily on ethos and pathos. Ethos is the immediate rhetorical appeal of this ad because every citizen of the United States in the 1950s was taught one thing—hate Communists. Any ad that negatively portrays Communism automatically will gain the trust of the readers; this was a common theme in 1950s propaganda. The pathos used in this ad to convince readers that not buying Scot Tissue is “breeding” Communists deals with two main emotions: patriotism and fear. The consumers that this ad targets would fear being identified as one who creates or spreads



Communism in America, and the ad makes it seem like not buying Scot will single a person out as a participant of either of these two endeavors. In the peak of the Red Scare, being singled out meant being punished and ostracized in some way; therefore, singling non-consumers of Scot tissues out as Communist sympathizers basically forces Americans to buy Scot tissue or risk an incredible change in all aspects of social life. Hence, use of pathos could easily be qualified as manipulation rather than persuasion. The second emotional appeal used focuses on patriotism. The illustrator calls on the patriotism of the American consumer to sway him or her toward a minor action—buying Scot Tissue. The ad implies that all men and women who love their country and despise Communism will buy Scot, which in this time, could convince consumers much more easily than it could today. Overall, this ad relies heavily on pathos and ethos to get the reader’s attention, which it does incredibly well.

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*Every citizen of the United States in the 1950s was taught one thing—hate Communists. Any ad that negatively portrays Communism automatically will gain the trust of the readers.*

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This “Bolshevik” poster, although a famous ad, uses no rhetorical appeals pertaining to logic—or logos. The main question reads “Is Your Washroom Breeding Bolsheviks?,” but nowhere in the paragraph at the bottom of the ad does it mention actual breeding of Bolsheviks. The paragraph at the bottom outlines how rough towels may make employees grumble, which in no way relates them to Bolsheviks. This fallacy in logic is a hasty generalization, stating that all people in a bad mood must be Bolsheviks. The quality of the towels has in no way an effect on an employee’s political beliefs. Some logos is used to help sell the Scot Tissue Towels, like the facts about its thickness and ability to dry hands faster and cheaper, but none of these facts relate back to the central theme of the angry Bolshevik in the center of the poster. Even with the inclusion of facts, the illustrator uses poor logos to persuade the consumer that buying Scot Tissue Towels will breed Communism. Overall, the rhetorical appeals in this ad lean more toward the emotional side than the logical.

Although most would not find this advertisement to be effective today with a different set of national values and fears, the consumers of the 1950s could easily comprehend the messages given off by the angry Bolshevik in the middle of the ad, threatening to spread his Communism due to his unbelievable unhappiness with his paper towels. Although lacking in any actual persuasive value and rhetorical merit, this ad now serves many Americans today as a reminiscent poster and a lesson in United States History.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### RACHAEL BANKS

Rachael Banks, a native of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, is excited to have her writing appear in *Fresh Writing*. She intends to major in Political Science, Arabic, and International Peace Studies. She is the current president of the NAACP chapter on campus and volunteers in the South Bend community with the Community Forum for Economic Development.

In her Community-Based First Year Composition course, Rachael studied select speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for their rhetorical content. She was inspired to analyze a few speeches from opponents of Dr. King, and one of these speeches was used as the basis for this piece.

# Defeating a Monster

## *The Segregationist Fight against the Civil Rights Bill*

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RACHAEL BANKS



Is speaking out against freedom unpatriotic? If so, then it is a cruel irony that on July 4, 1964, George C. Wallace, governor of Alabama, delivered a speech that clearly articulated the stance of Southern segregationists, and furthermore, that he used this speech to declare his campaign for the office of President of the United States of America. It is even more ironic that his speech, entitled “The Civil Rights Bill: Fraud, Sham, and Hoax,” which argued that the Civil Rights Bill was the “most monstrous piece of legislation ever enacted by the United States Congress,” was written in direct response to an event that had occurred the day before, an event that reiterated the freedom that the United States supposedly represented. On July 3, 1964, one day before the 188<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this country’s independence, President Lyndon B. Johnson, signed the Civil Rights Bill into law. Throughout his speech, Wallace makes a definitional argument that, contrary to nationwide rhetoric, the Civil Rights Bill tragically negates the principles of a democratic government. Wallace utilizes ethos and pathos to create a highly successful argument. That success, however, was completely dependent on his audience.

On that day in Atlanta, Georgia, Wallace spoke to hundreds of Southern white segregationists that represented a number of Southern states. Racial segregation, as one of the most controversial issues of the 1960s, referred to the legally and socially enforced separation of African-Americans from other races (“Racial Segregation in the U.S.”). Segregationists were those who not only believed in the concept of segregation and “separate but equal” facilities, but also made sure that those laws were strictly enforced in their towns, cities, and states. Wallace’s audience believed that African-Americans were inferior to whites. They were against the desegregation of schools and neighborhoods and the rights of African-Americans to eat and shop in white-owned establishments, and in favor of limiting the educational, economic, and social opportunities available to African-Americans.

As the governor of Alabama, Wallace was already in a position of power. He was elected to that office, so most of his audience shared the same views, ideals, and beliefs that he did. Before his tenure as governor, he also held the office of assistant attorney general and was elected to the Alabama state legislature. He spoke from a segregationist perspective, and much of his audience held that viewpoint. His audience knew from his background that he was a well-educated man dedicated to public service. Moreover, in his speech, he clearly established ethos by saying, “I am here to talk about the principles which have been overthrown by the enactment of this bill...the principles that you and I hold dear.” Through that sentence, it is as if he took off his hat labeled “governor,” and put on his hat labeled “common person,” because he identified the core values that he and his audience shared.

To further establish ethos, he continues with a series of statements that begin, “I am having nothing to do with enforcing a law that...” and lists the types of segregationist beliefs that will be destroyed with the enactment of the Civil Rights Bill.

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*It is clear that a segregated school system is something that Wallace believes very strongly in, and that he will do just about anything to keep it intact.*

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Wallace believes that it will destroy capitalism because the federal government is attempting to control certain privately owned and operating corporations, in order to ensure that labor practices are fair. The bill will destroy neighborhood schools because they will be desegregated and white children and black children will be in the same classrooms. The bill will destroy the rights of private property, especially with real estate, as shown by the “White Flight” dilemma. He chooses the words “I am having nothing to do with” because he is making his speech into a personal conversation with his audi-

ence, where he is reaffirming that their beliefs are identical and that he, personally, will fight for what they all believe in.

Wallace recognizes the significance of the day on which he is speaking, and uses the atmosphere of the day to make a very effective appeal to pathos. He begins the speech with a description of the principles of government that the founding fathers of the United States of America intended: a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. He also contends that, by signing the Civil Rights Bill into effect, the government is failing to uphold those principles. He parallels the “tyranny” of the federal government’s passing of the bill to the tyranny the colonists faced under British rule. He states that “the Declaration of Independence cited as an act of tyranny the fact that, ‘...kept among us in times of peace standing armies without consent of the legislature,’” but that the federal government recently invaded Arkansas without the consent of the state legislature, during the integration of the Little Rock school system. Wallace continues, “We have actually witnessed the invasion of the State of Arkansas...by the armed forces of the United

States and maintained in the state against the will of the people and without consent of state legislature.” It is clear that a segregated school system is something that Wallace believes very strongly in, and that he will do just about anything to keep it intact.

The year before, in 1963, Wallace had given a speech, entitled, “The Stand in the Schoolhouse Door,” in which he attempted to stop the desegregation of the University of Alabama. Two African-American students, a male and a female, wanted to register at the school, but Wallace would not allow it. He said, “I stand here today, as Governor of this sovereign State, and refuse to willingly submit to illegal usurpation of power by the Central Government. I claim today for all the people of the State of Alabama those rights reserved to them under the Constitution of the United States. Among those powers so reserved and claimed is the right of state authority in the operation of the public schools, colleges and universities. My action does not constitute disobedience to legislative and constitutional provisions. It is not defiance—for defiance sake, but for the purpose of raising basic and fundamental constitutional questions. My action is raising a call for strict adherence to the Constitution of the United States as it was written—for a cessation of usurpation and abuses. My action seeks to avoid having state sovereignty sacrificed on the altar of political expediency” (“Stand in the Schoolhouse Door”). President John F. Kennedy ordered the Alabama National Guard to go to the campus and protect the students. Wallace eventually stepped aside and allowed the students to enroll; however, he made sure that his reluctance was noted.

To further prove his point, he cites one more example, saying, “Today we have absolute proof that the Federal Department of Justice has planned, supervised, financed, and protected acts of insurrection in the southern states, resulting in vandalism, property damage, personal injury, and staggering expense to the states,” in reference to the federal government’s laid back response to the restaurant sit-ins by members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He specifically uses this example because he knows that SNCC members are located in most of the southern states, and that many of the people in his audience have probably had some interaction with them during sit-ins or riots. He also knows that the audience will respond because the majority of the funds used to clean up the damage that resulted came from taxpayers. Wallace knows that most of his audience will remember the SNCC sit-ins—the police presence that was brought in, the inconvenience the incidents caused when stores and lunch counters stopped serving people, the damage that was left in the aftermath. He wants to bring back the moment and make the anger his audience feels palpable, because he knows that anger is a huge motivational force. It is probably evident from Wallace’s tone of voice that these incidents are fresh in his mind, and he is as angry as if they are occurring

right now. If he can incite that same level and type of anger from his audience, he knows that his audience will back him even more, because again, they will see him as someone who is on their side, who is committed to preserving the lifestyle they have become accustomed to.

Finally, Wallace comes to the crux of his speech, where he references the title: “It is a fraud, a sham, and a hoax.” Through the use of a definitional argument, he responds to the prevailing view of the Civil Rights Act. He uses specific words that he knows will elicit negative reactions from his audience, even if they are not completely in agreement with Wallace’s point of view. He uses the definitions of “fraud” as “deceit or trickery perpetrated for profit or to gain some unfair or dishonest advantage,” “sham” as “something that is not what it purports to be,” and “hoax” as

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*All three of those words are synonymous with each other, and yet, upon hearing them, each carries a different negative connotation. “Fraud” induces anger, “sham” evokes a feeling of dishonesty, and “hoax” causes a sentiment of trickery.*

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“something intended to deceive or defraud” to his advantage. Essentially, he says that the Civil Rights Bill is attempting to take advantage of the freedoms that the American people have, the bill is not genuine, and it is a trick. All three of those words are synonymous with each other, and yet, upon hearing them, each carries a different negative connotation. “Fraud” induces anger, “sham” evokes a feeling of dishonesty, and “hoax” causes a sentiment of trickery. He bases his argument of fraudulence on the fact that “. . . [the bill] threatens our freedom of speech, of assembly, or association, and makes the exercise of these Freedoms a federal crime under certain conditions.” With those sentences, Wallace conveys to his audience the way he feels through a method that arouses the same emotions in them. He also entices them to listen further, because while he has told them that the Civil Rights

Act is not the “quick fix” that it is believed to be, he has not yet told them what they can do to protect themselves and preserve their way of life.

Wallace’s best appeal to pathos comes through his description of the federal judiciary’s use of power with a quote from the British historian Lord Acton, who wrote, “It has been said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There was never greater evidence as to the proof of this statement than in the example of the present Federal judiciary.” Wallace explains how the government has levied taxes in a small Virginia town without the consent of the people, has told the American people how to organize the legislative branch of state governments, and has placed restrictions on the protocol for ratifying state constitutions. He concludes this part of his speech by saying, “Therefore, I echo the sentiments of our forefathers who declared: ‘a prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.’” In this final claim, he concludes

his argument of the federal government as a tyrant, and explicitly tells his audience that the government is an unfit authority. By doing this, he reiterates his belief that the Civil Rights Act gives the government too much power over the States, and attempts to undo the distribution of power put in place by the Constitution.

Through the examination of Wallace's speech by the examples given, it is clear that he effectively appealed to his audience because the South maintained its segregationist attitudes well into the next decade. There is a direct correlation between the way that Wallace framed his speech for his audience and his speech's overall effectiveness. Although that relationship may not have been Wallace's primary goal, it certainly worked to his advantage during its delivery. Wallace knew that he was speaking to a white, segregationist audience, and he knew the perspectives that they would have on the issue of civil rights. Therefore, he chose his words and examples very carefully to ensure that his ideas matched those of his audience. The use of pathos and ethos was a manipulative gesture on his part, because he identified what made his audience tick and spoke on those issues. After he had presented his case and rallied support from his audience, he asked that his audience join him in reclaiming the government and guaranteeing liberty and justice for future generations by continuing to support the Segregationist movement.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### CAITLIN LYNCH

Caitlin Lynch is a Cincinnati native who dreamed of becoming a Domer since she was a young girl. She is majoring in finance and economics, and greatly enjoyed her FYC Multimedia course thanks to her brilliant instructor, Anne Snellen. She is excited to have her rhetorical analysis on *Control Room* published in *Fresh Writing*. The film challenged many of her preconceptions and forced her to recognize the subjective nature and bias of all human beings around the world. She recommends everyone challenge their own assumptions and think critically about any information provided to them. Caitlin would like to send special thanks to her FYC professor Anne, all the other amazing professors at ND, and her parents, Steve and Jeri, for all of their support and guidance.

# Control Room

## *The Impossibility of Human Objectivity*

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CAITLIN LYNCH



Since the beginning of the conflict in Iraq, there has been a great deal of talk by major officials about “winning the hearts and minds” of the Iraqi people. This quote reflects the importance of how a war is viewed by the masses. A generally positive opinion towards one side of any extended conflict can have an enormous ripple effect on the final outcome. Particularly in Iraq, where Western values are coming into conflict with Islamic fundamentalist values, it is imperative for the United States to convince the local Iraqis of the superiority of American ideals. Jehane Noujaim’s *Control Room* is a film that covers topics such as how wars can be seen from biased perspectives and what the consequences are of these biases. The methods by which the film maintains credibility, contextualizes the people involved, and uses language and framing all affect how the viewer understands the overall meaning. *Control Room* uses these techniques to convey to readers the message of the universality of human bias and the necessity of viewers to acknowledge a source’s prejudice no matter what its origin.

*Control Room* establishes credibility by showing all of the major different views concerning the Iraq war: from the perspective of the Western military, to the perspective of Al Jazeera, to the perspective of average Middle Eastern men and women. One way the film shows the perspective of common Middle Eastern citizens is by beginning with the reactions of some Iraqi men responding to a broadcast of George W. Bush, declaring that the United States would invade Iraq. This immediately stretches the Western viewer to see the invasion from a different perspective. George W. Bush appears much more hostile and much less credible from the vantage point of someone who is afraid his home will be bombed than from the vantage point of an American who is still angry and upset about the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The film continues to show the mainly angry and accusatory reactions of Iraqi

citizens to Americans throughout the story—for instance, a woman blames George W. Bush for her home being bombed, a child furiously asks how Iraqis can allow American troops in their country, and a man vehemently tells American reporters they will lose the war. Shouting and gesturing at the reporters, a randomly chosen Iraqi citizen repeats over and over, “You will lose the war. Lose the war! You will lose the war!” His comments, which are clearly supported by the boisterous and loud crowd behind him, clearly show American viewers the pulse of anti-American feeling by citizens in Iraq. These emotional and spontaneous words from Iraqi citizens give the viewer the impression that the film truly captures the general mood of how the local people reacted to the American invasion.

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The movie also shows the perspective of Al Jazeera reporters, who are presented as highly skeptical of, and perhaps even opposed to, the United States. Thus, Americans require a lot of persuasive convincing information to assure them that Al Jazeera is a fair source of information. *Control Room* establishes Al Jazeera as a credible media source in many ways. The film first makes it clear that Al Jazeera, the most watched network in the Middle East, is a “free speech” organization that is not controlled by any government in the region. Furthermore, the viewer sees that the reporters of Al Jazeera are local Middle Easterners and that they therefore connect with the Iraqi people on a more intimate and informal level than foreign reporters. In addition to their friendly connection with locals, these reporters are well-educated and well-traveled, and thus can see issues from a global perspective.

Finally, the film shows that on the spectrum of global opinion towards America, Al Jazeera is equally hated by both extremes, from certain governments in the Middle East to America itself. The movie flashes on the screen at one point that “several Arab governments banned the channel for criticizing their regimes” and the Bush administration has called it “the mouthpiece of Osama bin Laden.” The placement of these two statements suggests that the film is trying to show that Al Jazeera falls somewhere in the middle on that spectrum of political ideology, and actually probably presents the news in a moderate way.

The film does not focus only on the perspective of Middle Easterners and risk alienating Westerners. *Control Room* also shows official press statements by members of the White House, press conferences by the United States military in Iraq, and extensive interviews with Lt. Josh Rushing. For instance, Lt. Rushing is given the airtime to voice his opposition to the conspiracy theories for why America was in Iraq. He says, “We’re not here to occupy an Arab land, we’re not here to take their

oil, we're not here to kill Arabs or take mosques." He also is able to further contextualize Al Jazeera as a media source and offer his commentary on their objectivity, stating, "When I watch Al Jazeera and I know what they're showing and I can tell what they're not showing by choice; same thing when I watch Fox on the other end of the spectrum." The official statements point out some atrocities, such as "using pregnant women as shields," that Saddam's troops committed, which combat the idea that the American troops are the villains. It also allows the reader to understand that Al Jazeera is considered a biased source by the U.S., in the same way that as Lt. Josh Rushing put it, Fox News is generally known in America to be conservatively biased. However, they also show that Al Jazeera has reached out to the United States government and attempts to make sure they have a fair say in their program. "Al Jazeera has been critical, but at the same time, they've been quite open to us," says Nabeel Khoury, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department. "They invite U.S. government officials to speak directly on their channel and express the American point of view and that's good. While we may disagree with certain editorial policies that they follow, we do have respect for them as an institution with wide reach in the Arab world, and as such, we feel the need to have their points of view, balanced by our own points of view." This statement from the American government is a very powerful tool for legitimizing Al Jazeera as a media source that is attempting to be fair to the United States.

Since Al Jazeera is mainly unknown to most Western viewers, the film must contextualize it as a media station. By showing many different media stations—not just American stations, but also the BBC and the French media—and showing their reactions to American tactics in press conferences and with their military, the film contextualizes Al Jazeera as a respectable network. This is a good tactic because while Al Jazeera may be generally unknown to most Westerners, the credibility of the U.S. military and other major media stations is well-known and trusted. Thus, Western viewers can note the interactions of Al Jazeera, the unknown source, in the context of the known sources to understand how others view Al Jazeera and to be able to come to their own opinion of the media station. For instance, when one reporter says to Hassan, "It seems like a lot of BBC workers end up working for Al Jazeera," Al Jazeera is instantly given credibility and respect from viewers who know and respect the BBC station.

The language that really stands out in *Control Room* typically falls into one of two themes. The first theme that the language greatly impacts is the contrasting of objectivity and bias. A representative of Al Jazeera says in response to a question of Al Jazeera's ability to be neutral, "This term objectivity is a mirage." The Al Jazeera representative asks the American reporter, "Are any US journalists objective about this war? Are any of the news broadcasts that I tune into not taking a position on

the war?...If there was no agenda, if there was true neutrality [in the United States] there would be a welcoming of information from all sides.” Her words are powerful because they challenge Americans to wonder how biased the information is which they receive. She also indirectly says that a lot of American objection to Al Jazeera is not an objection to bias in the media, but just an objection to bias against the United States. This reminds us that no human being can be completely without emotional attachments to a story that is as provocative as war.

This theme that everyone has a prejudiced viewpoint is reinforced by a scene with Lt. Josh Rushing that immediately follows. Lt. Rushing, whom American viewers have come to respect and identify with, describes his different reactions to two broadcasts by Al Jazeera, one of which showed dead American soldiers and one of which showed injured or dead Iraqis. He says,

“The night Al Jazeera showed the POW’s and the dead American soldiers... it was absolutely revolting, it made me sick to my stomach. And then what hit me was the night before, Al Jazeera had shown images of [civilians who had been bombed] and they were equally, if not more, horrifying, and I remember thinking, wow, that’s gross, that’s bad, and going away and probably eating dinner or something and you know it didn’t affect me as much. So, the impact that had on me, me realizing that I just saw people on the other side... and it upset me on a profound level that I wasn’t as bothered as much [by the photos of Iraqi wounded and dead] as I was the night before [watching the American soldiers].”

This quote by a respected representative of the U.S. military whom Western viewers probably connected more with than the Al Jazeera representative, is very powerful in convincing Americans that no media station is truly neutral because no person can be truly neutral. We are all bound by our cultural and historical perspectives.

The second theme where the language stands out is the theme of the power of images. To illustrate the power of images, the film shows Donald Rumsfeld at a press conference condemning Al Jazeera for showing supposedly-injured Iraqis on television when they were not really injured, and then blaming America for their fake injuries. Then the screen flashes to a clip of Al Jazeera interviewing a supposedly injured woman with bandages on her scarred face. The image is incredibly powerful, and despite having just heard what Mr. Rumsfeld said about the falseness and deception of these images, viewers connect far stronger emotionally with the injured person than with Mr. Rumsfeld’s accusation. “Welcome to my house, Mr. Bush,” one woman says in front of a destroyed, bombed home, before shouting desperately, “Where is your humanity?! How can you accept a little girl crying for her mom and dad?” Then the film cuts to Mr. Rumsfeld, who says in an unemotional, intellectual

way, “We know that Al Jazeera has a pattern of playing propaganda over and over and over again. What they do when a bomb goes down is they grab some women and some children and they pretend the bomb hit them... To the extent that people lie, they are caught lying, and they lose credibility, and one wouldn’t think it would take very long for that to happen dealing with people like this.” The film then shows another injured victim again, bleeding from the face. The message behind the juxtaposition of these clips is clear: Mr. Rumsfeld could possibly be completely correct in his allegation that Al Jazeera spreads lies, but he will never win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people because he has no emotional appeal. The viewer sees him as a powerful and detached entity, while pitying and empathizing with the victims in Iraq who have clearly been hurt.

This theme of the importance of images vs. words is reinforced more explicitly when a U.S. military official is advised, “You say these things [that Saddam’s troops are committing atrocities] but you have no pictures. We need pictures.” The theme of everyone having a bias directly affects the theme of the power of images; it is precisely because it is known that everyone is at least a little prejudiced that no one’s words can ever be fully and completely trusted. Images seem far more reliable to viewers and can speak to viewers on a more emotional level. These themes shape the issue by showing that every news station, every region, and even every individual, has a different perspective and thus a slightly different bias in reporting events. The language used is very convincing and memorable, causing these two themes to stand out in the viewer’s mind.

The framing of *Control Room* is set up so that the two major clashing perspectives on the Iraqi war can interact and it is possible for viewers to see that different perspectives can have a gradual influence on one another. The different viewpoints of Lt. Josh Rushing and Al Jazeera reporters are in great contrast in the beginning of the movie, and the early interactions of Lt. Rushing with Al Jazeera reporter Hassan Ibrahim are marked by misunderstanding and hostility. However, Lt. Josh Rushing slowly starts coming around to the idea that maybe he is a biased source in the same way that he feels Al Jazeera is biased. When he recognizes the different effects that the violent images had on him, he begins to realize that his viewpoint makes him biased towards America. He also admits at one point that he sometimes catches himself spinning a story to counteract the spin he feels another person is putting on an issue.

Hassan also comes to realize that Lt. Rushing will listen and be open to different points of view. Hassan becomes less combative when he realizes he is speaking to a receptive individual. In the beginning, Hassan feels that Americans are essentially bullies, commenting, “These insensitive Americans roll over everyone to get their

way, and... soft-spoken people like me... get pushed aside.” However, by the end of the film, Hassan invites Lt. Rushing to dinner with his family, and Lt. Rushing sincerely tries to get off of the military base to go to dinner with him—a complete turnaround from their early tense conversations. Their conversations progress from the beginning of the film, when their conversations seem to be debates that each battle to “win,” to being honest, open discussions that have the goal of increasing understanding. In one of the final scenes of the film, Hassan tries to explain to Lt. Rushing that some citizens in the region have the perception of America as being a colonizing force. He says, “I understand you, I understand where you’re coming from... But to an average viewer, what do they see on television?... That’s what I’m trying to convey to you.” Lt. Rushing responds in a calm way, saying, “I understand how it can be perceived that way.” The diplomatic, kind words between them represent a complete transformation from their earlier hostility.

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The message of this gradual transformation of the rapport between Lt. Josh Rushing and Hassan Ibrahim is that although we are all biased sources, that does not mean we cannot come to an understanding with one another. It is possible to trust one another, even though everyone has a different perspective.

The meaning of *Control Room* is that everyone has a different perspective, and thus everyone has a bias when relaying events to other individuals. As a result of human prejudice, viewers must recognize the source of any information they receive and judge for themselves the reliability of the report.

This theme allows the film to present Al Jazeera as a legitimate media station despite accusations of a bias against America because the film shows that all media stations are biased towards one side of the issue. That idea is reinforced when reporters of Al Jazeera question the integrity of footage of Iraqi men toppling a statue of Saddam Hussein. These reporters feel it is clear that these men must have been paid by the U.S. troops because, among other things, it is improbable that one of the men just happened to have an American flag so that he could wave it about when the city fell to America. This highlights how the reporters of Al Jazeera do not blindly accept anything they see portrayed on the news, but rather, they proactively question its source and its potential spin. American viewers should also question the information portrayed by their media to ensure that they remain dynamic citizens who demand the complete truth from their news stations.

The film’s meaning of universal bias is not only supposed to make the viewer more skeptical and questioning of information given to them, but also to make the

American viewer realize, as Lt. Josh Rushing realized, that we need to be aware of our own bias towards America. Western viewers may feel that *Control Room* is a bit anti-American because it begins with the perspective of Al Jazeera and shows the anti-American end of the spectrum without showing the other extreme through a conservative media source such as Fox News. The vast majority of Americans' knowledge of the war has been fed to them through American media stations and what those stations choose to report and emphasize. Hearing another viewpoint of the war may broaden Americans' horizons and make them consider other perspectives, or it may make them feel defensive and distrustful. However, the progression of Lt. Josh Rushing throughout this film provides a reasonable parallel for American viewers to see how someone like them would respond to Al Jazeera. His eventual acceptance of the organization and their reporters as a reasonable news source, that just has a different perspective than Americans, shows Western viewers that Al Jazeera is no more biased than any other news station. Their perspective needs to be acknowledged and given respect, not marginalized as "extreme" and "biased" simply because it is often critical of the American government.

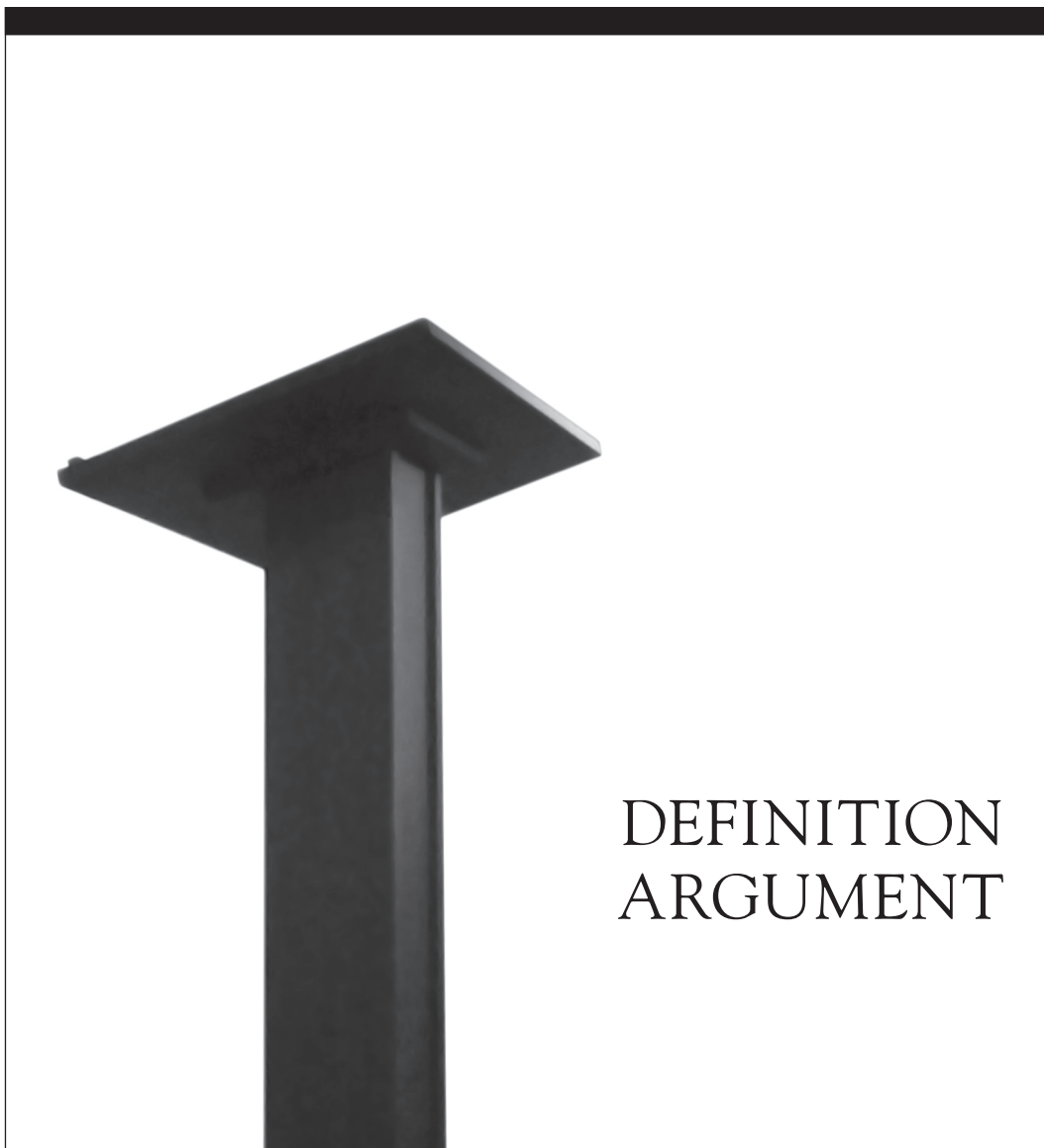
The film presents the argument that all sides of any issue have different perspectives and that every side tries to control the narrative of an issue through the use of persuasive tactics. Since any major issue evokes emotional responses in individuals, it is impossible for anyone to be completely without bias. *Control Room* conveys this meaning of the inevitability of different prejudices in several ways: by establishing credibility of a variety of sources of opinions about the war, by using bold and memorable language connected to the theme that there is no such thing as neutrality, by framing different perspectives against one another, and by contextualizing Al Jazeera as a legitimate media network. This message of the impossibility of neutrality does not mean that it is impossible to trust any media coverage, but it does mean that viewers should be open to hearing the news from many sources in varying geographic locations to be open to different viewpoints.

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DEFINITION  
ARGUMENT

## *Author's Biography*

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### STEPHEN LECHNER

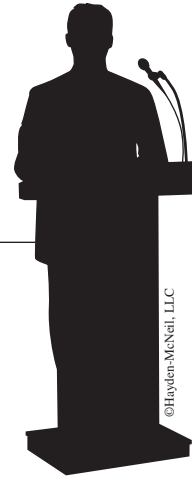
Stephen hails from some obscure and dearly loved suburb of Chicago, Illinois. He is currently studying philosophy and literature at the University of Notre Dame, although he admits to having suffered through a horrific bout of mechanical engineering from which he may never fully recover. He hopes at some point in his life to make writing an integral part of his career and thanks his professors thus far for helping him value the art that is textual composition.

During his freshman year at Notre Dame, Stephen sensed a kind of fear of religion in public affairs. He decided to write the following essay in order to explain why such fears are unnecessary. He hopes first that his readers will be put at ease to hear that religion need not be feared in principle and second that his essay might inspire new and open-minded thoughts on issues regarding the secularity of our religious society.

# America. Amen.

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STEPHEN LECHNER



We Americans tend to strive with great intensity to separate the church from the state; to distinguish religion from politics. Over the last few years, we have witnessed much controversy over prayers said before sports events in certain states, the reference to God in our Declaration of Independence, and, most recently, the invitation of Rev. Rick Warren to speak at the inauguration of President Obama. What we fail to realize is that our own “American Way” can itself be considered a religion. Today, most religions share many qualities: Almost all are communities of individuals who share a common belief and manifest their belief through sacred texts, traditional devotions to their founders, and upholding certain moral codes. American society often fits this definition of religion even as it tries to escape it. The collection of the basic American ideology, or Americanism, as I will call it for the purpose of this essay, believes in freedom as is evident in the more defining and shaping documents of the United States, the principles of the founding fathers and succeeding presidents, and the moral code that we Americans put into practice on a daily basis. I press this issue for the sake of all those who bicker about the distinction between religion and politics today; for they do so needlessly. Even if one is not in favor of a Christian government, realizing that our own American ideology can itself be considered a religion should keep us from fearing religion in principle, and thus encourage us to be open-minded to persons of different cultures.

According to more general modern thought, religions seem to need a collection of sacred texts by which the beliefs of its community are faithfully protected in physical form. This line of thought is born out of the fact that so many of today’s faith seeking communities have a divinely inspired book: the Jews and Christians have their Bible, the Mormons have the Book of Mormon, the Muslims have the Koran, etc. However, Americanism too has its own set of sacred documents. Now, I

will be the first to admit that neither the U.S. Constitution nor the Declaration of Independence were divinely inspired, but do we not tend to give them the weight and credibility that religious documents receive? Granted, most modern countries have an official manuscript by which they legally proceed; however, we Americans have always upheld our Constitution in a uniquely resolute way and strive to apply it to almost every aspect of American life. In politics, it is all but unheard of either to make a decision or to take action without first consulting the U.S. Constitution, and while growing up, the average American student will study it multiple times before graduating from high school. Then, there is the problem of change—how can we consider the U.S. Constitution a sacred text if it changes so often? But religions also undergo change in their spiritual books. For instance, look at the Gnostics who often add books to their version of the Bible, or at Luther, who removed several books from the Bible. Yet theirs did not cease to be religions once their documents changed, rather they simply underwent sometimes drastic transformation. Just so, our amendments did not disqualify Americanism as a religion, but rather transformed it into such.

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A unifying characteristic that almost every religion shares is its maintenance of traditional views towards its founders and succeeding leaders. Persons of various religious backgrounds are often labeled as followers of their respectable founder. A Muslim is a follower of the prophet Mohamed, a Jew of Abraham, a Buddhist of Buddha, and a Christian of Christ—

for the latter two there is no escape; even their names give them away. Similarly, we Americans hold the founding fathers, as well as some unique few succeeding presidents, in very high respect. I think you will agree when I say that for today's younger generation, a common question that many Americans ask when confronted with problems is "What would the Founding Fathers do?" In some ways, the reverence toward the founding fathers has even surpassed those of founders of many religions. In a Catholic magazine called *The Remnant*, Dr. John C. Rao, a history professor at St. Johns University, voices his concerns that Catholics today have replaced their devotion to the Fathers of the Church with what he calls "Founderology," or excessive respect toward the founding fathers. He says that many Catholics today sing "sweet hosannas to the founding fathers" while "insofar as daily practical life are concerned, they [the Fathers of the Church] are dead, buried, and forgotten, consigned to the doctrinal rubbish bin."<sup>1</sup> Although I find Dr. Rao's article very bold, I myself was surprised, when visiting the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., to see large and grand paintings of Washington and Jefferson on clouds surrounded by winged cherubim. Such honor likens the founding fathers to divine leaders whose

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<sup>1</sup> <<http://jcrao.freeshell.org/FoundingFathers>> (As I said, it is a very bold article, but there is some truth to it, at least enough to argue my case with.)

influence has surpassed the physical boundaries of the world we live in. While it is true that most European countries have great and long-lasting histories, none of them have the same connection to their founding fathers as we do. After all, most governing systems in Europe have undergone radical changes, especially since they each began as monarchies and nobility-favoring societies.

Very importantly, and possibly following from the aforementioned, Americanism contains within it one of the more distinguishing characteristics of any religion within the last two millennia: a moral code applied to individual citizens as a means of generally directing their actions to some kind of good. On the outset, this may sound slightly ridiculous seeing as one of the major precepts of Americanism is freedom for all. However, it is precisely this support of freedom that defines our moral code. While this it is not explicitly listed anywhere within the Constitution or Declaration of Independence, much of our more consistent morality originates within those documents, though interpreted in a variety of ways. The rest results from a unique set of values depending on the various movements of each time period. It consists of standing, whenever possible, for the freedom of individuals as long as doing so does not impose unjustly on others. Nationally speaking, this is manifest in our perpetual combat of tyranny, whether in empyreal nineteenth-century England or communist twentieth-century Russia. Within our country, one of the only sins someone can commit, short of rape, murder, or theft, is that of intolerance, or forcing one's beliefs on another. In recent years, public high school teachers have been fired for teaching about God and morals, two hot topics on which many people disagree, because they were forcing their opinions of divine existence on the children. In the end, we really aspire to be a "city upon a hill," as John Winthrop called us in his sermon "A Model of Christian Charity,"—a role model for the world to see and respect.

