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Black Feminism and Women's Roles in *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* debuted at the Barrymore Theatre in New York in March of 1959, a time of unprecedented changes in race and gender relations, specifically the rise of black feminism and a redefining of women's roles in society. The play opened to great critical acclaim and controversy. It was the first black play ever to be produced on Broadway: "Hansberry became the youngest American playwright at twenty-nine, the fifth woman, and the only black writer ever to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the 'Best Play of the Year'" (Hansberry and Nemiroff xvii). *A Raisin in the Sun* achieved an impressive run of five hundred and thirty performances viewed by mostly white audiences even while African Americans still endured ongoing segregation and discrimination. Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, seen through a feminist lens, explores the roles of black women during the oppressive era of the 1950's, foreshadowing the rising power of the black feminist movement of the 1960's.

In the play, Lena Younger, Mama, is the matriarchal head of a lower-class African American family residing in a small, worn-out apartment on Chicago's Southside after World War II. Like many impoverished black families at the time, multiple generations were living together within the small apartment. Mama's husband, Walter Sr., has recently passed away and she sees the \$10,000 life insurance check she receives as an opportunity for her family to finally escape poverty. With \$3,500 of the money, she decides to put a down payment on a new home in an all-white middle-class neighborhood. Mama earmarks another \$3,000 to her daughter Beneatha's medical school costs, but this is soon lost after she entrusts this and the remainder of the funds to her son, Walter Younger Jr. In an effort to quadruple the money, he secretly invests it in a shady business deal and ends up losing all \$6,500, which includes Beneatha's money for school. However, even though the family has lost the remainder of the insurance money and is told that they will not be welcome in the white neighborhood by the "welcoming committee," the family decides to continue with their plans to move into the neighborhood.

When examining *A Raisin in the Sun* through a feminist critical lens, it is clear that the play anticipated the massive changes in gender relations to come. The women of *A Raisin in the Sun* are ordinary yet radical, and the play presents "the seeming paradox of

setting revolutionary ideas in aesthetically conventional forms” (Anderson 214). According to the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, feminist criticism is “a mode of literary and cultural discussion and reassessment inspired by modern feminist thought” (Baldick 138). This publication goes on to describe feminist criticism as “an arena of debate about relations between literature and the sociocultural subordination borne by women...within a male dominated social order (Baldick 138). The women in *A Raisin in the Sun* each resist their prescribed roles in a male-controlled society. Hansberry uses strong female African American characters who are individually promoting their gender and race to new heights, while simultaneously grappling with such controversial issues as abortion, sexuality, and female empowerment (Mafe 30).

In order to artfully demonstrate the detrimental conditions and attitudes of the time concerning women, Hansberry also uses convincing, sympathetic male characters in her play. Walter Jr. is a prime example of this. Though he is a hard-working, caring black man who admirably strives to make life better for himself and his family, he is also outwardly hostile towards anyone he perceives as holding him back. He is angry in general with his wife, Ruth, who finds out she is pregnant early in the play and decides without consulting her husband to have an abortion in a desperate attempt to help her family survive. He is angry at his mother for using the money on a house instead of investing it in the future that he imagines for them, taking away what he sees as his one opportunity to prove himself as the true head of the family. Walter’s struggle to find his place in the changing dynamics of African American family life is embodied by his statement to his wife: “That is just what’s wrong with the colored woman in this world... Don’t understand about building their men up and making ‘em feel like they somebody. Like they can do something” (1.1). He is angry at his sister, Beneatha, for constantly berating him and for wanting part of the money to attend medical school. He repeatedly criticizes her ambition to become a doctor, suggesting that she “go be a nurse like other women—or just get married and be quiet” (1.1).

The women in *A Raisin in the Sun* pursue traditional goals through bold, revolutionary means. In striking contrast to cultural norms during this period, Mama exercises her right to do as she pleases with the money. In most families, the economic power lay with the patriarchal, or male head of the family, but Mama is determined to use the money to better the lives of her family

members as she imagines. She buys a home to benefit all of them, including Ruth, her daughter-in-law and Walter Jr.'s wife. However, her intention is to ultimately leave the home to Travis, her grandson and Walter Jr. and his wife Ruth's son, representing the third generation living in the home. It is the best home that she can find for the money, and she is not intimidated in the least by a racist neighborhood. "She does not buy a new house in a white suburb for artificially politicized reasons, but to get the best house for her family for the money she has" (Parks 211). She earmarks a portion of the money for her daughter Beneatha to attend medical school. She makes the decision to allow Walter Jr. to handle this, along with the rest of the money, to do as he sees fit, encouraging him to finally come into his manhood. She says at one point, "There ain't nothing worth holding onto, money, dreams, nothing else if it's going to destroy my boy" (1.3). Mama balances her conventional dream for her son with the goal of upward mobility for the women of the family.

Ruth, Walter's wife, provides insight into how women were not thought of as equal even when their contributions were greater than their male counterparts. She kept up the house, took care of their son and still managed to work outside the home as a domestic worker, one of the few jobs open to African American women at the time. Walter undermines her authority as a parent, treats her disrespectfully, and accuses her, as well as his mother and sister, of holding him back from attaining his goals and dreams. "While Hansberry describes Ruth's weariness, she also immediately shows her dogged determination and pained energy with her son and her anger at her husband as she tries to jumpstart them for the day" (Parks 212). Despite her role in her marriage to Walter, however, she boldly makes her own decision about her pregnancy, defying him in the process. During the time this was written in the 1950's, abortion was illegal and considered by most as shameful. Even though she changes her mind as the play progresses and decides to keep the baby, it is still her own decision.

Arguably the most dramatic example of black feminism, the character Beneatha was thought to be partly based on Hansberry herself, serving as an indirect expression of Hansberry's own opinions. Beneatha holds a modernized worldview highlighting her own unique brand of strength. She plans to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor, a male-dominated profession, after attending undergraduate studies, which had only been available to black women for a short time. Beneatha is already

halfway to the women's liberation movement as she weighs the attitudes of her suitors—a Nigerian intellectual, Joseph Asagai, and the male-chauvinist son of a wealthy entrepreneur, George Murchison. Even the progressive and idealistic African student Asagai makes comments regarding marriage such as “for a woman it should be enough” (1.2), showing the prevailing standards of the period. Beneatha seems interested in Asagai, but only so far as he helps her get in touch with her African roots, which sets her apart from many black women of her time. She even cuts her hair off to provide a representation of her heritage, a precursor to the radical afro that would continue to become more popularized over the next decade. Beneatha goes against what society dictates and shows her feminist side by standing up for what she believes in, regardless of what people think, say, or interpret her actions to mean.

There is no doubt that *A Raisin in the Sun* was widely celebrated and acclaimed because it mined many issues of the day facing African Americans, including racism, segregation, economic disadvantage, and power dynamics. Yet, it is Hansberry's portrayal of a great moment of transformation in the lives of average African American families that continues to resonate: the ground was shifting and the roles of women were beginning to radically change. Sheri Parks writes in her essay “In my Mother's House: Black Feminist Aesthetics, Television and *A Raisin in the Sun*,” that Hansberry “was a black feminist and the play bespoke a particular brand of feminism, that practiced by women within the family in traditional black culture” (200).

Hansberry's play sheds light on the many obstacles that black women continued to face during the 1950's and 60's. However, the courage and tenacity demonstrated by Mama, Ruth and Beneatha show the way to overcome the seemingly insurmountable hurdles ordinary black women faced through a feminist critical lens without losing their sense of self or family.

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Benjamin Thompson

ENL202

O' Music: Atmospheric Relativism through Diegetic Music in O' Brother, Where Art Thou?

The history of narrative and literary tradition, from contemporary stories to those of great antiquity, runs in conjunction with musical accompaniment, which either as a supplementary enhancement or fundamental method interweaves into the bedrock of storytelling. As in the philosophical tradition in which music unites and illuminates humanity in both singular and aggregate measures, psychological science has rediscovered the indelible value of music, finding that, "People listen to music to regulate arousal and mood, to achieve self-awareness, and as an expression of social relatedness" (Schäfer). A film comprising motifs and elements of the American South and Greece's Homeric antiquity, *O' Brother, Where Art Thou* by Joel and Ethan Coen, integrates musical elements into the core of the film's means of storytelling. On the film's celebrated use of period-piece music, Martin Harries writes, "The music, then, is for the most part what film critics call 'diegetic'; that is, it is part of the action, however dreamlike and strange, and not the added texture of a soundtrack" (Harries). The music of *O' Brother, Where Art Thou* elevates the film by both foreshadowing and informing the narrative but also through enhancing the ambience and atmosphere, which then becomes relative scene by

scene to the diegetic music.

From the outset of the film, while the credits are rolling, the atmosphere is introduced through the sepia pallet of the scene and the work song, “Po’Lazarus,” chanted by the prisoners who sing, “Well then the high sheriff, he told Lazarus / He says Lazarus I come to arrest you” (Coen). Beyond atmosphere building, with the beats of the wearisome song directly corresponding with the fall of the prisoners’ pickaxes, “Po’Lazarus” directly foreshadows elements of the plot. The main antagonist of the film is a sheriff who is analogous to the devil. Within “Po’Lazarus,” a sheriff is trying to arrest another Biblical figure, Lazarus of Bethany, who in the Bible was raised from death by Jesus. Not only Satan and the sheriff, but also the main character, Ulysses, and Lazarus are akin in that, upon divine entreaty and intervention experience great personal change at their respective narrative climax. Rather than resurrection, Ulysses experiences character growth as presaged by the opening prognostics of “Po’Lazarus.”

On the ambient front of atmosphere building, three major scenes include only singing characters. The music of these scenes, beyond being diegetic and part of the action, invokes atmospheric relativism in which the ambient mood is greatly informed and relative to the music of the scene. One scene in which the sirens seduce Ulysses and company involves the sirens’ spellbinding rendition of “Didn’t Leave Nobody but the Baby.” In this song, the sirens repeat the line, “Go to sleep little babe” (Coen). The lines, “You and me and the devil makes three / Don’t need no other lovin’ babe [...] come lay bones on the alabaster stones / and be my everlovin’ babe” (Coen), inform the sirens’ intentions being sinister rather than sexual. In the Klu Klux Klan scene, Homer Stokes sings “O death,” fervently intoning the lines, “O, Death / O, Death / Won’t you spare me over til another year” (Coen), informing the grave desperation of Tommy who is about to be murdered by the lynch mob as well as, more than the horror of the scene, the haunting zeal of the KKK members so willingly bringing death upon an innocent. In contrast, the river baptism scene in which a robed congregation walks and dips into the river includes the song “Down to the River to Pray,” in which the lines, “As I went down in the river to pray / Studying about that good old way / And who shall wear the starry crown / Good Lord, show me the way!” (Coen) are sung by light, ethereal singers over a soft chorus informing a hopeful, virtuous atmosphere beyond the initial, confounded reactions of Ulysses and Pete. In each of the

three scenes, the atmosphere is relative to its music: an enthralling sexual encounter becomes sinister, a horrific murder becomes haunting, and a perplexing spectacle becomes otherworldly.

Finally, the main song and major plot piece of the film, “I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow,” connects to the overarching Homeric narrative as well as the resolution of the film. The main lines of the song, “I am a man of constant sorrow / I’ve seen trouble all my day,” (Coen) represents the many trials in the journey of Ulysses. However, the line, “For I’m bound to ride that northern railroad / Perhaps I’ll die upon this train” is reprised at the close of the film. *O’ Brother, Where Art Thou* ends with Ulysses and his family, who are singing “Angel Band,” safely crossing the railroad with the blind prophet riding his handcar into the distance. The song lowers the curtain to the film’s narrative, with lines such as “Oh bear my longing heart to him who bled and died for me / Whose blood now cleanses from all sin and gives me victory” (Coen). These lines reprise the biblical motifs sampled from the story of Lazarus as of the beginning of the film through “Po’ Lazarus,” in both of which Ulysses and Lazarus are given new life, metaphorically in the film, by Jesus Christ. As established by the diegetic music, the atmospheric relativism of “O death” and “Didn’t Leave Nobody but the Babe” of haunting murder and sinister seduction is replaced by otherworldly, divine, salvation akin to “Down to the River to Pray.” The uncertainty presented in “I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow” is resolved by “Angel Band” as Ulysses, a changed man who has found salvation and happiness in his family and prayer, crosses the railroad alive, well, and without sorrow.

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Smartphones

Like many people, I use my smartphone throughout the day. It is my alarm clock in the morning and my reminder at night. I check the weather, email, and use social media to keep up with friends and family. It is also a big time killer when I am just sitting on the couch or about to go to bed. People don't realize how much time they spend on the phone or social media until they sit down and actually think about it. Teenagers in particular seem to be attached to their devices. Everywhere you see a teen, whether it be in conversation, out to eat, or walking down the street, they are most likely looking at their phone. The article, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" written by Jean M. Twenge, presents a compelling argument: smartphones and social media have changed the next generation drastically. I agree with Twenge's viewpoints, but I also believe that there are other factors that can account for the changes seen in teens today.

The generation that Twenge wrote her article about she calls "iGen," and classifies them as those who were "born between 1995-2012." Twenge is a generational researcher who pays close attention to the differences and similarities between generations. During her research involving the next generation, iGen, she noticed startling differences between them and generations of the past. These differences are seemingly linked to smartphone and social media usage (Twenge). Unlike the Millennial generation that had limited access to the internet, and can remember the large and bulky computers of the past as they started to become common in homes and schools, iGen, as Twenge states, "does not remember a time before the internet." Teens today are accustomed to turning to the internet for anything that they might need to know such as directions, using a dictionary or thesaurus, and looking up phone numbers; past generations, on the other hand, can recall the difficulty of searching for a particular word or phone number in handheld books. I can personally recall the struggle of trying to remember my friends' phone numbers because I had a normal house phone. Today, however, most people no longer have a house phone; rather, they only have cell phones that internally store all of the phone numbers that they need.

As a result of teens being so attached to their smartphones and social media, they are at a higher risk for depression and

suicide. In fact, according to surveys, teen depression and suicide rates have been on the rise since 2011 (Twenge). Twenge reports that 8th graders who spend most of their free time on social media are 27 percent more likely to develop depression, as opposed to 8th graders who participate in other activities. Twenge tells us how bad this mental situation truly is when she states that “[it] is not an exaggeration to describe iGen as being on the brink of the worst mental-health crisis in decades.” This information clearly demands the public’s attention.

