



UMass Amherst Writing Program
Student Writing Anthology

UMass Amherst Writing Program Student Writing Anthology

*UMASS AMHERST WRITING
PROGRAM*

*TIFFANY KHANG, EMMA BRIGHAM,
ARIYA SONETHAVY, NICOLE
PALACINO, ZILU WANG, ISABEL
HOWELL, SARAH VAN ELLS, MAYA
ASBRIDGE, HARRIET SMITH,
DANIELA MOLINA PALACIOS,
MAHTA FESSHAIE, MARGARET M.*

*DAVIS, GABRIELLA LALLI MARTINS,
JAMES MURPHY, AMY J LIM,
ANANYA TALWAR, MICHAELA AYISI,
SHASHANK LAL, ABIGAIL
MORREALE, AND JADA ANDRADE*

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST LIBRARIES
AMHERST, MA



UMass Amherst Writing Program Student Writing Anthology by University of Massachusetts Amherst Writing Program is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), except where otherwise noted.

Contents

Introduction	1
Elkie Burnside	

Part I. Course Portfolio: Culminating Writer's Statement

1. AW&W: Always Writing and Writing	7
<i>Always Writing and Writing</i>	
Jagath Jai Kumar	
2. ELA: English Language Arrogance	12
<i>English Language Arrogance</i>	
Nicole Norman	
3. My Reflection	17
Sasha Marie Bakker	
4. No Flowers, Featuring Linguistic Anthropology	22
<i>Featuring Linguistic Anthropology</i>	
Amanda Lookner	
5. The Talking Squirrel	26
Shirley Chen	
6. The Writing Process of a Nonwriter	30
Daniela Molina Palacios	

Part II. Inquiring into Self

7. Untitled	39
Emma Brigham	

8. Ingredients of Education	43
Tiffany Khang	
9. My Inner Beliefs	47
Nicole Palacino	
10. Painted in Red, White, and Blue	52
Ariya Sonethavy	

Part III. Interacting with Texts

11. Oppression, Language, Survival: A Response to James Baldwin	61
Zilu Wang	
12. Heads Up, Don't Duck	66
Harriet Smith	
13. A Spanish Gringa	72
Isabel Howell	
14. The Words You Do Not Yet Have	77
Sarah Van Ells	
15. Rogue Game: A Response to Steve Almond	81
Maya Asbridge	

Part IV. Adding to a Conversation

16. The Extinction of History: How Genocide is a "Look the Other Way Affair" in the U.S.	93
<i>How Genocide is a "Look the Other Way Affair" in the U.S.</i>	
James Murphy	
17. What Venezuela Silences	99
Daniela Molina Palacios	

18.	To Change a Culture Amy J Lim	106
19.	Stages of Inclusion of Women in Computer Science: What Factors Account for the Lack of Women in Undergraduate Computer Science Courses in the US? <i>What Factors Account for the Lack of Women in Undergraduate Computer Science Courses in the US?</i> Gabriella Lalli Martins	114
20.	Reproductive Rights: A Solution, Not a Political Issue <i>A Solution, Not a Political Issue</i> Margaret M. Davis	121
21.	Race and Representation Mahta Fesshaie	130

Part V. Circulating Multimodal Texts

22.	Black Girls Talk Michaela Ayisi	139
23.	Clique to Continue Shashank Lal	156
24.	Diving Deeper into Endangered Languages Ananya Talwar	164
25.	Listening to a Culture Amy J Lim	175
26.	How to Combat Body Image Issues Caused by Media Abigail Morreale	187
27.	Black Students in College Jada Andrade	190

Introduction

ELKIE BURNSIDE

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

The *Student Writing Anthology* (SWA) is created to continue the tradition of the Writing Program to make student work the center of our courses. Circulating and sharing the work of students attending the University of Massachusetts Amherst is a core component to ENGLWRIT 112: *College Writing* – the class for which this text is a required element. In this edition of the SWA we are excited to share the voices of students writing about a variety of topics that are relevant to them as they continue the journey toward social, cultural, and political participation along whatever path awaits.

As you begin your own journey in *College Writing* you may find the course a bit different than your previous writing experiences. As ya'll read these essays – and others your instructors will share in your classes for you to understand, critique, and evaluate – you will find that the class offers you a time to grow as a writer/author/designer in an environment focused on your development. You will have the opportunity to work with topics that are both familiar and challenging; you will have the chance to look at your existing ideas and frameworks in new lights; and ultimately you will have an environment in which you are encouraged to set goals and work toward them with your writing community (both in your class and with those you are already connected).

College Writing students are sometimes astonished when they hear that it can be appropriate to use **I** and **me** in formal writing – and at times – it is vital to your message to incorporate personal experience in connection with other published authors. As you explore the options shared in the selections that follow, I hope you notice that these student writers are

connected to their messages. They have found a way to bring their interests into their writing and work – that is a great way to learn – and *College Writing* is designed to open those doors for you.

You will notice that while these essays are grouped into units – they often differ drastically from one another in approach and focus. That is because this class focuses on the use of rhetorical principles to guide students through the writing process to help you continue to build on the skills you bring to the classroom. The focus of *College Writing* (the only class which meets UMass Amherst’s first-year writing general education requirement) is on working through the writing process. As a process-based class, this means you will get a chance to develop, draft, revise, and ultimately create a final product. Along the way you will work with your writing community to analyze how other authors have accomplished the same task, consider what you want to model from them, decide how you want to break away from convention, and a myriad of other exciting decisions that make up the writing journey. These essays are presented to represent the voices of our students in as genuine a way as is possible – and we hope you feel the connections and urgencies of each author.

The Writing Program is extremely proud to present this SWA edition as the first open access, free version. The support required to shift from a print publication to a digital one is tremendous. The adage that “many hands make light work” is certainly enacted in the book you are using. This process began with the students who worked with classmates to craft each version of these essays. Selection of these exemplar essays would not have been possible without the work of our review committee of graduate instructors – Bukem Reitmayer, Mitia Nath, Molly Hennigan, Shwetha Chandrashekhar, Sarah Ahmad, Nana Prempeh, and Assistant Director Peggy Woods. The digital publication process was made possible by the UMass Amherst Libraries Open Education Initiative grant and

the hard work of several graduate instructors working to edit and format these texts in preparation for publication – Grayson Chong, Mitia Nath, Molly Hennigan, and Bukem Reitmayer. The support of the Writing Program Administrative Team was also crucial to being able to complete this project and share it with ya'll. Without their confidence in the vital nature of providing free and open access textbooks for our students – this volume would not be complete. Thank you all – Director Rebecca Lorimer Leonard, Deputy Director Anne Bello, Assistant Director Peggy Woods, Writing Center Director Anna-Rita Napoleone, and Office Manager Heidi Terault – for believing in the need and in me during my first year as part of the Writing Program.

I have found that my first year at UMass Amherst was nothing like I expected to be – in all the best ways. May these essays help inspire you to find experiences and unexpected paths on your journey as well.

Elkie Burnside (she/they)

Associate Director

—Aug. 2022 Updates

We are proud to include in this version of the SWA a new 'zine essay in the Circulating Multimodal Texts section. This addition helps to illustrate the way physical multimodal composing works as a compelling way to share and circulate messages. Additionally there is a downloadable PDF version of the textbook provided for users that prefer physical copies to work with and annotate. Audio versions of each essay are also provided in this update for users who would like to listen to the essays.

PART I

COURSE PORTFOLIO: CULMINATING WRITER'S STATEMENT

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Our reflection-based unit – also known as the Course Portfolio – is designed to enable you to understand, analyze, and write about your own growth as a writer during ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing. By critically reflecting on your own work from the course units, this project will help you demonstrate an awareness of yourself as a writer, and the processes that made your writing journeys possible – both coming into and leaving this class. The unit highlights your recognition of rhetorical choices, as well as motivations for the choices you use in this class.

Unit Goals

- Gain confidence about college writing skills and strategies.
- Analyze your composing process and strategies over time and in a variety of rhetorical situations.
- Identify composing strengths and areas for improvement.
- Articulate which writing strategies you will apply beyond this course.

This unit is presented first, because as you look back upon the semester through your writing, including past reflection pieces, sometimes you are often able to see for yourself the distance you have traveled and the milestones you have achieved. The Culminating Writer's Statement then is a

weaving together of some of these key moments of College Writing in a single fabric that conveys the significance of each individual journey. Beginning to think about this reflection as you begin your journey through ENGLWRIT112 can help you keep track and reflect as you work on projects – rather than waiting to just the end.

In order for you to narrate your story as effectively as possible, the Culminating Writer's Statement offers greater creative freedom to experiment with form, style, and audience. As a result, the compilation of pieces in this section is a medley of stories, styles, and voices. What brings each of the pieces together is an evocative expression of the challenges, struggles, victories, and lessons of College Writing. We hope engaging with these pieces is as inspiring for you as it was for us!

1. AW&W: Always Writing and Writing

Always Writing and Writing

JAGATH JAI KUMAR

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this humorous and witty piece, Jai Kumar shares their thoughts on the similarities between coding and writing. Their experience with coding allows them to see ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing in a new, unconventional light, and helps them to grapple with the challenges encountered in this class. In their discussion of the key takeaways from College Writing, captured in snappy catchphrases, they also demonstrate a keen awareness of their audience for this piece.

Jagath Jai Kumar

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

AW&W: Always Writing and Writing

Write a piece of code, toss it out, and start over again. Write a new piece of code, tweak, and refactor. Show it to a friend, and ask her what she thinks. Clean up the syntax and compile. In a nutshell, the coding process boils down to four simple steps: draft, revise, peer edit, and proofread. Seems familiar?

Writing, in its plethora of forms, is all around you at all times. Whether you are reading an article on your smartphone, or reading the code that powers your app, evidence of the

writing process can be found wherever you are. But I know you, and I am sure you will argue that writers and programmers are different, and they follow radically different paths to achieve their goals. As a programmer, you challenge the idea that an excellent writer and a veteran hacker have anything in common, let alone their defining set of ideologies. As a young writer, you find writing difficult: crafting a research paper is boring, writing multiple drafts is discouraging, and writing for a specific audience is confusing. Fortunately, my experiences in College Writing 112 have shown me that writing and programming follow the same process, and the main mantras of coding are extremely applicable to writing essays as well.

Unit 1 Mantra: Fail Fast and Fail Often

Your first essay for 112 is an introspective investigation into one of your social contexts, and you will be required to write and ultimately submit 4 drafts for this portfolio. The key to succeeding at this assignment is to follow the classic motto of Silicon Valley: *Fail Fast and Fail Often*. In program development, this idea is critical because it encourages a developer to try out multiple different ideas and choose the one that works best for accomplishing his goal. For this essay, I went through three different first drafts before selecting the one that I could support the best with personal details and vivid descriptions. Then, I needed the courage (and motivation) to scrap my first draft and rewrite the whole paper with the same ideas. After several iterations of the paper, I finally felt confident in my final draft. Applying the mantra of Silicon Valley helped me to work through the numerous editions I had to write for this paper, and it made me comfortable with the process of building with multiple iterations. I was later able to apply my new skills to programming for a project in which I had to manage multiple versions of code the same way. Unit 1 was an extremely helpful portfolio that helped me to understand

the importance of multiple drafts in both writing and programming.

Unit 2 Mantra: Don't Repeat Yourself (DRY)

Responding to a text was the concept for Unit 2, but the real challenge centered on providing a unique perspective in an engaging and focused way. The coding lesson you should apply for this project is the first mantra you ever learned when you began to program: *Don't Repeat Yourself*. This is a simple message, but it is extremely important in programming. In writing, the mantra can be generalized to be: *Don't Repeat Others*. The main idea for this portfolio was to generate distinctive responses to the points made in a personal essay written by a professional author. This assignment was not a summary; there should be no repetition of words from the original essay. When writing this essay, I brainstormed a substantial list of possible response topics before selecting the few that I had strong connections with. I made sure that my points were related to the topics that the original author made, but the ideas that I provided were completely my own. Reflecting back on the assignment as a whole, I feel that this portfolio had the least impact for me. I was not particularly interested in the piece I was responding to, and I think that showed in my final paper. Because I was not interested in the topic, I think this was also the hardest paper for me to write. I would have appreciated the ability to select any essay to respond to for this paper, not merely the sample of works contained in *Opening Conversations*. However, this portfolio did allow me to employ the *Don't Repeat Yourself or Others* mantra in my writing.

Unit 3 Mantra: Descriptive and Meaningful Phrases (DAMP)

In programming, extracting the most information possible from every line is essential for detailed and expressive code, and the same principle applied for my research paper. *Descriptive and Meaningful Phrases* is one of the most important mantras in programming, and it heavily relates to

the research paper for Unit 3. Every line in a piece of code is extremely valuable, and each line needs to be treated with as much weight as any other. I applied this same principle to my research paper for Unit 3. I chose to write about the merging of Kinesiology and Computer Science at the Physical Activity and Health Lab at UMass, which is an exceedingly interesting topic for me. As a result, I found that this unit was actually the easiest of the four, and it had a monumental impact in furthering my development as a research writer. While conducting research, I read numerous publications and conferred with multiple members of the lab to gain as much data as possible. Transferring all this knowledge to the essay required me to imbue every sentence I wrote with clarity and cohesiveness. When actually crafting my draft, I focused on bringing the most content and information out of every sentence. Ultimately this portfolio was the most impactful for me as a writer because it combined all the previous skills I had acquired over the course of the semester.

Unit 4 Mantra: Keep it Simple Stupid (KISS)

The final portfolio for 112 involved transforming the academic level research paper into an evocative and understandable presentation for my classmates. Unfortunately for me, my research paper delved into complex and high level topics in kinesiology that required a background that most of my audience for this presentation did not have. The fourth and final coding mantra, *Keep it Simple Stupid*, had a significant impact in shaping my Unit 4 experience. In order to convey the main ideas from my research paper to my audience of classmates, I reoriented the focus of my presentation to center around the importance of skillfully diverse teams in science, with the UMass Health Lab as an example. This allowed me to simplify the language of my presentation, and use relatable and applicable examples of effective teams to easily convey my main ideas. I am usually a confident public speaker, and I believe the delivery of my presentation was both engaging

and informative for my classmates. While I do not feel like I improved as a speaker as a result of this portfolio, I certainly benefited from the practice of preparing a presentation for an audience with a minimal research background.

By applying the mantras of coding to my writing throughout the semester, I found that writing made me a better programmer, and programming made me a better writer. These four simple coding mantras helped get through each portfolio, and ultimately I believe that my writing has improved significantly with each unit. I now feel comfortable writing multiple drafts for an assignment, writing a complex and in-depth research paper, and transforming my research into a presentation that anyone can understand. As my skills grow as a programmer throughout my academic career, I know I will grow as a writer as well.

2. ELA: English Language Arrogance

English Language Arrogance

NICOLE NORMAN

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay Norman shares their experience of struggling with, and overcoming an unexpected challenge: their belief in the futility of taking an English class. The essay narrates the story of the author's reluctant plunge into College Writing 112, and their subsequent discovery of some helpful aspects of this writing class.

Nicole Norman

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

ELA: English Language Arrogance

Disappointment

It was a hot summer day. I knew I needed to take my placement exams but I had been putting it off for so long I didn't even know where to begin. While lying in my bed scrolling through Facebook I decided "*This is it, I need to do it now or I never will.*" I opened up OWL and looked over the writing prompt. I was immediately filled with irritation. The prompt was to read multiple articles about dress codes, analyze the articles, and then formulate my own opinion about whether or not dress codes should be implemented in schools

across America. This was **not** what I wanted to be doing today. I pretty much wanted to do anything except this.

I've never hated writing. It was always one of those things that I "just had to get over with," it was an annoyance but never something I disliked. Similar to how I felt with my placement-writing exam I would put writing off until the very last second and rush through it hoping to get the best possible grade for the least amount of effort. Writing was a chore similar to cleaning out the litter box, or folding laundry. There were by far much worse things you could be doing, but at that moment there was never any motivation to do anything except putting off doing those things.

This all changed in the spring semester. When I found out that I needed to take College Writing I was disappointed. I had had my fair share of English classes, from AP Literature and AP Composition to an Honors English class my first semester of college. I would be lying if I said I didn't feel like it would be a waste of my time. "What more could I possibly learn? Writing isn't that hard once you get the motivation to start doing it. I can churn out a decent paper in a couple of hours and call it a day. I don't need to do a semester's worth of papers to prove myself." I thought.

The first day of class arrived. We learned that we were going to be responsible for producing five complete papers by the end of the semester. Then the worst news came... we would be doing multiple drafts of each paper as well. I had never written drafts and revised them, before taking this class. I guess I never really understood the importance of doing so. I always wrote my papers last minute, and felt that having so much pressure on myself to do the work fast made me a better writer. This class forced me to draft because drafts were part of the assignment and they were actually looked at by the professor so I didn't have a choice to not do it. Through drafting I realized that by writing fast and under pressure, I was missing a lot of minor mistakes within my writing. I also found out that I could

do a lot better. Our first paper was on our context and how it shaped us as writers. When I completed my initial draft I was relieved. It was a paper that I would feel comfortable handing in as my final assignment. But when I revised it and submitted that final portfolio I was surprised at how much better it had gotten.

Realization

At this point I decided that maybe the way I was doing things before wasn't the best way, maybe I could do better. Unit Two was a little more intimidating. We were told to read someone else's work and analyze it. I had done a rhetorical analysis before in high school so it was a bit of a review...or so I thought. I eased myself into it. *"All you have to do is quote some stuff, explain it, and then you're good."* Little did I know, I was completing the infamous "hit and run" quotation. When I first saw the peanut butter and jelly sandwich I thought how could this possibly be relevant? But after a little practice it was easy to look at things in that format. I almost never had a lead in to a quote. I would drop the quote in, explain it briefly (or sometimes not even that) and leave the rest up to the reader. Annotating was sort of the same idea. I had annotated a couple of times for homework in high school but outside of an assignment it's not something I would ever do. When we were told to practice annotating Kalmar's text, it made my rhetorical analysis come so much easier. I really felt like I had a deeper understanding of the text, and I learned the value of close reading.

After completing Unit Two I really felt like I had it in the bag. *"Writing is easy,"* I thought to myself. I am finally a college writer, I know how to use quotes properly, I can annotate, and I'm much better at drafting. Then Unit Three snuck up on me and changed everything. We were told to identify an issue that was important to us. I had always felt passionate about our criminal justice system and the racial discrimination that goes on within it. When I found out it was going to be a research

paper I felt relieved. I had done so many research papers in my life that I felt I could write one asleep!

We talked about logos, pathos, and ethos – I had dealt with those before, no big deal. I chose my topic, identified my purpose, and started drafting.

I had what I would consider a pretty good initial draft, I had a bunch of information, I was really moving along, and then something happened. During my presentation numerous people wrote on their notecard that they would like to have seen more information about **all** minorities, not just Black people. At first I thought, easy enough! I'll just pop in a quick paragraph about their statistics and call it a day. That is until I found out that the statistics for all minorities almost completely mirrored the statistics for Black people. The only thing I could think to do was change my entire paper during its final stages to incorporate all of the information I had just gathered. That was my biggest mistake. My paper quickly grew from being 837 words to 1768 words in the course of a couple of days. It was the longest paper I had ever written to date, and I still feel like it didn't do justice to the topic. If I could go back in time and re-do any of my papers, that would be the one I would choose. As Emma Britton once said, "Sometimes you just have to delete paragraphs you've been working on forever, and it's never easy." Boy was she right. It's so hard for me to think of all of the work I've put into something, just to delete it and never have it be seen. But it's certainly better to do that than to submit a paper that is convoluted and confusing, for the sake of not wasting the time you've put in. It's best to just swallow your pride and submit a paper that flows, and really conveys your purpose. That was the greatest lesson I learned while writing that paper.

Gratitude

I've never really felt like I've fit into a perfect little box, no one does. When I found out that we would be writing about our own subcultures for Unit Four, at first I was excited. "*That*

sounds really cool!" Then I thought about what my topic would be. I like playing video games but am I a "gamer chick"? I really like technology, but would I consider myself a "techno-geek"? I really enjoy listening to The Grateful Dead, but am I hardcore enough to be a "Dead Head"? I ended up going with something that I enjoyed, but didn't truly feel like it was enough. In hindsight, I feel like my topic should have been my feminist identity, but it wasn't until I had already written my final draft that I realized that. This brings me to my final lesson learned from this class. Sometimes things don't just come to you; sometimes it takes you an entire paper to realize that you really should have gone in a different direction. Sometimes your "final draft" shouldn't even be final.

My biggest takeaway was this: I will never be in a place in my life where taking an English class won't be helpful. I may have been speaking and writing for longer than I can even remember but I can never be perfect, I will always have things to work on and that's totally okay. Going into this class thinking it was a waste of my time ended up being the furthest thing from the truth. I will always continue to grow throughout college and the most important thing to remember in life is that learning is inevitable; no one knows everything and no one ever will. The moment you decide that you don't "need" to take a class is the moment you have really been [tricked] out of bettering yourself. So, take an English class, I promise you will learn more than you ever expected.

3. My Reflection

SASHA MARIE BAKKER

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay, Baker (an aspiring physicist) shares how ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing helped them to break out of formulaic writing, and find new ways to express their ideas. Overcoming each writing challenge brought new realizations about their personal writing practices, and ways in which existing practices could be improved for effective communication. The journey that started with “dreading” the writing class concludes with seeing writing as a tool that even a physics major must learn to wield.

Sasha Marie Bakker

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

My Reflection

Dreading a required writing course during class sign-ups, I left it for the spring semester. “It’s easier to take in the fall,” my friends teased. “Gee, thanks,” I thought, “either way it won’t be more enjoyable.” Because my high school English teacher instructed at a community college, I assumed my writing was already at college level. My idea of ‘good’ writing was following a formulaic response, which held two quotes in each body paragraph, a thesis, and, occasionally, counter arguments. I came to the first English 112 class already exhausted, realizing we had to write about ourselves. Yuck. I couldn’t follow my formula with that rubric! Sharing my feelings seemed like a useless task for an aspiring physicist, whose future will be filled

with lab reports: writing from fact, not the heart. Nevertheless, I wrote with maximum effort, as I didn't want my grade to suffer from these judgments.

Unit 1. My essay, "American With a Dutch Family," gave context to my shared identity as a New Hampshirite with Dutch heritage. Due to my draft's non-assertive voice, I was clearly uncomfortable sharing experiences. My roommate suggested stating my feelings as claims to create a convincing argument. Initially, I meekly addressed, "I seem influenced by my dad's side of the family." To take hold of the claim's impact on my life, I modified the sentence to "This is my world view, and it has been influenced by my context of having family in a country apart from my own." However, my claims lacked support, as I wasn't fulfilling the unit's task of giving insight to the reader. Therefore, for example, to show why I felt a connection to Rembrandt's Night Watch versus other paintings, I expressed, "I vividly recalled its grandness at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam." In another instance, I revealed my thoughts about an emotionally intimate incident, in which I was laughed at for being an American who is sub-par at riding a bicycle. Expressing myself confidently showed me the necessity of making strong claims, a lesson not limited to the writing world of Humanities majors.

Throughout the semester, I found my papers held a focus for revisions. In my Unit 2 paper, "Duality in Assessing English as a Possible Language of the Future," I used literary examples of how the author Henry Hitchings "weighs the pros and cons of the argument of whether English is the top contender for the language of the future." I immediately reverted to my formulaic response by strenuously organizing a pattern of providing Hitching's statements, then extrapolating the information. For each body paragraph, 1.) I stated the purpose, 2.) Entered two quotes with lead-ins and explanations, and 3.) Signified its relation to my thesis with a transitional thought. This covered all necessary information for a response paper. Quote lead-ins,

such as “For example, Hitchings states” or “Henry Hitchings notes”, I discovered, explicitly clarify the author’s ideas as opposed to my own. I applied these in revisions. Yet, unfortunately, this lack of paraphrasing disrupted the flow of my paper. I also found its predictability boring to read, as it did not consider the audience beyond which thought belonged to whom. Playing it safe in my writing made me realize accommodating the audience needed to be taken up in the following units.

My Unit 3 research piece, “Female Stereotypes and the Physics GRE,” explores a possible cause and solution for the Physics Graduate Record Examination gender score imbalance. This time, I was sure to implement paraphrasing. Quotes were not the core medium of the arguments, but rather, argument supports. For example, the quote “is implicitly ascribed to men” (Polkowska) describes the word ‘entrepreneur’ better than in my own words. Considering the audience brought power to my writing. By choosing my voice over an author’s, it became fluent and coherent for the audience’s consumption, thereby satisfying a research paper’s purpose of informing the public. To further engage with my paper, I applied ethos, pathos, and logos. For instance, by saying, “We need to make women know they have the potential to become scientists”, pathos introduces the issue’s relevance to the audience by suggesting it is also their duty to help the cause (“Female Stereotypes and the Physics GRE”). To appeal further, I introduced the class’s collected opinions about standardized testing in my paper, so anyone who reads it will feel their voice is heard. This brings a sense of trustworthiness to me as an author.

Unit 4. “The Inside Experience of Belly Dancing”, is an autoethnographic work, which aims to break misconceptions of hypersexual belly dancing, and substantiate how the subculture empowers women. To resonate with the audience, I needed a clearly defined purpose throughout, such as by

reiterating my intended lesson. I found difficulty in this, so I considered my own place in belly dancing. My realization, “I partook in the stereotype of a sexualized belly dancing”, portrayed the commonality of its misconceptions within society. Due to this, I became confident in adding my experiences as supports, which built ethos, and contrasted my Unit 1 writing process. An anecdote of a common dance move, “The hand motion is a means of hiding our chest”, strengthened my claims of belly dancing as art rather than seduction. To push my purpose, I laced in experiences such as this, along with what I learned as the misconception was broken for me. I was writing from the heart, knowing I wanted to be represented well within my subculture. Through clarity of purpose and newfound passion, I illustrated the belly dancing subculture. For me, this illuminated that emotionally driven writing can be as strong as convincing the audience by fact.

Before English 112, I didn't think I could enjoy or find use in interest or experience-based writing. However, I realized my judgments were wrong. Rather than a formulaic response, there is a need for dynamic writing. It is easily consumable and meant to draw the reader in and inspire action or thought, by feeding passion, an outlook unforeseen, a trustworthy source, and agreeable terms to the audience. Strong claims are possible through these methods, especially if the author cares about the topic and its purpose, making drafting painless. I wish to someday impact the world of science, and reach a broader audience while doing so. Therefore, techniques I learned through my revisions can be upheld in all future writing, such as by sharing my interest in physics through publications apart from expected reports. As tough as writing lab reports will be, they will also be tough to read. After English 112, I now realize the need for truly ‘good’ writing in all majors. And no good writing comes without a willingness to improve.

Works Cited

- Bakker, Sasha. "American With a Dutch Family." Assignment, U of Massachusetts Amherst, 2018.
- . "Duality in Assessing English as a Possible Language of the Future." Assignment, U of Massachusetts Amherst, 2018.
- . "Female Stereotypes and the Physics GRE." Assignment, U of Massachusetts Amherst, 2018.
- . "The Inside Experience of Belly Dancing." Assignment, U of Massachusetts Amherst, 2018.
- Polkowska, Dominika. "Women Scientists in the Leaking Pipeline: Barriers to the Commercialisation of Scientific Knowledge by Women." *Journal of Technology Management & Innovation*, volume 8, no.2, 26 Apr, 2013.

4. No Flowers, Featuring Linguistic Anthropology

Featuring Linguistic Anthropology

AMANDA LOOKNER

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay Lookner articulates their newfound awareness of “purpose” in any piece of writing – a perspective they gained during their semester of ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing. From being the primary challenge in this class, the engagement with “purpose” becomes their most important takeaway from this writing class.

Amanda Lookner

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

No Flowers, Featuring Linguistic Anthropology

This semester, along with College Writing, I took a linguistic anthropology class. Now, I am a science major. I am used to quantitatively analyzing the world. So even the smallest, most obvious qualitative observation about human behavior or anything of the sort seemingly opens up a whole new way of thinking for me. You can only imagine the many, *many*, little epiphanies I had on a weekly basis.

The main takeaway from this anthropology class was

“language does things.” Yes, *that is obvious*, I originally thought. *Language communicates ideas, duh*. But of course, it goes much further than that. Based on the language or form of language people use, they reveal parts of their identities to us – or, really, **we** form ideologies about **them** based on their language use. Language is wholly connected with obtaining and maintaining power and with creation and with destruction; it shapes how we see the world. That is what all the linguistic anthropologists mean by “language does things.”

So that is what the anthropology class taught me. I was set in my epiphanies for the week. Then College Writing popped her head in the door, and asked the question:

“What do you want this language to do?”

And *that* became the hard part.

I knew language did things, but what did I actually want it to do? What were the “things”? In College Writing terms, this translated into “purpose.” Purpose is an extremely important part of a piece of writing. If a writer wants the reader to feel a certain way, or wants the writing to otherwise accomplish an element of the human experience, and the reader does not feel that way, or the writing does not accomplish that element, then the writing has not achieved its purpose. It will not have the writer’s desired impact on the reader or the world.

