

THE
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SCHOLAR

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The Berkshire Scholar

A COLLECTION OF ACADEMIC ESSAYS
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Prince Hal's Evolution

William Shakespeare titled his two-part play *Henry IV*, but really could have titled it “Prince Hal” because it is as much the story of the evolution of the king’s son as the reign of King Henry himself. Hal opens the play by forming the impression of himself as an immature young man who is not interested in, or ready to assume, the responsibilities of being the king’s son. Yet, by the play’s conclusion, the reader has witnessed the emergence of a mature and honorable adult who is determined to leverage the relationships he developed among his commoner friends to help him become the leader and warrior that his father desired all along.

At the outset of *Henry IV*, Prince Hal appears to be doing all he can to reject the aspirations his father has for him. He has taken up with a rowdy group of commoners who gather at a local pub plotting robberies. Taking pride in his contrary lifestyle, Hal ultimately explains that he is deliberately pursuing this life to lower the expectations that his father and others have for him. He is enjoying the carefree and playful life among his pub friends, using this time to deliberately stall until he is ready to assume the traditional role and responsibilities of a prince. “So when this loose behavior I throw off; And pay the debt I never promised, By how much better than my word I am” (I ii 215-224): Hal closes his opening scene with this monologue in which he acknowledges that his behavior is not meeting his father’s expectations, almost the equivalent of a teenage phase from which he will ultimately emerge to become the son his father desires.

Prince Hal’s transformation takes an important step forward when he returns to the palace at his father’s request. He has a difficult conversation with his father in which the King is very direct with Hal about his behavior and even suggests that Hotspur is more deserving of the title of Prince. For the first time, Hal re-

sponds openly, honestly, and emotionally to his father. He commits to taking revenge on Hotspur for all that has been done to the King, and by doing so, will prove to his father that he is a worthy Prince: “When I will wear a garment of all blood; And stain my favors in a bloody mask; Which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it” (III ii 140-164). With this promise, Hal commits to abandoning his carousing lifestyle and to earning back his father’s respect by taking on the highly regarded Hotspur. While his father appears somewhat skeptical of this transformation, Hal’s emotional speech convinces Henry to take a chance on his son.

The ultimate step in Prince Hal’s development occurs in the final act of the play, when his view of honor and ambition are put in contrast to his rival’s. In his dying words, Hal’s rival Hotspur appears more upset about losing his “proud titles” to the prince than about dying. In contrast, Hal views Hotspur’s life as one motivated by “Ill-weaved ambition,” for which “A kingdom... was too small a bound” (V iv 90-92). Hal reveals himself as an honorable prince who recognizes the importance of knowing and interacting with commoners, as well as with nobility, and of not being consumed by the vainglorious quest for titles, as was Hotspur.

Hal opens *Henry IV* as an immature young man rebelling against his father’s expectations, yet by the play’s conclusion, he has been transformed into a mature leader and skillful warrior who values honor and humility. Hal has earned his father’s respect, and has proven to himself, to his father, and to the realm that he is worthy of becoming the next King of England.

Maggie Zhu
Advanced English IV

***Oedipus the King* Translation Comparison**

The tragedy of *Oedipus the King* ends with once-powerful Oedipus blind and in exile, and Forth Form English teachers have a choice about how to read about this protagonist's downfall. According to the Aristotelian elements of Greek tragedy, the translation by R. Fagles should be adopted for use at Berkshire School, rather than the one by F. Watling, due to its rich depiction of characters, dramatic transition of plot, and dexterous use of diction. In Fagles's translation, the themes of the play were strongly highlighted by the characteristics of the protagonist, King Oedipus.

The character descriptions in Fagles's translation emphasized Oedipus' pride and hubris, while Watling did not fully illustrate these themes. "And you, I command you--" Oedipus addresses his last wish of properly burying Jocasta to Creon, still upholding his pride as the king (Fagles 1584). Oedipus stays consistent in his conceited personality to the end, as in "commanding" Creon. Watling translated the same line as "Then I have only this to ask, of your goodness" (Watling 1451). "Ask" and "goodness" lacked the power of Oedipus, and made the character seem ordinary and weak instead of highlighting his disposition.

When Oedipus gathers with his daughters at last, Fagles's translation clearly depicted the king's mood change from sorrow to excitement to anger, while emotions were depicted mildly and inconspicuously in Watling's. "O god, do I really hear you sobbing?" Oedipus exclaims when he heard his daughters. "My darling girls, my own flesh and blood!" (Fagles 247) Oedipus transitioned dramatically from his previous dark mood to an enthusiastic outburst; with certainty, Oedipus embraces his children, or sisters, and gratefully thanks Creon. Watling's translation did not emphasize a significant transition in mood, "Do I hear my darlings sobbing," Oedipus shows little excitement and significant

doubts: “Has Creon had pity, and sent them to me?” (Watling 66) Little evidence of Oedipus’ mood transition was depicted; instead, Watling’s protagonist remained in a state of self-doubt.

Fagles’s diction surpasses Watling’s in terms of aptness in the context and reflection of the theme. When Oedipus curses his daughters, the line was translated with great fury, passion, and dramatic brilliance in Fagles’s version: “Such disgrace, and you must bear it all!” Oedipus the king sets a curse on Antigone and Ismene with fiery emotions, “Your doom is clear: you’ll wither away to nothing, single, without a child” (Fagles 248). “Must bear it all” and “doom” stressed Oedipus’ determination and rage, which was consistent with the theme of the play. On the other hand, Watling’s translation addressed: “ Thus they will brand you...there will be none, my children, for you; your days can only end in fruitless maidenhood.” (Watling 67) Oedipus’s diction here is insufficient in the keenness and drama: “fruitless maidenhood” lacks the impressionist impact of “single, without a child.” Fagles well concluded the scene with artful application of diction.

As demonstrated in this comparison, R. Fagles translated *Oedipus the King* more dexterously and faithfully than F. Watling. Fagles emphasized Oedipus’ pride and therefore kept the themes distinct throughout the play, while Watling failed to incorporate those themes clearly into the characters. The plot turns to be more dramatic when Fagles highlighted the alternation of Oedipus’ temper, while the effect was not apparent in Watling’s version. Lastly, the use of diction was more fitting and clever by Fagles, where Oedipus’ emotions were stressed to dramatize his character; Watling simply stated the facts, without considering the dramatic effects. Needless to say, the Fourth Form English teachers should adopt Robert Fagles’s translation of *Oedipus the King*.

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Victor Leung
Advanced English IV

An Irreversible Mistake

When I was younger, around ten years old, an incident happened to me that would be retold by my parents endlessly to all my relatives every time we had a family gathering.

One Saturday morning, I was at home, relaxing and getting ready to attend a Chinese lesson. Having just come back from a swimming practice, I was particularly thirsty. Without haste, I ambled over to the kitchen and took out a can of grape juice from the refrigerator - at least that was what I thought it was.... An obedient child who sought permission for almost everything, I asked our housekeeper if I could drink it. I didn't want to drink something that wasn't mine as I thought my parents would get mad at me for doing so. Far from independent, I was a child requiring high maintenance who always relied on others. She promptly said it was fine for me to drink.

Subsequently, my father drove me down to the Chinese tutorial. Everything went smoothly, until I felt a tingly sensation around thirty minutes into the class. I shrugged it off, believing the sensation was nothing to worry about. However, my condition soon worsened rapidly when I started getting dizzy. Before I knew it, everything was spinning around me, and I started seeing stars. I couldn't stop myself from lying down on the chair beside me, and my body started moving spontaneously, as if it had a mind of its own. I barely heard the faint voice of my teacher saying: "What are you doing? We are having class."

Soon enough, I passed out and drifted into oblivion. I don't know how long I was unconscious for, but when I awoke, I found myself lying on a cushioned sofa. My maid was beside me. I was escorted out of the restaurant, where I had class, into the atrium. Thinking that everything was just fine, that I had gotten better, this was not the case. Uncontrollably, I rampantly puked out all of

the contents of the “juice” I had drunk a few hours earlier. Unbeknownst to me, the fluid I had drunk was lychee wine, with 30% alcohol content. Since that amount was dangerous for a child to drink, I was lucky to have recovered with no severe consequences.

Ever since the incident, I have developed a hatred of lychee. Lychee, a fruit most commonly found in China, is popular where I am from, Hong Kong. Whenever I go to my grandmother’s place on Saturday nights for family gatherings, she serves fruit as dessert, and one of these fruits is invariably lychee. Every time when she happens to serve lychee, I decline the offer emphatically. When I do so, an unrestrained display of laughter ensues, with all of my relatives cackling with delight. Whereupon my family, my mother in particular, tells this story once again.

I believe that is the message my mother wants me to understand every time she tells this story: If you start something with a bad beginning or with a mistaken impression, it will be difficult, in some cases impossible, to turn around. Chinese families put a lot of emphasis on educating the next generation. They greatly value grooming and giving the best they can to the offspring of the family, because young people are the ones who form the basis of society. The next generation should have opportunities to try every new thing they can in order to grow and understand their unlimited potential while expanding their horizons. For this reason, Chinese parents never give their children limits, and instead encourage them to keep trying. However, there are consequences, because when you try something in a wrong way and begin with bad footing, its result may be irreversible, such as happened in my case. The moral of my story is that while you should take risks and attempt to try new things, once you become accustomed to an activity that can affect you negatively, you should step away as soon as you can, or it may become increasingly hard to turn back.