One may argue that this moral code, providing it does exist, cannot be likened to that of a religion because it is constantly changing and improving with the times. True, America's moral code does change with the times. After all, we no longer find it acceptable to publicly lynch those with varying backgrounds or to dress people up as chickens and run them out of town on rails if they have displeasing views, but this change makes us no less religious. In fact, most of today's religions have, to an extent, adjusted their moral codes to apply to the present age. For instance, according to Professor R. E. Houser, a Muslim history professor at the University of St. Thomas in Texas, while scholars say that the writings of Mohamed suggest that literally killing non-Islamic peoples would gain favor for a man in the afterlife, the majority of present day Islamic persons now answer to a call for a spiritual "Jihad" by which men and women alike should live upright and holy lives. For a long period of time, African Americans were prohibited from joining the Mormon religion,

whereas now they are welcomed with open arms. Indeed, religions are likely to continue to adjust to the times if not suddenly, then subtly.

Religions believe in things. Monotheists believe in a powerful God that created and controls all existence; others like the Daoists, Deists, and to a limited extent, even some Atheists, believe in some sort of ephemeral experience or spirituality that governs and guides humans through reason and intellect. What Americanism believes in has been a constant topic of disagreement and you can think what you like, but I would argue that it too believes in a kind of abstract theme in life: independence. Our very culture, historical foundations, and everyday way of life scream of human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. People often turn to religions to find consideration, or joy, or peace, or God knows what, but something that will give meaning and purpose to their lives. Americanism also offers

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that. Americanism offers a chance to others from different backgrounds to live freely and to prosper in life with a job, education, property, and family—in short it promises what fifty years ago we may have termed “the American Dream.” Were it not so, then there would likely not have been such a vast rush of immigrants across the Atlantic throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, nor over our southern border today.

So there we have it: Americanism is a religion. It may not be one full of mysticism or prophesy, but it is a religion nonetheless. As we manifest in our American morality, we believe in freedom as the means of attaining peace, happiness, and a purpose in life and we look to the founding fathers, as well as their greater documents, to support that belief. By acknowledging this, we will realize that religion itself is nothing to fear, that it is even a part of who we are and what we, as Americans, are about, and I am convinced that this realization will make us more open-minded toward peoples of varying beliefs.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### DOUGLAS LIM

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Doug is a member of the class of 2011 living in Knott Hall. A French and Chinese major, he plans to study abroad in Angers, France in fall 2009. In his free time, Doug volunteers at the South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility, participates in Notre Dame's Asian American Association and Le Cercle Français, and works as a French tutor for Notre Dame's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures.

For the second assignment of his Community Based Learning First-Year Composition class, Doug had to choose a controversial subject to define. As an avid listener of rap music, he noticed that the genre is often given a negative connotation in society due to its occasionally degrading lyrics. Through this definition argument, he hopes that it will allow its readers to look beyond rap stereotypes and gain a greater appreciation for the music. He would like to thank the Writing Center and Professor Nicole MacLaughlin for their help in editing the piece.

# Guns, Drugs and Hoes: *Rappers Not Society's Foes*

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DOUGLAS LIM



On his 2003 debut album, rapper 50 Cent boasts, “When I roll twenty deep, it’s twenty knives in the club/ Niggas heard I f\_ \_k with Dre, now they wanna show me love/ When you sell like Eminem, and the hoes they wanna f\_ \_k” (50 Cent). Filled with images of violent gangs, celebrities, and promiscuous women, 50 Cent’s lyrics are considered by many to be the scourge of society. Tensions over the value of rap music lead to increased polarization between generations and ethnic groups. Both sides must be willing to investigate the subject of controversy so that this rupture can be healed. If rap music is examined closely and not summarily dismissed, many detractors will realize that rap is as an integral American art form which speaks to the lives of citizens.

Although rap music is often criticized for the lack of variation in its melody and the scarcity of singing, rap is an art form like any other genre of music. Essentially, rap music consists of one standard, pulsating rhythm and a rapper that speaks over the music. Since rappers rhyme their words, their lyrical creativity ameliorates the music’s supposed dearth of harmonic inventiveness. For example, in the Fugees’ “Ready Or Not,” Lauryn Hill jives, “So while you be imitating Al Capone/ I be Nina Simone” (Fugees). For her words to flow, Hill cleverly alludes to a 1920s mobster and a black songstress. Art forms are meant to stimulate the human senses and mind, and rap creatively does that without following the classical confines of melody. In fact, rap can claim a measure of success over many other art forms that also have attempted to push the envelope in raising questions about society. Pablo Picasso tried to show the ill effects of war through paintings such as *Guernica*, but how many Americans have ever seen his works? Through the use of an artistic medium that is accessible and appealing to the masses, rap music provocatively stimulates the minds and senses of a vast number of Americans.

In addition to being a valuable art form, rap music has merit based on its identity as uniquely American. Every generation of blacks in America has had its own brand of music, beginning with spirituals in the South during the plantation days of slavery. When ragtime and blues first appeared in the early 1900s, musicians of these styles were criticized for appealing to tastes other than those of black Christians (Basu 25). Blues became synonymous with working-class blacks and spoke about false hope. Similarly, rap addresses the concerns and plights of present day African-Americans. In the 1970s, the booming sound of rap music emerged from predominantly black areas such as the Bronx (Price III 100). The movement began as a response to social and political inequities and as an attempt to prevent violence among gangs (Price III 77). Released in 1979, “Rapper’s Delight” by Sugar Hill Gang was the first mainstream rap song, gaining great airplay across the nation (Price III 13). As the 1980s progressed and the popularity of rap grew, lyrics became more

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violent and sexual (Price III 14). Throughout the 1990s, rap evolved into a more commercialized industry as the number of record labels for the music increased and magazines specifically aimed at rap listeners were published (Price III 16). Each musical genre became important to a certain time and culture and thus should only be judged according to the context in which it was created (Price III 9). Just as one would have to know that Glen Miller’s “Over There” was created in support of American troops during World War I, one must be acquainted with the background information behind a rap song before dismissing it as irrelevant.

In an era when official American politics is treated with disdain by many throughout the world, rap can be an integral part of spreading American thoughts and ideals. Like other forms of music, rap can be appreciated by all different races across the globe. While critics would say that globalization simply propagates American rap’s demeaning messages, the exact opposite occurs in some locales. In France, rappers use the music as a medium to censure the alienation of Arab and African immigrants from French society (Price III 101). Across the Gulf of Mexico, Cubans incorporate traditional Cuban dance and music into their own style of rap, receiving the support of the dictatorial government (Price III 102). With various races around the world enjoying the music, multiethnic dialogue is created as different people can come together at rap concerts and clubs.

Some want to reject rap music as representing America due to its over-use of the word “nigger.” When Africans first arrived in America, “nigger” was a derogatory term used to describe black slaves, and the appellation persisted through the civil rights movement in the mid 1900s. Now, however, the use of this once offensive term gives blacks a sense of identity and empowerment in rap music (Price III 57).

Our school's mascot, the Fighting Irish, developed in a similar fashion to "nigger." The first Catholic immigrants were mostly Irish, and being a Catholic school, Notre Dame was thus ethnically labeled. Irish men and women were not looked upon highly by society as they were often banished from jobs and had to "fight" to earn a living. Thus, the college adopted the defamatory moniker in remembrance of the Irish's uphill battle (Carey). While it is still destructive for whites to call blacks "niggers," it is acceptable that blacks use the title to refer to themselves in recollection of their fight for civil rights in this country just as we refer to ourselves as the Fighting Irish.

Not only is rap an art form unique to black America, but it is integral to American society as a whole since it brings awareness of harsh conditions found in the inner-city. Although it is commonly accepted that music consists of theatrics and drama, the violent scenes and images of rap are objected to by many (Perry 38). However, it is important that rappers' lyrics present the uncensored truth and that musicians are candid as the storytellers of the streets (Price III 79). Ludacris depicts the harshness of ghetto life in one of his best known songs:

Until one day lil' Stacy gets shot  
A drive by bullet went stray up on her block  
Now Nicole stuck up in the world on her own  
Forced to think that hell is a place called home. (Ludacris)

In "Runaway Love," Ludacris does not promote murder but wishes to indicate that there is an ever-present need to correct gang violence or young loved ones will be accidentally killed.

Moreover, rap, like rock during the Vietnam era, can be an integral catalyst for political change. As mentioned previously, the genre began as a crusade during the Reagan years to address the fact that the rich were becoming richer and the poor were becoming poorer (McQuillar 4). In one recent song, Kanye West uses lyrics to combat crooked police:

Try to catch it, it's kind of hard  
Getting choked by detectives yeah, yeah now check the method  
They be asking us questions, harass and arrest us  
Saying, "We eat pieces of shit like you for breakfast." (West)

Even outside the actual music, rap figures position themselves as promoters of government transformation. As an influential record label owner, Russell Simmons talked to politicians to attempt to convince them to lessen harsh sentences for first time drug offenders (Watkins 144). More recently, P. Diddy used the slogan "Vote or Die" to try to entice young black voters to register for the 2004 presidential election (Price III 64).

Rap music definitely created dialogue at our beloved university when “the Show” brought young rapper Lupe Fiasco to the Joyce Center. Fiasco gave a controversial, politically-charged performance, yelling, “F\_ \_k Bush!” and chastising the lack of male role models in black communities. As one previous editorialist in The Observer noted, “The complexity of Lupe’s songs should keep them from being casually perused on the way to other, more radio-friendly offerings... Only by listening to the song in its entirety, breaking down the lyrics, and keeping an open mind can one truly appreciate what these songs stand for and what they represent” (Hicks). Rap songs represent a creative art form which speaks of an American experience that must be accepted as an integral part of society. Thus, rap should be judged with a more discerning eye before being dismissed as cultural garbage, for the music will always have a place in our history and society.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### BEN SCHOEN

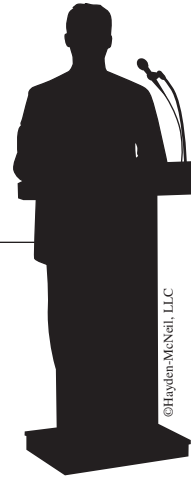
Ben Schoen hails from the small town of Moundridge, Kansas. The third child of three, Ben was born to write. In 2006, he co-authored the *New York Times* bestselling book *What Will Happen in Harry Potter 7*, which spent 26 weeks on the list, peaking at number two. His second book, *MuggleNet's Harry Potter Debates*, was released this past summer. Now a junior at Notre Dame, Ben is majoring in sociology and psychology, and plans to apply this knowledge in the business realm and other future writing projects.

# Heightism

## *Short Guys Finish Last*

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BEN SCHOEN



We have all heard Randy Newman’s famous words, “short people have no reason to live.” In America, it is just accepted that people who are not as tall receive the short end of the stick when it comes to dating, respect, jobs, and other parts of life. During the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans were treated like the scum of the earth, were denied job opportunities, and generally speaking, had a disadvantage compared to their white counterparts. While it might be a stretch to claim height bias is as serious a problem as racism, an examination of heightism—or discrimination based on height—shows our society’s view of stature meet all the necessary criteria for real, problematic discrimination. If we can recognize heightism as a problem, we can begin to address it. Towards this end we can define heightism as discrimination that is unjust to society because it creates social stigma towards shorter people, gives them a disadvantage in many aspects of life, encourages unnecessary health risks,, and lacks support nationwide.

The average height for males in the U.S. is about five feet, ten inches and five feet, four inches for females. There is a positive relationship between height and respect in America. Taller people are deemed more worthy, dependable, intelligent and authoritative (Horin). This discrimination is prevalent in nearly all aspects of life. Short men are incredibly underrepresented in the business world. Although 30% of men are 5’7” or under, they make up only 3% of the executives at Fortune 500 companies (Amy). One study discovered a direct correlation between the heights of newly hired MBAs and their average starting salary. Taller men (deemed 6’2” or taller) received 12.4% more than their shorter counterparts, despite graduating from the same school, and even when the shorter applicant was the man of higher intelligence. Studies done by the Universities of Florida and North Carolina are able to put a dollar amount on every inch of height. Each extra inch is worth an



additional \$789 annually (“NOSSA”). Additionally, 72% of the time, the taller man wins the job over shorter applicants (Rauch). The social stigma towards those lacking the few extra inches is unnecessary and remains unjustified.

Like the business world, politics in America also favor those who are taller. From 1904 to 1984, the taller candidate has won 80% of the time. Putting it in perspective, only two presidents have ever been shorter than the average height of the time. Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor under the Clinton administration, writes, “With rare exceptions, senators are always tall and big shouldered. Heightism is rampant in American politics. I’m tempted to stand on my chair, but that would be uncabinetlike. I have to remain content to hear the oath and watch the backs of senatorial necks.”

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*Studies done by the Universities of Florida and North Carolina are able to put a dollar amount on every inch of height. Each extra inch is worth an additional \$789 annually.*

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If you are a short male in America, good luck getting a date. A hundred women were shown photographs of men who were tall, average, and short, and each found the taller males significantly more attractive (“NOSSA”). Additionally, taller men are believed to be more sexually attractive and more likely to father children (“Tall men ‘top husband stakes’”). Some argue that women may find taller men more attractive because they just are more attractive individuals. While this may be true, in the aforementioned study, the photographs that were shown to the women were mug shot style and had no indication of the male’s actual height—the women were told the height of each male. This demonstrates that perceived height—not actual height—affects how attractive a man is believed to be.

The pursuit of growing taller has reached alarming extremes. In 2003, the Food and Drug Administration approved the use of human growth hormone, (yes, the same substance allegedly used by baseball legends Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds to build muscle mass), in healthy short children as an attempt to make them taller. Our culture has become obsessed with being tall; so obsessed, in fact, that we are willing to treat it as if it was a medical disorder. Treatment involves putting the child through an average of six injections a week, costing upwards of \$20,000 annually. Not only is the treatment potentially physically and emotionally harmful, but evidence concerning its effectiveness remains in doubt. Children are likely to only gain between one and one and one-half inches, if any extra height is gained at all (“NOSSA”). We need to focus on educating our youth about discrimination against those who are vertically challenged, rather than treating the victims of the discrimination as if something were wrong with them.

The same children who are injected with HGH are also significantly more likely to be bullied by their taller classmates. A study done by the British Medical Journal in 2000 found that short boys are twice as likely to report being bullied than the taller kids around them (“Short children more likely to be bullied at school.”).

Similar to many other equal rights movements, anti-heightism lacks support nationwide. Currently only five jurisdictions have anti-heightism laws, two of which are not even in the United States (“NOSSA”). This past August, Massachusetts proposed a law banning height and weight discrimination in the workplace, but many steps must be taken before heightism will be taken seriously.

Understanding the perspective of those who are less fortunate, and in this case, shorter, is extremely important. Heightism, in essence, is discrimination that has been flying under the radar. In our society, if a shorter person is assertive, they are seen as having “short man’s syndrome,” meaning their attitude derives from lacking those few extra inches. If a short man is introverted, he is seen as a wimp. It is a great prejudice of our time that has simply been ignored. Studies confirm that short men even judge themselves negatively because of the stigma that society has put upon them (Rauch). Dustin Hoffman, a famous actor standing at 5'6" is said to have spent years in therapy because of his height.

Some of the discrimination has its roots in our language. The way that we speak shapes our society. Is it any coincidence that respected men are said to have “stature” and are often “looked up to?” An experiment conducted in 1968 by Australian psychologist Paul Wilson puts our heightism into perspective. Several men of equal height were brought into a room at separate times. The first time, the person was introduced as a student; the second time, as a professor; and the third time, as a professor from Cambridge University. The people would then leave the room and Mr. Wilson would ask the students to estimate their respective heights. The results? The “professor” was believed to be more than two inches taller than the “student,” and the estimated height rose with the perceived status (the man “from Cambridge” was perceived to be the tallest) (Rauch). How many times have we heard someone meet a famous person and say, “Wow, I expected him to be taller!”?

It is time for America to realize what it is doing to the short. The bottom line: discrimination based on factors outside of your control, such as race, height, and gender, is unjust discrimination. Using these criteria, discrimination against those who are vertically challenged is no different than discrimination against blacks, Jews, women, homosexuals or any other minority group. If those people qualify as minority groups, then so should short people. We must reject the words of Randy Newman, and finally give short people a fair and equal opportunity in this life.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### LARAQUE STEWART

Laraque Stewart has lived his whole life in Kenner, Louisiana. He is a Program of Liberal Studies and Gender Studies double major at the University of Notre Dame and plans to go to law school and become a defense attorney in the future. Laraque is a very passionate sports fan and has been a pretty big professional wrestling fan for the last six years.

Laraque's FYC class allowed him to write about what he was passionate about in a serious way and explore some aspects of sports (and sports entertainment) that the average person does not understand. After noticing many of his fellow students' misconceptions of professional wrestling, he decided to write a paper in his FYC class refuting a few of them.

# The Greatest Athletes in the World

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LARAQUE STEWART



When most people hear the words “professional wrestling” or “WWE,” they probably think “fake” or “acting.” Almost every Monday night, when I sit in my dorm room and watch WWE Monday Night Raw, at least one person stops by each time to say, “you know it’s fake right?” or “you know they’re just actors?” Every time I correct him by telling him that wrestling is staged instead of fake. Yes, the winner of a match is almost always predetermined, but wrestling moves are very dangerous, and are difficult to perform correctly and painful to receive. Despite the general public’s opinion that professional wrestlers are nothing but steroid infused actors, they are actually professional athletes just like any other professional sports athlete that we see every day on ESPN. A professional wrestler’s job demands him to be in top physical condition, to be highly skilled, to put his body in risk of serious physical injury, and to contend to be the best in his profession.

Just by looking at most professional wrestlers, you can tell that they are in great physical shape. WWE wrestlers often compete in at least three or four official matches per week, and only one of which is usually broadcast on television. Matches can last anywhere from five minutes to an hour. To question their physical ability would be absurd. They often have to lift the body weight of grown men, who are also in fine shape, to perform wrestling moves that require a great deal of strength. To perform a vertical suplex, which is a pretty standard wrestling move, a wrestler must lift his opponent’s entire body directly over his head so that they are both vertical, and then drop down to the mat. It takes tremendous upper body strength to perform a move like that on any average-sized individual. Wrestlers work hard to get their impressive physiques. Many wrestlers’ rigorous workout regimens have been included in multiple credible workout magazines such as *Muscle Fitness*.

The most common idea about professional wrestlers' physical fitness is that they all use steroids to get their impressive muscle mass. However, that is largely a misconception. It is true that the use of steroids was rampant in professional wrestling in the past and that they are still, to some extent, present today just like in the NFL and the MLB. Similar to those associations, the WWE has taken steps to prevent the abuse of steroids from happening again. The first paragraph of The WWE Talent Wellness Program establishes that the program is made up of two components which are: "an aggressive substance abuse and drug testing policy and a cardiovascular testing and monitoring program" (CorporateWWE.com). The program reserves the right to test wrestlers for drugs randomly or on reasonable suspicion. The consequence of one positive test is suspension without pay, while multiple positive tests results in the termination of a wrestler's contract. Just like in the NFL and the MLB, the Federal Government keeps track of the WWE Talent Wellness

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*Wrestling moves are not just strong sweaty men picking each other up and throwing each other down. It takes a certain amount of agility and grace to perform some wrestling maneuvers.*

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Program to ensure that it is legit. The WWE does not allow any exceptions. Recently, the WWE terminated the contract of two-time Olympic Gold Medalist Kurt Angle, who was one of the WWE's most popular wrestlers, because of repeated substance abuse.

The skill that is involved in performing wrestling maneuvers is also greatly underestimated. Professional wrestlers have to be intensely trained, and some have to attend wrestling boot camps before even being allowed to compete in a real wrestling match. Wrestling moves are not just strong sweaty men

picking each other up and throwing each other down. It takes a certain amount of agility and grace to perform some wrestling maneuvers. The Shooting Star Press is one of the most popular moves in wrestling, but the amount of precision, athleticism, and courage required to perform such a maneuver is incredible. In a proper Shooting Star Press, a wrestler jumps forward from an elevated position, executes a back flip while going forward, and lands his chest on his opponents. Former WWE wrestler Brock Lesnar, who was also an NCAA national champion in amateur wrestling, and is now the current Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) Heavyweight champion, once performed the move incorrectly by landing face first unto his opponent's elbow and suffered a severe concussion. After that day, Brock feared for his health in professional wrestling and rejected a seven-year \$45,000,000 contract from the WWE, to move on to what he considered a safer profession—the NFL (ESPN.com).

One mistake in a wrestling match can have near fatal consequences for both wrestlers involved. In 1998, deceased wrestler, Owen Hart performed a reverse tombstone piledriver that severely injured his opponent Stone Cold Steve Austin. The

reverse tombstone piledriver is a technique in which the wrestler grabs his opponent, turns him upside-down, and drops into a sitting or kneeling position, driving the opponent's head into the mat. Owen Hart, who was a successful and well-trained professional wrestler, performed the move incorrectly by allowing Austin's head to hit the mat before Hart's legs, providing incredible force to Austin's head resulting in a broken neck, which forced Steve Austin to retire from wrestling years later. The list of wrestlers that have been injured by improperly used moves such as the pile driver is a long one, and just goes to show the amount of skill it takes to perform wrestling moves the right way and the risk involved when they are not.

This leads to another aspect of a professional wrestler's job description. Athletes generally have to risk their bodies in order to perform in their sport. The injuries facilitated in sports such as basketball, boxing, tennis, and especially football, are widely known. The recent spinal injury to the Buffalo Bills' tight end, Kevin Everett, that could have prevented him from ever walking again, was well-documented on ESPN. The story of former New England Patriot Ted Johnson's memory loss from multiple concussions was also at one time a huge story (ESPN.com). The similar list of severe injuries to pro wrestlers is taken for granted. In former professional wrestler Mick Foley's book, *Have a Nice Day: A Tale of Blood and Sweatsocks*, Foley calls the usual perception of wrestling being fake as ironic. He proclaims, "If wrestling is fake, than so must be the hundreds of injuries I suffered" (Foley 38). Mick Foley is a great example of the dangers that come along with professional wrestling. During Foley's wrestling career he needed 325 stitches, suffered eight concussions, two broken noses, a broken jaw, two herniated discs, had four front teeth knocked out, and had more than half of his ear torn off during a match. Most of those injuries were not even the result of a wrestler failing to perform a move correctly; they are just evidence of the risk involved in professional wrestling even when it is done right. In 1998, Mick Foley was involved in a Hell in a Cell match that is often described as the most dangerous wrestling match in WWE history. A Hell in a Cell match is a wrestling match in which the ring and ringside area are surrounded by a roofed steel cell which stands twenty feet tall. During this match in 1998, Foley was wrestling his opponent on the roof of the twenty foot cell when the most dangerous planned move in WWE history occurred. Foley was thrown off the cell by his opponent, and went crashing into a table where the Spanish announcers broadcast the show. Even the people who knew it was coming were terrified by the move when they saw Foley lay motionless on the broken table. The next event that happened in the match was completely unplanned and was a shock to both wrestlers involved. After regaining his consciousness, Foley climbed back on top of the cell to face his opponent. His opponent lifted him up and slammed him on the cell roof that broke instantly. Mick Foley fell through the roof onto the ring below; while a steel chair that was



also on top of the roof came crashing into his face leaving him unconscious. Foley had to be taken from the ring by paramedics on a stretcher. Foley does not even remember most of the match, and used a video tape to write about it in his book. One of the few things he remembers from that night is his wife crying during a phone conversation begging him never to do anything like that again.

Many people would wonder why Mick Foley would allow his body to go through such punishment for the sake of a wrestling match. The answer to that is the competition aspect of wrestling that often goes overlooked. There are over a million names who can garner the title of professional wrestler from completing wrestling school, and almost every single one of them want a spot as a wrestler in the WWE, the largest wrestling promotion in the world. The WWE usually only commits no more than eighty wrestlers to official contracts; so the competition for those contracts is fierce, and wrestlers who cannot perform well enough for WWE standards are often quickly replaced by one of the millions who believe they can. This probably makes people wonder how wrestlers are judged to be worthy of a WWE contract. Since the winner of a wrestling match is predetermined, many people cannot understand the concept of judging the success of a pro wrestler. Unlike other traditional sports, the true winner or loser of match is not determined by a final score or by the referee or judge's decision. It is determined by who can put on quality matches consistently. The concept of a quality match may be misunderstood by people who do not often watch professional wrestling. A quality match is a match where both wrestlers perform wrestling moves successfully, keep the crowd entertained, and prevent the outcome from being predictable. A good wrestler who consistently puts on quality matches is usually the wrestler that garners the most crowd reaction, whether it is cheers or boos. Those wrestlers are the ones who are usually put on television every week. The wrestlers that garner exceptionally good crowd reactions are the ones who possess the championship belts. Wrestlers who cannot consistently fulfill this criterion are usually the ones that get a lackluster reaction from the live audience. The Hell in a Cell match mentioned earlier is usually referred to as the jump start to Mick Foley's career even though Mick Foley lost that match. However, the crowd reaction for that match was incredible and was extremely difficult for any wrestler to surpass. The risk put into that gruesome match could not outweigh the reward.

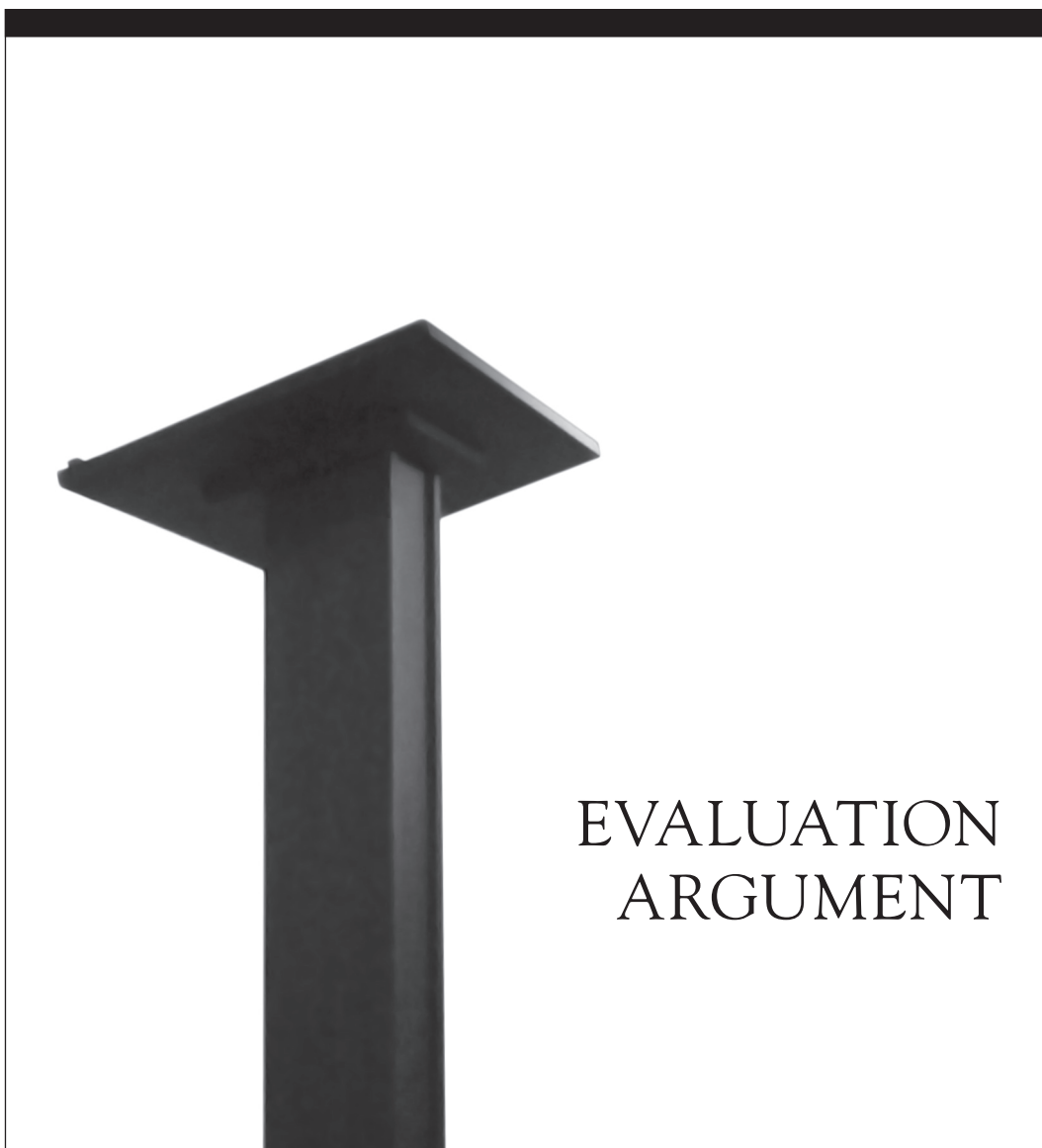
WWE television commentator, Jim Ross, is often heard every week on WWE Raw boasting about how WWE wrestlers are the greatest athletes in the world. He speaks of how they are all in incredible shape, how they are the best at what they do, how they perform several nights a week, every week of the year, and how they do not get an off season like other athletes. Ross may be exaggerating a little by claiming they are the greatest, but everything else he attributes to professional wrestlers is true. They are athletes just like all the football or basketball players we

see on ESPN each day. Professional wrestling is a very successful industry and it is growing, but somehow the general public retains this perception that wrestlers are not athletes. The occupation of professional wrestler is not going anywhere, and it is about time professional wrestlers get the respect they deserve by being classified as the athletes they are.

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EVALUATION  
ARGUMENT

## *Author's Biography*

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### MADDIE BUTTINGER

Maddie Buttinger, is a Canadian student here at Notre Dame from Waterloo, Ontario. Maddie is the oldest of seven children, and is a member of the University's track and field team, competing in the high jump and heptathlon. English was always one of her favourite subjects in high school, so the FYC course allowed her to continue to improve on her writing abilities and develop new skills to make her a better writer.

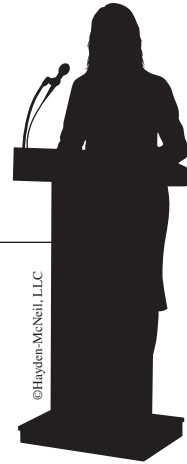
Hockey has always been a part of Maddie's life. She played when she was younger, and all of her six younger siblings currently play as well. *The Mighty Ducks* is a movie that she watched when she was younger and she used it as inspiration for her essay, "*Mighty Ducks: Inspirational Film or Breeding Ground for Violence?*" Maddie currently resides in Pasquerilla West Hall, and is pursuing a degree in business.

# ***Mighty Ducks***

## *Inspirational Film or Breeding Ground for Violence?*

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MADDIE BUTTINGER



*By the age of 18, the average American has witnessed 200,000 acts of violence on television, most of them occurring during Game 1 of the NHL playoff series.*

—Steve Rushin, American Sportswriter for *Sports Illustrated*

He shoots, he scores! Many would consider ice hockey to be Canada's national sport, and it increases in popularity each and every day. Today the sport has over 500,000 registered players from across Canada lining up at the blue line every season, each with victory in his sights (Marchie). With its high intensity, fast pace, and aggressive play, it is not hard for one to consider why hockey has become so loved. The number of youth participating in hockey continues to rise each season, and consequently, they become enveloped in the culture and spirit of the sport. One way these youth are motivated to participate in hockey is through inspirational sports movies, such as *The Mighty Ducks*. They watch their favourite characters in the movies fall in love with the sport, and are motivated to do the same.

*The Mighty Ducks* is a prime example of an influential and inspirational hockey movie from the early 1990s. This Disney classic focuses on a collection of stereotypical misfits and outsiders who end up bonding together through their hockey team, the Mighty Ducks. Coach Gordon Bombay, who does not want the job but eventually warms up to it, teaches the kids the significance of hard work and how to become a winning team. *The Mighty Ducks* delivers a positive, inspiring message to its young viewers in a variety of plot sequences throughout the film. The kids learn how to improve their hockey skills through practices on and off the ice. The team, made up of kids from different ethnicities, social classes and backgrounds, find common ground to work together towards a unified goal of making the play-offs. The movie highlights personal goals, and the fight that people have within themselves

to overcome their individual demons, demonstrated through Coach Bombay's decision to return to hockey after his traumatizing pee-wee play-off loss as a child. The team also overcomes many social obstacles through the game of hockey. They allow a girl to play on their all-boys team, which was extremely rare at that time. They also prove that a team does not have to have money or the fanciest equipment to succeed in the sport. Their hockey team moves from the bottom of the league to the top simply through hard work and determination. For the reasons listed, it is easy to see how a person would assume that *The Mighty Ducks* is simply an inspiring, positive movie.

However, in glorifying all of the above criteria, it also glorifies violence and injury for children. In *The Mighty Ducks*, there are two boys on the team named Fulton Reed

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*Viewers never find out what happens to the injured boy as the camera shifts its focus from him to the reactions from fans in the crowd. They are filled with thunderous applause, and cheer as the two boys skate to the penalty box.*

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and Dean Portman, who are known to everyone as "The Bash Brothers." Their jobs are solely to go out and hit opponents on the other teams. Throughout the movie these two boys are congratulated and applauded for these hits; the more they injure their opponents, the more attention they gain. This is revealed through a scene where the two boys decide to skate up behind a player from the opposing team and body check him from behind into the boards. The boy crumples under their hit and goes down hard onto the ice, clearly injured. However, viewers never find out what happens to the injured boy as the camera shifts its focus from him to the reactions from fans in the crowd. These reactions are not sympathetic or concerned as one may expect, they are instead filled with thunderous applause, and cheer as the two boys skate to the

penalty box. Young children may watch this scene and think that it is okay to play aggressively and generate lots of penalties. This way of thinking generates a culture of violence in hockey for children to imitate.

These hits by the "Bash Brothers" are glorified, but what happens to the players on the opposing teams that these two boys hit? The kids who were on the receiving end of these hits were probably seriously injured, however all that the audience sees is the amazing hit, and nothing of the kid lying on the ice afterwards. Injuries that these children suffer are completely ignored in most cases, creating a misconception to the youth audience that when someone gets body checked in hockey, they will walk away without a scratch. This is not the case, as Anthony Marchie, author of the article, "Body checking and concussions in ice hockey: Should our youth pay the price?" published in the Canadian Medical Association journal, states that body checking is the most common cause of trauma in hockey and it accounts for 86% of all injuries among players nine to fifteen years old.

The instances of violence and aggression on the ice within *The Mighty Ducks* are not just glorified, but the costs of the violence are regarded as courageous. When the movie decides to finally display the effects that body checking has on players, it is not for the sake of stressing the harmful damage, but the heroic action of the player for taking the hit. Adam Banks, a forward on the Ducks is injured after an extremely hard body check after a shot, and is forced off the ice on a stretcher. Instead of making this a depressing moment, the movie instead makes it a moment of worship. We see this worship revealed through the inspirational music playing in the background, the players on the Mighty Ducks congratulating Banks, the fans' applause and looks of respect and finally through the camera angles which focus on his face, rather than his body and the injuries that he endured. Banks pays no attention to the fact that he is on a stretcher and may be seriously injured. Instead, he simply asks, "Did it (the puck) go in?" His sole concern at that moment is whether or not he succeeded in shooting the puck into the net for his team's win. This stresses to the youth audience the notion of "taking one for the team," and the fact that getting injured is glorious, as it means that you are willing to sacrifice everything, including yourself, for the betterment of your team. This notion and motto can be very detrimental to the health of young hockey players.

Not only do body checks affect children at the time of impact, but they also can have lasting long-term effects. Within *The Mighty Ducks*, the players on the team are peewee age, meaning that they are all aged twelve to thirteen years old and allowed to hit. Hockey Canada permits three of its thirteen branches across Canada to allow body checking as young as the atom level, which is youth nine to ten years old (Hockey Canada). The fact that players are allowed to hit and body check at the age of nine is disturbing seeing as these children will not even begin puberty for another five to six years. Pre-puberty body checking is especially dangerous as many of the young player's organs, bones, and most importantly, brains, have not fully developed. This makes them increasingly susceptible to injury, and the injuries that they incur may stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Many hockey enthusiasts may argue that it is necessary for children to start body checking at a young age in order to learn how to hit properly and prepare for hitting when they get older. However, a study taken by the Canadian Hospital for Sick Children compared older players in Ontario aged fourteen to fifteen years, who had two to four years of body checking experience, with similarly aged players in Quebec, who were new to checking. The Ontario players came to emergency departments with checking-related injuries at this age more often than the players in Quebec. Therefore, even though the Ontario players had more experience with checking from an early age, they were at higher risk of having checking injuries at age fourteen to fifteen (James).



Possibly more serious, concussions may be a result of checking, and are of particular concern because of the risk of permanent damage that they carry. In studies involving youth and adults, concussions have ranged from a brief period of neural dysfunction to loss of consciousness and amnesia. The younger developing brain, like those of the children on the Mighty Ducks hockey team, is at an even higher risk of injury. Repeated concussions may lead to permanent learning disabilities and other neurological and psychiatric problems. Pre-adolescent youth with a traumatic brain injury may never fully develop the social and cognitive skills characteristic of adults and may be more violent than those without such an injury (Marchie). Is the glorification of giving and receiving hits within *The Mighty Ducks* really courageous or simply foolish?