The issue was, I could not figure out exactly what I wanted this impact to be, or how I could go about expressing it. I could write page-long flowery descriptions, but I would stray far away from what I actually wanted to say. College Writing led me away from the flowers, and instead, towards the nitty-gritty language that was actually doing things.

“Shitty First Drafts” (Lamott) was instrumental in helping me find my purpose for a piece of writing. Putting it all out there in one giant brain-dump of words forced me to articulate my arguments with no regard for all the extra flowers. Based on this process, I have created my own little practice. Whenever I am having trouble putting my thoughts into words, I literally

say to myself, out loud, “What am I really trying to say here?” It may seem silly and futile, but it demands that I ditch the extra flowers, and focus on the real purpose of each point in my writing. Saying this to myself is a practice I will continue whenever I write, as it helps me put the brain dump onto paper, which eventually results in the formation of an overall purpose.

To explicitly define more specific and smaller purposes, and to streamline my arguments, reverse outlines were beneficial. Rather than focusing on the overall purpose, they helped me to look at each individual part, and assign purposes to each. I had to analyze what the language was actually doing. Most times during reverse outlines, I would have to shift paragraphs around, or rewrite them to better connect to the overall purpose. Sometimes I would even end up changing my overall purpose of the paper based on a sentence that changed the tone of the paper or my argument, when I first wrote my “shitty first draft” or a later draft (which was scary). The process as a whole, of defining a purpose, was a sort of back-and-forth between creating a purpose through language, then making that language more pleasant (and frankly, bearable) to read, then once again articulating a purpose, then adding a few fun flowers in the language to round the whole process out.

Before, during, and after this process, looking at the given example essays with the same prompt, provided possible structures, but more importantly, helped me figure out my own place and purpose within a conversation or question. By reading about other people’s experiences and arguments, I found areas to which I could relate, and areas to which I had no relation. These model essays lit the paths through which I could take a prompt, by suggesting what needed to be said or what could be said from a different point of view. In other words, these essays showed the “gaps” in the conversation or question where I could interject with my own arguments and points of view. These “gaps” eventually became the purposes in my writing.

I now see writing as more than presenting a string of words into the everlasting empty void. Rather, it is many small purposes combining into an overall purpose. It is a collection of bits and pieces of language **doing things** in different ways than simply communicating information. And this “empty void” does not exist. My language is only doing things because there are people who receive it. There are people on the other side of my string of meaningful words to whom I am declaring a purpose. My language is imploring them to do something, or think in a certain way. It is simply about finding the right string of words for the job.

All of this is not to say that I am complete, and have found every way to articulate every purpose I could possibly imagine. On my most recent paper for College Writing, the feedback I received advised me to include sentences at the end of each paragraph describing how certain points relate back to – you guessed it – my overall purpose. I still have trouble staying focused on a purpose throughout a piece of writing as well as clearly defining that purpose. Now, the difference is I have specific processes to help me articulate what it is exactly that I want my language to do.

5. The Talking Squirrel

SHIRLEY CHEN

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

This piece explores Chen's ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing journey through an evocative story about a girl's encounter with a wise squirrel. Playing with the conventions of the essay form, Chen demonstrates how an essay can be crafted into a story about school, learning, and life. While engaging with the typical challenges of College Writing, this reflection is also a story about a young adult, finding their way in a new world.

Shirley Chen

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

The Talking Squirrel

Once upon a time, there lived a student named Shirley who was far, far away from home. It was her first time leaving the family and going on her own. Like many others, going to college was a normal part of being an independent adult. Everyone was busy preparing for the new school year. People were unpacking non-stop, moving their flip-flops and laptops. Cars were going in and out of the campus. The dorms were jam-packed with boxes. While people arranged their furniture, Shirley was too occupied remembering where the nearest bathrooms were.

"There's too much happening I don't even know where to begin!" she said to herself.

"Astronomy class over there, and philosophy class here. No wait, it's the other way."

She grew more frustrated as she walked in circles for what seemed like hours.

"Gee, I wish I was at home. But at least I can leave everything I hated behind."

Or so she thought.

College Writing is a course that a lot of first-year students were required to take. What better way to practice writing than making essays – the one thing that Shirley dreaded the most. Going from advanced English classes at the beginning of high school to low standards by the end of senior year, writing had been nothing but a heavy weight that pulled down her grades. What she learned was that without excellent writing skills, her opinions didn't matter, and were all wrong.

One day, Shirley had no idea what to do after writing the rough draft of one of her College Writing essays. She twirled and twirled on her chair, but no new ideas came. Then, right before she got up for a snack, an acorn was thrown to her head. A squirrel appeared from behind a tree and said to her: "Little human being, why give up on the very first revision of an essay?"

"It's terrible, I don't even want to read the replies I got!"

The squirrel eyed the papers on the table and looked at her in disapproval.

"Tsk, ts. You should not let fear stop you on this crucial step. Listen to what they have to say and take it with a grain of salt."

The squirrel then went behind a tall tree and disappeared. Shirley gathered up some courage and read the comments on her draft. To her surprise, they were encouraging her to write. One of them noticed a flaw in the final paragraph, which even the author herself did not see.

"How could I have been this blind!" she said.

And thus, she turned over a new page and began writing. "What is my 'potential happiness'? Well that's easy!" She extended her thoughts to make them sound more complete. Her readers wanted to know the full picture of those words: "I

do want something. I want a happy life, just like others. So I will strive for it, even if life will reach an end." She continued to write until her arms fell off and grew back.

Later, the squirrel came back a second time and saw Shirley with her face flat on the desk. The squirrel then asked: "What is wrong this time?"

"I'm stumped. I don't know why the audience matters so much."

"Well," the squirrel said, "writing to the right audience is important. After all, you don't expect adults to believe in fairytales or children to understand advanced scientific journals."

When the squirrel was done making its point, it dashed behind a trashcan and disappeared.

So Shirley thought about the audience of her essay. She was writing about an essay for consumers in general. "My intended audience seems too broad," she said to herself. "What kind of consumer is best fit for this, though?" Moments later, she knew what to do. "The audience that I'm looking for is right in front of me. Smartphone users! I just need to specifically include them in my conversations because they can relate to this the most!" Burning with purpose, she proceeded to type at the speed of lightning until her fingers burnt up and grew back.

The squirrel came back for the third time, and saw Shirley sulking at her table. The squirrel questioned her: "Why the sad face? Aren't you done with the writing?"

"Everything is too different."

The squirrel looked puzzled and could not understand. The human sighed and explained herself.

"I have never made huge changes to my essays before. So writing like this feels very risky for me. I'm used to little bits of words changing at a time. Not a huge essay makeover."

The squirrel seemed to sympathize with her. "I can assure you that making big changes to your essays is completely normal. Think of those changes as an essay going through phases of

its life cycle. It may not look like what it used to be from the initial draft. But that is fine, too, because amazing things don't always need to look the same. A caterpillar eventually becomes a butterfly, which looks more beautiful. It is not an easy task, because in order to do that, it must eat, eat, and eat until it becomes large enough to turn into a cocoon. Change is not always easy, and it can be necessary in some situations."

After the squirrel finished speaking, it scurried across the grass and disappeared. Shirley wondered for a while. One last time, she looked at the revised pages. Then finally, she submitted it.

In the final days of her College Writing class, Shirley was able to conquer vast mountains of drafts. She was no longer afraid of writing like she was before. Instead, she became more confident. She wrote what she thought, she read what others said, and she changed what needed to be changed. It was a miracle: the one thing she hated the most became the one thing she wanted to improve on – all because she never gave up trying in the first place.

To this day, the squirrel may come out from time to time. It likes to hide in the tall trees, watching people from above. It goes around eating nuts. And when it gets full, it travels from one branch to another. Some say that the squirrel can actually talk. Some say that it is just an ordinary squirrel. Whatever people think, the squirrel waits patiently. It is ready to throw another acorn at an unsuspecting student.

6. The Writing Process of a Nonwriter

DANIELA MOLINA PALACIOS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

This essay explores the ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing journey of a self-proclaimed “nonwriter.” The author, convinced of their inability to write, narrates the story of their gradual transformation, through the many small and big things they learn in this course. The essay’s subtle humor and tender conclusion, along with its strategic use of images, attest to the miles traversed by this nonwriter in the course of the semester.

Daniela Molina Palacios
Instructor
ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing
Day Month Year
The Writing Process of a Nonwriter

CLASS	SCHEDULE
ENGLWRIT 112-027	MoWeFr 10:10AM-11:00AM
LEC (71900)	French Hall Room 102

I dreaded looking at my schedule.
You must know one thing about me reader, and that is I am not a writer.
All I knew about writing was from all my poorly written

history and literature papers in high school. I knew enough to know I was not good, so everything I wanted was for me to make it through the course with my GPA intact. If I couldn't manage a simple high school paper written in my own language, how was I supposed to write a college level essay in a foreign language?

On the first day of class, I stumbled into the room and sat in the front. I was (probably) trying to show that I was genuinely interested in the class, so any piece of poor writing that I would be turning in during the semester was not the product of a last-minute, panic-induced work, but my actual best. The class went by and I couldn't stop staring at the assignment sheet that was just given to me. Not only did I have to write, but I had to write about myself. What was I supposed to write about?

After pushing it off as much as I could, I finally opened Microsoft Word. It started just as any other of my writing assignments:

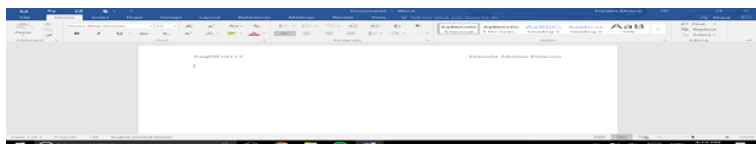


Fig. 1. Writing Process Begins. Screenshot of a screen of Microsoft Word, mostly empty except with the words “Eng1Writ112” on the top left, and the words “Daniela Molina Palacios” on the top right corner.

I must confess to you reader, it stayed like that for more hours than you could imagine. For a nonwriter like me, a blank page is not an opportunity, it is something to be frightened of. Eventually, when I finally started typing, it went like this:

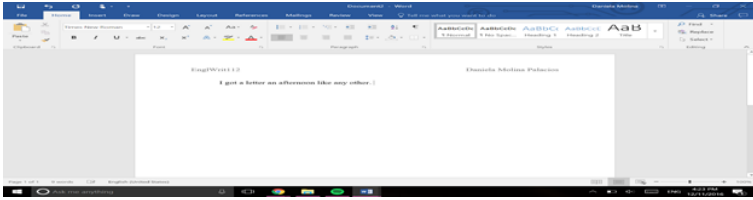


Fig 2. The Writing Process Continues. creenshot of a screen of Microsoft Word, mostly empty except with the words “EnglWrit 112” on the top left, and the words “Daniela Molina Palacios” on the top right corner. With the words, “I got a letter an afternoon like any other” in the body.

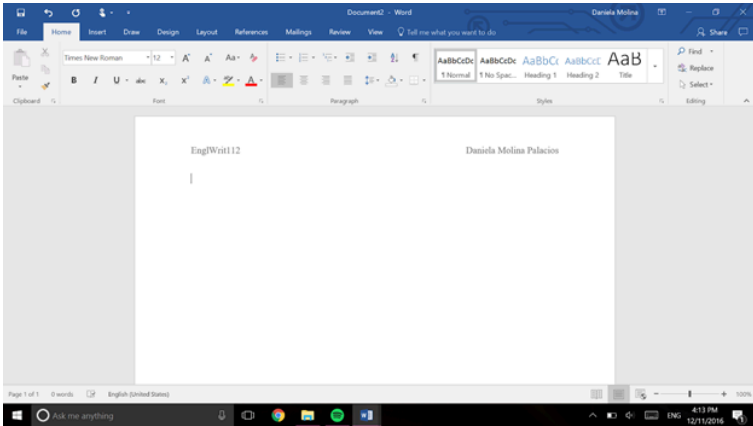


Fig 3. More of the Process. Close up of the same screen of Microsoft Word. Top left corner says, “EnglWrit112.” Rest of the screen is blank.

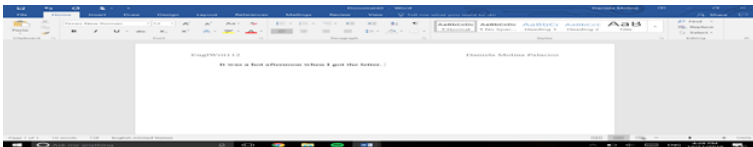


Fig. 4. The Process Still Happening. Another screenshot of the same screen. Top left: “EnglWrit 112”. Next line: “It was a hot afternoon when I got the letter.”

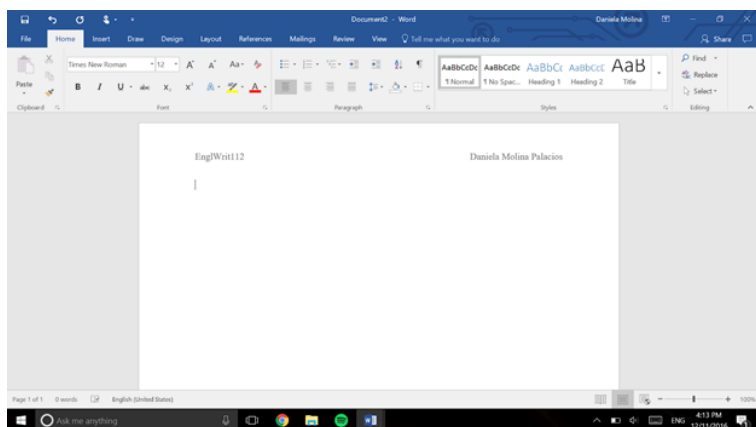


Fig. 5. More of the Process. Screenshot of the same screen. Blank. Except the words “EnglWrit 112” on the top left.

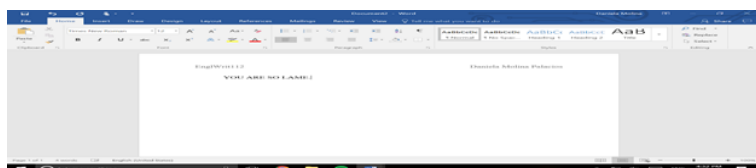


Fig. 6. The Process is Difficult. Same screen, with the words: “EnglWrit112” on the top left, “Daniela Molina Palacios” on the top right, and “You are so lame” in the body.

For hours, I stared at the blank Word document. All my thoughts were trapped in my head and I thought it was because I didn’t know how to write. Eventually, I found out later it was because I thought that every word and sentence I wrote needed to be perfect. Still, I somehow managed to finish my first draft and I still vividly remember how nervous and anxious I was about people reading it. Usually, I write the essay and turn it in to the professor. Done.

It didn’t go like that this time.

Peer responses, comments, advices, all different ways to edit my essay. For the first time, I had to review my writing, my word choices, the formatting and so on. Looking at my final draft of my first essay, I finally understood that writing is not a simple action of pouring words in a Word sheet but a process of reviewing and reflecting of the message one wants to transmit. For the first time, while looking forward and back from my first and final draft, I felt something different than mortified about my writing: I felt proud. Don't get me wrong reader, my essay was still bad but it had improved. I had improved it.

Before this course, I used to think this is how writing was supposed to be:

1. Have something to write about.
2. Write it.
3. Awesome piece of writing.

However, in this class my writing process was more like this:

1. Open Spotify and play favorite playlist
2. Open Microsoft Word
3. Think of what to write about
4. Keep thinking
5. Start typing thoughts
6. Finish first draft
7. Feel mortified about how badly it looks
8. Revise first draft
9. Edit first draft
10. Revise edited draft
11. Edit the edited draft
12. Realize it is worse (sometimes)
13. Edit again
14. Turn in Final draft

After understanding that every piece of writing is not supposed

to be good, much less perfect, on the first attempt, I had an easier time writing my papers. I took every chance to experiment with different formats and topics. However, I still dreaded a blank page. I still got caught up rethinking every word I type. You may not realize this reader, so far this is my fourth attempt at writing this assignment, and we are still halfway through. However, I need to remind myself that this paragraph may not even make it to the final draft, and that's the beauty of it. I find freedom in that – the freedom of putting my thoughts to ephemeral words.

What makes one a writer? People say that everyone is a writer. Am I a writer? It is true that anyone can be a writer, but trust me reader, I do not feel like one. Throughout this course, I learned to use words in my favor rather than against me, as I used to think of them. The portfolio that I am most proud of is the one that I made personal. For unit three, I committed, for the first time, my thoughts to writing. I remember that once I started typing, I couldn't stop. While playing my favorite playlist in the confidentiality of my room, I stopped thinking about the audience as my enemies but rather how to reach to them and deliver my message. Obviously, it required a substantial revising but I was surprised when I saw the reaction it generated from my audience.

"Your tone is passionate"

"I love how powerful you made this"

It certainly made a difference with my previous essay (Unit Two), in which I distanced myself from my academic audience, perhaps scared. With this, I learned that writing is personal, and that even I can express my thoughts, ideas, and experiences through it.

Maybe I **am** a writer... probably not the most brilliant one, but a writer.

So reader, this whole essay has been in vain if you do not understand the following:

I know you might still feel insecure about writing down your

thoughts, but please don't let that stop you. Remember that words can be easily erased so don't fear them. Writing is a process, a messy one, and there is always room for improvement. You probably have something to say, and you **will** say it, just find the right words, keep typing, and most importantly, ***don't be afraid.***

PART II

INQUIRING INTO SELF

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

For your ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing class, you as a student-writer may draw on familiar source material: a place that is important to you or an object. By starting with something familiar, you may write your way into the unfamiliar, discovering new insights about yourself and where you come from as a precursor to defining, in subsequent units, how your thinking interacts with that of others. The process, we hope, gives you both these necessary skills and a faith in your own ability as writers.

Unit Goals

1. To engage in the writing process and thereby gain awareness of writing options and their effects.
2. To analyze and discover new insights about how context has informed one's self.
3. To clarify one's purpose and to develop an essay through description and reflection.
4. To craft a personal voice/style tailored to a close audience (i.e., classmates).
5. To copy edit for an audience.

The lure of choosing the familiar as your subject is obvious: instead of facing the dual challenge of wrestling with language and a new topic, you focus exclusively on honing the craft of your writing. Even if the familiar is the subject of the Inquiring into Self essay, the goal is that through the drafting process, you can focus your revision efforts on, among other things, deepening the analysis and finding new meanings for familiar contexts. Before you write the essay itself, through a process of

close inquiry, you can work to bring nuance to the contexts you are writing from.

Place, for instance, can be the obvious choice of your hometown or a micro-setting: a dance studio, a gym, a basement where you played video games with your friends. You will also read published essays of a similar genre. In the *Inquiring into Self* essay, you can gain this understanding by re-seeing yourself through the lens of the larger contexts you participate in; you recreate your context in specific sensory details before reflecting on it.

You will ultimately compose the first draft of your essays, writing for a close, personal audience (i.e., their fellow class members) and introduce key elements of the rhetorical situation (context, purpose, audience) in a familiar, safe environment.

7. Untitled

EMMA BRIGHAM

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

“My voice is a defining part of who I am” writes Brigham. In their discussion of the ways in which their speech impediment shaped their experiences of growing up in the small Massachusetts town of Chelmsford, the author employs two kinds of specificity to ground readers: on the one hand they discuss the physiological reasons for the condition and on the other, through a recreation of specific experiences, like the one when they go out, as a child, to a restaurant with their family. This essay also takes a refreshing analytic turn when the author empathizes with international students who, like them, draw attention to themselves because of the way they sound. If speech is a critical point of contact between individuals and the world, then it is vital, Brigham writes, to remove pre-conceived notions to make sure that those connections are inclusive experiences.

Emma Brigham

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Untitled

When interacting and befriending people on campus, I was bombarded with the same question: “Where are you from?” Upon hearing a substandard answer from Chelmsford, they’d follow up by asking about my accent. After years of answering the same question, I devised a perfect response that wouldn’t offend anyone and keep up an easygoing exterior. “Yeah, most

people think it's an accent," I would quietly chuckle. "It's actually a speech impediment."

Everyone's reactions to this answer varied from surprised to embarrassed. I would try to avoid the awkward apologies whenever I could, considering it makes for a poor first impression. Many thought I was from Australia or Britain. Some people loved how "cute" and "exotic" it sounded, and it was amusing at first. After the second day, it started to get annoying. I had already had a few dozen of the same conversation, and I was sick of repeating myself over and over again. Maybe it wouldn't have bothered me so much if I had gotten to know these people first. They didn't mean anything bad for what they were asking and were curious about my situation. But it still bothered me.

My mouth is a little different than most people's. My hard palate on the roof of my mouth leads to my soft palate in the back. The uvula hangs from the soft palate in a teardrop shape. The path splits with a flap separating the two: the trachea in one direction for breathing and the esophagus in the other for eating and drinking. The larynx, or voice box, is somewhere around there. My voice is a defining part of who I am. It's used to attract the attention of friends, laugh at a joke, or talk to others. My tongue, a key component of my voice, is covered in papillae. It is also the cause of my distinction. The way it moves and interacts with my mouth makes a noticeably different sound when compared to others. It's like a filter between my voice box and the outside world. When I try to say 'r's, only 'w's come out. I can't hear it myself, and neither can my family. It happened in middle school here and there, where someone would comment on how I said, 'won't instead of 'run' or 'Bwhigham' instead of 'Brigham.' Others perceive it as an accent. To be fair, I thought it was one too at first. A good friend of mine has been around speech impediments for long enough to know one when she hears it, and a few years ago, she brought it up to me. Chelmsford, Massachusetts, is a small

community with a small likelihood of meeting new people. I knew most of the students in my school. As a result, my speech impediment rarely came up unless I was outside of the community. But when it did, it sometimes made quite the story.

There was one interaction that I remember to this day. My mom had discovered an outdoor bar offering a family-friendly night for a quiet Tuesday evening. My sister, brother and I were playing in the brightly colored blow-up bouncy house that definitely was not made for our size. It was dusk, and the sun was just setting on the horizon. We had found a kid to play with for the night, even if he was a little more than half our ages. We were joking and fooling around for hours. When our legs were beginning to shake from jumping, we decided to take a break. The four of us exited the jumpy house with the fluorescent LEDs of streetlights glinting off our teeth. The boy pushed past me and hugged his mother's legs with one arm strapped around them. He started to yank on her shirt and screamed, "Mommy, Mommy! Why does she talk so funny?" The lady calmly crouched down to his level and smiled at him, obviously amused as she replied, "Oh honey, they're just from Scotland." To this day, I don't understand how someone could make such a bold statement about another person they don't know. Instead of asking me, she assumed I wasn't native and imposed her inaccurate certainty on her son. In that instance, she was so quick to label me. I've come to the realization that this need to label others is not enclosed to one person or one instance but constantly happens in daily life interactions.

People want to put differences into pre-labelled boxes. They ask, "Where are you from?" to relieve a need to identify someone's history or background. Sometimes it is used to find similarities in themselves, but more often, it is used to pinpoint specific differences in others. When others meet me, they assume I have a unique history that is different from the general "us." No, I'm not from Australia. No, I'm not from Britain,

or Scotland for that matter. I am asked questions to confirm or deny my inclusion in “us.” Because I sound different, people have it in their minds that my lineage is something I need to tell them. I realized that this is what international students experience daily. It is my off tongue that makes me stick out, while international students simply integrate their home language into their speech. Students from all around the world are a part of the UMass Amherst community. Most come with English as their first language, while some do not. Those who fall into the latter category often have a noticeable accent that makes them stand out from “us.” Unlike me, international students have a unique history to back up their way of speech. They are constantly questioned on their ethnicity and familial background, which gets to be exhausting and frustrating, having to repeat themselves time and time again. If I or any other student wishes to disclose a part of their history, it will come up naturally in a conversation when they want it to. There is no need to ask for proof of a person’s history. Get to know someone through what they tell you, not what you ask.

My speech impediment simply gives me a glimpse of what it is like to be different from the majority. I am part of that “us,” yet I am treated time and time again as if I’m not. My voice should not define my identity or give someone a ticket to ask intrusive questions. As a society, we need to take our desire to label others out of our conversations, as this change is key to creating an inclusive world.

8. Ingredients of Education

TIFFANY KHANG

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay Khang interrogates the ways in which growing up as the daughter of Southeast Asian migrants in the small town of Brockton, Massachusetts shaped her through the contexts of ethnic identity and place through tangible lenses: mother tongue, cooking, and gender roles. The author writes, for instance: “growing up in a traditional Hmong household meant that the females did the household chores. These chores included something like cooking dinner without having to be asked because I am supposed to have this empathetic superpower of everyone else’s hunger.” High school, where they dismantle the stereotypes encountered, like jock and geek, is the context that shapes the decision to break away from these inherited expectations and pursue a higher education. Khang plays with chronology and alternates between analytic reflection and scenic depiction to discuss complex issues in ways that are refreshing and deeply personal.

Tiffany Khang

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Ingredients of Education

“Hello?”

“Nyob zoo.”

“Thank you?”

“Ua tsaug.”

“How do you say this word?”

“Kuv tsis paub.” I don’t know.

I don’t know; one of the phrases I remember from my language, Hmong. It is pronounced “Mung,” not “Ha-mong,” and yes, you sound like an idiot if you say it like that. Hmong rhymes with sung and lung, and the H is silent. My ancestors originated from the Southeast Asian country Laos. Not Mongolia, as some people might assume, because a Hmong being from Mongolia makes sense to them. Having to elaborate upon my ethnicity and heritage to someone repeatedly never tires me out. I like that they are so interested in a culture that is not well known. Sometimes, I do not have the answers to their questions, however, like, “How do you say this word?” My parents hated that. They hated how distant I can be from my own culture.

The distance widened when I entered high school. Brockton or “Broketown” as some people in my city might refer to it as, because I am not going to lie, it is an ugly city, lies in the eastern region of Massachusetts in Plymouth County. In this city exists a school called Brockton High with over 4,000 students. Maybe even more, but no one is going to take the time to tally how many of us are actually there. The students of Brockton High come from all walks of life, well, at least the ones I knew of. I became aware of the diversity within my high school when I entered my freshman year. I noticed labels did not matter here. Brockton High was far from the stereotypical high schools featured in the movies. The “band geeks” were not geeks at all. They were just people who happened to be in the band. They were never the lower tier of popularity. Some of my fellow classmates even attended the football games just to see the band perform during the halftime shows. The “jocks” at Brockton High were more than the sports they played. They were not viewed as mediocre students with inhumane athletic

abilities. Most of them were academically talented as they had to obtain a certain GPA to even be on a sports team. From observing the students at my school and realizing that they portrayed a different dynamic than what was on the media, I learned to be less judgmental and more open-minded. This open-mindedness did not exist within my home, however.

Growing up in a traditional Hmong household meant that the females did the household chores. These chores included something like cooking dinner without having to be asked because I am supposed to have this empathetic superpower of everyone else's hunger. The men of the house were reared to work and provide for the family financially. My brothers never learned how to cook, not because they were lazy, which they were, but because it was not expected of them. As my parents were raising my brothers to get a good job, what my parents expected me to do was get married, find a husband, and produce grandchildren. But that is the farthest thing from my mind.

I want an education. I am smart, and I know that I have more to offer to my academics than to just give up on the potential I have. I want to be dependent upon myself financially and not have to lean on my future husband for our family's source of income. I also do not want children anytime soon because those little human beings know exactly how to disentangle the strings binding a person's composure together. This idea I gained on furthering my education and postponing my duties of being a housewife came from the people I observed at Brockton High. No one is whom you expect them to be. I acquired the knowledge that I myself did not have to fulfill the expectations my parents set out for me. I could make my own path.

The journey to my own path began my junior year of high school, when I decided to take three international baccalaureate courses: English, Latin, and Calculus. I decided to take these classes to challenge myself, and I was right in doing

so. I found myself investing more of my time in my education than helping my mother around the house. My parents would frequently ask me, “Why are the dishes not washed?” or “Why is dinner not ready?” but I always told them I was “busy doing my homework,” which frustrated them. We would often have arguments like this, constantly debating what my priorities were and should be.

It was difficult explaining to my parents that we had grown up in two different worlds, and with two different worlds come two different perspectives. I had to force my own reality on them; the reality that what our generations hold value towards is not the same, and the roles of females and males differ from how they were twenty years ago. Breaking what is traditionally valued in the Hmong culture of being a good housewife and assimilating to the open-minded atmosphere of Brockton High was difficult for my parents, but they very well knew in order for me to survive this world, I had to follow the norm of the society we now lived in.

Different is scary. When I began to stray away from a recipe that dinner was supposed to follow and started stirring the pot by adding my own ingredients of education, my parents became fearful. The idea of sending me off to a college scared my parents. The idea of me entering college undeclared scared my parents even more. The idea that I was becoming a part of a culture outside of my home scared my parents the most. But change is just what happens from generation to generation, and my parents and I had to come to an in-between. A compromise that I would be a part of my generation's norms, but I would not forget my culture; I would not distance myself.