Jimmy Graham
Advanced English V

The Genius of F. Scott Fitzgerald

When it comes to discussing great American literature, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is invariably among the titles considered. In fact, Fitzgerald's work is widely held as 'The Great American Novel,' positioned alongside titles such as *To Kill as Mockingbird*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Moby Dick*. So how does *The Great Gatsby* continue to grow in popularity long after its contemporaries have faded? The answer lies in Fitzgerald's uncanny ability to construct pointed meditations on important issues, such as the American dream, the upper class, and faithfulness, weaving his philosophy into the tapestry of phraseology in the novel, and leaving the serious student of literature with a powerful message that separates it from the rest. Fitzgerald's masterful portrayal of the minor character Meyer Wolfsheim is one small component of his enormous achievement in *The Great Gatsby*.

Fitzgerald makes use of Wolfsheim's character to put forth his opinion that the American Dream is no longer what it once was, drowning in the greed of the American people and their increasingly destructive relationship to money and material possessions. This is well illustrated when the narrator, Nick Carraway, first meets Meyer Wolfsheim in chapter IV of the novel. Gatsby observes that, "He's the man that fixed the World Series back in 1919" (Fitzgerald 73). Fitzgerald is making reference to the "Black Sox Scandal," implying that Meyer Wolfsheim is based on the historical figure of Arnold Ruthstein (May). This fact is important to our understanding of Fitzgerald's distaste for the corrupt avenues through which Americans are willing to make a quick buck. It should be noted that this example was chosen strategically, in that baseball is 'America's pastime,' beloved by so many throughout the nation, and so the corruption of the game becomes symbolic of societal decline. In addition, after Nick asks how

Meyer was involved, Gatsby replies that “He just saw the opportunity” (Fitzgerald 73) as if it were a quotidian business transaction that he had the opportunity to be involved in, reinforcing our suspicions regarding the manner in which he acquired his wealth. This idea is fundamental to the idea that Gatsby has traded in good moral values and beliefs for the accumulation of wealth and grandiose material possessions, which gives forth Fitzgerald’s idea of the state of the American dream in the 1920’s. Also relevant is the manner in which Nick describes Wolfsheim: a “small, flat nosed Jew [who] raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril” (Fitzgerald 69). Carraway’s contempt and distaste for Wolfsheim is a physical extension of Fitzgerald views toward those have traded in their American values, motivated by an insatiable thirst for money.

Fitzgerald is also able to accentuate the thematic idea of the indecency of the American upper class of America through his depiction of Meyer Wolfsheim. In chapter IV of the novel, when Nick first meets him at lunch, Wolfsheim excuses himself, citing that he “belongs to another generation” and that Nick and Gatsby should “discuss your sports and...young ladies” (Fitzgerald 72). Wolfsheim’s comment reveals to the reader a sense that social norms have passed by the wayside in the new generation of Americans, as well as the connotation that all Nick and Gatsby have to talk about are superficial, meaningless affairs (which is not entirely untrue). It should be noted, however, that Gatsby’s character does represent some of the most important qualities of the American dream, and that the character of Wolfsheim does not serve to cast Gatsby in an entirely unfavorable light. In fact, Fitzgerald portrays Wolfsheim and Gatsby much more favorably than he does the East Egg ‘old money’ social elite. The fact that Wolfsheim shakes Nick’s hand “earnestly” (Fitzgerald 69) proves it. All in all it is strongly evident that Wolfsheim helps to develop our sense of the lack of moral values present throughout the story.

On a different note, Fitzgerald is also able to use the character of Wolfsheim to complement the novelist’s fervent deliberations on the idea of faithfulness, or the lack thereof. This can be seen in the scene in which Nick demands that Wolfsheim

attend Gatsby's funeral. As a long time friend, Wolfsheim should attend the funeral, yet Meyer discards this convention, stating that when someone gets killed, he does not like to "get mixed up in it" (Fitzgerald, 171). When Wolfsheim was a "young man it was different — if a friend of mine died...I stuck with them to the [bitter] end" (Fitzgerald 171). This change in values indicates a shift away from loyalty and faithfulness akin to the shift in the accepted values of America, according to Fitzgerald. Moreover, the telling detail of Wolfsheim's cuff links is incredibly effective in hinting to the attentive reader that Wolfsheim is a sinister figure, reinforcing the malevolence and corruption that this seemingly minor character represents.

It should be apparent in reading this piece that Fitzgerald's ability to communicate his thoughts through the medium of a fictional narrative is extraordinary, and is worthy of study of the most rigorous sort. This is why it is so important to meditate on the true meaning of the story that is so often missed by those looking only to read what is written on the page. This attention to detail is of particular importance in the study of Fitzgerald's narrative. The next time you find yourself reading a seminal piece of literature, perhaps even a great American novel, take the time to appreciate the entirety of what is being said, otherwise you just might miss the opportunity to expand your consciousness in ways you could not possibly imagine.

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Caroline Skinner
Advanced English V

A Rocky Road with a Reputable Result

I believe that failure is an unavoidable aspect of life. There is no hiding or escaping from it, and despite struggling against it, there will always be obstacles obstructing the journey to my ultimate destination throughout life. However, I believe that a failure is only a true failure if I do not learn anything from it. If people only view their failures as a complete and utter loss, then their failures remain so. But if we can find a way to view lack of success in a constructive way, the failure has the potential to ultimately become more productive than the success would have been in the first place. Every failure is an opportunity to grow and learn; each bears its own lessons. If we can look past the feelings of disappointment and shame that failures often inflict upon their victims, then focus on the learning opportunity that they present as a motivation to become better, failure can become invaluable.

I can speak to this belief from personal experience. For my entire life, my family's and my own values have been focused on academics. I was taught before anything else that my mind was the most important asset I could ever have and that my grades were a reflection of this. I fell behind in other areas where my peers succeeded: anyone who knows me can testify that all forms of sports are completely beyond my capability and understanding, and I suffer from serious lack of common sense and street smarts. But despite these shortcomings, I have always succeeded in school. However, when I first came to Berkshire, the transition was very distracting for me. From the newfound freedom in living without my mother to the culture shock in moving from an all-girls' school into the first co-ed school I've ever attended, I was immediately caught up in all of these exciting aspects. For the first time in my life, school fell to the wayside, as my focus shifted all at once. The decline in my grades was fast and drastic, and for some reason, I

was hardly bothered by this decline. Suddenly I transformed from a student whose eyes would cloud at the sight of a B to a student who hardly batted an eye at a C or below. For the entire year, I didn't let this failure bother me, although I was clearly neglecting to work to even a fraction of my potential.

Eventually, however, I began to feel ashamed and disappointed in myself. I wanted to succeed, and I wanted to go back to a time where I could be proud of my academic accomplishments. From this failure, I earned inspiration. And although it is at times exhausting, I have reached my goal in the new school year. I am once again proud of what I accomplish, and every free period spent in Fentress and every request for late lights is worth the happiness and pride I feel for what I have accomplished this year. Without my initial failure, I would not have felt the urgency with such intensity, and I would not have learned the consequences of laziness and the benefits of hard work. My failure taught me to never do less than my absolute, one hundred percent, pure best that I am capable of.

I believe that the nature of failure allows us to grow and mature. I believe that failure empowers us to rise from low points in our lives and makes our triumphs exponentially more meaningful. I believe that I learned so much from my experience last year that to call it a failure would be a glaring misnomer. Failure can teach just as well as it can punish, it can provide a motivation and fuel to change, and because of this, I believe that failure is invaluable.

Katie Stonecipher U.S. History

Beauty: An American Ideal

When did beauty become a campaign composed of lies? From *Glamour* to *Vogue*, grocery store lines across America are decorated with the faces of flawless women. Aside from their poreless skin, these perfect “covergirls” share one thing common: they aren’t real. Over the past century, the world of technology has advanced immensely, along with the exposure to these images. Without even knowing it, the perspectives of Americans are manipulated by the media everyday. With magazines and billboards, television commercials, the internet and smartPhones and social platforms, the media has found new ways to dictate the societal views in America. Unfortunately, Americans cannot ignore this constant exposure to the messages our media sends about women.

American society has always valued the concept of beauty, particularly in women. From Marilyn Monroe to Angelina Jolie, society has praised and idolized women who possess a rare allure. Only the few blessed enough to fit the idealized beauty have received recognition in society. For a long time, America reflected the values of a patriarchal society, in which women notably came second to men. Men’s education was prioritized over women’s, thus the social norm for women was to be the family’s caregiver; to cook, to clean, and to take care of the children. Up until 1920, women were deprived the right to vote, reinforcing this American patriarchy. When the 19th amendment was passed, women garnered legal equality. However, women did not see much change in terms of their portrayal. Instead, the media interfered with the progress, providing Americans with skewed portrayals of beauty and degrading ideas about women.