Twenge also addresses the effects of the smartphone on teenage sleeping habits. In order for teens to be adequately rested, they require nine hours of sleep, yet many are now sleeping significantly less than that. In fact, Twenge reports that about 57 percent more teens were sleep deprived in 2015 than in the early 1990s. There are many serious consequences of being sleep deprived including reducing the ability to think and reason clearly, high blood pressure, weight gain, being more susceptible to getting sick, anxiety, and depression (Twenge). All of this indicates the importance of parents monitoring their teens’ screen time and teaching them to use the internet responsibly and in moderation (Twenge).

Teenagers today are less independent than previous generations, preferring to stay home instead of going out. Naturally other aspects of life are affected as well, though not all the effects are bad. For example, because teens are staying home more, they are not dating or having as much sex, and less sexual activity leads to less teen pregnancies (Twenge). Additionally, many of today’s teens do not have jobs. Twenge reports that towards the end of the 1970s, 77 percent of 12th graders were employed, whereas by mid-2010, only 55 percent of teens were. Because teens are not working, they do not have a need to get driver’s licenses, and instead remain at home, relying on their parents; thus, they do not learn the value of hard work and managing money. Having worked side by side with teenagers myself, I can say that, in my experience, teens seem oblivious in the workplace today. Job functions that seem like common sense to most people simply do not register for teens, because they are not used to doing critical thinking for themselves.

Twenge does admit that on an individual level, teens who spend much of their time online also spend more time with their friends in person. Also, Twenge states that depression has many contributing factors, with smartphone usage being only one

possibility. Twenge admits that it is possible that teens who are unhappy are spending more time online, but she also cites studies that “suggest” that screen time, and more specifically social media, does in fact “cause” teens to be unhappy. I do not necessarily agree that teens’ screen time usage *causes* teens to be unhappy; I think that teens could already be unhappy and are thus turning to the internet as an escape from their life. On the other hand, I do agree that teens can be socially awkward, because they are more comfortable with electronic means of communication rather than actual human face-to-face interaction. Regardless, it is clear to me that Twenge’s research is shining a light on issues that need to be addressed by the parents of iGen in particular. I also think that parents today are stricter than parents were in the past about where and when their teens are going out. Parents are constantly shown in the media that the world is a dangerous place. They want to protect their teenagers by keeping them close, but they need to find a balance between protecting them and stunting their growth as young adults.

I am not a parent, but I feel like I was a teen not too long ago. If you are a parent, it is so important that you be observant with what is going on with your teen. Maybe parents can set a “no phones” rule during specific family times. Teach teens that it is rude and unacceptable to be on their phones when they are in conversation with people. Get them engaged in their life, not just being content to spend it looking at a screen. Impart in them the value of hard work and money management, so that they can be prepared when they enter the workforce and are earning their own income. They will thank you for your efforts.

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Mass Shootings in America

Mass shootings have been around since the 1900s, but they have become more frequent in the United States. On October 1, 2017, Rhonda Lerocque was at a Las Vegas concert with her husband, six-year-old daughter, and father-in-law. She decided to send her daughter back to their hotel room with her father-in-law because it was getting dark. Shortly after, shots rang out, and Rhonda was killed. In that instant, 57 other people were killed and 500 were injured in the concert crowd when a lone gunman, Steven Paddock, decided to open fire (Christensen). A mass shooting can be defined as an incident in which four or more people are killed or injured by gunfire (Ingraham). The cause of mass shootings is usually unclear because the killers usually take their own lives without leaving an explanation as to what would lead them to commit such a violent crime. However, experts have come up with some factors as to why these shootings occur.

While mental health is a factor in mass shootings, research has shown that most people who commit this heinous act were not diagnosed with a mental disease. “In the *American Journal of Public Health*, the incidents of gun violence for a person diagnosed with severe mental illness increases significantly only when the individuals were using drugs or chemical independent” (Naprawa). One major factor that is contributing to mass killings is the copycat phenomenon. Some researchers believe that mass killings can be contagious (Christensen). “The chances that one mass shooting can provoke an increase of other similar situations is an infection that researchers found can last about 13 days” (Christensen). In the article, “The Chilling Rise of the Copycat Mass Shooters,” according to Follman, the eighteen-year-old who went on a rampage at Arapahoe High School in Colorado in December 2013 had a copy of the book, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*. Such content fulfilled the need of aspiring killers to find people they can identify with.

Another motive for mass shooting is the desire for fame. Since the popularity of social and mass media, mass shooters have sought to gain popularity. “There is no doubt that terrorists want fame, whether it is for a cause or themselves” (Christensen). In each case of mass shootings, the shooter is trying to kill a larger number of people than the killer before him or her. In Orlando, and

in other mass shootings, the killer is attempting to make his mark on society and go down in history as the deadliest killer and raise the bar for the next shooter. Mass shooters sometimes seek fame in favor of a cause. “If the Orlando attack was motivated by radical Islamic fundamentalist ideology, this would be consistent with the intolerance toward gays and lesbians and seeking fame on behalf of this cause” (Christensen).

The availability of guns is another cause of mass shootings in the United States. High powered weapons are easily accessible in the U.S. making it easier for killers to gain access to them. “A vast majority of guns used in 17 percent of recent mass shootings, including the guns used in the Las Vegas shooting, were bought legally and with a federal background check. At least eight gunmen had criminal history or documented mental health problems. However, that did not prevent them from obtaining their weapons” (Buchanan et al.). Additionally, since there is no federal law requiring a seller to alert the bureau when a person is buying multiple rifles, the Las Vegas shooter, Mr. Paddock, was able to purchase thirty-three firearms within a year.

According to the research of Adam Lankford, a University of Alabama criminal justice professor, there were 90 mass shootings between 1966 and 2012 in the United States (Christensen). These shootings account for one-third of the 292 attacks in similar nature that occurred globally during that period. Despite the United States only having 5 percent of the world’s population, it had 31 percent of all public mass shootings (Christensen). Global incidents of mass shootings usually include one gun while in the United States, the shooter was, in most cases, carrying multiple weapons (Christensen). According to Lankford’s study, the average amount of victims in 171 countries was 8.8 comparing to 6.87 victims per incident (Christensen). An average of 6.4 shootings were reported from 2000-2006 annually, however, from 2007 to 2013 there was a significant increase to 16.4 shootings annually in the United States (Schmidt). “Gun homicides are a common cause of death in the United States, killing about as many people as car crashes” (Quealy and Sanger-Kats).

The impact of a mass shooting can result in lasting effects on victims, family members, and the public who have witnessed the shooting. The impact of a mass shooting lasts longer for some victims than others. Some people will require medical attention and treatment for the stress and problems that the mass shooting has caused them. “Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a

condition of persistent mental and emotional stress that occurs as the result of severe psychological shock, this is one of the results caused by witnessing such a horrific act” (Tucker). Along with PTSD, witnesses become anxious and afraid to engage in public activities. Depression can follow and reactions of isolation and fear (Tucker). There is a fear factor that spreads not only to those present at a mass shooting, but also anxiety can spread to all members of society. “People who witness mass shootings can also develop anxiety disorder worrying about going out in public or taking their children to school. Also, they can become afraid to leave their homes or get very depressed about the state of the country and the world” (Tucker).

Mass shootings are very costly for tax payers. According to Natasha Bertrand, a political correspondent at Business Insider, American taxpayers pay roughly 12.8 million dollars every day to cover the cost of gun related deaths and injuries. Taxpayers cover roughly 87 percent of these costs, which include, but is not limited to, medical treatment, legal fees, long term prison costs, long term medical and disability expenses, mental care, emergency services, police investigations, and security enhancements (Bertrand). The annual total cost of gun violence is 229 billion dollars which can be broken down to more than 700 dollars per person every year (Bertrand). Medical expenses account for 5 million of the 229-billion-dollar cost per victim. This includes hospital bills, physical therapy, trauma counseling, in home care, wheelchairs, customized vans, and lost income (Bertrand). In one instance a shooter was caught and brought to court, the cost for the legal fees reached 5.5 million dollars before the trial even started (Bertrand).

Victims of mass shooting who receive long term disability from the incident can incur a bill of more than 1.7 million dollars. However, if the victim is a Medicaid patient, tax payers will pay this bill (Bertrand). Mental health care caused by gun violence account for 410 million annually in direct mental health cost. Each gun injury requiring emergency services can cost approximately 583,000, dollars. The ambulance service for a five-mile ride can cost more than \$800 per person (Bertrand). Police investigations are another cost that taxpayers have to contribute to because, “when someone dies or get injured in a shooting officers are required to launch a full investigation into the attack” (Bertrand). After an attack, security enhancements are done to keep people safe and give the public peace of mind. Increasing security at schools such as hiring security guards and paying for metal

detectors are some prevention methods which have cost the federal government \$811 million. The cost to implement safety measures such as the “bulletproof” backpack, purchasing police officers’ time to practice “active shooter drills” and detection systems can be as much as \$100,000. Mass shootings are a growing concern and finding a solution is vital (Bertrand).

According to the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action 2013 Fact Card, Americans have more guns than any other country in the world; one for every man, woman and child (Lewis). Mass shootings have become a major problem in the U.S and to control this growing epidemic, the United States government must implement stricter gun laws to keep its citizens safe. Imposing stricter gun laws is one possible way to prevent or reduce the number of victims of mass shootings. If guns are more regulated, then it will be harder for criminals to access them. Stricter gun laws will include universal background checks, protection orders, an age limit, safe storage, straw purchases, ammunition checks, banning bump stocks, and research (Kristof). The implementation of stricter gun laws is essential to stopping guns from being placed in the hands of criminals and the mentally ill.

“Lax laws not only make it easy for good people to get a gun but also for criminals which is a major problem in the U.S” (Kristof). Since twenty-two percent of guns are obtained without a background check, the implementation of universal background checks before buying a gun is essential. “A potential gun owner will be checked thoroughly for history of mental health and violent or criminal behavior. More than four out of five Americans support this measure” (Kristof). The government would also have to clamp down on alternative ways to get guns, making it a criminal offense. The banning of bump stocks, which allow semiautomatic rifles to fire more like automatics and claim many lives, will lower the number of victims per incident. “Imposing an age limit to purchase a gun will ensure that children won’t be able to walk in a gun store and purchase a gun just the same as a child can’t walk in a store and purchase alcohol” (Kristof). Enforcing a ban on possession of guns and limiting gun purchases by any one person to no more than two a month, tightening rules on straw purchasers who buy for criminals, and making serial numbers harder to remove can help decrease mass shootings because guns will become more difficult to purchase (Kristof). When Australia had four mass shootings between 1987 and 1996, public opinion turned against

gun owners, and parliament passed stricter gun laws. Since then, Australia hasn't had a mass shooting (Christensen). "For skeptics who think that gun laws don't make a difference, consider what happened in two states, Missouri and Connecticut. In 1995, Connecticut tightened licenses laws, while in 2007 Missouri eased gun laws" (Kristof). According to Kristof, firearm homicide rate dropped 40 percent in Connecticut, and rose by 25 percent in Missouri.

Despite evidence that gun laws will work, a possible objection to this is that laws will not stop terrorists and criminals. "As Marco Rubio often proclaimed during the primary campaign, "my skepticism about gun laws is criminals don't follow the law" (Defilippis and Hughes). However, if criminals are just going to run red lights, why is it necessary to have traffic penalties? (Defilippis and Hughes). Laws were put in place to regulate and organize society. One instance of the usefulness of the law is that over the past twenty years, terrorists have largely abandoned bombs. One reason for this is in the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, federal legislation made it more difficult for consumers to obtain bomb-making ingredients and easier for law enforcement to monitor purchases. However, with the implementation of this law, terrorists had to change their tactics and replaced bombs with guns (Defilippis and Hughes).

Another solution to mass shootings is threat assessment, "This is essentially a three-part process: identifying, evaluating and intervention" (Follman "Inside"). Threat assessment starts with identifying that someone might be a danger to himself or someone else. "This process usually begins with an instinct that something is not right with someone. It could be that a teacher notices that her students make open threats of harming other students then she reports it to the principal" (Follman "Inside"). If this report makes it to the threat assessment team, the next step begins—an evaluation. The assessment team will then begin to talk with family, friends or coworkers to get an insight into the person's intentions. The focus in this process is the person's access to weapons (Follman "Inside"). The final step is intervention; the threat assessment team would try to help the person to vent their anger and refocus on school or work by providing long term counseling (Follman "Inside"). "If violence is imminent, involuntary hospitalization or arrest may be the safest approach" (Follman "Inside"). Threat assessment can be challenging because sometimes the quieter, less outwardly threatening subject can be the most dangerous, even

though these individuals provoke fear and anxiety toward society, still no crime has been committed (Follman “Inside”).

Another alternate solution to mass shootings is to change how the media addresses these incidents. Changing how the media reports mass shootings may be essential in preventing mass shooting incidents. In the reporting of mass shooting, the media should minimize the use of the attacker’s names and their images. Reports on the perpetrator should be forensically stated with dispassionate language, avoiding terms such as lone wolf and school shooter. Instead, using more formal language such as perpetrator, act of lone terrorism and act of mass murder (Follman “How”). “The media should also avoid using terms such as pseudo commando or other posed photos of the perpetrator, especially after the images are outdated (Follman “How”). The publication of a perpetrator’s videos or manifestos should be avoided when reporting about mass killers, instead paraphrases, and analysis should be provided (Follman “How”). This strategy can reduce copycat mass killers if potential killers realize that they will not get the attention or fame they are seeking. For instance, to children who are aspiring to become a mass killer, the extra attention from the media can seem heroic (Follman “How”). However, reporting on the killer is necessary to the public understanding of the problem because misleading information that circulates around the internet during the aftermath of an attack can be portrayed to the public (Follman “How”). Moreover, if the media cut back on reporting on the killer, then people won’t get the full understanding of the nature of the problem (Follman “How”).

With the continued rise of mass shootings, finding a solution is vital. The implementation of stricter gun laws will benefit all citizens of America. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Scotland and Germany have implemented stricter gun laws, and have seen a significant decrease in their crime rate (“Four Countries with Gun Control”). Also, utilizing the threat assessment process will be essential in stopping a shooting before it happens by identifying the perpetrator and trying to get counseling or hospitalization for them when necessary. Changing how the media reports on mass shootings could help to put a damper on people who are seeking fame or even people who are trying to copy their predecessors and surpass their number of victims.