*The Mighty Ducks* is a positive, inspiring movie; however it also carries a glorification of violence to the children that it is meant to inspire. It is this violence that is reflected in the actions and opinions of today's youth in sport. Inspirational hockey movies such as *The Mighty Ducks* should shift their focus from body checking and violence in hockey, back towards fun, skills, and love for the game. Children are the future leaders of tomorrow, and it is crucial that we protect them from violence, rather than encourage them to take part in it.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### MARIA CAPOTESCU

Maria Capotescu came all the way from Romania to attend the University of Notre Dame in August 2008. She wants to double major in business and psychology and minor in German. She took Community Based Learning First-Year Composition as a way to give back to the community she was welcomed into. She felt challenged, but, for her, it was ten times more rewarding. She wants to thank her FYC teacher for the patience, advice and tremendous help during the writing process. She was given an Evaluation Argument assignment and she decided to drift back to Europe and the Holocaust. The Holocaust is well-known to students at Notre Dame, but they do not often look at it on a deeper level. "Sophie Scholl, the Final Days" is a stirring motion picture depicting the breathtaking lives of a group of students, just like us, who lived their dream.

## *Sophie Scholl—The Final Days* *History Without the Exaggeration*

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MARIA CAPOTESCU



We, the students at Notre Dame, take pride in our extensive knowledge about many different subjects. Certainly, among the many topics we learned about in our life, history is one of them. Everyone here at Notre Dame knows what happened during Adolf Hitler's regime. But does everyone know the deep understanding of it? Is everyone familiar with people's outcries and bitter resentment? The personal experiences of these people tell us more about the reality of those days than dry words written years later in a book by a historian or a dozen movies exploiting the crude reality into Hollywood-born realities. "Sophie Scholl—The Final Days" is a German movie describing the last days of Sophie Scholl, a twenty-one-year-old woman who was part of a non-violent resistance group in Nazi Germany called The White Rose. The White Rose consisted of a number of students from the University of Munich and their philosophy professor. The group became known for an anonymous leaflet campaign, lasting from June 1942 until February 1943, which called for active opposition to German dictator Adolf Hitler. The six core members of the group were found guilty of high treason, arrested, convicted and beheaded by the Nazi police in 1943. Some critics argue that the movie focuses too much on one group's inner concerns and struggles, and not enough on the broad historical events of Nazi Germany. However, the film is actually a very convincing portrayal of German history because it combines real historical depictions with a moving narration. Specifically, it personally connects the viewer to the events through brave characters and breathtaking scenes.

The movie sets out to unravel a piece of German history: Adolf Hitler's regime. Through the tragic story of a small university group, it makes people aware of the hardships the students went through, the courage and ambition that spirited their actions, and the patriotism they cherished so much. Movie reviewers complain that "the moviemakers concentrated on how the main characters live in this situation,"

and that “there was a lot more to the story” (“Sophie Scholl—The Final Days—User’s Reviews—Yahoo! Movies”). They insist that by only exploring the story of a few people, the movie does not fully cover all the issues during that time. However, these conclusions add weight to the argument that the movie offers a unique and interesting perspective by personally connecting the viewer to a piece of German history; precisely because it focuses on this small group of students that was an icon for Germany at that time. The film director choose to create a movie that would immerse the audience personally in a true story about people who were actually part of the Nazi regime, as opposed to creating just a documentary based on hard facts written by historians about that period of time. Although documentary movies and historical books are reliable and offer credible, accurate information, they do not connect the reader with the true meaning of what happened, nor do they connect the reader with a sense of true human compassion. Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor,

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*The movie offers a unique and interesting perspective by personally connecting the viewer to a piece of German history, precisely because it focuses on this small group of students that was an icon for Germany at that time.*

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reminds us in his speech at the White House, that we should not be indifferent to the victims of suffering, because “in denying their humanity we betray our own” (“The Perils of Indifference”). Therefore, the focus on Sophie’s group of friends makes the audience understand the implication of the groups’ actions because it puts a human face to the facts.

These facts are presented by means of many outstanding elements, starting with an original portrayal of an important part of the world’s history, and ending with breathtaking scenes. The movie holds the viewer’s attention because of the intensity of the scenes; every second of them is filled

with emotions so strong that they almost electrify the audience. This artistic move makes the audience better identify with Sophie. Also, the natural rhythm of the movie gives the viewer a sense of understanding every detail that is going on. At the same time, the audience is able to sympathize with Sophie and her friends. There are no flash forwards and no flashbacks in the movie. Every moment is captured to its full potential. This artistic procedure gives the audience a sense of actually participating in the action and being there with Sophie, feeling her suffering the whole time. One of the most important scenes in the movie is Scholl’s interrogation by Gestapo agent Robert Mohr. Mohr’s desire to dominate an unwavering Sophie is suggested by their physical position in relation to each other: He is standing up, bold and determined, and she is sitting down on a chair, dignified and calm. The riveting dialogue is a clash between two brilliant minds, one clouded by the evil regime and one driven by honor: “Mohr’s atheistic views clash with Sophie’s unruffled appeals to decency, morals and God and unwavering conviction that all life is precious” (“USCCB—Sophie Scholl: The Final Days”). Although this scene may seem trivial in today’s democratic times, it is in fact crucial to our understanding of Germany’s history at that time because it reemphasizes the fact that no one could

ever stand up and speak her mind without being severely punished. The fact that Sophie did stand up to the Gestapo agent was a courageous act, thus connecting us again to the struggles she and her friends went through.

Also, the dialogue mentioned above adds to the movie's credibility because all the people who are involved in that action are not Hollywood puppets—they are non-theatrical characters, deeply rooted in reality. They are not exaggerated to please the audience's appetite for overly dramatic scenes and flawless-looking people, but rather, are presented as close to the standard of reality as possible. In other words, they do not seem to be out of the ordinary. Instead, they are presented as having good and bad sides and a demeanor appropriate to the situation, without falling into any extremes. Specifically, Wesley Morris claims that in most movies "there's no place for them (Gestapo) to go but insane," and they are portrayed as being "hotheaded, shrill, delusional, and intolerant," but here, the filmmakers do not rely on exaggerating the evil of the cold-hearted, soulless Nazis to make us more aware of the suffering that *The White Rose* is going through (1). Jeffrey Overstreet points out that Robert Mohr, a rather unusual Nazi, who, although cold-hearted, "is a Gestapo agent with a mind like an engine, and we can see the gears in his brain grinding as he analyzes Scholl's impassioned defense. [...] He realizes, on some level, that he cannot win this fight" (1). Overstreet's description of this Nazi is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the fact that the movie presents realistic portrayals of people. His statement also adds to the movie's distinct feature of providing a morally responsible depiction of the Gestapo, whom many of us would think are all the same robots performing whatever task they are told to do. Of course, most of them are like that and the movie describes them well. As a safe bet for the movie to be successful, the director could have stereotyped all Nazis, thus running the risk of creating another Hollywood production that is not rooted in reality. Instead, he created an accurate portrayal by introducing this unusual and intelligent agent who adds to the movie's realistic representation of Nazi Germany.

Furthermore, the movie is successful in achieving a realistic portrayal of Germany during World War II by successfully encompassing a small scale story to represent such a large group of people. Some accuse the movie of being "sentimentalist" and full of empty "historicity" ("*Sophie Scholl: The Final Days—Review*"). In other words, they believe it is not an accurate and full reconstruction of that period, and the scenes presented are dramatically intensified to artificially trigger the viewer's emotions. Although I agree that it is not a full reconstruction of that period since it only focuses on a certain group, it is still valid because it is based on a true story, and the university group represents the struggles Germans went through at that time. For example, the movie director uses the dialogue between Sophie and Mohr to show how the group was not free to express its opinion, how it struggled to achieve its goals, and how the students were executed in the end. In the same way,

people had to pay attention to what they said or did, and were not allowed to freely express their opinion, as they were harshly punished for having a different perspective than Adolf Hitler.

“Sophie Scholl—The Final Days” is not only a movie, but also a remarkable and compelling account of a true story that happened during World War II. The relationship between Sophie and her friends, the justice and righteousness that they are seeking, and the frigid aura surrounding the Gestapo agents turn this film into a masterpiece. Although it does not describe in detail the political part of the regime, it accurately portrays the struggles people went through during those days, because the small group of university students truly represents the collective outrage that lay inside all people in Germany at that time. As Notre Dame students, we ought to know about this piece of history, not only to enrich our knowledge and nurture our minds, but also to understand the profound implications of Sophie’s group.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### NANCY PAUL

Researching nuclear policy was natural for Nancy Paul, who likes to spend her free time accelerating particles in the bellows of Nieuwland's Nuclear Structure Lab. Nancy discovered the dynamic world of nuclear physics at Notre Dame and, alliteration aside, found it to be the perfect fit. The little girl from rural Pennsylvania spent her first semester researching and observing the relationship between public policy and nuclear physics, which afforded unique insight to evaluate the issue of nuclear detection. Her sights have now moved from the highways to the heavens, as she assists in an investigation of nuclear processes in stars and hopes to eventually earn her Ph.D. in nuclear astrophysics.

# Dirty Bomb Detection Needs Some Cleaning Up

NANCY PAUL



With the growing concern that terrorists might use a radioactive “dirty bomb” to attack U.S. cities, states including California and Michigan have instituted high-speed roadside detectors to sense radiation sources in vehicles. Legislators feel that they are taking a proactive approach to nuclear threats by establishing a network along the interstates that has the potential to “see” a radiological device being carried in a truck and intercept the dangerous substance. Industrious national labs have developed large detection systems capable of analyzing vehicle-sized objects and are eager to sell their products to the government who has a large budget for homeland security. Unfortunately, the reality of nuclear threats is a complex issue that cannot be solved simply by spending money on technology. While the concern with national security is admirable, the implementation of these detectors is a poor use of government resources, as the program is essentially ineffective at both detecting and deterring a major nuclear attack.

In 2006, the United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Domestic Nuclear Detection (DNDO) distributed more than three million dollars for the installation of radiation detection systems along the country’s major transportation routes. The systems are part of an initiative to develop a widespread nuclear detection framework to manage nuclear risks, in this case along routes between international ports and highly populated cities that may be targets (Deployment of Transportable Radiation). The detection systems, purchased from private companies and positioned along the major highways and byways of the U.S., are intended to detect a major nuclear device being transported by motor vehicle. The DNDO sees these detectors as a concrete way to address possible threats and proclaims that their efforts will help prevent high consequence risks and ultimately deter terrorists who seek to use nuclear sources to inflict harm (DHS Awards). A 2005 press release

from Livermore Labs, creator of one of the new detection systems said that, “With ARAM (detector system) around, people and vehicles carrying illicit radiological materials can run, but they can’t hide” (Walter). However, these assertions are severely misleading and overconfident as the control of nuclear matter is a complex and highly difficult enterprise.

Despite honorable objectives, the policy displays a clear lack of understanding of both the properties of radioactive materials and the methods of concealing these substances. Substances are considered radioactive if they emit alpha and beta particles, electromagnetic gamma rays, neutrons, or a combination of these. Radiation detectors contain substances that will interact with these particles when they are released from the radioactive source. Ordinary matter, however, easily blocks most

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*Even if a detector was placed in contact with the side of a tractor-trailer filled with nuclear materials, as long as the trailer was appropriately shielded, the trailer would appear no more suspicious to the detectors than a station wagon on its way to Disney World.*

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forms of radiation. A single sheet of paper will stop all alpha particles, betas will be annihilated in glass or plastic, lead will halt most gamma rays, and paraffin or water will effectively screen a neutron source (Radiation Safety Training Manual). Such methods of stopping radiation, known as shielding, are well understood and are taught in the required lowest level radiation courses, which are a prerequisite in a nuclear lab. Shielding methods are standardized by the scientific community and utilized on a daily basis all over the world so that nuclear physicists may safely use highly radioactive sources.

It is reasonable to assume that any terrorist organization with the intent to launch a nuclear attack will be familiar with the shielding techniques mentioned above, all of which are relatively straightforward and inexpensive. Dr. Ani

Aprahamian, nuclear physicist at the University of Notre Dame and former nuclear physics program advisor on funding for collaborations between the National Science Foundation and the DNDO, explained in a recent interview that it is quite simple to shield a radioactive source and block all forms of radiation from detection (Aprahamian). The large semi-trucks and trailers that the monitors are scanning have enormous allowable payloads and ample space for lead, plastic, paraffin, water, and nearly every other conceivable shielding method. The current detectors that have been placed by the DNDO use two large volume panels, called scintillators, to spot gamma and neutron emissions; yet even if a detector was placed in contact with the side of a tractor-trailer filled with nuclear materials, as long as the trailer was appropriately shielded, the trailer would appear no more suspicious to the detectors than a station wagon on its way to Disney World (Deployment of Transportable Radiation). In fact, Aprahamian noted slyly, a person who had received medical radiation from X-rays or a PET scan would actually appear more radioactive to a roadside detector than an appropriately shielded payload of uranium (Aprahamian).

The Department of Homeland Security is striving to utilize the latest scientific methods to address a real issue in the control of nuclear substances. DNDO director Vayl Oxford said, "We are intensely focused on preventing high consequence threats such as a radiological or nuclear attack" and their new system is an attempt to use the latest technology to create a far-reaching network of threat detection and alarm network (DHS Awards). However, Dr. Aprahamian described the DNDO implementation of roadside nuclear detectors as a, "simpleminded solution for a complicated problem." Oxford said he envisions a, "web of radiation detection systems on our nation's highways" (DHS Awards), but the control of nuclear materials is most imperative at ports and in research facilities, not simply along the interstates. Nuclear detection is extremely complex and there currently does not exist a detector capable of rooting out a well-shielded source, much less one traveling down a highway. Since the proportional effectiveness of the detectors decreases inversely with distance squared, unless the scintillators were placed in direct contact with the unshielded source, Aprahamian said that there exists little likelihood of detection. She suggested that the policy of detection implementation is more likely a response to pressure from the American public for concrete preventative measures in the war on terror, even if the appropriate equipment does not exist (Aprahamian).

Yet just as the government is expected to take preventative measures to ensure protection of the people, it is also expected to do so in a responsible manner. Despite the major problems inherent in roadside detectors, the DNDO continues to award sizeable grants for these systems. In addition to the 3.2 million dollar grant awarded in 2006 for the southeast corridor, detectors have appeared along Interstate Highway 80 and Route 69 in Indiana and Michigan (Aprahamian). The DNDO budget for the 2009 fiscal year includes 37 million dollars for surface transportation security, much of which will support roadside nuclear detectors. Comparatively, the DNDO is spending only 17 million dollars to enhance Coast Guard intelligence capabilities, which actually has a better chance of intercepting illicit nuclear materials coming from other countries than highway detectors (Budget Overview). Simply working diplomatically to improve political relationships with threatening countries and encouraging honesty in our nuclear facilities will go much farther in preventing a nuclear attack. However, given the current economic crisis, spending a large quantity of money on inefficient and essentially ineffective technology, especially when the money could be appropriated to more proactive efforts, is a poor use of national resources.

Certainly the governmental concern regarding the possibility of a terroristic attack that utilizes nuclear weapons warrants an appropriate course of action to protect the citizens of the United States. However, the Homeland Security initiative from the Detection of Nuclear Device Office to install roadside nuclear detectors is inconsistent with scientific knowledge of these substances and is essentially irrational.

While we should continue to research better detection methods and discuss ways of controlling nuclear substances, spending mass quantities of money on technology that gambles on the ignorance of our enemies is simply irresponsible.

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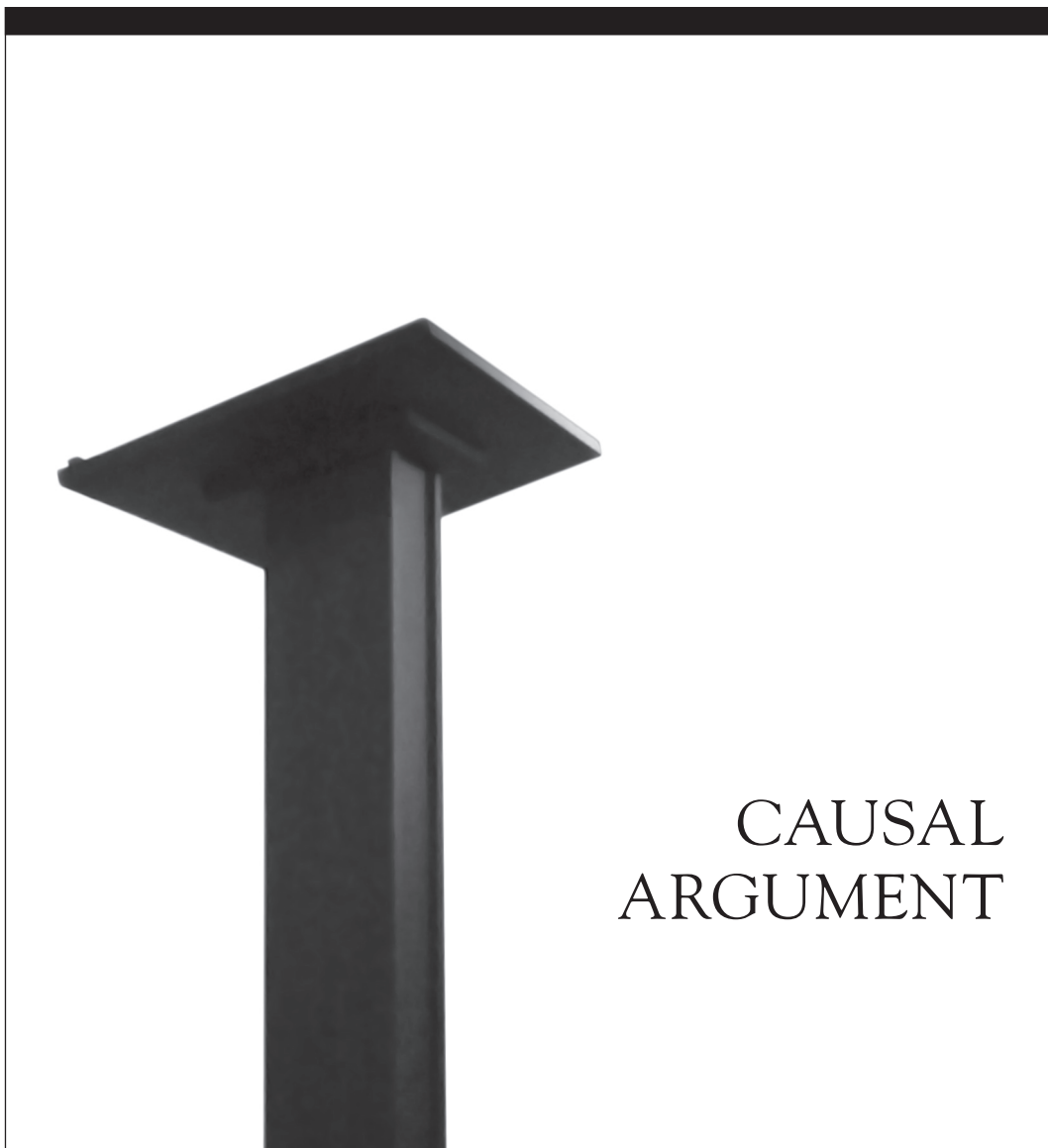
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CAUSAL  
ARGUMENT

## *Author's Biography*

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### VERONICA STAFFORD

Growing up in the small town of Fort Atkinson, Iowa, Veronica found little to do other than watch *Wishbone* and travel to the library. She discovered that the summer reading program offered ice cream cones as prizes, and quickly enrolled. Unfortunately, the other kids in the town were not as eager. After watching the library slowly decline in popularity, she decided to investigate the cause, and with a little encouragement from her instructor, Veronica looked more closely at the issue.

When not avoiding her cell phone, Veronica enjoys baking in the Howard Hall kitchen, cheering for the Iowa State rugby team, and singing with the Women's Liturgical Choir at mass. She dedicates her Thursday nights to *The Office*, and wishes that Notre Dame had a color guard. She is proud to be the best twin to come from Iowa after Ashton Kutcher. Veronica plans to major in English.

# **Txting n Ltrcy**

## *A Communications Revolution and a Devolution of Language*

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VERONICA STAFFORD



As Notre Dame students walk to class each day, most do not notice the other people around them. Rather than conversing with their neighbors, they are texting their friends in the next building, in their dorm, or back home. Although social networking is the most common use for text messages, they are not used solely for socializing. Sports scores, safety alerts, and even election updates can be received electronically. Students have the option to receive weather forecasts, astrology predictions, or jokes through text messages, thus increasing the popularity of texting. While texting is a quick and easy way to keep up with friends, it is injurious to other aspects of our lives. When students spend time texting rather than focusing on those other important aspects, texting becomes detrimental. Students' enjoyment of reading, their schoolwork, and their relationships with others are all negatively affected by text messaging.

Due to the mass appeal of text messaging, students pass their free time chatting through their cell phones rather than enjoying a great book. Texting is so widespread because 25% of students under age eight, 89% of students ages eleven to thirteen, and over 95% of students over age fifteen have a cell phone (Mobile). On average, 75.6 million text messages are sent in a day, with 54% of the population texting more than five times per day (Mobile). In contrast to the time they spend texting, fifteen to twenty-four-year-olds read a mere seven minutes per day for fun and only 1.25 hours a week (Average), which is less than half the time that seventh grade students spend texting: 2.82 hours a week (Bryant). While more than half of the population texts every day, almost as many (43%) have not read a single book in the past year (To Read). It seems there is a direct correlation between reading and texting because, as text messaging increases in popularity, reading decreases. The National Endowment for the Arts surveyed eighteen to twenty-four-year-olds and



discovered that the enjoyment of reading in this age group is declining the fastest. Inversely, it is the group that sends the most text messages: 142 billion a year (To Read). From 1992 to 2002, 2.1 million potential readers, aged eighteen to twenty-four years old, were lost (To Read). As proved by the direct correlation, reading does not have the same appeal because of texting. Students prefer to spend time in the technological world rather than traversing the written world.

However, reading well is essential to being successful academically. Although some argue that text messages force students to think quickly and allow them to formulate brief responses to questions, their habit is actually stifling creativity. When a group of twenty students was given a chance to write responses to open-ended questions, the students who owned cell phones with text messaging wrote much less. They also had more grammatical errors, such as leaving apostrophes out of contractions and substituting the letter “r” for the word “are” (Ward). Because of text messages, students perceive writing as a fun way to communicate with friends

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*While more than half of the population texts every day, almost as many (43%) have not read a single book in the past year.*

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and not as a way to strongly voice an opinion. Students no longer think of writing as academic, but rather they consider it social. For instance, in Scotland, a thirteen-year-old student wrote this in a school essay about her summer vacation: “My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4 we used 2 go to NY 2C my bro, & 3 kids FTF ILNY, its gr8...” (Ward). She used writing that would appear in a text message for a friend rather than in a report for school. Furthermore, students who text become so

accustomed to reading this type of shorthanded lingo that they often overlook it in their own writing (O’Connor). This means that teachers have to spend even longer correcting these bad habits. Regardless, Lily Huang, a writer for *Newsweek*, believes that text messages increase literacy because a student must first know how to spell a word to abbreviate it in texting (Huang). However, texting not only affects the way that students write, but also the way in which they think about language. As a critic of Huang’s article writes, “Habitual use of shorthand isn’t just about choppy English, but choppy thinking” (Huang). Writers who text will have trouble thinking creatively, and will especially have trouble composing intricate works like poetry because of the abridged way of thinking to which they are accustomed.

Outside of school, students’ interactions with one another are similarly altered. Three in five teens would argue with a friend and one in three would break up with someone through a text message (Technology). Text messaging is now the most popular way for students to arrange to meet with friends, have a quick conversation, contact a friend when bored, or invite friends to a party (Technology). Eight out of ten teens would rather text than call (Mobile). Although it is true that text messaging has made conversations much simpler and faster, it has not

improved communication. Texting may make it more convenient to stay in contact with friends, but it does not ensure that the contact is as beneficial as talking in person. Text messages do not incorporate all of the body language and vocal inflections that a face-to-face conversation does. These nonverbal cues are essential to fully comprehending what is being communicated. Only 7% of a message is verbal. When the message is not communicated face-to-face, 93% of that message is lost (Importance), and this nonverbal message is crucial to maintaining close relationships. According to Don McKay, a contributor to [healthinfosource.com](http://healthinfosource.com), the most important aspect of lasting friendships is effective communication (McKay). Friends must be able to convey emotions and empathize with others (McKay). However, friends who communicate solely through text messages will miss out on any truly personal interaction because they can never see the other person's posture, body language, or gestures.

All of the negative effects of text messaging additionally deteriorate literacy. The enjoyment of reading leads to avid readers who eagerly absorb written words. A devotion to schoolwork encourages students to read so that they may be informed about important topics. Through book clubs and conversations about great literature, even relationships can foster a love for reading. However, text messaging is detracting from all three. In today's society, literacy is important. Schools focus on teaching English at an early age because of the active role that it forces students to take (Le Guin). While students can passively text message their friends, they need to focus on reading to enjoy it. In order to really immerse themselves in the story, they need to use a higher level of thinking than that of texting. This learning is what causes avid readers to become so successful. Those who read for fun when they are young score better on standardized tests, are admitted to more selective universities, and are able to secure the most competitive jobs (To Read). The decline in literacy caused by text messaging could inevitably cost a student a selective job. If a student spent less time texting and more time reading, it could give him an advantage over his peers. Imagine a scenario between classes without any students' eyes to the ground. Imagine that Notre Dame students are not texting acquaintances hours away. Perhaps instead they are all carrying a pen and notebook and writing a letter to their friends. Maybe they are conversing with those around them. Instead of spending time every week text messaging, they are reading. When those other students text 'lol' it no longer is an abbreviation for 'laugh out loud,' but for 'loss of literacy.'

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REBUTTAL  
ARGUMENT

## *Author's Biography*

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### DYLAN W. KRIEGER

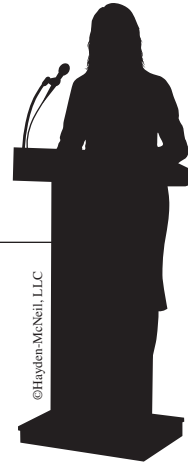
Dylan W. Krieger was born and bred in the gloomy recesses of South Bend, Indiana, finding solace from her haphazard surroundings primarily only in classic novels, raucous music, and the irony of routinely feigning enthusiasm for opposing The Man. The last of these is what initially inspired her rebuttal argument, "Real ID: A Make-Believe Solution," which in effect rebuts not only a newspaper editorial, but also the U.S. government's current strategy for a transition in the very nature of personal identification. Dylan plans to major in English and Philosophy, graduate with honors, and subsequently do anything necessary to evade the fate inevitable for aspiring writers: living in a cardboard box.

# Real ID

## *A Make-Believe Solution*

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DYLAN W. KRIEGER



Although most American citizens have not yet heard its name or understood its plan, the Real ID Act was first passed by the House of Representatives and signed by President George W. Bush in 2005, after which it was to finally go into effect on May 11, 2008 (“The History of Federal Requirements”). The act is intended to decrease the ease with which illegal immigrants and foreigners who are potential terrorists are able to live and work in the United States; it demands that each citizen replace his or her current state identification card or driver’s license with Real ID personal documentation, which is then to become necessary evidence of citizenship (“Real ID”). Because it is a federal—and not a state—mandate, this act completely changes the nature of personal identification in the United States.

Of those who are familiar with it, some argue that it will meet its goals and produce a dramatic decline in illegal immigration, unfair labor competition, and the threat of terrorism to our nation. However, others assert that Real ID is more likely to produce a dramatic decline in the privacy of citizens, open immigration policy, and the balance between state and federal government on which our nation was founded.

On October 16, 2007, an editorial entitled “Real ID Needed Now” was published in *The Providence Journal* of Providence, Rhode Island. Within the article, the author claims that “...states should follow federal law and adopt ‘Real ID,’” because “[s]tates...are unreliable jurisdictions to accurately verify one’s citizenship status” (“Real ID Needed Now”). Earlier, the author uses stories of illegal immigration in which identification fraud was involved as evidence for these claims. Although this editorial largely consists of a negative evaluation of the United States’ current personal identification procedures, it also includes an obvious proposal: The states should adopt Real ID. However, this is a poor use of a proposal argument in that

the author refrains from addressing any objections to it. Moreover, through various unwarranted assumptions concerning Real ID and American values, as well as a rushed conclusion which disregards alternative solutions to identification fraud and illegal immigration, the article expresses a fundamentally flawed case.

By neglecting to defend the adoption of Real ID against opposing arguments, the author implies that the act could not fail to meet its goals or have any ill effects on the country, which is a naïve assumption to make. Creating a “national database” of citizens’ information, including “biometric data, such as a thumbprint,” would obviously make the practice of monitoring citizens more convenient for the federal government (“Real ID Needed Now”).

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*The assumption exhibited here is that the United States’ immigration policy is—or should be—comparable to other Western nations. However, the U.S. has always been known for the unique acceptance and care it offers to its own kind—foreigners searching for political representation and economic opportunity.*

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In addition, the last two sentences of the article read, “We need our borders back—now. No other Western country would accept this state of affairs” (“Real ID Needed Now”). The assumption exhibited here is that the United States’ immigration policy is—or should be—comparable to other Western nations. However, the U.S. has always been known for the unique acceptance and care it offers to its own kind—foreigners searching for political representation and economic opportunity. After all, nearly every current American citizen is either an immigrant or a descendent of an immigrant no more than a few generations removed. Therefore, the author’s underlying opinion that the U.S. should implement a pedantic immigration policy—an opinion on which the rest of the article is based—is either ill-informed or intentionally contrary to American values.

Aside from all this, many of the stipulations of Real ID are superfluous to solving the problems described in the article. Although the editorial’s reports make very clear the fact that identification fraud committed by illegal immigrants is currently of significant concern in the U.S, only one portion of the Real ID Act actually addresses this issue: the requirement that—as the article puts it—“states...ensure that the documents presented for getting a driver’s license—usually a birth certificate or passport—are genuine” (“Real ID Needed Now”). If this were carried out, the legitimacy of all forms of state identification would be rigorously verified before being issued; thus, no new Real ID documentation, “biometric data”, or “national database” of information would be necessary in order to monitor and prevent possible identification fraud (“Real ID Needed Now”).

This compromise would allay the fears that Real ID instills in many Americans concerning the violation of privacy rights and the expansion of the federal gov-

ernment. Additionally, it would do less to discourage legal immigration, because federal identification checkpoints and hasty or unfounded terrorist investigations would remain a thing of totalitarian regimes and dystopian fiction.

In other words, just as “Real ID Needed Now” suggests, the provisions of the Real ID Act can ensure a decrease in illegal immigration to the United States, but only because the country would be stripped of one of its most distinctively attractive qualities: the balance of power found not only between separate branches of the federal government, but between the state and federal levels of command.

In conclusion, American citizens, as well as elected government officials, must decide whether the adoption of Real ID is worth forfeiting some of the ideals originally found within the Constitution and the Bill of Rights; whether this legislation which is so desperately “needed” in order to maintain our country’s borders is worth destroying part of its very foundation in the process. To anyone who appreciates his or her rights as a citizen of the United States, the benefits are obviously not worth the cost.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### ALLISON VANDER BROEK

Allison Vander Broek hails from what she thinks is the greatest small town ever: Pella, Iowa. She is majoring in history and sociology and loves any activity that allows her to combine these two interests. Allison really enjoyed her Community Based FYC class which allowed her to learn not only in the classroom but also in the local community. This essay is a rebuttal of Svi Shapiro's article "It's Time for a Progressive Vision of Education," and it addresses the timely issue of how to improve America's educational system in light of recent legislation such as No Child Left Behind. Allison found Shapiro's argument a tough one to rebut, so she especially wants to thank her FYC professor, Ed Kelly, for his patience and persistence in challenging her to make this essay the best it could be.

# The Unattainable Utopia of a “Progressive Vision of Education”

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ALLISON VANDER BROEK



It may be a dog-eat-dog world out there, but this does not need to apply to the American educational system. This is exactly what Svi Shapiro argues in “It’s Time for a Progressive Vision of Education.” He offers an innovative view of education in America today, and as he conveys his vision, he also brings up some deep-rooted problems in society, problems that Shapiro fails to acknowledge for their complexity. While Shapiro accurately points out the problems of today’s educational system, his ideas for an educational utopia, where schools encourage true learning, academic competition gives way to true community, and education teaches the true worth of each human, will not work in the real world.

Shapiro’s basic argument is as his title states: America needs to have a progressive vision of education. He believes that legislation, such as No Child Left Behind, simply makes schools “testing mills...devoid of creative or critical input” (17). This creates competition that diminishes genuine community among students as it assigns worth based on academic merit. But as Shapiro digs deeper, he begins to expose some major societal flaws, including consumerist culture, the workaholic mindset, and competition and individualism. He believes that education is the way to solve these issues.

One of the first issues Shapiro addresses is No Child Left Behind, legislation he calls a “debacle” and a “ghastly mistake” (17). To Shapiro, No Child Left Behind has made school a cycle of preparing students for tests and then testing them, with no emphasis on true learning. Non-tested areas, such as the arts, social studies, and physical education have been cut out of the curriculum in many schools. Although Shapiro is correct in stating that No Child Left Behind has done little to improve education, he fails to point out that No Child Left Behind has simply been a practical means of applying Shapiro’s own ideas that education needs to be improved.

According to the Department of Education, one of the four main goals of No Child Left Behind was to “make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency” (1). This would also involve investigating schools that made no apparent progress. The government needed a way to monitor the progress of schools, students, and teachers. Testing was the most obvious solution since, for many, testing offers a means of motivation and mapping progress. It can also hold schools accountable to that progress. No Child Left Behind may need to be thrown out, but some form of governmental supervision for the progress of schools will be necessary.

His argument in the next section, entitled “Democracy and Education,” centers on the idea that schools need to encourage critical thinking, which to Shapiro

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*In 2006 the United States topped the list of oil consumers, using about twenty million barrels of oil per day. Now compare that number to the number two country on the list: China. China used a little more than seven million barrels per day.*

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forms true citizens of a true democracy. His argument is that in America, democracy is too often defined as the capacity to consume. Shapiro says, “. . .very little time is spent in school equipping young people with the capacity to critically interrogate our culture of advertising and persuasion” (19). However, is that really enough in this consumerist culture? Consumerism confronts children for the majority of their lives. As soon as they are old enough to watch television, they will constantly be assailed with advertisements for the next best thing. Even education gives way to consumerism. Parents and society tell children that they must do well in school so that they can get into a good college and can get a good job and make a lot of money. Many people welcome the idea of changing this, but can it actually be done? Even

if it is unacknowledged, each individual, by nature, wants more stuff and wants to be better than the next person. Not only are individual Americans gluttonous consumers, but also America as a whole is the biggest consumer on earth. For example, in 2006 the United States topped the list of oil consumers, using about twenty million barrels of oil per day. Now compare that number to the number two country on the list: China. China used a little more than seven million barrels per day (1). That amount is for a country four times the size in population of the United States. America has a voracious appetite, and it will require more than educational change to fix this.

In addition to American consumption reflected in schools, Shapiro says that societal competition is reflected as well. His issue with this is that this competition links human worth with academic achievement and diminishes true community in the classroom. Competition encourages students to be selfish and, in some cases, to resort to cheating to get ahead (70). Placing less emphasis on testing and incorpo-

rating more creativity-enhancing classes would help with the issue, but the fact is that American culture is based on competition and individualism. Capitalism promotes competition between businesses; workers are told to do anything for the next promotion. Even the so-called “American dream” centers on individual success. So, as sick as it may sound, competition in schools, in a sense, prepares children for the pressures of the real world. At the same time, schools have been trying to increase a sense of community in the classroom. Programs, such as “Character Counts,” try to teach children the “unconditional worth of all human beings” (70). It could be that children need more reinforcement of these values than education can offer.

Then, in his last section, Shapiro provides a strong claim. He says, “Finally, education ought to be one of the primary ways through which we can realize the fullness of human existence” (71). This is one part of the argument that needs no alternative. Shapiro is saying that education should educate the *whole* person, not just that part of the person that will one day be a productive member of society. Shapiro wants learning to be a pleasure once more. This point seems to be the crux of his argument. If learning is not a nuisance, but a joy, then testing, critical thinking, and competition will not be a problem. Here, balance is the key. The old system cannot be completely thrown out; testing and the other normal school functions are important. America still needs productive citizens; not everyone can be an academic. But, America needs to find that balance where the student gets an education and, at the same time, experiences all the joys that go along with new learning discoveries, from kindergarten to graduate school and beyond.