As society's exposure to the media has increased, America has become more and more of an appearanceobsessed culture. The ambiguous term, "beauty" has been defined and limited by society. From the toys a child plays with, to the mannequins in a storefront window, women receive the message that beauty is the most important trait and in fact, essential in determining their worth. Inevitably, this notion has made women feel obligated to achieve the set standards of beauty. An impossible standard because the criteria for this ideal image has only grown stricter. The standards are so high that in order to reach them, women have turned to extreme and unnatural solutions. Not only are women doomed for failure when striving to achieve society's unattainable expectations, but they also fall victim to the media's objectifications. American media and culture have set unreachable standards of beauty for women, while promoting the idea that women's appearance is valued over their abilities. In addition, the media has portrayed women in an objectifying manner, thus exploiting woman as lesser, and therefore, unequal to man.

With Ruth Handler's creation of the anatomically incorrect Barbie doll, in 1959, society's message of beauty spread to an even younger audience (Chapman). Not only did the iconic toy establish an unrealistic ideal for beauty, but it also sent a notion that beauty meant success. Horrifically described as the, "most commercially successful doll in history," the doll was widely exposed to girls across America. Originally constructed as a "porn doll" symbolizing "illicit sex", Barbie was crafted to promote a fantasy composed by males (Chapman). The first model created society's "perfect" woman; white skin, shiny blonde hair, long thin legs, narrow waist, full heartshaped lips, large breasts, and blue eyes set at a sideways glance. As if that wasn't unrealistic enough, Handler dressed her impractically in a zebra print swimsuit accompanied by stiletto heels. Barbie's perfection was a lie. If Barbie were humansize, she would have a relatively modest thirtysix inch chest, but a waist of only eighteen inches. With these proportions, research at a hospital in Finland said she lacks the body fat required for menstruation

(Masters). The standards set by Barbie were not just extreme, but biologically impossible. The exposure of her false measurements could not erase what society had seen, and the definition of beauty already established by the plastic figure. Barbies' unattainable image also introduced a theory about success. To an extent, the controversial doll exemplified female independence; taking on an extensive list of what were considered, primarily male jobs (doctor, pilot, police officer, etc.) In her zebra swimsuit and high heels, she found success in every area of work. However, Barbie was not advertised for being an intelligent, working woman, but for being a token of beauty. Consequently, little girls could only link her occupational success to her accompanying beauty, thus sending a false message that in order for a woman to be successful, she must be beautiful. The Barbie doll helped compose this theory of success, making it a popular exploitation in future media.

Pageants, beauty contests in which females are judged on their appearance, have also promoted this idea that a woman's worth and success in society is measured solely by her level of attractiveness. In 1921, the infamous Miss America Pageant was created, allowing women from all over the United States to compete and be crowned what was essentially, the female face of America. During the early years of the competition, the state representatives were judged on their photograph submissions (Hazard). The contestants were not judged on their intellect or their contributions to the country, but instead, their physical appeal. The fact that the female face of America was solely selected by a picture shows just how much beauty was valued in society. The message was clear, being an attractive woman meant you had succeeded in society and were worthy. In fact, worthy enough to be coined the face of America.

Although it's the most renown, Miss America was certainly not the only beauty contest receiving publicity. These pageants and their definition of worth have become popular amongst American culture. The media has continued to advertise beauty pageants, and recently introduced a reality show, *Toddlers in Tiaras*. Like Barbie, the message found its way to an even

younger audience. From ages one and up, little girls take dress up to an extreme, competing in beauty pageants across the United States. With spray tans, corsets, hair extensions, fake teeth, stickon lashes, and lots of glitter, toddlers battle for titles of “Best Face”, “Best in Swimwear”, and “Grand Supreme” (Dena). “Facial Beauty is the most important thing,” says one of the toddlers. Before these girls can read, they are taught the importance of appearance and their obligation to look a certain way. Since they are competing amongst each other for these glamorous titles, it is inevitable that they identify success with beauty. Thus, when they do not succeed, they feel shame, “I won princess, but that’s the only thing I got out of the whole pageant. It makes me really sad inside,” says another toddler. Since the media only associates successful women with beauty, these girls are left feeling sad and ashamed when they do not meet the standards. Pageants have been telling children, women, and even men, that being pretty is the most important female trait. By crowning women as “most beautiful”, these pageants have helped contribute to the growing societal definition of beauty, which is often carried over to the big screen.

The majority of women cast in American movies are selected because they fit society’s definition of attractive. Once again, a misleading portrayal of reality. Jean Harlow, one of the first and most iconic sex symbols, starred in Howard Hughes film, *Hell’s Angels*. The 1930’s film faced harsh reviews, and Jean Harlow’s acting ability was heavily criticized. Yet, it became clear that she was not cast for her acting ability, but her physical appeal to the viewers. *Variety* magazine wrote, “It doesn’t matter what degree of talent she possesses, nobody ever starved possessing what she got” (“Jean ‘Baby’ Harlow”). Despite her flawed performance, she was praised for the way she looked. “Possessing what she got”, implied her unprecedented beauty, not her talent in the field of acting. Through this, *Variety* revealed the societal truth; that beauty and success go hand in hand.

Since then, an actress’s image has only become more crucial. Their appeal to the audience has become just as important, if not more, than their degree of talent. After the Oscars, *People Magazine*, takes a “Who Wore it Best?” poll; in which, they

focus on who looked the most attractive prior to the event. The Oscars are intended to celebrate hard work and recognize talent, but it becomes a beauty contest when the actresses are being acknowledged only for their looks. Although it would be more appropriate to focus on their professional accomplishments, the attention is on their appearance. Evidently, it is very rare that an “unattractive” woman is cast as a lead. Unless the character requires a quirkiness, directors usually cast women who are beautiful by societal definition. In fact, *People Magazine* did a survey and found that eighty percent of female respondents felt that women in movies and television programs made them feel insecure about their bodies (Dam). This is because the roles of “normal” women are not played by averagelooking women. When models are acting as “the average mom”, it sends a distorted picture of what “normal” looks like and the perception of average becomes inaccurate. Although movies have played a significant role in forming the credentials of beauty, they are not the only contributors.

Even the products sold in stores and advertised on television stress the importance of female beauty. A recent study showed that fifty percent of commercials aimed at women mentioned “physical attractiveness” (Walsh). That exceeds in comparison to the miniscule three percent which were directed at men. In leading female magazines, one third of the articles also include a focus on appearance, while fifty percent of their ads use an appeal to beauty to sell their products. While these advertised products indicate a females’ duty to achieve beauty, they also help define it. Products such as; lip plumpers, lash extensions, cellulite removers, bronzers, teeth whiteners, hair volumizers, antifrizz creams, and even spanx, send the message that certain features detract from their beauty. They suggest that things as natural cellulite are unappealing. Antifreeze creams suggest that frizzy hair needs to be tamed, bronzers suggest that tan skin is more attractive than pale, lip plumpers suggest that full lips are ideal, and spanx suggest that a little extra weight is shameful. The extensive lists of beautyenhancing products are a result of reality; these “flaws” are common. But still, they are displayed

as faults. By indicating that certain qualities are “unattractive”, these advertised products have helped to establish new precedents for beauty. The implications from these products, along with the models who solicit them, construct a limited definition of beauty.

From Twiggy to Tyra, it’s clear that the modeling industry has always emphasized the importance of beauty; however, this ideal has gradually strayed further and further from the “average” woman, illustrating an unrealistic image of beauty. Over the years, models have grown notably slimmer, imposing that “thin” is the ideal body. Thirty percent below her ideal body weight, famous super model, Kate Moss, weights just ninetyfive pounds. However, it’s not just Kate Moss. In 2012 the average model weighed twentythree percent below her ideal weight, thus meeting the criteria for anorexia (Lovett). These models have adapted dangerous habits in order to formulate a standard which can not be met in a healthy way. With the images of slender models plastered throughout American, society develops a false interpretation of the “average” size. “Plussized” models have gone from sizes twelve to eighteen, to, sizes six to fourteen. However, nearly half of the women in the United States wear a size fourteen or larger. With their unhealthy weights, models send an inaccurate message about the “ideal” body.

The message is unavoidable. Everywhere, Americans are exposed to these stickthin women. Even the mannequins in stores have adapted this sickly physique. In the 1950s, mannequins closely resembled the shape of the average woman, having the hip measurements of thirtyfour inches. However, since then there has been a widening gap between mannequins and the average woman. By 1990, the average hip measurement had increased to thirtyseven inches, but the average mannequin measurement had decreased to thirtyone inches. Between models and mannequins, the medias ideals have shifted further from the societal norm. The media continues to collect new criteria for beauty, making it nearly impossible for normal women to measure up to.

As if the beauty ideals set by models weren’t extreme enough, the world of technology found ways to construct utter perfection. Technological advancements in the media increased

the beauty standards set for women increased. With appearance-altering tools like photoshop, the media has found severe ways to cover up foibles, thus sending an unattainable message about beauty. Tina Fey touches on the current standards, “Now, every girl is expected to have Caucasian blue eyes, full Spanish lips, a classic button nose, hairless Asian skin with a California tan, a Jamaican dance hall ass, long Swedish legs, small Japanese feet, the abs of a lesbian gym owner, the hips of a nineyearold boy, the arms of Michelle Obama, and doll tits.” Fey uses humor to suggest the fatal truth; it is genetically impossible to possess all of these traits. She mocks the impossible expectations derived from this technologicallycrafted media illusion.