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ENL101

Opioid Abuse on Cape Cod

David McCarthy was a recovering addict who was on the path to success. He had a job, a girlfriend, and most importantly, a plan to recovery. David took a trip to his parents’ house on a Thursday and watched part of the Patriots Jets game with his dad Kevin, until the tiny television made David decide to go to a friend’s house for the majority of it. The next night was David’s last night before he drove to the family’s ski place, so his family decided to celebrate before he left. The family was about to go out to dinner, before David’s stepmom Nancy decided against the idea, since David was doing so well, and didn’t want to tempt him with drinking. So, Kevin went to the grocery store to buy steaks. Once he returned home, he heard David’s dog whining. “Dave? Dave?” Kevin shouted. He didn’t hear David, so he went upstairs and swung his door open. David’s skin was cold, the needle he used was on the bed, and the spoon was on his nightstand with

the heroin (Fisher). Unfortunately, this is a common story on Cape Cod, so it is a top priority to find solutions and fight against the opioid epidemic.

Over prescription of high strength opioids such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), and meperidine (Demerol), and an abundance of heroin is the main cause of the opioid epidemic (“Caution”). When high strength opioids were first invented, they were only used for terminally ill patients and now they are prescribed for minor injuries such as broken bones or general soreness (Okazaki). From 2000-2015 in Massachusetts, prescriptions for painkillers rose by 7%, and one in six people had a prescription with each having an average of three refills, which greatly increases the chance for addiction (“Chapter 55”). According to Okazaki, 80% of heroin users start off abusing prescription painkillers. Once people run out of their prescription, the pills can get extremely expensive, which is why people switch to heroin. The most popular pill used is Oxycontin, which costs between \$50 and \$80 each (Kavilanz), while a single dose of heroin will cost between \$15 and \$20 (“How Much Does Heroin Cost?”). The amount of heroin on the streets has increased substantially with the legalization of marijuana. Since the Mexican cartel can’t smuggle as much marijuana into the United States, they have begun to smuggle cheap heroin instead (Okazaki). The sharp increase in opioid addiction is partly due to genetics as well (Melemis). According to Melemis, addiction is half genetic and half poor coping skills. Children of addicts are eight times more likely to develop an addiction during their lifetime. No matter what substance has been abused in the family, the child will be eight times more likely to develop an addiction to any substance (Melemis). Also, people who can’t cope with stress well and experience negative emotions often are also more likely to develop an addiction (Melemis).

Occupation and education are also major factors in the opioid crisis. On Cape Cod in 2015, 46% of the population worked in the service/trade industry, which includes jobs such as fishing, landscaping, restaurant work, and construction. Those working in service/trade industry have double the risk of having a fatal overdose than other jobs, and construction workers have five times the risk of having a fatal overdose (Pollock). The service/trade industry accounts for 65% of the 281 opioid deaths on Cape Cod between 2004-2014 (Harik et al.). People working in trade jobs get injured frequently, so they could be prescribed low doses

of painkillers from doctors. When their doctors cut the supply off after so many refills, they'll move to heroin (Pollock). Between 2004 and 2017, 69% of the people who died from an overdose had only a high school education or less. People who decide to work right after high school, instead of pursuing a higher education, are also at much higher risk of fatally overdosing. Most jobs available to recent high school graduates are in the service and trade fields. Between 2004 and 2014, 72% of opioid deaths of people between the ages of 18-29 worked in the trade industry, and 98% of them only had a high school education or less (Harik et al.). Another reason for this high rate of addiction in people out of high school is that many students feel that Cape Cod is physically and emotionally isolating, especially during winter. This can create negative emotions, which could increase their risk of addiction (Harik et al.). Researchers discovered this after talking to three vocational schools on Cape Cod and a handful of social workers. They all shared similar feelings about Cape Cod (Harik et al.).

The opioid epidemic is claiming more lives than it ever has on Cape Cod. Cape Cod hit a 16 year high for fatal overdoses in 2016 with 78, compared to 71 in 2015, and 55 in 2014 ("Opioid Deaths"). Between 2014 and 2016, the number of opioid related overdoses on Cape Cod was 23% higher than the state average. In 2016, Barnstable had the most deaths with 22, followed by Falmouth with 15, Bourne with eight, and Mashpee and Yarmouth with seven each ("Opioid Deaths").

One of the largest consequences of opioid abuse is the potential of death. There has been outburst of an illegal synthetic opioid called fentanyl, which is extremely dangerous, and is responsible for 70% of all opioid overdoses in 2016, which is four times more than fentanyl overdoses in 2014 ("Opioid Deaths"). Fentanyl is so dangerous because of how potent it is. Fentanyl is up to 50 times as potent as heroin and up to 100 times as potent as morphine. An amount of fentanyl the size of a grain of sand is enough to kill someone. When someone overdoses on fentanyl, it affects the respiratory center of the brainstem, which controls breathing. Tiny doses are enough to paralyze the muscles that are used to breathe (Villa). Fentanyl has become so common because Mexican cartels have been smuggling it instead of heroin lately. This is because fentanyl can be made in a lab easily, compared to heroin. Also, fentanyl can be used to cut other drugs and is much more profitable. Between 2013 and 2015, the DEA seized 239 kilograms of fentanyl in the United States (Villa). People are rarely

prescribed fentanyl because of how potent it is so most is produced illegally in labs.

Opioid abuse also leads to increased crime rates. In 2014, 85% of all crimes committed on Cape Cod were opioid related (Okazaki). Those who abused opioids and were arrested for a crime were 50 times more likely to have a fatal overdose within the first six months of being released from prison (“Chapter 55”). Also, the first six months are six times as dangerous for an addict after leaving jail compared to any other time frame.

Another consequence of opioid abuse is the cost on the economy. In 2016 opioid overdoses cost the United States economy \$504 billion (United States), and Massachusetts \$55 billion (Okazaki). The opioid epidemic is the worst drug epidemic that America has yet to experience, and Cape Cod is one of the hardest hit places in the country, so it is imperative to take action before it gets worse.

There have been other countries that have struggled with severe drug epidemics and have successfully fought against them. Portugal in the 1990s was having a major heroin addiction crisis and a steep increase in drug-related AIDS deaths. The way Portugal dealt with this issue was decriminalizing all drugs in 2001, and they began to treat addiction as a health issue, not a crime (Miron). Drug dealers still go to prison, but people caught with less than a ten day supply of a drug or less receive a fine and mandatory treatment (Frayer; McElroy). After being caught, a person will be brought to medical experts, social workers, and psychologists to direct them towards proper treatment and rehabilitation (Miron). Those who are problematic users will be sent to a treatment facility, while those who are occasional users will be assessed to determine if there’s any social, family, or psychiatric problems that could lead to becoming a problematic user (McElroy). People were accepting of the new policy because many families had addicts. The national drug coordinator for Portugal said, “Every family had its own drug addict. It was so, so present in everyday life, that it turned public opinion, we are dealing with a chronic relapsing disease, and this is a disease like any other. I do not put a diabetic in jail, for instance” (Frayer). Addiction becoming destigmatized and treated as a health problem has decreased Portugal’s overdose deaths per million people to three, which is five times lower than the European Union average (Miron; Frayer). Massachusetts has 330 overdose deaths per million people in 2016 (“National Center for Health Statistics”). In all of 2016,

Portugal only had 16 drug related deaths out of 10.5 million people (McElroy). Arrest rates for drug offenses in Portugal is also down by 60% from 2001. Money saved from not incarcerating addicts can be spent on more treatment programs. There is also another country that has found success decriminalizing drugs which is the Czech Republic (Miron). Multiple countries that have had success prove that if Massachusetts could implement a similar policy it could have tremendous benefits.

Implementing a similar policy could cause some issues; however, if drugs become decriminalized, people could think that they aren't as dangerous and experiment with drugs and potentially become an addict (Wheeler). Many people today already abuse tobacco and alcohol, as well as illegal drugs. If drugs were decriminalized then they would become cheaper and easier to obtain which could increase abuse rates (Califano). Decriminalization could also cause drug users in other states to come to Massachusetts, so they won't get punished. However, despite these issues, the benefits of decriminalization still outweigh the risks.

One alternative solution to the opioid epidemic is to decrease the cost that it takes to pursue a higher education. The price of college has risen dramatically in the United States. Citizens in the United States have a combined \$1.31 trillion in college debt (Weller). The average price of tuition without room and board is \$9,410 at public schools, and \$32,405 at private schools. Room and board adds over \$10,000 to the price (Lobosco). However, in Europe many colleges are extremely inexpensive, with the majority costing less than \$2,225. Even with scholarships and grants, a student in the United States will pay at least \$4,000 per year (Lobosco). European countries are able to do this because they have higher taxes (Jackson). The countries with the highest rates that provide free college are Germany with 49.4, Finland with 43.8, and Sweden with 42.8, compared to the United States, which has a rate of 31.7 (Jackson). Opioid addiction strongly affects those coming out of high school and people in the service and trade industry. Lowering the price of college would allow those young adults to get a higher education and provide an opportunity for better jobs, reducing their risk of abusing opioids.

However, there are some problems with free college. In 2015, Bernie Sanders proposed that public colleges should have free tuition—Washington would pay for two-thirds of the funding and the state would pay the rest. This would make it much easier

for lower income citizens to pursue a higher education, but the projected cost for the first year was \$47 billion (Lane). The plan would also lower the quality of the school (Jackson).

Another solution to the opioid crisis would be to make opioid addiction a qualifying condition for medical marijuana in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, to obtain a medical card the patient must be 18 years old and have a debilitating illness such as cancer, glaucoma, Multiple Sclerosis etc. (“Guidance for Physicians”). Researchers studied data from Medicare and found a 14% reduction in opioid prescriptions in states that had easy access to medical marijuana. The dispensaries in those states reduced the number of daily prescription doses by 3.7 million, and states that have legal home growing reduce daily prescription doses by another 1.8 million. Average Medicare recipients received 23 million daily doses between 2000 and 2015 (Jackson). Marijuana may be used to help quit opioids. Researchers found that cannabinoid receptors and opioid receptors are very close to each other in the brain, so when dopamine is released from marijuana, it affects the opioid receptors slightly (Lieber). Many people start their addiction with prescription painkillers, so if opioid addiction was a qualifying illness for medical marijuana, people would be less likely to become addicted (Jackson). Marijuana isn’t the perfect cure, as it can be a potential gateway drug (Miron). A study also found that people who use marijuana are six times more likely to use opioids than nonusers (Jackson).

Keeping extra prescription drugs off the street will also help reduce the opioid epidemic. A survey of Massachusetts residents found that 50% of respondents felt that painkillers were prescribed too often with too many pills. Moreover, 47% of respondents said that getting prescription painkillers from people they knew was easy, and 36% of respondents said when they were prescribed opioids, they weren’t informed about the dangers (“The President’s Commission”). It is common people find leftover prescriptions in friends’ and families’ cabinets, so it’s important to increase the amount of prescriptions that get taken back. The Drug Enforcement Agency has two days a year when they collect unused prescriptions, and there are also local places that collect prescriptions such as police stations, and some pharmacies (“The President’s Commission”). Cape Cod could use more though; there are only 17 on the Cape and almost all of them are police stations (“Find a Waste Medication Kiosk”). If more pharmacies became authorized prescription collectors, the collection rates would

increase along with awareness (“The President’s Commission”).

Cape Cod is one of the hardest hit areas of America’s severe opioid epidemic. There is not a single solution that can solve this problem; it will take a combination of many to have an effect. It is essential that action is taken to stop this crisis.

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Freshwater Pollution on Cape Cod

A still, serene lake on a warm spring day is an idealistic capture of just what it means to be at peace. What is beneath the surface, however, is far from peaceful. Fish begin to float to the top of the water and drift along the banks of the shore. Aquatic plants and algae weaken and shrivel. Birds become malnourished from the lack of aquatic life. This disturbing image is already a reality for the residents of Cape Cod because of the drastic increase of chemical pollution in fresh bodies of water. Fresh water, often used for drinking and bathing, has become contaminated and deemed harmful according to state standards. Without intervention, this problem will persist and cause greater harm in the upcoming years, which makes finding a solution an imperative task to prevent irreversible damage.

The Environmental Protective Agency, or EPA, is at the forefront of preventing damage to the water sources of the United States, yet is simultaneously causing the rise in pollution. Recently, though, there has been conflict among state and federal jurisdictions. The EPA has, “dramatically lowered its advisory levels for two chemical compounds — perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), once found in things like nonstick coatings and stain-resistant clothes — instantly putting water from the Hyannis Water System over the limit” (Bedford). In this case, state standards and federal standards are competing for dominance. Ultimately, the federal standards take precedence, putting thousands at risk. The EPA currently allows for up to fifteen contaminants to be present in drinking water (“Protecting Our Oceans from Pollution”). This impacts current and future generations living on Cape Cod, which only perpetuates the issue of pollution and stands as an example of why change is necessary.

Runoff from vehicles and substances such as gasoline and other forms of oil play a large role in the contamination of fresh water. The increased population on Cape Cod within the past two decades has led to a direct increase in automobiles. More specifically, aquatic vehicles like boats have become main modes of transportation in water-laden areas. As a result, “hull paints [from boats] can contain metals, such as tin and copper, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), all of which

are toxic to marine life” (“The Coastal Environment and Pollution Impacts”). These seemingly minute details are often overlooked by boat owners, who fail to take proper care of their vehicles, leaching these toxic chemicals into water supplies. Additionally, gases and oils, “[contain] other chemicals components, such as zinc and sulfur, at toxic levels” (“The Coastal Environment and Pollution Impacts”). These components are extremely potent, meaning small amounts can devastate vast areas of water.

Though pollution has been a large issue throughout the past century, the dramatic rise within recent years is exponential. There has been a 60% increase in the population on Cape Cod since 1950 (Ramachandran). Directly related to this population rise is a 27% rise in nitrogen concentration within a ten year period, likely related to improper septic system maintenance (Ramachandran). Nitrogen has the potential to drain oxygen levels from water, essentially drowning species of fish through oxygen deprivation (“The Problem”). Such a dramatic rise in a relatively short span represents the extreme increase that pollution is likely to undergo as years progress. Water quality is expected to continue to steadily decline at an average rate of 1.98% per year (Ramachandran). This shows that the rate of pollution is going to grow; therefore, massively increasing the size of the already large pollution problem.