Shapiro’s hopes for a new vision for education are definitely welcome, but what needs to be addressed is how these ideas would actually pan out in the real world. His first idea is fairly practical. The government needs to find a way to test progress in schools without putting so much emphasis on testing and instead placing more emphasis on creative subjects such as art and music. As for his second argument, that education needs to help fix the distorted American view of consumer democracy, a real world solution is less visible. The educational system can teach kids about this, but education is just one area of students’ lives. They must also contend with the rest of society, including, and especially, the media. Once again, maybe it would be effective if parents would affirm this anti-consumerism notion at home, giving children a more consistent view of consumption. So, assume for a moment that the educational system starts teaching this. Who can get everyone else on the proverbial band wagon? Presidential candidates offering a “language of possibility?” What would it take? Yes, America can improve. There will always be things in society that need improvement. However, the question is not can it improve, but will it improve. This also applies to competition in schools. Even if the educational system begins to deal with this problem, one must still contend with the competition inherent in sports and other extracurricular activities, as well as in the business world.

As stated earlier, these issues often stem from how society assigns individual worth. Education can reinforce this concept, but it really comes down to how parents teach their children to assign worth. Parents have the most control in the most formative years of a child's life and should acknowledge the role they play in their child's view of other people. At home, in the early years of life, a parent can demonstrate that people should be valued for more than their educational merit and then can reinforce this through all of childhood. Parents can also have a big influence on their child's educational experience. According to the National Center for Family Literacy, children whose parents read to them have shown improvement in language skills and more interest in books (1). This can help provide the balance necessary to promote learning for its intrinsic and extrinsic value. So, maybe that is where the focus should be: on the family. Education alone cannot change society.

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*Education is just one area of students' lives. They must also contend with the rest of society, including, and especially, the media. It would be effective if parents would affirm this anti-consumerism notion at home.*

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Perhaps educational change, along with increased awareness of the value of family, will help to transform society.

Shapiro makes a strong argument for a new vision of education, yet the question remains at the end of his article: what will change? In the real world, society envisions new goals of education, the government passes new legislation, and a new batch of students enters school or graduates into the business world. Life continues, and Svi Shapiro's essay, and this essay, will fade from memory. So, what does the dialogue about the vision of education do? It stirs up a "language of possibility" for both opponents and proponents. As Winston Churchill once said, "Every day you may make progress. Every step may

be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb" (Churchill). America must face the fact that the education system can never be perfect. Some inherent cultural attitudes just run too deep. But through the viewpoints of the optimists and the pessimists on what may be done to bring education closer to that utopia, America can come to understand more of the societal issues with which its citizens are faced each day.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### ZHE YANG

Zhe Yang comes from Qingdao, China. She spent one year in Virginia as a high school exchange student before coming to Notre Dame. She really enjoys studying at Notre Dame, and she plans to major in business and math.

Zhe was always interested in the topic of happiness. In her First-Year Composition class, she chose happiness as her project topic. For the rebuttal argument assignment, she carefully examined Steve Maich's article "It's official: money buys happiness" and refuted Maich's statement by pointing out the weaknesses of his argument. She really appreciated the help she received from her instructor as well as the Writing Center.

# Can Money Buy Happiness?

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ZHE YANG



In the 1970s, University of Pennsylvania economist Richard Easterlin conducted a study that concluded that economic growth does not necessarily lead to civil happiness. This is known as the “Easterlin Paradox.” For years, his “Easterlin Paradox” has been a predominant theory in the research of happiness—until now. In the essay “It’s official: money buys happiness,” Steve Maich argues that the “Easterlin Paradox” is flawed. He argues that Easterlin’s research is not reliable enough and that money does lead to happiness. To support his claim, he uses the results from a recent study conducted by Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, both economists at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. In the study, Stevenson and Wolfers found out that Easterlin did not properly conduct the happiness level survey, which was the basis of the theory. Also, they think that Easterlin “confused a lack of positive evidence as proof of the contrary” (Maich). I wholly agree that Easterlin’s theory is imperfect, but I cannot agree that the claim “Money buys happiness” is true because it is based on a flawed method of research as well.

I agree with the idea that the happiness level survey conducted by Easterlin is not convincing enough. Just as Maich argues, happiness is something complicated to measure; therefore, you cannot determine people’s happiness levels simply by asking them whether they feel “very happy,” “satisfied,” or “unhappy,” as Easterlin did. Some may say that happiness is a mental state and there are no better ways to tell a person’s degree of satisfaction than asking about his or her feelings. Still, Easterlin’s scale of happiness is too limiting to reflect the diversity of people’s feelings, because people’s feelings are complicated. For example, people may just be feeling “kind of unhappy.” Should they be counted as “unhappy” since they do feel upset, or should they be counted as “satisfied” since they are mostly happy with life but just feel a little bit of unhappiness? The existence of such confusion definitely contributes to the imperfection of Easterlin’s research.



Maich not only effectively refutes “Easterlin’s Paradox” through pointing out the weakness of the survey on which the paradox is based, he also presents a strong objection by claiming that Easterlin “confused a lack of positive evidence as proof of the contrary.” To illustrate his point, he uses an effective analogy. He argues that the fact that we cannot find evidence about alien life does not mean that alien life does not exist; since it is possible that alien life exists, but there is no way to prove it because our science and technology are not advanced enough. It is the same with the relationship between money and happiness. Although we cannot show that money and happiness are related, we cannot conclude that there is no relationship between them because it is possible that we are just not able to show the relation. Therefore, Easterlin cannot say that economic growth does not lead to happiness simply because he cannot prove that economic growth leads to happiness.

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*Happiness is something complicated to measure; you cannot determine people’s happiness levels simply by asking them whether they feel “very happy,” “satisfied,” or “unhappy,” as Easterlin did.*

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Although Maich clearly points out the imperfections of Easterlin’s theory, I cannot agree with the conclusion that money does buy happiness. The reason is that Stevenson and Wolfers did not conduct a better survey than Easterlin’s. It is true that they do include more people in the survey and instead of evaluating happiness level with “very happy,” “satisfied,” or “happy,” they expand the happiness scale by asking people to grade their happiness level from 0 to 10. Nevertheless, there is no essential difference between Stevenson and Wolfers’ survey and Easterlin’s survey. The happiness level was still determined by simply asking people how they feel, regardless of the age and religious life of people being surveyed, which are

very important. Some may argue that when surveying something at a large scale, it is reasonable to neglect minor factors. However, age and religious life definitely affect the research because they are non-negligible quantities concerning happiness. According to a University of Chicago study regarding the effect of age on happiness, older people tend to be more satisfied with their lives than young people. Therefore, if a country has a larger percentage of older people and smaller percentage of young people, then it tends to be happier than other countries, regardless of how rich or poor that country is. The same applies to people’s religious life. According to a new happiness index created by Harris Poll, “People who describe themselves as ‘very religious’ are among the happiest of people. Those who say they are ‘very religious’ come in ten points higher than America as a whole on the Happiness Index (45% compared to 35% are considered ‘very happy’). In contrast, just over one-quarter (28%) of people who describe themselves as ‘not religious’ were measured at that level of happiness.” Thus, if a country has a higher percentage of people who go to church, the country tends to be happier, whether it is rich or poor. So we may conclude that Stevenson and Wolfers’ survey is also flawed because they did not take

the age and religious life of people being surveyed into account. Thus, there is still no reason to believe the conclusion that money leads to happiness.

Maich successfully proves that the “Easterlin Paradox” is not true by clearly pointing out and analyzing the weaknesses of the theory. He shows us the flaws of the survey which is the basis of Easterlin’s theory, and points out that lack of evidence does not serve as a proof of the opposite. However, his attempt to prove that money leads to happiness fails because the evidence he uses is flawed as well. Therefore, the conclusion that money leads to happiness is not sufficiently supported. So we may say that the relationship between money and happiness remains a puzzle and we need more evidence and information to figure out what it really is.

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RESEARCHED  
ARGUMENT

## *Author's Biography*

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### PATRICK BROWN

Patrick Brown is a member of the class of 2011 from just outside of Seattle, Washington, majoring in Political Science and Economics. His paper, "Pulling Out of NAFTA: The Right Course? The Right Message?" was inspired by the rhetoric and arguments being promulgated during the historic 2008 Presidential Election. In it, he decided to take a deeper look beyond the talking points and explore the history, legacy, and economic and political effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement and what impact it has had on American jobs and international relations.

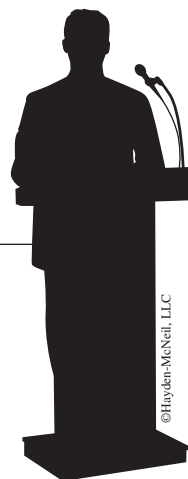
His academic interest in NAFTA and political economics stems from his personal passion, exploring the intersection between current affairs, economics, and culture. Outside the classroom, he is a resident of St. Edward's Hall, performs in the Band of the Fighting Irish, and hosts a weekly radio program on 88.9 WSND-FM.

# Pulling Out of NAFTA

## *The Right Course? The Right Message?*

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PATRICK BROWN



In the midst of their fierce battle for the Democratic nomination, presidential hopefuls Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton have sought to increase their primary voting numbers by appealing to their party's base on issues such as the war in Iraq, universal health care, and progressive fiscal and social policy proposals. As their race moved into states with large bases of industrial voters, such as Ohio, which has seen millions of manufacturing jobs leave in the past couple years, the candidates tailored their message to fit those regions and made concerns about the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, a key part of their electoral platforms. From a political standpoint, the move makes sense: Speaking out against NAFTA not only helps reach out to industrial voters, who may be under the threat of having their jobs outsourced and somewhat (as one candidate infamously put it) "bitter" about factories closing their doors and moving overseas, but also throws a carrot toward those voters who may have serious misgivings about the impact that the free trade pact has had on the environment and labor unions ("On the Defensive"). But while strong anti-NAFTA rhetoric may pay dividends for the candidates at the primary polls in certain states, would the scaling back or elimination of the agreement be the best course for us to take as an entire nation? In order to be able to answer that question, it is necessary to examine the history of the North American Free Trade Agreement, isolate and study what effects it has had, for better or for worse, on American manufacturing and our economy at large, and what message it would send to the world if we were to scale it back in favor of a more protectionist trade policy.

The United States' first foray into creating a free trade area with its neighbors came in 1987, when the U.S. and its neighbor to the north, Canada, agreed to remove almost all tariffs and increase economic opportunities between the two countries by implementing the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (Clinton 11). From

that, expanding the free trade zone to the south to include Mexico was a logical, albeit controversial, progression. The three leaders of their respective countries, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Mexican President Carlos Salinas, and American President George H.W. Bush, agreed to the framework of the agreement in 1992 and it was signed into law a year later by Mulroney, Salinas, and Bush's successor, William Jefferson Clinton. Although Clinton, a Democrat, would normally have been expected to oppose the pact along with many in his party, he found political expediency in working across party lines and making the passage a priority during his first few months in office (Hakim 17).

Before the agreement was ratified, tariffs on goods entering Mexico from the U.S. were about two-and-a-half times greater than Mexican goods coming into the

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*A cessation of the inflow of American capital would obviously greatly reduce the cash flow there, and it is hard to imagine how that would in any way contribute to stopping the cycle of poverty so prevalent in that region of the world.*

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United States, and one half of Mexican products were already allowed to enter duty-free. With the implementation of NAFTA, the Mexican government agreed to eliminate cumbersome and protective tariffs on many industrial products, including computers, aerospace equipment, and telecommunications devices, while leaving the touchy field of agriculture subject to a slow phasing-out process (Clinton 4). At the time of its signing, the Clinton Administration put out a press release that flatly stated the agreement would "create high-wage U.S. jobs, boost U.S. growth, and expand the base from which U.S. firms and workers can compete in a dynamic global economy," and unabashedly proclaimed that "NAFTA Is Good For America" (Clinton 3, 9).

So how well do the effects of the agreement stack up against the hype? Even for skilled economists, separating out the direct results of the agreement from any of the other hundreds of factors that affect a large-scale economy like the United States' is a difficult task. However, a general consensus can be formed concerning some basic facts. It is undeniable that trade between the three countries has increased at a tremendous rate since the trade deal was signed: In 2007, total trade between Mexico and the U.S. was valued at \$347 billion, five-and-a-half times more than the early 1990s. Likewise, total trade with Canada sits at \$562 billion, over three times more than at the time of NAFTA's ratification (Census Bureau). Combined, these three countries have a gross domestic product (GDP) larger than any trade bloc in the world, including the European Union (Hakim 1). Growth in trade has obviously occurred, but the controversy that has surrounded the agreement in each country centered on other issues beyond the raw economic data.

In Mexico, the impact of the agreement, and the public's acceptance of it, could certainly be said to be a mixed bag. While Mexico's economy has grown in the years

since the agreement was signed, wages for the average Mexican worker are actually lower today than they were in 1993 (Audley 6). Critics of the agreement say the reason behind this apparent discrepancy is that the wealth created by the agreement is concentrated in the hands of the already-wealthy factory owners and other members of the upper class, with little of any newly-created income trickling down to the lower class workers, whose presumed economic advancement was one of the main reasons the agreement was originally supported in Mexico. In the words of Andrés Rozental, founding president of *Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales* [The Mexican Council on Foreign Relations], “NAFTA...shows little sign of contributing significantly or quickly to the upward harmonization of Mexico’s economy or society...Most of NAFTA’s benefits have accrued to a small segment of the country’s economy and to an even smaller number of primarily multinational firms” (Hakim 76). However, much of the lack of growth in Mexico can be directly attributed to the economic crisis that the country experienced in 1994–95, which drastically devalued the peso in worldwide markets, but which most economists agree was not caused by the free trade agreement. A report put out by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2004 concluded that the “setback in wages was caused by the peso crisis of 1994–1995—not by NAFTA” (Audley 6). While the critics who allege that the wealth being created flows primarily to those in the upper echelons in society certainly make a valid observation, it is unclear how those less well off would have been helped if American investment dollars had been cut off. A cessation of the inflow of American capital would obviously greatly reduce the cash flow there, and it is hard to imagine how that would in any way contribute to stopping the cycle of poverty so prevalent in that region of the world.

Here in the U.S., domestic opposition to the plan centered on the damage it was predicted NAFTA would cause to American manufacturing jobs. Opponents to the agreement said that its passage would spur firms to move their plants to Mexico in search of a lower wage rate and lower production costs. Notable critics included Pat Buchanan, a contender for the Republican presidential nomination, and Ross Perot, the third-party billionaire who financed his own presidential bid and memorably predicted that NAFTA would create a giant “sucking sound going South” (*New York Times* transcript). However, numerous studies carried out in the intervening fifteen years indicate that rather than a drastic influx or hemorrhage of jobs, “NAFTA’s net effect on jobs in the United States has been minuscule, given the size of the U.S. economy and the importance of other trading partners,” according to the Carnegie report. “The best models to date suggest that NAFTA has caused either no net change in employment or a very small net gain of jobs” (Carnegie 12). A pair of researchers at George Mason University, in a paper directly responding to Perot’s hyperbolic claims, hypothesize the reason that many business did not rush



to Mexico in search of lower-cost workers is because the infrastructure in Mexico could not support a rapid increase in the number of firms producing there. “When one considers that Mexico’s transportation and communication systems are less efficient, Mexican crime rates are higher, and Mexico is farther from U.S. customers, the disincentive for U.S. firms to move to Mexico increases” (Thorbecke 649). While some companies certainly found economic benefit by moving their factories across the border, the indisputable fact is that for most firms, the additional financial costs and less-developed facilities in Mexico made drastic changes cost-prohibitive. Although exact numbers on the amount of firms who did not chose to leave the U.S. are understandably hard to find, it does not take a leap of the imagination or even a trip down to Tijuana to realize that manufacturing facilities in the U.S. are generally in much better condition with much better support systems than ones below the border.

Another objection made against NAFTA takes on the changing nature of American jobs. Robert E. Scott, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute, champions this attack in his paper entitled “The High Price of ‘Free’ Trade.” In it, he accepts the figures that show the pact has not been the direct cause of massive net loss of jobs, but instead makes the case that export-related jobs being shipped overseas are being replaced with lower-paying, lower-quality jobs caused by imports (Scott 10). Scott is correct; as our economy advances technologically, there is no question that a shift is occurring, moving the bulk of our labor force away from manufacturing jobs. But in his paper, Scott conveniently neglects mention of a program called Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA,) which is specifically designed to help workers whose manufacturing jobs have been downsized because of NAFTA by providing them with job development programs, resume writing assistance, and education and job search allowances (U.S. Dept. of Labor). TAA numbers show that as of late 2003, “a total of 525,094 workers had been certified as having lost employment due to NAFTA,” which is less than the 914,000 export-related jobs that the U.S. Trade Representative estimates have been created by the expansion of consumer markets in Mexico (Carnegie 27–28). Plus, as Thorbecke and Eigen-Zucchi from George Mason University point out, “the U.S. contains more higher skilled, higher productivity workers, and Mexico contains more lower skilled, lower productivity workers. Both countries would gain in aggregate if the U.S. specializes in producing goods requiring higher skilled labor and Mexico specializes in producing goods requiring lower skilled labor” (Thorbecke 649). Without delving too deeply into economic theory, this principle, known as “comparative advantage,” has been accepted virtually unanimously by most economists today.

Of course, taking the aggregate numbers of total job losses throughout the nation hides the strong regional variations and patterns that characterize the impact of

NAFTA on the U.S. economy. States in the Rust Belt, such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Indiana have been much more negatively affected than states with little manufacturing such as Kansas, Utah, and Maryland (Scott 5). It is undeniable, as Scott points out, that losses of manufacturing jobs are being covered in the total job numbers by gains in other sectors. However, while Scott is right in pointing out that America is shifting from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy, that shift had already been taking place for years before the passage of NAFTA, and would have continued without the agreement. The truth is, American manufacturing employment experienced its peak in 1979, and was declining even before NAFTA was talked about (Levy). The increase in productivity, the decline of the “Big Three” automakers, technological advances, and a new, globalized economy have all contributed to the decline of American manufacturing, and, no matter what the Presidential candidates might say, it will take more than the revocation of a free trade agreement to get those jobs back again.

As the years passed after the implementation of the agreement, the issue of free trade slowly slipped off the radar screen in many regions of the country, replaced by debate over a stained blue dress, acts of terrorism on U.S. soil, and a turbulent economy. While the passions began to subside over the topic, most, if not all, American citizens, whether they were aware of it or not, were capitalizing on the benefits of the free trade agreement through the form of lower prices on consumer goods produced in Mexico and transported duty-free across the border. Unfortunately, for those employed by U.S. manufacturing firms, however, their job market was about to take a turn for the worse.

From early 2001, seven years after NAFTA's ratification, to the first months of 2004, the American economy lost over two-and-a-half million jobs, with the bulk of those losses coming from the manufacturing sector (Scott 3). Union leaders and political officials hastened to cast the blame on globalization, and specifically NAFTA, for much of that damage, but the facts did not square with their portrayal of the agreement as the culprit for the massive cuts in American jobs. Franklin J. Vargo, a representative with the National Association of Manufacturers, points out that whereas one would expect imports from Mexico to rise dramatically during the U.S.'s period of rapid job loss, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show that in fact, the exact opposite happened: Imports from Mexico actually fell by about \$1.5 billion from 2000 to 2003 (Census Bureau). As Vargo rhetorically asks, “Since our manufactured goods imports from Mexico fell, how could they have been responsible for being the principal cause—or even a significant cause—of the loss of nearly 3 million manufacturing jobs?” (Vargo 154). Also, if Mexico truly was stealing jobs from American manufacturing plants, why did it take an entire seven years after the implementation of NAFTA for the job losses to be noticeable?

The truth is that Mexico was not the country that was benefiting from the decline of American manufacturing. It is true that part of the job drop-off came from the curse of being a highly efficient and higher-skilled economy and that as U.S. workers grew more skilled, educated, and productive, by default the need for more jobs shrank as each worker contributed more. In fact, statistics from the U.S. Federal Reserve show that production—not the raw number of jobs—in the manufacturing sector has risen in every year since NAFTA’s enactment, save terror-affected 2001 (Federal Reserve). But increased productivity alone cannot account for the almost three million job drop-off in the manufacturing sector around the turn of the century. A new, exogenous player was beginning to reach across the sea and affect the balance of jobs in the Americas: China.

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*The preponderance of the evidence shows that NAFTA and Mexico cannot truly be assigned the title of primary causes of the decline of American manufacturing.*

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In 2001, China entered the World Trade Organization, a group of countries dedicated to liberalizing and supervising international trade, accelerating its rise as a global power (WTO). By 2003, it had become the United States’ second-highest provider of imports after Canada, knocking Mexico out of that spot. Today, China provides the United States with over \$26 billion dollars of imported goods annually, or 15.7% of the total goods imported by the U.S. That figure has been steadily increasing, showing few signs of slowing, from the early 1990s and into the new millennium. Currently, China stands a mere tenth-of-a-percentage-point behind Canada for the top slot, while Mexico’s percentage of total imports provided, currently 10.2%, lags behind in a distant third (Census Bureau). Professor Peter Karl Kresl, from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, calls the emergent China “the 800-pound gorilla” that has “taken the steam out of NAFTA for Mexico...as a source of exports to the US market” and points out that the combined effects of China, India, and other developing nations “dwarf the effects of the NAFTA” for both the Mexican and American economies (Kresl 6, 11).

For firms for which outsourcing manufacturing is a potentially attractive option, moving to China makes fiscal sense. As cross-global transportation and communication have improved over the decade, the geographic advantage Mexico holds over China has diminished in importance, and because of the vast population difference, Chinese workers usually command a wage of up to five to six times less than that of their Mexican workers (Greider 22). China boasts a tremendous advantage over Mexico in terms of personnel resources, with a labor force base of over 803.3 million people, compared to Mexico’s 45.3 million, and China has the upper hand economically as well, posting an astonishing GDP growth rate of 11.4% in 2007. Mexico’s economy, on the hand, grew at a significantly more modest rate of 3% (CIA). As William Greider, a senior correspondent for *The Nation* magazine,

pointed out in late 2001, these numbers show the great amount of foreign investment, production, and capital that is flowing into the Middle Kingdom and drawing attention away from the land south of the Rio Grande. Greider argues that a firm that may not want to take a chance on technologically under-developed Mexico can find much-higher quality infrastructure and technical support in China, claiming, “[China’s emergence affects more than] just jobs. China also takes scarce foreign capital from other developing countries, as investors seek the most promising returns. China, one should add, is not doing anything to gain its advantage that other nations didn’t do before it or that the global system considers illegitimate” (Grieder 23). Recently, the Chinese have come under some scrutiny for providing substantial subsidies to their manufacturing companies and undervaluing their currency, the yuan (Barboza). If these minor controversies blow up into something bigger and draw the attention of the global community, they could somewhat hinder China’s economic growth, but as of now, it remains to be seen how much of an effect, if any, these concerns will have on slowing the stream of jobs across the Pacific.

The issue of how U.S. manufacturing jobs and wages, especially those in certain regions of our country, are affected by the rise of China is a topic of great interest to our nation, but lies outside of the scope of this paper. Let it suffice to say that the preponderance of the evidence shows that NAFTA and Mexico cannot truly be assigned the title of primary causes of the decline of American manufacturing, and any discussion about U.S. trade must be careful to separate the effects of NAFTA from those of China. In that light, we can consider the side issues raised by those opposed to NAFTA’s continuation.

The two major concerns that have been most often raised against NAFTA center on the agreement’s lack of strong labor and environmental protections. Even in 1993, when the pact was ratified, the need for stronger regulations on the protection of unions and the environment was recognized, and acted upon, by the Clinton Administration, who included supplementary provisions to the final bill. The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC) were passed as supplements to NAFTA with the intent of strengthening it. It is recognized on many fronts that both the NAAEC and NAALC do not go far enough in terms of reining in potential environmental abuses and protecting unionized workers, and they are often cited as reasons to withdraw from the agreement (Scott 11). But, while weak, those accords offer a foothold into setting appropriate parameters to follow for Mexican factories and companies that may otherwise go unregulated. According to the Carnegie study, “NAFTA is neither the sole cause, nor, in most cases, the primary cause of growing environmental pressures associated with Mexico’s agricultural sector” (Carnegie 76). Also, statistics published in the late

1990s by the Clinton Administration show that from the beginning of the agreement to 1997, “serious violations” of Mexican environmental law by border factories, or *maquiladoras*, dropped by over 70 percent (U.S. Study 112). These standards certainly have room for improvement, and calls to strengthen them are not out of order, but their weaknesses are inadequate excuses to pull out of the pact.

The truth is that for the United States, the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement was always about more than just the free passage of goods from one country to another. We already had a free trade agreement with Canada, who was then, and is now, the biggest consumer of our exported goods, and the marginally lower prices on consumer goods were not enough of a substantial reduction to truly rally people around the free trade flag. Yes, the trade benefits were substantial: For most of the 1990s, the United States’ exports to Mexico and Canada grew about twice as fast as its exports to the rest of the world combined (Vargo 158). But even more importantly than the economic advantages gained from the pact, the U.S. was able to ensure Mexico would continue on its turn away from protectionist trade policies and socialist fiscal principles. Daniel Griswold, director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank based out of Washington, D.C., argues that:

[For the United States,] NAFTA was more about foreign policy than about the domestic economy...[It attempted to] institutionalize our southern neighbor’s turn away from centralized protectionism and toward decentralized, democratic capitalism. By that measure, NAFTA has been a spectacular success. In the decade since signing NAFTA, Mexico has continued along the road of economic and political reform. It has successfully decoupled its economy from the old boom-and-bust, high-inflation, debt-ridden model (Griswold 1).

This, I would argue, is the lasting legacy of NAFTA. By helping our markets and companies, and those of our geographic neighbors, to move towards an attitude of open competition and away from protectionism, we are sending a positive and, I believe, appropriate message to the rest of the world. At a time when our image around the world is suffering and many at home are arguing for a more isolationist foreign policy, NAFTA is a signal to countries in our hemisphere and around the globe that we are recognizing the need for greater international cooperation and openness by not imposing artificial tariffs and protecting our industries from external competition.

We have seen that NAFTA appears not to have had a major impact on U.S. jobs, has helped pave the way for environmental standards, and has set a clear, positive message to the rest of the world about the United States’ openness to trade. So why then are two major Presidential candidates striving to out-denounce each other

when it comes to the agreement? The anti-NAFTA rhetoric was at its peak when the candidates were campaigning in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and while the rise of China periodically becomes an issue of importance on our national radar screen, NAFTA still remains the favorite whipping-child for candidates seeking to bolster their credentials on trade and labor issues. The reason behind this is simple: In an interview that aired February 28, 2008 on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," Pierrette Talley, secretary of the Ohio chapter of AFL-CIO, admitted that NAFTA has not had the impact on American jobs many detractors claim, while explaining that the reason that NAFTA has so much traction around election time is because when the agreement was originally signed, organized labor fought hard against it and affirmed its importance in the minds of workers. "Workers know about NAFTA because we did a lot of education in the 90s," Talley says, adding that because the push against the agreement was the union's last nationwide movement, it "cemented NAFTA as a big issue" in the minds of union voters, thereby ensuring its political saliency for years to come for candidates looking for an edge among that demographic ("Non-Issue?"). Also, the relative softness of NAFTA, a target that, unlike China, lacks a government to speak for on its behalf or a tremendous and one-sided trade deficit to complicate matters, helps make the agreement the convenient punching bag it has become in the primary election cycle.

At the risk of sounding hokey, it seems appropriate to recall the title of a book by noted economist and *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman: *The World is Flat*. As he and countless others have pointed out, with the onset of globalization and the advent of technologies our grandparents could never have dreamed of, our entire industrial, cultural, and social paradigms have undergone tremendous change in just the past two decades. Although repealing NAFTA may not have a serious impact one way or another on American jobs, products, or consumption, eliminating the agreement and discarding the philosophy underlying it would be a disastrous message for the American government to send to its allies and friends around the world. Advocating for a weakening or elimination of NAFTA may make for good primary politics, but, if pursued at a national level, it would prove an irresponsible move that would tell the world that the U.S. is determined to ignore the complex geo-political realities of today's world and protectively pursue our own interests to the exclusion of the global community at large.

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N.B.: Audley, Greider, Griswold, Kresl, Thorbecke, and Vargo articles accessed through EBSCOHost database. Access provided by University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.



## *Author's Biography*

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JOSEPH D. DUFOUR

Joseph is a native of Mt. Carroll, Illinois. He currently resides in St. Edward's Hall under the shadow of the Dome. He is studying for a double major in Political Science and Arabic. His plans include law school followed by a career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Joseph enjoys swimming, movies and friends.

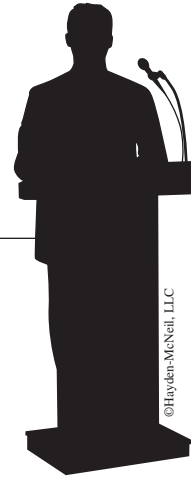
The year 2008 found our country in the midst of a presidential election that will forever be a part of history. While there were many topics argued, discussed and debated, one that interested the author was the energy crisis. He was very intrigued with then candidate Barack Obama's Green Jobs Plan. This was driven home when as a freshman, the University of Notre Dame's yearly Forum was themed "*Sustainable Energy: Enlighten, Engage, Empower.*" This served as the catalyst for his FYC Research Essay. Joe is grateful to Professor Duffy for his guidance and influence in writing.

# Going Nuclear

## *Fusing the Politics and Economics of Nuclear Energy*

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JOSEPH D. DUFOUR



On December 20, 1951, in a small town in Idaho, less than one square mile, several of the world's most intelligent physicists held their breath as they flipped a switch that had the power to change history. Six years, four months, and fourteen days after the first nuclear weapon was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, these pioneering scientists were attempting to turn nuclear energy from one of the most feared weapons of war into electrical power for the first time. As they flipped the switch, four 200-Watt light bulbs lit up. The world's first nuclear reactor, the Experimental Breeder Reactor I (EBR-1), was generating electricity for the first time (National Historic Landmarks). Two and a half years later at 5:30 p.m. on June 26, 1954, the nuclear power reactor near Obninsk, Russia, was turned on and power was generated by a nuclear reactor for the mainstream power grid and for 2,000 residential houses. Nuclear power finally crossed the Grand Canyon of scientific leaps. In one decade, nuclear technology went from being a strange new idea, to being the world's most powerful weapon, to being the world's newest source of energy for the greater population of the planet (International Atomic Energy Association).

Today, there are 439 nuclear reactors in use and thirty-nine are in construction around the world. Of these, the United States currently operates 104 reactors within its borders (International Atomic Energy Association). Yet somehow, we are facing one of the biggest energy disasters the world has ever faced: the end of our oil driven energy economy. Paul Roberts points out in his book *The End of Oil* that even by conservative estimates, the amount of oil that we can withdraw from the earth per day will peak in the next thirty years at the longest. This means that in the next century, we will be relying more and more on our so-called "alternative energy sources." These alternatives will soon become our primary resources. One of the most disturbing aspects to our current energy debacle is that we are looking

for more oil and coal, while also seeing how we can make what we have last longer. This is disturbing because oil and coal are not renewable sources, nor are they environmentally sound. The automobile industry is looking for ways to reinvent the car with new energy sources like the Hydrogen-Fuel Cells. However, the energy industry needs to do some looking of its own. We need an energy source that has what I refer to as the four R's: Renewable, Reliable, environmentally Responsible, and economically Reasonable.

Back in 1976, Barry Commoner, in his book *The Poverty of Power*, quoted the Federal Energy Administration as saying, “[Nuclear Energy] is expected to account for about 15 percent of demand by 1985 and about 30 to 40 percent by the year 2000” (82). Yet here we sit, in the year 2008, with nuclear energy consumption in

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*So, we find that if we start a new reactor with a mass of 104 Kilograms, it will be able to sustain itself for 703.8 million years... It would be very hard to disagree with the idea that nuclear power is a sustainable energy source.*

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the United States having plateaued at just 19.39 percent of total energy consumption. Are we possibly sitting on the answer to our current energy dilemma? Commoner also wrote, “If the U.S. Government can be said to have *any* policy for the solution of the energy crisis, it is that we will be saved by nuclear power” (82, italics in original). So, if the government of the United States had the idea that nuclear energy could save us then, why can it not save us now? Is nuclear energy really renewable, reliable, environmentally responsible, and economically reasonable? There is always the opportunity and possibility for more research to find better renewable, reliable, responsible, and reasonable energy sources; but for now, nuclear power seems to be one of the best long-term solutions for our energy needs.

Let's take on the first R: Renewable. To avoid any confusion, I must point out that nuclear energy is not truly renewable by definition, but rather highly sustainable in comparison to fossil fuels. To understand nuclear energy, one must understand a little chemistry. Half life is an important concept because half life is the amount of time it takes for half of a given amount of material to deteriorate. The half life of the most common isotope in reactors, Uranium-235, is 703.8 million years. Another important term in understanding the “Renewability” of nuclear power is critical mass. Critical mass is the amount of Uranium-235 that needs to be present to maintain a self-sustaining nuclear reaction for a given reactor. The critical mass of Uranium-235 varies slightly by the type of reactor, but is generally 52 Kilograms (Georgia State University). So, if we combine these two ideas, we will find out that if we start a new reactor with a mass of 104 Kilograms, it will be able to sustain itself for 703.8 million years. No reactor will ever run that long continuously without maintenance though, and in no way would a reactor ever be allowed to run without

constant monitoring by human technicians. It would be very hard to disagree with the idea that nuclear power is not a sustainable energy source.

Nuclear energy may one day be a renewable energy source. In spite of the critics, programs are moving forward around the world to improve the reprocessing method for nuclear fuel. The idea for the reprocessing of fuel rods, (the ability to reuse spent rods that would otherwise be discarded), has been around since early on in the days of nuclear power. Even in the 1970s, initiatives were started that cut the amount of waste from nuclear power generators from 0.5 percent of the nuclear material to 0.0001 percent of the original mass (Commoner 91). With this type of conservation, one can only imagine the possibilities for the future. It is feasible to say, that one day we may have the ability to reprocess the nuclear material to a point where its energy possibilities are not only maximized, but the level of radioactivity remaining in it is so miniscule that it could have no adverse effects on people if it were to come in contact with the general population. As of now, according to the Energy Information Administration, procedures are already in place that “include recycling (reprocessing) substantial portions of the spent fuel as usable nuclear fuels and transmuting problem components of nuclear fuel into less harmful components.” So even though by definition nuclear power is not a renewable source of energy, it is a very sustainable form of energy that we can rely on for the future.

Not only is nuclear energy sustainable, but it is also a very reliable source. Many people attempt to contradict this finding by citing the instances of nuclear accidents. The most notable of these accidents was the Chernobyl Disaster in the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. On April 26, 1986, one of the reactors at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant had a meltdown and experienced a steam explosion that exposed the control rods; thus contaminating a large portion of the surrounding area with radiation. A major misconception with this horrible disaster is the idea that nuclear power is unstable. The disaster occurred because the operators switched off the alarms and warning systems to perform an experiment. Another Russian scientist, Legasov, later compared it to pilots experimenting with their engines in flight (Mahidol Wittayanusorn School). The actual risk of being exposed to radiation due to a nuclear reactor disaster is so minute that Dr. Dixy Lee Ray, the former head of the Atomic Energy Commission, at one time compared the risk of nuclear radiation exposure to the risk of being bitten by a poisonous snake on the streets of Washington, D.C. The Rasmussen Reports group conducted a study to estimate the actual risk of dying due to certain external factors. They found the chance of dying in a car accident was one in 4,000, in a plane crash was one in 100,000, and in a tornado was one in 2,500,000. The risk of dying due to a nuclear reactor accident was found to be one in 300,000,000 (Commoner 95). It seems

strange that so many people worry about their risk from a nuclear disaster when they have a three hundred times higher chance of dying in a plane crash.

Nuclear energy gets a bad reputation from a few highly publicized incidents such as the Chernobyl Disaster, and in a way, that fear is rightfully justified. It is estimated that if just one one-thousandth of the nuclear radioactive material used in reactors around the world were released, 78,000 new cases of cancer would directly result (Commoner 102–103). Therein lies the dilemma, the risk is so minimal and yet at the same time the consequences are so extreme. How can we make the right decision given these huge consequences and yet small risk?

First, nuclear reactors are safer today than ever. Nuclear reactors in the United States conduct a drill every two years to prepare for the event of a nuclear accident, and every year in between, nuclear power plants conduct a drill to prepare for a hostile action. In other words, nuclear power plants are ready for everything from a fire near the reactor to an armed assault by terrorists. Every reactor also has safety features built-in to the reactors and their containment buildings. The standard containment building surrounds the entire reactor and is comprised of a massive 150 foot diameter hemisphere. Within the containment unit, there are special sprinkler systems designed to drain out radiation should there be a release from the reactor core. There is also a highly complex backup cooling system should the primary cooling system fail. All these measures are to help prevent the possible fallout from a reactor meltdown. If the core overheated enough to melt, it would burn its way through the containment building and start contaminating the surrounding area in less than twenty four hours (Commoner 93–94). However, the risk of such an accident is extremely small, even in comparison to that of a plane crash. Even though it carries the possibility of such dangerous consequences, nuclear energy is still a very reliable and available long-term solution to our current energy needs.