In 2011, Dove revealed the process of creating this illusion. They released a sixty second video which showed the process photo editors go through to “tweak” a photograph. The video showed an attractive, but seemingly average women. She was not a size zero, her skin was aged, her hair was slightly dull, and she had a few sun spots (Staav). It started with her hair and makeup getting done, but soon shifted to a computer screen in which they photoshopped her “flaws” away. Scrutinizing every pixel, they chiseled at her nose, stretched her neck, raised her cheekbones, widened her eyes, stretched herhair, highlighted her collar, and airbrushed her pores away. With a few clicks of a button, she went from an average thirtyyearold to a human barbie doll. The Dove commercial exposed the horrific truth about the media in America. The truth being that no one looks like that. However, the media’s so focused on creating this ideal appearance that they have created a lie. They have altered women into falseness, deleting every trace of flaw. Dr.Barbara Levy says, “We are looking at ourselves in the mirror, and comparing ourselves to women who are made up or on television having had the best of what Hollywood can do to make them look great” (Swinson). Women are being told what they need to look like in order to be considered “beautiful” in society. However: these images of poreless girls do not reflect reality, but instead, humanly impossible ideals.

The societal pressure on women to meet this impossible criteria has resulted in a drastic and expensive measure, plastic

surgery. Due to its nonchalant exposure, these procedures have become not only a trend among celebrities, but everyday Americans, showing just how desperate women are to achieve this ideal image. The plastic surgery business was kept secretive for a long time, but with shows such as; “I Want a Famous Face”, “The Swan”, “Extreme Makeover”, “Nip/ Tuck”, and, “Dr. 90210”, the public has been introduced to the process. These shows promote the idea that surgery will change and ultimately improve all aspects of ones life. In a recent study, researchers discovered that more patients became interested in plastic surgery procedures after seeing them on TV and researching them online. With prices ranging from a few hundred to twentythousand, sixteen million people underwent cosmetic procedures in 2006 (American Society of Plastic Surgeons). The two and a half million increase from 2004 was not nearly as shocking as the percentage of females who partook in cosmetic surgery. In more recent studies it’s been noted that, eightyseven percent of people who’ve undergone surgical procedures were female, and ninetytwo percent who’ve undergone minimallyinvasive procedures were female. Not to mention, breast augmentation and botox, both associated primarily with females, have become the two most popular procedures. The desire to be beautiful has become so strong in American society that it’s resulted in these very expensive and dangerous procedures. With the vast majority of these patients being female, it is quite clear that the pressure on women to be attractive is far greater than that on men. And, when the only way to achieve this “beauty” requires unnatural means, the standards are biologically incorrect.

With objectifying messages, the representation of women in American media exceeds beyond exploitations of beauty. A more recent phenomenon, “reality” television, has created objectifying dating competition shows. These shows continue to emphasise the importance of beauty, but also portray women as prizes to be won. *The Bachelor*, for example, selects one man and in theory, sends him on a search to find love. However; it appears more like a kid in a toy store than a man searching for love. He is given a handful of attractive suitors and week by week, eliminates the women, until he is left with one. Jennifer Pozner, author and

feminist, writes, “Not only are the women cast on these shows supposed to be hot, dumb and licentious, but they’re also, for the most part, white. Producers manufacture a fractured reality that looks nothing like America.” In the current season of, *The Bachelor*, there was only one colored woman and she didn’t make it past the third episode. This “fractured reality” is proven by the similar appearances among the girls. No one appears to be larger than a size six and they all have clear skin. These shows are not organic reality, but false depictions, once again influenced by the media.

The media has stressed the vitality of appearance, held to women to impossible standards, and portrayed women in an objectifying manner. Societal views derive from the media which has influenced American culture immensely. From Barbie dolls to beauty pageants, American media imposed that physical appeal is more important than the content of a woman’s character. Sending the message that female success is linked to their appearance. However, this ideal beauty has been formulated by underweight models and false perfection. With intangible classifications of beauty, women cannot achieve society’s vision of “success”. Not only has the media set impossible standards of beauty, but it’s also depicted women as inanimate creatures. The objectification of females extend from reality television to the sports field, challenging female equality. Although there has been significant progress, the portrayal of women in the American media, and the message it sends to society, prove that equality for women has not been achieved socially. So long as women are portrayed as objects and valued only for beauty, patriarchy will remain present in American Society. Each year the societal definition of beauty has become stricter, setting women up for failure when striving to fulfill these expectations. If American media continues to put women in situations of inevitable failure, will there ever be a day in which women are truly equal?

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**The Effect of Neo-Darwinian Ideology
on the Tragedy of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles***

It is irrefutable that Thomas Hardy was deeply affected by the writings of Charles Darwin in the *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*, as well as by the work of post-Darwinian critics and scholars. Hardy's pessimistic perception of human progress in *Tess* can be traced to the Neo-Darwinian theories regarding "the neglected issue of inheritance" (Morton), underlies Hardy's view of societal progress, or lack thereof, and his belief that fate is an uncontrollable product of the universe. This ideology is imperative in defining Hardy's intent of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as a tragedy built along the lines suggested by Aristotle many centuries earlier.

August Weismann, "the most learned and persuasive of the Neo-Darwinians," laid the foundation for Hardy's pessimism with his inheritance theory (Morton). The inheritance theory was described in Weismann's *Essays upon Heredity and Kindred Biological Problems*, which Hardy most certainly read: it argued that inheritance held no influence over social virtue, that it was quite detrimental to progress, and cast doubt over humanity's ability to progress (Morton). This ideology is essential in understanding Hardy's intent in the novel, which is rooted in this perception of inheritance and human progress. Tess Durbeyfield fails to better herself as a result of her inherited traits. As the novel progresses, Hardy provides social commentary on inherent human qualities and human insignificance against nature to suggest he, too, was doubtful of human progress.

At the same time, Hardy utilizes the Aristotelian model of tragedy to reveal this: "the narrative flows smoothly up to the *peripeteia* of Alec's stabbing and afterwards ebbs rapidly away with *cathartic* idyll of Phase the Seventh, 'Fulfillment'. In his presentation of *hamartia* and *nemesis*," Hardy utilizes hereditary

determinism “to centre the interest solely and entirely in the individual face to face with the universe” (Morton). It is through this model of tragedy that Hardy emphasizes his Neo-Darwinian ideology; the form of the novel serves to highlight Tess’ confrontation with her inheritance, to expose the influence of hereditary determinism and the insignificance of humanity, through her realization of these realities.

Hardy’s influence by Weismann lies heavily in his exposition of hereditary determinism: the “innate ‘wired-in’ patterns of [human] behavior” (Morton). Through Tess’ hubris, ignorance, and subsequent realization of her lack of control of her fate, Hardy establishes his belief of the influence of human determinism on fate. The hubris and ignorance of Tess Durbeyfield lie solely in her belief that she can control her destiny; she spends the majority of the novel attempting to change herself and her future, an inherent human aspiration that Hardy views as foolish and unobtainable. This ignorance is a result of her refusal to learn history; her exclamation in the beginning of the novel, “what is the use of learning that I am one of a long row only...the best is to not remember that your nature and past doings have been just like thousands” (Hardy 99) serves to highlight her ignorance and juxtapose her human determinism with her eventual fate. The fate of Tess Durbeyfield is, too, characterized by this refusal to learn history: “her tragedy is absolute and is not relived by her undoubted nobility of character” (Morton).

As the novel progresses, as Tess increasingly becomes victim of her own fate, she begins to understand her lack of control. After the death of her father John Durbeyfield, Hardy interjects to provide his opinion on the matter of fate, “flux and reflux – the rhythm of change – alternate and persist in everything under the sky” (277). Hardy’s commentary here serves to represent the educative process Tess is undergoing as the novel moves toward catharsis. Tess again expresses her developing understanding of fate when she exclaims “once a victim, always a victim: that’s the law” (261). These revelations serve to highlight Hardy’s perception of fate and its influence by human determinism. Tess’ initial hubris and ignorance, and her subsequent understanding, together func-

tion as social commentary on the inherent behavior of humans: her hubris and ignorance, her belief that she could control her fate, an intrinsic human belief, is the sole reason for her inability to progress. Hardy's comparisons between Tess and nature throughout the novel serve to further his belief that fate is a product of inherited qualities; that Tess is doomed because of her heredity.

In his recurring comparisons between Tess and nature, Hardy explicitly expresses his belief of human insignificance. One of the most profound such comparisons came in Tess' encounter with the dying pheasants, "writhing in agony", as they awaited their death, "except the fortunate ones whose tortures had ended... by their inability to bear no more" (218). Hardy provides this passage to compare the fate of animals to the fate of humans, to highlight Tess' insignificance in the universe. Furthermore, Hardy's description of the dead as "fortunate" expresses his pessimistic view: his belief that pain is a product of fate, inevitable in nature, and will be inflicted without deterrence. This comparison truly expresses Hardy's perception of fate, establishing his belief that the universe is unstoppable and fate is uncontrollable, that, despite Tess' advancements, she, too, will only stop suffering when she is unable to bear more.