As a region that is highly reliant on tourism and the revenue it provides, Cape Cod’s pollution problem may cause tourism and its economic benefits to steadily decline. It has been recently reported that at least 31% of Cape Cod residents would cease to participate in activities like fishing and swimming due to the risk of exposure to harmful pollutants (Ramachandran). In addition, the current value of homes is expected to decrease. If chemical pollution continues to rise at its current rate, **“towns could see their tax bases decline by hundreds of millions of dollars”** (Ramachandran). **A decline in tax base will create a significant shift from the current economic situation on Cape Cod, one that will become extremely difficult for already struggling families to face. The economic impacts of pollution can prove to be detrimental to the very economic structures of homes, towns, and industries on Cape Cod.**

Because much of Cape Cod’s drinking water is supplied by aquifers, these areas are typically home to numerous types of aquatic wildlife that suffer from the effects of pollution. “Impacts from pollutants on marine life range from direct poisoning through

ingestion of pollutants to indirect habitat degradation through pollution that produces poor water quality and creates coastal waters uninhabitable” (“The Coastal Environment and Pollution Impacts”). Uninhabitable environments in combination with a decrease in population size leads to an imbalance in the food chain. As an example, the disruption of a single species diminishes the food source of its predators. This may cause malnutrition, reproductive issues, and developmental abnormalities (“The Coastal Environment and Pollution Impacts”). The disruption of the food chain in such a manner leads to an unbreakable cycle of species death on a pandemic scale that may even result in extinction (“The Coastal Environment and Pollution Impacts”).

Polluted water sources are more than a simple inconvenience; they are a public health issue that have the potential to cause harm to future generations without intervention. Families, often those with pregnant mothers and young children, are part of the large population on Cape Cod. These individuals are ultimately destined to suffer the most from the negative effects of chemical pollutants in their drinking water. Continuous use of polluted water while pregnant places mothers and their children at a significant “health risk due to exposures of anthropogenic chemical contaminants” (Morganwalp). These risks are also increased in prepubescent children. Further, prolonged exposure during these crucial periods of development have been directly linked to a number of medical conditions, including brain damage, intellectual disabilities, dangerous infections like E. Coli, and more (“Possible Health Effects of Drinking Contaminated Well Water”). These effects are sometimes life-threatening. The drive for change is necessary in order to prevent the harm that chemical pollution has already caused so many families.

Working to prevent any further pollution through raising the standards of the Environmental Protection Agency is the most ideal way in which to solve the pollution crisis permanently. Lowering the number of federally acceptable pollutants in drinking water will create a trickle-down effect in preventing the causes of Cape Cod’s pollution problem. Currently, the federal standards override the state standards. This fails to provide the necessary consistency to efficiently manage the issue. Aligning state and federal standards will enhance the governmental authority that is needed to create new regulations on boating vehicles and sewage runoff, which will therefore decrease the amount of pollution altogether.

The role of the Environmental Protective Agency is to

preserve areas of nature, especially those that are threatened, and to subsequently better serve the United States population (“Our Mission and What We Do”). One focus of their concern is the safety of water used for bathing and drinking, and they must place rules and guidelines regarding this for the country to follow. As a result of the vast area of the United States, some areas unfortunately take precedence over others, leaving out regions like Cape Cod when making these vital decisions. The result of being overlooked in such a way is the incredible amount of pollution that is seen on Cape Cod.

The standards of acceptable levels of chemicals in parts per million in drinking water must be revised by the Environmental Protective Agency in order to create change. As their regulations have shifted, so have the levels of pollution on Cape Cod. As of 2011, flame retardant chemicals were discovered in well over one half of tested water sources (“Tests Find New Contaminants in Cape Cod Drinking Water”). This alarmingly high number was calculated before the EPA lowered their federal guidelines. Consequently, this rose by 16%, reported as recently as this past year (Yee). This overwhelmingly suggests that the federal government’s lack of regulation for these harmful chemicals leads to a direct increase in their presence in drinking water, especially on Cape Cod. With this in consideration, conclusions can be drawn that the EPA’s guidelines and the amount of pollution are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they go hand in hand. Reform is imperative in order to lead to a greater change, as it is evident from past data that the federal standards directly influence those of the state.

Though appealing the Environmental Protection Agency’s ruling appears to be the most effective solution, to many it may seem to be a daunting and time-consuming task. It would likely take a minimum of two years for the EPA to change their standards back to their original standing (Lyons). However, this is in comparison to the number of years in which the pollution on Cape Cod would continue to flourish if left untreated. The resources and money saved by decreasing pollution on Cape Cod will quickly prove to be worth the effort. As an example of this, the town of Hyannis, Massachusetts has been reported to be in need of upwards of 6.5 million dollars (Spillane) to efficiently manage their high rates of pollution. This not only puts the town at risk for debt compilation, but also repurposes the funds gained from taxpayers, which neglects areas in need of repairs, such as damaged roads or

bridges (Spillane). By raising the standards of the Environmental Protection Agency, massive expenditures such as this one are easily avoidable through the direct confrontation of the problem.

An alternative solution is privately outsourcing water for drinking in ways such as utilizing reservoirs and private wells. This method has already been done in a handful of towns and has demonstrated the extreme effects of the pollution crisis on communities. It is a beneficial solution to providing citizens with clean water on relatively short notice. Despite this, the privatization of public water ultimately leads to future complications, such as higher costs of operation (“Water Privatization: Facts and Figures”). Previously seen in areas that have made this transition, homeowners will be forced to pay an average of 59% more for their water use (“Water Privatization: Facts and Figures”) compared to their current costs. Not only is it more costly, but it has the potential to create more pollution without the proper maintenance, which would undermine the initial purpose. Individual underground water routing systems are more likely to deteriorate; therefore, creating a higher likelihood of septic leakage and nitrogen runoff (“Water Privatization: Facts and Figures”). The original problem does not become solved through this method, but rather avoided, and allowed to persist. The result of simply using other water sources is a continuous rise of pollution in already vulnerable areas.

A second alternative to the proposed solution is creating a set of guidelines regarding the maintenance of aquatic vehicles like boats, to reduce the runoff of pollutants from gasoline and other chemicals. This would likely produce the desired results. Although, if put into practice without the proper governmental support from departments such as the Environmental Protection Agency, it would have a negligible widespread or long-term effect. This is because these guidelines would be implemented by county, state, or town—none of which have the current ability to override federal standards, which would ultimately prove any small-scale efforts to be futile due to the lack of support.

Requiring nationwide change will surely put an end to the dangers of Cape Cod’s water pollution crisis. Thinking back to the picturesque day of a still lake, only to be disrupted by the harshness of habitat destruction, is something that will become commonplace if pollution persists at such a rate. Enhancing the standards of the EPA provides hope for Cape Cod that, maybe one day, the cold reality of pollution will no longer hit so close to home.

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ENL108

Compensation for College Athletes is Not Necessary

College students, how do you feel about the possibility of having tons of student debt after college? Well, college athletes not only receive substantial amounts of scholarships, but now people are arguing that they should receive a salary on top of that. Individuals all over the world have been debating if college athletes should or should not be paid. College athletes should not be paid because most colleges do not make enough money to fully pay their athletes, a college athlete’s education is more important, and generally college athletes already receive a variety of benefits while attending college.

Most colleges generally do not have enough money available to pay their athletes. In the article “Should Athletes Be Paid to Play,” Jared Walch of *The Daily Utah Chronicles* includes, “only a few sports tend to bring in money. Often, it is the big programs, football and basketball, that bring in the most revenue.” Walch goes on to explain that the bigger programs are making a majority of the money, which directly pays for the smaller programs that don’t nearly make as much. These bigger programs are generally keeping the school on its feet, by paying for crucial factors, such as facilities, training, and other programs in the

school. If schools can barely make enough money off the smaller programs, and the bigger programs bring in just enough money to cover other expenses in the school, where is the money going to come from to “pay” the athletes? Josh Freedman emphasizes how in 2014, the University of California was 14.5 billion in debt, which contributed to an 86% increase in interest payments per student. Freedman notes, if a school like the University of California has no money available to cover expenses, with extreme debt, students attending these schools will generally have to pay more towards expenses like tuition, room and board, and books. If some schools can barely cover costs of their own expenses, how would they pay their athletes a salary? A recent article titled, “Why College Athletes Should Not Be Paid” written by Maurice Reed Jones included, no college big or small, has enough money available to pay their athletes a salary. Schools have more important priorities that the money needs to go towards, such as building facilities, paying coaches and athletic directors, and giving scholarships to athletes to increase their chance of winning. Jones goes on to explain that the money needs to go to more important assets that will further improve the school; paying the athletes will generally take the money away from doing so.

A college athlete’s education is more important. Horace Mitchell remarks, “Students are not professional athletes who are paid salaries and incentives for a career in sports. They are students receiving access to a college education through their participation in sports.” Mitchell goes on to explain that athletes are not yet “professional,” they are generally earning benefits through scholarships, to keep the athletes motivated to continue their education. Mitchell includes that collegiate sports are not a career, but a “vehicle” to a higher education opportunity, and an athlete’s education is key and should be valued accordingly. Mitchell explains that athletes are generally performing in their sport to earn benefits to lower or eliminate their expenses of college; therefore, it is important that athletes prioritize their education first. This is particularly important with athletes as studies have shown this population needs more academic support. Currently, 60 percent of the University of North Carolina’s football and basketball players read at a level below the 8th grade, while 8 to 10 percent read below a 3rd grade level (“Athletics vs. Academics”). Power notes that most athletes are prioritizing athletics before their academics, which is generally holding them back from advancing their knowledge. Power relays that it is important that schools restore

their “academic reputation” to further advance their athletes’ education. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar of ESPN discusses how a college education is important, by relating the topic to a former NBA player named Junior Bridgeman, who went on to be a successful business man after his career ended in the NBA. Abdul-Jabbar goes on to explain that Bridgeman’s education was a foundation for success after his career ended. Abdul-Jabbar remarks that a college athlete’s education is important, due to the fact, not every “career” lasts forever. It’s important to receive an education to allow new opportunities for success, if the athletes original career path doesn’t go as planned. According to Jake New of *Inside Higher Ed*, more than three quarters of men’s Division 1 basketball believe they will go on to play professional basketball when, in reality, less than 2 percent actually make it to the NBA; therefore, a college athlete’s education is very important.

In addition to their education, college athletes earn a variety of benefits while attending college. According to the NCAA, more than 150,000 athletes receive a combined amount of 2.4 billion dollars in scholarships each year from NCAA member universities (“Benefits to College Student-Athletes”). This large amount of money is shared between the athletes to enhance their educational experience, as well as provide financial support while they are playing for an athletic team while attending college. In addition, the NCAA discusses how college athletes receive academic support such as tutoring. Students who are not student athletes are required to pay for this form of extra support. Anna Orso of Penn Live discusses how student athletes attending Pennsylvania State receive a meal plan, “The NCAA allowed schools to pay for 21 meals a week for students.” These athletes generally receive 3 meals each day of the week and the expenses are directly covered by their university. Not only is this a huge benefit alone, but multiple meals a day can be expensive for an average athlete attending college. Chris Isidore of *CNN Money* recently stated that stipends, available to the college athletes involved in major sports programs, range from about \$2,000 to \$5,000 a year, although some schools offer a few thousand more than that. Isidore explains that these “stipends” generally go towards personal necessities including, student fees, late night snacks, laundry money, transportation, and entertainment.

Opponents of this argument might suggest that college athletes should be compensated, due to their performance and contribution to the team. Jared Walch explains that although

athletes are putting themselves and their body at risk for injury and failure, they are doing it voluntarily. No one is physically forcing them to participate. Walch goes on to explain that just because an athlete performs doesn't mean they should be subject to receiving a paycheck. Although an individual might perform better than another athlete, it doesn't mean they should be paid. Walch suggests, it would be difficult and unfair to pay athletes who are performing better than others; you can't just pay one individual who is "bringing in all the dough" without paying every other athlete in the industry.

It's important that colleges and players understand the lack of funding colleges and universities face. More focus should be on the importance of academics and not the benefits athletes receive when arguing whether or not college athletes should be paid. If colleges focus less on the importance of an athlete's academics and more on the benefits that the athletes should receive, then the athletes will be limited to opportunities in the future. These establishments should focus more on academics and the importance of an education to further benefit the athlete's future. College athletes should prioritize their education and academic experiences; therefore, paying athletes is not necessary.

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ENL205

Hegemonic Racism and Violence

In the development of the United States, hegemonic racism—the domination of a diverse society by those in power—has had a strong influence on laws and social norms. Prominent figures such as Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, endorsed racist opinions that dehumanized people of African descent. Jefferson's beliefs were both born of and serve to reinforce hegemonic racism, the effects of which are best related by those who suffered from them. The first-hand accounts of former slaves show how the influence of hegemonic racism has a corrupting effect on empathy and creates circumstances

in which racial violence is inevitable. In one of these accounts, *Narrative of an American Slave, Written by Himself*, Frederick Douglass describes the laws which perpetuated violence against black slaves. He also tells the story of his enslavement to the Aulds, which illuminates for him and the reader the corrupting influence of slavery. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, Harriet Jacobs tells her story of enslavement in which she was subjected to threats of violence, sexual harassment, and emotional abuse at the hands of her masters. The brutal facts of slavery as described in the narratives of former slaves relate the violence of hegemonic racism.

Prominent figures in American history influenced how people of color were perceived by reinforcing hegemonic racism. For example, Thomas Jefferson in his book *Notes on the State of Virginia*, relates his observations of black slaves and how their behavior spoke to their essential character. He attributes certain physical and mental qualities to race. He writes, “they seem to require less sleep, a black after a hard day’s labor will be induced by the slightest amusement to sit up until midnight... knowing he must be out with the first dawn.” Not only is this absurd and false, but the effect of this conclusion is to reinforce the hegemonic conception that people of African descent are biologically suited to hard labor. Also problematic was his belief that black people were less capable of complex thoughts, feelings and meaningful relationships than white people. Jefferson describes blacks as being cognitively inferior, as he writes, “never yet could I find a black that had uttered a thought above the level of a plain narration.” Further, Jefferson doubts a man of color’s capacity for romantic love, as he writes, “They are more ardent after their female: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation.” Jefferson imagines the inner experience of people of color as unreflective, dull and inferior to the inner experience of a white. Jefferson even asserts that the inner experience of people of color doesn’t allow for profound suffering, or, as he describes his own perceptions, “Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them.” Attitudes such as these are harmful because they justify racial violence—slavery in particular—by reinforcing the notion of white supremacy. Jefferson, as the founding father who wrote the Declaration of Independence, gave undue credibility to these ideas. Jefferson’s beliefs were

influenced by and contributed to a culture of hegemonic racism which served to justify and perpetuate slavery as an institution and other forms of violence against people of color in America.