So far, nuclear energy's renewability and reliability have been discussed, now it is time to discuss how environmentally responsible it is. What does that mean? The third of the four "R's" in the criteria set forth for a superior energy source has a multitude of meanings. The most important purpose is that our next major energy source has to have less damaging effects on the environment. Radiation is one of the most poisonous substances known to man, so how can nuclear power be considered environmentally responsible? For one, no radiation escapes into the atmosphere. Also, nuclear reactors provide the power to run themselves as well, not relying on any external energy from fossil fuel sources. One of the most powerful facts in support of nuclear power is the complete lack of carbon emissions from nuclear energy production. As it is being produced, nuclear energy releases absolutely no emissions other than steam into the atmosphere. However, to produce energy of the same amount (one megawatt-hour) through coal production, 2,278

pounds of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides are released into the atmosphere; to produce that amount of energy through oil, 1,688 pounds of emissions are released; and to produce the same amount of energy through natural gas 1,136.8 pounds of emissions are released (Energy Information Administration). The Energy Information association states,

“On a pound per pound basis the potential environment costs of waste produced by nuclear plant is usually viewed as higher than the environmental cost of most wastes from fossil fuels plants. [However,] the volume of waste from the nuclear plant is substantially less and better controlled.”

Compared to the standard methods of producing energy for the power grid, nuclear energy is much cleaner.

However, one must wonder what we are going to do with all the nuclear waste as it begins to build up? Another former head of the Federal Energy Administration, Frank Zarb, said, “A single aspirin tablet has the same volume as the waste produced in generating...one person’s share of the country’s electric output for an entire year.” The problem though, as Commoner points out, is that with the mass of one aspirin tablet, nuclear material has the power and toxicity to kill one hundred people. This material must be isolated from people and guarded for well upwards of 200,000 years (90). So how are we supposed to accomplish this?

The United States’ government has built a geological storage facility under Yucca Mountain in Nevada that can contain up to 77,000 tons of nuclear waste, according to the Governor of Nevada. This site could hold all of our current spent nuclear fuel being stored at multiple sites around the country and then some. Again however, the Governor points out the problem that by the time we fill Yucca Mountain to capacity, we will have already generated more nuclear fuel to where we will have almost as much spent fuel at the separate sites around the country that we have now. But, when all hope seems lost there is usually a light at the end of the tunnel. Yucca Mountain’s capacity could be doubled, safely, without compromising the stability of the storage facility (Yucca Mountain). Not only that, but if we open Yucca Mountain at its maximum possible capacity and keep open the sites we currently have around the country, it is safe to say that even if we increased the amount of nuclear energy that we use substantially, we could store the spent nuclear fuel safely that is created in one hundred years of nuclear energy production at the current sites. Another interesting idea to propose is that with the current trend of recycling spent nuclear fuel, we are continuously decreasing the length of time that the material would be dangerous to humans. Commoner talked about the possibility of future nuclear reprocessing methods in his book from 1976. Many methods of reprocessing have been developed now and the ideas he put forth in his book are coming

true to the extent that we are accomplishing more as far as reprocessing goes every year (Commoner 91, Energy Information Administration). Nuclear energy is an environmentally responsible energy source that we should consider as a strong option in our search for new energy sources.

Now that the renewability, reliability, and responsibility of nuclear energy have been deliberated, time has come to discuss economics and the economic reasonability of the future of nuclear energy. The hard fact is that nuclear power plants are more expensive to build than coal, natural gas, or oil plants, but these have a much higher environmental cost that comes along with them. However, nuclear power plants would probably cost about the same or less than solar or wind farms because they are newer technologies that are still paying off the costs of their research. The United States has already fallen far behind in the nuclear energy trend. The United States' nuclear production of 19.6 percent of our total energy consump-

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*A single aspirin tablet has the same volume as the nuclear waste produced in generating one person's share of the country's electric output for an entire year.*

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tion trails France with 77.7 percent, Belgium with 59 percent, and Sweden with 43.1 percent. Other countries that we fall behind include Switzerland, Spain, Finland, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Even Canada is quickly catching up to us in the percentage of nuclear energy that they use compared to their total energy output (International Energy Agency, 155). Many countries adopt nuclear policies for several reasons: especially renewability, reliability, environmental responsibility, and economic reasonability.

A new nuclear power plant not only costs millions of dollars, but it also takes a long time to gain the permit from the government to build a new reactor site. Just like with any bureaucracy, there is a lot of red tape to cut through to be able to get the ball rolling on a project. Then, once a company has obtained a permit to build a reactor, it is a matter of finding the capital to build. However, all these costs, in time and capital, pay off in the long run once a reactor is built, started, and begins pumping energy into the power grid. As was stated in the previous section on environmental responsibility, the environmental costs of nuclear energy are very small compared to that of fossil fuels. That "cost" is not only measured in the harm done to the environment, but also in the fact that companies that pollute often are penalized, and that penalty is often carried to the energy consumers. Nuclear energy's cost of production is also carried to the consumers, but is often a similar price to that of fossil fuel energy. Initially, the price of nuclear may be more expensive than fossil fuels, but in the long-run the cost is less for nuclear.

Just as nuclear power has lower emission levels, nuclear also has a far lower production cost than other energy resources. One of the main arguments for continuing to use coal as our primary energy source is its relative affordability. However, nuclear

energy's cost of production is only 1.72 cents per kilo-watt-hour. So how much does coal cost if it is so cheap? Coal energy's cost of production is 1.80 cents per kilo-watt-hour, 0.08 cents more per kilo-watt-hour than nuclear power. This may seem miniscule, even on a large-scale, but the numbers show that nuclear energy has a lower production cost. Nuclear also has a lower production cost than oil at 5.53 cents per kilo-watt-hour and natural gas at 5.77 cents (South Texas Project). Along with being cheaper than fossil fuels, nuclear is also very beneficial to the Gross Domestic Product of the United States. Nuclear power is a huge industry in the United States, generating \$420 billion dollars in sales annually. Many jobs are also generated through the production of nuclear power. A total of 4.4 million people are employed by the industry, from nuclear physicists to the plant guards that keep the reactors safe. The government also benefits from the production of nuclear power, generating \$77.8 billion dollars in taxes from its production (South Texas Project). Much of the money that the government raises through these taxes goes straight back to the industry and raises the funds for projects like the building of the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository in Nevada. Nuclear power is economically reasonable not just because of the lower costs of production, but also because of the greater economic benefit that it generates for the nation as a whole.

Over one-half of a century has passed since the first nuclear reactor generated power to light four light bulbs for the first time. The United States currently operates 104 nuclear reactors spread across the country that generate approximately 19.6 percent of our annual energy consumption. We are continuously falling behind competing countries in nuclear energy production, and it is costing us. The United States, and the world, is going through a major energy resource crisis. We are looking for a better resource to create energy than fossil fuel. The next major energy source we will use will need to meet certain criteria. Four primary criteria it must meet are the four R's of Renewability, Reliability, environmental Responsibility, and economic Reasonability. Nuclear energy has been around since the 1950s, and yet somehow we are not exploiting the full potential. Even though it is not renewable by definition, it has the potential to be even more sustainable than it is now, and is much more sustainable than our current use of fossil fuels. Although there have been a few highly publicized accidents, nuclear energy is very safe because the risk of an accident is extremely small. The environment is not directly affected by nuclear energy production because it has no emissions other than steam and the spent fuel rods are strictly guarded and protected. Finally, the economic benefits are huge in the long-run for nuclear energy.

This world needs to change direction on its energy usage. Few would argue that we need to get away from fossil fuels. Great possibilities lie in store for the future: hydrogen, solar, and wind. But what we need right now is a resource that we can create



quickly and on a large-scale. Nuclear energy is highly sustainable, nuclear energy is highly reliable, nuclear energy is environmentally responsible, and nuclear energy is economically reasonable. Going nuclear is one of our best options for the immediate future. We must act for the future, before the future acts for us.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### JOHN HELMS

John Helms, an Edina, Minnesota native, currently resides in Siegfried Hall. John's career as a writer has been a varied one. He's used a plethora of pen names in his work, most notably J.K. Rowling, Dr. Seuss, and Mother Goose. Be on the lookout for John's next novel coming this April, *Harry Potter and the Temple of Doom*.

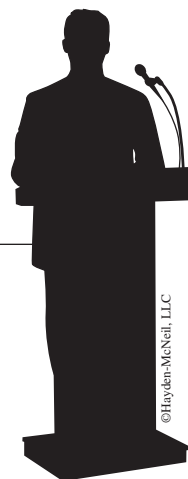
On a serious note, this essay is largely a result of John's growing interest in the rhetoric of politics. He hopes to double major in Finance and Political Science. John would also like to thank his FYC writing instructor, Joel Dodson, one last time for all his help.

# After All, It's Just War Theory

## An Inadequate Model for Evaluating Modern Warfare

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JOHN HELMS



“Some men aren’t looking for anything logical, like money. They can’t be bought, bullied, reasoned or negotiated with. Some men just want to watch the world burn.” Although this quote from the 2008 blockbuster, *The Dark Knight*, is used to discuss a purely fictional villain in “The Joker,” its characterizations of terrorists are generally accurate. In fact, for many years, the U.S. has struggled to answer the same exact question that plagues Batman throughout the movie: how do you justly respond to such men, who seek nothing for their own gain, but only the destruction of others? In its current foreign policy, the Bush Administration has proclaimed that the most appropriate and just method of response is to take direct action against these terrorists, thus beginning its well-documented “war on terror.” However, this decision has been highly debated. The war has incited a multitude of arguments that seem focused on answering one question: Is this war truly a just one?

Not surprisingly, many prominent scholars, and even the Bush Administration, have turned to the just war theory in their arguments. They inevitably use this theory as rhetoric to help illustrate their views. The just war theory lays out a series of specific principles to determine the righteousness of a war. Among these principles: a war must have a just cause, resulting from only self-defense or a preemptive strike, and it must have an obtainable goal. However, attempting to justify the war on terror using these principles, as the Bush Administration does, is problematic. Terrorism is, after all, an ideal. It is unseen and unconnected to a specific nation. In a critical application, terrorism does not furnish the knowledge necessary to uphold either of the aforementioned principles: It is simply not credible. But does this lack of credibility automatically dictate that the war against terrorism is unjust? As I will show through an examination of the Bush Administration’s rhetoric in support of the war on terror, as well as that of its detractors, there is only one appropriate

conclusion: The just war theory is inevitably an inadequate means of analysis for this “war.”

According to Alexander Moseley of the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, throughout history the just war theory has been used either historically or theoretically. Since a war on terror is unprecedented, those who have attempted to justify the war can only use the latter. As Moseley defines it, “the theoretical aspect is concerned with *ethically* justifying war and forms of warfare” (n.p). In order to “ethically justify a war,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church lays out four principles:

1. The damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain.
2. All other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective.
3. There must be serious prospects of success.
4. The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition. (The Just War Doctrine)

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*While it is true that the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks played a pivotal role in the cause of the war on terror, an assumption that the war is solely responding to the men responsible for these attacks misunderstands the scope of the war.*

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As Jeremy Lott of *Reason Magazine* suggests in his article, “A Just Crusade?”, President Bush appeals to the just war theory as rhetoric to justify the war, addressing every single principle in his introductory speech (a matter we will come back to shortly). But Bush’s approach is flawed. The second and third principles are the most troublesome for the war on terror. The second principle pertains to the cause of war. Essentially, it says war can only result as an absolute last resort. Theorists

generally contend that there is only one real circumstance in which this is the case: an act of self-defense. However, self-defense can be expanded into the idea of a preemptive strike as “the principle of self-defense can be extrapolated to anticipate acts of aggression...Therefore, it is commonly held that aggressive war is only permissible if its purpose is to retaliate against a wrong already committed, or to pre-empt an anticipated attack” (Moseley). Such a strike can only exist against an imminent and unavoidable threat. Unless there exists such a threat, a strike cannot be labeled as “preemptive,” it must be labeled as “preventative,” which falls outside the theory of just war.

The reason for this ties back to the fundamentals of the second principle: If a war is simply “preventative,” it is not necessarily being waged as an absolute last resort. In this case, there are still other means of settling the conflict that have yet to be explored. As Joseph Schwartz said in his presentation to the American Political Science Association, “Just-war theory only justifies truly preemptive wars against

hostile nations on the verge of attack...But the doctrine of preventive war—which justifies a nation initiating a war against a potential enemy that might someday gain the ability to inflict harm upon the attacking state—has always been rejected by just war theorists” (29). The third principle deals with the prospect of success. Again, there must be a reasonable or “serious” chance of succeeding in the war. The terms “serious” and “reasonable” are somewhat vague and automatically insert a certain level of personal opinion. But regardless of this, one thing is certain about this principle: There must be an obtainable goal set forth from the onset. Without such a goal, it would be impossible to attain “success.”

Before examining the Bush Administration’s appeal to the just war theory to justify the war on terror, it is important that we first look at similar appeals made by several prominent scholars. These scholars have promoted the idea that the war’s cause is a direct result of self-defense from the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. In doing so, they apply the cause of the Afghanistan campaign, which directly followed these attacks, to the entire war on terror. In her novel, *Just War Against Terror*, Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain, a renowned political philosopher and editor for *The New Republic*, first establishes that the method of terrorism is “the random murder of innocent people,” then argues the war on terror has a just cause because “when examining the evidence, we can see that the United States’ military response in Afghanistan clearly meets the just criterion of being a war fought with the right intention to punish wrongdoers and...stop them from murdering civilians in the future” (61). In other words, it is a war of self defense: America is directly responding to the individuals who attacked them. Former Secretary of Education and political theorist, William J. Bennett, supports this same idea in his book, *Why We Fight*. Although he first acknowledges that support for the war has “weakened over time,” he argues that those who now believe the cause of the war is unjust must remember Afghanistan, saying “I would not be surprised if in historical retrospect, the Afghanistan campaign were to qualify as one of the most just wars ever fought” (54).

Bennett and Elshtain’s justification of the cause of the war is problematic. While it is true that the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks played a pivotal role in the cause of the war on terror, an assumption that the war is solely responding to the men responsible for these attacks misunderstands the scope of the war. It is true that the Afghanistan campaign was the initial battle of the war on terror, but its individual cause is not applicable to the entire war. As President Bush said in his October 2001 Presidential Address to the Nation, “Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader. Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves” (“Address to the Nation” n.p). Clearly, the purpose of the war on terror is much greater than, as Elshtain describes, to “punish

the wrongdoers” who were responsible for 9/11. It is to prevent future threats from developing.

As stated, the Bush Administration also appeals to the just war theory to justify the war on terror. Unlike Bennett and Elshtain, they show this by adamantly claiming that the cause of the war is of a preemptive nature. In the National Security Strategy, the Administration discusses the threat of terrorism, saying that “shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores... Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction” (*National Security* 15). They label this threat as imminent and next proceed to proclaim the legitimacy of waging a preemptive attack against such imminent threats:

We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries...For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat (*National Security* 15).

This section is invaluable to the Bush Administration: It establishes the credibility of the just war theory while relating it to the war. The Administration first states that we must view the threat the terrorists pose as an imminent one. This clearly refers to the just war theory’s second principle, as this idea is plainly articulated by Moseley. They proceed by establishing the credibility of the just war theory, saying that “legal scholars” and “international jurists” believe in the use of “preemption” against an imminent threat. Hence, they believe it is only appropriate for them to appeal to such a credible means of analysis. Finally, the Bush Administration bluntly states the cause for the war on terror: “As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed” (*National Security* 15). Thus, the Bush Administration believes its cause in the war on terror upholds the just war theory: It is simply a matter of preemptive self-defense.

The Bush Administration also appeals to just war theory in order to justify the war on terror by illustrating its goal with a certainty of victory. In his Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, President Bush states, “the only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows” (“Address to a Joint Session” n.p). He continues, saying, “our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated” (“Address to a Joint Session” n.p). This goal is certainly a lofty one, to completely eliminate an

ideal from the world. However, Bush is vehement in his belief that it is obtainable. He acknowledges skepticism, and refutes it thus: "Americans are asking: How will we fight and win this war? We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war" ("Address to a Joint Session" n.p). In the end, he is convinced that the goal is not only obtainable, but that the United States will undoubtedly succeed. He ends a parallel speech saying, "We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will not fail" ("Address to Nation" n.p).

Despite the Bush Administration's best efforts, these rhetorical characterizations of the war ultimately do not uphold the principles of just war theory. In the case of the cause of the war, the problem lies in the nature of terrorism. Terrorism is marked by uncertainty: It is deceptive, coercive, and manipulative. As scholars Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter point out in their study "The Strategies of Terrorism," terrorism has five strategic logics: attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling, and outbidding (Kydd 2). With attrition, the terrorists attempt to convince the enemy that they are powerful enough to inflict harm on them if the state continues to practice a certain policy. With intimidation, the terrorists' aim is to make the general population believe that their government is too weak to stop them. A provocation strategy is aimed at turning the general population against its government, while the goal of spoiling is to set two nations against each other. Outbidding is the final strategy, in which they try to convince the public that they are worthy of support (Kydd 2). While there are important differences in all of these, there is one crucial similarity: They all take different paths to accomplish the goal of developing uncertainty in their enemies. As Kydd remarks, "uncertainty has long been understood to be a cause of conflict" (Kydd 3). This understanding of terrorism applies perfectly to the attacks of September 11th and the war on terror. The attacks sent a massive wave of uncertainty throughout the country. This uncertainty evolved into conflict, a conflict which is expressed through the war on terror. Thus, the true cause of the war on terror was in the uncertainty felt by America following the attacks, not as a matter of preemptive self-defense proclaimed by the Bush administration. As Schwartz argues, a war based on uncertainty is instead one of preventative nature, which again falls outside the bounds of just war theory. The war on terror "advocates a potential unlimited series of preventive wars against anyone, any group, or any nation that at some point might threaten the United States" (Schwartz 32).

The uncertainty produced by terrorism is not just a condition of the American people, but it is a condition of terrorism itself. On this level, it is impossible for a war on an ideal such as terror to ever have a strictly preemptive purpose, as a preemptive strike must be against an attack that is considered imminent and unavoidable.



A threat like terrorism could never be considered as such, because it is marked by coercion and deception. Simply put, terrorism is not credible. According to a *USA Today* article entitled “Terrorism Hoaxes Still Plaguing Law Agencies,” “senior federal officials say they still are forced to run down hoaxes nearly every day, creating a huge drain on agents’ ability to pursue real threats to the nation’s security” (Hall n.p). Another example of this is the anthrax scare of 2001, in which terrorists repeatedly and falsely claimed that they would expose the disease to millions of Americans. It was a threat which caused an enormous uproar and inevitably amounted to almost nothing. Both of these show that the federal government is often unable to know for certain whether all terrorist threats are legitimate or not. Therefore, it is impossible to characterize the threats of terrorism as imminent and unavoidable: There are thousands of documented “hoaxes” each day. Thus, the preemptive nature of the war on terror proves to be problematic, as there is rarely an opportunity to attribute credibility to a given threat.

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*He has essentially said one impressive nothing: that in order to defeat the terrorists, we must destroy them, and the only way to destroy them is to defeat them.*

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With respect to the issue of prospective success, while Bush strongly believes the underlying goal of the war to “defeat terrorism” is obtainable, he is unable to define clearly how this is so. Bush’s rhetoric begs the question when attempting to define this end goal. In his “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” he first says the only way to defeat terrorism is to “destroy” it, then he says that the only way the war can end is when the “terrorist groups are defeated.” It becomes clear, without his fancy wording, that he

has essentially said one impressive nothing: that in order to defeat the terrorists, we must destroy them, and the only way to destroy them is to defeat them. The main point here is that he has no way of identifying the point at which the terrorists are defeated. As Professor Stanley Hauerwas, *Time Magazine*’s theologian of the year, points out in “In a Time of War: An Exchange,” “the Bush administration...needs to say what constitutes a ‘terminal point.’ If a war is to be just, the purpose—which is necessary so your enemy will know the conditions for surrender—must be stated at the beginning. Asking the Taliban to turn over Osama bin Laden comes close to naming such a purpose. A war on terrorism does not” (n.p). Here, Hauerwas makes a salient point. According to just war theory, there must be a stated and obtainable purpose that one can point to as a “terminal point.” Without this, a war cannot be considered just according to just war theory.

Hauerwas’s argument brings our analysis of just war theory and the war on terror in a new direction. He, unlike Bush, appeals to just war theory to discredit the war on terror. However, his larger argument is one that promotes pacifism. This argument brings a new question to light: Is it appropriate for Hauerwas, a pacifist, to appeal

to the just war theory at all? And further, is the just war theory an inappropriate means by which to assess the war on terror?

According to Hauerwas, he does not believe in just war theory at all; he believes all war is unjust. His line of reasoning is straightforward: "Jesus was an advocate of non-resistance. That is why Christians must leave Jesus behind when they come to the political realm. They must do so because politics names the order of disguised violence" (n.p). While Hauerwas makes a valid point here, he fails to distinguish between violence and force. In the editors of *First Things* response to Hauerwas, they make such a distinction. They say that while violence is always contradictory of Christianity and therefore unjust, force is not necessarily: "Violence is inherently disordered—meaning it is random or capricious, or ordered to an evil end. Force is a sometimes necessary means ordered to a good end. The use of such force is the prerogative and duty of legitimate public authority and is clearly distinct from the individual use of force for private purposes, especially if those purposes include revenge or malicious intent" (Hauerwas n.p).

This distinction sheds a new light on the application of just war theory to the war on terror. Hauerwas opposes the war on terror because he opposes all violence, and he associates wars with violence. However, if the war on terror is a vehicle of force, and not violence, then Hauerwas's argument is invalid because the war on terror would fall outside the bounds of what he considers a "war." The war on terror is certainly not "ordered to an evil end," or "random or capricious" as the editors distinguish violence to be. It would also certainly qualify as an honorable use of force: Its "means" are intended for a "good end," an end aimed at ridding the world of terrorism. Its goals are not centered on "private purposes" and certainly not on "revenge or malicious intent." Therefore, the cause for the war on terror cannot be said to be unjust, as "theorists hold that initiating acts of aggression is unjust," (Moseley) and the idea that this war is an act of aggression is undoubtedly not the case. Thus, it seems the war on terror is concerned with force and not violence, and Hauerwas has fallen victim to the assumption that the war on terror is indeed what he considers to be a "war."

This assumption is also evident when considering Hauerwas's view on the "obtainable goal" principle. As shown before, the war on terror does not uphold such a principle because there is no evident "terminal point" set forth from the onset. However, this principle is necessary in the just war theory, as Hauerwas explains, "for the enemy to know the terms and conditions of surrender" (n.p). But what if the enemy will never surrender? Elshain points out that terrorists "are not parties to any structure of diplomacy and thus cannot be negotiated with; there is nothing to negotiate about. They only seek our destruction" (62). In a fight against an

enemy such as this, it would be nonsensical to set out such a point when one can declare “victory.” Success is not necessarily defined by victory in a fight against terrorism, it is defined by progress. For example, it may not be possible to rid the world of terrorism, but to make it a safer place from such a threat is successful in itself. Therefore, while a war on terror does not present a tangible point of victory, and thus an obtainable goal, it does present a certain “prospect of success.” While an obtainable goal must be necessary for a war to uphold just war theory in what Hauerwas considers to be a war, the sheer use of force does not necessarily seem to require such a “terminal point” in order to be considered successful.

In light of all this, there are two different conclusions to be drawn from an application of just war theory to the war on terror. Firstly, the just war theory cannot characterize the war on terror as a just war because it does not uphold its principles. Secondly, the just war theory can neither characterize the war on terror as unjust because the war on terror deals with the sheer use of force and therefore falls outside of the preconceived notions of what many, like Hauerwas, assume a “war” to be. Thus, it falls into its own category. But this should come as no surprise to anyone. The war on terror is the first of its kind, against an unseen enemy who is not connected to any specific nation-state. It is completely modern and unprecedented, while “the just-war tradition is as old as warfare itself” (Moseley). Theorists such as Thomas Aquinas, when documenting just war theory, could not possibly have envisioned a fight against such an enemy as terrorism. They assumed war between two tangible opponents. With all this in mind, one thing becomes clear: Just war theory should not be used as rhetoric to either justify or not to justify the war on terror. The nature of the war and the nature of the enemy are too new and too unprecedented to be held to outdated theoretical and religious assumptions based on the historical standards of war. Many times throughout history, modern warfare has been used to update just war theory. I believe the war on terror presents another opportunity to redefine some of the outdated principles.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### JEREMIAH KELLY

Jeremiah lived in Northern Virginia before attending the University of Notre Dame. He majors in philosophy and currently resides in Keough Hall. He has no plans beyond graduation, and only occasionally succeeds in distracting himself from this conspicuous lack of direction in his life.

In his second semester as a freshman he took First Year Composition in which, among other things, he learned how to perform rhetorical analysis. His last assignment of the semester was to write a researched rhetorical analysis. Having written about the Patriot Act in high school, Jeremiah took the opportunity to look at the Act again at a higher level and from his new perspective of rhetorical analysis.

# The ACLU and the Department of Justice on the Patriot Act

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JEREMIAH KELLY



*We take a handful of sand from the endless landscape of awareness around us and call that handful of sand the world.*

—Robert M. Pirsig,  
*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

The USA PATRIOT Act was passed by Congress “by overwhelming, bipartisan margins” (Preserving) and signed into law by President George W. Bush shortly after September 11, 2001 amidst national fear of further terrorist attacks. Ostensibly designed to “[arm] law enforcement with new tools to detect and prevent terrorism” (Preserving), it has been criticized, especially by the ACLU, as giving “federal law enforcement unnecessary and permanent new powers to violate civil liberties” (Letters). Since its inception it has gone through numerous revisions, various changes, and some of the provisions set to expire have been renewed. For the purposes of analyzing the rhetoric surrounding the PATRIOT Act, it is unnecessary to understand its complicated legislative history, as the rhetoric remains substantially the same throughout.

The amount of literature surrounding the PATRIOT Act is its own universe. There are newspaper articles, law articles, court cases, Supreme Court decisions, majority opinions, dissenting opinions, websites, stories, the Act itself, the number of laws that the Act changes, the changes those laws made to other laws, and so on. Not to mention amicus briefs, essays, editorials, histories, Senate hearings on its use, and government publications on its use and abuse. Thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands of pages are relevant to the PATRIOT Act. I am unable to cope with this universe of information, and so limit myself to the debate between the U.S.

Department of Justice and the American Civil Liberties Union, and further limit myself by concentrating on what the average person will see by analyzing the websites of those two organizations.

The ultimate goal of the ACLU's rhetoric is to obtain donations, and the ultimate goal of the DOJ's rhetoric is to convince the reader to leave them in peace. The ACLU gets donations by building up their own credibility as a defender of civil liberties and painting the government as a horrific civil liberties violator, and the DOJ calms the reader down by giving example after example of how the PATRIOT Act has helped them protect Americans from terrorist attacks and other crimes. In neither case is there an incentive to give the reader a balanced view of the PATRIOT Act, and this leaves the reader unable to come to an honest conclusion about the effects of the Act as a whole on both civil liberties and on the security of the nation.

This produces ill-informed readers who are unable, unless they do rigorous and time-consuming research of their own, to understand the Act as a whole, and who will have a difficult time understanding how to deal with the tension between national security and civil liberties in a reasonable, constructive way.

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*The language above is representative of the way the ACLU argues.*

*Their language is accusatory, evocative, loud, and unabashedly anti-government.*

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### **The American Civil Liberties Union**

The goal of the ACLU is to “preserve all of these (Constitutional) protections and guarantees” (About) and the primary goal of the ACLU's website is to make money.

They do this by convincing the reader, through their presentation of the current issues of the day, to donate to their cause or become a member and pay dues. Nowhere is this monetary goal expressly stated, but given the kind of rhetoric they employ, their reliance upon donations for their continued existence (About), and the fact that every page has one—and most pages at least two—places to donate or join, this goal becomes apparent. If their goal were only to give the reader a balanced view of the tension between civil liberties and national security, they would be less loud in their presentation of issues and much less dramatic in their claims about what is going on. They are “nonprofit and nonpartisan,” which suggests that they are not after money on the whole, but even assuming that they are purely motivated to protect one from governmental intrusions on civil liberties does not stop the goal of their website from being monetary gain. They stress heavily how important it is for citizens to be active in order to maintain our civil liberties and in their eyes the best way for one to do this is to give them money and let them fight the battle.

Convincing the reader that something must be done about the government's intrusions on civil liberties is not enough, they must also convince the reader that the ACLU is deserving and trustworthy of donations. They do this in a variety of ways. The ACLU's logo includes the statue of liberty, and throughout the website are links describing recent and current heroic ACLU actions against the government. They also have sections showing the history of the ACLU and how it has been effective in getting its goals accomplished. One such section is a flash video titled "ACLU 100 Greatest Hits: Landmark Supreme Court decisions in which the ACLU played a major role, either as direct counsel or as friend-of-the-court" (ACLU Greatest Hits). Currently the front page has a list of supporters, which includes Janet Reno, a USMC Lt. Colonel, spouses of September 11th victims, Retired Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, William Webster (former head of the CIA) and others. They waste no opportunity in painting themselves as a patriotic, concerned, and powerful group.

They convince the reader that something must be done about the government when talking about specific issues such as the PATRIOT Act. Convincing the reader means something more along the lines of terrifying the reader, and instilling fear and anger at the government. The PATRIOT Act webpage, dramatically displayed with the right side in blood red and the left in a dirty yellow, shows a gloved hand reaching into files with the caption "Section 215, Government Access to Any Personal Records" (Reform). On the yellow side is a link reading "TELL CONGRESS TO STOP ILLEGAL SPYING." The top is a picture of the U.S. Constitution, except "liberty," "United States of America" and other words have been messily covered over with red ink and replaced with the USA PATRIOT ACT in the same messy red ink.

The main claim of the ACLU, in the case of the PATRIOT Act, is that it is an unnecessary intrusion on civil liberties and paves the way for horrendous government abuse. They have several web pages explaining what the PATRIOT Act does. One such page is titled "Reform the Patriot Act—Don't Expand It!" which claims that the PATRIOT Act allows the government to "SEARCH YOUR HOME AND NOT EVEN TELL YOU" and "COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT BOOKS YOU READ, WHAT YOU STUDY, YOUR PURCHASES, AND YOUR MEDICAL HISTORY." Every page on the PATRIOT Act has claims like this, and some are drastic. They claim the Act "vastly expands the FBI's power to spy on ordinary people" (Section 215) and that we have "the need to protect our most fundamental freedoms" laid the foundation for the "public's rejection of the president's abuses of power, including the warrantless NSA program to spy on Americans...for reform of the Patriot Act's unwarranted and intrusive powers. We will also demand that the Bush administration stop its abuse of power and respect the rule of law." I



could go on, but the language above is representative of the way the ACLU argues. Their language is accusatory, evocative, loud, and unabashedly anti-government. They use words such as “intrusive,” “illegal,” “unconstitutional,” “wrong,” “reckless,” and “Un-American” all over the place.

Of course, many of those claims could be true, but accusatory claims are everywhere while their standards of evidence are not high. Some things look like evidence, and some sound like evidence, and some probably are real evidence, but it is hard to find a calm explanation of how the legal system works, the pros and cons of the PATRIOT Act, or other balanced views. Mostly they seem to have arrived at their own conclusions, dressed them up in rhetoric finery, and tried to convince the reader through their own credibility and demagoguery to help them fight the intrusiveness inherent in the system. They do not need their reader to have a truthful view on the matter. They do not even have to necessarily prove any of their claims. They only need to make the reader suspicious enough of the government to give them money. With their long history of being “Guardians of Freedom” (About) and with enough fear-mongering claims, the ACLU apparently succeeds in getting what they want. They were established in 1920, are still around and flourishing, and handle “6,000 court cases annually” (About).

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*One walks away from the DOJ website feeling confident about their ability to protect the country and less worried about civil liberties. This feeling lasts for as long as one does not go back and read the ACLU’s website again.*

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ness inherent in the system. They do not need their reader to have a truthful view on the matter. They do not even have to necessarily prove any of their claims. They only need to make the reader suspicious enough of the government to give them money. With their long history of being “Guardians of Freedom” (About) and with enough fear-mongering claims, the ACLU apparently succeeds in getting what they want. They were established in 1920, are still around and flourishing, and handle “6,000 court cases annually” (About).

### **The Department of Justice**

The DOJ primarily wants you to leave them alone and let them do their job in peace. They are a government agency, and do not need money as the ACLU does. They do not need

to stir anyone up, and they do not use scare tactics. They focus on demonstrating how the PATRIOT Act has been an integral part in recent counter-terrorism cases, and calmly argue that the PATRIOT Act does not violate any constitutional rights. They also have a page dedicated to “Dispelling the Myths” about the PATRIOT Act, and all of the “myths” are claims from the ACLU.

The first thing to notice about the DOJ homepage (<http://www.usdoj.gov>) is its quietness. There are no blaring warnings or dire notices of imminent civil liberties collapse. The colors are less radical, mainly red, white, and blue with an American flag banner at the top of every page. There are no ever-present “DONATE NOW” links. On the side there are links to issues, the purpose of the department, how to apply for a job, and other things. Relative to the ACLU homepage, there is little interesting about the main page and the same goes for the PATRIOT Act page (Preserving Life and Liberty).

The main section explaining the PATRIOT Act contains a “field report” about the effectiveness of the PATRIOT Act. The “field report” is a twenty-nine page document that gives numerous examples of how the PATRIOT Act has “[equipped] federal law enforcement and intelligence officials with the tools they need to mount an effective, coordinated campaign against our nation’s terrorist enemies” (Report from the Field). The myths section contains claims by the ACLU about the PATRIOT Act and the DOJ’s responses to them. The DOJ quotes an ACLU claim and then makes the opposite of that claim, arguing that ACLU has been too drastic. The DOJ claims, contrary to the ACLU, that the PATRIOT Act “specifically protects Americans’ First Amendment rights.” They avoid civil liberties concerns by saying that “investigators have no interest in the library habits of ordinary Americans” (Preserving Life and Liberty) and by stating that certain sections do not violate any Constitutional rights.

Most of their arguments focus, through the field report and on congressional testimony, on the effectiveness of the PATRIOT Act in aiding investigators. They say it is a “vital tool” in the fight against terrorism and give many examples. Their primary method of combating civil liberties concerns is to say that law enforcement agencies are only interested in terrorists, rather than arguing that legally speaking, civil liberties are protected.

The DOJ uses a different type of rhetoric than the ACLU. Instead of loud, emotional claims they use a sort of repetitiveness and try to drown one in examples of how useful the PATRIOT Act has been. While they try to deal with the civil liberties concerns, they do not offer much in the way of legal research and instead rely upon various quotations from congressmen and their attention-diverting examples to quell possible fears of the reader, as well as repeatedly stressing that only the activities of terrorists are of concern.

## **Conclusion**

One walks away from the DOJ website feeling confident about their ability to protect the country and less worried about civil liberties. This feeling lasts for as long as one does not go back and read the ACLU’s website again. While one remains persuaded about the effectiveness of the Act, the worries about civil liberties appear again. This discrepancy is accounted for by a neat rhetorical move pulled by the DOJ. Instead of showing how the Act does not legally allow for abuse, they concentrate on their intent to only investigate terrorists. This would be fine if they knew who the terrorists were, but they do not. The concern of the ACLU is that the

PATRIOT Act allows for potential abuse<sup>1</sup>, and the DOJ counters this by essentially promising that they will not abuse their power.

At the end of the day, switching back and forth between the two websites is likely to produce a reader who is persuaded by the ACLU that there are legitimate civil liberties concerns, but also persuaded that PATRIOT Act has prevented many horrific crimes. How are we to balance these two values? How, and should we, change the status quo? How badly could the government abuse its powers? Are they mutually exclusive? Are they compatible? How and where do we resolve the tension? These are questions that are not dealt with well. The ACLU concerns itself only with demonizing the government's attempts to fulfill its security responsibilities, and the DOJ neatly sidesteps civil liberties concerns by focusing on the effectiveness of the legislation in catching terrorists, and relying upon the reader's trust that the people who use the PATRIOT Act are after terrorists, not the ordinary American.

The curious reader who tries to get an honest picture of the reality of the situation through the information and arguments of these two organizations is likely to walk away confused and misinformed, and not sure how to cope with the competing values. The farther we move away from September 11<sup>th</sup> and the longer terrorists are unable to attack again, the more people will be more sympathetic with the ACLU and do more to limit government power. All in all, the rhetoric surrounding the PATRIOT Act, at least in the cases of the ACLU and the DOJ, is not designed to inform the reader about the situation, but only to provoke a specific response and thus tends to be manipulative and dishonest on both sides. Neither the ACLU nor the DOJ is interested in promoting fruitful dialogue, because the more moderate one becomes, the more likely it is that one will not support either side because they are both extremist. But maybe this is a good thing, because in our democratic system extremist sides are usually forced to compromise, and as long as they are both around, compromise will also be. Whatever the case, if one wants to be truly informed about the reality of the situation, one must look elsewhere than the ACLU and the DOJ.