The other most profound comparison came in an observation describing the generations of cows at Dairyman Crick's farm; in it, Hardy exposes his belief of the affect of inheritance, "infinite cows and calves of bygone years, now passed to oblivion almost inconceivable in its profundity" (83). It is herein that Hardy emphasizes the "receding replications of the organic world" and therefore describes the fault of Tess' heredity: "the thing 'inherent in the universe' which, valueless though irresistible, helps destroy her" (Morton). It is her heredity, the qualities inherited from Tess' ancestors, that drives her fate. Angel describes the fault of Tess' heredity after the wedding night, exclaiming, "I cannot help associating your decline as a family with... your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct" (182). Angel's revelation directly connects Tess' inherited qualities with the heredity explained with the cows; it establishes the perspective that tragic fate is a result of heredity: a belief directly influenced by

Weismann's inheritance theory. Critic Charlotte Thompson agrees upon the idea that Tess is a victim of her own heredity: "Tess' tragedy...[lies] in the ability to perpetuate the past by...predetermined ends" (Thompson). Through Hardy's comparisons of Tess to the natural world, he emphasizes his belief that human fate is of no distinct significance, rather it suffers the same fate as the organic world: receding "to oblivion" as a product of heredity.

Wholly, Hardy's ideology and the novelistic form establish the tragedy of Tess Durbeyfield, a product of Neo-Darwinian ideologies at work within Thomas Hardy. August Weismann disposed Hardy to a deterministic perception of human progress. Through the pessimistic lens by which he consequently viewed the world, Hardy crafted the tragedy of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He operates with the Aristotelian framework of tragedy to achieve his message that progress is doomed by human determinism and inheritance. Furthermore, Hardy's comparisons with nature provide a platform from which he establishes his belief in the insignificant human position in the universe. As a whole, these literary techniques contribute to the reader's overall perception of the fate of Tess Durbeyfield and of an author who systematically "hammers away at the tragic self-deception" (Morton) of his doomed protagonist.

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Its Representation in *The Lion King*

Arguably one of Disney's most popular films ever, *The Lion King* provides a unique representation of Child and Adolescent PTSD. While most recall the film's award winning musical pieces and revolutionary digital animation, the depiction of post-traumatic stress disorder in the protagonist is one of the picture's greatest accomplishments. Closely resembling the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the story is that of Simba, young heir to the Animal Kingdom, whose world collapses when his father, Mufasa, dies after an accident set up by Simba's uncle, Scar. Subsequently, the young lion is banished from the kingdom. Other characters important to the understanding of not only this paper, but of the story as a whole, are Nala, Simba's childhood friend and adult mate; Timon and Pumbaa, Simba's new-found friends following his banishment; and Rafiki, an elder of the kingdom. Through close analytical viewing of the classic film, Simba's transition from happy youth to PTSD-suffering adolescent becomes apparent.

As the heir to Pride Rock, the home of the lions and Mufasa's throne, Simba is born into a privileged life. At birth, Simba is presented to the Animal Kingdom as their future king, a ceremony highlighted by the joy in every representative of animals. From a young age, Simba is taught the lessons needed to be a leader by his father; lessons ranging from their place in the circle of life, to the meaning of the stars. Mufasa is the central figure in Simba's childhood; his father teaches him to hunt, to respect everything, and most importantly to the young lion, to roar. Simba's childhood personality is that of many other young boys. He is energetic, confident, adventurous, curious, free spirited, and boundlessly talkative. Early in film, Simba wakes up his father, early, for a trip around

the kingdom; this is one of many of examples of Simba portraying healthy characteristics of a young boy. While on this trip, Simba spots a part of the kingdom he has never seen before: an elephant graveyard. Simba then carries out another typical characteristic of a boy his age, disobedience. Despite being clearly told that he is never to enter that part of the kingdom, Simba, and his young friend Nala, sneak away to the dangerous area. Simba's disregard for strict authority is visible at this point in the film. While this initial incident of disobedience causes no lasting consequences for Simba, his protective parents decide to give him a de facto babysitter in the form of a talking bird named Zazu.

Later in the story, Simba is out hunting with his father when they hear news of a stampede. Mufasa orders Simba to go home with Zazu as he goes to deal with the situation. Simba's natural disposition towards rebellion, compounded with his eagerness for adventure, lead him to ditch Zazu and make for the stampede. Here Simba becomes trapped in the path of the stampede, and his father is forced to rescue him. Although Mufasa succeeds in saving Simba, he falls when his treacherous brother, Scar, throws Mufasa down the cliff into the stampeding wildebeests. Simba's tragedy begins when he sees his father, lifeless on the ground in the eerily silent gorge. Tugging at his father's ear and pleading through tearful cries for Mufasa to wake up, Simba realizes that the center of his world has been lost. This moment is the trauma in Simba's childhood, a moment that haunts him for years to follow. His agony is multiplied when his uncle, whom he turns to for comfort, tells Simba that it is his own fault. Scar, for personal gain, urges Simba to flee as the others "won't understand". The words of his uncle on that day, "run... and never return..." resonate in Simba, fueling his torment, grief, and guilt. Simba's flight ends when he is found collapsed due to exhaustion, by Timon and Pumbaa.

While the obvious the poisonous relationship to Simba's mental health is that of his uncle, Simba's personal strife impedes his ability to move forward in a healthy way. That being said, Simba develops important relationships with Timon and Pumbaa. Though they are unable to help Simba come to terms with his past, they do provide the supportive environment in which Simba is able

to, at the very least, cope with the mental anguish from which he suffers. During his time with his companions, Simba transitions from a cub to a full grown lion. Despite his physical maturation, Simba's mental state remains unstable. The guilt he feels for the death of his father keeps him from going home. Not only does his inability to return to Pride Rock keep him from his family and friends, it means actively denying the birthright his father prepared him for. The dire news of the situation at Pride Rock eventually sends Simba into an anxiety attack. He denies who is his, and refuses to go with Nala back to his home. Until Nala urges Simba to remember the pain being suffered by those Simba proclaims to love, the rightful king refuses to leave. The symptoms demonstrated by Simba include: guilt, episodes of anxiety or panic, self-doubt. Even the drastic change in Simba's diet, from that of a carnivorous lion to a vegetarian cat, may be a PG representation of the substance abuse or self-medication often experienced in trauma victims. The emergence of these symptoms following the traumatic event contribute to the diagnosis: Simba is suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Simba receives two forms of unconventional treatment for PTSD, and though the term is rarely used in the lion community, both treatments aid Simba in his recovery. His initial treatment is immersion into the lifestyle of Timon and Pumbaa. The two friends introduce Simba into their way of thinking, a mindset encapsulated in their motto, "Hakuna Matata, [which] means no worries... for the rest of your days." While this clearly is not a formal method of treatment, nor does it remedy the issue from which Simba's mental state stems, their efforts to put their friend into a supportive and nurturing environment, allow for Simba to experience relief from his initial heartache. In addition, Timon and Pumbaa contribute to Simba's maturation from cub to adult. By acting as both friend, and adoptive family, the two of them provide for Simba both mentally and nutritionally. Following Nala's relocation of Simba, the young lion agrees to come back home and reclaim Pride Rock. Along the way Simba is faced with the image of his father among the stars. Simba pleads with his father to give him guidance as he used to, but Mufasa offers only the words, "Remember who you

are.” Shortly after his experience with celestial parenting, Simba is met by Rafiki, the innately wise baboon. Acting through similarly unconventional methods, Rafiki is successful in his role as Simba’s short term therapist. By forcing Simba to let go of his past and live in the present, Rafiki is able to provide Simba with some relief. While true therapy often requires months or even years of counseling, and considerable less assault with coconuts tied to a stick, Rafiki’s cartoonish form of therapy is reflective of some legitimate steps toward rehabilitation. The final step that Simba takes in regards to his therapy is the confrontation with Scar. By overcoming his fear and returning home, Simba eliminates many of aspects of his PTSD. Over the long term, it is likely that Simba will be able to come to terms with the loss of his father, while he will still grieve over the death; his ability to recognize that he was not to blame for the accident will allow him to overcome his disorder.

Many psychological texts refer to PTSD as, “Characterized by lingering symptoms including haunting memories and nightmares, a numbed social withdrawal, jumpy anxiety, and insomnia.” (Myers, 2007, P 652) While several of these symptoms are visible in Simba’s struggles, his case does not fully encapsulate this definition. This is due in part to the difference between PTSD typically seen in adults and cases seen in children. Judith A. Cohen makes the point that, “The diagnostic criteria for PTSD in adults may not adequately describe this disorder in children and adolescents” (1998). The nature of PTSD being a specific incident induced disorder means that there is no typical age of onset. While victims diagnosed with PTSD are most commonly in their mid to late thirties, this is more attributable to the fact that PTSD is usually recognized in military veterans who experienced trauma during a tour. When considering the age at which most military services are completed, late 20’s to early thirties, it can be deduced that after several years of readjusting to life at home, these veterans begin to seek help for their disorders. The statistics of PTSD in children show similar trends. While there is no particular age at which most cases of pediatric PTSD are diagnosed, most victims suffer the trauma before adolescence, and then seek assistance sometime during the teenage years (Cohen, 1998). While many consider PTSD

to be wide spread across the world, especially in military veterans, the disorder is much less prevalent than the public would presume it to be. In fact only about 7.8% of people suffer from PTSD, (Tull,2014). That being said, Myers presents the fact that, “Many psychologists believe that PTSD is over diagnosed, due partly to a broadening definition of trauma.”(2007,P 653).