Narratives of former slaves expose how laws influenced by hegemonic racism enabled the exploitation of black women. Although never explicitly stating so, the law ensured that slave owners wouldn't face legal consequences for sexually assaulting slave women and, in effect encouraged the practice. Under the law in question, as Douglass writes "slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mother" (958). Douglass points out the motivation and the consequence of this, as he writes "This was done all too obviously to administer to (the slaveholders') own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable" (958), the profit being the birth of new slaves. The facts that white men at this time held all the political power and owned most of the slaves, and that the law passed resulted in the widespread sexual exploitation of slave women, is an example of the enabling effect of hegemonic racial prejudice on violence. Although perpetrators of this type can exist in societies that punish such behavior, the total lack of legal protection for the victims would encourage the common practice of sexually assaulting slave women. Laws and their consequent social ills described here are an example of hegemonic racial prejudice in society. The narratives of former slaves describe such cruelty and the people involved in greater detail.

The harassment endured by Jacobs at the hands of her masters, the Flints, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, demonstrates the violence that laws and social norms influenced by hegemonic racism inevitably produce. Dr. And Mrs. Flint each torment Jacobs in different ways. Dr. Flint sexually harasses Jacobs. Mrs. Flint blames her for her husband's behavior and stalks her. Technically she was their daughter's property, but that only mattered when Dr. Flint needed a reason not to sell her (Jacobs 861). Jacobs rejects Dr. Flint's first advances, but he is unrelenting, as she writes "my master's footsteps met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him" (856). Dr. Flint's status as her de facto master gave him unlimited legal latitude in his treatment of Jacobs. Jacobs worked in the house, which made it difficult to avoid him. The behavior of Dr. Flint shows that he viewed Jacobs as his property. Dr. Flint wants Jacobs to "consent" to having sex with him because in his eyes (and in the eyes of his

peers and the law) he has a right to her body and her consent would validate his feelings of ownership and inflate his ego. Jacobs writes of the happiness he would promise her, as she reports him saying, “I would make a lady of you.” His promises, however, were belied by harsh threats and reminders that it was within his power to be cruel to her (861). Mrs. Flint escalates the problem. Mrs. Flint, who could have sympathized with Jacobs and protected her, instead makes her the target of her jealousy. She blames Jacobs and adds to her torments. She is suspicious of Jacobs and interrogates her, stalks her, and even watches her sleep (859-860). At one point, Mrs. Flint confronts Dr. Flint about his behavior, citing Jacobs’ testimony (to the horror of Jacobs), but he simply dismisses the testimony and Mrs. Flint is at a loss as to how she should proceed. This botched intervention, while not a heroic act—being motivated by jealousy rather than concern for Jacobs—demonstrates how little power Mrs. Flint had to help Jacobs even if she wanted to, due to the inferior position of the wife in American households (Jacobs 861). The Flint’s behavior shows how laws and social norms resulting from racial hegemony enable violence against women of color, but the cruelty of the Flints seems almost innate; enabled by rather than resulting from racist laws and social norms. But as seen in Frederick Douglass’ account of one family he was enslaved by, slavery has a corrupting influence on those not naturally inclined to be cruel.

Douglass’ experiences with the Aulds demonstrates the corrupting influence of hegemonic racism. Douglass describes Mrs. Auld, the mother of a young master who owned Douglass for a time. Mrs. Auld treats him at first, as Douglass writes, “As she supposed one person ought to treat another” (975). She shows Douglass civility and kindness and teaches him to read (which was illegal). However, this doesn’t last, as Mr. Auld forbids her to continue when he discovers the lessons. He says to Mrs. Auld, as Douglass writes, “Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world... it would ever unfit him to be a slave” (973). Slaveholders such as Mrs. Auld were corrupted by such beliefs. Douglass notes the change in her demeanor after the incident. Mrs. Auld, a previously caring woman would come at him “With a face made all up of fury” and “snatch” a newspaper from him (Douglass 976). Mrs. Auld’s tragic transition from kindness to cruelty exemplifies the corrupting effect of hegemonic racism on empathy. Ironically, Mr. Auld, in forbidding the lessons, reveals to Douglass that literacy can help him achieve freedom. Inspired by this event,

Douglass endeavors to learn reading, writing, and geography which enabled his eventual escape (979). Douglass' escape is remarkable on its own and a useful metaphor for those who are trying to escape the corrupting influence of hegemonic racism itself.

Douglass' struggle against the physical violence of hegemonic racism was empowered by his education, by making him more aware of the world he lived in. So too can people educate themselves to help protect against the corrupting influence of slavery. This in itself is a revolutionary act, but it is not enough. As the narratives of Douglass and Jacobs teach the reader, laws and social norms allow racial violence to go unpunished thus perpetuating that violence. But, with this knowledge, the reader can better recognize hegemonic racism and confront it in their own lives.

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Final Days of the Great Jewish Revolt: Roman Siege at Masada

When looking back over the planes of human experiences it can be extremely difficult to tell what is truth and what, through the never-ending game of historical “telephone,” has been over-exaggerated, simplified for comprehension by the masses, twisted into political propaganda, and what is an outright lie. In this effort, an event, little known outside of the Jewish community, comes under the microscopic lens of historical thinkers and archeologists. This is an examination of the final days of the “First Roman Jewish War” (66CE to 73CE) and the siege of the hilltop fortress of Masada. For nearly 2,000 years the actions conducted here have helped to create a sense of unity among Jews, and became a focal point in their desires to never again be left stateless or under the boot of a foreign power. For Jews who find meaning and power in the story of Masada, the actual truth of what happened there is of little importance. Masada stands as a reflection on how they see themselves and how they comprehend their world. To those who study history however, the event and its primary sources must be viewed with more diligent scrutiny, with proper appreciation paid.

In the year 66CE, the Roman province of Judea erupted in revolt.¹ Discontent over taxation and religious freedoms/obligations had finally boiled to the surface.² Into the fray, Rome, sent one of its most famous military units, the Tenth Fretensis legion. The legion traced its origins to the campaigns of Julius Caesar, and it was ordered to bring the region back into the imperial yolk.³ The campaign was long and bloody, lasting over seven years; it saw not one but two future emperors in control of the operation.⁴

1. Flavius Josephus, William Whiston, William Reuben Farmer, and D. S. Margoliouth. *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1960), 7.

2. Ibid., 10.

3. Ibid., 34.

4. Neil Faulkner, "Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt Against Rome, 66-73 CE;." *History Today* 52, no. 10 (2002): 47, World History Collection.

When the fighting had finally neared its conclusion, the Jewish rebels were left with only a single stronghold, the mountain fortress at Masada. Rome needed to squash this last bastion of rebellion before the war could finally conclude.⁵

The mountain was steep on all sides, with only a single winding path leading up the southern side. Located only two and a half kilometers north of the Dead Sea, the climate was, and remains, dry and hot. The fighting here lasted over two months and saw the construction of massive earthworks projects as well as extensive field camps and defensive walls that are still visible in the terrain to this day.⁶

Most scholarly work revolving around the events at Masada rely on the writings of a single primary source, the writings of the Romanized Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus.⁷ He is not only a contemporary of the time, but also lived in Judea during the revolts; he acted as the Roman instated governor of Galilee in 66-67CE.⁸ His works are very detailed and well-compiled, telling the story of a society in turmoil, rife with urban terrorists cells, would-be messiahs, countrysides filled with millenarian movements, and clashes between rioters and Roman forces. Recent archeological evidence has tended to cast shadows of doubt onto the writings of Josephus.⁹ This is not new, however: Josephus was well liked in Rome, he lived and wrote from the city for many years following the conclusion of the war.¹⁰ His histories were meant to be consumed by the literate classes of Rome, and as such there is a pro-Roman slant to most of what Josephus describes.¹¹ He tends to cast the worst possible light onto Rome's enemies, treating them as barbarous and simple, while painting the Roman forces as valiant and powerful. The second half of this paper will seek to examine how Josephus' version of Masada and the first Jewish revolt match up to what archeology shows on the ground today. Much of the archeological evidence that will be examined was conducted by Israel in the early 1960's. The team was headed by the former chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Yigael Yadin.

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

Josephus records the events leading up to and during the siege of Masada as follows. The area of Judea, called Palestine by the Romans, was a minor province of the empire under the control of the Governor of Syria.¹² The area was divided along ethnic, religious, and class line, most of the population being peasant Jewish farmers who lived in rural areas.¹³ The upper echelons of society were filled Roman gentry, wealthy merchants, and elite Jews that sided with Rome.¹⁴ In 66CE, a riot took place in the city of Caesaria, north of Judea.¹⁵ The riots were sparked when the Greek and Jewish populations of the city quarreled over the use of a synagogue.¹⁶ When the altercation was not suppressed, sectarian violence escalated. The riots took on a new face when Roman troops were sent in to collect seventeen talents of gold, that the city owed in taxes to Rome, from the treasury. The riots changed into an anti- tax protest that threatened the local Roman authority.¹⁷ The protests swept south and sparked larger movements of “anti-Roman” civil unrest. In response, the Roman procurator of Judea initiated a heavy crackdown on the rioters, with over three thousand killed inside the city of Jerusalem alone.¹⁸ The flame of revolution, however, had been sparked and the situation in the area began to spiral out of Rome’s control. The society fractured across the already existing lines of ethnicity, religion, and class. Waves of violence washed across the region.

In Jerusalem, rebels ousted the Roman occupation and slaughtered numerous Roman garrisons in the area surrounding the city.¹⁹

It is during this time that the group known as the Sicarii, or Dagger men, a zealous millenarian segment of Jews were able to capture the fortress at Masada.²⁰

12. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*, 36.

13. Ibid., 20.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 18.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 22.

18. Ibid., 100.

19. Ibid., 89.

20. Richard Gabriel, "The Myth of Masada." *Military History* 31, no. 6 (March 2015): 64-71, History Reference Center.

To contemporary peasant Jews, the Sacarii were a force fighting for the liberty of the Jews, to Rome, the Dagger-men were a terrorist organization that needed to be eradicated. Sent in to quell the uprising, Rome launched the Tenth Fretensis Legion, along with six additional cohorts of allied troops. A legion of great fame, the Tenth traced its inception back to the campaigns of Julius Caesar.²¹ Leading the army were two future Roman emperors, Vespasian and his son Titus. The legion was brutally effective in its systematic shutting down of each city that had risen in revolt. The campaign revolved around numerous sieges of individual cities until the legion finally reached Jerusalem in 70CE.²² According to Josephus, 1,000,000 people were killed in the siege, capture, and looting of the city.²³ He claimed that the siege came during a time of religious pilgrimage and many people that were unrelated to the societal upheavals had been unwittingly caught in the crossfire.²⁴ Josephus also claims that 100,000 people were taken as slaves by the Roman army, these figures are highly contested.²⁵

When the city of Jerusalem was finally recaptured, Vespasian and Titus left for Rome and clean-up operations were given to a Roman commander by the name of Bassus.²⁶ It is worth mentioning here, that this is also where some sources point to as the true end of the first Roman-Jewish war, and the rest of the conflict consisting of cleanup operations.

Bassus led the Tenth Fretensis Legion on several more sieges around the Dead Sea, until there was only a single stronghold left to the rebels. Bassus perished of natural causes while the army marched back to Jerusalem. He was succeeded by a commander by the name of Flavius Silva. Silva finally marched the army south to claim the final stronghold of Masada for Rome.²⁷

Built on a flat top mountain by Herod the Great nearly a century prior, Masada stood two and a half kilometers south of the Dead Sea, and overlooks a barren, arid desert landscape.²⁸

21. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*, 36.

22. Ibid., 181.

23. Ibid., 183.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 204.

26. Ibid., 224.

27. Ibid., 260.

28. Ibid., 200.

The fortress rises roughly 140 meters straight up, with only a single zig-zagging road, named the serpents path, that leads to the top of the mountain.²⁹

Masada had a great wealth of resources at its disposal, large store houses and the ability to grow its own food inside the walls thanks to its large, flat area.³⁰ The fortress was also supplied with water from numerous major and minor cisterns.³¹ The mountain top was ringed by large double layered walls nearly four meters wide and six meters tall.³² The walls could be filled with earth or stone in times of siege or double as storage when needed.³³ The dry air helped to ensure that provisions would last long past the period of expiration that would have been experienced in more humid territories. The fortress was near impregnable to any conventional invader. Unfortunately for the Jewish resistance, the rigorously trained, combat hardened Roman legion, and its accompanying cohorts, were anything but a conventional adversary.

At his disposal, Silva had roughly 10,00 fighting troops, made up of the legion and cohorts, as well as thousands of additional Jewish prisoners taken from previous battles.³⁴ On top of the mountain stood roughly 1,000 defending Jews, many of whom were women and children refugees who had fled the Roman occupations of other cities. The Jews in Masada were led by a man named Eleazar Ben Ya'ir.³⁵

When the Roman legion arrived, they faced the daunting task of taking the mountain fortress. A frontal assault along the serpentine path promised to be nearly suicidal, as progress up the hill would be maddeningly slow and leave soldiers exposed for far too long, in range of projectile armaments that the defenders would rain down upon them.³⁶

29. Richard Gabriel, "The Myth of Masada," 64-71.

30. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*, 200.

31. Ibid., 201.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 234.

34. Ibid., 226.

35. Ibid., 218.

36. Ibid., 216.

Worse, Silva estimated that the Roman forces would run out of supplies long before the Sacarii and Jewish refugees on top of the mountain.³⁷

Silva's response to these numerous problems was, in part, what would make the story of the siege last so long and mean much to the Jews. Upon arriving to the site, he immediately set his men to work mining local stone and constructing a three-meter-high wall of circumvallation; this is a defensive wall that wrapped around the enemy's fortification, sealing it from the outside world.³⁸ The idea behind the wall of circumvallation was two-fold; first, to keep his own troops from being harassed by Jewish sorties and second, to ensure that no opponents could easily leave the battlefield. Walls of this nature had been used by the Roman armies for over 100 years by the time Silva was besieging Masada. Most famously in the Battle of Alesia, during Julius Caesar's war against the Gauls of central Europe. During that battle, Caesar's men constructed not one but two massive walls of circumvallation. The first was to keep the forces of Vercingetorix trapped inside their forest stronghold, the second was to repel the reinforcing Gaulic army that had come to aid their encircled and beleaguered compatriots. Along with the walls at Masada, the Romans also built eight field camps of varying sizes, four major camps and four minor, and diverted water from one of Masada's major cistern for their own use.³⁹ With the stage set, the issue of how to get troops into the fortress became Silva's next priority. His plan was audacious. If there was no reasonable, natural, way to approach the top, then he would simply have his troops and slaves construct a new one. On the western side of the mountain, which is slightly shorter than the eastern side, Silva had his men begin to construct a massive earthen ramp.⁴⁰ He ordered his troops to begin the construction of the ramp, and set the slaves to the task of keeping the troops well-stocked with building material and water; the earth slowly began to rise at the defenders feet.⁴¹

37. Richard A. Gabriel, "The Myth of Masada," 64-71.

38. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70* (De Bello Judaico), 210.