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<sup>1</sup> At least one section of the Act has been substantially misused. After the PATRIOT Act lowered the standards for National Security Letters, the use of them by the FBI rose significantly and while the two sides argue about how bad it actually was, it seems that some oversight would have been appropriate. (Geliman, "My National Security Gag Letter," R. Jeffrey Smith, "The Inspector General's independent report")

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## *Author's Biography*

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### DANIEL O'DUFFY

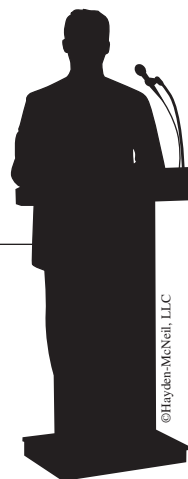
Daniel is a proud first-generation Irishman with an international background, having lived in places as far flung as London, New Zealand, and Florida as well as his home in Wexford. He is proud to be a “real Irishman” in the home of the “Fighting Irish.” With his passions and future major focused on philosophy, Daniel saw his final FYC project as a perfect opportunity to explore a major and contentious issue in modern life—the Theory of Evolution—through the lens of both secular science and Christian theology. In his essay, Daniel draws on a range of techniques learned in FYC to try and find common ground between faith and reason over the question of life’s origins.

# A God of the Gaps, or a Gap for God?

## How We Should Interpret the Bible in Light of Evolution

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DANIEL O'DUFFY



### A False Dichotomy

What if your religious faith told you that scientific facts were incorrect? What if scientific data showed you that your religion was wrong? Which would you choose—your reason or your religion? Most people, like me, do not think that one must be chosen over the other, but millions of people *do* feel that religion and science are mutually exclusive; that they have to pick between them. This dichotomy is most noticeably observed over the question of life's origins. In this essay, I will defend the view that a Judeo-Christian faith does not *necessarily* contradict the scientific account of our origins, as the story of Genesis can be interpreted in such a way as to be compatible with evolution while retaining its meaning and purpose. Instead, I believe that scientific fact can complement religious understanding.

My thesis contends that there is no necessary contradiction between science and religion, even though both provide two apparently contradictory accounts of the origin of life. As we inhabit one world created by God, there is only one Truth—His, so individual truths cannot contradict others. When two disciplines of thought seem to contradict one another, we must find reconciliation. Either one must bend to fit the other, or both need to do so, in order for humanity to get closer to the Truth. On the question of Genesis and evolution, if there was a way to interpret scripture so as not to contradict scientific fact, while maintaining its internal coherency and meaning, then there is no *necessary* contradiction between science and Christianity, as that would depend upon our choice of interpretation. Similarly, if science were able to bend to fit religious teaching, then there would be no *necessary* conflict. I will endeavor to show that science provides a history of our origins—evolution—that is resolutely backed up by fact, and that the Bible provides an account that may be interpreted to either contradict or complement scientific truths, depending on whether we see Genesis as *literal* or allegorical.



## The Origin of Origins

Amidst the routine of daily life, people all over the world have wondered, ‘where has the universe come from?’ Asking this question is a hallmark of our species. When our ancestors asked ‘why,’ just as we do now, they found explanations in myth and religion. When they considered how the cosmos came to be, for example, they turned to creation stories. This was not a weakness in logic on their part, but merely a natural tendency to understand the unknown in familiar terms—origins were explained by the hatching of an egg, the mating of two deities, or perhaps the intonation of a magic phrase. Our ancestors made their best attempt at explaining the universe with the tools they had at their disposal—wherever there was a gap in our knowledge, it was filled by the Divine, by myth, and by superstition. These stories told a story of God’s relationship with man, the meaning to life, and conveyed

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*Our ancestors made their best attempt at explaining the universe with the tools they had at their disposal—wherever there was a gap in our knowledge, it was filled by the Divine, by myth, and by superstition.*

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a message of spiritual meaning. The belief in a literal truth to these stories was replaced over time by a different set of answers, those from science and reason. In most cases, where once we saw the supernatural in the ‘gaps’ of science, we now find naturalistic explanations. Often, the meaning behind these stories remained, as the literal veracity of the stories was deemed superfluous to the *meaning* thereof.

However, there is a point where we have not acquiesced to science’s advance into the ‘gaps’ where God resides. The literality of the Judaic creation story is often seen as vital, integral to faith, and irreplaceable by science. For thousands of years, humanity has had but a single answer to questions concerning the origins of life—divine intervention. The apparent design of life, the greatest ‘gap’ in our knowledge that God filled, was left untouched throughout history, until Darwin. If we simply attribute God as the answer to scientific mysteries, then as science answers those questions and “the frontiers of knowledge are pushed further and further back, then God is being pushed back with them, and is therefore continually in retreat.”<sup>1</sup> Many people cannot allow their conception of God to be usurped by what they see as a cold, godless scientific alternative.

Darwin’s theory of evolution is thus thought by some to be “completely irreconcilable with what is perceived as an appropriate sense of God.”<sup>2</sup> It is here that we are told by some that science and Christianity are mutually exclusive, that faith will concede no ground. Any hope of reconciliation “is often overshadowed by the high-decibel pronouncements of those who occupy the poles of the debate” (Collins).<sup>3</sup> The rancorous rhetoric surrounding evolution is not a new phenomenon, but something that has been seen whenever science appeared to conflict with religious belief.

## **A History of Competing Truths**

When religious answers to scientific questions are challenged, religion may respond, restraining or even blocking scientific pursuits. Religion and science may become enemies, each becoming the antithesis of the other. We have seen this tug-of-war time and time again in our past, with the work of Columbus, Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus and Newton, to name but a few. These men challenged incorrect science based on Biblical literalism, replacing such understanding with scientific models that accurately explain the order of the universe. For example, the Bible may be read to infer that the Earth is flat<sup>4</sup> and the center of the universe<sup>5</sup>, so the religious hierarchy opposed science contrary to the literal reading of those passages. Asked to renounce the truth, Galileo pointed out that he did not “feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with good sense, reason, and intellect, has intended us to forego their use.”<sup>6</sup> This battle between the mind and heart, between faith and reason, is one that we all know of. However, this should not be the case, for two truths cannot contradict one another.

## **The Compatibility of Truths**

The revelations of scripture and nature, if both true, cannot be in conflict. Aquinas pointed out this compatibility, stating that supernatural and natural revelations, when understood correctly, must be complementary rather than contradictory in nature, for they pertain to the same unity: God’s Truth. As truth cannot contradict truth, we must find reconciliation between God’s word as seen in scripture and God’s word as seen in nature. If there is enough room for interpretation in either evolution or Genesis, then the existence of a conflict between the Bible and science is due entirely to one’s own personal and subjective view of either. The question, then, is whether this is the case with Genesis and evolution.

## **Evolution—A Special Case**

Evolution by natural selection is a theory. It is a theory that explains the origins of adaptation, diversity, and complexity of life on earth. But is it *just* a theory? In the same sense, Einstein’s relativity is *just* a theory. Heliocentrism—the notion that the Earth revolves around the Sun, and not the other way around—is *just* a theory. Gravity is a theory. Electricity is a theory based on particles that no one has ever seen. Nuclear physics? Theoretical. Yet we send rockets into space, we power our homes, and we set our watches by these theories; we build our civilization and our lives on them, “apparently assuming that the science undergirding these phenomena is generally trustworthy” (Collins).<sup>7</sup> Colloquially, we understand a theory to be mere speculation, a guess that is just as valid as any other, but in science, the word theory “is not intended to convey uncertainty; for that purpose a scientist would use

the word hypothesis.”<sup>8</sup> As the American Academy of Sciences states, “some scientific explanations are so well established that no new evidence is likely to alter them. The explanation becomes a scientific theory... In science, the word theory refers to a comprehensive explanation of an important feature of nature supported by facts gathered over time.”<sup>9</sup> With theories is general, then, the data is in and the conclusion has been made, but is this the case specifically with evolutionary theory?

Evolution, the scientific theory explaining life’s origins, can be explained simply: “Given sufficient time, the non-random survival of hereditary entities (i.e., genes, which occasionally miscopy) will generate complexity, diversity, beauty and the appearance of design.”<sup>10</sup> The fact that life on earth has changed and adapted over time—‘evolved’—has indeed been proven conclusively; Scientists saw evidence for evolution even before Darwin came on the scene!<sup>11</sup> For example, the fossil record “provides consistent evidence of systematic change through time—of descent with modification” (NAS).<sup>12</sup> What Darwin did was explain ‘how’ this evident evolution took place with his theory of evolution by natural selection. Let us remember, “Fact-supported theories are not ‘guesses’ but reliable accounts of the real world... [The Theory of Evolution] is as factual an explanation of the universe as the atomic theory of matter or the germ theory of disease. Our understanding of gravity is still a work in progress. But the phenomenon of gravity, like evolution, is an accepted fact” (AAAS).<sup>13</sup>

In fact, the remarkable thing about Evolution is that completely diverse fields of science all independently and unanimously converge on proving Evolution: “geology, paleontology, botany, zoology, herpetology, entomology, biogeography, comparative anatomy and physiology, genetics and population genetics, and many other sciences point to the conclusion that life evolved.”<sup>14</sup> The fact that all the signs point to one answer led the famous Christian evolutionary scientist Theodosius Dobzhansky to say, “nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution,”<sup>15</sup> a statement that the scientific consensus agree with (support for Creationism amongst biologists is 0.14%).<sup>16</sup> The theory of evolution, then, is no guess or supposition, but a complete puzzle that has fit all of the jigsaw pieces of evidence we have into a coherent shape.

Science may well claim that it has made a conclusion, but we all know that scientific knowledge is not fixed in place, in stasis, but in a continual evolution of its own. After Newton, we saw gravitation as behaving in a certain way, but when Einstein came along, we understood gravity to behave completely differently. Einstein’s theory of gravitation superseded Newton’s. If science is in progression all the time, what reason do we have to accept any one point as definitively proven? In order to answer this question, we must remind ourselves of the methodology of science. Theories explain facts. Although Einstein’s explanation of gravitation replaced Newton’s,

the fact that gravity exists has not changed! Einstein's calculations for gravitation are simply more accurate under a wider range of conditions, making a better model. Einstein built upon Newton's models, not destroying them, but improving upon them. Newton was not 'wrong,' just not completely right. Perhaps Darwin's evolutionary theory could be similarly refined? In fact, it already has. Darwin only laid the foundations to our current understanding of evolution, which has become even more comprehensive and coherent than Darwin envisioned. For example, since Darwin, we have discovered DNA, which forms the cornerstone of our new understanding of evolution and forms the most conclusive proof for evolution. Although our explanation of the data may become more and more refined and accurate, the testimony of the data itself will not change. The fact that life has evolved over time has been proven. As Daniel Dennett states, "the hope that [evolution] will be 'refuted' by some shattering breakthrough is about as reasonable as the hope that we will return to a geocentric vision and discard Copernicus."<sup>17</sup> There is simply too vast a preponderance of evidence in favor of evolution to suggest that it might be refuted. It is safe to say, due to the sheer volume of evidence, that science will not suddenly volte-face and deny the fact of evolution.

### **Conflicting Accounts**

In Genesis, we read that God created the universe in six days to look exactly as we see it today, culminating in His breathing life into Adam, the first man. This Biblical beginning of the universe is calculated to be on October 23, 4004 BC.<sup>18</sup> Thus, here, we find that a literal interpretation of the Bible gives us a wholly contrary tale of events to evolution. Evolution, if true, spanned over billions of years without God's intervention. There is not even an 'Adam' according to evolution. Evolution, then, poses a problem for those who prefer a literal interpretation of Genesis.

Evolutionary theory has no active role for a creator god or gods, with life itself adapting, changing and 'evolving' based on natural laws over several billion years. Even today, a majority of Americans doubt this,<sup>19</sup> with most of that opposition stemming from churchgoers.<sup>20</sup> Despite the efforts of scientists to convince them, belief in a literal Book of Genesis has never been held by less than 44% of Americans (Gallup).<sup>21</sup> It is important, however, to note this in contrast to Europe; in the UK, 97% of Catholic priests, Anglican bishops and Protestant ministers do not believe in a literal genesis of six days.<sup>22</sup> Also, in Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and France, 80% or more of adults accept evolution; in Japan, 78% of adults do.<sup>23</sup>

Those who oppose evolution have not been silent. We are told by Saint Paul to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."<sup>24</sup> With this very quote in mind, certain Christians who believe in a literal Genesis have tried to hold fast to their conception of what science *should* say. The results have been 'Creation Science' and

‘Intelligent Design’ (ID), an attempt at answering scientific questions with scripture. If these hypotheses fit the data just as well as Evolution does, then the conflict between science and religion on this matter is a personal choice, entirely dependent upon which aspect of science you choose to interpret as correct.

### Alternative ‘Science’

On the question of the origin of life, fundamentalist Christians have created two rival hypotheses to evolution: creationism, the original mythological story of Genesis spruced up with modern pseudoscience, and ID ‘theory,’ which accepts evolution to a limited extent yet still retains God as an active designer. Both have disregarded scientific methodology in attempting to make the data fit their prejudices, rather than the converse. The former is utterly discredited by the evidence; the latter is an

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*To view certain sections of the Bible as factual in a historical sense is purely a subjective choice, for there is sometimes nothing in the text itself that would cause one to believe this.*

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attempt to *force* a place for God within Darwin’s evolutionary theory. Despite the fact that an active designer violates one of the two core tenets of evolution—random mutation—and so evolution and ID are incompatible, ID is also plainly contradicted by scientific methodology itself. ID makes no testable assertions, instead making its claims on the back of a resurrected ‘God of the gaps’ argument; this is an age-old fallacy that identifies gaps in our knowledge and attributes their cause to God. This opinion is not empirically disprovable or provable—so it is not scientific. It also presupposes that there is an ‘intelligent designer’ who actively inserts design into the universe from the outside, but whether there is

an intelligent designer or not is a matter of *religious faith* rather than a *scientifically testable* question.

It is clear, then, that creating a gap for God in nature, or even trying to find one, is contrary to the methodology of science. The cases of creationism and its progeny, Intelligent Design, are pseudoscientific hypotheses based on prejudged religious belief rather than empirical fact. As both try to base science upon preconceived conceptions of how they think things *should* work—whether because of scripture, or otherwise—rather than coming to judgments after analyzing how things *do* work, as seen via empirical evidence and the scientific method, the hypotheses have skewed results and are false. There is no factual relativism at play here; either a theory works or it does not. Science has made a conclusion as to how life developed—through evolution by natural selection—and it will not budge. The data is conclusively in favor of evolution.

### **If We Deny the Data...**

If God created the universe, as Christians believe, would we not be able to look to His divine handiwork and see His fingerprints? If so, then science would be able to find these clues. One such clue that has been found is the fact that our genomic sequence contains nonfunctional elements that are found in exactly the same position in the DNA of animals said to be our evolutionary cousins. If God created us from scratch like Genesis describes, Francis Collins asked, “why would he insert a pseudo-gene that has lost its ability to do anything in the same place that it appears in a chimp?” Without accepting evolution, ‘you’re forced to the conclusion that God was trying to mislead us and test our faith,’”<sup>25</sup> a conclusion that does not gel with our concept of God. If Evolution is wrong, it must have been quite malicious of God to plant contrary evidence in our very DNA. If we accept that God has not created the world to be deceptive in its smallest detail, we must similarly accept the data present in Creation. The data clearly shows evolution to be factual. Science will thus not bend for faith.

### **A Methodological Difference**

Religious faith is simply unsuited to accurately answer *how* things came to be. As Aquinas mused, truth can be known through reason—imparted by God’s natural revelation—and faith—God’s *supernatural* revelation. With matters of natural revelation, in which truth is deduced through logic and evidence, all men of every faith turn to science for answers. It is in this realm that we find that the evidence always wins out over weak hypotheses. This is simply how science works. The methodology of science does not allow for similes, metaphors, parables, fables, or literary genres. Science is cold, clear, and forthright. Creation itself speaks to us plainly, bluntly, and in such a way that can only proffer a single materialistic interpretation.

Now that we have found that science is locked into its set of conclusions and cannot be adapted to fit a particular worldview, our gaze turns to religion. Is religion similarly intransigent on the question of origins?

### **How to Read the Bible**

The Bible, unlike a science textbook, cannot be read as a completely literally true document. For example, when one reads in the Bible that God stretches out His hand, one ought not think that God has a corporeal hand. The literal meaning of such passages concerns God’s power, not His anatomy. Nor ought one think that the six days at the beginning of Genesis literally refer to God’s acting in time...” (Carroll, 1999).<sup>26</sup> When Exodus 33 speaks of God showing his backside to Moses, it would be naïve to conclude that God possesses anthropomorphic anatomical

parts (in Romans 1:21-23, Paul says that only fools change God to look like mortal man).<sup>27</sup> The Bible is clearly not *literal* in every part of the Bible, even if it can be *true* in every word. Is it necessary to interpret the parables as literal, for example? Do we really have to believe that the Good Samaritan that Jesus spoke of was a real person? The answer, surely, is that it does not matter. Jesus used parables as a means of illustrating profound, divine truths, not for telling historical accounts of real events. To view certain sections of the Bible as factual in a historical sense is purely a subjective choice, for there is sometimes nothing in the text itself that would cause one to believe this, due to differing styles within the Bible.

In the Bible there are multitudinous examples of non-literal passages. We have poems, songs, declarations of intent, dialogue, and a whole host of other styles, forms, and structures of writing; to ask if these are all *factually* true is beside the point. Not all sections of the Bible can be read in the same way, for they are not all written in the same way. The Bible is split into literary genres, divided amongst historical narrative, law, wisdom, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, gospel, and epistle. Within the Bible, and indeed even within books of the Bible, we see a change between genres, and each has to be read differently. Imagine tasting ice cream and trying to explain the flavor of ‘cookies and cream’ with linear algebra. Imagine a poetry teacher analyzing Yeats with the tools of physics. To do this would be ludicrous. Physics works with logic, numbers, and objective data whereas poetry operates with emotion, words, and subjective values. The two subjects are not commensurable. They have different tools for different jobs. In the same way, allegorical parts of the Bible cannot be read as historically true, or scientifically valid. Poems and Psalms should not be seen as necessarily factually true, for that is not the purpose of poems—Biblical poems exist to impart a deep spiritual message.

### **Interpretations and Commensurability**

With so many different styles in the Bible, so many different interpretations and ways of reading the same text, it is incumbent upon the reader to form his own opinions as to the meaning of scripture. When David states in Psalm 137, “happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones”<sup>28</sup> we have a number of questions to ask. Before we can debate if he is saying that it would be morally justifiable for us to kill babies, we must ask a more basic question. Before we debate if David is telling us that we will really find happiness if we kill babies, we must ask a more basic question. We must find out what the author intended to say. Did David mean to be taken *literally*? This would seem to be an important question to answer, before we might proceed to murder children based on a supposition. The meaning and nature of certain passages of the Bible is often not clearly inferred from the passage itself, but is gleaned from a process of thought and theological inquiry.

When it comes to passages in the Bible where there appears to be a scientific statement made, we must ask ourselves the same question that we asked over Psalm 137: is this meant to be taken *literally*? Did the author of this passage make a scientific claim? If we can be sure that the author did just that, then we can measure this account against the data, just like any falsifiable scientific hypothesis. If we can be *sure* that Genesis is a literal historical account of the origins of the universe and the life therein, then—and only then—is it commensurable to scientific theories of the likes of Evolution, only then can we see contradictions. However, if we are not certain of this, then we cannot make such a leap. There is no need to make an interpretation of scripture that would lead it to contradict scientific fact if there are other options available. After all, where is Genesis' disclaimer stating that it is not a metaphor? Where does the Bible explicitly tell us where it intends or does not intend something as *literally* true?

Although the Bible may not explicitly tell us which passages of the Bible to take literally, science can help fill that void. If all of the empirical evidence available to us contradicts the conclusions that follow from a certain interpretation of scripture, then we should be strongly inclined to choose an interpretation of scripture that does not conflict with other facts. The founders of Christianity, from the Church Fathers to the medieval theologians such as Aquinas, never viewed this methodology—where our understanding of scripture was influenced by empirical fact—to be a rupture from Biblical teaching; instead, they saw it as realizing God's Truth, uniting faith with reason. The guidance of the Church Fathers should be instrumental to any authentically Christian hermeneutic. As the great theologians of Christianity accepted scientific testimony, so we should be inclined to follow suit. The Catholic Church is but one church among many to follow this example in accepting evolution as true.<sup>29</sup>

### **Religion and Science—Different Questions, Different Answers**

When we read scripture, we must realize that holy books are intended to have a very specific purpose, one of spiritual and not scientific or technological relevance. Genesis tells a tale of God's relationship to man, the cause of suffering, and many other messages beside, but it would be a mistake to see Genesis as a literal account of history. Saint Thomas Aquinas did not think that the Biblical account of Creation should be held as a scientific text, for that is not its purpose. Aquinas showed us that we could remain faithful to the truth of the Bible without being forced to choose between the literal interpretation of the Bible and modern science. "For Aquinas, the literal meaning of the Bible is what God... intends the words to mean. The literal sense of the text includes metaphors, similes, and other figures of speech useful to accommodate the truth of the Bible to the understanding of its



readers” (Carroll, 1999). Saint Augustine has similar things to say on the interpretation of scripture, stating that “Whatever there is in the word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative.”<sup>30</sup> In fact, Augustine saw a great danger in holding fundamentalist beliefs that conflicted with fact. In itself, inaccurate ideas of nature are not damning but can become an obstacle “if he thinks his view of nature belongs to the very form of orthodox doctrine, and dares obstinately to affirm something he does not understand.”<sup>31</sup> If religious believers hold onto a scientific opinion as if it were a central tenet of their faith, and then that opinion turned out to be wrong, the skeptical unbeliever would reject that faith outright and thus lose the saving grace of God. The Christian’s lack of scientific knowledge will cause unbelievers to “think our sacred writers held such opinions and...the writers of Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men.”<sup>32</sup> We do not have to fall into this trap. We have the capability to view the story of Genesis as metaphorical. As long as there is nothing within the Bible that *necessitates* a literal reading of Genesis, then there is no *necessary* contradiction between the Biblical and scientific account of our origins. When we take a metaphorical view of Genesis, science and theology proffer two different yet complementary conclusions about life’s origins, approaching the question differently. Both operate on a different and separate level of description; giving us different kinds of answers to different questions, and each using a unique vocabulary. Each level of description is complete at its own level, but each constitute but a single part of God’s Truth. This appears to be both internally coherent with the higher meaning of Genesis and externally coherent with empirical facts, thus satisfying my thesis.

If we accept evolution as factual, as the evidence compels us to, it cannot conflict with other established truths, for there can only be one ultimate Truth. When we see that one truth is, by its very nature, proven to be true and not amenable to change (science), then it falls to the other (religion) to adapt. This should not be a surprise. Bronze Age books of any description are not likely to provide us with useful scientific knowledge. As the preeminent physicist and Roman Catholic Priest Georges Lemaître pointed out, “hundreds of professional and amateur scientists actually believe the Bible pretends to teach science. This is a good deal like assuming that there must be authentic religious dogma in the binomial theorem.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Conclusion—New Interpretations**

As time has moved on, religion has come to accept extra-biblical facts such as a round earth, heliocentric cosmology, gravitation, Big Bang Theory, and relativity; incorporating them into their faith systems. Christianity has evolved to see these

scientific findings as complementary or irrelevant, not antagonistic. The Roman Catholic Church is one of many to accept scientific findings as part of God's truth, finding no problem with evolution.<sup>34</sup> "The Catholic Church values scientific study, views science as no threat to religion in general or Catholic doctrine in particular, and has long accepted both the legitimacy of evolution as a field of study and the potential harmony of evolutionary conclusions with Catholic faith."<sup>35</sup> The Pope has been outspoken on this issue, saying, "[evolution and Christianity] are presented as alternatives that exclude each other... This clash is an absurdity because on one hand there is much scientific proof in favor of evolution, which appears as a reality that we must see and which enriches our understanding of life and being as such."<sup>36</sup> As Christianity can and has adapted to fit scientific truths in the past and has largely accepted science over evolution, it is clear that there is no inherent conflict between science and Christianity.

### **Addendum—Finding Reconciliation**

If Christians accept a non-literal interpretation of Genesis, is the meaning of Genesis lost? Well, what difference should it make to Christians if the Earth was created in 4,004 BC or 4,004,000,000 BC? The fact that life exists, in all its glory, is reason enough for reverence; a few zeroes added to the number should not change that. In fact, the sheer majesty of an infinite, expanding, life-giving universe of billions of years should be celebrated as revealing the magnificence of God, not detracting from it! Aquinas asserts that the central message of Genesis is the "fact of creation," not the manner or mode of the formation of life—*how* God made life is trivial next to the assertion *that* He made life. Our focus should instead be on harmony and reconciliation between these two differing and yet complementary facets of human inquiry. "Scientists, like many others, are touched with awe at the order and complexity of nature. Indeed, many scientists are deeply religious. But science and religion occupy two separate realms of human experience. Demanding that they be combined detracts from the glory of each"(National Academy of Sciences, 1999).<sup>37</sup>

As Francis Collins, eminent scientist and committed Christian states: "If God, who is all powerful and is not limited by space and time, chose to use the mechanism of Evolution to create you and me, who are we to say that it wasn't an absolutely elegant plan? And if God has now given us the intelligence and the opportunity to discover his methods, that is something to celebrate."<sup>38</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters Papers from Prison, Page 311. <[http://books.google.com/books?id=NGQ\\_JFQPfIC&pg=PA298&dq=isbn:9780684838274#PPA311,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=NGQ_JFQPfIC&pg=PA298&dq=isbn:9780684838274#PPA311,M1)>.
- 2 John F. Haught, God After Darwin, Preface: Page x. <<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v5G-kaQ9WoYC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=evolution%2Btheology&ots=pUXwc04Pya&sig=dsJJT8lu8R6EomSHdFh9Aydq0Q#PPR10,M1>>.
- 3 Francis Collins, The Language of God, Page 4. <<http://books.google.com/books?id=TCU4dh5yq74C&printsec=frontcover&dq=francis+collins#PPA4,M1>>.
- 4 One example: Job 38:13, “That it might take hold of the *ends of the Earth*, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?” (Emphasis mine, KJV)
- 5 Psalm 104:5, for example, “He set the earth on its foundations; it can *never be moved*.” (Emphasis mine, KJV)
- 6 Galileo as quoted by Scott Tippetts: in his essay “Eppur Si Muove” <<http://zarahemlacitylimits.com/essays/EppurSiMuove.html>>.
- 7 Francis Collins, The Language of God, Page 4.
- 8 Francis Collins, as quoted in the Time magazine article “Reconciling God and Science” by David Van Biema Monday, Jul. 10, 2006. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1211593-4,00.html>>.
- 9 National Academy of Sciences (2005), Science, Evolution, and Creationism Page 4. <<http://books.nap.edu/html/11876/SECbrochure.pdf>>.
- 10 Richard Dawkins, “Why Darwin Matters,” Saturday February 9 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/feb/09/darwin.dawkins1>>.
- 11 Seen most clearly in the example of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s book Philosophie Zoologique, in which he presented a basic form of evolution by adaptation. Various philosophers and scientists have proposed evolution, dating back to Anaximander in 520 BC. Although parts of Darwin’s theory were proposed before, it was Darwin who first proved the existence of evolution and adequately explained it.
- 12 Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences, Second Edition (1999), by the National Academy of Sciences, Page 14. <<http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309064066&page=14>>.

- 13 American Association for the Advancement of Science, “Q & A on Evolution and Intelligent Design” <[http://www.aaas.org/news/press\\_room/evolution/qanda.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/news/press_room/evolution/qanda.shtml)>.
- 14 “Why Darwin Matters” by Michael Shermer, page 13. <<http://books.google.com/books?id=-xpLqNFj1ZcC&printsec=frontcover#PPA13,M1>>.
- 15 This is the title of a 1973 essay by the evolutionary biologist and Russian Orthodox Christian Theodosius Dobzhansky.
- 16 “By one count there are some 700 scientists with respectable academic credentials (out of a total of 480,000 U.S. earth and life scientists) who give credence to creation-science, the general theory that complex life forms did not evolve but appeared ‘abruptly.’” “Keeping God Out of the Classroom,” *Newsweek* (June 29, 1987), p. 23.
- 17 Daniel Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea* Page 20. Simon and Schuster. New York, 1995.
- 18 According to Bishop James Ussher (1581–1656), an Irish Archbishop whose chronology of Biblical history was widely accepted throughout Christianity until recently.
- 19 CBS News, Oct. 23, 2005 “Poll: Majority Reject Evolution 51 Percent Believe God Created Humans” <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/22/opinion/polls/main965223.shtml>>.
- 20 74% of American churchgoers do not believe in Evolution, far above the national average, instead preferring a creation story. This is clear evidence of a correlation between religious belief and disbelief in evolution. CBS News, Oct. 23, 2005. <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/22/opinion/polls/main965223.shtml>>.
- 21 The statement “God created humans in their present form” is agreed with by no less than 44% of those surveyed since the poll was first started. Gallup. <<http://www.unl.edu/rhames/courses/current/creation/evol-poll.htm>>.  
  
Approximately 55% of American adults have held a “tentative view about evolution for the last decade”—*Science* magazine, 11 August 2006. <<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/313/5788/765>>.
- 22 News item in *ReligionToday* for 1999-DEC-29. They quoted the Conservative News Service. Original source of data was not specified.

- 23 According to a survey by Science magazine. <<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/reprint/313/5788/765.pdf>>.
- 24 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 5 verse 21. American Standard Version.
- 25 Both quotes are from Francis Collins, as they appeared in the Time magazine article “Reconciling God and Science” by David Van Biema Monday, Jul. 10, 2006. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1211593,00.html?iid=sphere-inline-sidebar>>.
- 26 William E. Carroll, Professor of History at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, in his essay “Aquinas and the Big Bang,” as published in First Things 97 (November 1999). <<http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9911/opinion/carroll.html>>.
- 27 1:22–23: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” KJV.
- 28 Psalm 137:9, KJV.
- 29 “‘In the Beginning...’A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall: excerpts from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)” (Eerdmans, 1986, 1995) <<http://www.bringyou.to/apologetics/p81.htm>>.
- 30 St. Augustine, as quoted from City of God, Chapter 10 verse 14.
- 31 Saint Augustine, as quoted in “How Augustine Reined In Science,” by Kenneth J. Howell “<<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1998/9803fea3.asp>>.
- 32 Saint Augustine, as quoted in “How Augustine Reined In Science,” by Kenneth J. Howell “<<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1998/9803fea3.asp>>.
- 33 Georges Lemaître, as quotes in Big Bang: The Origin of the Universe by Simon Singh, Page 276.
- 34 “Truth Cannot Contradict Truth” a statement by Pope John Paul II issued on October 22, 1996, to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, defending both the evidence for evolution and its consistency with Catholic doctrine.
- 35 “Nonoverlapping Magisteria,” by Stephen Jay Gould, <[http://www.stephenjaygould.org/library/gould\\_noma.html](http://www.stephenjaygould.org/library/gould_noma.html)>.
- 36 Catholic News Agency, “Pope calls for protection of environment, says creation-evolution debate is ‘absurdity’” <<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=9968>>.

- 37 Steering Committee on Science and Creationism, National Academy of Sciences (1999). "Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences." Retrieved on 2007-11-16.
- 38 Francis Collins, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute as quoted in Time magazine, "Can You Believe in God and Evolution?" by Steven Pinker, August 7th, 2005. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1090921,00.html>>.

## *Author's Biography*

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### NANCY PAUL

The writer's hat is only an occasional accoutrement for Nancy who likes to spend most of her time in the depths of Nieuwland Hall of Science when not consuming large quantities of coffee or playing the guitar. It was food actually, in combination with Community Based First Year Composition that beckoned this physics major forth on an adventure into the city of South Bend where she had the opportunity to work with the South Bend Urban Garden Market. While this Pennsylvania native has her heart set on nuclear physics, quality time with produce has allowed Nancy to both gain a unique perspective into the issues surrounding food insecurity and spend some time with the amazing people of the LaSalle Square neighborhood. Whether smashing atoms or eating apples, she is thankful for the occasion to share in all the good things growing from the compassionate innovation of the Notre Dame community.

# A Greener Approach to Groceries

## *Community-Based Agriculture in LaSalle Square*

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NANCY PAUL



In our post 9/11 society, there is incessant concern for the security of our future. Billions of dollars are spent tightening borders, installing nuclear detectors, and adjudicating safety measures so that the citizens of the United States can grow and prosper without fear. Unfortunately, for some urban poor, the threat from terrorism is miniscule compared to the cruelty of their immediate environment. Far from the sands of the Afghan plains and encapsulated in the midst of inner-city deterioration, many find themselves in gray-lot deserts devoid of vegetation and reliable food sources. Abandoned by corporate supermarkets, millions of Americans are maimed by a “food insecurity,”—the nutritional poverty that cripples them developmentally, physically, and psychologically.

South Bend, Indiana, the midwestern city that surrounds the University of Notre Dame, has a food-desert sitting just west of the famously lush Irish campus. Known as LaSalle Square, it was once home to the lucrative Bendix plant and has featured both a Target and a Kroger supermarket in recent years. But previous economic development decisions have driven both stores to the outskirts of town, and without a local supplier, the only food available in the neighborhood is prepackaged and sold at the few small convenience stores. This available food is virtually void of nutrition and inhibits the ability of the poor to prosper and thrive. Thus, an aging strip mall, industrial site, and approximately three acres of empty grass lot between the buildings anchor—and unfortunately define—the neighborhood.

While there are multiple ways of providing food to the destitute, I am proposing a co-op of community gardens built on the grassy space in LaSalle Square and on smaller sites within the neighborhood, supplemented by extra crops from Michiana farmers, which would supply fresh fruit and vegetables to be sold or distributed to the poor. Together the co-op could meet the nutritional needs of the people,



provide plenty of nutritious food, not cost South Bend any additional money, and contribute to neighborhood revitalization, yielding concrete increases in property values. Far from being a pipe dream, LaSalle Square already hosted an Urban Garden Market this fall, so a co-op would simply build upon the already recognized need and desire for healthy food in the area. Similar coalitions around the world are harnessing the power of community to remedy food insecurity without the aid of corporate enterprise, and South Bend is perfectly situated to reproduce and possibly exceed their successes.

Many, myself previously included, believe that large volume, cheap industrialization of food, and the welfare system have obliterated hunger in the United States. Supermarkets like Wal-Mart and Kroger seem ubiquitous in our communities and

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it is difficult to imagine anyone being beyond their influence. However, profit-driven corporate business plans do not mix well with low-income, high-crime populations, and the gap between the two is growing wider. This polarization, combined with the vitamin deficiency of our high fructose corn syrup society, has created food deserts in already struggling communities where malnutrition is the enemy inconnu of the urban poor.

LaSalle Square's food insecurity is typical of many urban areas. The grocery stores that used to serve the neighborhood have relocated to more attractive real estate on the outskirts of the city and only local convenience stores, stocking basic necessary items and tobacco products, remain profitable. If

the community was fiscally healthy it would be reasonable to expect the inhabitants to simply drive the six miles to the strip mall district, but unfortunately many are marginally employed and do not have access to cars (Wolfson). For them, it is economically irresponsible to spend the extra money to get to the supermarket, and so they feed their families on the cheap soda, chips, and processed food that is readily available at the convenience store. Especially since high calorie, low nutrient, packaged food tends to be denser, urban mothers find that it helps their children feel full (Garnett). Sadly, a health investigation released in 2006 concluded that by the age of three, more than one-third of urban children are obese, due in large part to the consumption of low quality food obtained from corner stores (Smith). A recent analysis of urban stores in Detroit found that only 19% offer the healthy food array suggested by the FDA food pyramid (Brown 5). The food that is offered contains 25% less nutrient density, and consequently, underprivileged socioeconomic populations consume significantly lower levels of the micronutrients that form the foundation for proper protein and brain development. In a recent study of

poor households, it was found that two-thirds of children were nutritionally poor and that more than 25% of women were deficient in iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B6, thiamin, and riboflavin (Garnett). Of course, some may challenge the relevance of these vitamins and nutrients since they are not something the average person consciously incorporates into their diet on a daily basis. Yet modern research, examining the severely homogenous diets of the poor, has found severe developmental consequences associated with the lack of nutritional substance. For those afflicted, these deficiencies are not simply inconvenient, but actually exacerbate their plight and hinder their progress towards a sustainable lifestyle.

The human body is a complex system that cannot be sustained merely on the simple sugars and processed carbohydrates that comprise most cheap and filling foodstuffs, and research shows a relationship between nutritional deficiencies and a host of cognitive and developmental impairments that are prevalent in the undernourished families from urban America. Standardized tests of impoverished siblings, one of whom received nutritional supplements and the other who did not, showed cognitive gains in the well nourished child as well as increased motor skills and greater interest in social interactions when compared to the other child. In the highly formative toddler years, under nutrition can inhibit the myelination of nerve fibers, which is responsible for neurotransmitting and proper brain function. Collaborators Emily Tanner from the University of Oxford and Matia Finn-Stevenson from Yale University published a comprehensive analysis of the link between nutrition and brain development in 2002. Their analysis, which they linked to social policy, indicated that a shortage of legumes and leafy green vegetables, which are near impossible to find in corner stores, is the leading cause of the iron-deficiency anemia afflicting 25% of urban children. This extreme form of anemia is characterized by impaired neurotransmission, weaker memory, and reduced attention span (Tanner and Finn). For those who do not have access to the vitamins, minerals, and micro-nutrients found in fruits and vegetables, these maladies are not distant risks, but constant, inescapable threats.