Between the two types of PTSD described in this paper, adult and child/ adolescent, both have a social root in regards to the causes of the disorder. In most cases of adult PTSD a singular traumatic event is the stem for their issue. The most common of these traumas include exposure to war acts, assault, usually on a long term bases, kidnapping, and rape. In cases of PTSD involving children, however, the cause for their experiences with PTSD are most commonly vehicular accidents, or near death experiences. Most pediatric cases do not include emotional traumas as the victims are often not old enough to comprehend the events (Cohen, 1998). Other traumas that are potentially experienced in childhood ie, abandonment, abuse, neglect, usually manifest later in life, but in the form of various disorders outside of PTSD.

Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is most commonly received in the form of therapy. Individuals suffering from PTSD have often been experiencing symptoms of the disorder for some time before they decide to receive professional aid. Therapeutic treatment of PTSD usually involves talk based sessions focusing on tools to alleviate symptoms. This approach is taken because direct discussion about the particular trauma may do further damage to the mental state of the victim. (Fairbank; Brown, 1987). In children, however, most professionals do see merit in a direct approach to the specific trauma responsible for the disorder before the event becomes a fixture in the mind of the child (Cohen, 1998). Furthermore, Fairbank and Brown articulate that, “Research addresses the etiology and effects of PTSD in children... and treatment approaches to PTSD have not been proven efficacious in the absence of a clear understanding of the therapeutic mechanisms that account for their positive outcomes.”(1987).Considering the fact that complex therapeutic techniques have been proven ineffective, most therapists have elected to adopt a more simplistic ap-

proach to their treatment of PTSD, especially in cases of childhood trauma.

When initially watching *The Lion King*, Simba's struggle with guilt, fear, anxiety, societal removal, and change in character are clear. Although it is not until further studying PTSD and its manifestations in adolescence that his diagnosis became very clear. While Simba is never misdiagnosed at any point in the film, it is possible that Timon and Pumbaa did not fully understand the severity of Simba's anguish. While this had no lasting effect of Simba, one might contest that had they attempted to aid Simba with the root of his issues; their friend may have recovered sooner; though that would lead to a particularly unremarkable motion picture. In *The Lion King*, what we would refer to as PTSD is referred to as "Living in the past", and had this description not been fitted to Simba, first by Nala and then by Rafiki, the young prince likely would not have recovered from his disorder.

As stated by Myers, PTSD is often over diagnosed which can lead to negative thinking on the part of the victim. When labeled with a stigmatic disorder such as PTSD, the effects can be counter intuitive to the goals of treatment. In broad strokes, *The Lion King* does a strong job at portraying childhood PTSD, and Simba's transition from energetic and confident cub, to reclusive and fearful adult, accurately displays some of the symptoms associated with the disorder. Furthermore, Simba's initial refusal to return to Pride Rock due to his guilt and fear can be clearly linked to the feeling children have when confronted about their trauma as they often believe they are somehow to blame. Where the movie falls short in depicting PTSD is pardonable when one remembers it is in fact a Disney movie. As a children's movie, the story cannot show some of the frightening and realistic symptoms of PTSD, such as violence, substance abuse, severe depression, and suicide attempts. The scenes of the Simba's fearfulness in regards to seeing the people whom he believes hate him, is reflective of the real symptoms of depression felt by PTSD victims.

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**An Enlightened Nation:
The Intricate Rise of Buddhism in the West**

Introduction

In recent years, the role of Buddhism in American society has gained ascendancy. The escalating interest in Buddhism is evident in the increasing amount of Buddhist based literature, the rising abundance of Buddhist centers, and the increasing knowledge of basic Buddhist values. This essay aims to highlight the source of this rising interest in Buddhism by analyzing aspects of Buddhism and characteristics of American culture that mutually support the growth of Buddhism in modern American society.

There are several factors responsible for the rise of Buddhism in the states: The growing appreciation of Siddhartha Gotama's story, the assimilation of Buddhism with science and philosophy, the Americanization of Buddhist ideologies, and finally the divergence between Buddhist ideals and the American economic incentives. The story of Siddhartha Gotama is one of the most vital components to the initial spread of Buddhism, for this narrative explains the human dilemma. Many Americans are drawn to Gotama's story because they believe it provides a thoughtful understanding of human nature. However, although many are in awe of Gotama's moving spiritual journey, the initial reaction to Buddhist immigration in the States was not entirely hospitable.

While Buddhism received a mixed response from Americans, its malleable nature allowed Americans to integrate specific aspects of Buddhism into their daily lives. This ability to specify a uniquely American Buddhist practice

provided the means by which Buddhism was ingrained into American society. Subsequently, Buddhism offered a new perspective on the American economy. While the materialistic pressures of society increased, and practices of accumulating wealth became more prominent, Buddhism offered a comfortable alternative to this demanding principle and showed that happiness could be attained by virtue and the ethics of sharing. Additionally, Buddhism embraced qualities that the country epitomized, like the appreciation of science. Like science, Buddhism is known to provide a non-celestial perspective on life, agreeing with the notion of a universe ruled by laws. This empirical aspect of Buddhism has in turn captivated the attention of Americans. The rational, ethical, and flexible nature of Buddhism has enticed a myriad of Americans, thus allowing Buddhism to make its mark in a progressively advancing nation.

Chapter 1: The Relevance of Gotama and the Origins of Buddhism

The son of a king, who lived a lavish lifestyle, this Indian prince had been given all the luxuries he could imagine, but he was not satisfied and strove to fill a void of doubt in his mind. As he witnessed the suffering that the less fortunate around him endured, his thoughts moiled into a maelstrom. Was there a way to end the somber promise of sickness, pain and death? Must one be forced to endure unchangeable calamity?

To find the answer to his questions, the prince gave up the comfortable, material life he knew, and withdrew himself to a life of pure deprivation. He starved until hunger ached in his bones. He drank his own urine. He slept on nails, and hung himself by the feet for hours. After six years of embracing the most excruciating pain he could inflict on himself, he realized that his question was not answered. As he reflected on his experiences and the two extremes of life he had endured, he had an epiphany: Neither of the lives he had lived were a way of eliminating suffering from his life. Instead, he realized that suffering exists, but by taking the proper path, the “middle way” (Harvey

10), his suffering would cease. In that moment, this man, Siddhartha Gotama, became enlightened. He became the Buddha. The word Buddha is a Sanskrit word meaning: “The Awakened One” (Armstrong 5). As many became infatuated with Gotama’s story, Buddhism continued to spread through Asia. To this day, Buddhist followers around the world have been following in Gotama’s footsteps in the search for their own enlightenment. The story of Siddhartha Gotama is the most vital component to the diffusion of Buddhism throughout the globe: it empowers Buddhist teachings to make sense of the hardships of life, and it shows how anyone can overcome these inevitable adversities.

The beginning of Gotama’s spiritual journey displays a timeless conflict that is ubiquitous among those exposed to life’s inevitable hardships, therefore making his story relatable to all who suffer. Although one may not have weathered the extremes of poverty and famine that Gotama did, his strife is poignant. Despite Gotama’s comfortable life, he was still plagued by the thought of other’s suffering. As Harvey states in his book, *An Introduction to Buddhism*: “Even from his sheltered existence, he became aware of the facts of ageing, sickness, and death” (Harvey 18). Harvey’s reiteration supports the idea that evading suffering is unfeasible; all people must learn to cope with pain. When Gotama looked at life, he saw a grim cycle of sorrow and corruption. Like many people, Gotama was troubled by the suffering he saw around him. Thus, he began his journey to enlightenment. This substantial decision to seek fulfillment led him to ultimate peace, and more importantly, it supported others attempting to cope with life’s vicissitudes.

Other than explaining the nature of human suffering, Gotama’s story also reveals a universal human desire: the search for peace in a world of agony. Like Gotama, many people alive today have witnessed disconcerting glimpses of man’s inhumanity to man. Enveloped in the political and social madness of their time, people struggle to find solace in their lives. In Armstrong’s book *Buddha*, she describes the relevance between the story of Gotama and our own period: “In our society too there are widespread malaise, urban despair and anomie, and we are fearful of the new world order that is emerging”

(Armstrong 30). Here Armstrong explains the fear humans have of the volatile world around them. Much like Gotama's journey for enlightenment, myriad people go on similar journeys in the hope of conquering such fear. Gotama's life has been viewed as an answer to the human predicament, which is why his teachings have evolved into their own religion: Buddhism.

Passed on for centuries after Gotama's death, his teachings have provided the foundation of the Buddhist religion. Gotama's teachings have spread throughout the globe as people become attracted to their simple and nontheistic qualities. Rather than preaching about enlightenment, Gotama provided a path or "middle way" (Harvey 10), that his followers could take in order to achieve enlightenment on their own. This middle way involves understanding the *Four Noble Truths* (Harvey 56):

1. Suffering is an inherent part of life.
2. The cause of suffering is desire, attachment, misperception, and ill will.
3. When desire and other causes of suffering come to an end, suffering stops.
4. The *Eightfold Path* is the way of practice that leads to the cessation of Dukkha, or suffering.

In addition to the four noble truths, there is an eightfold path. The eightfold path simply states the moral responsibilities of Buddhists if they are to achieve enlightenment: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Harvey 68). The path emphasizes the importance of virtuous behavior, compassion, kindness, and in some cases, restraint. Through his pragmatic teachings, Gotama tried to make human beings more conscious of themselves, in order to help them reach their full potential, as he did. The idea of achieving one's full potential is attractive to many humans, hence the rapid spread of Buddhism across the globe.