Now instead of asking me why certain chores around the house are not done, my parents ask me questions like, “What are you going to major in?” I would respond with, “Kuv tsis paub.”

9. My Inner Beliefs

NICOLE PALACINO

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Palacino begins this essay discussing the challenges of bringing their liberal Catholic identity into social discourse given the perceptions about religion. The author begins by contrasting personal experiences in a progressive church with the experience had in her grandparents' more conservative church. Later, through a recollection of an experience had in a high school Biology class, Palacino reflects on how her classmates' perception of Christians as creationists is at odds with their own scientific bent of mind. The essay uses these two scenes as a point of departure to explore the concerns that are particular to their context—of being excluded from both the communities the author seeks membership in: religion, science. They write: "because my faith can often be seen as contradictory to my involvement in science, I am afraid that one community will reject me because of my involvement with the other." Using both specificity and analysis, Palacino writes an essay that invites readers to replace their own binary perception with a nuance understanding that is situated in the specific experiences of individuals.

Nicole Palacino

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

My Inner Beliefs

I did not often feel any need to conceal my belief. Not until,

that is, I visited my grandparents at their church in upstate New York. I remember very distinctly one Sunday we were visiting them and decided to join them for Sunday mass. That day happened to be the day that their pastor preached on his idea of the “perfect family.” He believed (and thought we should agree) that the perfect family must always support each other, be kind to each other, and contribute in many other helpful ways. I agreed with a lot of the ideas that he was talking about because I thought it would help everyone be more kind to each other. However, he also believed that the perfect family must consist of one dad and one mom. As soon as I heard that, I began clutching too hard to the edge of the bench, and my knuckles turned white. How could it be that my beliefs as part of my religion could be so different from theirs? I could feel the discomfort of my family in the air, but we did not discuss it until we had left, and my grandparents were in a different car.

Ever since I was little, I have gone to church every Sunday with my family. Since we moved to Massachusetts, we have gone to a Catholic church on the campus of a college because even though it was a much longer drive, the proximity of the college made it much more progressive than the churches in my town. Never once was there a mention of any prejudice towards the LGBTQ community, and people of every possible background attended. There was also an overwhelming sense of community that I haven’t been able to find fully in any other place in my life. Needless to say, I was and always have been grateful for that piece of my life.

However, going to my grandparent’s church was my first real experience with what is seen often in the news as a stereotypical Catholic church. It shocked me, and suddenly I realized that there was a chance that if people knew I was Catholic, they might jump straight to that image of a church preaching about the “perfect family.” Oftentimes when I watch the news, there are stories about Christians protesting the addition of more abortion clinics or the fact that marriage

equality has been legalized. Even though I know, that isn't me, and I can't help the fear that people will see me as anything other than what I am. So instead of taking the time to explain to each person, I met why I was Catholic, I just avoided the topic altogether. It is a piece of my identity that I only share with those that I am closest with and only after I am sure they know me well.

One day in my junior year of high school, my biology class moved on to the topic of evolution. We were discussing how natural selection is a driving force for the process of evolution and how we all came from prokaryotes in the very early years of Earth. After class, a group of my friends and I were sitting outside and discussing the notes. As we were discussing evolution, someone brought up how they thought it was so amusing that there were people in the world who refused to believe in science and that did not believe in evolution. They especially focused on Christianity since there are many Christians who believe that every living creature was created within a few days by God. "I'll never understand religious people," one of them said. At those words, my heartbeat increased, and I felt my palms get sweaty. Immediately, I felt so separated from that group. There was no way I was going to speak up and correct them at that moment. There was no way that I was pointing out that I am religious, and I most definitely believe in evolution. Instead, I sat there quietly until everyone was done with the topic and had moved on. Never once did I say a word.

I am a biology major, and I consider myself an active member of the scientific community. In the future, I hope to have a job either in a lab or working to provide vaccines to third-world countries. I have known this for a long time and don't picture myself drastically changing my plan. I have also been a part of the Catholic church for as long as I can remember. However, when I am in a group of Catholics, I often feel as though there is a chance that I will be excluded or considered an outsider

because of my passion for science. In a similar way, I feel as though the scientific community would reject me if they knew of my religious beliefs because they would feel like it would not line up with their own view of the world. Both groups reflect a general sense among communities that their way of living in the “correct way” and that anyone who does not fit neatly into their box is in some way incorrect or not worth their time. This creates a sense of isolation between groups, and while it may seem like there is diversity in identities, most people instead must change to fit into these boxes. Otherwise, like me, they must hide pieces of themselves, ensuring that none of us are free to be who we truly are.

I've never once been ashamed of my faith. I do not hide my faith because I feel there is anything wrong with what I believe. However, because my faith can often be seen as contradictory to my involvement in science, I am afraid that one community will reject me because of my involvement with the other. By concealing this one piece of myself, I have been able to give myself the freedom to be involved in both parts of my life that are so important to me. The polarity between each of my interests has prevented me from being able to be completely open about my identity with everyone around me. Because so many groups in our lives may have secondary views that prevent them from being open to other groups, many people feel the need to hide parts of their identity to fit in where they want to. They are afraid that showing each part of their identity will cause them to be rejected by one or more of the groups they wish to be a part of. In order to stay active in all of these communities, people must conceal their involvement in groups that could cause controversy. While it may seem as though hiding pieces of ourselves keeps us trapped, it, in fact, gives us the freedom to truly be ourselves while avoiding judgement. If this secret were to be revealed for someone, they could be pushed out of a group that they identify with or be forced to choose between two parts of their identity, showing

the polarizing nature of many communities many of us hope to be a part of.

10. Painted in Red, White, and Blue

ARIYA SONETHAVY

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Sonethavy is the child of migrants from Laos, and yet, “Painted in Red, White and Blue” explores this context in a way that is different from Kang’s essay, “Ingredients of Education.” Sonethavy focuses on the experiences that form their context as a second-generation migrant: on the one hand, the author finds the depiction of Asianness in American pop culture contrasts with their own experience as an Asian in America, and on the other, they feel unable to connect with extended family when visiting them in Laos. Sonethavy writes: “Like an alien visiting its home planet after a long departure, the anxiety in my body is exacerbated by my lack of communication skills to carry full-length conversations with my family members, constantly resulting in my mouth being stitched together.” Thus, Sonethavy examines these experiences in the contexts of both countries, the one their family migrated from, the one they migrated to. The author underscores that are particular to their experiences and yet universally resonant, colorism and language barriers, to name a few, even while reflecting on the sense of belonging that is ultimately forged with both of their homes.

Ariya Sonethavy
Instructor
ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing
Day Month Year

Painted in Red, White and Blue

I am eleven years old when something about the blonde hair and blue eyes of the beautiful people I see on television sends knots into my stomach. This subsides after watching my favorite Disney film, *Mulan*, and yet something unsettling sticks, creeping inside me until the face I see in the mirror is not entirely there. My pupils look like a black hole, incomparable to my white classmates and the celebrities on the posters decorating my bedroom walls. The porcelain skin of *Mulan* and other Asian women in movies is not claimed in my honeyed complexion. In America, the stereotypical perception of Asia is ambiguous—it becomes a place of lush green forests or populated cities where people with almond-shaped eyes and porcelain skin reside. What does a person see when they think of Southeast Asia? My mother sees it as home. I see it as a vision, a faraway world that seems to be tied with the past, of some creation myth that ended with a tale of my parent's immigration to the United States. They were born and raised in Laos, a country that evokes puzzled looks from peers who ask about my ethnicity. I had only been there twice, both times under the age of six. I remember my grandfather's house, a mansion lined with gold and granite, regal in my childlike mind. I remember pink flesh from my mosquito-bitten skin. I remember dirt and sand and the color green. These mental images become blurred apparitions, broken pieces of a story I would try to piece together to remind myself of my roots. Years later, I would find myself not recognizing my mother's hometown as my own kind of sanctuary but instead emerging in the lost familiarity that I had with the country.

I am eighteen years old when I revisit a forgotten dream. The airport is a small purgatory between my dazed disposition and the destination before me, like the moment between asleep and awake. I wake up to saturation and the sun, and my sweatshirt meant for Massachusetts weather already makes me warm. The black and white fragments of the vision I

manifested in my mind of my mother's country convert into full-blown technicolor, with every aspect newer than what my five-year-old mind could remember. From childhood pictures, my conceptualization of the place is a fever dream, and upon arrival, the haze suddenly clears. The saturation in the surroundings makes my home in Massachusetts pale in comparison, as the sun casts a golden glow on every palm tree, every building, every face. I am greeted with people I don't remember, and the overwhelming nature of this culture shock feels both daunting and exciting. There is a refuge in the beauty of the scenery and the tiny plant-filled apartment that is my home for the next two weeks. I romanticize the quantity of Buddhist temples and the bustling rhythm of the local shops and cafes, things that residents have memorized their whole lives.

Like an alien visiting its home planet after a long departure, the anxiety in my body is exacerbated by my lack of communication skills to carry full-length conversations with my family members, constantly resulting in my mouth being stitched together. The awkwardness of American adolescence was defined by feeling like an "other" in a classroom where everyone else was white. I have always been the Asian girl that didn't even fit the stereotypical appearance of Asian people. Despite being somewhere where other people looked like me, estrangement is defined by my lack of language fluency, feeling like the "typical" American girl. The gut feeling of isolation translates through two different mediums where I don't completely belong in either place. Instead of being a native of anywhere, I am a girl without a country, stuck in a strange limbo between two places that are integral to my identity.

By day, every aspect of the city floods with light from all directions, grazing the roofs of unfinished buildings and the tanned skin of locals and tourists alike. By night, this light changes hue through neon lights in the face of cold beers and

bowls of Pho. I enjoy feeling small in the chaos that wasn't as vast with capitalism as American cities. Travelling at the same time the world turns into the new year bred an unspoken vow for spiritual inspiration on my way across the globe. In return, moments of revelation occur throughout these two weeks—some are rather neurotic, ending in impulsive tears in the bathroom of some relative's house during a family gathering, and some redefine my idea of family. I wonder why I'm unable to speak my family's language and realize that the barrier between me and the place where I'm supposed to belong is a thin veil in which I can see everyone else, but they can't see me with the same clarity. It feels like being mute, able to completely understand a foreign language and not have the right wires connected in your brain to respond in that language. The insecurity of this reverts me to a shell of a child that was too shy to be happy-go-lucky, uncomfortable to the point of tugging my mother's sleeve asking to go home.

It is strange to become familiar with the unfamiliar once again. I was so used to the routine of being a part of something simply because I was supposed to. However, my lack of knowledge of Buddhism as a religion doesn't hinder my mother's insistence on my participation in the ceremonies. Her ways of answering my questions had always had the effect of telling a story to a child. The ceremony of uncle becoming a temporary monk was explained as a necessary sacrifice for good luck in both life and the afterlife. I endure hours of preparation and uncomfortable pain in my legs from kneeling during the actual ceremony, but the ordeal is rather beautiful—from the ornate bowls of fruit to the vibrancy of the monk's orange robes, to the Buddha statue with his hands closed in prayer the same way everyone else's is. Here, too, the sense of exclusion for lacking the emotional and religious context that my mother has forms a lump in my throat. My mother is next to me with soft whispers of prayer repeating the monk's foreign words. The drone in my ears is like a gong until

it turns into a hum vibrating inside my chest, evolving into a lulling kind of calm. Something about this feels right.

These are the moments of complete serenity that convince me that the constant Laotian sunlight developed a sense of belonging within me. It made me want to stay, to escape the depressing, busy lifestyle of America. There was a certain simplicity in reading a book for hours on a balcony overlooking my aunt's house and the temple next door, a paradise where summer never ended. It was easy to manifest this honeymoon state of mind into therapeutic practice, and the exoticism of my surroundings only felt more alluring when I compared it to my unhappiness in the frigid New England. The roots of my cultural identity that wilted within years of growing up an American suddenly bloomed into something new. Laos became a new home, or at least, a strange alternative vision of home. My culture shock did not overshadow the undeniable warmth that this city exuded, making me comfortable with my surroundings as everything around me existed in its own rhythm.

The tanned faces of schoolchildren on their break from school is a refreshing sight compared to the desolate enclosure that was my old high school back in America. The quaintness to Vientiane's rhythm was what made it so calming—there was never the impending sense of doom that was always tied to American money, possessions, and stress. There was only the bright green of palm trees and the ocean licking land, and by night the sun would fall as the tempo of the city went faster. Marketplaces flooded the streets with goods, and the smell of my favorite soup inviting itself to my sense. There was never a closed storefront in Vientiane—every market, shop, or cafe had its doors open or had none at all. The colored light and the comfortable nature of feeling like a local made the streets like a dollhouse, each shop exposed in the front to show the different stories inside. I wanted to bask in it, breathe it in, and hold it inside me until the feeling would grow into the

comfort of feeling a level of frequency that balanced between my nationality and my ethnicity.

I am eighteen years old when I feel like I am on top of the world. I am overlooking the city of Vientiane from the top of Patuxai, Laos' version of the Arc de Triomphe, and my aunt and uncle smile at me with a camera. I wear red, white, and blue on the jacket—one sleeve the American flag, and the other the Lao flag. Inside me, I feel these colors in two different forms, and within myself, I allow the disparity between my two countries to dissipate. There is a balance between my American upbringing and my Lao roots, and with the seeds of acceptance planted inside me, I cultivate harmony. Culture is an ever-evolving term, and I think I've come to terms with my own eclectic definition of it.

PART III

INTERACTING WITH TEXTS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Entering into a conversation with a published text by way of critical analysis is often the main writing act that students anticipate when they enter the ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing classroom. This unit asks you to explore this concept of critical analysis in a way that extends and complicates the analytical interaction. In order to do this, you will spend significant time with an assigned published text, ascertaining the key terms of the text and identifying an entry point where you can interrogate the work. There are a variety of options when it comes to interacting with the published text: you could focus on rhetorical analysis, the strength of the argument put forth in the published text, extending or tempering the position of the published text, reflection, conversation or any combination of these.

Unit Goals

- Develop a purposeful response to published texts.
- Fairly represent a writer's ideas through summary, paraphrase, and quotation.
- Discover new insights by analyzing intention, meaning, or effect of texts.
- Engage in the composing process to gain understanding of creating for different modes, media, or genres.
- Use effective rhetorical choices to write and revise for an academic audience.

One of the main challenges of the Interacting with Texts essay

involves balancing voice for an academic audience, which can be difficult. Oftentimes, in a bid to fairly represent the work of the published text being critiqued, your own voice may be sidelined. This unit works to recalibrate your voice in an academic context. While *Interacting with Texts* does not engage with the personal perspective in the same way as *Inquiring into Self* does (by focusing on pivotal places and personal contexts), it does invite you to carve out a sense of identity in the sphere of academic writing by bringing an awareness to rhetorical choices and their inherent value. By exploring themes such as language, oppression, and narratives of illness and injury through a series of mindful rhetorical choices in conversation with specific published texts, the authors in this section share new insights in dialogue with these texts while balancing their own voice and expanding their own ideas.

This unit familiarizes students with processes of summarizing, paraphrasing and direct quotation along with an introduction to MLA formatting including in-text citations and works cited page. All of this prepares the student for *Adding to a Conversation* by laying the foundations of academic writing skills in order for them to be expanded beyond the parameters of assigned texts, allowing students to showcase your rhetorical prowess on a topic of your choice. As writing is primarily conceived of as a social act in the College Writing classroom, this unit helps students to combine your academic writing skills with your individual identity as a writer, clarifying the exigence of your work before entering into *Adding to a Conversation* where you will add your voice to an ongoing conversation on a topic of social importance that also has personal meaning for you.

11. Oppression, Language, Survival: A Response to James Baldwin

ZILU WANG

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay, Wang explores the relationship between language and social contexts. Pairing the linguistic background of their own family with James Baldwin's article 'If Black English Isn't A Language, Then Tell Me What Is' Wang unpacks the subtle differences in language that can illuminate details of lived experience. Further exploring the interplay between language and control, this essay focuses on language as a tool to reflect different realities.

Zilu Wang

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Oppression, Language, Survival: A Response to James
Baldwin

When I was little, I was always curious to know why my grandfather seemed to speak a different language than everyone I knew. No one else around me used words such as “comrades” and “serve the people” that were both novel and puzzling to the eight-year-old me. “Where did you learn these

words?" I inquired, to which my grandfather returned a gentle smile and said: "These were the words of Chairman Mao." From his answer, I was finally able to gather that these words were the remnants of the Maoist period, and the reason why I felt as if my grandfather was speaking a different language: he was speaking a different language. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, people were forced to adopt a type of communist language. Refusal to speak this language would immediately result in arrest and even execution. Therefore, having lived in this social context, my grandfather is accustomed to speaking the communist language.

In his article, "If Black English Isn't A Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" James Baldwin speaks about the capacity of language to articulate experience. According to Baldwin, "people evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances." Baldwin's observation is that, since each individual has distinct circumstances, he/she speaks a language that is subtly different from that of other people. For instance, as Baldwin points out, "a Frenchman living in Paris speaks a subtly and crucially different language from that of the man living in Marseilles; neither sounds very much like a man living in Quebec ... although the 'common' language of all these areas is French." In my grandfather's case, the language that he uses articulates the circumstances of another place in another time period: China in the Cultural Revolution era. Though Baldwin claims that everyone speaks different languages, everyone spoke the same language in China during the Cultural Revolution. The Communist Party took control of people's realities, and thus every individual had the exact same amount of control left: none. In fact, they had so little control that they could not "evolve a language"; their language was given. Baldwin says, "people evolve a language ... in order not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate. (And, if they cannot articulate it, they are submerged.)" If we do not have the tools required to articulate our circumstances, we

are submerged by the forces of our societies. This is why the Chinese people were submerged: they lacked the language to articulate their reality.

The fact that the Chinese people were forced to speak a language that reflected a controlled reality robbed them of their ability to articulate their circumstances. James Baldwin, in his essay, asserts powerfully that “we are not inarticulate because we are not compelled to defend a morality that we know to be a lie.” This quote implies that inarticulateness is a result of hypocrisy, and that the white people in America were inarticulate because what they said was not consistent with the reality. This situation in America is surprisingly similar to that in China during the Cultural Revolution period. As a result of the political environment, the Chinese people were all hypocritical, though involuntarily. They praised the Communist Party and recited *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* for fear of oppression, and this hypocrisy was another obstacle that prevented Chinese people from becoming articulate.

The Chinese Communist Party must have recognized the potential of language as a means to control reality, or else it would not have paid such attention to people’s language. This shows that “language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power,” as the James Baldwin essay states. Through the imposition of the communist language, the Communist Party reinforced its ideology among the people as they became accustomed to and accepted the values hidden within the language. The reason speaking the communist language would protect people is that language, as Baldwin recognizes, “connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger, public, or communal identity. There have been, and are, times, and places, when to speak a certain language could be dangerous, even fatal.” By speaking the communist language, my grandfather connected with the Communist Party. By contrast, those who spoke a different language distanced themselves from the Communist Party and risked danger. It is interesting

that while James Baldwin also uses the word “survival” in his article (to describe the purpose of black English), “survival” as the purpose of communist Chinese has a completely different meaning. Whereas James Baldwin uses the word to indicate flourishing and advancing, I use the word in the most literal meaning: “the state of continuing to live.”

On a more fundamental level, reactions to languages are not triggered by the languages per se. “It is not the black child’s language that is in question, it is not his language that is despised: It is his experience.” In this quote, James Baldwin elegantly states that black English is despised only because it represents the black experience. What this quote suggests is that reactions to languages are based on not the languages themselves, but on the contexts of the speakers that these languages reveal. Applying this idea to the Chinese scenario, it is evident that the oppression was not geared towards the non-communist language itself, but rather an entire ideology that the non-communist language represents: capitalism.

The ability of a language to articulate reality and facilitate survival varies according to different social contexts. In Baldwin’s context, black English articulated the status quo of the African Americans, and contributed to the flourishing and advancing of the African American population. In contrast, in my Chinese context, the communist language was essential to preventing harm, and the language did not reflect reality accurately. When a language fails to reflect reality, its speakers become inarticulate, such as the white people in America and the Chinese population during the Cultural Revolution. For both the white people in America and the Chinese Communist Party, their reactions toward languages are not determined by the languages per se, but the personal contexts of the speakers. In the contemporary China, since the political circumstances have changed, the Chinese people have become articulate. Nevertheless, remnants of the Cultural

Revolution can still be found, such as the communist language that my grandfather still uses.

Works Cited

Baldwin, James. "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-english.html>. July 29, 1979. Accessed 5 March 2017.

12. Heads Up, Don't Duck

HARRIET SMITH

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

How do we resolve the relationship between sport and injury? In this essay, Smith explores the seemingly contradictory aggression of contact sport and the sense of peace and calmness that follows for many. Smith engages with the work of Steve Almond, probing the long-term impact of contact sport on physical and mental health. Tracing the ethics of competition, Smith critiques the dangerous and irresponsible attitude of coaches who risk player's lives, uncovering the sense of shame that is cultivated around injuries in the world of sport.

Harriet Smith

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Heads Up, Don't Duck

The slam of fists on a metal hallway. Condensation and the smell of beer hanging in the air around your head. Rowdy, red-jersey wearing Midwesterners crash against your shoulder and you lean back into them. There's a short woman bouncing up and down in excitement about to get lost in the shuffle. Suddenly she's hoisted up onto someone's shoulders as the crowd releases a deafening cheer, celebrating their victory over the New Englanders. There's very little space to move around, and the only way you can make it to your car is to be carried

by the swarm. But you don't feel threatened. In fact, there's a sense of community, even safety. You look around and see small children in the embrace of their parents offering high fives to anyone their stubby arms can reach, ecstatic to be wearing the same jersey as the rest of the group. Ice hockey, much like football and other classic American pastimes, instills a sense of belonging and purpose that is unique to the world of sports.

Two years ago, Steve Almond published his book *Against Football*, illustrating the torsion of growing up a football fan while also realizing the brutality of the way the game is played. In the chapter from his book, "You Knock My Brains Out This Sunday and I Knock Your Brains Out the Next Time We Meet", it's made clear that Almond, like many others, enjoys the sport in part for its violence and aggression rather than simply for the finesse. Watching another human slam into the rubbery turf or hearing the crack of shoulder pads and shins offers a release of the instinctual aggression that we are hard pressed to find in the regulated, modern world. Anyone who's ever been to a Red Wings game in their hometown of Detroit at 11:30pm, surrounded by hundreds of red-clad drunken Michiganders, will know that it's hard to find something that gives you a rush quite like that. At some point, humans need to find a way to exploit that rush and release that day-to-day frustration. I was out in the woods the other day, watching the leaves fall in the same pattern as they do every Fall and found myself picking up a large, uneven branch. After a few moments of looking between the branch and a nearby evergreen tree, I took the branch like a bat in my hands and slammed it against the trunk of the tree with everything I had. Bits of wood and bark flew in every direction, and a deeply satisfying **crack** punctuated the quiet space of the woods. After hurling what was left of the branch through the ragged woods, I picked up another branch and hit the tree again. And again, and again. With every snap

of wood I felt better, more at peace. For many, contact sports provide that same sense of calm.

But there's an unspoken, sombre side to the sports industry. Almond discusses evidence of serious long-term athletic injuries, some of which are nearly inevitable in the NFL and similarly violent sports. Researchers have found that many professional athletes, football players in particular, suffer from Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (or CTE), which may cause early-onset Alzheimer's-like symptoms and result in a lifespan of ten to twenty years shorter than average. Even speaking from the perspective of a life-long fan, Almond's essay calls out for a change in football culture, and perhaps even the culture of the professional sports industry as a whole. Using a few fairly tragic examples, Almond explains just how bizarre the players' psychological deterioration can become. Justin Strzelczyk was a former Steelers offensive lineman, and at the age of 36 he led police on a high-speed chase until ramming his car into the side of a truck, going 90 mph. His body showed no signs of intoxication. Further examination of his brain indicated that he was suffering from CTE, which severely warped his mind and view of reality. At the age of forty-five, "Steelers lineman Terry Long drank antifreeze" (Almond 26), likely due to head trauma related depression. The list of similar events is extensive. Sure, they're paid millions of dollars per season, but a disproportionate number of players experience mental dysfunction highly atypical of men their age. Running back Tony Dorsett began experiencing depression and memory loss in his 50's, and "[admits] he gets lost driving his daughters to their sports games" (Almond 23). An entire industry has been dedicated to constructing safer sports equipment, but the dangers associated with collision sports seem to be unavoidable.

While watching football from the comfort of your couch, you see dozens of horrific but exhilarating hits per game. As a boy, Almond would use this gladiator-esque sport as his way of

releasing the rage that built up within his home. The clash of helmets, the snap of tugging cloth and flying turf. As one player's shoulder dings the corner of another player's head, you may wince a little bit. As you well should. Only after years of speculation did Almond realize the grotesquely high tolls taken on NFL players. But still we cheer. We buy the jerseys and those silly foam fingers, we turn on the TV every Sunday night, and we ultimately support the madness. Almond recounts a conversation he had with Dr. Ann McKee, co-director of the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy at Boston University, in which she admitted to being an avid Packers fan *while dissecting the brain of a young woman who had suffered multiple concussions* during a game of rugby. Sports are so fundamental to our society that we can't help but sideline their negatives. And it's not only football; all competitive sports have huge pitfalls when it comes to long-term injuries. The NFL is just one piece of a larger destructive, if not appalling industry.

Almond tells us that it's unethical to encourage such a dangerous game, and it would be hard to disagree. However, the dangers of football run deeper than just physical injury. At the core of competitive sports lies an issue far more personal. "Injury prone" has become synonymous with cowardly or weak-willed" (Almond 30), to the extent that players will play hurt because they are afraid of public or peer opinion, and of losing their job. Fighting through an injury makes you look tough. What's worse is that the coaches and trainers are responsible for pumping players full of painkillers and sometimes even steroids to speed up recovery time (among other reasons). As Almond mentions, in 2002, Patriots' linebacker Ted Johnson returned to practicing only days after receiving a concussion. Despite being told by the team's trainer that he was not cleared for contact his coach, the well-known Bill Belichick, marked him with a "full-contact" jersey. Only minutes into the practice, Johnson experienced a second major concussion and was

rushed to the emergency room. Bill Belichick's response to the incident was appalling. He said if "Ted felt so strongly that he didn't feel he was ready to practice with us, he should have told me" (qtd in Almond 29). Coaches like Belichick shirk their duties as professionals to consider the best interest of their players. By instructing Johnson to enter a full-contact situation, he put the man's life at risk for no added value to the individual or the team.

Playing ice hockey, I became familiar with the pressure to "play hurt". Nearly every season I encountered a concussion or a similar injury. My forehead would slam into the boards and I would go down, stars clouding the periphery of my vision and my legs suddenly unbearably shaky. But I'd clamber back up, shake my throbbing head, rest for a shift or two on the bench and go right back out. My coach would tell the school trainer to perform a baseline concussion test but to clear me for play, no matter the results. When I partially tore my left patella tendon, and my knee swelled three times its normal size, it was deemed a "sore knee". She used the threat of mockery to keep me playing the rest of the season. Even at a high-school level, failure to perform due to a physical injury is extremely shameful. The stakes can only rise from there.

Competitive sports have woven themselves into modern society because they offer a glisten of a better future. The best players in our league were the players who depended on success in ice hockey to grant them a more productive, fulfilling life. Their impressive athletic abilities gave them a way into a good prep school, and maybe a good university with a sports scholarship. The same goes for many of the individuals who play for the NFL. Almond's essay acknowledges that playing for a professional team promises a steady and high income that players can use to lift themselves and their families into a state of financial stability. Many of these men came from next to nothing, and football was their ticket out. But this road to riches only exists as long as they can perform

at an elite level and can provide a high enough entertainment value for spectators. This often equates to playing through injuries and ultimately degrading their overall health throughout their career until they are inevitably forced to retire due to mental or physical inability to keep up with the ruthless culture.

The set of rules and regulations practiced in the NFL doesn't protect players from sub concussive hits or other forms of relatively minor injuries that can pile up over time. Or even if they do, coaches, peers, and the droves of fans often push players to play through their injuries, shoving them to the brink of possibly life-threatening situations. This dynamic is clear in football because it's one of the most highly televised sporting events. The annual Super Bowl alone generates millions of dollars in league revenue, and is fundamentally irreplaceable. And despite being bored senseless by watching two and a half hours of a football game, I can't envision our culture without it. Perhaps something else would step up to take its place, or perhaps our society would be a healthier, happier place. Either way, as a core of American tradition, it's easy to turn a blind eye to football and its many problems. In the coming years research and methods of physical therapy will continue to develop, and I'll be wearing my Michigan State Spartans jersey this Sunday.

Works Cited

Almond, Steve. "You Knock My Brains Out This Sunday and I Knock Your Brains Out the Next Time We Meet." *Opening Conversations: A Writer's Reader*, edited by Haivan V. Hoang et al. Hayden-McNeil, 2015, pp. 19-33.