In light of these severe consequences of under-nutrition, the term “food insecurity” encapsulates the condition wherein the economically disadvantaged are vulnerable simply because their bodies are unable to receive adequate fuel for optimal functioning. Just as one cannot expect a dry, parched plant to bloom and pollinate a garden, by constraining the development of individuals, food insecurity also constrains the development of the neighborhoods in which the individuals contribute. For the health of a city and its communities, all roadblocks to progress must be removed and food insecurity must be cut out at its roots so that individuals have the resources for advancement.

As socially conscious citizens and local governments have recognized the prevalence and danger of food insecurity in inner cities, there have been attempts at a remedy. Obviously, the easiest solution is simply to introduce a grocery store that would provide a variety of quality, healthful foods. However, for big-box supermarkets driven by the bottom lines, urban areas are less than desirable business locales both from a standpoint of profitability and maintenance. It is simply irrational for a supermarket to invest in an urban area with lesser revenue potential, size constraints, unattractive locale, and increased threat of theft and defacement when it is so easy to turn a profit in spacious and peaceful suburbia (Eisenhauer). Supermarkets must have significant incentive, beyond humanitarian ends, if they are to take the financial risk of entering a poor, urban marketplace.

Certain cities are using the power of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to encourage supermarkets to invest in urban centers. Under these redevelopment laws, tax revenues from retail development or other commercial enterprises are devoted, for a specified number of years, to infrastructural improvement of the district (TIF Reform). This approach has been effective in enticing new businesses; in fact, the exterior growth around South Bend is the result of a TIF district established in the late 1980's. LaSalle Square is currently part of a TIF district but there is discussion as to how the TIF monies should best be applied (Wolfson). It may be possible to use the power of the TIF to encourage another large retailer such as Kroger to establish a presence in the square, but a smaller enterprise may be a better option. Experts indicate that for the destitute and food-insecure, reliance on a corporate entity is not optimal. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, a researcher from the State University of New York, investigated the interplay between supermarkets and the urban poor. She concluded that large big-box stores lack a commitment to the communities they serve and can only be relied on when it is clear they will make a profit, which may or may not happen when TIF benefits expire (131). Even when a portion of proceeds is used in the community, the majority of the cash flow from a supermarket is going to a corporate headquarters elsewhere, not directly supporting the surrounding neighborhood. Likewise, while some employees may be local, the highest salary management positions are generally given to outsiders, making the stores and their employees set apart, rather than integrated into the neighborhood (130). Certainly a supermarket in an urban area will greatly contribute to the reduction of food insecurity, but it is not the only available option and the city of South Bend is ripe for alternative solutions. The city is primed for a cooperative effort that could shift the paradigm for urban renewal from a quick, corporate solution, to a long-term enterprise built on community contributions and under local control.

Around the globe, many destitute urban areas have found the means to reverse nutritional poverty through a literal and figurative grassroots effort. In an effort to

avoid packaged, convenience store food, neighbors in the Bronx, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, and most successfully in Philadelphia, have been planting their own crops right in the heart of the city (Brown 3–4). Truly farming the food desert, coalitions that link community gardens, local farmers, and urban markets are providing healthy, sustainable food sources without a supermarket. Interestingly, in the process, such coalitions are generating jobs, increasing property value, and in some cases, actually reversing the effects of poverty. The city of South Bend, uniquely situated in the breadbasket of the United States, is in the perfect position to launch a “greening” effort, modeled after the successes in other parts of the world, which would both solve the problem of food insecurity of LaSalle Square and invigorate the local economy.

While modern Americans have the tendency to think that food production should be, and always has been industrialized, internationally, especially economically disadvantaged nations, are exemplifying the possibilities of local gardening efforts. Far removed from industrial farms, Cubans grow half their vegetables within the city, vacant land in Russian cities produces 80% of the nation’s vegetables, and specifically in Moscow, 65% of families contribute to food production. Singapore has 10,000 urban farmers and nearly half of the residents of Vancouver grow food in their gardens (Brown and Carter 10). These habits are not simply a novelty; rather, populations that garden tend to be healthier, eating six out of the fourteen vegetable categories more regularly than non-gardeners and also consuming fewer sweet and sugary foods per capita (13). This data, compiled by the North American Urban Agriculture Committee, was synthesized from the journals of Public Health Policy and Nutritional Education and shows the interrelatedness of nutritional access and availability to healthy personal choices. While these trends towards healthful lifestyles and gardening have been gaining ground slowly in the United States, when food insecurity and poverty take their toll, cities are finding that urban agriculture is an increasingly attractive and profitable alternative.

American communities very similar to South Bend have shown that creativity and collaboration can be quite effective at reversing food insecurity. The Garden Project of the Greater Lansing Food Bank has successfully combined gardening and Midwest access to local farms to bring food security to urban residents and senior citizens. Their eighteen community gardens and volunteers provide fresh fruits and vegetables year round to low-income families, food pantries, the elderly, and social service organizations. Completely bypassing the commercial market, the Garden Project has trained 500 families to grow their own food in backyard plots so that they can always have healthy food in the midst of the city (Brown and Carter 1). The gardens are supplemented by a process known as “gleaning,” where volunteers harvest extra crops from local farmers that would otherwise go to waste,

and deliver it to residents of subsidized housing (“Gleaning”). In 2008 alone, the Garden Project actively involved 2,500 individual gardeners and was able to provide over 250,000 pounds of produce from gleaning alone, plus the yields of the community plots which were used directly by the gardeners (“GLFB Facts”). This Lansing coalition serves over 5,000 individuals per month, yet only 4,400 reside under the poverty line in the LaSalle Square Area (Advameg, Inc.). If half of the inhabitants of LaSalle Square became engaged in the gardening effort, a similar collaboration could meet the needs of the region and greater participation could yield an excess.

Similar efforts have demonstrated not only that inner-city food production is achievable, but also that it can be cost-effective and self sufficient, unlike a food-bank. Frustrated by the inner city downturn she describes as “an overgrown dog toilet,” industrious London entrepreneur Julie Brown created a community gardening company aimed at providing un-mechanized, local,

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sustainable food. The company, Growing Communities, uses organic box gardens and small farms within to supply more than 400 homes with weekly deliveries of organic fruits and vegetables. After a ten-year investment in local farmers and mini-gardens within the city, Growing Communities is now financially independent and generates over \$400,000 per year (Willis 52–55). Compelled by both capitalism and social concern, Brown’s efforts have shown that community-supported agriculture is not only possible, but can be profitable as well! South Bend’s community agriculture program should not be an entrepreneurial endeavor, but Brown’s work in London indicates that it need not be a financial burden to the city either. Rather, the co-op would be financially self sufficient, with the potential to generate revenues and fiscal growth in the city.

There are environmental factors that make South Bend an even better place to launch a profitable community agriculture program than London. Chiefly, South Bend has many more farms in the immediate vicinity than Ms. Brown could ever have dreamed of in the U.K. While Brown was limited to 25 local farms within 100 miles of the city, South Bend has over 50 farms within 25 miles of LaSalle Square (Local Harvest). Offering a broader production base creates more potential for profits by decreasing transportation time and increasing product, thereby making it easier for a coalition to become financially self sufficient in a shorter time frame than Ms. Brown’s ten-year plan.

A self-sufficient co-op would not be a burden to the taxpayers of South Bend, but, as Growing Communities shows, could generate a small, but constructive profit. These proceeds could then be invested in the Michiana farms themselves, which

would encourage local agriculture, or in infrastructure for LaSalle Square, similar to TIF revenues. Unlike TIF revenues, which are diverted to the city after a time, the profits of the co-op would always contribute to LaSalle Square and presumably, contributions would increase with the profits as the co-op became more established. Either way, whether the funds were reinvested in the farms or in the neighborhood, a co-op would support the local economy for the duration of the project, benefiting the immediate community without stressing the fiscal situation of the city.

Urban Philadelphia has led the way in demonstrating the profitability of community solutions to food insecurity through an offshoot of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) known as Philadelphia Greens. Since the 1970s, this coalition has reclaimed parks, planted trees, and created community gardens; both to revitalize the neighborhood and to serve the nutritionally and economically poor. Through a process that plants trees, builds wooden fences, and gardens the more than 1,000 vacant lots of Philadelphia, PHS combines housing projects and reclaimed space to “green” and reinvigorate the neighborhood (“The Effects”). Since LaSalle Square is essentially a large empty grassy area at the moment, a community agricultural co-op should turn this vacant lot and others in the neighborhood into community gardens, which would work in tandem with the gleaning from local farms. Similar to the Philadelphia project, these gardens would simultaneously yield produce and improve the appearance of the neighborhood.

One PHS project, in the New Kensington neighborhood of north Philadelphia, was the subject of a recent socioeconomic study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania’s renowned Wharton School of Business. In the New Kensington area, PHS recently planted 480 new trees, cleaned 145 side yards, developed 217 vacant lots, and established fifteen new community gardens. The effort was a model of the collaborative strategy between PHS and the local community development corporation, making it the ideal subject of the Wharton study. The findings, published in 2004, showed significant increases in property values around the PHS greening projects, and were the first step in quantifying the fiscal returns of neighborhood greening beyond the qualitative benefits of remedying food insecurity. After analyzing the sales records of thousands of New Kensington homes between 1980 and 2003, the study reported that PHS greening had led to a \$4 million gain in property value from tree plantings alone and a \$12 million gain from vacant lot improvements. Simply greening a vacant lot increased nearby property values by as much as 30% (“Seeing Green”). While a supermarket might modestly improve property values for those immediately near the store, community greening involves multiple plots across an area, benefiting many more people and properties. The Wharton study showed that community greening would provide increases in the value of any property near a green space, up to multiple millions of dollars. The New Kensington

neighborhood covers 1.4 square miles which is approximately the size of La Salle Square, so while the overall property values are lower simply because South Bend is a smaller city, the gains might be proportional (City Data). It is reasonable to believe that cleaning up LaSalle Square and planting gardens would quantitatively benefit the fiscal situation of the city and increase assets of the homeowners while subsequently improving quality of life over many acres.

On a humanistic level, an agricultural co-op that involves neighborhood collaboration and community gardening would contribute to LaSalle Square's social health. The Square is surrounded by distinct ethnic neighborhoods, including African American, Latino, and Caucasian that do not intermingle extensively (Wolfson). In Philadelphia's Warrington neighborhood, however, the more than sixty community gardens have created a venue for Asians, Caucasians, and African Americans, to plant and work together to improve their lives. Longtime Warrington resident Joanne Jackson was impressed with the rich community the gardens foster saying, "It provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know folks that you wouldn't ordinarily meet in your everyday life." In Philadelphia's Norris Square, community gardening was able to harness the talents of Puerto Rican, Cambodian, and other minorities, to create a medium for cultural discussion. The Norris Square garden serves as an educational tool, featuring a mural of Puerto Rican folklore, traditional island spices, and teaching the local children about their heritage and immigrant history. More genial interactions surrounding the San Francisco Dearborn Community Garden actually led to a 78% decrease in crime around the garden ("The Effects"). Similarly, a community garden in urban South Bend could encourage interracial collaboration, build unity, and improve the communal wellbeing of LaSalle Square.

The only proposed facet of the LaSalle Square Redevelopment Plan that is currently being initiated is the construction of a new senior residential housing complex that will help improve the outward appearance of the Square and encourage new residents. These new residents will contribute to the overall aging population, which is in sharp contrast to the young mothers and children who currently live around the Square. There is a need for intergenerational sharing and a social forum that will encourage communication and interaction between the two groups, who may otherwise have a tendency to polarize because of inherent differences. A community garden would provide a healthy meeting ground for the two demographics, where old and young could come and work alongside one another for a mutual—and delicious—harvest, while simultaneously forming relationships that will build up the community. It is widely accepted that the strength of a neighborhood often lies in the cohesiveness of its inhabitants, and a community garden in LaSalle Square would preempt any potential rifts among the differing age groups that the new redevelopment project might incur.

Certainly there are challenges to the sort of dynamical, community-based solution that I am proposing. Such an agricultural co-op is hinged upon the participation of the people it serves and cannot be successful without the dedicated support of the neighborhood. It could be noted that lower-income economic groups are less socially involved than their higher income counterparts and some might believe that they are unlikely to contribute to, or care about, a greening effort. Yet I believe that there is a distinction between political involvement and neighborhood interaction. Middle-class Americans are conscious of gas prices and the fluctuations of the stock market that affect their job security and ability to provide for their families; yet the unemployed poor without cars must rely on their neighborhoods to eek out a living. Their sustenance comes not from a salary, but from odd jobs, welfare, and the munificence of fate. The battle to put food on the table is more familiar to the poor than foreign conflict and is one that they fight every day. Therefore, while the poor are less inclined to vote or worry about governmental affairs because of the difficulties associated simply with daily living, they are acutely aware of their immediate surroundings and how those surroundings challenge or contribute to their success. The position makes them uniquely inclined to invest in the betterment of their surroundings since it can have a dramatic effect on their personal lives. The real success of the sustainable food movement may come from harnessing the power of urban communities who can derive great, immediate, and lasting benefit from neighborhood revitalization.

At risk urban populations frequently feel a need to band together for survival, leading to the problem of gangs in many cities. A community garden simply harnesses this desire for interconnectedness and security in a constructive manner. The notoriously dangerous Los Angeles Pico-Union gang, during a 1992 riot, burned down businesses and homes in protest, but surprisingly left their inner-city garden unscathed. In the days that followed the riot, the gang issued a statement saying that they objected to the lack of green spaces and parks in their neighborhood and others in the area said that creating green spaces was more important than bringing in new businesses ("The Effects"). The Pico-Union gangs made it clear that they care about their community green spaces and were willing to go to great lengths to ensure that it was maintained and improved. Fortunately, in the LaSalle Square neighborhood, the community gardens would both create green space and encourage economic development: two things that are indeed very important to the people who inhabit urban areas.

It has been argued that urban growers, especially from lower socioeconomic classes, do not have the expertise or knowledge base to generate successful yields that will ensure food security. Fortunately, agriculture is Indiana's fourth largest industry and the state boasts over 63,000 farms ("A Look"). In addition to the many inhabitants



of LaSalle Square who have a background in agriculture, there is a wealth of knowledge about proper planting methods available from the farmers around South Bend. Many of these farmers have already shown a willingness to help by selling or donating their produce to the local Urban Market. Additionally, national urban agriculture non-profit groups, such as Master Gardening and Cooperative Extension, offer free public education to cities beginning community agriculture programs and some will even perform on-site training (Brown and Carter 16). By harnessing the assets of local, gratuitous knowledge and supplementing that knowledge with national support groups, South Bend has multiple resources available to train and encourage its burgeoning urban farmers.

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Assuming that statistics are correct and the citizens of LaSalle Square will support a community agriculture co-op, the initial funding to transport the vegetables and organize the endeavor must come from somewhere. Fortunately, the South Bend Community Forum for Economic Development, partnered with the South Bend Botanical Gardens, have already begun urban gardening efforts in South Bend and launched the Urban Garden Market in September of 2008. There are smaller gardening projects underway at many local churches and the South Bend Center for the Homeless, with the distinct aim of providing food for the hungry (Wolfson). These efforts could simply be coordinated by a dedicated board of between three and five people under a new corporation, the LaSalle Square Gardens, which would encourage the gardens, train gardeners, and make contact with local farmers who have extra produce. There are at least five Michiana farmers who contribute to the Urban Market so it would just be a matter of using those connections to establish a permanent wholesale partnership with the opportunities for gleaning during the harvest. The recently published LaSalle Square Redevelopment Plan is considering packages of between \$200,000 and \$5,500,000 for infrastructural development of the area; those funds could be reallocated to the LaSalle Square Gardens since the co-op would necessarily contribute to infrastructure in the greening process (City of South Bend). The start-up money would purchase a couple vehicles to transport produce, help acquire gardening tools, and could be used for the construction of the first new gardens in LaSalle Square. There would be minimal cost for a building since the old Kroger property is currently abandoned. The city would just need to pay the small sum to obtain the undesirable property from the strip-mall owners and then transfer the deed to the co-op. With tools, a building, and an already established urban market, the LaSalle Square

Gardens could start recruiting and training neighbors to plant in the spring of 2009, establishing food security and beginning the journey towards revitalization.

Solving the problem of food insecurity is a complicated issue that must balance the severe nutritional needs of the poor with practical feasibility and fiscal gains. Unfortunately, an uncomplicated solution, such as simply building a grocery store, is not realistic in economically challenged locales and an alternative must be sought. For the LaSalle Square region of South Bend, a community-supported agricultural co-op that distributes produce from neighborhood gardens and local farmers through an urban market would both solve the problem of food insecurity and contribute to the renewal of the neighborhood. Other coalitions in London, Lansing, and Philadelphia have shown that vacant land, local farm connections, and community willingness are all that are needed to form a productive and profitable community agriculture program. LaSalle Square has a large grassy lot at its center, is surrounded by farmers, and already has the beginnings of an urban greening program through the Community Forum for Economic Development and various local groups, so is it perfectly prepared to emulate the successes of other greening programs. If the program, which should be profitable a short time after start-up, was funded by the allocation already in place for LaSalle Square redevelopment, the co-op would not be any extra burden to taxpayers or the city, but would actually enhance fiscal health and quantitatively increase property values with the new gardens and green spaces. The economic and nutritional gains of the people would only be heightened by the personal well being that is born of inter-personal collaboration that crosses racial and social boundaries. Such an effort is ambitious; it will indeed require the time and talents of many people who care about the health of their community. But South Bend is rich with the necessary seeds for such a project that may, in time, blossom and grow to feed its people.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### ANNE RESER

Anne Reser is very excited to have her essay published in *Fresh Writing* and would like to thank her First-Year Composition professor for submitting her research paper for consideration. A native of Bucyrus, Ohio, Anne is a Philosophy major and Gender Studies minor with plans to continue her studies in law school after receiving her degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Anne chose the topic of her research paper after reading an article debating the pros and cons of mandatory Gardasil vaccination for young girls. The issue, which incorporates ethical, religious, legal, and medical concerns, is a little-discussed but important matter that has the capacity to affect at least half of the population of the United States. She hopes that by reading her paper, more people will become aware of the controversial matter and will take the time to examine the facts and form their own opinions.

# To Mandate or Not to Mandate?

## The Controversy Surrounding Gardasil

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ANNE RESER



Twenty million. This staggering number reflects how many people across the United States are infected with Human Papillomavirus (*HPV Vaccine: What You Need to Know*). Most of the afflicted do not realize they have been infected and go about their daily lives until they come down with sores or growths or, even worse, cancer. This disease can disrupt and even end lives, leaving nothing but destruction in its path. Fortunately, a solution has been found. Recently, a vaccination called Gardasil was approved by the government as an effective method of protection against certain cancer and growth-causing strains of the disease. Problem solved, right?

Wrong. Controversy surrounding the vaccine has recently hit an all-time high as states all across the nation scramble to decide how to handle this new discovery. Proponents of a mandate for the vaccine claim that Gardasil is necessary to protect our children against the evils of Human Papillomavirus and its long term effects. However, opponents of a possible compulsory decision claim that Gardasil is not the “wonder drug” its manufacturers make it out to be. So, who is correct? Should states require all young girls to be vaccinated against HPV or do we not yet know enough about the drug to make an educated decision? Although Gardasil is an extremely valuable and effective tool in the fight against HPV, it needs further modification and observation before states should pass mandates requiring the immunization of 11 to 12-year-old girls.

While much of the public has heard of Gardasil and has a basic understanding regarding its function, (thanks to its parent company’s extensive “one-less” marketing campaign), many do not have a full grasp of the vaccine’s background, purpose, and how the vaccine is able to protect women from HPV and cervical cancer. On June 8, 2006, Gardasil became the first vaccine to be licensed by the Food and Drug Administration in the campaign against Human Papillomavirus and cervical

cancer. Following suit, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted on June 29, 2007 to approve the use of Gardasil for females between the ages of 9 and 26 (*HPV and HPV Vaccine: Information for Health Care Providers* 1). The vaccine was, and continues to be, marketed as a solution for the growing rate of both HPV and cervical cancer in the United States. What many do not know about the vaccine is that, while there are over forty strains of HPV, Gardasil specifically protects against only four particularly harmful varieties: 6, 11, 16, and 18 (Temte 1). These four strains have been proven to directly cause 70% of cervical cancer cases as well as 90% of genital warts instances that stem from the contraction of HPV (*HPV and HPV Vaccine* 1). Also, it is important to note that the vaccine was approved by the FDA on its ability to protect against HPV and not on its effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer (Klotter 1). The vaccine contains no live viruses and is administered in a set of three separate injections given over the course of six

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*The purpose of any vaccine is to produce “herd immunity” and that this type of immunity is not possible when only 50% of any given population can actually be vaccinated.*

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months to females aged 9 to 26 who are neither pregnant nor have already contracted HPV (Strehl 1). Ideally, the vaccine is recommended for girls 11 to 12 years old (the age of the average sixth grader), as it is meant to be administered prior to the onset of sexual activity (*HPV and HPV Vaccine* 1).

So far, it seems as if Gardasil is no different than any other vaccine; however, this drug has been steeped in controversy from the minute it was licensed by the FDA. The debate stems from the question at the heart of this research paper: should state legislatures mandate the use of Gardasil for their

school-aged girls? There are many different viewpoints on the question at hand, with each commentator backing her opinion with statements based on the safety, legality, and/or morality of such a mandate. The commentators ask many different questions: Has the vaccine been tested rigorously enough to ensure it is safe for our children? Is it within the state’s power to mandate such a vaccine for such a large population? Furthermore, is it moral for a state to rule on a vaccine which protects against a disease that is transmitted through sexual contact? All of these questions and multiple others have posed great problems for the public and policy-makers alike, leading to a great debate that has led to no clear answer. It is now time to take a closer look at the facts stemming from the Gardasil debate and decide, based on objective facts (not moral opinions) regarding the safety of the vaccine and the legality of such a law, if states can and should require their school-aged females to be immunized.

While many doubts may surround Gardasil, there is no question that the vaccine is an incredibly important and effective tool in the fight against HPV and its many side effects. In a recent publication, the CDC described Gardasil as a vaccine that

is “highly effective in preventing four types of HPV” and the first drug of its kind “developed to prevent cervical cancer” (*HPV Vaccine: Questions and Answers 1*). Research conducted by the Food and Drug Administration further reinforced this claim with studies that showed the vaccine successfully preventing over 95% of HPV cases (of the 11, 16, 18, and 6 strains) in test subjects (Temte 1). More importantly, Gardasil had a 100% success rate in preventing “cervical precancerous lesions and noninvasive cervical cancer” caused by HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18. Also, 99% of the patients were successfully protected from genital warts stemming from the same infections (Zarbock 1).

After examining statistics compiled on the prevalence and expansion of HPV across the United States, it becomes frighteningly obvious how important the prevention of this disease is to the health of women nationwide. Human Papillomavirus has been the most prevalent sexually transmitted disease in the United States for many years. The disease is so common, in fact, that studies have shown that 54% of women contracted HPV within four years of first sexual intercourse (Temte 1). If the infection alone weren't enough, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that “persistent infection with...HPV is associated with almost all cervical cancers” (*HPV and HPV Vaccine 3*). Estimates for 2007 published by the American Cancer Society predict that over 11, 000 women will develop cervical cancer and that approximately 3,600 deaths will be attributed to this disease by the end of the year (*HPV Vaccine: Questions and Answers 2*). The math seems relatively simple: Gardasil offers 100% protection against the four strains of HPV that cause 70% of cervical cancer in the United States; therefore, the vaccine would, predictably, protect 7,700 women annually from the trials of cervical cancer while at the same time saving the lives of 2,520 of the afflicted. What seems to be the problem?

Unfortunately for the manufacturers of Gardasil, the vaccine's critics have found and publically pointed out many of the problematic aspects of the drug, which has negatively affected the vaccine's reputation and has reduced the public's confidence. One of the most common issues raised against Gardasil is its incredibly high cost. The drug, which is given over the course of three injections, costs \$120.00 per dose (\$360.00 total). This large, extra expense surpasses the budgets of many families nationwide, some of whom would have to pay to immunize more than one teenaged daughter (Zarbock 1). Also, booster shots, if needed, would add yet another expenditure to an already elevated price tag. At this time, it is unknown how long the original vaccine is effective, due to a lack of research extending past five years.

While that particular uncertainty may seem severe enough on its own, the issue of the drug's durability is only one of the many health related concerns surrounding Gardasil and its effects. At the time of immunization, 83% of test subjects reported



the injection site being a source of moderate to severe pain and swelling and/or reported that they developed a fever shortly after vaccination. Also, the occurrence of fainting in recipients increased compared to the average of the same age group (Strehl 1). More seriously, 5% of reported adverse reactions were classified as “serious,” meaning they resulted either in a hospital stay or, in five instances, death (Eggertson 1). While it has not been proven that the five reported deaths are positively linked to the administration of Gardasil, critics claim that these cases need to be fully investigated in order to potentially save lives.

Along with the immediate adverse reactions and the economic ramifications of Gardasil, there are also other issues that have been raised regarding the vaccine. Firstly, the long term effects (past five years) of this drug are unknown. While no studies have shown there to be any harmful long term effects, there is still a possibility that adverse reactions could begin manifesting themselves in the future. Also troubling is the lack of a vaccination for males. As is the case with sexually transmitted diseases, approximately half of the HPV-afflicted population is male; Gardasil, however, is only licensed for use on females. If, at any time, the vaccine does cease to be effective against HPV, females would be left exposed to infected males and would again have a significant chance of contracting the disease after sexual contact. Critics claim that the purpose of any vaccine is to produce “herd immunity” (when 97% to 98% of any given population has been vaccinated against a certain disease, thus practically eradicating said disease) and that this type of immunity is not possible when only 50% of any given population can actually be vaccinated (De Soto 2). Lastly, the clinical studies conducted on the vaccine also proved to be problematic after some critics noticed that the tests only evaluated results from women ages 16 to 26, while the vaccine has been approved for girls as young as 9 years old and recommended for 11 to 12-year-olds (De Soto 1). Without conducting further tests examining Gardasil’s effects (whether positive or negative) on girls between the ages of 9 and 16, it is unclear whether the rewards of early vaccination outweigh the potential risks involved. All of this information (both positive and negative), while important on its own, is put into an entirely new perspective when examined with the question of compulsory immunization in mind.

One of the most highly contested issues in health care is the question of whether or not the government has the right to mandate the administration of a vaccine to school-aged children. As the law now stands, each state is given the task of deciding which vaccines should be mandated for children and what the consequences are for disobeying those mandates. The criteria that lawmakers use to come to their decisions changes for each vaccine; however, the government looks at factors such as whether the disease is an imminent threat, whether herd immunity can be established, whether it is feasible that the vaccine be mandated (both economically and

geographically), and whether the vaccine is safe and effective (“A Matter of Health: Immunization in the Tradition of the U.S”). The process is a long and thorough one, due to the fact that it must ensure the vaccine in question will not cause harm when administered.

For years, the Federal Courts of the United States have heard case after case regarding the legality of such vaccine mandates as well as whether or not the vaccines were, in fact, beneficial for the children. So far, the government has always come out on the winning side. Repeatedly, the legal system has upheld the states’ rights to require that children be vaccinated with various vaccines. The decision that is credited with setting the pro-government precedent was heard by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1904–1905 after a man brought a suit against the state of Massachusetts when it required his child to be vaccinated against small pox (Harlan, 1). The court’s opinion in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts* stated that the state was granted the power to “enact a compulsory vaccination law” because of the “police power” the state had been granted in the nation’s early years. Also, the court decided that it was the responsibility of “the legislature, and not...the courts, to determine...whether vaccination is or is not the best mode for the prevention of (a disease) and the protection of the public health” (Harlan 1).

It is clear that the government’s ability to set mandates requiring immunization has been well-established; but how does this ability apply to Gardasil? As of February 2008, legislatures in thirty-four states have proposed bills that would require the government to “fund (vaccinations) or educate the public” about Gardasil. These laws have been passed in seventeen of the states, including Colorado, New York, Texas, Washington, and Indiana. Also, there is legislation pending in twenty-eight states that would set mandates requiring females entering the sixth grade (typically 11 to 12 years of age) to be vaccinated against HPV before attending school (“HPV Vaccine”). Only the governor of Texas has gone so far as to issue an executive mandate requiring immunization with Gardasil; however, the state legislature overrode the mandate and repealed the law (“HPV Vaccine”). The lack of such a statute is due mainly to probable public outrage, the unknown long-term ramifications of the vaccine, and the unwillingness of any one state government to set such a shocking precedent. Still, it cannot be denied that something must be done about the staggering increase in Human Papillomavirus cases in the United States; nor can Gardasil be ignored as a possible solution that would stop HPV from proliferating so quickly. It is the goal of both sides of the issue to eradicate this disease and protect future generations from its horrendous ramifications. The only question is: How?

I believe that there is a very simple solution to the Gardasil conundrum: Instead of siding with either the pro-Gardasil activists or the vaccine’s protestors, legislators

need to come to some sort of compromise between the two ideas, thus blending the best of both worlds. There are many possible ways of coming to such a compromise, some being better and more feasible than others. For instance, legislators could choose to avoid making any ordinances pertaining to the mandation of, funding for, or literature about Gardasil. In effect, they could allow the vaccine to remain a voluntary undertaking with no assistance or support given by the federal or state government. Another option would allow state governments to strongly encourage, but not mandate, the vaccine for young females, much like the influenza and chicken pox vaccines which are currently promoted for young people today. This support could include federal grants for the immunization of those who cannot afford the vaccine, literature to better explain the vaccine's benefits to a person's health, and public awareness campaigns promoting the vaccine for at-risk women.

The final and, in my opinion, best option for lawmakers is to eventually mandate the use of Gardasil for sixth-grade girls. However, this mandate would have to come after extensive research and careful planning.

Why is a mandate necessary? After hearing the facts, it should be clear that Gardasil is a vital scientific breakthrough that would allow parents to protect their girls from the horrors of HPV and cervical cancer. Unfortunately, the divisive nature of the publicity surrounding the vaccine, as well as the required series of three expensive shots, would most likely result in a low percentage of young girls actually receiving the vaccine. After all, it would certainly be easier for parents

to point to the negative information surrounding Gardasil and refuse to vaccinate their children than it would be for them to sacrifice the time and effort necessary to research the vaccine and ensure that their children receive all three shots in a timely manner. Also troubling is the idea that many parents would avoid vaccinating their female children based on the assumption that their child is certainly "too young" to be engaging in the sexual activity necessary for the contraction of HPV. The harsh reality is that many parents, no matter how involved in their child's life or how open they claim their relationship with their child is, are unaware of the objectionable behavior of their teenaged (and even pre-teenaged) offspring. Unfortunately, this ignorance could cost the child more than just her relationship with her parents. It could result in much more serious health problems and even death. It is for these reasons, along with the staggering increase of HPV and HPV-related cervical cancer cases in the United States, that I believe a mandate requiring the vaccination of all females prior to their sixth-grade year would be the most secure and effective method of protecting young girls.

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*If the state is going to mandate that children must receive this vaccination, they are responsible for ensuring that every last girl, no matter her financial situation, is able to benefit.*

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That being said, it is vital that a mandate not be immediate. Gardasil needs to undergo further study and examination before vaccination is made mandatory and thousands of girls are injected. The most troubling information surrounding Gardasil is the lack of research done on females under the age of 16. Because the vaccine is recommended ideally for females ages 11 and 12, the FDA and Gardasil's manufacturers must put many more months, if not years, of study behind the drug to ensure that it is not damaging to a young girl's developing body. Incorporated in the study of pre-teenage girls should be a thorough examination of the long term effects of Gardasil, both on younger and older women. This is imperative due to the fact that it is not known whether the vaccine requires booster shots in order to sustain resistance, nor is it known if any detrimental long-term effects exist. Another troubling limitation of the vaccine that needs to be examined is its supposed ineffectiveness in males. As previously stated, the fact that only 50% of the population can be inoculated against a certain disease means that the other half remains susceptible to the infection, thus making it very unlikely that the disease will ever be completely eradicated (which is the ultimate goal of compulsory vaccination.) In order for Gardasil to be as effective as it is meant to be, further study needs to be done seeking a solution that would successfully prevent males from contracting and spreading HPV.

After the previously discussed studies have been conducted and any problems surrounding the effectiveness or safety of Gardasil have been solved, there are still a number of policy issues that need to be dealt with in order to ensure that any mandate is feasible for both the government and its citizens. The most important issue that needs a solution is the problem of Gardasil's cost. At a total price of \$360.00 (\$120.00 for each of three injections), Gardasil would be a large financial burden to many families. A federal or state-funded program needs to be implemented that would offer assistance to families who qualify for any sort of other federal aid (i.e., Medicaid, Food Stamps, or Welfare) as well as for other families who could offer proof of need (such as a tax return or proof of extenuating circumstances). If the state is going to mandate that children must receive this vaccination, they are responsible for ensuring that every last girl, no matter her financial situation, is able to benefit.

The second most important issue that needs to be addressed is the matter of an opt-out clause. Most vaccine mandates contain an "opt-out clause" that allows a parent to choose not to vaccinate her child if the vaccine would be detrimental to the child's health or if the concept of a vaccine violates the family's ethical, religious, or philosophical beliefs. Because Gardasil is such a controversial vaccine, lawmakers need to carefully format the opt-out clause in the mandate. Many parents would not want to vaccinate their child due to the fact that HPV is a sexually transmitted

disease and would, therefore, be contradictory to the beliefs of many different religions and moral ideologies. However, it is well-known that children of even the most religious or moral parent may experiment with teenage sexual relations. For this reason, I believe that any mandate for Gardasil should have a fairly narrow opt-out clause that would read similar to the following: "Parents may 'opt-out' of immunization if, and only if, the child's physician believes that this vaccination would adversely affect the health of said child or if the family's religious beliefs strictly ban all vaccinations." This would allow for serious conflicts of interest to be avoided while still ensuring that girls whose parents have only personal moral objections would not be left unprotected.

As stated previously, I believe that this compromise would effectively merge two opposing ideas into one proactive solution. However, I am sure that there are many people who would strongly disagree with my proposition. The first group that would take issue with the suggested changes and eventual mandate would be those who support an immediate mandate for Gardasil, imperfections and all. These activists argue that there is simply not enough time for further studies to be conducted; certainly, there is no time for the vaccine to be further modified. After all, there is more than enough proof that the United States is teetering on the brink of an HPV epidemic, the cure for which is in our grasp. Yes, the vaccine may have unknown side effects or other detrimental qualities, but the benefits surely outweigh the slim chances of those risks. Who among us would not spare our daughter from the horrors of disease or cancer if we were able? By not immediately mandating this vaccine, they would argue, the government is doing just that: It is allowing parents who are not well-informed to expose their daughters to one of the most rapidly spreading infections of our time.

I believe that the concerns of these critics are legitimate, but do not offer enough reason to compel an immediate mandate. Yes, a solution for HPV needs to be found as quickly as possible. Yes, I believe that part of that solution is mandatory vaccination with Gardasil. However, I do not believe that it is prudent to require mass immunization with a drug that has not been properly tested on its target audience or on long-term patients. If anything has been learned from past drug-related tragedies, it is this: Even the most amazing of medical breakthroughs can have side effects which outweigh any benefit. Take, for example, the miracle drug Thalidomide which was once marketed to pregnant women as a cure for morning sickness. After several years and thousands of deformed newborns, the drug was proven to cause serious birth defects (i.e., severe limb stunting, defects of the heart and nervous system, and the destruction of sensory organs) and a warning to pregnant women was quickly issued. For thousands, this warning came much too late ("Thalidomide: Important Patient Information"). The chances that Gardasil would produce such

adverse effects, while admittedly slim, are reason enough to abstain from enacting a mandate until it has been proven to be completely safe. HPV has been around for thousands of years and it is unlikely that a delay of a few more will send our society over some disease-ridden edge.

The other group that would disagree with my proposed plan is comprised of persons who vehemently oppose any sort of a mandate for Gardasil. For the most part, those so opposed to such a mandate base their opposition on moral ideals. They point to the sexual nature of the disease and claim that it is wrong for the government to involve itself with sexual and moral instruction, which, they insist, is the parents' responsibility. These people believe that children would never begin sexual relationships at such an early age. If the children did, they would certainly inform their parents or another responsible adult. As such, there is no point in wasting the vaccine and the money on girls who will never be in a position to contract this disease; nor should girls so young be exposed to another vaccine.

While it is difficult to refute a moral objection, I believe that this side of the mandate's opposition has severely flawed arguments. Firstly, to state that the sexual nature of HPV is reason enough to prohibit a mandate is irresponsible. The fact is that HPV is a very serious, if not deadly, disease that over half of our nation's sexually active population will contract at some time in their life. Certainly, the prevalence and seriousness of this disease more than outweighs the objections to the mediums through which it is passed. As previously mentioned, it is extremely difficult to convince a parent that his or her beliefs of what is and what is not moral are flawed; so I will not attempt to do so. However, to put a child at risk of serious infection because her parents have convinced themselves that their little girl will not be sexually active without informing them is irresponsible and ignorant. These parents are the reason that a mandate is necessary: To allow girls with parents with varying moral stances to benefit from this vaccine that many would not receive if it were not mandatory. Why should the state stand back and allow a parent's naiveté to endanger his or her child's health and well being?