39. *Ibid.*, 211.

40. *Ibid.*, 222.

41. *Ibid.*, 266.

The siege ramp was designed to have a twenty-degree slope, shallow enough to allow a siege tower to traverse the incline, upon its completion.⁴² At its base, the ramp was over 200 meters thick and rose over ninety meters at its tallest point.⁴³ Over months the rise slowly came to completion, with a total weight equal to about one and a half Empire State Buildings. Finally, when construction had ended, a siege tower, constructed on-site, was launched up the slope. The final strokes of the battle had begun.

Attached to the siege tower was a large battering ram, designed to hammer away at the exterior walls of Masada, while keeping Roman forces, relatively, safe.⁴⁴ When the defensive walls finally gave way to the repeated strikes of the ram, the attackers were met with new, freshly constructed, walls made of earth and wood inside that proved to be more capable of absorbing the battering rams assault than stone walls.⁴⁵ In response, the Romans simply set these walls on fire, though this process nearly also destroyed the siege tower.⁴⁶ Once this was done the Roman prepared for the final assault on foot into the compound.

It is here that the story takes a significant shift, for when the Romans finally breached the walls that had halted their progress for so many months, they were not met with the screams of combat and terror, they were met with silence. It was not a battle that waited for them of the inside of Masada, it was instead a mass grave. According to Josephus, the Jews, swayed by several powerful speeches delivered by Ya'ir, agreed to deny the Romans their final victory, instead opting to commit suicide rather than be slain by a Roman or taken as a slave. The Jews then drew lots. Ten men killed the other thousand. Lots were drawn again. One man killed the other nine before finally taking his own life.⁴⁷ Josephus says that the story of the final moments for the defenders came to him from a handful of women and children that had been able to escape the slaughter. They claimed that the Jews chose a quick death to the alternative of fighting an unwinnable battle.

42. Ibid., 224.

43. Ibid., 225.

44. Ibid., 225.

45. David M. Jacobson, 2006. "The Northern Palace at Masada — Herod's Ship of the Desert?." *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 138, no. 2 (2016): 99-117. Academic Search Premier.

46. Ibid.

47. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*, 226.

In collecting their remaining forces in a single place the Sacarii provided a great service to Rome.⁴⁸ It was here at Masada, Silva believed, that they could once and for all end the rebel group without the need for prolonged guerilla-style war over a large area.⁴⁹ This all but sealed the fate of the rebels taking up refuge there. The Romans would not skimp on allotting a large force to the area, making no expense too great to pay for the assurance of success. Had the Sacarii not coalesced into a single area and continued to spread their message, rather than make a heroic final last stand, the First Jewish Revolt may have continued much longer and weakened the Roman presence in the area.

Josephus tells that the commander of the Jews at Masada gave two rousing speeches to the troops and refugees in order to get them to commit to the murder suicide plot.⁵⁰ He attributes these words to Eleazer; “Let our wives die before they are abused, let our children die before they tasted of slavery.”⁵¹ However, some disregard these speeches as a literary device, placed there intentionally by Josephus to heighten the drama. Opponents of the speeches claim that dying a valiant heroic death is much more characteristic of Greek and Roman ideology, where dying as a martyr for a cause was a source of pride. Jews, claim some scholars, value life as a gift from God and suicide is never to be allowed, no matter what the struggle.

The story that Josephus spins is gripping and dramatic. It tells of human ingenuity, conquest, perseverance, and sacrifice; but what is known about Josephus the person? It is known that there certainly was a military operation at Masada conducted by the Roman legion. There are other sources that make mention, the Dead Sea Scrolls for example, and archeological evidence supports that there was a military presence surrounding the mountain. But what about its scale and the true outcome of what happened to those defenders inside? For this, the only real evidence is the writing of Josephus. An examination of who Josephus was and who his writings were meant to be read by is a necessity. So, who was Flavius Josephus?

48. *Ibid.*, 236.

49. Gabriel, "The Myth of Masada,"64-71.

50. Michael Avi-Yonah. "History: The Aftermath of the First Roman War." In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 200-204. Vol. 9, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA), 2007. *World History in Context*.

51. Josephus, *The Great Roman-Jewish War: C.E. 66-70 (De Bello Judaico)*, 260.

Flavius Josephus was originally born Joseph Ben Matthias, in the year 37CE.⁵² He grew up in a wealthy family, and became a priest, a member of the aristocratic society in Judea.⁵³ Eventually Josephus was appointed to the governorship of the province of Galilee.⁵⁴ He played a small leadership role in the early days of the Jewish uprising.⁵⁵ As a priest, he acted as a voice of moderation in the Jewish community, arguing for calm, and to work with the Romans in hopes of gradual change. He was eventually captured in the year 67CE by Flavius Vespasian.⁵⁶ Fortunately for Josephus, Vespasian spared him from public whipping and crucifixion, the standard punishment meted out to the traitors of Rome.⁵⁷ Josephus spent the remainder of the war acting as an interpreter for the Romans, and as an emissary between Rome and the Jewish communities.⁵⁸

When the war had finally concluded, Josephus was moved to Rome where he was handsomely rewarded by the now emperor Flavius Vespasian, for his actions and support during the war.⁵⁹ He was given full Roman citizenship as well as land and continued patronage by the Vespasian family.⁶⁰ This is also when Josephus took on the name Flavius, in honor of his new patron. It was only after his move to Rome that Josephus began to write his histories. He acted as a court historian to the Roman government.⁶¹ His first major work "The Great Roman-Jewish War," which this paper has relied upon a great deal, was written shortly after Josephus moved into the city. He was writing for an audience of Roman elites. He seems to have been loved by the Romans and loved living in Rome. His history is a no-frills exploration of the major triggers of the war that discusses army movements and operations

52. Ibid., 269.

53. Falkner, "Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt Against Rome, 66-73 CE," 47.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Michael Avi-Yonah, "History: The Aftermath of the First Roman War." In *Encyclopedia Judaica* 2nd ed., edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 9 (2007): 200-204.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Falkner, "Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt Against Rome,66-73 CE;," 47.

in Palestine. Josephus gives little written time to why the Jews felt that they needed to revolt and their emotional turmoil. The mechanics of the revolt were much more important to him. Along with his history of the rebellion, Josephus wrote numerous other works that included, a history of the Jews, from Adam to the revolt titled “Antiquities of the Jews”, and an autobiographical essay that recounts his time spent as the governor of Galilee in 66-67CE titled “The Life of Josephus.” It is in this essay that Josephus speaks of all the problems that bothered him in Galilee and the province of Judea.

What does the modern-day site of Masada tell of what really happened there nearly 2,000 years ago? Is Josephus correct in his interpretation of the events, or is the truth more complicated? The first question one might ask is; was there even a battle at all, is there evidence to prove at least this much? The answer to this question is an easy yes. The general area surrounding Masada is littered with evidence of the Roman camps and walls, as well as left over artillery balls. Thanks to the incredibly dry climate, the site has been exceptionally well preserved.⁶² Then there is, of course, the splendid ramp that the Romans and their slaves constructed. It still stands proud, foreboding, and all together unnatural over the flat landscape. The eight military camps, along with their gateways through the circumvallation, and rubble left from the numerous towers are still there today dotting the ground. When aerial photography is added, the picture becomes clearer. The remnants of the defensive walls are easily seen and there is little doubt of their existence. However, scholars question if the size of the walls, described in Josephus’ texts, are accurate. The Dead Sea area is devoid of most conventional building materials. Getting enough stone to build the walls to the three-meter height that Josephus describes would have been very difficult, and possibly taken longer than the entire siege to complete. What is more likely, is that shorter walls were built and then topped with wooden spears to achieve a similar effect. This would also explain why some of the defenders did escape. This is known because the Sacarii as an organization did not perish entirely at Masada. They continued to be an active force in the region long after the conclusion of the war.

62. Avi-Yonah, "History: The Aftermath of the First Roman War."

Many criticisms have been leveled with the original Israeli archeological study, 1963-65, led by Yigael Yadin and the way that the team interpreted much of the findings. Yadin and his team, found several bodies at Masada; a young boy, a young girl, a middle aged-woman, and a middle-aged man. He claimed that the bodies were those of a great Jewish general and his family from the revolt. The bodies were given a state funeral and numerous accolades. However, later studies found that the bodies were, most likely, of Roman origin, possibly captives of the Sacarii. Yadin also found several arrowheads on the top of Masada. He claimed that this was definitive proof of a protracted siege, and again later investigation found that the arrowheads were not of Roman origin, with their quality falling short of what was demanded by the Roman military.⁶³ Then there is the question of the bodies. With the dry conditions on top of Masada it was expected that more of the bodies from the defenders should be present at the site. This is of course a more difficult argument to maintain as many things can happen over 2,000 years, such as additional forces using the mountain at other times during the interim period, cleaning the site of the bodies. However, without definite evidence, there is the possibility that the whole story of the mass suicide is a myth, a story concocted by Josephus. It is entirely possible that the defenders at the top of Masada back in 73CE, met the same fate as so many other rebels, death by Roman troops or enslavement.

Even with all the discrepancies, Masada and the story surrounding the first Jewish revolt from Rome, is still incredibly important. To the Jews of today Masada stands as a symbol of Jewish nationalism and identity. The Israeli Defense Forces take a vow to never again let the temple of Masada fall. The story of Masada stands as an example of the Jewish ideal of fighting against oppression from all sources both internally and externally.⁶⁴ The story and site of Masada tell an exhausting story of differing ideologies and peoples clashing with one another. It stands as a moment through which understanding of a larger world in motion can be derived. Between the monumental efforts of the Roman army to break into the fortress, and the valiant last stand of those

63. Ibid.

64. Alexander H. Joffe, "Sacrificing Truth: Archaeology and the Myth of Masada." *Middle East Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003). World History Collection..

defending it, Masada gives moderns the unique ability to peer back through time. Discrepancies in scale and outcome set aside, the writings of Josephus are a rare treasure. To have such a detailed contemporary account from any point in history is fantastic, let alone one following events of nearly 2,000 years ago.

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Global Eradication of Polio: A Paradigm for Immunization and Public Health

In the early part of the 20th century, polio, or infantile paralysis, began affecting large portions of the country and quickly took away the sense of health security and the freedom to engage in communal activities that individuals were accustomed to. During the early stages of the outbreak, many of those infected with the virus were asymptomatic and those dying from paralysis were even more rare. The uncertainty about how the disease was spread and the seemingly random possibility of contracting the disease seemed to terrify people as much as, or possibly even more than, the anticipated effects of the disease itself. Since children were found to be more susceptible to the disease, the motivation to find a cure was fueled even more by the desire to save the innocent lives of children, both in this country and around the world. It is understood that in times of epidemic disease, immense fear can occur in the infected population, and people react to the stress of the epidemic in a variety of different ways, ranging from panic, to an increased gravitation towards religion, or, in the worst of scenarios, by completely ignoring the problem altogether.

According to the Nieman Foundation's "Guide to Covering Pandemic Flu," "When people initially become aware of a risk, they overreact . . . they take precautions that may be excessive, may be inappropriate, and are certainly premature. The knee-jerk reaction of overreacting early to a potential crisis is extremely useful [because] it protects us" ("How Do People React"). From this we understand that an early, fear-driven reaction, regardless

of whether it is necessary, is much better than fear-driven inaction, or, in other words, resorting to the human coping mechanism of denial.

The societal fear at the time spurred the competitive efforts of scientists and doctors like Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin and set the tone for efforts by government and the public to organize and develop many different initiatives that eventually led to the eradication of the disease. The advances made during the peak period of the polio epidemic serve as a template for how we approach modern epidemics today. Through the efforts of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and collaborative organizations, many countries have become polio-free and similar measures have been developed to address other infectious diseases, particularly through the development of more effective immunization systems and disease-management processes.

Poliomyelitis, commonly known as polio, is an extremely infectious virus that causes a much-feared paralytic disease. The Greek words *polio* and *myelon*, meaning “grey” and “marrow,” reference the grey matter within the spine (Mehndiratta, et al.). The name of the virus illustrates the idea of an infection of this area resulting in a deformed and unhealthy spinal cord, which in turn results in the symptom of paralysis (Mehndiratta, et al.). *Poliovirus is known to be transmitted from person to person through direct fecal-to-oral contact, as well as by indirect contact with saliva or contaminated water.* Polio is caused by any one of the polioviruses, which are all members of the *Enterovirus* genus that is part of the *Picornaviridae* family (Albrecht, et al.). The overall disease can be further broken down into multiple stages, each varying in its level of severity: abortive polio, nonparalytic polio, and paralytic polio.

As mentioned in the article “Poliomyelitis” by Mehndiratta et al., abortive poliomyelitis is a mild form of polio that causes between 4 - 8% of infections. Flu-like symptoms and mild respiratory tract infections are often a common side effect at this stage but usually improve and are cured over the course of a week (Mehndiratta, et al.). Similarly, non-paralytic polio causes the same mild, flu-like symptoms; however, more neurological symptoms like muscle weakness, pain, and back and neck stiffness can occur and usually persist for up to ten days (“Polio”). In contrast, paralytic polio is the most severe stage of the disease yet only accounts for less than 1% of those infected with poliomyelitis. According to Kidd et al., at St. Thomas’ Hospital:

Following the meningitic phase, most patients develop a

spinal type of poliomyelitis, in which severe muscle pain arises, often with muscle spasms, then weakness and fasciculation develops. Weakness tends to be asymmetrical, the lower limbs being more often affected than the upper limbs, [and] a biphasic form may arise in which further weakness occurs . . . Muscle tone is flaccid, the reflexes are initially brisk, then [eventually] become absent.

As paralysis worsens, the chest and throat may also become paralyzed forcing a patient to receive artificial breathing support if they are to survive. Due to the advances made since the 1900s, medical science in the United States in the 1950s seemed fully capable of understanding and dealing with the majority of illnesses that presented. Unfortunately, with the onset of the polio epidemic, the general feeling of health security was swept away; this feeling had been a luxury that the society of the time was suddenly deprived of. This insight further explains the public's feelings of incredible vulnerability and allows us to better understand why so many lived in fear during the many years of the epidemic.

Although many actions had been taken to stop the rapid spread of the disease, the attempt to find a cure was temporarily put at a standstill when doubts and questions arose about the feasibility of creating an effective vaccine. In response to such reservations, Melvin A. Glasser, a former director of the Health Security Action Council who supervised the medical field trials for the Salk vaccine, recalled that, in a meeting with Basil O'Connor and other scientists, O'Connor declared, "About fifteen thousand . . . will be paralyzed and more than a thousand will die. If we have the capacity to prevent this, we have a social responsibility . . . it is our duty to save lives, no matter how many difficulties may be involved (qtd. in Gould). Through this statement, we can understand that the medical necessity to develop a vaccine was no longer burdened by the logistics needed to complete it, for it had instead become a moral responsibility to save humanity at whatever cost.