The first recorded scriptures of Gotama's life and teachings were written approximately 500 years after his death (*The Buddha Documentary*). Therefore, no one can be certain that his journey to enlightenment is even true. However, it is not the evidence that inspires people today to practice Buddhism, but

rather the relevance of his story. Gotama's legend reveals the innermost anxieties of man, and it exposes the innate need for stability in an unpredictable world. With these aspects embedded into the fabric of his teachings, Gotama has been able to provide solace for millions of Buddhist followers in the centuries since his death. Additionally, Gotama represents an ideal that is achievable purely through human determination. In other words, Buddhism does not involve faith in the supernatural, thus making his story compatible with the now ubiquitous laws of science.

Chapter 2: Buddhism and Science

“The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God, avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual and a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism.” Albert Einstein

In the 17th century, the Scientific Revolution in Europe caused a dramatic shift in society's perspective of religion by encouraging Westerners to question the notion of the supernatural. Disturbing previous religious conceptions of the universe, the revolution challenged established dogmas and undermined the celestial aspects of various religions. As this scientific ideology expanded, Westerners began to accept the laws of science as a fundamental truth. In her book *Buddhism and Science*, Kirthisinghe states:

“[This] new psychology seemed to show that man's mind, like his physical body, worked on a pattern of casual law, and that however deep one plumbed its depths, it would not be possible to discover in it an unchanging soul which governed all its activities.”

(Kirthisinghe 20)

This new world view derived from the myriad of scientific advancements during the revolution, including Nicolaus Copernicus's discovery of a heliocentric universe, Galileo Galilei's laws of motion, Francis Bacon's development of deductive reasoning, and Newton's law of gravity. These

empirically-based notions caused widespread admiration and awe towards the new scientific world, resulting in a shift towards the Enlightenment period in the 18th century. The Enlightenment marked a transition toward a secular world view, causing Westerners to consider the notion of independence from a greater being. While scientific notions were still being tested and developed, the role of religion was questioned. Although Buddhist texts had not yet made an astounding appearance in the West, it was the shift in scientific ideology that provided a catalyst to its imminent introduction.

Buddhism was “discovered” in the West during the first half of the 19th century as a result of the Enlightenment. While segments of Buddhist texts had been filtering through Europe since 1000 A.D., first transported to the West by monks on the Silk Road, these readings made little impact on Western society until after the revolution (Almond 7). With the turn of the 19th century, Buddhism established its role in the West through the progressive collection, translation, and publication of its scriptures. Phillip Almond states in his book, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*: “By 1860, [Buddhism] had come to exist not in the Orient, but in the Oriental libraries and institutes of the West, in its text and manuscripts, at the desks of Western savants who interpreted it” (Almond 21). Scholars were intrigued by this religion that encouraged questioning and personal reflection as a method of self-discovery rather than relying on faith. As the French Enlightenment writer Voltaire said, “Faith is to believe in something which your reason tells you can not be true.” This division of reason and faith explains why Buddhist literature began to thrive. Notably absent from the Buddhist teachings are two common aspects of Western religions: the existence of an eternal human soul and of an omnipotent holy creator. For many, Buddhism provided the ideal limbo between an understanding of the natural world and a desire for spiritual fulfillment.

In addition to its independence from a holy deity, Buddhism was viewed to be compatible with scientific laws and methods. The nature of matter, physical reality, space, and time, are all present in Buddha’s teachings. For instance, Buddhism stresses the unity of all things; since all beings are interconnected, the action of one being ultimately elicits

an equal reaction from other entities in its environment (Flanagan 65). This Buddhist notion is compatible with Newton's third law which states that, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction," which scientific notion is seen as a universal truth. The creation of such laws relies on scientific method, which involves creating a hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, and creating a new hypothesis based on the given information. Similarly, the Buddha has experimented with various hypotheses regarding the ideal way of life. He experienced both extremes wealth and luxury, and after much trial and error, found the middle way to enlightenment. Buddhism suggests that one can achieve enlightenment without disregarding the laws of science. Both principles of science and Buddhism concur that the world functions in accordance with the notion of cause and effect. This mutual belief is responsible for bridging the gap between science and religion, allowing Buddhism to advance within a pragmatic and scientific society.

People do not generally speak about science and religion in the same amicable context. Most form a skeptical attitude when religion is compared to the sciences. However, unlike most Western religions that derive from belief in the supernatural, Buddhism has harmoniously allied itself to the world of science. Like Christianity, Buddhism has a system of moral values, but these values are not dependent on God or priests. Like science, Buddhism is based on experience, and it agrees with the notion of a universe ruled by law. The development of the Scientific Revolution provided an ideal opportunity for Buddhism to take rise in the west, for it was the change in scientific ideals that encouraged people to find out more about this natural religion. Regarding science and spirituality, Buddhism captivated the attention of many Westerners in search for a meaningful, logical perspective on life.

Chapter 3: Buddhist Philosophy vs. Theology

Since the 19th century, Buddhism has begun to adapt to society in the West, while expanding its doctrines in the East. In countries

like India and Sri Lanka different forms of Buddhism developed contradictory characteristics. Mahayana Buddhism, for instance, relies heavily on the belief of multiple worlds, nonphysical states of mind, different realms of heaven and hell, and spiritual deities, thus admonishing the idea that Buddhism is a logical, non-theistic religion (Flanagan 3). This revelation caused many to question the fundamental nature of Buddhism: Could a Western form of Buddhism, driven away from its cultural soil, even be considered Buddhism? Although the legitimacy of Western or “naturalized” Buddhism has been debated, it is ultimately the depth in which one chooses to pursue their spiritual wellbeing that accounts for the impact of Buddhism in Western society.

Many people believe that embracing Buddhist philosophy without its theistic aspects is futile and irrational. They argue that abandoning certain doctrines of Buddhism mimics claiming to be Christian without believing in God. Nicholas Buxton, in a BBC interview regarding the influence of Buddhism in America, stated his view on the nontheistic adaptation of Buddhism: “This is a popular Western view, that Buddhism is simply a clean, pure, rational philosophy of life that doesn’t come with the superstitious accretions that we associate with other religions. That is not the case” (Buxton). Here Buxton argues that Western society has created a convoluted view of Buddhism, that is not true to its real qualities. To people like Buxton, religion is not simply a set of beliefs that one decides to take on, but rather a part of one’s cultural identity.

Although many reject the idea of a selective Buddhist philosophy, others believe that the primary goal of Buddhism is to aid the human pursuit of wisdom, virtue, and mindfulness. While Buddhism encourages its followers to consider the aspects of karma and rebirth, it does not state that one is obligated to follow all of its supernatural implications. Owen Flanagan, in his book *The Bodhisattva’s Brain*, views the idea of Buddhism without theology in a positive context: “Such a theory might shed light on the human predicament, on how finite material beings such as humans and animals fit into the larger scheme of material being” (Flanagan 30). He believes that the desertion of celestial characteristics in Buddhism may in fact be a benefit to one’s search for understanding. In this

context, the naturalization of Buddhism does not seem like a nebulous concept, but rather a meaningful and viable practice.

Today, it is not unusual to encounter one who is perturbed by the idea of faith in an impalpable, omnipotent God. Ajahn Sumedho, the Chief Monk of the Amaravati Forest Monastery in the United Kingdom, is the quintessential example of one who seeks spirituality without blind faith. When asked about his attraction to Buddhism, he provided a thoughtful and relatable response:

“What impressed me about Buddhism was that it did not ask me merely to believe. It was a way where one was free to doubt [that] offered a practical way of finding out the Truth through one’s own experience rather than through accepting the teachings of other people. I realized that was the way I had to do it because it is in my nature to doubt and question rather than to believe. Therefore religions that ask one to accept on faith were simply out. I could not even begin to get near them.”

(Abeysekera I).

The debate between Buddhist philosophy and theology still stands today. Many argue over what defines the bounds of religion, and whether or not altering these bounds is acceptable in practice. Many Americans today, for instance, practice their own “Americanized” form of Buddhism, which some argue is no religion at all. The next section will explore the foundation of this new form of Buddhism, and how Buddhism was introduced to the United States. Although only a small fraction of the United States citizens claim to be Buddhists, many have incorporated aspects of Buddhism into their daily lives. Perhaps the best way to view Buddhism is neither as a form of religion or philosophy, but rather as a story of a man’s journey to happiness.

Chapter 4: Buddhism in America

Centuries after Buddha’s life, Buddhism continued to spread. Favored among Indian emperors, it evolved into different

branches, diffused through a multitude of countries, and influenced the minds of many. Eventually, Buddhism penetrated the minds of Americans, who were initially perplexed by what they perceived as its eccentricity.. Americans responded to the emergence of this exotic religion with passionate, yet conflicting ideas. Some were fascinated and intrigued by Buddhism as they read through a growing assortment of Buddhist themed literature. On the other hand, many viewed Buddhism with hostility, and took the initiative to make early Chinese Buddhists feel unwelcomed. Rather than inhibiting the spread of Buddhism, these conflicting reactions drew more attention to Buddhism, encouraged the spread of Buddhism through the states, and eventually led to the integration of Buddhism in the daily lives of Americans. America's first encounter with Buddhism began with a fusion of fascination and resentment, due to the exotic and foreign nature of Buddhism, ultimately resulting in the gradual adoption and acceptance of Buddhism as it became engrained in American society.