It is almost impossible to predict what fate lies ahead for Gardasil. The decision rests in the hands of lawmakers across the nation, and will determine whether this highly controversial vaccine will become a mainstay of American health care, or will simply be seen as a supplement to the current roster of compulsory vaccines. No matter which side you may support on the issue, the facts remain the same: Gardasil, while admittedly imperfect and in need of certain improvements, is a tremendous innovation in the quest to eliminate Human Papillomavirus and the oft-subsequent cervical cancer and genital warts. Something needs to be done to stop the proliferation of these diseases before they can be transmitted to our young

girls, who deserve to be spared the hardships of disease. The United States and its citizens should take advantage of this great gift that science has given to us. Tests should be run, improvements should be made, policies should be written, and the vaccine should be administered. Yes, there will most likely be even more controversy than before and perhaps even a few court cases thrown in. Advocacy groups will be formed to combat this bold legislative move. Parents will fight tooth and nail to avoid vaccinating their daughter against such a “dirty” disease. However, if the life of just one daughter, one mother, or one sister can be saved because of this vaccine, the struggle will all be worth it.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### TRICIA STEPANEK

Tricia grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and is currently an on-campus resident of Cavanaugh Hall at the University of Notre Dame. She is a science pre-professional major and hopes to attend medical school upon graduation. Tricia first learnt of the allegations against the Coca-Cola Company through her high school's Peace and Justice Club, of which she was an active member. Through this essay, she hopes to bring awareness to the seriousness of the situation and encourage Notre Dame students to address the issue and take the necessary action on campus.

# Coca-Cola Crushes Colombia

## *A Critique of the Human Rights Violations Plaguing Coca-Cola Bottling Plants*

TRICIA STEPANEK



Walk into almost any building on Notre Dame's campus and you will be confronted by gleaming red vending machines bearing the signature script of the world's largest soft drink dynasty: Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola soft drink dispensers line the walls of both North and South Dining Hall. The Coleman-Morse Center even offers free Coca-Cola soft drinks, asking for only a quarter donation per cup. Notre Dame purchased 60,000 cases of Coca-Cola brand products just last year alone. Currently, there are approximately 120 Coca-Cola brand vending machines on campus (Prentkowski). In addition to such products as Coke, Diet Coke, Vanilla Coke etc., the Coca-Cola Company also produces Sprite, Powerade, Schweppes, Simply Orange, DASANI, Fanta, Minute Maid, and even BACARDI Mixers. Coca-Cola is almost impossible to avoid, so we drink it. But, do we really know where each can of Coca-Cola product that we drink comes from?

In 1996, Isidro Segundo Gil, board member of the local SINALTRAINAL union in Carepa, Colombia, was murdered on the premises of the Coca-Cola bottling factory. The current SINALTRAINAL president, Luis Hernan Manco, was only yards away when the shooting took place. "When I heard the gunshot, I turned and saw him fall," Manco recalled. "Two men standing over him shot Gil several more times, and then they very calmly got on their motorcycle and rode off" (qtd. in Smith 3). As president of the targeted union, Manco received numerous death threats after the occurrence of the murder. He was forced to flee from his home and take refuge in Bogota for the next decade, leaving behind his three children and their mother. Almost ten years later, Manco is still afraid to return to Carepa, as "the people who killed Gil are still there" (qtd. in Smith 4).

This story is just a glimpse into the life of one Colombian union member. Unfortunately, murders and death threats are common occurrences in the recently

liberalized country. The neoliberalization of Colombia completely reshaped its economy, having major effects on the dealings of large corporations, such as the Coca-Cola Company, and the workers that they employ. Neoliberalism, or “market friendliness,” is characterized by market deregulation, state decentralization, free trade, and limited state control over the market. One major effect of market deregulation in Colombia was a drop in trade barriers. Lowering the tariff encouraged Colombian corporations to purchase raw materials from cheaper, foreign producers as opposed to local, Colombian businesses. Unchecked competition and a flood of cheap imports seriously damaged small businesses and many were forced to close down. This allowed the Coca-Cola Company to take advantage of struggling local bottlers, driving many out of business and condensing those remaining into a few,

large “anchor bottlers” (Gill 239). The Coca-Cola Company then formed exclusive contracts with these bottling factories.

It is important to note here the distinction between the Coca-Cola Company and its Colombian bottlers. “The factory in Colombia is not technically Coca-Cola Company, it is Coca-Cola...which means that the factory in Colombia is an independently contracted business that ‘coincidentally’ contracts exclusively to Coca-Cola Company” (Simon). Therefore, the actions of Coca-Cola bottlers cannot be legally attributed to the Coca-Cola Company. Whether or not they can be morally attributed to the Coca-Cola Company, however, is another question.

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*Coca-Cola bottlers often hired employees for a short period of time, temporarily terminated their employment, and then rehired them for another short period of time; denying them benefits and job security.*

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Fortunately for Coca-Cola, it is not legally connected to its Colombian bottlers, as the actions of its bottlers are, more or less, disreputable. Colombia’s lack of state involvement in the market allowed bottling factories to take full advantage of their employees. They pressured directly contracted workers into resigning, encouraging them to pursue micro-enterprising. While many of the employees feared sacrificing their job security for the high risk involved in managing a micro-enterprise, the majority submitted to company pressure and “willingly” left their jobs at the bottling plants. Coca-Cola bottlers then replaced its contracted employees with subcontracted, part-time employees (Gill 244). This new group of workers was hired under drastically different conditions. They earned only a quarter of the wages granted former, contracted employees, and were required to work up to sixteen hours a day. Coca-Cola bottlers often hired these employees for a short period of time, temporarily terminated their employment, and then rehired them for another short period of time; denying them benefits and job security (240). Many of the former, full-time employees that had resigned to pursue micro-enterprising were forced to return to Coca-Cola because

of economic hardships. These employees were rehired as subcontracted workers, losing all of their previous benefits (244). It was not long before workers began to collaborate in protest against the Coca-Cola bottlers.

To counter the new policies of Colombian bottlers, Coca-Cola workers formed three separate unions: SINALTRAINAL, SINALTRAINBEC, and SICO, with SINALTRAINAL being the largest and most prominent. Civilian-organized military troops in Colombia, often referred to as paramilitary troops, responded violently to this union formation. Between 1996 and 2005, these paramilitaries targeted SINALTRAINAL union members and were responsible for eight deaths, forty-eight exiles, and sixty-five death threats (Foust 3). Steven Dudley, Bureau Chief of the *Miami Herald*, described SINALTRAINAL leaders as “walking ghosts,” due to the immense hardship they suffered as paramilitary violence tore their families apart (qtd. in Gill 246). SINALTRAINAL tied such paramilitary action to Coca-Cola bottlers, accusing them of conspiring with paramilitaries to suppress union involvement.

There is no doubt that bottlers benefit from paramilitary violence. What is often overlooked when discussing the murder of Isidro Segundo Gil is that a week prior to his death, he had initiated negotiations with the Carepa bottling company over a new contract. Conveniently, the Carepa bottlers no longer have to worry about granting Gil a new contract, because of actions taken by paramilitaries. After Gil's murder, paramilitaries took over the Carepa bottling plant. They presented workers with a union resignation statement, bearing the bottler's letterhead, and offered the employees three choices: “resign from the union, leave Carepa, or be killed” (Leech 2). The majority of union members resigned immediately, while twenty-seven went so far as abandoning their jobs and fleeing the city out of fear for their lives (Foust 3). Paramilitary success in ending SINALTRAINAL activity in Carepa allowed the bottling factory to continue hiring subcontracted workers with little resistance from unions.

In addition to the obvious benefits of union suppression, there is clear evidence of communication between paramilitaries and bottling plant managers. Ariostos Milan Mosquera, plant manager at Carepa's bottling company, was seen socializing with members of the paramilitary and even supplied Coca-Cola products for paramilitary parties (Leech 2). Coca-Cola bottlers not only have the motivation to commit the crime, but also there is condemning evidence of their association with the criminals.

So, what is the stance of the Colombian government on all of this? Colombia's government has developed a policy of impunity in which, according to the Human Rights Watch, “supposedly phantom paramilitaries that the military claims it can

neither identify, locate, nor control take the blame for massacres and forced disappearances” (qtd. in Gill 241). It has also blamed numerous SINALTRAINAL deaths on the current civil war that plagues the country, as well as ludicrous scapegoats such as domestic violence. For example, when a SINALTRAINAL member was murdered in August 2006, the police chief in charge of the investigation immediately passed it off as a family dispute, as the attacker was related to the dead man’s wife. The police chief failed to acknowledge the prior death threats the victim had received for his involvement in SINALTRAINAL (247). It is apparent that the Colombian government has no plan to intervene in paramilitary violence against Coca-Cola union members.

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*While the student-initiated boycotts have begun to expose Coca-Cola’s connection with violence in Colombia, they have not been enough to generate change within the bottling plants. The solution lies within the Coca-Cola Company.*

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In summary, paramilitary groups in Colombia are responding violently to unionized workers through murders and death threats. Concrete evidence directly ties these paramilitaries with Colombian bottling factories. While these bottlers are not owned by the Coca-Cola Company, they are directly contracted by Coca-Cola. The Colombian government has developed a policy of impunity toward the violence and refuses to accept that it is related to anything other than civil war or domestic conflict. Anti-union violence in Colombia has been occurring for the past two decades and action needs to be taken to protect workers from economic suppression and violent paramilitary response to unionization.

In 2001, the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) and the United Steelworkers filed a lawsuit on the behalf of SINALTRAINAL against both the Coca-Cola Company and its Colombian bottlers. The lawsuit claimed that the Colombian bottlers “contracted with or otherwise directed paramilitary security forces that utilized extreme violence, and murdered, tortured, unlawfully detained, or otherwise silenced trade union leaders” and held the Coca-Cola Company accountable (Rogers 1). In 2003, Coca-Cola was officially dropped from the allegations, based upon the ruling that it could not be held responsible for actions committed by bottlers it does not legally have ownership over (Blanding 14). The charges against the Colombian bottlers still remain intact. However, the case may take years to conclude and the lawsuit has already been sitting in Miami for the past seven years. The attempt to bring legal allegations against the Coca-Cola Company failed, namely because Coca-Cola cannot be held responsible by law for the actions of a company that it does not have official ownership over.

SINALTRAINAL’s next plan of action was to force Coca-Cola to conduct an investigation of its bottling plants in order to provide more concrete evidence against

the bottlers for use in the Miami lawsuit. Coca-Cola claimed to have already performed two separate, independent investigations, both of which cleared bottlers of human rights violations. These investigations, however, were questionable in their validity, as the companies responsible for their execution are strongly tied to, and financially dependent upon, the Coca-Cola Company (Collingsworth 2). A third, purely independent investigation was conducted in 2004 by New York City Councilman Hiram Monserrate. This investigation found 179 separate civil rights violations in the Colombian bottling plants as well as significant evidence that the violence committed by paramilitaries was carried out “with the knowledge of and likely under the direction of company managers” (qtd. in Collingsworth 1). In order to settle the discrepancies among the three investigations, in 2005 the Coca-Cola Company resolved to organize a commission of student activists, school administrators, and labor leaders. This committee was intended to develop a procedure for an independent investigation of Colombian bottlers. However, the Coca-Cola Company proved to be extraordinarily uncooperative in the process and when it insisted that none of the investigation’s findings could be used as evidence in the Miami court case, the commission was brought to a standstill and many of its members resigned out of frustration with the company (Blanding 17).

In 2003, SINALTRAINAL called for an international boycott of Coca-Cola products (Blanding 14). It was not until a few years later, after the 2005 commission came to a disappointing end, that the boycott began to pick up steam. College campuses became the frontline of the boycott, as student activist groups campaigned to cut or refuse to renew their college’s contract with Coca-Cola. As of 2007, sixteen colleges in the United States, including New York University, had ended their contracts with the corporation. Five colleges in Ireland, Canada, and Italy have followed suit (Gill 251). While campus boycotts have gained significant support over the past three years, they have not been enough to damage Coca-Cola financially.

So, what is to be done now? While the Miami lawsuit still holds allegations against Coca-Cola’s bottlers, the court case could take years to resolve. SINALTRAINAL repealed the court decision that removed the Coca-Cola Company from the charges, but such an appeal is unlikely to be successful, as Coca-Cola legally does not have control over the actions of its bottlers. The attempt to conduct an independent investigation also failed, due to Coca-Cola’s refusal to cooperate. Finally, while the student-initiated boycotts have begun to expose Coca-Cola’s connection with violence in Colombia, they have not been enough to generate change within the bottling plants. The solution lies within the Coca-Cola Company.

It cannot be denied that the Coca-Cola Company benefits from union suppression in Colombia. If Colombian bottlers can continue to get away with underpaying and overworking their employees, production costs will remain low, allowing the

bottlers to sell their products to Coca-Cola at a lower price. Despite what seems to be suggestive evidence pinning Coca-Cola to paramilitary violence against union members, Coke explicitly denies involvement and refuses to make amends. According to a Coke spokeswoman, “We were not complicit in what happened, so it wouldn’t make sense for us to pay reparations” (qtd. in Foust 3). It may be impossible to determine what level of involvement Coca-Cola actually has in paramilitary violence against union members. Whether or not the company was directly involved, however, is beside the point. The point is that the multibillion dollar corporation not only has the power to intervene in Colombia, but also the moral responsibility to do so.

Just how much control does Coca-Cola have over its bottling factories? Not only does Coke own shares in the Colombian bottlers, but it has highly detailed, confidential, bottling agreements. As the bottlers exclusively contract with Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola has the power to seriously damage the bottlers by taking its business elsewhere. “I’m 100 percent sure that if Coca-Cola in Atlanta ordered them to change their uniform color from red to blue, they would do it,” ILRF lawyer Terry Collingsworth says. “They could stop these activities in a minute” (qtd. in Blanding 14). Clearly Coca-Cola is capable of intervening in Colombia. However, the company has not taken action against its Colombian bottlers yet because it does not feel that it is responsible for their actions.

According to Coca-Cola, of the eight SINALTRAINAL members that were murdered, only one was killed on the premises of the Coke bottling plant. Coca-Cola sides with the Colombian government, claiming that the other seven deaths were related to Colombia’s civil war, not anti-union violence (Foust 2). Coca-Cola also fails to recognize substantial evidence, such as prior death threats due to union involvement, tying the deaths to Coca-Cola bottlers. Despite the disagreement over the other seven murders, Coca-Cola cannot deny that Isidro Segundo Gil was murdered on the premises of its Carepan bottling plant. If such a murder took place in the United States, there would be outrage nationwide. Coca-Cola has a moral and political responsibility to intervene in Colombia. According to Luis Alejandro Pedraza, representative in Bogota of the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), the IUF has “‘always maintained that Coke has a political responsibility...to seek peaceful labor relations and that it should sign an international agreement guaranteeing labor rights. Coke hasn’t said yes yet, but it has been open to dialogue’” (qtd. in Smith 3). It then becomes the consumer’s duty to give Coca-Cola the motivation it needs to take up such responsibility.

A consumer boycott, specifically on college campuses, may be enough to capture and hold the attention of the Coca-Cola Company. Such boycotts have not been

successful in the past because they have not received enough support. If more colleges participate in the boycott by ending their contracts with Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola will be forced to accept responsibility for the actions of its bottlers. The ultimate goal is to work together with the Coca-Cola Company to conduct a purely independent investigation of Colombian bottling factories in order to determine exactly what needs to be done to fix the problem. The Coca-Cola Company has the power, and according to former employee of a Colombian bottling plant, Luis Cardona, “‘students have the capacity and energy to change policies’” (qtd. in Walters 3).

While a successful boycott may not have significant financial effects on the multibillion dollar corporation, it will considerably damage the company’s “Coke Side of Life” reputation. Colleges have been making the news for campus boycotts since they took off in 2005. Ray Rogers, head of the Corporate Campaign, Inc., formed the Killer Coke Campaign, an advertising strategy that altered Coca-Cola slogans to expose Coke for the violence committed by its bottlers. Rogers created the Killer Coke logo from Coca-Cola’s trademarked red script and changed such slogans as “Coke—It’s the Real Thing” to “Murder—It’s the Real Thing” (qtd. in Blanding 14). “‘They are right at the top of the worst companies in the world, and yet they’ve created an image like they are American pie,’” Rogers says. “‘When people think of Coca-Cola, they should think about great hardship and despair for people and communities around the world’” (qtd. in Blanding 14). Student activist groups across the nation have adopted Rogers’ approach and use many of his slogans in their efforts to remove Coca-Cola from their campuses. Coca-Cola’s image is everything, and it immediately responded to the Killer Coke Campaign through ads on TV and in school newspapers in an attempt to protect its image. Coca-Cola’s advertising budget climbed thirty percent to a tremendous \$2.4 billion between 2004 and 2006 (Blanding 14). If Coca-Cola has an extra half-billion dollars to spend on advertising, surely it can afford to conduct an investigation and accept the financial consequences that may result from changed policies among its bottlers.

Numerous arguments opposing consumer boycotts of Coca-Cola products have arisen over the past five years. The International Union of Foodworkers (IUF) declined participation in the boycott on the basis that “SINALTRAINAL did not present us with proof that Coke had ordered the killing of unionists” (qtd. in Smith 3). While evidence tying the Coca-Cola Company to the killings is lacking, there is no denying the involvement of the Colombian bottlers in the paramilitary violence. Although Coca-Cola does not own the bottling plants in Colombia, it contracts exclusively with them and is the source of the majority of their profit. Every corporation has a moral responsibility to conduct its business only with reputable companies, and Coca-Cola is no exception.



The British National Union of Students (NUS), which represents approximately three hundred British colleges, decided against participating in the nationwide boycott as well. The NUS felt that entering into “constructive dialogue” with Coca-Cola over moral issues was a more effective means of attack (qtd. in Norton). The NUS failed to recognize that constructive dialogue with Coca-Cola has already been attempted. The 2005 commission created to develop protocols for investigation was designed to elicit cooperation from Coca-Cola in clearing up allegations against its bottlers. Coca-Cola blatantly refused such cooperation, as it utilized every means available to delay the intended investigation. Coca-Cola already had its chance for “constructive dialogue,” and it abused it.

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*By attending Notre Dame and paying tuition, students are involuntarily supporting the Coca-Cola Company, and, in turn, supporting Colombian bloodshed.*

*It then becomes the responsibility of the students, as informed consumers, to take action against the dominating presence of Coca-Cola on campus.*

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Finally, some have expressed concern over the effects of a boycott on the Colombian workers which the boycott is attempting to aid. The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), Colombia’s largest trade union, fears that “if the boycott strikes a blow against the company’s share of the soft drink market, working people like themselves, who bottle and distribute the beverage, are more likely to suffer” (Gil 254). The CUT’s concern, while it appears logical, only scrapes the surface of the situation surrounding the boycott proposal.

First of all, it should be noted that the consumer boycott was specifically requested by SINALTRAINAL, Colombia’s largest union of Coca-Cola workers. According to United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) member Tommy Simon, “Our entire strategy at USAS is to never call for a boycott, only support a boycott that has been called for by workers. This is extremely important. We are a solidarity organization, not a group that tries to impose our beliefs on workers in other countries” (Personal Interview). SINALTRAINAL members would not have asked for such a boycott if they were not willing to face the consequences.

However, it is extraordinarily unlikely that a consumer boycott of Coca-Cola products will have an effect on the workers in Colombia. Financially, campus-wide boycotts have only made a small dent in Coca-Cola’s total profits. Collectively, colleges that have banned Coca-Cola from their campuses have cost the corporation 67 to 200 million dollars, only one to three percent of their 6.7 billion dollar sales in North America (Walters 2). Financially injuring Coca-Cola’s multibillion dollar soft-drink dynasty is not a probable result of the boycott, nor is it the goal. The purpose of the boycott is to damage Coca-Cola’s reputation and coerce the corporation into acknowledging and putting a stop to the crimes being committed in Colombia.

If, however, the consumer boycott became so successful that it did begin to threaten Coca-Cola financially, the company would more than likely take action before actual financial damage was done: "I don't think Coca Cola would really allow that many contracts to be cut. I would assume after a few large contracts went, Coca Cola would do something, even if it was just for show" (Simon, Personal Interview). If, for some reason, Coca-Cola still refused to intervene in Colombia and accepted the loss in profit as a consequence, the boycott would still not have an effect on Colombian workers. The entire argument can be negated when, once again, the distinction is made between the Coca-Cola Company and the Coca-Cola bottlers. Coca-Cola does not own the Colombian bottling plants. If the plants are not receiving sufficient business from Coca-Cola, they have the option to contract with another beverage company, such as Pepsi-Cola (Simon). Therefore, financial damage done to the Coca-Cola Company by means of consumer boycott is very unlikely to have an effect on Colombian workers.

A well-organized, nationwide boycott will seriously damage Coca-Cola's image. As Coca-Cola's image is the most important factor in distinguishing it from other soft drink brands, the boycott will persuade the Coca-Cola Company to cooperate in the execution of a purely independent investigation of its Colombian bottling plants, which is the ultimate goal. Once the investigation has been completed and specific human rights violations have been identified, further steps can be taken to improve working conditions and protect union members. Student-driven, campus boycotts have proven to be successful in exposing Coca-Cola's Colombian bottlers, but the movement requires increased university participation to truly have an impact on the soft drink dynasty.

The University of Notre Dame is a well-known, prestigious university that could potentially hold a good deal of power in the Coca-Cola boycott. Notre Dame just recently extended its five-year contract with Coca-Cola North America for another five years:

The contract includes terms regarding the procurement of Coke branded products, vending machine placement, fountain machine placement, maintenance and replacement of all machines and equipment, marketing and advertising, delivery and other services and Athletic Department Sponsorship. It also defines the terms regarding how prices for products are adjusted, the number and placement location of vending machines for new facilities, the ratio of Coke branded versus competitor branded products and the Athletic Department Sponsorship (Prentkowsi).

Most important among the terms of this contract is Coca-Cola's control over the presence of its competitor on Notre Dame's campus. Coca-Cola dominates both of

the campus's two dining halls, which do not offer "non-Coke" soft drink options for students. By attending Notre Dame and paying tuition, students are involuntarily supporting the Coca-Cola Company, and, in turn, supporting Colombian bloodshed. It then becomes the responsibility of the students, as informed consumers, to take action against the dominating presence of Coca-Cola on campus.

The University of Notre Dame prides itself on its academic standards and Catholic identity. According to its mission statement, "the University seeks to cultivate in its students...a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice" (nd.edu). Education will play a vital role in initiating change at Notre Dame. The first step, however, will be either to unite with an existing social justice organization on campus, or to create a new organization dedicated solely to the Coca-Cola issue. Education will be the next step. *The Observer*, Notre Dame's student-run newspaper, is an excellent means of informing the university's student and faculty population of the situation in Colombia. Campus demonstrations and protests outside of dining halls may also facilitate a student response. Hopefully, once students and faculty have been educated on the topic, a campus-wide boycott will result, capturing the administration's attention. Prentkowski claims that "Notre Dame would end any business partnership with any organization if it was proven guilty of acting in an unethical or illegal manner with no regard for financial or any other factor."

Educating students, faculty, and administrators at the University of Notre Dame will ultimately convince the university to fulfill its mission statement by reevaluating its contract with the Coca-Cola Company. If enough students become involved in the campaign against Coca-Cola, together we can kick Coca-Cola off campus and support the Coca-Cola workers in Colombia.

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## *Author's Biography*

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### RYAN TRAUDT

Ryan Traudt stumbled upon his research essay topic through stories told by friends and classmates in high school about the growing popularity in amphetamine abuse, primarily for academic purposes. The abuse seemed inconsistent with Ryan's idea of a drug culture, and he wanted to show others how the drug culture was changing so drastically. Furthermore, he wanted readers to become aware of the dangers of using drugs like Ritalin and Adderall without a prescription.

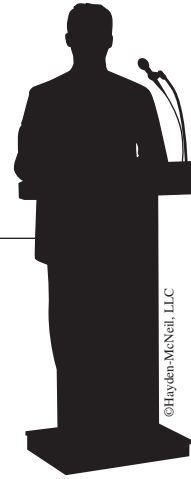
Ryan is a proud native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is a die-hard Packers and Brewers fan. He currently lives in Knott Hall and is majoring in Biology with the ultimate goal of attending medical or dental school, as long as he does not kill all of his brain cells boxing in Bengal Bouts.

# A Drug Promoting Society

## How Our Culture of Competition Incites Psychostimulant Abuse

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RYAN TRAUDT



*"Looks like I picked the wrong week to quit amphetamines."*

—Steve McCroskey (*Airplane!*)

Although the line may seem hilarious in the satirical comedy, *Airplane!*, Steve McCroskey's succinct statement is reflected today in a much more serious manner. With the ever-increasing pressures of collegiate life, from making the grade to keeping off the "freshman fifteen," college students exhibit another, even less healthy trend: the increasing prevalence of non-medical amphetamine use. This "pharming," otherwise known as non-medical prescription drug use, is the latest solution for students across the country searching for every possible advantage towards succeeding in college. Furthermore, "pharming" reflects our culture's emphasis on productivity and time-management, and college students are turning to amphetamines to fulfill these expectations. From sleep deprivation to life-altering addictions, the non-medical use of these drugs has tremendously dangerous side effects, yet they are made easily available and are seen as a simple, less bitter alternative to the boost of coffee.

The fear of drug abuse haunting today's college students for years to follow, however, is only a minor concern from a cultural perspective. These drugs are more than a health concern. They are a group of flashing lights pointing towards a culture that is subconsciously destroying its countercultural view of drugs and is, instead, embracing them in the form of amphetamines. No longer are the only drug users high school drop outs, roaming the country with their favorite band. Rather, modern drug users are engineers at Princeton, business students at Notre Dame, and medical students at Harvard.

Although the media portrays drug users, and its culture, as violent and terrifying, as well as people who attempt to remove themselves from contemporary society, the psychostimulant drug culture is changing this perception. For years, especially since the 1960s and the explosion of drug counterculture, drug users fell under the stigma of rebels. Even users, including Lisa Law, admitted their rebellious nature, stating that the counterculture “was an attempt to rebel against the values our parents had pushed on us” (“The Counterculture” 1). Drug users of the Sixties “dropped out and left the cities for the countryside to experiment with utopian lifestyles,” and they sought to “challenge authority,” work for “greater social tolerance,”

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*With the use of psychostimulants, drug culture has done a one-eighty. The use of amphetamines is not meant to rebel against cultural norms, but instead college students, among others, use the drug as a “tool for performance enhancement,” and to help them “maximize [their] human potential and social identities.”*

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and instill a personal sense in politics (Law 1). Users saw the drugs themselves as a gateway to “expanding one’s consciousness” (Law 1). Yet this drug culture is by no means a recent development in society; it has been around for centuries, as seen in a work by Baudelaire, a writer in the late nineteenth century, who claimed that drugs were a “means of expanding individuality” (Baudelaire 1). Baudelaire goes so far as to say that, through drugs, “man [surpasses] the gods,” and in this claim, along with his work as a whole, he portrays a prevalent drug counterculture that pervaded society long before the LSD obsession of the Sixties and Seventies or the modern day party scene dominated by Ecstasy (Baudelaire 1). Modern day drug culture is depicted as “rock stars, high on cocaine, [shaking] the rafters with eardrum-bursting anthems to drug and alcohol abuse,” as well as celebrities filling “the pages of People, US, the National Enquirer, and Page Six of the New York Post with outrageous alcohol and drug fueled antics” (Califano 2). Even prescription drug use has been around for decades, with the fist epidemic in America during the Civil

War. Soldiers widely used morphine, a prescription painkiller, during the war and many developed a severe addiction, known commonly as the “soldier’s disease,” and soon its use spread like wildfire through the middle class (Califano 19). Other, more modern abuses include “robotripping,” using “cough suppressants containing dextromethorphan (DXM) to get high” (Califano 27). Yet all of these drug uses exhibit one similar characteristic: removing oneself from reality or society. With the use of psychostimulants, however, drug culture has done a one-eighty. The use of amphetamines is not meant to rebel against cultural norms, but instead college students, among others, use the drug as a “tool for performance enhancement,” and to help them “maximize [their] human potential and social identities” (Loe 1). These prescription drugs are used to improve one’s characteristics that society values so greatly: “looks, performance, and psychological well-being” (Loe 1). The generation

currently in college, known as the Eccoboomer or Millennial generation, is “known for their materialist, highly-managed lives” that are, for the most part, a result of the environment in which they grew up, one characterized by “identity politics, medicalization, consumption, and efficiency” (Loe 1). These are not your typical drug abusers. They are not street rats, artists, rock stars, crack addicts, shady dealers, or gang members. They are the generation of the future, the ones sitting through philosophy lectures or chemistry labs at universities across the country, including our very own Notre Dame. The changing drug culture, no longer a counterculture, is one that must be prevented from morphing any further in hopes that prescription drug abuse will never be mentioned in the same sentence as caffeine or other commonly accepted drugs.

The reasons that today’s college students turn to these drugs are endless. From losing weight to staying up to write a paper at five in the morning, students have discovered tremendous advantages to using amphetamines. These drugs, known as methylphenidate, dextroamphetamine, and mixed-salts amphetamine, or by their brand names as “Ritalin, Dexedrine, and Adderall, respectively” are medically used to treat symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (McCabe 2). Non-medical amphetamine use first appeared in the Spanish Civil War as a drug meant to “assist personnel in ‘driving hard beyond the normal limits of human endurance’” and in the Second World War the drug’s use exploded on both sides (Iversen 71). Ever since the inception of non-medical use in the wars, amphetamine users have ranged from athletes to young teenage girls. Today’s college campuses’, “high-pressure worlds of timed exams, assignments, and review sessions,” have become the epicenter of amphetamine use, and even their use among students varies, yet among the wide range of uses, the two most prevalent are weight loss and academic performance enhancement. In early human tests of amphetamines, subjects displayed a reduction in appetite, and soon after the drugs were prescribed as a treatment of obesity, with over ninety percent of US physicians prescribing them by 1948 (Iversen 35). While the drug was eventually abandoned medically as an obesity treatment, the original purpose can still be seen in the use of college students today. College students, with the pressures to keep off the “freshman fifteen,” turn to amphetamines to reduce their appetite. Unfortunately, the use of amphetamines to lose weight is a problematic solution, as the drug merely reduces appetite rather than increasing metabolic rate, and therefore a user will return to their previous weight once they end drug use (Iversen 35).

The most prevalent use of amphetamines, however, appears in the classroom. Similar to steroid use in athletics, in today’s super-competitive academic environment, students seek to “become the person [they] always wanted to be and knew [they] could be” (Winger 132). In other words, the students want to perform at



their highest level under the pressures of “reading substantial numbers of pages in a short time,” staying awake, and maintaining focus “during moments of intense stress” (Loe 7). Drugs like Ritalin and Adderall give the student a “greater sense of control of their behavioral and mental abilities,” allowing them to deal with heavy workloads in a minimal amount of time (Loe 7). Users describe the effects to be extremely desirable, as one student states that “[Ritalin] makes you feel like Superman” (Loe 7). Testimonials such as these reveal college students’ view of an idealized human body, able to meet societal demands for an ever-increasing amount of work done in a limited time, and also reveal the growing popularity of amphetamines as a method to achieve this body. The popularity of stimulants as academic performance enhancers is so prevalent that, in a survey done at Kendrick University, an astonishing seventy-five percent of non-prescription drug users

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*More than a third of students eleven to eighteen years of age experience others who approach them regarding their prescriptions in an attempt to make a purchase.*

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claimed that the reason for taking the drug was for “academic purposes” (Loe 20). Adderall and Ritalin, which are easily taken in the form of oral pills, possess a tremendous ability to stave off natural fatigue, improve performance “in tasks that required a long period of sustained attention, and could restore performance that had deteriorated because of fatigue or sleep deprivation” (Iversen 21). Studies both on animal and human subjects support this finding; yet there is no evidence that the drug can affect intelligence, save through “improved attention and vigilance” (Iversen 23). The drug’s effects are heralded by students, including one Adderall user who states, “I felt like I could work for hours and hours and I did not get

bored and did not have to take a break” (Loe 12). One of the most popular views of stimulants is that of a “paper-writing drug,” and as one Harvard student admits, “In all honesty, I haven’t written a paper without Ritalin since my junior year in high school...It keeps you up when you’re tired, and makes you much more aware of what you’re doing” (Iversen 68).

These effects of Adderall, Ritalin, and other stimulants appeal considerably to students considered “perfectionists,” and a survey at an unnamed, competitive college in the U.S. showed that high perfectionist seeking sensation had a much higher self-reported abuse of stimulants (Low 285). Another survey of 10,904 randomly selected students from 119 four-year colleges in America depicts the greater level of non-prescription use among the high achieving perfectionist in college. Of the students surveyed, those who attended a school with the most competitive admissions criteria in the sample had the highest rate of use within the past year (5.9%), compared to moderately competitive (4.5%) and less competitive (1.3%) colleges (McCabe 100). Thus, with Notre Dame’s highly competitive admissions criteria,

the chance that students in South Bend abuse non-prescription stimulants increases. Furthermore, Notre Dame, with its majority population of white students, sees its potential number of “pharming” students increase further according to the same survey, as the survey shows that a much greater percentage of whites are abusers (4.9 %) compared to other races (McCabe 99). These surveys further the evidence of a changing drug culture, as these students at selective universities, the same students who will someday be leaders in our society, are turning to amphetamines to maximize their productivity and time management and fulfill expectations that society has for them.

Given that these amphetamines are, in some cases, medically prescribed, many non-prescription users assume the stimulants to be relatively safe for use, and as one Harvard student states, “Although there are certain risks involved, I think it’s worth it” (Iversen 68). Students often fail to realize, however, that Adderall and Ritalin are extremely comparable chemically to methamphetamine, also known as “ice” or “crystal meth.” In fact, the similarity is so strong that “human users cannot distinguish one drug from the other when they are given acutely” (Iversen 87). While users in college may not realize it, the chance of becoming an abuser and addict of amphetamines is very high due to its effect on dopamine release in neural cells, and prolonged or high-dosage use of the stimulants has been shown to cause some nerve damage, perhaps harming the brain for the remainder of one’s life (Iversen 86, 137). Such side-effects are oft overlooked by young college students, blinded by societal pressures to seek every advantage for performing at peak efficiency in their lives, especially the academic aspect of their lives.

While the demand for Adderall, Ritalin, and Dexedrine increases steadily, the amount of easily available stimulants increases as well. One major factor to blame for the growing number of non-prescription amphetamine abusers is the over-diagnosis of ADHD and the subsequent “increases in prescribing of psychoactive medications in the United States, including amphetamines and other stimulant medications for ADHD” (McCabe 1). Those diagnosed with ADHD become a means of acquiring stimulants for non-prescription users, and surveys show that around eighty-four percent of amphetamine users obtained the drugs from a friend or relative with a prescription (Loe 20). In fact, more than a third of students eleven to eighteen years of age experience others who approach them regarding their prescriptions in an attempt to make a purchase (Califano 51). In many cases, these “friends” are classmates, and those who are taking stimulants for medical purposes are commonly approached regarding the sale of their medication. More recently, however, non-prescription users turn to websites for their stimulants, as the Internet provides a much easier and convenient method of purchasing the amphetamines; the only requirement is a mailing address and a valid credit card (but not a prescription)

(Califano 51). One such website, Buy-Adderall.com, even has its own catchphrase, urging users to “Buy Adderall online, no prescription needed, no costly doctor fees, quick discreet shipping, buy Adderall now” (“Buy Adderall”). Other websites, including NoPrescriptionNeeded.com, show the ease with which one can obtain stimulants without a prescription.

The ever-increasing number of non-prescription psychostimulant users is evidence of a dangerous trend, yet, unlike the drug revolution of the Sixties, society promotes the current trend. The use and abuse of amphetamines reflects people’s attempts to “internalize social control,” and the use of these drugs embodies the culture of performance and tenets of medicalization that college students exist in (Loe 17). Unfortunately, neither education nor a better monitoring of the prescription of ADHD medication is a viable solution to the growing problem. Instead, the cultural values that society enforces upon students must be altered or abolished to prevent drugs from transitioning from a counterculture to a reflection of cultural norms. Psychostimulant use is, in the eyes of an increasing number of college students, the only viable option to achieve their ultimate potential as a student. Perhaps both students and professors alike should take a moment, step back, and look at the current academic culture. Suddenly, the difference between writing a late night paper and hitting home runs is a little blurry, as students are, in many ways, doing exactly what Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa did during the 1998 Major League Baseball season: turning to “pharming” to find an advantage over their competition. Today’s college students are “juicing up” on amphetamines instead of steroids, but hopefully it will not take another Mitchell Report to show the world that the changing drug culture is a major problem. So, next time you see a crack addict in tattered clothing in the city, think to yourself, “Is he really much different than my chemistry lab partner?”

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