13. A Spanish Gringa

ISABEL HOWELL

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay, Howell probes the limits of social acceptance when it comes to the expression and embodiment of culture. Weaving together their own experience and that of Gloria Anzaldua's in the essay 'How To Tame a Wild Tongue' Howell unpacks the multiple forms of prejudice one grapples with when their identity doesn't fit neatly into one cultural container. Acknowledging that the expression of their Cuban identity rests on more than language alone but broader cultural values, Howell in this very essay exemplifies the ways in which writing can extend and expand our thinking through critical interaction with a published text.

Isabel Howell

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

A Spanish Gringa

Growing up in Boston, I was always surrounded by other kids of different ethnicities, many of whose parents came to the U.S. to start a better life. A big portion of those people were Latino. They came from the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador and numerous other places. The common characteristics of kids from these countries were dark skin and fluency in their parents' language: Spanish.

With my mother being Cuban and my father a proud Bostonian, I was raised as a Spanish speaking American, where English was the dominant language. However, my translucent-

looking skin and absence of a Spanish accent led others to only acknowledge the American-ness. Starting from elementary school and continuing through high school, the Hispanic side of my identity was denied and ignored, by both Latino and American students. Meanwhile, the American half of me was nurtured, encouraged and praised. Hispanic-ness was only appreciated if one were the whole exotic package: dark skin, fluency in Spanish and a strong expression of culture.

At home, I was able to fully relax into my identity through the Cuban culture I had grown up with, while balancing it with the already prominent New England culture. From dancing bachata with my mom, to eating my grandmother's famous arroz con habichuelas and playing dominos, I knew I was Cuban. So, why did I feel so inadequate in the presence of other Hispanic people, or with others who spoke the language better than I did? Gloria Anzaldua's essay, "How To Tame a Wild Tongue", helped me understand how being an untraditional Hispanic is okay, and that it doesn't take away from one's Hispanic identity. In her essay, Anzaldua shares her struggle of being a Latina immigrant in the U.S., while also feeling like an outsider among her own people because of her unique, Chicana heritage.

In her essay, Anzaldua describes how speaking in a different dialect of Spanish led to her being seen as a traitor to other Spaniards and Latinos who spoke the same language. She is also told that by speaking English she is "a cultural traitor...ruining the Spanish language" and that her Chicano Spanish is "a mutilation of Spanish" (36). In this instance, not only is Anzaldua being attacked for speaking English, but also for speaking in a different dialect when she does speak Spanish. The prejudice within the Spanish culture pushes on Anzaldua, while on the other side, she is combatting the already present prejudice of Americans toward Latinos.

Additionally, Anzaldua explains how, as she was growing up, her dialect of Spanish was looked down upon and she was

ridiculed by Americans for speaking Spanish, while also by other Latinos for speaking Chicano Spanish. She explains how this restricted her growth as a person and confused her about her identity. Anzaldua recalls how being caught for speaking Spanish at school was “good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler” (34). The punishment the writer received for speaking her native language in the 1950s can help remind people of how much the world has changed.

Oftentimes, I was also told off by my family for not speaking enough Spanish, acting like a “gringa,” and criticized if my Spanish was not perfect. This burden pressed on me as I struggled with how to express my Cuban identity.

As I read Anzaldua’s essay, I realized that there are many other people like me who aren’t necessarily fluent in the language of their ethnicity. As Anzaldua explains the meaning of being Chicana, she describes a situation to readers:

Chicana feminists often skirt around each other with suspicion and hesitation. For the longest time I couldn’t figure it out. Then it dawned on me. To be close to another Chicana is like looking in the mirror. We’re afraid of what we’ll see there. Pena. Shame. Low estimation of self. In childhood we are told that our language is wrong... (39)

Because of the scrutiny within the Latino community, Anzaldua describes how Chicano people are taught to be ashamed of their culture, and don’t have the opportunity to be proud of their unique heritage. This forces many Chicano people to lose a sense of self, a part of their identity, and to feel lost. They feel like they don’t belong anywhere.

This got me thinking about the idea of mixed ethnicity in today’s world. Oftentimes we see people “claim” their ethnicities when they have little-to-no experience with the culture or the language. Especially when there is such a large Hispanic community in the U.S., the criteria for being accepted into the community falls heavily on language fluency. It can be

cutthroat at times, as it was for the Chicano people described in Anzaldua's essay who were shunned for not speaking the purest of the Spanish dialects.

In defining a Chicana, Anzaldua stresses the idea that language isn't the only characteristic by which to measure someone's Chicano-ness. She emphasizes that "a monolingual Chicana whose first language is English or Spanish is just as much a Chicana as one who speaks several variants of Spanish" (39). Ethnicity is made up not only by language, but by culture and traditions. Anzaldua makes that very clear in her writing, pointing out that when she was growing up, language was taken away as a measure of one's identity. So, she focused on culture and embraced her people's food, dancing and music to continue living as a Chicana.

The idea that culture is just as important as the language when expressing one's ethnicity really stood out to me. While I may not speak Spanish fluently, I still grew up with the Cuban culture, and that is a way I can connect with people. Additionally, while people can point to my physical appearance or language fluency in questioning my credentials as a Cuban, they can't take away the culture I know and grew up with.

Finally, Anzaldua explores the special circumstance of being "mestiza", which means mixed. As a Chicana, she was constantly pressured into conforming herself to identify as either a Mexican, or an American. In reality however, she is neither. In her elaboration on what life is like as a Chicana, Anzaldua describes how "Nosotros los Chicanos straddle the borderlands. On one side of us, we are constantly exposed to the Spanish of the Mexicans, on the other side we hear the Anglo's incessant clamoring so that we forget our language" (42). In this passage, we see that Anzaldua is conveying the message that one should be proud if they are "mestiza", that it's okay not to fit perfectly in one single box, and that being mestiza can be its own unique identity, like any other.

While people are often encouraged and praised for thinking

“outside of the box”, they often don’t apply that to identity. Society as a whole seems organized so people can fit into a certain “box”. However, as time goes by, one needs to remember that not fitting into a certain group of people is something to admire, even though it might be scary. Anzaldua’s point here is saying exactly that. It is comforting to know that there are different types of “mixed” people, and that I am not necessarily alone. Overall, Anzaldua’s writing has helped me realize that while language is a part of one’s ethnic identity, culture and family are just as important and should be recognized. Today, if someone knows more than one language, they are highly praised, and, in most cases, it helps them in life. Remembering this reminded me to feel proud of my Cuban ethnicity and motivated me to continue learning and practicing Spanish. The author’s struggle with trying to fit into two separate cultures (Mexican and American), and being neither, taught me that it’s okay to be proud of both my American and Cuban backgrounds, and, more precisely, to be proud of being both. Finally, this piece gave me the confidence to embrace my Cuban-ness more and to not be afraid of expressing that part of my identity, even if I’m not a traditional Cuban.

Works Cited

Anzaldua, Gloria. “How to Tame a Wild Tongue.” *Opening Conversations: A Writer’s Reader*, edited by Haivan V. Hoang et al. Hayden-McNeil, 2015, pp.34-45.

14. The Words You Do Not Yet Have

SARAH VAN ELLS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay, Van Ells explores the value of audience engagement by discussing the ways in which certain illness narratives can be illuminating for the reader when they feel involved in the piece. Referencing Audre Lorde's work, Van Ells focuses on the power of direct questions, ultimately concluding that this approach of challenging the reader to grapple with their own silence, needs and identity plays a role in the enduring significance of Lorde's work. The outcome for Van Ells is a period of self-reflection followed by a renewed investment in using their knowledge of and strong opinions about animal cruelty and issues with dairy production to affect positive change.

Sarah Van Ells

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

The Words You Do Not Yet Have

In her paper "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," Audre Lorde awakens any reader or listener with a personal call to action. Through her own experience, Lorde effectively convinces her audience that they must not stay silent any longer, as silence does not mean safety. I personally had a very emotional response to this text, and though this paper was given at an academic conference in Chicago well

before I was born, the integrity and universality of Lorde's voice make it relevant to any reader, no matter the time or place.

In the opening of her speech, Audre Lorde reveals that just a few months earlier she was told she had a malignant tumor in her breast and would need surgery. Though the tumor turned out to be harmless, this health scare required her to think critically about her own mortality and about the impact of her silences on her own experience. "I was forced to look upon myself and my living," she says, "with a harsh and urgent clarity that has left me shaken but much stronger" (40). Lorde comes to the conclusion that although she faces adversity as a Black lesbian poet, she cannot afford to remain silent anymore, and, perhaps more importantly, neither can we. Lorde insists that her audience feel the same urgency that she does, whether or not they have experienced something as severe.

Prior to reading this essay, I had always been turned off by authors using their own near-death experiences to try to invigorate me. I understand why people feel the need to share those stories; they definitely can change how one views the world. However, I have always found them nearly impossible to identify with. If I, an eighteen-year-old college freshman, have never had such an experience, how am I to wholeheartedly believe what you have to say? The issue here is accessibility, and for many people in my position, the circumstances of this scenario are not exactly relatable. Since reading Lorde's essay, however, I have discovered that this type of narrative can be very effective when used tactfully.

In the "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," Audre Lorde does just that. She beautifully weaves in and out of personal narrative while keeping the audience not only engaged in the text but *involved*. She hooks you in with a poignant introduction, which very plainly and concisely states that she believed for a period of time that she did not have much longer to live. She never leaves the reader or listener out of the equation and uses some direct as well as some

subtle language to show this. For example, after a paragraph of describing her personal experience in depth, she adds, “My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you” (Lorde 41). In this moment, just when you might disengage or stop identifying with the content, one sentence reminds us that her purpose is not to justify her own actions, but rather to help us see how we might change ours.

Whether she uses a subtle reminder such as in the previous example, or a more direct interrogation, Audre Lorde brings the reader along with her in a very deliberate way. She asks the audience, “What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?” (Lorde 41). By coming right out and asking these direct questions, Lorde gives you absolutely no choice but to engage with her words and make them personal. She goes on to identify as a “Black woman warrior poet” doing her work, and then challenges her audience once more, asking: “are you doing yours?” (Lorde 42). This challenging language is what I believe has kept this piece and a lot of Lorde’s work relevant into the present day. These essential questions are always worth revisiting, especially in times such as this when political and social debates are at the center of our culture. Now more than ever, we are forced to make these questions personal and seriously consider how our own voices are being used.

After engaging with this text, I had to ask myself: What is my work? What am I passionate about? What can I do about it? After spending some time with Lorde’s words, I was able to identify several things about which I feel very strongly and do not speak about. For example, I have strong opinions about animal cruelty and poor meat and dairy production practices, particularly in the United States. I am a vegetarian, but I rarely talk about it unless I am actually eating with people or am prompted by others. I used to be more outspoken about this

issue, but my words were usually met with disagreement and disrespect, occasionally with indifference. The most common response I get when I tell people that I am vegetarian is: “So... what **do** you eat?” I got tired of constantly defending my position, so I just stopped talking about it altogether.

I first became vegetarian almost five years ago, and I stopped telling people why about six months after that. However, after reading Lorde’s paper, I am feeling more empowered to speak up. As time has gone on I have only sunken more firmly into my beliefs and have decided that now is the time to start using my knowledge and passion for this issue as tools for positive change.

Coming to this kind of conclusion about how and why to speak up is not always a matter of courage or strength, but rather one of vulnerability. Admitting to yourself and others that you are dissatisfied, upset or angry about something can be difficult, especially when you expect to be met with disagreement. This paper is the first evidence, in years, of my passion for vegetarianism, and it was honestly challenging to put into words. However, I believe that this very process is, in essence, what Lorde is encouraging. Turning internal discomfort into external expression and language is, according to Lorde, how we can properly affect change.

Turning again to Lorde’s text: I am not a Black lesbian poet, nor am I necessarily an activist, but I am a human. That alone is my justification for speaking up for what I believe in, and should be yours too. As Lorde states in the conclusion of her paper, we must not “rob ourselves of ourselves and each other” (Lorde 44). Whether it is fear of humiliation, adversity, or other forms of dissonance, we must not let that fear prevent us from turning our own silences into language and action.

Works Cited

“The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action.”
Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches, by Audre Lorde,
Crossing Press, 2015.

15. Rogue Game: A Response to Steve Almond

MAYA ASBRIDGE

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Responding to Steve Almond's writing on CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy) and football, Asbridge claims that Almond isolates three key contributors to the perpetuation of unsafe practices in football: the fans, the players and the officials. Asbridge ultimately puts forth the argument that a sense of idolatry on the part of the fan, of an elite fraternity for the players, and of capital gain on the part of NFL officials play significant roles in the continuation of this violence. The interconnectedness of these three comprise the key site of Asbridge's critique.

Maya Asbridge

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Rogue Game: A Response to Steve Almond

Q: Do you think CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy) is a problem in the world of pro-football?

Fan: CTE? Uh, I mean, it doesn't sound too good, but it won't be a problem because we've got a great team, they're coming out strong this season, and they've got all of us behind them. Go [insert team name here]!

Player: *Nah. Most of us have had some pretty nasty hits but the key is just to tough it out, in the end we heal up and are back to normal in no time.*

NFL Official: *Of course not, this is a media issue. Anyone who's read our research on the subject, featured in the accredited magazine, *Neurosurgery*, knows that the real problem isn't CTE but players' pre-existing mental, physical, and/or substance abuse issues.*

Steve Almond, in a chapter of his book, *Against Football*, entitled, "You Knock My Brains Out This Sunday and I Knock Your Brains Out the Next Time We Meet," emphasizes the permanent damage that violence in football often causes to players and analyses reasons as to why it is so overlooked. He pinpoints three main contributors to the marginalization of the violence: the fans, who may "pay lip service to health issues," but who often suspect hurt players, rather than pity them (Almond 30); the players who willingly disregard their health to avoid feeling/being regarded as weak; and NFL officials themselves, who have no problem lying, manipulating, and coercing to keep people ignorant.

Q: *Do you acknowledge that by attending the games, or even watching them on TV, you are facilitating the prolongation of violence in the NFL and the harm that comes to the players?*

Fan: *Look, this game is no more violent than any other major sport. The players love it and they know the risk of getting hurt. We fans are not the problem, all we're guilty of is rooting for our team to win.*

Almond, as a former football fan, understands the appeal of the game. He recalls that to go on watching remorselessly, both he and his family ignored the violence for years – in fact, he "doesn't recall that [they] ever talked about" it in some cases (21). Almond chocks up his family's behavior to more than mere apathy; he cites an underlying "delight that boys (and later men) take in tackling and pounding and hurting" and in seeing

such behavior “granted a coherent, even heroic, context” (20-21). The barbarism, which is allowed only on the field, not only reminds fans of what they can’t lawfully do (that is, inflicting pain on others), but also satiates a primal impulse that, for the most part, lies dormant in modern society.

This fascination is perpetuated, Almond explains, by the fact that we are “soaking” in “self-delusion” (24). He certainly backs this statement up when recounting his meeting with Dr. Ann McKee, a neuropathologist who “cuts up the brains of former players and determines if they have CTE” (Almond 31). Almond says that despite seeing the damages of football first hand, McKee is still a big fan – she watches the game every Sunday, she found it “horrifying” that her own son couldn’t play (qtd in Almond 32), and she can’t accept the obvious connection between brain damage and the ethical dilemmas embedded in the game. Unfortunately, Dr. McKee is not alone; many other fans also refuse to understand the magnitude of the violence and how utterly compelling it is.

Q: If you got a concussion while playing, would you rest for as long as your doctor recommended or would you continue to play?

Player: *I would play, if I’m being honest. My teammates, they all play through anything, and every one of us is important to the team, so unless it’s really serious we all show. Plus, you know, you can’t really let down the fans – some travel hundreds of miles to see you play, so you’d better play.*

Almond’s second problem is with the players. He lists the many health risks of playing football – which include being “nineteen times more” likely to suffer brain trauma (22), being susceptible to dementia (26), dying around 20 years earlier than average (22), and even dying on the field (32), to name a few. He speculates: what if players had to have full disclosure about all these issues before starting to play? Would they reconsider? He concludes that, despite the dangers, “most of those kids would sign [...] NFL players are members of an elite fraternity

that knowingly places self-sacrifice, valor, and machismo above medical common sense” (28). Pressure from the team, this “fraternity,” is what will get a kid to sign on, with or without full disclosure, and what keeps a player playing, even when hurt. What’s even more dangerous for their health, though, is refusing to care for their infirmities for fear of how the fans will react; this is an upsettingly valid concern. It’s clear from the section above that fans are closed-minded towards the players’ injuries and vulnerability. They find it very upsetting that the same superhero-like tough guys, who are often unfazed by the hardest hits, can be bedridden for weeks because of a bump on the head. Since the players are so idolized, getting the fans to understand, rather than oppose, the weaknesses of these men is tremendously difficult. The blame doesn’t fall solely on the fans though; if the players were to admit their limitations, then their supporters would have no choice but to adjust their mind-sets accordingly, and the players’ health wouldn’t be jeopardized. Instead, however, they doubt the fans’ response so much that “they tend to downplay or even hide their infirmities” (Almond 22).

Q: Do you consider what league officials do to be ethical? Do you consider the game itself to be ethical?

NFL official: *Football is one of the most ethical and most American games out there. Our research suggests that playing football doesn’t cause health problems; it’s a safe, wholesome game – the players and fans agree. As far as what we league officials do, it’s all pretty standard.*

Though the players and fans are a clear part of the problem, they’ve got nothing on the NFL officials. When football was only played in non-profit settings, such as at high schools and colleges, people questioned the morality of it (23), but Almond explains that when it became a professional sport, morality went out the window and money came barreling in, and it’s only gotten worse since. Rampant capitalism has put greed at the heart of the NFL. This greed, Almond shows us, is what

prompts the NFL officials' relentless attempts to dissuade people from knowing the truth about the effects of violence in football: in 2012, they refuted proper scientific data on the NFL and concussions with an "inherently flawed" study that suggested football players "enjoy greater longevity" (Almond 22); they created a concussion research group which was headed by a man with no neurological background (Almond 25); they published "scientific" papers that were rejected by a number of peer reviewers and editors before *Neurosurgery* magazine finally accepted them (Almond 25); and they bought their way out of having to say what they really know about the trauma in football under oath (Almond 27).

From this, it's obvious that the NFL is doing everything in its power to "obscure the most disturbing aspects of the game" (Almond 25), so people can enjoy the violence "without dwelling on the ethical costs" (Almond 24). It's really quite jarring that the corruption and manipulation can affect so many people and effectively keep them from questioning the NFL's motives. Fans still "want to believe that the league officials will choose the righteous path over the profitable one" (Almond 24), despite the fact that this is clearly "nonsense and always has been" (Almond 24).

Q: How do you feel connected to football?

Fan: *I'm connected by the players, they're, like, my heroes, they're so skilled and strong, and by the league because I know it cares as much about the game, the players, and us fans as I do.*

Player: *I feel more connected than anyone. This game brought me up from nothing, it runs through my veins. I love the fans, they believe in me, even when I'm doubting myself, I love the league for giving me a home here, and they love me back.*

NFL official: *I'm connected in that I run things. I look out for the players, I look out for the fans, and I help them feel good about the league because we need them and they need us.*

The fans, the players, and the officials individually seem like

fairly strong forces against eliminating violence in football, but something Almond hints at, which is undeniable, is just how intertwined the three are. Six major relationships appear to join them together:

1. The fans need the NFL because it provides that satisfaction only violence creates. Without the league there to hide and lie for the game, the government might begin looking in to the ethicality of it and the violence might be lost.
2. The fans need the players because they're their idols. If the people playing the game weren't the indestructible super-humans they seem to be, it's safe to assume there would be a significant drop in interest. The fans "worship players for bravery and excoriate them for vulnerability" because they need to think these guys are extraordinary (Almond 31); it gives them a little hope and a big thrill.
3. The players need the NFL because football "isn't just what they do. It's who they are" (Almond 28). Not only does the league let them be who they are, it also gives the many players who "began life with limited socioeconomic options" (Almond 30), "glory and riches" for playing (Almond 30).
4. The players need the fans because they make them feel like the behemoths they know they're not. They understand that they could get a concussion by playing, but the fans are so devoted and supportive that they're convinced to toughen up and become exactly who they want to be.
5. The NFL needs the fans to come to the game and watch on TV, as "nearly half its total revenue [...] is generated by the tens of millions of casual fans engaged in what we might call 'passive consumption'" (Almond 24). Therefore, to keep people watching, they "do just enough [...] to allow us fans to pretend that the league gives a damn" by

expertly hiding the fact that “the business they run is unsafe for their workers” (Almond 27).

6. And, of course, the NFL needs the players because if these men – who possess priceless qualities, such as playing through pain, succumbing to wealth, and not questioning the league – didn’t exist, there’d go the whole game, and with it, the league’s billions.

The interconnectedness of the triad makes it that much stronger. Each component feeds on the lies and misconceptions of the other two and they all come out with narrower minds because of it; regardless of intentions, they form a sturdy unit of sheer denial. However, though they do make each other stronger, they also need each other desperately – none can stand without the others. This is football’s weakness. It seems that Almond knows this, as rather than attempting to appeal to the whole unit, he writes to just one section – the fans – hoping that if enough of them become aware, they will cause the whole franchise to collapse.

Q: Do you think football will change in any way?

Fan: No, it’s a great game the way it is.

Player: I don’t think so, so many people like it how it is.

NFL official: Of course, we’re always changing – bigger stadiums, better halftime shows, longer games– you name it.

It’s clear that Almond isn’t expecting a miracle. He knows outside forces alone, such as science, testimonies, data, etc., can’t touch football, it’s far too fortified by its subsections for that; instead, he simply asks one subsection, the fans, to recognize the outside sources and come to an objective conclusion based on them. If fans addressed the self-delusion, if players addressed the detrimental macho culture, or if the NFL addressed the corruption and greed, football as we know it would fall. All that’s needed is a majority in one section to reform this capitalistic colossus.

Works Cited

Almond, Steve. "You Knock My Brains Out This Sunday and I Knock Your Brains Out the Next Time We Meet." *Opening Conversations: A Writer's Reader*, edited by Haivan V. Hoang et al, Hayden-McNeil, 2015, pp. 19-33.

PART IV

ADDING TO A CONVERSATION

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing asserts that writing is a social act. This unit encourages students to embody what it means to be “social writers” in the world. Students use the skills they’ve acquired in previous units (such as writing about their own personal contexts by interacting with texts by published writers) to enter a conversation that interests them or that they care deeply about. This unit aims to broaden the writer’s audience from the academic classroom to real-world communities and spaces. In doing so, the students are empowered to define their own audience, context(s), and genre of the essay. This unit differs from previous units in that students are asked to engage more deeply with the research process (evaluating sources; avoiding plagiarism; learning more about the contents and audiences to whom they are writing). Taking on the role of both writer and researcher, this unit aims to help students understand how their academic writing skills are applicable to public contexts and communities.

Unit Goals

- Engage in the composing process to gain understanding of creating for different modes, media, or genres.
- Learn about a conversation based on academic library research, including finding and evaluating sources.
- Effectively represent a conversation based on a specific purpose and public audience.
- Ask a research question drawn from personal interest to

show ways your initial thinking substantially extends or evolves.

- “Add” to a conversation with additional insight, research, or inquiry.
- Cite multiple sources in-text and in a works cited page using MLA style.

Before the writing process, students usually begin with a specific question that engages with multiple contexts as their point of entry. Generative writing in this unit proves helpful in having students define their context, audience, and purpose for the paper. The research process aims to refine their focus and scope by allowing them to gather information about their topic and identify their perspective on the topic. This process is meant to be purposeful, inquiry based, and specific to the question guiding this assignment. Students typically write a short proposal or research paper. This is often accompanied by an annotated bibliography. Depending on the topic, students may also decide to engage in a different writing genre such as a magazine article or college newspaper.

The challenge of this unit is both to balance educating audiences about a topic of interest while outlining the existing research on that topic: for example, to ask a focused research question that negotiates scope, timeliness, and audience; to represent a conversation based on library research; to tailor writing to a public audience; and to extend a conversation by incorporating one’s own insight and solutions. Extending the conversation takes on many forms, evidenced by the samples of essays featured in this section. Some authors experiment with formatting; some include primary sources for research material such as personal interviews, historical documents, and social media posts. All these authors use and evaluate both academic and non-academic sources; outline how their topic engages with multiple perspectives and contexts; and make specific calls to action that are applicable to readers. In doing

so, these authors articulate – with research, vision, and insight – what it means to be social writers in the world.

16. The Extinction of History: How Genocide is a “Look the Other Way Affair” in the U.S.

How Genocide is a “Look the Other Way Affair” in the U.S.

JAMES MURPHY

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Murphy tackles history, colonization, and (the lack of) education in this essay. In it, Murphy asserts the importance of being aware of the United States' history of genocide towards Indigenous peoples. This essay examines historical documents and takes into account multiple perspectives. One of the notable aspects about this essay is Murphy's decision to include historical events that spans across various geographies in the Americas to illustrate the prevalence of colonization and genocide. Murphy engages in close reading at the level of the word to reveal how these documents expose the writers' intentions and understandings of the Indigenous peoples they encounter. In this critique of US colonization, Murphy provides a number of calls to action that educators and the public can follow.

James Murphy
Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

The Extinction of History: How Genocide is a “Look the Other Way Affair” in the U.S.

The education system in the United States fails to address the seriousness and widespread genocide perpetuated by European colonists and later American citizens. It is important that children engaged in primary and secondary school education are made aware of the United States history of genocide and cruelty towards indigenous peoples so that we can begin to mature as a nation.

In Alysa Landry’s essay entitled, “All Indians are Dead? At Least That’s What Most Schools Teach Children,” she discusses the lack of studies focused on Native Americans in k-12 schools today. For instance, Landry goes on to cite: “In half of the states no individual natives or specific tribes are mentioned.” This example is disturbing because it emphasizes The United States willingness to ignore Native American history.

Perhaps more telling though is the kind of history being taught to children. According to Landry, “A staggering 87 percent of references to American Indians in all 50 states’ academic standards portray them in a pre-1900 context,” with very few references to treaties and land rights (Landry). Furthermore, “All of the states are teaching that there were civil ways to end problems and that the Indian problem was dealt with nicely,” with “Washington being the only state to use the word genocide in relation to Natives” (Landry).

This kind of skewed history in which genocide and the history of Native Americans is consistently brushed under the rug is however not entirely the fault of our education system. For instance, “ninety percent of all manuscripts written about Native people are authored by non-Native writers” (Landry). History is often written by the victors and so the lack of accounts from a Native perspective is not in the least bit surprising. By this token, I am somewhat sympathetic towards

all the teachers and professors out there trying to penetrate the dirty waters of a history largely polluted by white perspectives.

Many of the documents written by European and American perspectives however paint a revealing and disturbing picture of how Europeans viewed Native Americans and in particular how they were treated. Historian Howard Zinn discusses how Columbus is often treated as a figure of heroic adventure in primary and secondary school textbooks as opposed to the ruthless oligarch he truly was. Zinn illuminates Columbus's true motives by explaining how he convinced the king and queen of Spain to finance his expedition to the then undiscovered region of the Americas in search of gold. When Columbus encountered the Arawak tribe of the Bahamas, he wrote in his journal explaining that:

They brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned... They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They would make fine servants ... with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want. (Zinn)

The words "subjugate" and "servant" are crucial here in exposing Columbus's true motives because they allow the reader to understand him as a figure that saw the indigenous peoples of the Bahamas not as human beings but as tools that he could exploit in his conquest for gold. When barely any gold could be found Columbus had to pay dividends to the Spanish crown in some way so he, "rounded up 1,500 Arawak men, women, and children," before picking the "500 best specimens to load unto ships. Out of these 500 200 died en route" (Zinn). These massive deaths meant nothing to Columbus and his men, who frequently inflicted horrific acts of cruel violence

unto the Arawak people. Las Casas, a priest on Columbus's expedition and a vehement critic of Spanish cruelty writes that, "The Spaniards thought nothing of knifing Indians by tens and twenties and of cutting slices off them to test the sharpness of their blades" (Zinn).

Another example of the cruel treatment of Native Americans comes in the form of a letter written by United States brigadier general John E. Wood in which he states that if the Cherokee do not move to a territory west of the Mississippi and relinquish their lands to the U.S. government, they "will be hunted up and dragged from," their "lurking places and hurried to the west" (Wood). By using such words as "hunted" and "dragged," Wood paints the Cherokee as nothing more than animals to be hunted for sport and mercilessly tortured if they do not give up the lands that they have resided in for centuries to white settlers. Wood ends his letter by describing how if the Cherokees comply with the government's request and move west of the Mississippi, they will be provided with "rations, blankets and clothing to be furnished to the poor and destitute of your people" (Wood). In other words, the only way Cherokee could receive any kind of government aid was if they gave up the lands that they had known their entire lives, in turn sacrificing their entire history and culture associated with their lands to be owned and exploited by white settlers. The Cherokee's refusal to remove themselves from their lands eventually resulted in the Trail of Tears in which thousands of Cherokees were placed in "temporary stockades," forced to leave their home as captives (Garrison). On this journey an estimated "4,000 to 5,000 Cherokees...died" (Garrison).