Two different polio vaccines were developed simultaneously in order to limit the spread of poliovirus, along with many attempts that were made to try to cure those whom had been infected. By 1947, Dr. Salk was sought after by the University of Pittsburgh to develop a virus research program specifically targeting poliovirus. By 1953, Salk and his associates developed an inactivated, or killed, injected polio vaccine ("Timeline"). As mentioned in an online resource by the Smithsonian National

Museum of American History, “The chief advantage of Salk’s killed virus vaccine was safety . . . [while] its chief disadvantage was that the formaldehyde used in its manufacture caused the immune system to recognize killed virus differently from live virus, possibly risking a shortened period of immunity” (“Two Vaccines”). Although concerns about the vaccine remained, Salk’s field trials still took place in 1954 and millions of children participated in the trials in hopes of getting immunity from the crippling disease. According to the museum’s timeline, as a result of Salk’s vaccine, the incidence of polio within the United States fell by 85 - 90% (see fig. 1). Over the course of a year, on the tenth anniversary of FDR’s death, news of Salk’s immense success swept through the nation, and Dr. Thomas Francis, Salk’s mentor and chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan, announced one of the biggest breakthroughs in modern medical history: a vaccine capable of curing polio (“Timeline”).



Figure 1. Poliomyelitis in the United States, Years 1940 - 1985. Annual incidence per 100,000 population. Redrawn from J.R. Paul, 1971. (Dames, M., and D. White D. *National History of Infectious Disease*, 4th Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1972)

In contrast, Dr. Sabin focused on his own initiative and developed an oral vaccine that included a weakened form of the live virus. According to the Smithsonian Museum, one of the greatest attributes of his vaccine was the fact that “after vaccination, people shed weakened virus in their fecal waste. This boosted immunity for others . . . and gradually reduced the number of people susceptible to poliomyelitis” (“Two vaccines”). Once Sabin conducted and completed his own “mass clinical trials” in Russia, his vaccine was proven successful, and in the beginning of 1962, it replaced Salk’s killed vaccine (“Timeline”). Sabin’s vaccine was quickly adopted and was the predominant vaccine used in all parts of the world from 1963 until 1999 (“Timeline”). The popularity of Sabin’s vaccine is mostly credited to the fact that it resulted in better intestinal immunity, was easier to administer, and was more affordable overall compared to Salk’s vaccine.

(Okayasu, et al.).

Although Salk and Sabin strongly disagreed with each other's approaches to the epidemic, the competition that arose between them greatly accelerated the development of a safe and effective vaccination program. In retrospect, the global effort to end polio throughout the majority of the world was only made possible by the development of both types of vaccines, for without the complementary benefits of each type of vaccine, the goals that have been reached in regards to eradicating poliomyelitis would not have been attainable.

The widespread use of vaccines within the United States dramatically reduced the number of new cases within a few years (see fig. 1). According to an article by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP), titled "Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases," "In the United States, the number of cases of paralytic poliomyelitis reported annually declined from more than 20,000 cases in 1952 to fewer than 100 cases in the mid-1960s ("Epidemiology"). Although polio was actively being dealt with in America, it took many countries much longer to recognize the threat poliomyelitis posed and mobilize to address the severe consequences that inaction on polio had placed on the population. In light of the increased recognition of the burden of disability during the 1970s, global organizations began to take notice and started developing ways of actively targeting areas struck with polio. As mentioned by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) website, lameness surveys were undertaken in developing countries in the 1970s and as a result "routine immunization were introduced worldwide as part of national immunization programs [intended] to control the disease in many developing countries" ("History"). For example, in 1985, the countries associated with the Pan American Health Organization established the goal of eliminating poliomyelitis from the Western Hemisphere by 1990. According to the CDCP-sponsored article:

The strategy to achieve this goal included increasing vaccination coverage; enhancing surveillance for suspected cases (i.e., surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis); and using supplemental immunization strategies such as national immunization days, house-to-house vaccination, and containment activities. ("Epidemiology")

The efforts taken by the Pan American Health Organization, were successful and out of the "6,000 cases of polio [reported] in

the region . . . the last case was detected on August 23, 1991, in Peru (Mitchell).

As increased awareness was brought to polio victims, more organizations became involved in the cause and began running their own campaigns and developing new goals focusing on specific areas. In 1988, “the World Health Assembly (the governing body of the World Health Organization) adopted the goal of global eradication of poliovirus by the year 2000” (“Epidemiology”). Although the organization was not able to achieve the goal it had established, the organization continued its mission and “nearly three decades after the World Health Assembly launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988, four of the six WHO regions have been certified polio-free” (Bolu et al.)

With just three countries left in which to eradicate the disease, the world is on the verge of accomplishing global polio eradication. In a recent analysis of remaining cases of wild poliovirus (WPV) transmission during 2013, it was noted that, for the first quarter of that year, there were only three countries reporting activity; Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan reported a total of 22 cases. Compared to just one year earlier, this total was down from 48 cases in four countries, with none reported from Chad. Also of great note, India had not reported a case since 2011 and was not considered to have the polio disease as of 2012 (“Progress” 335).

Currently, the world is in the final stages of polio eradication; a goal that has been worked toward for the past 30 years is nearing completion. However, stubborn pockets of infection remain in some of the most difficult-to-access areas of the world, such as the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, due to conflict and poor transportation infrastructure (Asghar S295). In spite of the continued difficulties in some areas, it is clear that progress toward the goal of complete eradication is continuing, and in 2013 the WHA established the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan for 2013-2018. This initiative established four main goals: to accomplish the end of both wild and vaccine-derived polio virus transmission, to continue polio virus immunization with only the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), to continue to certify polio virus transmission-free areas and prevent spread from the remaining infected area back into recently cleared countries, and to plan for the innovations, experience, and technical capacity of the GPEI to transition to other global health initiatives (Cochi et al.

S540).

Some of the main accomplishments of the GPEI are training, surveillance, and delivery. The GPEI has trained millions of health workers and vaccination volunteers and these remain a valuable resource for programs to address other diseases going forward. The surveillance network that was established for polio includes both infrastructure for laboratory capacity, currently a network of 145 national labs with highly trained staff, and, also, infrastructure for web-based communications and data-management systems. Again, these assets remain available, if maintained and expanded, for achieving progress against other diseases and for the monitoring of novel outbreaks. Finally, in the area of delivery, the GPEI has developed proven methods in the areas of community mapping, survey planning and implementation, vaccination team management, and many other aspects of healthcare delivery that will be beneficial when applied to other public health programs (Cochi et al. S544).

A major goal of the 2013-2018 Endgame Strategic Plan is to plan for the legacy of the GPEI, to ensure that the efforts made on behalf of defeating polio are preserved. This legacy includes continuing programs to protect against a recurrence of polio and transitioning the knowledge and infrastructure of the GPEI to other public health programs. The lessons that can be taken from GPEI have been described in detail. Key among them is the need for engagement of the local community and the establishment of local, political will to develop support for vaccination or other health initiatives (Cochi et al. S541). Other important program characteristics have been: the use of polio vaccination to engage communities in other health interventions, the development of a research program to improve program strategies, and the coordination of advocacy initiatives to involve political and business groups (Cochi et al. S544-46).

These lessons serve as a template for how the world is addressing current vaccination programs such as measles and rubella and will serve for addressing new epidemics, such as Ebola, as they arise. Based on the continuing threat of viral exposure, it's reasonable to conclude that our effort to limit infectious diseases is an on-going process that will exist for as long as humankind survives, regardless of whether certain diseases have been eradicated. We can only develop models to the best of our ability and learn from the victories and failures of past successful initiatives.

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HON200

This Is To Enrage you

The United States experienced unexpected shocks when the AIDS epidemic began in the 1980s. The suddenness with which the disease appeared and its initial high morbidity rate in only one specific demographic of the population were perplexing aspects of this new infection. Because the gay community, disproportionately affected by the new, deadly disease, was already stigmatized in media and society, when AIDS began killing gay men, the government and social institutions were not hard pressed to provide support. Unfortunately, mismanagement of the AIDS crisis by political leaders and medical experts also led to the spread of misinformation about the disease and caused a lack of comprehensive care for AIDS patients. In his book *Plagues in World History*, John Alberth comments that “truly, an epidemic tempers a society, subjecting it to trials either to which it must succumb or over which it might triumph.”¹ The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power was a grassroots activist group formed to counter

1 John Alberth, *Plagues in World History* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 1.

rising stigma against AIDS patients in the wake of government inaction. The coalition used art and direct-action protest to demand a critical change to societal misconceptions about the virus and those it infected, and triumphed in pressuring major institutions to change regulations, seek new and more accessible treatments for the virus, and to listen to the needs and experiences of AIDS patients.

In June of 1981, the Center for Disease Control released an article in their premier publication *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.² The report was titled “Pneumocystis **Pneumonia**---Los Angeles” and detailed the cases of five young men that had been confirmed diagnosed with a relatively rare form of pneumonia, not commonly found in young, healthy lungs.³ All but one of the five men had been previously healthy, succumbing to this not-often seen illness after experiencing bouts of fever, cytomegalovirus (a common virus that causes fever, sore throats, and swollen glands),⁴ and candida mucosal (thrush).⁵ The CDC concluded that “All the above observations suggest the possibility of a cellular-immune dysfunction related to a common exposure that predisposes individuals to opportunistic infections such as pneumocystosis and candidiasis.”⁶ All five of the men identified as homosexuals, the only other aspect besides their curious illnesses that linked them.

The infections that were ravaging these men would later be found to be but cunning predators, attacking bodies lacking functioning immune systems. The real culprit was identified first as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency⁷, or GRID, but would later, when it was realized that gay men were not the only ones susceptible, become more infamously known as AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.⁸ AIDS is the final stage of the

2 “Pneumocystis Pneumonia,” Center for Disease Control, accessed March 28, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/june_5.htm.

3 Ibid.

4 “Cytomegalovirus (CMV) and Congenital CMV Infection,” Center for Disease Control, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/cmV/>.

5 Center for Disease Control, “Pneumocystis Pneumonia.”

6 Ibid.

7 Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 121.

8 Ibid., 171.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV, a slow-acting virus that decimates its hosts' immune defenses by invading helper cells called T-lymphocytes, or T-4 cells.⁹ Full-blown AIDS is diagnosed when the virus is detected at high levels within the body, leaving the person at an increased risk for opportunistic and secondary infections, which act with uncharacteristic severity.¹⁰ AIDS is transmissible through certain body fluids – blood, semen (cum), pre-seminal fluid (pre-cum), rectal and vaginal fluids, and breast milk.¹¹ It is most commonly passed between people during sexual activity or through the shared use of needles or syringes, and less commonly from mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.¹²

The swift spread of AIDS in the 1980s was in part due to the suddenness with which it seemed to have appeared, as well as the general misunderstandings of what the disease was, who it affected, and how it was contracted. However, the severity of the epidemic, with 36,058 Americans diagnosed with the disease and 20,849 already dead by 1987¹³—six years after the first reports of the disease—was compounded by ineffective government regulations,¹⁴ profiteering by big pharmaceutical companies,¹⁵ and social hysteria fueled by homophobia.¹⁶ In 1987, while much of the rest of the world created educational campaigns about AIDS to respond to the pandemic that was now reported in 51 countries,¹⁷ government and social institutions in the United States remained woefully committed to out-of-date regulations, misinformation, and condemnation for those infected.

In response to the mishandling of the epidemic, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), a grassroots coalition of

9 “HIV/AIDS,” Center for Disease Control, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/whatishiv.html>.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Shilts, *Band*, 596

14 Alberth, *Plagues*, 146-147, Shilts, *Band*, 585, 601

15 Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U. S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 169.

16 Ibid.

17 Shilts, *Band*, 589.

activists based in New York City, united in 1987¹⁸ and turned the public health crisis into a political movement. Informed by the civil rights movements in the US and South Africa, the gay rights movement, and anti-Vietnam protests,¹⁹ ACT UP channeled the anger of AIDS activists into direct action demonstrations, protests, and creative public service announcements that confronted the systemic and sociocultural indifference that was increasing the spread of the epidemic. Through art and activism, ACT UP worked to change the course of the epidemic by advocating for innovations in AIDS research, demanding affordable treatment options for AIDS patients, and creating awareness about the realities of living with the virus. Most importantly, they fought for the inclusion of AIDS patients' voices and experiences in the national discourse about the disease.

ACT UP used art to create a powerful public presence that also clearly stated their demands and messages. Early in its formation, ACT UP was granted permission by a group of gay activists to use their slogan, the words Silence=Death accompanied by an upright pink triangle.²⁰ The slogan was used again and again in ACT UP demonstrations and became synonymous with the coalition; it was printed on posters, on banners, on t-shirts, in flyers, and wheat-pasted on city buildings.²¹ The pink triangle and Silence=Death slogan called attention to the parallels between past abuses against homosexuals and the AIDS crisis; an inverted pink triangle had been used by the Nazis to identify homosexuals in concentration camps during World War II.²² The upright pink triangle was then a "conscious attempt to transform a symbol of humiliation into one of solidarity and resistance."²³

ACT UP used politically charged imagery and slogans to

18 Brier, *Ideas*, 157.

19 Ronald Hayduk and Benjamin Shepard, eds., *From ACT UP to the WTO* (London: Verso, 2002), 89.

20 "Silence = Death," Act Up New York, accessed April 1, 2018, <http://www.actupny.org/reports/silencedeath.html>.

21 Ibid.; "Act Up NY Records," New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/act-up-new-york-records#/?tab=navigation>; Christopher Reed, *Art and Homosexuality: A History of Ideas*, (Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2011), 217-220.