This kind of cruelty exposes the very worst qualities of humanity and the sickening truth behind a figure often celebrated in the United States. Educators throughout the United States seem content to ignore this cruelty, to bury the worst aspects of America's history under the rug and continue teaching as if these tragedies never occurred. Native American

history Professor Gregory D. Smithers posits several reasons as to why this may be:

We live in an age of social and political polarization, an era in which some of our leaders demand a “pro-American” history curriculum for K–12 students. Ours is also a time when violence is all too commonplace in our communities, and when serious intellectual debate over historical symbols causes deep anxieties everywhere from the op-ed pages of our newspapers to college classrooms. (Smithers)

While it is understandable that politicians and educators may fear that teaching about Native American genocide may stoke the flames of division in a modern age of polarization, this lack of knowledge “imperils rather than strengthens American democracy” (Smithers). Isn’t one of the key values of The United States freedom of speech and freedom of thought? How free is the thinking of America’s citizens if it is being manipulated and transformed to be “pro-American”? If our history lessons are dictated by lack of honest discussions regarding genocide and other Native American tragedies, students may bring “deep-seated cultural assumptions, clichés, and racial preconceptions about Native American people,” perpetuated by Hollywood films “with them when they arrive at university” (Smithers).

As a nation, a healthy response would be to come to terms with the truth of what happened. This response includes making the displacement and genocide of Native Americans a core part of the curriculum we teach our children. In order to properly apologize for the mass genocide and displacement of Native American peoples perpetuated by the United States government and early European settlers, we need to recognize that the progeny of the people we harmed still live among us today. Thus I believe is also important that we create a fund in which we pay reparations to Native Americans for the crimes we have committed similar to the “Remembrance,

Responsibility and the Future Fund,” implemented in Germany in 1999 that compensated individuals used as “forced labor and slave labor by private companies during the Nazi era” (Weyeneth 18). Only after completely responding in these ways may we ask for their forgiveness and have a chance to create a peaceful end to this horrible story.

Works Cited

- Garrison, Tim A. “Cherokee Removal.” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. 06 June 2017, <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal>. Accessed 31 Mar. 2018.
- Landry, Alysa. “All Indians Are Dead? At Least That’s What Most Schools Teach Children.” *Indian Country Media Network*, 17 Nov. 2014, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/all-indians-are-dead-at-least-thats-what-most-schools-teach-children>. Accessed 18 Mar. 2018.
- Smithers, Gregory D. “Teaching Native American History in a Polarized Age.” *The American Historian*, 11 Nov. 2015, <https://tah.oah.org/content/teaching-native-american-history-in-a-polarized-age/>. Accessed 18 Mar. 2018.
- Weyeneth, Robert R. “The Power of Apology and the Process of Historical Reconciliation.” *The Public Historian*, vol. 23, no. 3, Aug. 2001, pp. 9-38, <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2001.23.2.9>. Accessed 6 Apr. 2018.
- Wool, John E. “An 1837 message from Brigadier General John E. Wool to the Cherokee Nation warning them of the consequences of resisting removal.” 1837. TS. *Digital Public Library of America*, <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/cherokee-removal-and-the-trail-of-tears/sources/1511>. Accessed 29 Mar. 2018.
- Zinn, Howard. “The Real Christopher Columbus.” *Jacobin*, 12 Oct. 2015, www.jacobinmag.com/2014/10/the-real-christopher-columbus/. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018.

17. What Venezuela Silences

DANIELA MOLINA PALACIOS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this piece, Molina Palacios narrates the glory of Venezuela and the conditions that led to its present political conflict and economic crisis. An essay carefully crafted in thought and vision, it employs contextualization, history, statistics, and personal narrative to educate readers about the country. This essay is especially insightful and visionary for its bilingualism, experimentation with formatting, and poetic nature while maintaining the focus and research components crucial to standard academic essays. Molina Palacios incorporates and balances both creativity and intellect that expands readers' ideas of what a research paper can look like.

Daniela Molina Palacios

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

What Venezuela Silences

***Llevo tu luz y tu aroma en mi piel; y el cuatro en el
corazón.¹***

*I carry your light and your scent on my skin; and the cuatro²
in the heart.*

Venezuela had it all. It was a country that was blessed with everything one could ever ask for: it had the largest proven oil reserves in the world, vast agriculture, natural wonders, and *ganas*.³ It was the promised land; the land of opportunities for

those who were trying to escape the disasters left by the World Wars. Venezuela, with its rich cultural traditions and contagious energy, was easy to fall in love with, not only for the breathtaking landscapes but for its people.

Llevo en mi sangre la espuma del mar y tu horizonte en mis ojos.

I carry in my blood the sea foam and your horizon in my eyes.

Eight hundred and seven. The height, in meters, of the highest uninterrupted waterfall in the world, which is called Angel Falls and is located in Venezuela. 4,765. The meters above sea level of the highest cableway in the country, which is also the highest in the world and second longest. Two. The number of consecutive crowns won in the Miss Universe. Five hundred and ninety-three. The total number of ice cream flavors in a store located in Mérida, Venezuela, which gives them the record for the most quantity of ice cream flavors. 177,617. The size, in square kilometers, of the Amazonia forest located in Venezuela, which is the biggest portion of the largest rainforest in the world. 2008. The year Venezuela was voted the happiest country in the world.

Con tus paisajes y mis sueños me iré...

With your landscapes and my dreams, I will leave...

27,875. The number of people who died in 2015 due to violent crime. 1,351.98. The number of bolívares a dollar can buy on the black market. One hundred and forty-one. The percentage of the inflation by the end of 2015. Twelve. The mortality rate in the country due to homicides. Eight. The percentage of the economy that is projected to shrink this year. Ninety. The number of homicides for every 10,000 inhabitants. Eighty-nine. The percentage of homicides that go unpunished. Thirty. The number of minutes the government pushed the official time forward, to maximize daylight and blunt the blow of power shortages. Eighteen. The number of minimum wages needed to get a basic food basket. One hundred and forty-six. The

amount in dollars that a McDonald's Happy Meal costs in Caracas. Three. The time in the morning when people start lining up in supermarkets with the hope of buying basic products. Two. The percentage amount that the death rate among babies under a month old increased in the last year. 27,064,231. My ID number, which ends in one and means I only get to buy food or hygiene products on Mondays. Zero. The places Venezuelans feel safe. One. The number of questions that comes to mind: How did we get here?

It was once one of the richest countries in Latin America, and now it is falling apart. The country that was once "divided" into two baseball teams' supporters is now split into Chavistas, the name given to the followers of the socialist policies of the late President Hugo Chavez, and those who cannot wait to see an end to the seventeen years in power of his United Socialist Party (PSUV). As BBC News summarizes the conflict in its article "Venezuela Crisis: What Is Behind the Turmoil?" while Chavistas praised Chavez for using Venezuela's oil riches to markedly reduce inequality and for lifting many Venezuelans out of poverty, the opposition stated that ever since it came to power in 1999, the PSUV had eroded Venezuela's democratic institutions and mismanaged its economy. Over the years, the government managed to change the laws in order to concentrate power to themselves and stay longer and longer in power; all for "the people's benefit". In 2013, the socialist leader, Hugo Chavez, passed away and after fraudulent elections, his successor Nicolas Maduro, who was handpicked by Chavez himself, rose into power with the promise of continuing Chavez's policies. However, Maduro has not been able to inspire Chavistas in the same way his predecessor did ("Venezuela Crisis").

Chavez's social programs were possible because of the money coming in from oil. When oil was around \$100 a barrel, the millions flowing in through the state-owned petroleum company could be spent on social programs and subsidizing

food. However, as Rachel Clarke explains in her article for CNN, when oil prices fell to less than \$30 a barrel that became unsustainable. With the drastic fall in oil prices, the amount of foreign currency available for the government, which affected dramatically the ability to import items, decreased resulting in critical shortages of goods, including medicine. Also, Chavez ordered the prices of key products to be slashed so that everyone could afford them, which makes them accessible for consumers. Now, however, the prices have fallen below the cost of production, so domestic producers have stopped making them, which has led to imports becoming even more essential (Clark).

Shortages of basic food. Shortages of medicine. Rolling blackouts. Difficulty getting clean water. Rising unemployment. Soaring violent crime. All of these have become part of our daily life. A perfect example of the crisis Venezuela is facing, that Javier Corrales assertively explains in his article for The Huffington Post, is the phenomenon known as *las colas*. When Venezuelans stand in lines to get food, they face four types of painful uncertainties. First, because the lines are so long, there is no guarantee to make it to the front. Second, even if you manage to enter the store, you still don't know whether you'll get what you need, if anything at all. Stores often run out of rationed products, and the prices are too high due to rampant inflation. Third, standing in line makes you an easy target for criminals. Venezuela, being one of the most insecure countries in the world, murders and robberies in broad daylight are routine. And lastly, Venezuelans are uncertain if a protest will materialize while standing in line. Protests incite the police to act and can trap innocent bystanders in episodes of violence or even arbitrary arrests. The government has created hunger games (Corrales).

Separately, per Freedom House in 2015, Venezuela scored eighty one out of a hundred in press freedom, one hundred being the worst. Press freedom deteriorated in Venezuela in

2014 as journalists were caught up in Maduro's attempts to shut down antigovernment demonstrations. More than forty people were killed and at least nine hundred injured by the time the protests began to calm down; journalists covering the events were subject to arrests, harassment, and violence. Moreover, the sale of influential newspaper *El Universal* in an opaque transaction the same year, which led to the softening of its critical stand toward the government, was another blow to press freedom after two other major networks suffered similar fates in 2013. Also, Freedom House assertively explains the lack of freedom of speech by calling out the 2004 Law on Social Responsibility in Radio, Television, and Electronic Media, which contains vaguely worded restrictions. For example, the law bans content that could "incite or promote hatred," "foment citizens' anxiety or alter public order", "disrespect authorities", "encourage assassinations", or "constitute war propaganda" ("Venezuela"). There is no clearer example of the press oppression faced in Venezuela than the fact that I had to turn to international sources to get real ciphers and events that were happening in my own country to be able to write this paper. The government has silenced us. They have made us hungry, and they have silenced us.

Despite being only nineteen years old, I have missed months of classes due to riots happening all around the country. I have heard gun shots while trying to do homework in my bedroom, the place you are supposed to feel safe. While working at a tutor center, I have witnessed how kids robbed other kids. I have been pulled out of my classroom by the *capuchas*.⁴ I have had to pack my notebook and pencil and run desperately trying to find a way out. I have been locked down in my own neighborhood by barricades built by ourselves. I have marched for kilometers hoping the deaf government men would listen. I have stood in line for hours trying to get food and hygiene products. I have gone to every pharmacy or drug store in my hometown trying to find medicine my sister or I needed. I have

been living in fear of leaving my house. I have been afraid of being in my house. I have been afraid.

Y tus recuerdos al atardecer, me harán más corto el camino.

And your memories at sundown, will make shorter my path.

Twenty-three. The ranking of Venezuela, despite the critical crisis the country is facing, in the happiest countries in the world by The Washington Post in 2015. We Venezuelans are passionate and energetic people. We have a way of finding the humor in every situation: we laugh it off. Our traditions, culture and *ganas* are still intact. You would never hear a single Venezuelan speaking badly of the country; they may speak badly of the government or the situation, but never about Venezuela. On the contrary, we love Venezuela more than ever, because protesting and fighting for your country has a funny way of making you love it even more. You may find Venezuelans all over the globe: Madrid or Oviedo, Spain; Panama City, Panama; Lisbon, Portugal; Bogotá, Colombia; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Toronto, Canada; Quito, Ecuador... Amherst, United States of America; and I assure you that each one of them would do anything to have an *arepa*⁵ and *un marrón*⁶ while listening to *Alma Llanera*⁷ in the warmth of Venezuela.

***Y si un día tengo que naufragar;
y un tifón rompe mis velas,
enterrad mi cuerpo cerca del mar,
...en Venezuela.***

*And if one day find myself shipwrecked
And a typhoon breaks my sails,
Bury my body near the sea,
... in Venezuela.*

¹ Lyrics of a popular song dedicated to Venezuela by writers Jose Luis Armentos Sanchez and Pablo Herrero Ibarz.

² Traditional Venezuelan instrument.

³ Willingness.

⁴ Group of antisocialists.

⁵ Traditional food.

⁶ Coffee.

⁷ Popular Venezuelan song.

Works Cited

Alarcón, Benigno et al. "Can Democracy Win in Venezuela?" *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 27, no. 2, Apr. 2016, pp. 20-34.

Bremmer, Ian. "These 5 Facts Explain Why Venezuela Could Be on the Brink of Collapse." *Time*, May 2016, <http://time.com/4342329/venezuela-economic-collapse-nicolas-maduro/>

Corrales, Javier. "How Venezuela's Repressive Government Controls the Nation Through Hunger." *The Huffington Post*, 8 Oct. 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/venezuela-government-hunger_b_11429014

Clarke, Rachel. "What Went Wrong in Venezuela?" *CNN*, 2 Aug. 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/02/americas/venezuela-what-went-wrong>

VanderMey, Anne. "What on Earth Happened in Venezuela?" *Fortune*, 1 June 2016, <http://fortune.com/2016/06/02/venezuela-crisis-key-statistics/>

"Venezuela." *Freedom House*, 2015, freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela

"How Happy is Your Country?" *Washington Post*, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/world-happiness-2015/>

"Venezuela Crisis: What is Behind the Turmoil?" *BBC News*, 26 Oct. 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36319877

18. To Change a Culture

AMY J LIM

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Lim's essay focuses on eating disorders among adolescent male wrestlers. Lim also compares how eating disorders in males are understood and treated differently from females with eating disorders. In addition to crafting an essay that highlights a nuanced and underexplored topic, Lim employs a wide range of research materials from journal articles to sports websites to Reddit messages to personal interviews from wrestlers in the field. In using both traditional and non-traditional sources in this academic essay, Lim's research skills provide a unique vantage point into the experiences of male wrestlers. By utilizing existing scientific findings, accounting for a multitude of perspectives, and creating a call to action, Lim's research works to destigmatize male eating disorders and mental health by educating readers.

Amy Lim

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

To Change a Culture

I was friends with a talented varsity wrestler. He was intelligent and kind but often overshared his experiences as a wrestler. I met him at the peak of his season, which prompted him to talk about his weight-cutting practices in great detail. He complained about being hungry even though he had purposefully skipped lunch. He was often dehydrated and dizzy as a result. As a talented wrestler, he attended and won many

matches throughout the season, perhaps attributing his success to his aggressive weight-loss tactics. His favorite days of the season were days directly after matches, in which he binge ate to “reward” himself. Even though he was not overly thin, we often joked about his destructive weight-loss practices, dismissing the severity of his issues. His destructive behavior seemed to subside in the spring, as they were only for the purposes of wrestling. What was there to be concerned about? He is lucky never to have experienced life-threatening issues, but many other high school wrestlers have.

It turns out my friend’s experience is not uncommon amongst adolescent male wrestlers. In fact, “numerous studies have reported these practices in [adolescent] wrestlers... eleven percent of wrestlers were found to have an eating disorder... 45%... were found to be at risk of developing one” (“Promotion of healthy weight-control...” 1559). Wrestlers declare weight classes before matches, working hard to “make” the weight range they declared. Weight classes divide competitors based on weight and size, giving athletes on the higher end of each weight class an edge over lighter opponents. As a result, wrestlers often employ weight-loss tactics rather than weight-gain tactics. The inability to “make” a declared weight-class results in disqualification from a match or even suspension for the season (OHSAA 176). Pressure from teammates and coaches to lose weight may result in “unsafe practices leading up to competition... [including] excessive vigorous exercise, fluid restriction, [the implementation of] vapor-impermeable suits, and hot environments (e.g., sauna), in addition to laxatives, emetics, diuretics, and self-induced vomiting” (Gibbs 227). These practices were all too familiar to me as my friend routinely pursued them. Commonly employed rapid weight-loss techniques cause life-threatening conditions such as cardiovascular and renal dysfunction or even death.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) creates strict guidelines to curb college athletes’ dangerous behaviors,

but such behaviors still remain prevalent. High school wrestling, on the other hand, is especially poorly regulated. A 1993 clinical survey of 713 male high school wrestlers demonstrates that 1.7% of participants “met all the criteria necessary for the diagnosis of bulimia nervosa,¹ a higher percentage than expected from male athletes in this age group” (228). Regulations have changed in the following decades, but dangerous eating practices in high school wrestling are widespread anyway. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) creates guidelines for high school wrestling. Official rulebooks are not available free to the public, and current (available) rule changes are more concerned with hair length restrictions than eating disorders (NFHS). However, individual states seem to regulate guidelines a bit better. Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) appears to be quite vocal about their guidelines, even granting the public free access to rulebooks each year. But how can eating disorders still be so prevalent when “OHSAA does not permit any practice that endangers the health and safety of the participants” (OHSAA 175)? It is evident that unhealthy weight-cutting measures in adolescent wrestling need to be brought to mainstream attention. The cause of modern weight-cutting practices should be explored, as well.

Eating disorders in the general male population are severely under-researched. As of 2017, “the majority of clinical research informing medical management guidelines... [psychological] treatments, and indices of symptom severity, has been conducted in exclusively female samples” (Murray 352). The lack of eating disorder diagnoses in adolescent males is appalling, but perhaps reasonable as diagnostic criteria for all eating disorder sufferers are based on females with anorexia nervosa² (353). In recent years, a large influx of adolescent males seem to suffer from muscularity-oriented disordered eating (MODE), which go unrecognized as such “behaviors are typically oriented toward... the development of greater

musculature... [and] muscle leanness" (352). MODE criteria do not include the fear of weight gain found in anorexia or bulimia. However, it does include an "overvaluation for... shape and weight, distorted body image, and attempts to reduce overall dietary energy" (353), which are commonly seen in eating disorders found in female patients. No wonder so many adolescent males go undiagnosed! MODE symptoms are so drastically different from thinness-oriented symptoms found in female patients.

I met fellow UMass student and former high school wrestler "Josh" via Reddit. Even as Josh stated, excessive weight-cutting is a "bad idea in my opinion," Josh's wrestling experience paralleled that of my friend's. Josh purposefully wore warmer clothing and long sleeves to "sweat more" and limited his overall water intake, restricting himself to "one bottle... usually, drink[ing] half [of it] during practice and [saving] the rest for right after practice." He ate only a banana and sandwich a day to maximize weight loss. He would also treat himself with "chipotle and water" after successfully making weight. Sometimes, Josh resorted to chewing gum and tobacco to lose excess water-weight before matches. Only "more susceptible to bumps and bruises" and a decrease in muscle mass, Josh states, weight-cutting did not majorly impact his health. His eating habits resolved after the wrestling season, and he gained his weight back almost immediately. Josh and those close to him were never concerned about his practices, even as they aligned closely with MODE symptoms.

Unfortunately, other adolescent wrestlers are not as lucky as "Josh" or my high school friend. MODE commonly goes unrecognized, as muscle gain and leanness are often praised, sought after, and normalized in wrestling and other male-dominated sports. As a result, MODE sufferers are oblivious to their praised but unhealthy eating patterns that cause severe medical conditions. Johnny's experience, a published case report, outlines a 16-year-old wrestler's MODE case, which

explores common symptoms and behaviors observable in adolescent males with eating disorders. The case report emphasizes Johnny's concerning behaviors. He "[used] dietetic methods to enhance muscularity... [and drank] up to 8 cups of milk each day" (Murray 353). His symptoms were initially considered "normal" within female standards, even praised by teammates and coaches. Eventually, his resulting medical issues, namely low heart rate and normocytic anemia, resulted in a hospital stay of seven days (353). Johnny experienced bradycardia, a slow heart rate, which is a common, life-threatening MODE complication. In the end, Johnny physically recovered but declined psychological treatment (353). Along with the need to destigmatize psychological care in males, Johnny's case emphasizes the necessity for more extensive research in male eating disorders, especially in adolescents.

Johnny's case report indicates a strong normalization of MODE eating disorders in adolescent males. The normalization of dangerous weight-cutting measures in male-dominated sports and eating disorder research exclusively in females are a nod toward sexist societal pressures on both men and women. Because MODE symptoms are generally associated with societal body standards for men (strong muscularity and muscle leanness), MODE often goes ignored and even praised. Praise for MODE is similar to the praise and normalization associated with eating disorders of extreme weight-loss commonly found in females, as they are the results of female societal pressures (thinness). It's apparent that both sexes feel societal pressure to conform to "ideal" body standards, but why is it that eating disorders are more recognized and treated in women? This is likely because mainstream American society regards any ailment (physical or mental) as "feminine" and therefore, "unmanly." Consequently, seeking out medical treatment for eating disorders as a man is exceptionally stigmatized and condemned because of such regards. As a result, men—adolescent boys especially—are less inclined to

seek out and accept treatment for their eating disorders. Even if male patients seek out physical treatment, they may decline psychological treatment, as seeking help for mental ailments is incredibly “feminine” according to our patriarchal society. Johnny’s case outlines this specific issue. Although Johnny accepts treatment for his physical injuries, he declines treatment for his psychological ones. There is less advocacy for mental health awareness in men also, which plays a role in further stigmatization of eating disorders in men.

Though societal pressures play a role in adolescent boys’ adamance to seek help, the problematic nature of wrestling culture as a whole must be addressed for the most meaningful change. As the “coach is the authority figure and responsible for the success of the team” (Stankovich), teenage athletes are sure to please their coach’s demands. Adolescent athletes’ wrongful interpretations of their coach’s suggestions proliferate unhealthy weight-cutting behaviors, resulting in MODE. However, it may be the case that young athletes are not misinterpreting their coach’s suggestions at all. As wrestling is heavily dependent on weight, coaches may actually aggressively push their team to “make weight,” perhaps suggesting unhealthy ways to do so. For example, Johnny’s coach prescribed him to lose “approximately 2.5 kg and reach... [a] lighter-weight class” (Murray 353), leading to Johnny’s health issues. Even in the absence of adult pressure, peer pressure and the desire to conform with peers may reinforce unhealthy weight control practices. Josh states, “my coach honestly did not like us cutting a crazy amount of weight. My family did not want me losing too much weight [either]... [but] my teammates and I would [pressure each other to do so] ... [and lost] our weight together,” attributing his issues to the validation he received from his peers. Because Johnny and Josh are merely two people out of hundreds of thousands of high school wrestlers in the United States (Abbott), their experiences alone

cannot determine what exactly in wrestling culture contributes to male eating disorders on a whole.

However, it's clear that the best way to address eating disorders in adolescent male athletes is to destigmatize eating disorders and psychological treatment throughout all wrestling teams in the US. The NFHS could make readily accessible psychological treatment mandatory for all high school wrestling teams. District taxes could fund such treatment in public schools. Perhaps the duties of personal and academic guidance counselors already available in schools could be extended to sports as well. In schools without access to funding or existing counselors, the NFHS itself could fund psychological treatment. Additionally, wrestling should not be the only sport to receive these essential services. However, if mandatory accessible treatment in schools is not feasible, existing public healthcare services should be firmer to assess psychological issues in all children. In my experience, hospital staff does not advocate for the destigmatization of mental health enough at my yearly physical check-ups. At the hospital I attend, staff only require patients to answer a single-page mental health questionnaire without a mention of eating disorders or their symptoms. Perhaps my experience is not universal, but it most definitely indicates that mental health is less important than physical health in mainstream healthcare. Additionally, schools already require a clean bill of physical health to participate in athletics. It only makes sense that schools should require a clean bill of mental health as well. Obviously, children with mental health diagnoses should not be discriminated against in athletics. Still, schools and healthcare systems should implement more significant measures to advocate for children in all aspects of health, especially eating disorder awareness and treatment in male high school wrestlers. As advocacy and awareness increase, research of eating disorders in adolescent males will increase

as well, leading to more accurate and efficient diagnoses of MODE in the future.

¹ Also known as bulimia, an eating disorder characterized by bouts of binge eating followed by excessive self-induced purging (vomiting) most commonly diagnosed in females.

² Also known as anorexia, an eating disorder characterized by the refusal to eat most commonly diagnosed in females.

Works Cited

Abbott, Gary. "NFHS Reports High School Wrestling Participation Up for Boys AND Girls in All Categories for 2017-18." *Team USA*, United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, Aug. 2018.

Gibbs, Aimee E. "Weight Management in Amateur Wrestling." *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, vol 1, no. 3, Sage Journals, May 2009. pp 227-230.

"Josh." Message to Amy Lim. Oct. 2020. Private Message via Reddit.

Murray, Stuart B. "Boys, Biceps, and Bradycardia: The Hidden Dangers of Muscularity-Oriented Disordered Eating." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, 2017. pp 352-355.

NFHS. "2020-21 High School Wrestling Rules Changes Address Weigh-In Procedures, Hair Length Restrictions." *NFHS*, NFHS, Apr. 2020.

OHSAA. "Wrestling." *Sports Regulations*, OHSAA, OHSAA, 2019, pp. 174-179.

"Promotion of healthy weight-control practices in young athletes." *Pediatrics*, vol. 116, no. 6, *American Academy of Pediatrics*, Dec. 2005. pp. 1557-1564, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2005-2314>.

Stankovich, Chris. "Learn Why Listening to the Coach Helps Athletes Play their Best." *Advanced Human Performance Systems*, 19 June 2017, <https://drstankovich.com/learn-why-listening-to-the-coach-helps-athletes-play-their-best/>.

19. Stages of Inclusion of Women in Computer Science: What Factors Account for the Lack of Women in Undergraduate Computer Science Courses in the US?

What Factors Account for the Lack of Women in Undergraduate Computer Science Courses in the US?

GABRIELLA LALLI MARTINS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

What are the implications of being told you do not belong? Lalli Martins explores this question by focusing on women's experiences in STEM fields, particularly Computer Science. This essay skillfully engages with multiple contexts (social, cultural, educational, gender) to outline the inter-related dynamics that lead to the lack of women in undergraduate Computer Science courses in college. In it, the author incorporates history and research from academic journal articles to illustrate their

ideas. A few notable aspects of Lalli Martins's work are the integration of sources; the use of clear strategies and calls to action supported by existing research; and the emphasis on compare and contrast. In all, Lalli Martins's essay will resonate with students (perhaps especially female students) in STEM majors and is a strong example of a nuanced and focused topic on gender representation and equality.

Gabriella Lalli Martins

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Stages of Inclusion of Women in Computer Science: What
Factors Account for the Lack of Women in
Undergraduate Computer Science Courses in the US?

Imagine it is your first day of college. You are excited to start your studies, despite your parents' protests regarding your "non-suitable" major choice. As you settle in your seat for the first class, you notice that the class is made up of mostly males. You shrug it off as some weird coincidence, but as the week goes on you realize that it is definitely a trend. And not only that, but the faculty seems to be an all-male group as well. You start to struggle with your course load, which requires a lot of previous knowledge – that most of your male peers seem to have. You feel discouraged and unwelcomed, and not knowing anyone going through the same experience makes matters even worse. Your only female friend in the major decides to switch out of Computer Science and you consider following along – the lack of representation and your parents' constant complaints and "I-told-you-so's" are finally getting to you. It doesn't seem like you belong there.

Unfortunately, the scenario above is a true-life story for many of the women who choose to pursue a bachelor's degree in

Computer Science. With women representing only 18% of the degrees received at a bachelor's level in 2008 and the lowest proportions of female PhDs of any science (Abbate 145), computer science seems to illustrate very well the gender gap that still exists in many STEM disciplines. Choosing to study Computer Science often means immersing yourself in a heavily male-dominated world, both at student and faculty levels. This gap is better understood when we look at major choices as a result of personal interests developed through childhood and adolescence. That way we begin addressing the issue not at the college-level but way before then, taking into account the way girls are socialized and educated throughout their lives.

Children begin to experience the construction of gender very early in their lives. They learn how to walk, how to talk, and then they learn that cars are for boys and dolls are for girls. Not only that, but it seems like they construct gender in opposition to one another and perceive toys that are associated to the opposite sex as being “out of bounds” to them (Francis 326). By age seven, children usually have concrete views on toys and how they relate to gender, and as they grow up, they shift that subconscious gender binary to other aspects of their lives (Upitis 166). Aside from the gendering of toys itself, there is also the issue of what they are and what they represent. Boys are more likely to be gifted with computers and video games, through which they “learn to experiment and take risks, and to develop complex strategies for sharing information with one another” (165). Girls, on the other hand, tend to be on the receiving end of dolls and kitchen sets that, even though responsible for teaching them “to develop communication skills and ‘emotional literacy’” (Francis 326), don't exactly reward or encourage risk-taking and logical thinking. In recounting early childhood experiences, a fair number of women, interviewed by Jane Margolis and others, seemed to draw parallels between the way they interacted with computers in opposition to their male siblings, saying they

usually “watched while a male family member (brother or father) played games, tinkered or took them apart” (Margolis et al. 108), which further illustrates that there’s a bigger “disconnect” when it comes to women and computers.

During middle school, another key issue becomes evident: the lack of representation. At a stage where girls are starting to look elsewhere for role models, there seems to be a disturbing lack of diversity: “Children watch movies where only 19% of the characters ‘on the job’ are women and... read books in which men are depicted in twice as many careers as women” (Shapiro et al. 4-5). This further reinforces the gender stereotypes they began picking up as infants and, because “social dynamics tend to reward both boys and girls to maintain conventional gendered roles” (6), it discourages them to pursue interests and careers that are portrayed as “male-oriented”. Girls are more likely to doubt and underestimate their abilities in the sciences and mathematics (Margolis et al. 111) and the lack of female role-models in STEM-related careers also leads them to question whether they can be successful in such environments. Coupled with that there is the disconnect between how these girls perceive themselves to be – young, socially active females – and the image they have of the stereotypical ‘hacker’ – obsessive, narrow-minded and socially inept males (Lagesen 69).

When the time to apply to university finally comes around, many women have already changed their minds about pursuing computer science degrees. The ones who haven’t must still face a series of challenges that begins with the admissions process. Because of computer science’s rise in popularity in the last few years, colleges have had to reject a lot more applicants, thus favoring people who might have already had some experience in coding and high-level science and mathematics courses. As discussed in previous paragraphs, girls are led away from science and mathematics throughout the course of their lives, so it is usually males that have those

credentials and that, consequently, get accepted into CS programs. Many of the women that get in also start “with less computing experience than their male peers” (Margolis et al. 110). This, associated with introductory courses with excessive workloads – designed to “weed out the students with less ability” (Abbate 150) – explains why women tend to feel intimidated and to perceive themselves as doing a lot worse than their male peers, possibly leading to what is informally known as “impostor syndrome.” This term describes when people from underrepresented groups and social backgrounds start feeling like they “don’t belong” in a certain environment.

When addressing the issue of the lack of females in computer science, it is important to implement strategies at different levels, in order to achieve better, faster and longer-lasting results. It begins with a less gender-influenced upbringing, allowing children to experience spaces where they can shift the gender roles and introducing themes with both men and women in non-traditional roles. Females-only spaces have also been shown to be better learning environments for young girls (Upitis 166-167), especially when geared towards “real-world” scenarios. Girl Scouting, for example, has been shown to broaden “girls’ career aspirations to more fully embrace STEM careers” (Shapiro et al. 9), and it is also responsible for providing them with tangible role-models whose guidance is, in itself, an extra incentive towards the pursuit of traditionally non-female careers.

Bridging this gap in college can be a little harder, but universities like Carnegie Mellon show that it’s possible to address the gender issue and even the playing field for women in Computer Science. Boasting of one of the top three Computer Science departments in the country, the university managed to increase the rate of females in the undergraduate program from 7% in 1995 to 43% in 2000 (Margolis et al. 111). This was only possible through a series of measures that intended to lessen the experience gap between men and women in

computing, beginning with the remodeling of the admissions process – that would prioritize candidates with prior experience on the subject, which were usually male. They also made changes to the major, emphasizing human-computer interaction and coding as a tool to address social issues, since a great deal of women seem to contextualize their interest in computer through the lens of other subjects – such as arts and humanities, and created courses that would encourage students from diverse backgrounds and levels of experience to work together.

Remodeling the gender structures may seem like a daunting and unnecessary task to some, but the reality is that when minorities are underrepresented when society is in the process of creating new technologies, it means that they will also be cast aside in the new world this very same technology is building. I'm sure many people are familiar with the frustration of trying to make themselves understood by programs like "Siri" or "Cortana", especially if your accent is any different than the mainstream variations. This is partially because of the lack of diversity in the groups responsible for programming voice recognition softwares, the computers were never "trained" to recognize variations in speech. The problem was only detected after the programs had already been released and the trend of trying to fix that is fairly recent. This may seem like an unimportant detail, but in a world that is more and more dependent on man-made algorithms, the long-term effects can be catastrophic.

The lack of women in computer science models a historical trend of using women to work less reputable and lower paying jobs and then slowly driving them away from those very same jobs when they become prestigious. Women were responsible for working on the very foundation of Computer Science, especially during World War II, so it is clear that the present lack of women in the field has nothing to do with a lack of interest or a lack of capability. The strategies aforementioned

are great examples of what can be done to make computing attractive to women once again, and consequently reconquer spaces where women can make impactful contributions – having computers working in favor of minorities, instead of against them.

Works Cited

- Abbate, Janet. *Recoding Gender: Women's Changing Participation in Computing*. The MIT Press, 2012.
- Francis, Becky. *Gender, Toys and Learning*. Taylor & Francis, Ltd. 2010, pp. 325-344. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25699588>.
- Lagesen, Vivian Anette. "The Strength of Numbers: Strategies to Include Women into Computer Science". *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2007, pp. 67-92. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25474498>.
- Margolis, Jane, et al. "The Anatomy of Interest: Women in Undergraduate Computer Science". *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1/2, 2000, pp. 104-127. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40004448>.
- Shapiro, Mary, et al. "Middle school girls and the 'leaky pipeline' to leadership". *Middle School Journal*, vol. 46, no. 5, 2015, pp. 3-13. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24342229>.
- Upitis, Rena. "Girls (and Boys) and Technology (and Toys)". *Canadian Journal of Education /Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2001, pp. 164-182. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1602199>.

20. Reproductive Rights: A Solution, Not a Political Issue

A Solution, Not a Political Issue

MARGARET M. DAVIS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

The intent of Davis's essay is clear: women should be in control of their own reproductive rights. Davis uses a combination of research and personal anecdotes to illustrate the negative impacts for women without reproductive rights and highlights those fighting for these rights. The images provided throughout the essay are effective in playing with formatting and stretching the limits of what a standard academic essay can look like. One of the most interesting aspects of this piece is Davis's use of social media (Facebook in particular) as a form of research material. Davis observes that people use social media to create a conversation where "each person contributes their own voices to the dialogue at hand." In doing so, Davis emphasizes how social media becomes a means for advocacy where the public are social writers.

Margaret Davis

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Reproductive Rights: A Solution, Not a Political Issue

The right to have a family, be given information on where to get help, and decide what to do with one's own body should not be something a woman has to fight for. The World Health Organization defines reproductive rights as "the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health" ("Reproductive Health"). For women, these rights sometimes include: the right to legal and safe abortion, the right to birth control, the right to education and access in order to make free and informed choices, and many more. Yet what seem like basic rights women should have are, in fact, not actually enforced.



*Fig. 1. Trump Signs Legislation. (Evan Vucci. "President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House, Monday, Jan. 23, 2017, in Washington." *Humanosphere*, 24 Jan. 2017.)*

Many of the current policies for reproductive rights are at the state level, but President Trump has taken away some of these rights altogether. President Trump and the administration he appointed in the Department of Health and Human Services issued new rules making it no longer mandatory for health care insurance to cover birth

control, claiming 99.9% of women will be unaffected by this change, even though over 55 million women have access to birth control for free because access to it is mandatory as stated by existing policies (Goldstein et al.). President Trump described it as stripping the new health care bill of "essential benefits" in an aim to repeal Obamacare (Pear et al.). His words are only directed to the beneficiaries of this policy and states this is a "win for religious liberty," yet he completely ignores the

female employees that this mandate will affect (Pear et al.). What is even more concerning is that women are not involved in making these decisions. People retweeted a picture of President Trump, along with former White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus; Director of the National Trade Council Peter Navarro; President Trump's advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner; Senior Advisor to the President Stephen Miller; and former White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, reinstituting the global gag rule removing U.S. funding to any organizations in developing nations that offer abortions even if the organization provides those services with their own funding (Nikolau) (see fig.1). Although this issue expands further than just birth control and covering abortion rights or other means of preventative care, this issue affects 50% of the population making it a huge concern for many.

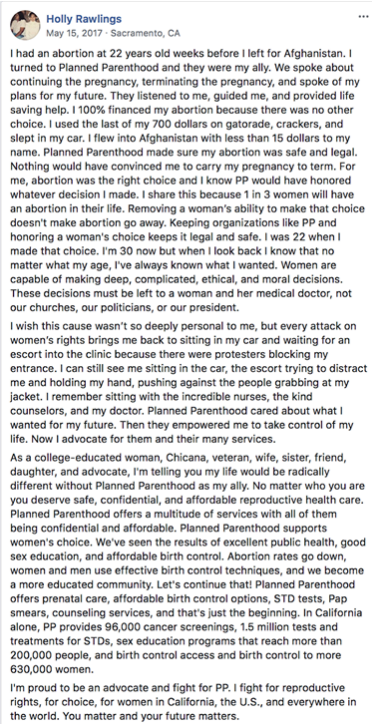


Fig. 2. Story Shared to Pantsuit Nation. (Holly Rawlings. Abortion story to Pantsuit Nation. Facebook, 17 May 2017.)

Reproductive rights should not be a political issue; it should be a solution for all women and their decision to do what they want with their bodies. As a young woman, I fear what President Trump and his administration might do to many of my rights. President Trump has made it no longer mandatory for insurance companies to provide women with birth control coverage and is trying to ban abortions for good. I decided to get the arm implant as a form of birth control and without insurance coverage, the device and the procedure would cost over a thousand dollars. For many, including myself, birth control is not only used to prevent

unintentional pregnancies, but to manage period symptoms. Many men do not see birth control as necessary, but for some women, it is a treatment for health conditions such as premenstrual dysmorphic disorder or endometriosis. Because of President Trump's new insurance policy, millions of women will be paying out of pocket for something to simply ease their daily life or make their periods even somewhat bearable. I remember many of my friends rushing to get some form of birth control right after Trump was elected before he could change the insurance policies. It was astonishing to see so many women scared for something that seems like such a

basic right. It was an eye-opener for me because I never thought some of these basic rights about my body could be threatened until then. This policy is important for not only me, but half the world's population – even if they are not under President Trump's administration. The right to make choices for one's own body is not ever something that should be debated by a room of a handful of men. Even in a developing nation, women should never feel their bodies are being controlled by anyone but themselves, which the current policies at hand are overstepping.

I searched Facebook for posts regarding reproductive rights around 2016 to the present, and I found three main types of posts: personal stories, concerns for the future, and posts educating the public. The message of each of those stories was the same though: reproductive rights is a choice they should have no matter what. The majority of the personal stories and concerns I found were specifically in the Facebook group, "Pantsuit Nation." This group is a safe space for many women (and some men) to post their stories and their concerns to share with over a million others around the world. One example is a story posted by Holly Rawlings (see fig. 2). Rawlings includes personal details about the decisions she faced and what factors contributed to the decision she made in the end. Stories like these using emotional appeal get both women and men reacting and supporting the person posting. Many others in Pantsuit Nation have posted their stories about going through abortions (some legal, some not) and how the legal issues around it impacted their lives for better or for worse. Other stories included how birth control has saved their lives quite literally for health reasons. By posting as a Facebook post specifically in Pantsuit Nation rather than a tweet or on their wall, these women open up completely allowing the audience to be impacted more by their words.

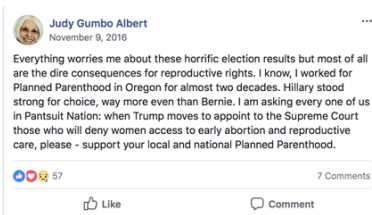


Fig. 3. Post Election Facebook Post. (Judy Gumbo Albert. Concern about birth control to Pantsuit Nation. Facebook, 16 Nov. 2016).

Parenthood (see fig. 3). Albert, like many, is speaking out in order to gain support or voice an opinion. Some of the more educational posts, like one by Senator Elizabeth Warren, use the logical appeal and include facts like “Contraception not only prevents pregnancy and helps control health conditions – it gives women more chances to go to school, get jobs, create businesses, and grow our economy” (Warren). The logical appeal in conjunction with personal anecdotes of what society used to be like before all of the progress that has been made makes the reader critically reflect on the past and where we stand now. Their posts also seemed more hopeful, sometimes saying, “we must take action” or “we can’t go back to the days where women didn’t have these rights.” Again, using Facebook posts as their mediums allows the public to respond easily and voice their opinions. It is a less formal way of writing, but a conversation is still being had where each person contributes their own voices to the dialogue at hand.



Fig. 4. Replies in Pantsuit Nation. (Meg Davis. Social Media Post to Pantsuit Nation. Facebook, 22 Apr. 2018).

The other type of posts I saw were about the public’s concerns about new policies regarding women’s rights and other politicians trying to educate the public about what is really happening. Judy Gumbo Albert voices her concern and asks people to support Planned

After posting in Pantsuit Nation, over 3.5K people liked my post and 490 people have commented or responded to comments made (see fig. 4). Many of the comments were in agreement with my post saying, “Stay strong

braveheart!" and "You go woman <3!" It was amazing to see that much support on a post that I was simply passionate about. It was also amazing to see the different perspectives people had. Women from different generations who lived during a time where birth control was illegal unless they were married responded. Other people also opened the conversation to the double standard for men: Viagra, a hormone regulator for men, is apparently covered by Medicaid. It was an astonishing experience to see in real time people adding their opinions to an existing conversation and how many women are impacted by the policy initiated by President Trump and his administration.

The right to make choices about one's own body should never be questioned or threatened, but unfortunately, we are seeing this all around the world. Abortions, in particular, are an area of concern. Many pro-life supporters are shaming women about getting abortions, even if it is a life-threatening condition or they know they cannot support a child at that stage in their life. And when it is illegal, women still go through with abortions, only it typically is unsafe and can permanently injure them. In the most extreme, women have their boyfriends punch them in the stomach or insert knitting needles into their vagina, or even throw themselves down the stairs in order to miscarry. But the most effective way to reduce abortions is in fact to provide women effective birth control. Seems circular, right? That's because it is. According to Planned Parenthood, over 2.2 million unplanned pregnancies are prevented each year from family planning services available through Medicaid and Title X of the Public Health Service Act, and the number of abortions in the U.S. would be two-thirds higher than it is now without these services. Millions of women are greatly impacted without these reproductive rights, and it should be a crime to let men dictate our access to basic health care.

Works Cited

Goldstein, Amy, et al. "Trump administration narrows

Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate." *The Washington Post*, 6 Oct. 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/trump-administration-could-narrow-affordable-care-acts-contraception-mandate/2017/10/05/16139400-a9f0-11e7-92d1-58c702d2d975_story.html?utm_term=.ca7b622775aa.

Pear, Robert, et al. "Trump Administration Rolls Back Birth Control Mandate." *The New York Times*, 6 Oct. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/06/us/politics/trump-contraception-birth-control.html>.

"Reproductive Health." *World Health Organization*, 2018, http://www.who.int/topics/reproductive_health/en/.

Warren, Elizabeth. Addressing President Trump's attack on ACA's birth control mandate. *Facebook*, 16 Oct. 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/plugins/post.php?href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fsenatorelizabethwarren%2Fposts%2F863526300476531>.

Images Cited

Albert, Judy Gumbo. Concern about birth control to Pantsuit Nation. *Facebook*, 16 Nov. 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pantsuitnation/permalink/1128652583899009/>.

Davis, Meg. Social Media Post to Pantsuit Nation. *Facebook*, 22 Apr. 2018, https://www.facebook.com/groups/pantsuitnation/permalink/1804665312964396/?comment_id=1810084122422515&reply_comment_id=1811223262308601¬if_id=1524768465620782¬if_t=group_comment&ref=notif.

Rawlings, Holly. Abortion story to Pantsuit Nation. *Facebook*, 17 May 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pantsuitnation/permalink/1473303089433955/>.

Vucci, Evan. "President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House, Monday, Jan. 23, 2017, in Washington." *Humanosphere*, 24 Jan. 2017,

<http://www.humanosphere.org/global-health/2017/01/trumps-gag-rule-endangers-the-lives-of-women-around-the-world/>.

21. Race and Representation

MAHTA FESSHAIE

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this essay, Fesshaie calls for a greater understanding of the black American experience in educational settings, particularly at UMass. Using UMass slogans as a point of critique and site for critical thinking, Fesshaie skillfully observes the ripple effects of the UMass administration and student body to “bias-related” incidents and provides multiple solutions to diversifying the curriculum and creating greater empathy and understanding among students, such as implementing a general education class requirement that educates students on Black literature and history. One particular aspect of interest in this essay is Fesshaie’s decision to explore the Special Collections and University Archives for research material. In this way, Fesshaie bridges history, literature, race, and representation in an environment familiar to all students: UMass.

Mahta Fesshaie

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Race and Representation

The importance of learning about the Revolutionary War, the Great Depression and the Watergate scandal are not thought about twice in American school systems; they are even considered to be essential in understanding the United States

today. The significance of black history in America however is not only reduced but questioned. The lack of understanding of black history makes it predictable that incidents like Melville Hall can still occur. On September 22, 2018, a student wrote in the public restroom “Hang all the Melville Niggers.” In response, the UMass administration – the same administration that claims to prioritize diversity and inclusion by promoting “Hate has no Home at UMass” – responded by labeling it as a “bias incident” and not for what it was- a hate crime. Anybody with knowledge about the black experience in America knows this is not just bias; it is a threat to every person of color’s existence on campus. As a black student I was not surprised to hear that this happened as stories like this have been broadcast multiple times a year across the United States. What struck me more than anything was the clear apathy amongst students, some had even asked “Does it really matter?” Had the administration and students been more empathetic to the black American experience they would have understood the implications of their literacy.

The initial statement calling the Melville incident “bias-related” instead of a hate crime proves the campus is still racially illiterate. Racial literacy is the “skill...in which individuals are able to discuss the social construction of race [and] probe the existence of racism” (King 1304). UMass underestimated the power of their literacy when they called the incident biased-related because in doing so they ignored hundreds of years of oppression and again marginalized black students. It should not be students’ responsibility to host a forum informing members of the UMass community why their word choices were offensive. The lack of knowledge of black history enabled the student and administration to not feel the devastation of their diction. In order to not only prevent future racist incidents like this but also change the way these incidents surrounding race are addressed, it is imperative that the community demands civility from students and the

administration. Classes such as Afro-American Literature and History must be required in order to diversify the curriculum; this will create empathy amongst students and progress conversations about the role of race in America.

The lack of sensitivity from non-black people is due to the scarce awareness of the black-American experience; this is because of minimal representation of black literature and history in the common curriculum. Starting from elementary school, any inclusion of black history revolved solely around slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. In these classes the “placement of black history... reinforces the misinformation that black people are ‘relatively insignificant to the growth and development of [American] democracy’” (1314). The denial of black people’s impact in the United States is why representation is important. In order to empathize with black people, students must be educated about black history and how it has shaped the black American experience. Learning about the black experience through literature and history will also progress conversations about race. Students are never taught about race as a social construct and how the implications of categorizing black people have manifested in mass incarceration, wealth gaps and unequal access to healthcare, education and housing. Being able to understand the systems that marginalize black people is the only way students will be able to discuss race in the complex manner that it is. The omittance of black history and literature gravely misconstrues the truth of the United States. At a public institution like UMass, all students should have a diverse and honest understanding of why and how the world is where it is today in order to make substantial change in the future.

Black UMass students in DRUM (the black literary experience) addressed the concerns of white people learning black history. They wondered if white students would draw the same conclusions about race that black students would (DRUM). Although black students at Amherst College were also

weary they recognized its importance and fought for the inclusion of a Black Studies Department because they believed that “coursework on the diversity of the black experience... [would] cultivate a greater sense of... inclusion...and better prepare all students to live and work in a multiracial society” (Baumgartner 287). Through their continued advocacy they were able to get a Black Studies department to be instituted, which UMass followed soon after. Taking Afro-Am classes will make students realize that when racism is brought up, it is not solely in retrospect. They will understand that the American system they view as fair only survives at the expense of black people. Understanding race as a social construct used to uphold white privilege will make conversation about race progressive instead of counterproductive. These important but uncomfortable topics about privilege will not happen however unless it is required. If students in the past were able to use their literacy in order to progress race conversations in college curriculums it is possible that it can be done for a general education class requirement today through advocacy from students of colors and allies.

Although UMass requires a “Diversity in the US” class to graduate it is clearly not enough. Diversity in the United States does not exclusively mean black people and even more so the classes that do include black experiences do not go into enough depth; Afro-American Studies classes are offered as a choice to fulfill this requirement but it is not mandatory. In order to make students more aware of privilege and systematic oppression UMass must require at least two Afro-Am courses in order to graduate: literature and history. King states that “the issue of race and black history is interconnected, and to truly comprehend blacks’ involvement in US history is to understand the racial history of the US” (King 1305). These classes are important not only to inform students about the injustice black people have gone through but also break student’s perception of race as biological and instead a social construct. There is so

much potential to shift the negative connotation pertaining to race in classrooms; UMass and other institutions have the power and must do better.

There would be no American history without black history, they are one and the same. It is shameful and embarrassing that a student could go to an institution like UMass with an abundance of resources and graduate believing the United States is in a post-racial society; that is like someone thinking the Earth is flat. Racism is real and it matters; required Afro-Am literature and history courses would force students to engage in conversations about bias and privilege. If students were once able to convince administration of the importance of black history in the 1960s, there is absolutely no reason why it cannot be done again today. Although back then black students were the primary leaders in the increasing of representation, we cannot do it alone again today. We need the help of white allies so that change can happen more rapidly and effectively; there must be an immediate dismissal of apathy. The Melville incident was not an isolated incident and something similar is bound to happen again however I hope that when it does happen again white students and administration have the ability to condemn those actions and uplift the black population rather than marginalize them. Students are our future – UMass has the power to change thousands of views on race; capitalizing on this opportunity can be the first step in improving racial literacy not only across college campuses but also society as well.

Works Cited

- Baumgartner, Kabria. "'Be Your Own Man': Student Activism and the Birth of Black Studies at Amherst College, 1965-1972." *New England Quarterly*, vol. 89, no. 2, June 2016, pp. 286-322.
- "DRUM." Student Body Publications (RG 45/00/D7), vol. 1, no. 2, 1969, Special Collections and University Archives, UMass Amherst Libraries.
- King, LaGarrett Jarriel. "Teaching Black History as a Racial

Literacy Project." *Race, Ethnicity & Education*, vol. 19, no. 6, Nov. 2016, pp. 1303-1318.

PART V

CIRCULATING MULTIMODAL TEXTS

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Continuing to build on the concept that writing is a social act which encompasses many ways to find, evaluate, create, and distribute messages to audience all over the globe – this unit asks you to either take the information from your Adding to a Conversation research and reconceptualize it for a new audience, purpose, and delivery method or create a multimodal object on a new topic. The goal of Circulating Multimodal Texts is just as it sounds – how can you circulate a message in a conversation that is of interest and/or importance to you? This unit is intended to allow you to dive into composing methods that may be viewed as non-traditional – but are just as vitally important as a standard alphabetic essay.

Unit Goals

- Engage in the composing process to gain understanding of creating for different modes, media, or genres.
- Gain experience composing in multiple modes.
- Explore how composing strategies shift when composing multimodal projects.
- Tailor multimodal content for a specific purpose and audience of your choice.
- Explore the ways texts can and do circulate.
- Cite multiple sources in conventions appropriate for a multimodal genre.

Specific steps in your process for this type of project may vary depending on the parameters set forward for you to achieve.

However, you will still follow the steps used in all other projects in the course: generate an idea, draft to develop and try out techniques, get feedback on those drafts, and ultimately make decisions about what the final product should be for your intended audience and purpose.

It can be challenging to select an approach from so many different options. The options shown here give a glimpse at what podcasts, photo essays, social media posts, audio/visual presentations, infographics, and 'zines may be like when creating in an academic environment – but writing for a more general audience. This unit also provides an opportunity to consider both physical and technological accessibility as you create. You will notice descriptive figure captions and even full descriptive transcripts are provided with different projects to help demonstrate options for keeping all potential reader/viewers of your work in mind. Engaging in writing as a way to participate in your community is exciting – and we hope that you can find something of interest to you for this unit.

22. Black Girls Talk

MICHAELA AYISI

In this podcast Ayisi and featured guests consider how black women are represented in movies and how the lack of representation influenced them young children. This frank conversation between high school friends all now attending different universities is a great way to think about how our daily conversations can help process and reframe experiences. Be sure to listen to both parts to find out each speakers favorite childhood movie and how representation (or lack of it) plays a role in their enjoyment now. Note that the transcript below the podcast clips models how to time-stamp content in order to allow for clear citation of the podcast. Transcribing a spoken conversation often requires a different approach than a written document – this is one example of how you can approach that task.

Michaela Ayisi

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Black Girls Talk Podcast Transcript

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

Part One

00:00:06.899 → 00:00:16.949

Ayisi: Hello, and welcome. On today's podcast we will be discussing Black women and their portrayal in Hollywood films, more specifically, the lack of range and the roles Black women are given.

00:00:17.670 → 00:00:24.750

We will question and converse about the stereotypes driving this issue and the effects they have on young Black women throughout their lifetime.

00:00:25.440 → 00:00:32.280

To help facilitate this conversation I will be interviewing two young Black women today Rebecca Anane and Kaya Willingham.

00:00:33.060 → 00:00:45.060

Rebecca and Kaya are both 18-year-old women who grew up in a predominantly white town and school system. Rebecca currently attends Howard University, while Kaya studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston, welcome ladies.

00:00:47.760 → 00:00:56.460

Kaya: Thank you for having us.

Rebecca: Yeah, thank you so much for having us,

Ayisi: Of course, um my first question I'm going to start off with is

00:00:56.970 → 00:01:05.100

what was your favorite movie as a child? I'd just like you to keep that in the back of your head and we're going to circle back to it at the end – just think about it, as we go through this interview.

00:01:06.660 → 00:01:16.440

So, the first thing I'm going to start off with is explaining some basic stereotypes that a lot of Black roles have come from, so the first one is the mammy figure.

00:01:17.070 → 00:01:22.110

The mammy figure is depicted as a dark skin overweight woman with big pink lips, but typically wears

00:01:22.950 → 00:01:32.910

an apron or bonnet of some type and her job is to cook, clean, and typically care for white children. This archetype was created in order to strip Black women of their femininity.

00:01:33.450 → 00:01:41.880

She was perceived and portrayed as almost an asexual being

whose sole purpose was to be a matriarch and we continue to see modern day examples of the mammy figure.

00:01:42.570 → 00:01:50.610

The other figure I'd like to talk about is Jezebel. Jezebel is quite the opposite and she's portrayed as a light skinned slender woman who is

00:01:51.030 → 00:02:01.200

over sexualized, to the point where any type of responsibility for sexual misconduct towards her falls only on her and not the perpetrator – because she's portrayed as a seductive, deviant woman.

00:02:01.950 → 00:02:15.390

We also see modern manifestations of the Jezebel archetype today. So, my question to you two is, do you think there is – or do you see a general theme in which Black women are portrayed in films, and can you kind of elaborate on that?

00:02:18.450 → 00:02:30.180

Kaya: I'd say yeah definitely, – in films there's usually like the Black woman isn't usually like the main character, but if they are a prominent character it's usually

00:02:31.230 → 00:02:43.650

their character is attributed to their race – it's not because of like – their interests and their goals or their achievements. It's usually like – that being the Black character is their role in the movie or the show.

00:02:44.820 → 00:02:53.700

And it's usually backed up by some of those stereotypes so it's like the sassy Black friend, or like the umm, you know something like that.

00:02:55.800 → 00:03:07.740

Rebecca: Yeah, I agree with what Kaya said, like we don't ever get to be the main character and then on top of that, like what I've seen from like films and TV shows, especially is

00:03:08.340 → 00:03:17.310

just like we're just portrayed in like the same way – like just

loud, ghetto, over sexualized – like that, and so we're just like assisting. Like –

00:03:17.640 → 00:03:31.350

we don't get to be like dynamic characters or complex – like we don't get to be like actual humans in like roles, so we just come off as just – like one thing which then like pushes into real life and like people think that.

00:03:32.760 → 00:03:44.430

Ayisi: Yeah, that really leads into my next question, is very similar, was just that growing up, would you say you saw a lot of people who looked like you occupying a multitude of roles, rather than just the same roll over and over again?

00:03:47.160 → 00:03:54.420

Kaya: I'd say that I'm as like a biracial person I definitely see more representation in the media, like –

00:03:54.750 → 00:04:01.530

for example, Zendeya. Like is it like everything. And a lot of people are like yeah well there's a Black girl in this, but then it's Zendeya, you know.

00:04:01.860 → 00:04:09.630

And it's like well yeah like she is a Black girl, but like that's only representation for like biracial white skin people. It's the same in

00:04:10.260 → 00:04:24.000

like modeling. Like they'll use a lot of light skinned women um and if they are using like dark skinned women like that's also a big focal point of it. Like they never just let somebody be a model, it's like you're a dark skinned model, you know.