22 Act Up New York, "Silence."

23 Ibid.

draw attention to misinformation about the epidemic and protested misrepresentations of AIDS patients and the gay community. During the 1987 Gay Pride Parade in NYC, the group “wheeled a moving jail with AIDS prisoners down the city’s central thoroughfare—a graphic protest against the very real threat of an AIDS quarantine.”²⁴ Quarantine, and other extreme measures such as compulsory testing, had been floated as possible ways to curb the epidemic by conservatives in Washington.²⁵ At other demonstrations, images of political leaders, such as NYC Mayor Ed Koch and President Ronald Reagan, called out state and federal government inaction – it took until 1987, six years after the epidemic began, for President Reagan to mention AIDS in a public statement,²⁶ and just as long for Reagan to accede to pressure from the Senate to create the first presidential commission on AIDS.²⁷

ACT UP also directly countered poor reflections of AIDS patients in other media and artworks. In 1988, ACT UP protested artist Nicholas Nixon’s opening at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in NYC, passing out a flyer with the words “STOP LOOKING AT US; START LISTENING TO US” printed on it.²⁸ The flyer urged attendees of Nixon’s show to think critically of the photography on display, which featured AIDS patients in grave conditions, wasted from the disease. ACT UP argued in their critique of the show that:

We believe that the representation of people with AIDS (PWAs) affects not only how viewers will perceive PWAs outside the museum but, ultimately, crucial issues of AIDS funding, legislation, and education. The artist’s choice to produce representational work always affects more than a single artist’s career, going beyond issues of curatorship, beyond the walls on which an artist’s work is displayed. Ultimately, representations affect those portrayed. In portraying PWAs as people to be pitied or feared, as people alone and lonely, we believe that this show perpetuates general misconceptions about

24 Hayduk and Shepard, *ACT UP*.

25 Shilts, *Band*, 587.

26 *Ibid.*, 596.

27 *Ibid.*, 589.

28 Reed, *Art*, 209.

AIDS without addressing the realities of those of us living every day with this crisis as PWAs and people who love PWAs.²⁹

ACT UP also targeted homelessness, intravenous drug use, and the different issues felt by people of color living with AIDS and women living with AIDS.³⁰ ACT UP used provocative imagery and slogans to address the myriad ways in which AIDS patients were being de-humanized, ostracized, or neglected. The group organized kiss-ins and other like demonstrations of physical affection between AIDS patients, as well as between same-sex partners.³¹ These performance-based public service announcements alerted the general public to the reality that AIDS could not be spread through close contact touching, and also acknowledged the humanity of the gay community.³² ACT UP also staged performative actions in front of the New York City housing commissioner's office³³ to draw attention to the needs of homeless people living with AIDS and organized clean needle exchanges as HIV prevention in cities where the possession of needles was often illegal and carried fines or possible jail time – needle exchange was seen as a way to challenge laws that ACT UP felt obstructed health care, as well as evaluate what other services intravenous drug users may need.³⁴

In their first organized action, the Women's Caucus of ACT UP, a committee that focused on women's health and HIV, protested *Cosmopolitan* headquarters after they published an article titled "Reassuring News about AIDS: A Doctor Tells Why You May Not be at Risk," written by psychiatrist Robert Gould, which claimed that heterosexual women did not need to worry about contracting HIV, even if having unprotected sex.³⁵ The action was one of many organized by the Women's Caucus that fought against ignorance of women's health issues, and the corresponding

29 Ibid., 210.

30 Brier, *Ideas*, 157-158.

31 Gregg Bordowitz, From *Act Up Oral History Project*, interview by Sarah Schulman, <http://www.actuporalhistory.org/interviews/images/bordowitz.pdf>, December 17, 2002, 56.

32 Ibid.

33 Hayduk and Shepard, *ACT UP*, 91.

34 Zoe Leonard, From *Act Up Oral History Project*, interview with Sarah Schulman, January 13, 2010, 26-28.

35 Brier, *Ideas*, 172.

negligent misinformation and poor treatment for women AIDS patients.³⁶ The caucus would go on to spearhead a major campaign to have the CDC change its definition of AIDS to include the health issues that affected women – namely tuberculosis, cervical cancer, and bacterial pneumonia.³⁷ The inclusion of tuberculosis also ensured that the poor and intravenous drug users, both populations that had increased risks of contracting the disease, would be included in the CDC definition.³⁸ The Women’s Caucus, would also go on to publish a book recounting the efforts of women AIDS activists, the effects of HIV on women’s health, and a critical analysis of the politics of HIV titled *Women, AIDS, and Activism*.³⁹ *Women, AIDS, and Activism* “represented a sustained effort not only to talk about how the AIDS epidemic affected all women, across race, class, and sexual orientation, but also to prove that without a broader definition of AIDS — for both treatment and prevention — whole groups would be left without help.”⁴⁰

The Majority Action Committee (MAC) was committed to addressing the specific needs of people of color living with AIDS (“Majority Action” because people of color constituted the “majority” of people who had AIDS worldwide).⁴¹ Along with the Women’s Caucus, MAC “focused on the racism and sexism that suffused not only the state’s and the medical establishment’s responses to AIDS but also ACT UP itself.”⁴² MAC was unique in ACT UP, as it focused on community outreach and service to communities of color as a form of direct action,⁴³ in addition to attending and organizing protests. MAC was also critical of limiting the scope of ACT UP’s work to direct actions and protests. Members of MAC saw the distribution of information to communities of color and building solidarity with other AIDS activist organizations as key steps to breaking down the racism and racialized privilege that had led to such disproportionate rates of

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 172-175.

38 Ibid., 175.

39 Ibid., 176.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 162.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., 171.

infection.⁴⁴ MAC also helped organize nine days of protests in May of 1988 that focused on the unaddressed aspects of the virus, such as homophobia, women's health issues, intravenous drug use, and the health of people of color.⁴⁵ The protests included outreach to NYC black and latino churches, where remembrance services for those killed by AIDS were held.⁴⁶

The Majority Action Committee had several other important platforms that drove organization of their outreach and protests. Members of MAC saw the issue of treatment for AIDS patients that ACT UP worked for as a much more complex issue for people of color living with the virus. Kendall Thomas, a former member of MAC, in an interview with the ACT UP Oral History Project, discusses the disparity between the experiences of people of color and white AIDS patients:

The fact of the matter is, is that the gay, white men who are getting sick, for the most part, had earlier and better healthcare and died under conditions that were materially superior to those of people of color who were getting sick – whose first point of access to the medical health care system, as in so many other cases, was through the emergency room.⁴⁷

The Majority Action Committee advocated for universal healthcare to end the disparity in treatment access.⁴⁸ Jennifer Brier describes the efforts of MAC, as well as the closely affiliated Women's Caucus and Housing Committees:

While they had different foci, the ACT UP members who joined these contingents supported the provision of universal health care and basic social services, particularly housing and drug treatment, to all people with AIDS as a way to ensure health. This broader definition of treatment as a way to end AIDS allowed advocates to claim that the only way to get drugs into bodies was to deal with structural inequalities that made it difficult for certain people to access health care more generally.⁴⁹

44 Kendall Thomas, From *ACT UP Oral History Project*, interview by Sarah Schulman, May 3, 2003, 14.

45 "Capsule History, 1988," ACT UP New York, accessed April 1, 2018, <http://www.actupny.org/documents/cron-88.html>.

46 Thomas, interview, 19-20.

47 Ibid., 13.

48 Brier, *Ideas*, 171.

49 Ibid., 168.

The committees recognized that AIDS activism required a broader scope of perspective, as well as priorities. Members of MAC, not totally satisfied with the often singular focus of the general assembly of ACT UP, created a committee that included the voices of marginalized groups within the organization.

ACT UP worked for other innovations in treatment and research as well, both on the ground level and federally. The Treatment and Data Committee of ACT UP brought together self-taught researchers and academics who poured over federal data about the AIDS crisis that was gathered through the Freedom of Information Act.⁵⁰ The committee organized fact sheets and gave advice to AIDS patients about treatment options.⁵¹ Treatment and Data also collected information about drug trial testing—where it was happening, what drugs were being tested, and who fit the criteria for trials—democratizing access to information about new drugs.⁵² In 1988, the committee drafted a response to AIDS research that had been done at New York University. In the critique, which was sent to the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease (NIAID), Treatment and Data recommended the use of parallel trials, in which “people who did not qualify for official inclusion in a particular trial, because of other drugs they were taking or because they were too sick, were still able to take the drug.”⁵³ Activist Jim Eigo, one of the members of Treatment and Data who drafted ACT UP’s response, comments further on the significance of parallel trials:

In 1988, an overwhelming number of people with AIDS were routinely excluded from trials due to gender, illness, or conflicting medications. Data collected from parallel trials, while not clean enough to secure a drug its final approval, would yield a wealth of data on how a drug worked in a target population.⁵⁴

While Treatment and Data targeted the NIAID, ACT UP planned a major demonstration at Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Rockville, MD. Seize Control of the FDA, as it

50 Hayduk and Shepard, *ACT UP*.

51 Ibid.

52 Iris Long, *From ACT UP Oral History Project*, interview by Sarah Schulman, May 16, 2003, 25.

53 Brier, *Ideas*, 165.

54 Hayduk and Shepard, *ACT UP*.

would be called, took place on October 11, 1988, with over 1500 people in attendance.⁵⁵ Activists brought signs with large, bloody handprints on them that read “The government has blood on its hands; one AIDS death every half hour” and covered the FDA building with posters.⁵⁶ Prior to the protest, ACT UP members put together a handbook that detailed what would be demanded at the action, who was being targeted at the action, and why.⁵⁷ It was distributed among members of all ACT UP chapters in attendance, as well as to media outlets. The handbook was effective in bringing a large and informed media presence to the action, as well as disseminating information to AIDS activists about the importance of addressing the failings of the FDA.⁵⁸ Just two weeks after Seize Control of the FDA, the agency revised its Investigational New Drug (IND) regulations and sped up drug testing trials⁵⁹—within a few months, several new drugs were approved to treat opportunistic and secondary infections.⁶⁰ Not long after the FDA approved new regulations, the director of the NIAID, Anthony Fauci, approved the use of parallel trials, which he called “parallel track” testing.⁶¹ These important changes to federal regulations were spurred into action by ACT UP’s tireless research and activism.

Availability of drugs for AIDS patients was a major demand of ACT UP members. In addition to calling for more research and diversity of research trials, the coalition also protested for the release of new drugs at more affordable costs. Wall Street

55 Brier, *Ideas*, 168.

56 Ibid.

57 “FDA Action Handbook,” ACT UP New York, accessed April 1, 2018, <http://www.actupny.org/documents/FDAhandbook1.html>.

58 Douglas Crimp, “Before Occupy: How AIDS Activists Seized Control of the FDA in 1988,” In AIDS Demo Graphics (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/12/before-occupy-how-aids-activists-seized-control-of-the-fda-in-1988/249302/>.

59 Brier, *Ideas*, 166: “HIV/AIDS Historical Time Line 1981-1990,” Food and Drug Administration, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.fda.gov/ForPatients/Illness/HIVAIDS/History/ucm151074.htm>

60 Ibid.

61 Brier, *Ideas*, 166.

had been the location of the first ACT UP demonstration, which occurred on March 24, 1987⁶² The demonstration targeted the high cost of AZT, a shelved cancer drug “found to be the first effective antiretroviral treatment for AIDS.”⁶³ The demonstration featured a die-in in front of Trinity Church on Wall Street, a visual representation of the deaths that were being caused by corporate greed and government inaction.⁶⁴ In addition to protesting the high cost of AIDS drugs, ACT UP put forth a list of other demands, including a public education campaign, the creation of policy that would prohibit discrimination against AIDS patients in treatment, insurance, housing, and employment, and the development of a comprehensive national policy on the AIDS crisis.⁶⁵ In her book about infectious disease and politics, Jennifer Brier notes that “in this early protest, ACT UP articulated the position that AIDS was a political problem because of the chronic underfunding of AIDS work and profound governmental resistance to sexually explicit AIDS prevention.”⁶⁶ In the flyer for the protest, ACT UP included a message for Ronald Reagan, stating “President Reagan, nobody is in charge. AIDS is everybody’s business now.”⁶⁷

In another Wall Street demonstration that occurred in September of 1989, several ACT UP protestors chained themselves to the VIP balcony of the New York Stock Exchange and called attention to the high prices of AZT set by Burroughs Wellcome, the drug manufacturer. ACT UP members infiltrated the Stock Exchange while hundreds of protestors gathered outside the building with fog horns, banners, and signs.⁶⁸ In response to the protest, Burroughs Wellcome “nearly halved the original ten-

62 “Capsule History, 1987,” ACT UP NY, accessed April 8, 2018, <http://www.actupny.org/documents/cron-87.html>.

63 Alberth, *Plagues*, 145.

64 Brier, *Ideas*, 160.

65 “First Flyer,” ACT UP New York, accessed April 8, 2018, <http://www.actupny.org/documents/1stFlyer.html>.

66 Brier, *Ideas*, 160.

67 ACT UP NY, “Flyer.”

68 “ACT UP Demonstration at the New York Stock Exchange,” NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/act-up-demonstration-at-the-new-york-stock-exchange/>.

thousand-dollar-per-year price tag of its drug.”⁶⁹ The Wall Street demonstrations galvanized Burroughs Wellcome and the FDA to change the way that AIDS drugs were introduced to the market—it inspired new regulatory practices and significantly dropped the costs of these life-saving drugs.⁷⁰ ACT UP used the power of assembly and creative protest to stand up for AIDS patients.

The AIDS epidemic began like many plagues before it. People – in this case, gay men – began dying from unusual infections, confounding their doctors, friends, families, and lovers. As the disease lay waste to gay men, fear and confusion racked the gay community. The understandably frightened response in the gay community was exacerbated by a lack of response by society’s leaders. In place of new drugs to treat the disease lay obstructive regulations that produced slow results and greedy companies that sought to turn a profit instead of saving lives. Instead of compassion for AIDS patients, those infected were met with homophobia, misconceptions about the disease, and underwhelming action to ease their suffering. While waiting for a strong voice to unite the country in a time when the national community was fractured by the panic of confronting a new disease, there was silence.

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power united in defiance of this silence. ACT UP formed to address the crisis and the political and cultural mismanagement that increased the disease’s spread. The coalition marched under their Silence=Death banners and boldly stood up for the health of the marginalized, demanding that society and its leaders pay attention to the communities that were suffering from the disease. ACT UP mobilized old and new generations of activists that changed the course of the epidemic – members of ACT UP fought for new federal regulations, affordable AIDS drugs, and were responsible for informing the Center for Disease Control’s very definition of the disease. ACT UP provided a place where activists could bring their personal and varied experiences of the virus and find solidarity and community. The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power directed the anger and fear that beset those infected with AIDS and the people that loved them into political momentum, amplifying the need for compassion, awareness, and most importantly, action.

69 Alberth, *Plagues*, 148.

70 Ibid.

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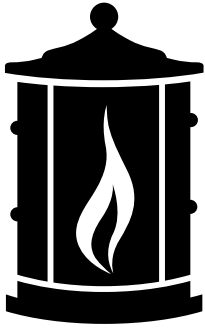
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