00:04:25.620 → 00:04:36.570

?: No, I definitely agree and I think like at one point, there was some representation like, especially if you look at like 90s and TV shows – like we had stuff coming – like we had a lot like –

00:04:36.930 → 00:04:44.040

Moisha and, like the Proud Family. Like we had stuff and then like over time, they just like went away, and so I think like –

00:04:45.210 → 00:04:54.570

you – it's like sucks because then you like don't see yourself at all and it's like seeing yourself is like how kids grow up to think they can do stuff in a sense.

00:04:55.230 → 00:05:10.350

So, if people are not like seeing themselves represented. Or like you only are represented so like this company can fulfill their diversity quotas and stuff like that – then it's just like you don't feel like you're like actually part of society – if that makes sense.

00:05:11.670 → 00:05:26.700

Ayisi: Yeah, and um I was also going to ask you guys, if you could maybe share a personal experience on how you feel like the perpetuation of stereotypes in these films and TV shows affected how you perceived yourself either growing up or even now?

00:05:29.820 → 00:05:35.400

Kaya: I'd say like kinda like the Jezebel stereotype you're talking about like light skinned women are supposed or like –

00:05:35.730 → 00:05:42.870

supposed to be like curvy and like – like have like an ideal body type and like I grew up like really thin, I don't have curves, but like –

00:05:43.620 → 00:05:50.400

I wouldn't get like picked on for that, and my growing up like that was something that really bothered me. I'm like I don't care as much now.

00:05:50.880 → 00:06:00.090

But that's definitely something that like I would notice – is like oh like you're a Black girl, but you don't have any curves. Like stuff like that, it's like it's usually from like white people who would say that.

00:06:00.480 → 00:06:05.310

So you just – it's like you know yeah

Ayisi: Yeah, and Rebecca how about you?

00:06:06.300 → 00:06:17.790

Rebecca: know I definitely agree. Like, if you like, it's like you have to fit in like a perfect box like if you don't have certain things that are supposed to make you Black then it's like you're not Black enough.

00:06:18.690 → 00:06:26.070

But at the same time, they like take things like, for example, I – just assuming that we're always angry and like they just look at you and assume you're angry.

00:06:26.340 → 00:06:35.940

Or like you're loud, or like you like, to fight and stuff like that, like that a lot of that. Like I have people be like – oh like I know she can fight – like no I like to sit down and mind my business.

Ayisi: Yeah.

00:06:37.200 → 00:06:46.290

Rebecca: It's like those types of things – like people just make those assumptions and like it's like irritating. I think it gets to a point where they forget, you have feelings, other than just like

–

00:06:46.800 → 00:06:58.170

anger. We're not always angry or anything like that. And then again like Kaya said, like they have this idea of like what a Black women is supposed to be. So, if you're not those things they make it seem like –

00:06:58.680 → 00:07:07.530

you are not Black in a way – which is like weird for like someone who's not even Black to like tell you that, like oh you don't like stereotypical Black things like

00:07:08.040 → 00:07:15.720

oh – like you listen to like that, like we don't all just listen to hip hop and rap and like we don't all look the same like.

00:07:16.440 → 00:07:33.570

We have a variety of looks – like it's not just we look like what you see on TV.

Kaya: Yeah, especially like us. Like we all grew up in the same

environment in the same town, but we're expected to act different behave different like different things

Ayisi: exactly

Rebecca: Like we grew up together, yes.

00:07:34.710 → 00:07:42.630

Ayisi: And I was just gonna say – we're maybe like the three – of four or five Black girls in our entire graduating class so

00:07:43.380 → 00:07:54.090

how do you think that the lack of diversity on the screen and the direct translation into the lack of diversity in your lives has affected, how you feel about yourself and how

00:07:54.810 → 00:08:07.470

you think – things you think you may be able to accomplish or maybe not now, but maybe more as a kid – if you felt kind of deterred in anyway, because you didn't see that kind of representation in real life or on TV?

00:08:10.050 → 00:08:10.500

[Both Rebecca and Kaya start to speak at once]

00:08:13.680 → 00:08:23.820

Rebecca: Sorry um I was gonna say – like I think I don't know about you guys, but like I noticed a shift like growing up in like a mostly white neighborhood like.

00:08:24.240 → 00:08:32.490

Between like middle schoolish kind of, that's when like Black culture became more like popular like white kids started liking it type of thing.

00:08:32.880 → 00:08:40.980

So, you saw a shift between like people picking on you, for certain things to suddenly like liking that about you, and that was the only thing they liked about you.

00:08:41.550 → 00:08:50.460

And so, it was like it was irritating on both sides because it's like okay like as a young kid you grew up like people are talking about your hair and like.

00:08:50.820 → 00:08:57.270

they just expect that you're dumb for some reason yeah like
Ayisi: yes, yes

Rebecca: you're poor, you don't have a dad like all of those
things – and then

00:08:57.810 → 00:09:04.560

slowly this shift and like people are just suddenly in tune with
Black culture, now they like – they like the way you dress they
like –

00:09:04.980 → 00:09:14.400

oh, like where did you – like just a lot of questions. I like your
hair – suddenly – like you do mind? Like I think it's just like
there's a lot of pressures regardless like whether people

00:09:14.820 → 00:09:25.470

accept it or not, because they don't accept it in the way that
they're supposed to like – okay you different – I'm gonna leave
it at that. It's just like infiltrating in like who you are and it's like

00:09:26.340 → 00:09:38.970

I just come to school here – like that's it.

Ayisi: Yeah

Kaya: It's also like a part of like your success like – like we're
all applying to college and stuff like that, like we're all getting
good grades, or like whatever and

00:09:39.630 → 00:09:44.040

I've had people I talked about like affirmative action as like
being attributed to like

00:09:44.730 → 00:09:54.690

getting into a school that I got into. Or like – oh like you got
that because you're Black. Or like – oh, they doing that because
they don't want to seem racist – and stuff like that. It's like – why
can't I just be successful

00:09:54.960 → 00:10:03.060

because I'm successful? Like I'm not talking about your race
– like when you're telling me that you've got a good grade on
your test. Like all – that like it's just

00:10:04.500 → 00:10:12.960

people like either want to acknowledge how race affects you – but – or they don't acknowledge it at all. It's usually not in a positive way.

Part Two

00:10:13.620 → 00:10:19.740

Ayisi: And do you think that all the people thinking automatically just assuming you're not smart or your got this because

00:10:20.220 → 00:10:26.940

of your race – do you think that that ever affected what you thought about your own ability like maybe more so if you when you were younger?

00:10:27.270 → 00:10:35.520

Or like maybe you were less likely to speak up because you felt because you've been told that you were not smart enough or assumed that you weren't smart enough?

00:10:36.930 → 00:10:47.670

Both Rebecca and Kaya: Yeah.

Rebecca: like I I'm pretty sure like cuz like – I like – when people like find out you're smart or like you do well, like they kind of like – they're shocked.

00:10:48.240 → 00:10:52.590

And then, like you, kind of feel like there were times, where I would like just play dumb – like no joke.

00:10:52.920 → 00:11:00.600

Because it was just like sometimes you feel like you know what – like, let me just fall back – because it's just like okay. I'm like – certain types of kids

00:11:00.960 → 00:11:07.530

are supposed to be smart and it's like kind of that comparison, like, for example, like Asian kids are expected to be smart by nature.

00:11:07.980 → 00:11:18.300

And then, if you're not smart or like you don't understand something, then it's like oh like – you're Asian or something like

that – so then like on the contrast you are smart and it's just like

–

00:11:18.810 → 00:11:31.950

it's not like when they find out your smart it's not like an encouraging thing. It's just very like a – oh – like how did that happen?

Ayisi: Yeah, yeah – like yeah – like you're some type of exception.

Rebecca: yeah or like – like where did you come from?

00:11:34.050 → 00:11:36.690

Kaya: Yeah, especially growing up like where we grew up.

00:11:37.500 → 00:11:48.210

Like I – like as a kid – like I wasn't really surrounded by like anybody that wasn't white most of the time, and so, when you're like the only kid that might be educated on like your history or like Black history. You're –

00:11:48.900 → 00:11:58.830

you don't want to speak up because of this idea of being sensitive or like oh like you can't take it – like you're like it's just a joke stuff like that.

Ayisi: Yep

?: so then like

00:11:59.670 → 00:12:05.580

you just feel like you're being silenced or that like even if you were to talk that you shouldn't – um –

00:12:06.060 → 00:12:12.660

I feel like that just carries over into other things. Like if you feel like you can't talk about one subject and you feel like you can't talk about a lot of subjects.

00:12:13.470 → 00:12:19.800

Um, especially when it like relates to your identity

Ayisi: Yeah, I definitely get that and do you think if

00:12:20.520 → 00:12:26.220

Black women in general, just had more role models to look up to like even just in movies and shows that were

00:12:26.670 → 00:12:38.100

in roles that weren't so stereotypical that might have been different growing up and even not even just the way you perceive yourself, but in the way that your peers, like other people who aren't Black might have perceived you?

00:12:40.260 → 00:12:43.410

Kaya: Yeah, definitely. I feel like if other people saw – like

00:12:44.580 → 00:12:55.680

I feel like Disney is like one of those shows where like they take on like kind of a serious subject and you like see how it affects the character, sometimes if they did, that with like Black struggles, then maybe kids could see like –

00:12:56.070 → 00:13:02.550

the emotional perspective of like how it actually affects Black kids; like maybe – maybe it's not just a joke. Like if they explain the history in the

00:13:03.060 → 00:13:09.150

show this character, but also if they just show Black characters in a positive life, like being successful.

00:13:09.600 → 00:13:20.910

People are less likely to be like – oh like you know, like where did you come from things like – because they're seeing that representation – they're seeing that Black people are smart like can do what they want to do all that.

Ayisi: Yeah.

00:13:22.110 → 00:13:26.250

Rebecca: I agree, and I think also people would be able to approach like

00:13:26.820 → 00:13:39.480

us more normally. Like there's nothing that makes us like – like in terms of like personality and like things you like. Like it's not like – we're really not all that different from like the rest of you like – it's not like –

00:13:40.020 → 00:13:43.530

Oh, like you have to go search up like – what do Black people like to eat? We all like the

00:13:45.570 → 00:13:54.720

same thing, and so I think if they like understood that they would be like okay like I'm just going to approach this person like any – like the same way, you would approach your white friend.

00:13:55.050 → 00:14:04.110

And then it's just also understanding like historical context to certain things because I feel like because our education system doesn't really like prioritize that.

00:14:04.530 → 00:14:15.690

So then, like people will like – you know – be saying sensitive stuff and stuff like that and see it as no big deal, but if they understood the whole thing they would understand why it's a big deal to like someone else.

Ayisi: Yeah.

00:14:17.610 → 00:14:34.200

Um – last question is just what do you think can be done better to fix this issue, especially for young girls that are growing up idolizing movie characters who don't often look like them? What do you think could be done to combat this so they don't have to go through as much struggles?

00:14:36.090 → 00:14:45.270

Kaya: I'd say, overall, more representation. Representation is never a bad thing for people, especially marginalized groups who aren't really seeing themselves in the media

00:14:46.830 → 00:14:48.930

Um, etc. and just –

00:14:50.130 → 00:14:56.460

even just more conversation in general, like opening up the conversation, maybe even schools like for young children.

00:14:57.420 → 00:15:05.040

Just like having more of this like diversity, I don't want to

say diversity, training, but like something like that – you know because it actually like,

00:15:05.580 → 00:15:13.320

even for like young kids, like that's where it starts. Like that's really helpful if people are feeling that they're not being represented.

00:15:15.630 → 00:15:25.980

Rebecca: Yeah, I agree, and like – also like – even like in books – like if kids could like – open a book and like see themselves like in, like a normal story like –

00:15:26.640 → 00:15:31.410

it would help a lot like and people it's, not just for those marginalized kids but those kids who

00:15:31.830 → 00:15:38.760

they don't interact – like if you live in a mostly white town, you probably don't interact with Black people that often. So, you can see them like they're not –

00:15:39.540 → 00:15:43.860

they're not like foreign. Like they're not just like wild animals you've just never seen before, like they're

00:15:44.280 → 00:15:51.570

very normal. They play toys, just like you and stuff like that. And so, like Kaya said, like the representation like is important because

00:15:52.230 → 00:16:03.510

you need to know that these people exist in society. Like you can think like not even just with Black people – like Native Americans. Like there are kids who like genuinely think they're extinct, which is a problem –

00:16:04.080 → 00:16:15.240

there's no representation for them.

Ayisi: Yeah.

Rebecca: It's like you have to show that they exist and, like they are no different –

Ayisi: Yeah

Rebecca: and if they are different, like those differences aren't like –

00:16:15.690 → 00:16:21.330

a big deal. Like you acknowledge them as a good thing, not a bad thing. Ayisi: Yeah, exactly.

00:16:22.080 → 00:16:28.140

And now just going back to our very first question about your favorite movie – now that we've kind of talked about it more do you think

00:16:28.710 → 00:16:44.160

that you can tell me your favorite movie now? And do you think it has anything to do with diversity – or if it doesn't have anything to do with like what you see in the characters – do you think that more inclusion within the movie would have helped you as a child?

00:16:47.490 → 00:16:55.170

Kaya: The movie I chose was the Polar Express, and I remember there being one Black character in the movie.

00:16:55.710 → 00:17:10.410

But I feel like there was like a lot of kids and they were like all white kids so maybe if there is more Black kids they would have shown, like the connection between Black and white kids and how they interact versus just like this one isolated girl in like her interactions with everybody.

00:17:11.490 → 00:17:13.170

Even though that is kind of telling – of like

00:17:14.400 → 00:17:21.390

the school system anyway, but I'm just showing that more interaction, I think, would make people more inclusive

Ayisi: Yeah, and it also seems kind of like –

00:17:21.780 → 00:17:29.550

she was – she might have been put in the movie just as like the token Black girl. That she was portrayed in like a decent way in which they weren't –

00:17:30.150 → 00:17:42.390

her race was never really mentioned, which sometimes is a good thing, just to show that, like Black little girls are just the same as anyone else just trying to have fun, so I think that was good. And how about you Rebecca?

00:17:44.280 → 00:17:54.090

Rebecca: So, I think my favorite movie has to be like the Cinderella but, like the version with Brandi in it, and the reason why is cuz

00:17:54.660 → 00:18:02.580

look – the dad was white and then the mom was Black and then the prince was Asian. And like as a kid you didn't question that – like you know what, I mean –

00:18:02.880 → 00:18:10.200

and then you have like a Black princess finally, like you, didn't question anything at all, but like the representation was all there. And I feel like –

00:18:10.530 → 00:18:16.260

for kids – like as long as they see it – like they're not going to question it – like as a kid I didn't question like how

00:18:16.530 → 00:18:22.050

an Asian Prince was created from a Black and white mom.

Ayisi: Yeah

Rebecca: and it was just really cool to see – like you know what I mean.

00:18:22.470 → 00:18:35.490

And like also like Twitches – with like Tia and Tamera on Disney – like seeing Black people in like something that isn't like a drama, or like a slave movie

Ayisi: Yes

Rebecca: is like very refreshing. Because I think like –

00:18:36.060 → 00:18:41.970

like a lot of kids like discouraged themselves – like especially a lot of Black girls discouraged themselves from like exploring like sci-fi.

00:18:42.360 → 00:18:52.650

And, like those types of things because they're not in them so it's like – like I used to hate sci-fi until like recently. Sci-fi and horror I hated both those genres until

00:18:53.010 → 00:19:02.280

recently – they've been coming up with a lot of stuff and I actually like really like them. So, like again – like put us in them.

Ayisi: Yeah, and I also think a lot of people are –

00:19:03.090 → 00:19:09.750

they try to shy away from those things because they're considered inherently white because, as you said, they don't put people like us in them.

00:19:10.260 → 00:19:15.720

So – they feel as if it's a really like exclusive group that they can't enjoy.

00:19:16.590 → 00:19:25.410

And we have a lot to offer – like horror movies, with Black people they've – they've been doing really well and like yeah really interesting and like.

00:19:25.980 → 00:19:41.910

we're able to tie a historical – like we're able to tie historical components into like a timeline like that's crazy link and I think a lot of people like of all races enjoy it so –

Kaya: Yeah, like Us and Get Out. I got so into horror when I was watching movies, because of that reason.

00:19:43.530 → 00:19:46.020

Ayisi: All right, well, thank you guys for that

00:19:47.610 → 00:19:49.020

and have a good day.

00:19:50.550 → 00:19:58.950

Once again, I'd like to thank Kaya and Rebecca for joining me to speak on such an important topic and so graciously sharing their experiences with us.

00:19:59.430 → 00:20:07.950

I hope that this podcast was able to shed some light and

give a new perspective on an issue that is often overlooked yet affects so many Black women, thank you.

23. Clique to Continue

SHASHANK LAL

In this piece, Lal makes use of the photo essay to illustrate the constant nature of change. Change is explored here in the particular context of embarking upon third level education with all its attending upheavals and discoveries and also in the context of the pandemic. Lal's engagement with digital and visual literacies in this photo essay invites the audience into a new space of meaning-making, showcasing the unconventional possibilities of the Circulating Multimodal texts unit. The descriptive transcript provided is one way to consider how to translate visual content into a delivery method appropriate for screen readers.

Shashank Lal

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Clique to Continue

Click to [watch this essay](#)

Clique to Continue Descriptive Transcript

Slide One

[White writing on black background]

Introduction

Change is the only constant in life. I left the umbrella of my parents' protection in September 2019 as I changed my environment, my friends, my everything to come here, to the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. There was a change in my education system, a change in who I was living with, a

change in the food that I ate, a change in my lifestyle, and, now again, a change in everything due to the pandemic. Before this semester, I was pretty annoyed about how I had to take a college writing class because in my head it seemed completely useless to me. I kept thinking, “I’m a computer science major, I don’t need to know how to write essays in MLA format”. However, the skills that I have learnt in this class and the perspectives that I gained are unparalleled to any other experience.

This photo essay is simply an effort to display my life over this past year with the changes I mentioned along with many more and how the topics of discussion in our units culminate beautifully, allowing me to reflect visually by looking at a picture which I probably wouldn’t have before this class. The pictures that I’ve included are simply of those in my community and those that have influenced me and shaped me in pivotal ways; all in the context of what we learnt in this class, together.

Slide Two

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Left side] Home Away From Home – 10/02/2019

My initial days here at UMass were mostly filled with just meeting an endless flurry of people, knowing that I probably wouldn’t even remember anyone’s name come dusk. Eventually, I found my own circle, where I found my three best friends who’ve been by my side since.

I’ve always been influenced by those around me. I like to think of myself as a mold of everyone that I have ever been close to over the years. Usually being picky about who I spend my time with, I’ve surrounded myself with people who carry various qualities such as kindness, selflessness and honesty.

[Right side] A collage of three images:

On top a landscape image of Boston with blue skies,

captioned 'My First Trip To Boston (view from Prudential Tower)'

Below to the left: an image of the author with two friends. The glare of the sun is visible. All three are smiling and embracing, captioned 'Sairam, Anushka and I'.

Below to the right: the author and one friend in the foreground embracing and smiling for the camera. Another friend in the background. Red lighting. Captioned 'Tanya and I'.

Slide Three

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Left Side] New Experiences – 11/18/2019

College is all about new experiences, right? Meeting new people, finding your clique, and even trying out things that perhaps your parents might frown upon (not me though). I promised myself that I would try everything, I didn't want to miss out on any experiences (except the Freshman 15). In my freshman year, I was successfully elected as the president for my house council, won an award at my first HackUMass, faced heartbreak, found a family, and even partied and blacked out whilst also taking part in and keeping up my grades in all my classes. The whole package.

[Right Side] A collage of four images:

Top left: author and two friends photographed after winning an award. Captioned 'Post-winning an award at our first HackUMass'.

Top right: Author and four friends at a house party, smiling. Arms around shoulders. Captioned 'A Sylvan House Party (surprisingly those exist)'.

Bottom left: Author with fellow members of Webster House Council. Casual clothes, spaced apart. Captioned 'Webster House Council 2019-2020'.

Bottom right: Author with group of four friends. Outside at night, on campus. Captioned 'The Clique'.

Slide Four

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right side] My First Snow – 12/02/2019

I specifically remember this moment because Sairam looked at me, and said “Let’s take one for the *gram*,” and I had never cringed harder. Then, Anushka slipped. We had also somehow built a sad snowman, but we all loved it dearly. Until someone lobbed a piece of ice and mutilated it. Good times.

Just like Nathan Jurgenson said in *The IRL Fetish*, what happens offline fuels the online (Jurgenson 130). In this case, we wanted to share our first snow with our friends and family. These were memories that we knew we would want to cherish even twenty years down the line.

[Left side] One portrait image of author and friend in the snow. Both dressed in warm coats, hats and scarves, laughing. No caption.

Slide Five

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right Side] Glued to Screens – 3/22/2020

Speaking of how we use media to stay connected, I remember when I was younger, my mom would always come and shout at me, telling me to stop sitting in front of a screen all day. Now, I think about how the tables have turned watching my dad reply to a seemingly endless stream of emails, my brother with his video games, and my mom getting her daily dose of social media. Jurgenson talked about how people boast about not having a Facebook profile (Jurgenson 128), and my parents were one of them as well. Until they weren’t.

[Left Side] Image of author’s family members at home. His father, mother and younger brother all sitting on the couch

and engaged with screens (laptop, phone and tablet). No caption.

Slide Six

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right Side] Effect of Our Four Day Work Week – 4/20/2020

One of the best parts of this class was that I was given a platform to research and dive into a topic of my interest. Researching the four-day work week gave me a lot to learn and think about. One of the main reasons that I chose this topic was seeing all the stress that my dad faced.

Upon coming back home, I told him about the findings from my research, and how it could really change his — and my — life. I told him about how my research showed me that a four day work week would be beneficial for both employers and employees (Lal). His reactions — pictured — speak volumes.

[Left Side] Two before and after images of the author's father, wearing grey hoodie. Father has blank expression in first image and is smiling in second image. Captioned 'Before After'

Slide Seven

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right Side] Applying my Research – 3/21/2020

This period of self-isolation really gave me an opportunity to test and put my own research into practice. During the month of April, I planned out my week in such a manner that I could keep up with my schoolwork and chores without sacrificing either, all within four days of a week.

I'd usually start my day at 10am, have breakfast with my family, and then get on with what was planned for the day. Between my planned activities, I would find myself enjoying a repetitive stroll in my balcony (lockdown, so beggars can't be choosers). To end the week, video games all night.

[Left Side]

Orange and purple infographic of a quarantine four-day weekly planner. Planner title is: 'My Four Day Quarantine Week'.

First box, light orange in color reads: Monday extra day off – family time, work on my ukulele, do some yoga.

Second box, dark orange in color reads: Tuesday catch up on Friday, Monday, Tuesday lectures, do the dishes.

Third box, dark orange in color reads: Wednesday study for CS187 and Math233 quizzes, broom and mop the house.

Fourth box, light orange in color reads: Thursday catch up on Wednesday, Thursday lectures, do the dishes.

Fifth box, dark orange in color reads: Friday complete assignments for the week, video games with the boys till sunrise ☺

Slide Eight

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right Side] Zoom University – 4/23/2020

Our times of separation and socialization are more interconnected than ever before (Singer 55). Singer may have meant it in a different context, but it can be applied to our current situation as well — while we crave human interaction more than ever, we are ironically more connected and more 'in contact' with our relatives and friends.

Due to the interconnectivity, life, to an extent, is still going on normally. Can you imagine what would've happened if we didn't have this level of connectedness in today's world? I surely can't.

[Left side] Two images:

On top: Screenshot of a zoom meeting of friends playing a game. Five participants are to the left with video on. A screen is shared showing round 5/5 completed in the game. Caption reads: Despite what it looks like I wasn't really fifth. I had to re-join the game because my internet crashed.

Bottom: Screenshot of a zoom meeting between two people. Author is in small screen and second participant's zoom screen takes up most of the image. This larger image shows the zoom participant in a kitchen, leaning over the sink. The caption reads: Performing a chemistry experiment virtually isn't the best idea.

Slide Nine

[Slide split into two parts. Left half black background with white text, right half purple background with images and white text]

[Right Side] Self-Quarantine – 4/2/2020

Amidst this pandemic, I've been locked indoors for more than a month now. Initially, in March, there were only three things I would do when I was awake: Eat, study, or play video games.

This time of lockdown gives us all an opportunity to invest time into ourselves and self reflect. As a college student, the feeling of overwhelmedness isn't alien. We sometimes forget to slow down, and I often find myself guilty of that. While staying on top of lectures and assignments, I give myself time to do the smaller things I enjoy, such as listening to the soothing sound of my ukulele.

[Left Side] One close-up image of author wearing a yellow t-shirt and playing the ukulele. Caption reads: Originally French, La Vie En Rose (the song played in the background) is about peace, love and hope; and honestly in times like these, we need nothing more. I easily spent a week learning how to play this melody.

Slide Ten

[White writing on black background] CONCLUSION

Realizing how important my community is in shaping me, critically analysing essays written by established authors such as Jurgenson, independently researching and presenting an addition to an ongoing conversation for the ideal work-life balance, and eventually curating this photo essay to really

bring everything together has been nothing short of an enriching experience.

My journey so far at UMass has been all about discovering myself and finding lessons in the most unexpected places. While I agree that one's personality is shaped throughout their lifetime, I also believe that college is where most of it happens, since college is the first time that I truly experienced independence.

The innumerable skills that I've taken away from this class, such as the ability to critically analyse texts, will help mold my future endeavours as now I will see them from a different perspective. As I move forward in life, I know that these skills will stay with me forever, allowing me to understand and analyse any situation properly. Thank you Professor Aaron Tillman, for every piece of knowledge that you've passed on to us in this class.

Slide Eleven

[White writing on black background]

Works Cited

Jurgenson, Nathan. "The IRL Fetish." *Opening Conversations: A Writer's Reader*, edited by Haivan V. Hoang, et al. Hayden-McNeil, 2015, pp. 126-131.

Singer, Daniel. "Disconnected." *The Student Writing Anthology*, edited by Anna Floch Arcello, Hayden-McNeil, 2019, pp. 53-57.

Lal, Shashank. "Time to Cut Time?" ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing, 9 Apr. 2020.

24. Diving Deeper into Endangered Languages

ANANYA TALWAR

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

*In this piece Talwar aims to educate audiences about endangered languages and what we can do to prevent their extinction. Initially in the form of a blogpost, Talwar presents research findings in a series of infographics. Talwar highlights the versatility of infographics by making them applicable to social media (such as Instagram and Snapchat). The author uses the similar graphics on social media “stories” to publicize the blogpost itself. In this way, Talwar engages in multiple mediums with multiple audiences to circulate the conversation and create greater awareness about endangered languages. The content content below was originally shared on a personal website, hosted by Talwar (which is now disconnected). In addition to figure captions, we also provide the **alt-text** (alternative text) coded with each image to demonstrate how images should be prepared for screen readers.*

Ananya Talwar

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Diving Deeper into Endangered Languages

Blogpost Text

Endangering languages is a distressing and alarming issue. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) states that a language becomes extinct when nobody speaks or remembers the language and that the loss of languages can have cultural, social, developmental, communal, religious and political repercussions. Languages define our cultural identities, social behaviors, communication styles, technical vocabulary, and our way of thinking. Loss of language can have imploding repercussions on human society, and thus this issue must be addressed at the earliest to save dying tongues. Read below to gain more perspective.



Fig. 1. What Are Endangered Languages.

Alt-text: Background image of blue, orange, brown, and pink dialogue bubbles of various sizes and shapes. The dialogue bubbles include writing systems from various languages.

Central image is of a salmon pink rectangle. It reads: “What are endangered languages?” in white text. To the upper right corner of the rectangle are two dialogue bubbles: one is of Japanese Hiragana; the other is of the Latin alphabet. To the bottom left corner of the rectangle is a white body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body’s mouth.

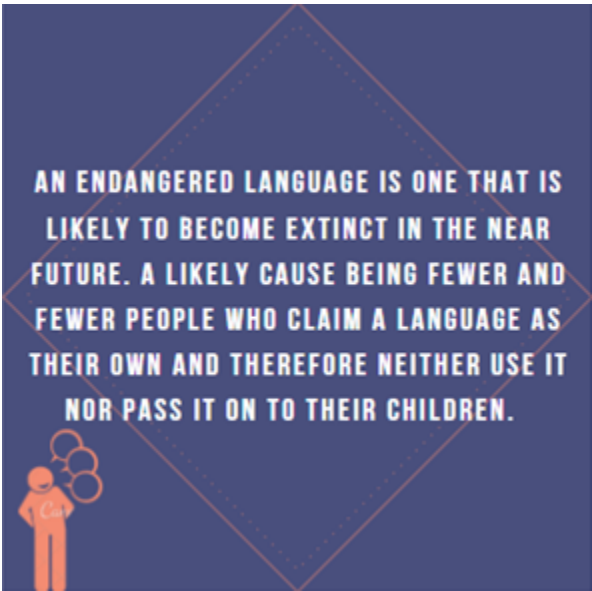


Fig. 2. Defining Endangered Language.

Alt-text: Purple background. White text at center of the graphic reads: “An endangered language is one that is likely to become extinct in the near future. A likely cause being fewer and fewer people who claim a language as their own and therefore neither use it nor pass it on to their children.” At the bottom of the image is a salmon pink body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body’s mouth.



Fig. 3. Why Should We Save Dying Tongues?

Alt-text:

Purple background. White text of the graphic reads “Why should we save dying tongues?” followed by white bullet point text:

To preserve our cultures; image to the left of bullet point is a white Indigenous headdress

To strengthen communication and connections; image to the left of the bullet point is a group of people talking to each other indicated by blue, pink, and gray dialogue bubbles above their heads

To maintain diversity; image to the left of the bullet point is a cluster of brown, tan, and white hands raised to form a circle

To create unique identities through the means of language; image to the left of the bullet point is a salmon pink fingerprint

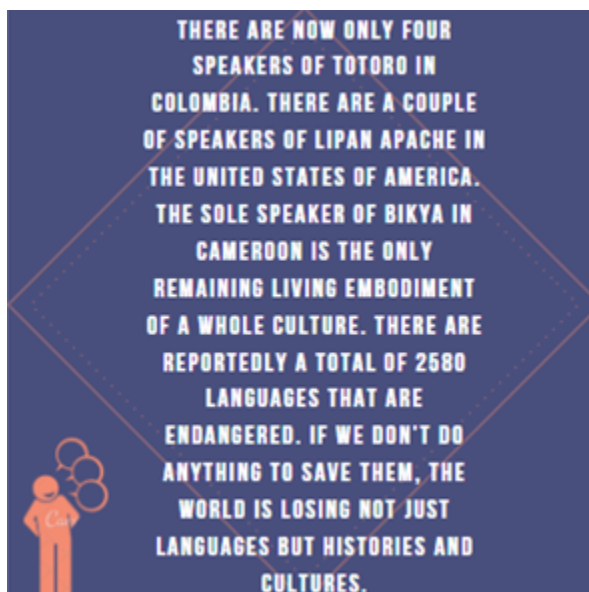


Fig. 4. Speaker Statistics.

Alt-text: Purple background. White text at center of the graphic reads: "There are not only four speakers of Totoro in Colombia. There are a couple of speakers of Lipan Apache in the United States of America. The sole speaker of Bikya in Cameroon is the only remaining living embodiment of a whole culture. There are reportedly a total of 2580 languages that are endangered. If we don't do anything to save them, the world is losing not just languages but histories and cultures." At the bottom of the image is a salmon pink body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body's mouth.



Fig. 5. What Can You Do?

Alt-text:

Purple background. White text of the graphic reads “What can you do to save endangering languages?” followed by white bullet point text:

Use your native languages for regular communication

Take language classes to learn different tongues

Listen to music in different languages

Promote your own cultures and languages amongst your friends

At the bottom of the image is a salmon pink body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body’s mouth.

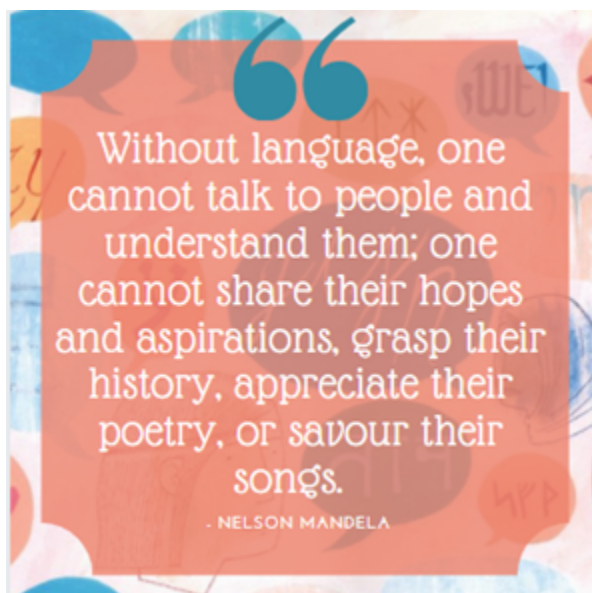


Fig. 6. Nelson Mandela's Advice.

Alt-text: Background image of blue, orange, brown, and pink dialogue bubbles of various sizes and shapes. The dialogue bubbles include writing systems from various languages. Central image is of a salmon pink square. It is a quote from Nelson Mandela that reads: "Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savour their songs." A teal open quotation appears at the top of the square.



Fig. 7. Instagram Story Example.

Alt-text:

This is part of an Instagram story. Background image of blue, orange, brown, and pink dialogue bubbles of various sizes and shapes. The dialogue bubbles include writing systems from various languages. At the top of the image is a semi-circle with “Endangered Languages” in white text. To the upper right corner of the rectangle are two dialogue bubbles in black: one is of Japanese Hiragana; the other is of the Latin alphabet.

At the center of the image is a white text bubble that reads: “Check out my new blog post!” in black text. To the bottom left corner of the rectangle is a black body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body’s mouth. At the bottom of the image is a salmon pink line that reads “Link in bio” white text.



Fig. 8. Snapchat Story Example.

Alt-text:

This is part of a Snapchat story. Background image of blue, orange, brown, and pink dialogue bubbles of various sizes and shapes. The dialogue bubbles include writing systems from various languages. At the top of the image is a semi-circle with “Endangered Languages” in white text. To the upper right corner of the rectangle are two dialogue bubbles in black: one is of Japanese Hiragana; the other is of the Latin alphabet. At the center of the image is a white text bubble that reads: “Check out my new blog post!” in black text. To the bottom left corner of the rectangle is a black body speaking with three dialogue bubbles to the right of the body’s mouth. At the bottom of the image is a salmon pink line that reads “Swipe up for the link” white text.



Fig. 8. Blog Background Image.

Alt-text: blue, orange, brown, and pink dialogue bubbles in different languages in various sizes and shapes

Works Cited

Ever Widening Circles. How Saving Languages Can Save the World! *everwideningcircles.com*. <https://everwideningcircles.com/2019/03/27/saving-endangered-languages/>

Strochlic, Nina. The Race to Save the World's Disappearing Languages. *National Geographic.com*. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/04/saving-dying-disappearing-languages-wikitongues-culture/>

25. Listening to a Culture

AMY J LIM

Click to [listen to and watch this essay](#)

In this piece Lim continues to explore the topic used for their Adding to a Conversation essay – body issues present in wrestling culture. In this text Lim uses a visual essay format, combining both text and images in a slide deck presentation with audio clips of their own reflection on the project and from Interviewee A. One unique aspect to how Lim designed this essay is that they used the notes field of the presentation to provide the transcript for the audio clips. The blend of images, audio, and written text all combine to deliver a message about the importance of understanding the damage accepted weight cutting practices enact on participants. This project also provides an excellent demonstration of how a descriptive transcript can provide the visual, textual, and auditory content of a multimodal text. The descriptive transcript for this project demonstrates how to share this multilayered content.

Amy Lim

instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

Listening to a Culture

Access the visual essay shown in this video by clicking [Listening to a Culture](#)

Listening to a Culture Descriptive Transcripts

Slide One

[White background and black text centered in slide with decorative brown arrows on upper left and lower right of content]

Listening to a Culture

Amy Lim

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112

20 November 2020

Slide Two

[White background and black text on slide with audio icon in lower right corner]

Introduction

My original paper was written from my point of view—the perspective of an “outsider.” I’ve never wrestled or played a competitive sport in general. Because of my lack of experience, I believe I lack the authority to dive into my topic deeply. As a result, I would like to invite the true “insiders” of wrestling to talk about their experiences to hopefully curb ignorance about the severely under-researched eating disorders in male high school wrestlers.

[Audio when clicked] Author’s voice: To excel in the sport, many wrestlers resort to dangerous weight cutting tactics, often similar to those of well known eating disorders in mainstream media. These mainstream eating disorders, however, are usually only portrayed in female patients. As a result, all eating disorder diagnostic criteria are modeled after extreme-weight-loss oriented symptoms, such as those present in Anorexia. However, research shows that male patients are more likely to exhibit “muscularity oriented disordered eating” (MODE). Such disordered eating does not result in extreme weight loss, which accounts for the lack of eating disorder diagnoses in boys and male-focused eating disorder research overall.

Slide Three

[White background and black text on slide]

Definitions

Weight Cutting: losing weight quickly prior to a wrestling competition to qualify for a lower weight class, as weighing the least may be advantageous in competition.

Water Weight: extra water held in the body as weight easiest to lose.

Weight Class: in wrestling, weight classes divide competitors on weight to bring fairness to the competition.

Eating Disorder: a psychological illness of abnormal and detrimental eating habits, impacting the body physically.

Muscularity-oriented disordered eating (MODE): a severely under-researched eating disorder characterized by muscle leanness and extreme exercise observed in male patients.

Anorexia: an eating disorder characterized by the refusal to eat most commonly diagnosed in female patients.

Bulimia: an eating disorder characterized by binge eating followed by excessive vomiting commonly diagnosed in female patients.

Slide Four

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

Silence—Eating Disorders in Adolescent Males

Interviewed former high school wrestlers showed a strange eagerness to share their unhealthy wrestling experiences with me, a stranger on the internet.

[Right Side]

Image of hand moving weight on body scale. Caption:

“In the United States alone, eating disorders will affect 10 million males at some point in their lives. But due in large part to cultural bias, they are much less likely to seek treatment for their eating disorder” (NEDA).

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A: I’d assume their eagerness to share is due to the silence they’ve endured for

so long—their entire high school wrestling careers. Mainstream American culture condemns any and all femininity in men, especially young boys (high school aged boys). And because eating disorders are traditionally stereotyped as “women’s diseases,” many male wrestlers are afraid to acknowledge their illnesses and seek help. Additionally, mental health issues are extremely stigmatized for men as well, also being perceived as “feminine.” They have no opportunity to share their struggles, and their dangerous habits continue and become normalized.

“Interviewee A,” a former high school and collegiate wrestler, shares his experiences with the dangerous weight cutting culture in wrestling in the following slides.

Slide Five

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

MODE Anorexia and Bulimia

My initial research is not reflective of all the “real world” experiences of many high school wrestlers. Interviewees claim to have experienced some sort of eating disorder, often naming anorexia. However, MODE was not named, though many interviewee accounts extensively detail MODE’s symptoms.

[Right Side]

Image of male upper body with ribs showing. Caption:

“To not eat or to throw up what you have eaten or to try to throw up even if you haven’t eaten in order to make weight, they are right alongside bulimia and anorexia”

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A: Were these methods similar to those of eating disorders you know of today? Yeah. Yeah. If someone’s close to weight, they may try to throw up if they’re not able to... or if they’re not willing to do the cardio workouts or the wrestling workouts necessary to sweat. They may starve themselves or simply not drink anything. So that is right alongside bulimia and anorexia. To not eat or to throw up

what you have eaten or to try to throw up even if you haven't eaten in order to make weight, they are right alongside bulimia and anorexia.

Slide Six

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

Weight Cutting Methods

High school wrestlers oftentimes look “healthy” and “normal,” as MODE is not usually characterized by extreme weight loss. Dangerous weight cutting methods are “integral” parts of wrestling culture. So, MODE symptoms go unnoticed and undiagnosed, forcing young men to suffer in silence.

[Right Side]

Image of legs running on treadmill. Caption: “Cardio sessions, running on the treadmill, getting on a stairmaster, those were things we would do after practice.”

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A:

So as far as weight cutting methods that I used and that I'm familiar with from my time wrestling in high school and my time wrestling in college, a lot of it was, you know, making your body run at a deficit. And what I mean by that is take in the least amount of calories possible and work out as much as possible in order to get your weight down. Cutting water weight is probably the most important part of weight cutting because you're not losing healthy weight. It's not like you're losing excess fat. If you're cutting weight, it's already assumed that you're fairly trim. Weight loss in a healthy manner is gradual; it's slower. Weight cutting is for short term weight loss. You're expecting to put weight back on once you're off the scale.

The weight that comes off the easiest is water weight, so while operating at a deficit, not eating and working out as much as possible. You may throw on [a] sweatsuit, you know, a

sweatpants, a hoodie. We would tape our cuffs of our sleeves; we would duct tape them shut so that way the heat would not escape. We would tie our hoodies tight around our faces, you know, with the hood up. We would tie them tight, so that way, again, heat would get trapped. We'd wrap duct tape around our waists, again, to keep the heat trapped in the sweatpants or in the sweatshirt... same thing with the ankles of our sweatpants. Or you'd tuck your sweatpants into your socks... you'd pull your socks high and then you'd tuck them in there.

Another thing is underneath the layer of sweatpants or sweatshirts, putting on clothing of a wicking material... like you'd think Under Armour, rash guards, tights, anything that can keep your body heat up. Those are some of the ways you could speed up the weight cutting process and losing that water weight. Cardio sessions, running on the treadmill, getting on a stairmaster, those were things we would do after practice. So once you have a sweat going from a tough wrestling practice, you'd jump on a treadmill, you'd jump on a stairmaster to keep the sweat going.

It was pretty important to bring a few changes of clothes to practice. So that way, when one shirt was soaked, or a sweatshirt was soaked, it would actually start to cool you down because that's what sweat is supposed to do. But when you're losing water weight, you're sweating. And that sweat, the main purpose of it is to cool you down. When it starts to cool you down, you don't sweat as much, so you take off the sweaty shirt, put on a dry shirt and that way your body stays warm and you keep sweating. So you may go through three, four, five shirts or sweatshirts in a practice. If you want to continue to keep sweating, you just keep changing your shirt.

Another thing we would do is once a practice is over with, and everyone has a sweat going, before the sweat dies, everyone huddles together and uses body heat to keep the sweat going. So a group of two or three would sit as close as possible to each other, they may link arms, and bend over that

way their body heat keeps them sweating. Exhaling the hot air from their lungs into a concentrated area that coupled with the close proximity of their bodies, increases the temperature and makes them sweat more. So these were some of the tactics we used to cut weight.

Slide Seven

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

Pervasive Body Image Issues

In my early research, lasting psychological effects were not emphasized. But, every interviewee noted lasting psychological effects, particularly poor body image. Surprisingly similar body images experiences in interviews clearly point to the fact that men's mental illness and health are especially overlooked.

[Right Side]

Image of stomach with Not Good Enough sketched on center. Caption:

"I thought I was getting out of shape because I was getting farther and farther away from my competition weight, but I was six feet tall and 157 pounds... the body weight that I'm at now is healthy. I struggled coming to that realization."

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A: In the long run, I definitely, you know I'm five years removed from competing at the college level, I noticed I had body image issues once my weight began to regulate. I wrestled 157 pounds all four years of college, and I now walk around at about 175 to 180. And as my weight began to climb to what it is now, I had body image issues. I thought I was getting out of shape because I was getting farther and farther away from my competition weight, but I was six feet tall and 157 pounds. What I didn't realize is that's not something I can maintain all year. It was only something I maintained when I trained six days a week,

three hours a day. That's the only environment that could support my frame at that weight. Whereas now that I'm not doing that, I don't have that kind of training regimen. The body weight that I'm at now is healthy. I struggled coming to that realization.

Something else I noticed was once I was no longer cutting weight, I noticed in my mid twenties, it was almost like a second puberty. I noticed more chest hair. I noticed more facial hair. I noticed changes in my shoulders. I began to pack on more muscle. I was essentially letting my muscles develop at that point, instead of focusing solely on cardio and keeping them lean. They were healed. They were growing. That's part of what I mentioned before with my weight gain.

Slide Eight

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

Other Long Term Effects

Long term physical effects were not uncommon in among interviewees. On the other hand, my initial research named physical effects and covered them in depth. I believe true anonymity allowed interviewees to be more inclined to share their experiences.

[Right Side]

Image of man clutching stomach as if in pain. Caption: "I know some people have acid reflux disease if they've tried to make themselves throw up too much."

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A: Lasting health effects outside the body image issue, no real health effects. I don't have any issues with my intestines. I don't have any issues with my stomach or anything. I know some people have acid reflux disease if they've tried to make themselves throw up too much. A lot of wrestlers, in order to, this is actually a strategy for cutting weight, a lot of wrestlers will turn to tobacco. They'll

turn to dip. And because they use dip, the nicotine kills their appetites, so they don't eat as much... they don't feel like they need to eat as much. Plus, when you dip, you spit, so spitting is a way to lose water weight. So a lasting health effect, not for me, but I've seen on other wrestlers is an increase in the use of tobacco products, which obviously runs down a whole rabbit hole of health issues on its own... cancer of various kinds.

Slide Nine

[Slide divided into two halves. Left half white background with black text, right half blue background with image and audio icon in lower right corner]

[Left Side]

The Coach "Hero"

Interviewees describe their coaches as "heroes" and torturers. So, what are the effects of the overbearing coach appearing so prevalently throughout high school wrestling?

[Right Side]

Image of two male coaches at the side of the mat at a wrestling match. Caption: "They did their time and now they're coaches, and they'll help us get through our tough weight cuts so that way we could be coaches. It's a cycle..."

[Audio when clicked] Interviewee A: Coaches, honestly, they were wrestlers themselves. Did they like seeing us put ourselves through that? No, but there was an unspoken rule that it's part of the sport. And, you know, they did their time and now they're coaches, and they'll help us get through our tough weight cuts so that way we could be coaches. It's a cycle, and some weight cuts are easier than others. And some coaches are more sympathetic toward wrestlers than others. And some coaches are vehemently against weight cutting. Others just kind of shrug their shoulders... tell you to get back on the treadmills. So it just kind of depends on the situation that you're in. My coaches were supportive about it, and they were smart to intervene if it got too extreme.

Slide Ten

[White background and black text on slide with audio icon in lower right corner]

Conclusion

Eating Disorders stemming from weight management in wrestling is a very obviously glaring issue that needs to be addressed and made aware. MODE is virtually unknown to the general public, which may play a role in lack of diagnoses. A change in culture must be made, as young men's psychological well-being proves to be an afterthought, as stigmatization, stereotyping, and sexism remain pervasive in American culture.

[Audio when clicked] Author's voice: In the beginning of my project, I feared I was exploiting others for my personal gain—to fuel my genuine curiosity about eating disorders in wrestling. However, I now believe that my project will bring the much needed exposure and voice to silent sufferers in the high school wrestling community. Hopefully, I am able to make others more aware of male high school wrestlers and their struggles with eating disorders and weight management to create meaningful change.

Slide Eleven

[White background and black text]

Works Cited

- "2020-21 High School Wrestling Rules Changes Address Weigh-In Procedures, Hair Length Restrictions." NFHS, Apr. 2020
- Abbott, Gary. "NFHS Reports High School Wrestling Participation Up for Boys AND Girls in All Categories for 2017-18." Team USA, United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, Aug. 2018.
- "Eating disorder." Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eating_disorder. Accessed 19 November 2020.
- "EATING DISORDERS IN MEN & BOYS." National Eating Disorders Association, 2018
- Frew, Harriet. "When poor body image stops you socialising."

Eating Disorder Therapist, 2018, rethinkyourbody.co.uk/blog/2018/04/16/when-poor-body-image-stops-you-socialising.

Gibbs, Aimee E. "Weight Management in Amateur Wrestling." *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, vol 1, no. 3, Sage Journals, May 2009. pp 227-230

"Interviewee A." Message to Amy Lim. Nov. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

"Interviewee A." "Re: Weight Cutting." Received by Amy Lim, 10 Nov. 2020.

Slide Twelve

[White background and black text]

Works Cited

"Interviewee B." Message to Amy Lim. Nov. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

"Interviewee C." Message to Amy Lim. Oct. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

"Interviewee D." Message to Amy Lim. Nov. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

"Interviewee D." "Re: Wrestling Questions." Received by Amy Lim, 10 Nov. 2020.

"Interviewee E." Message to Amy Lim. Nov. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

"Interviewee F." Message to Amy Lim. Nov. 2020. Private Message via Reddit

Murray, Stuart B. "Boys, Biceps, and Bradycardia: The Hidden Dangers of Muscularity-Oriented Disordered Eating." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, 2017. pp 352-355

Palmer, Mark. "Apple Valley wrestling coach Wasmund retires." *Intermatwrestle*, Rev Wrestling, 2017, intermatwrestle.com/articles/18233.

Slide Thirteen

[White background and black text]

Works Cited

"Promotion of healthy weight-control practices in young

athletes.” *Pediatrics*, vol. 116, no. 6, American Academy of Pediatrics, Dec. 2005. pp. 1557+

Rehman, Najibah. “Freezing the ‘hunger nerve’ could help with weight loss.” ABC News, ABC News Internet Ventures, 2018,

abcnews.go.com/Health/freezing-hunger-nerve-weight-loss/story?id=53912867.

Stankovich, Chris. “Learn Why Listening to the Coach Helps Athletes Play their Best.” Advanced Human Performance Systems, 2017.

Upadhyay, Lipi. “7 signs your everyday acidity has taken a more serious turn.” India Today, Living Media India Limited, 2017,

www.indiatoday.in/lifestyle/wellness/story/acidity-acid-reflux-gerd-chest-pain-sore-throat-nausea-bad-breath-heartburn-lifest-1047206-2017-09-18.

Valle, Carl. “Curved Treadmills: Pros and Cons That You Should Know.” SimpliFaster, simplifaster.com/articles/curved-treadmills-pros-cons/. Accessed 19 November 2020.

“Wrestling.” Sports Regulations, OHSA, 2019, pp. 174-179.

26. How to Combat Body Image Issues Caused by Media

ABIGAIL MORREALE

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

This infographic focuses on combatting body image issues influenced by media. In it, Morreale proposes three solutions: practice positive self talk; surround yourself with positive people; and avoid the scale. These solutions are supported by research by the Student Nutrition Action Committee at UCLA. The images that accompany these solutions are simple and universal in scope. The consistency in font and format and the balance between text and simple images allows readers to digest the information being presented quickly and easily. This project also provides a different way to approach describing highly visual content for screen readers.

Abigail Morreale

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

How to Combat Body Image Issues Caused by Media

Access the infographic in PDF form by clicking the link:

[Combat Body Image Issues Infographic](#)

Combat Body Image Issues Infographic Descriptive
Transcript

Title Panel

Title reads “How to Combat Body Image Issues Caused by the Media” in dark green text on top of a pastel green background.

Content Panel 1

Header reads “Practice Positive Talk” in black text. Subheadings read: “Give Yourself Compliments” and “Stop Negative Self Talk” in black text. Explanation provided reads: “Young adults are impacted most by the media. The Student Nutrition Action Committee at UCLA suggests doing these 2 major things to combat negative media influence on body image. By doing these things, you can start to believe that you are worth more than the unrealistic representations of people we see on social media” in gray text. To the left is an outline of two heads facing each other in white with a small light blue dialogue bubble overlayed on top of a larger blue dialogue bubble. The image and text are on top of a pastel green background.

Content Panel 2

Header reads “Surround Yourself with Positive People” in black text. Subheadings read: “Unfollow Accounts That Promote Negative Body Image” and “Be Around Healthy People” in black text. Explanation provided reads: “The Student Nutrition Action Committee at UCLA as well as experts at King University believe that the saying ‘you are who you associate with’ plays a big role in fighting against negative stigma surrounding body image in the media. When young adults surround themselves with body positivity, they become more body positive” in gray text. To the right is an image of bodies in different colours – purple, blue, orange, red, and green – holding hands to form a circle. The image and text are on top of a light blue background.

Content Panel 3

Header reads “Stay Off the Scale” in black text. Subheadings read: “Focus on Your Health” and “A Number Does Not Define You” in black text. Explanation provided reads: “The Student Nutrition Action Committee at UCLA emphasizes the

importance for young adults to stay off the scale. The scale only gives you a measurement of your weight, it does not actually determine how healthy of a person you are” in gray text. To the left is a gray scale with dark gray footprints on it and a red X across. The image and text are on top of a pastel blue background.

Footer Panel

Header reads “Works Cited” in black text. The two citations are provided in gray text on top of a pastel green background.

“Media Influence on Body Image”, Mirror-Mirror, 2020, <https://mirror-mirror.org/media-influence-on-body-image>.

Accessed 25 March 2021.

“Link Between Social Media & Body Image.” King University Online, online.king.edu/news/social-media-and-body-image/

27. Black Students in College

JADA ANDRADE

Click to [listen to this essay](#)

In this 'zine Andrade demonstrates how to circulate a message using physical multimodal composing strategies. Using interview quotations, images, and the layered structure of a physical zine she is able to share and highlight experiences of black students at UMass Amherst in connection with other secondary research sources as well. By combining formal academic citation with personal drawings, words, and images – the final product is a strong example of how something physically multimodal can be just as interesting as something created through digital multimodal composition.

Jada Andrade

Instructor

ENGLWRIT 112: College Writing

Day Month Year

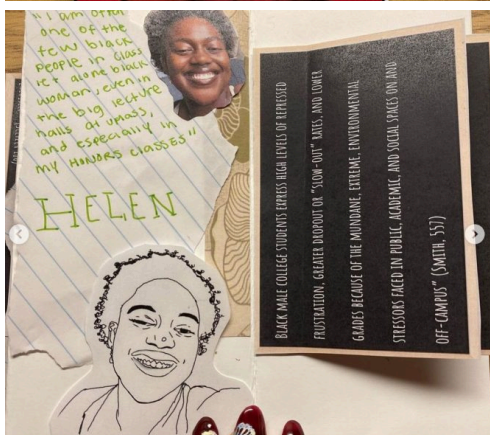
Black Students in College

The images of this 'zine are provided below with a descriptive transcript for provided above each image.



Front Cover

Red backpack with zipper pocket and black top handle. Label at top of backpack: Black Students in College



Page 1

Right side: Handwritten on torn piece of blue lined white paper: "I am often one of the few black people in class let alone black women, even in the big lecture halls at UMass, and especially in my honors classes" Helen

Cutout photograph of black woman with short natural hair smiling on top middle and black ink line drawing of same woman on bottom middle.

Left side: White text on black background glued to brown notecard, all glued to center of zine page "Black male college students express high levels of repressed frustration, greater dropout or "slow-out" rates, and lower grades because of the mundane, extreme, environmental stressors faced in public, academic, and social spaces on and off campus" (Smith, 557)

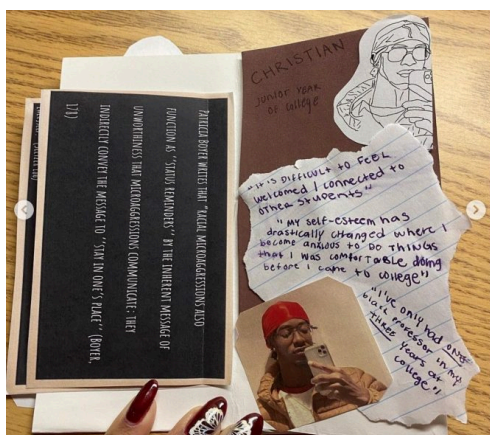


Page 2

Right side: Handwritten on torn piece of blue lined white paper: "I think attending a PWI feels like waking up every morning and being in the wrong body" Sharai senior year

Cutout photograph of black woman with long hair on bottom middle and black ink line drawing of same woman on top middle.

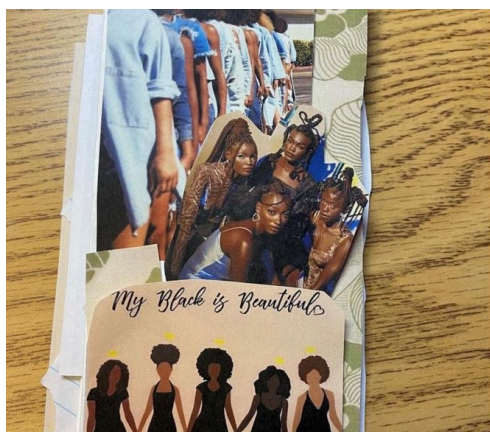
Left side: Megan freshman year written on green flower decorative paper. Cutout photograph of black woman with box braids smiling on top middle and black ink line drawing of same woman in middle right of page. Handwritten on torn piece of blue lined white paper. "I sometimes feel like I have to hide parts of who I am so I don't draw attention to myself and stand out"



Page 3

Right side: White text on black background glued to brown note card, all glued to center of zinc page Patricia Boyer writes that "Racial microaggressions also function as "status reminders" by the inherent message of unworthiness that microaggressions communicate; they indirectly convey the message to "stay in one's place" (Boyer, 178)

Left side: Christian junior year of college handwritten on brown paper. Cutout photo of black man in red cap taking selfie with phone bottom middle and black ink line drawing in upper right. Handwritten on torn piece of blue lined white paper: "It is difficult to feel welcomed/connected to other students" "My self-esteem has drastically changed where I become anxious to do things that I was comfortable doing before I came to college" "I've only had ONE black professor in my THREE years at college"



Back Cover

Collage of photo cut outs of photos on green flower decorative paper. Top: Black women lined up in a row wearing different denim dresses, photo focused on right shoulders. Middle: Four black women with different braid hairstyles pose and look at camera. Bottom: Five black women silhouettes showing a variety of hair styles and skin tones holding hands with yellow stars in highlighter over each head, labeled My Black is Beautiful