The initial contact between American culture and Buddhism occurred largely through the popular writings of American Transcendentalists in the 1840s (Harvey 345). One of the first expositions of Buddhism was in 1844, when *Tire Dial*, a favorite magazine of American intellectuals, published an English translation of a Buddhist text (Mann 4). By the 1890's a plethora of books about Buddhism had been written, including Olcot's *Buddhist Catechism* (1881) and Paul Carns's *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894). These writings portrayed the Buddha in a positive light, as a holy entity. Buddhism continued to be popularized by American writers through the 1950s, as seen in the popular Buddhist books such as *Siddhartha* (1922) by Hermann Hesse or *The Dharma Bums* (1950) by Jack Kerouac (Harvey 303). According to Harvey, these books "attracted people who found the conventional structures of society inhibiting, for example intelligent, creative people with formal education, or women chafing at their social position" (Harvey 304). The fusion of Buddhism into literature played a large role in introduction Buddhism into American culture. It was the first step to slowly engraining Buddhism into American Society. However, not all

Americans welcomed the Asian immigrants, and many fought against Buddhists, regarding them as unwelcomed outsiders.

Buddhism began planting a different set of roots in American soil through the immigrant communities of Chinese and Japanese laborers who arrived in the 1840s and 1880s respectively (Harvey 346). Although many Americans were fascinated with the religion of Buddhism, others regarded Buddhist immigrants with hostility. About 2.5 million people left China between 1840 and 1900, starting an influx of Buddhist immigrants into the West coast. (Mann 6). In California, anti-immigrant nativists created the slogan “California for Americans” and took part in numerous robberies, beatings, and murders of new Buddhist Asian immigrants. Even as immigrants spread through several states, the anti-Asian riots continued. These riots and protests were indicative of people’s animosity towards the unfamiliar. Many Americans were threatened by the sudden surge of Asian immigrants into their lives. However, it was only a matter of time until they would start to accept the Asians’ unique religion in their environment.

Despite conflicting views on Buddhism, it began to spread throughout the country, and eventually adapted into American culture. During the 1960s, there was a decline in participation in Christian churches by young Americans (Garces-Foley 26). Many young adults were searching for new spiritual practices, and Buddhism presented the perfect alternative. At this time a group of Americans, including Jack Kornfield and Ruth Denison, traveled to Burma to where they learned vipassana, a Buddhist practice that emphasizes meditation (Garces-Foley 26). In the United States, they began to teach their own vipassana meditation, leaving out most theistic elements that were embodied in the practice of Buddhist immigrants. In addition to abandoning theistic elements, these teachers amalgamated vipassana with other schools of Buddhism, other religions, and various therapeutic practices, thus creating a distinctively American form of Buddhism. Quickly Americans began to appropriate Buddhism, practicing only those aspects that were relevant to their daily lives. This way only a minor amount of Buddhist knowledge was required for an essentially Buddhist technique

dynamic societal values Buddhism has begun to inspire people with its relevant and useful traditions as many Americans have begun to rely on Buddhist tenets or techniques in their daily lives. This worldly coherence within Buddhist ideals has egged on the growth of Buddhism in the United States, and will support Buddhist ideologies for years to come.

Chapter 5: Meaning in a Material World: Buddhism and the Economy

In the *Anguttara Nikaya*, A Buddhist scripture, Buddha tells a story of the one-eyed human. This person knows how to acquire and increase his wealth but does not understand the ethics of right and wrong. While the two-eyed person understands how to acquire wealth virtuously with high moral standards, the one-eyed person continues to do so by both the right and the wrong means, blind to the ethical aspects of achieving prosperity (Chau 1). The Buddha exploits the one-eyed human as a flawed individual, for one must be able to balance affluence and morality in order to pursue a fulfilling life.

A Buddhist might characterize American society as predominantly composed of one-eyed individuals. From this point of view, Americans could be seen as driven by the competition for material wealth. Because the capitalist system thrives on production and consumption, Americans are constantly encouraged to consume. However, the drive to accumulate wealth is unlikely to be ultimately satisfying. Buddhism offers a spiritual refuge for the disillusioned. It offers a seemingly rational, pragmatic, and personally beneficial approach to life. The practice of Buddhism offers a promise of fulfillment in this life, and an antidote to the pressures of a competitive and materialist society.

The pursuit of wealth in America helps to drive the economy. Many Americans work long and hard to go beyond meeting their minimum needs. They strive for a level of comfort, and even luxury, that sets them apart from people in less wealthy nations. Some scholars, such as Peter Daniels, question the sustainability of this “American dream.” In his

that would be useful for all life circumstances. Tomas Tweed, author of *American Encounter With Buddhism*, argued that “Americans turned to the exotic Eastern religion of Buddhism only insofar as it affirmed basic American values of theism, individualism, optimism, and activism.” It is clear that Buddhism, or at least certain parts of it, are compatible with American society.

As Buddhism continued to filter into American society, it began to adopt distinctively American traits. For instance, many “nightstand Buddhists” (people that don’t claim to be Buddhists but have a profound interest in Buddhism) emphasize the practical aspects of Buddhism. This trait involves the integration of Buddhist philosophies into daily life as an attempt to rationalize the human condition in the modern world. Another Buddhist aspect emphasized by Americans is engagement. Buddhism emphasizes that people should care about the wellbeing of others, especially those who are suffering. Many Americans believe that Buddhist teachings can be beneficial in terms of alleviating the effects of major concerns such as poverty, discrimination, crime, etc. Finally, Americanized Buddhism has become increasingly privatized. Rather than regularly attending meditation centers and temples like traditional Buddhist monks would, American “nightstand” Buddhists are trying Buddhist based practices in their own home. Some argue that this Americanized or “fast food” version (Ms. Hutchinson) cannot be considered Buddhism. However, despite the critiques, Buddhism has become engrained in American society, and it is continuing to grow in America today. Buddhism has proven to be astoundingly resilient through the turn of the 21st century. When Buddhism was introduced into America, it received two opposite reactions. It was idealized through literature, and shunned in respects to the immigrants. However, as this strong response to Buddhism on both ends of the spectrum began to overlap, Buddhism thrived. Now, many Americans have found ways of integrating aspects of Buddhism into their lives in a more “Americanized” form of Buddhism. It is possible that American Buddhism is deviating from the authentic practice of this exotic religion, nevertheless, Buddhism has become integrated into American culture. In a country of

article regarding Buddhism and sustainable economics, Peter Daniels states: “The American economy thrives by exploiting the gap between what people want and what they can have, taking advantage of people’s desires and encouraging them to buy more” (Daniels 159). Daniels seems to imply that a consumer frenzy has supplanted the American pursuit of true happiness. *Blroga sukha*, a Sanskrit phrase, is the satisfaction derived by enjoying and donating the wealth earned righteously (Preecha 249). Buddhist teachings suggest that happiness is not achieved through self interest, instead, it comes from sharing, and giving to others.

Americans have traditionally taken pride in working for U.S. companies and corporations. American companies were known for providing good jobs, good salaries, good benefits, and good pensions. However, there are indications that the face of corporate America is changing. In Barbara Ehrenreich’s book *Nickled and Dimed*, she describes her distressing experience working as an undercover journalist for a variety of American businesses: “I grew up hearing over and over, to the point of tedium, that “hard work” was the secret of success: “Work hard and you’ll get ahead” or “It’s hard work that got us where we are.” No one ever said that you could work hard - harder even than you ever thought possible- and still find yourself sinking ever deeper into poverty and debt” (Ehrenreich 70). In her work, Ehrenreich effectively asks the questions: Are we accumulating wealth at the expense of life? Do workers need to suffer from poverty when they are working for corporations making huge profits?

Beyond the issue of the minimum livable wage, American corporations are under attack for perceived indifference to the environment. For instance, oil companies involved in fracking are seen as determined to extract a resource without regard to potential contamination. Fracking has been shown to cause damage to exposed humans, animals, plants, and water. As Americans become disillusioned about the actions of American companies and about their own role as consumers, Buddhism seems to offer the promise of reconciliation. Buddhism holds all economic activities as they are with full intention. Every aspect of a business is

considered with respect to Karma: the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, which is, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences (Harvey 64). Although one may not consider finance in terms of their future or past lives, the philosophy of Karma is applicable to the American economy. Karma can be good or bad. It is important to understand how economic activities that take place in society have a direct impact on society. According to Daniels, "Buddhism provides the logic to help resolve the tension between ingrained economic system imperatives and changes actually required for achieving environmental sustainability" (Daniels 156). If Buddhist philosophy were to be ingrained in American business, success would be measured through an amalgamation of financial prosperity, ethical employer support, and environmental sustainability, rather than financial affluence alone.

From a Buddhist perspective, it is evident that there is a flaw in American's perception of wealth. Although the economy may thrive in the midst of a consumer oriented nation, one must also consider public health and sustainability as a part of economic success. In order to remodel our values as a society in regards to material wealth, we must first change our perspective of happiness. Buddhism has shown that happiness can be attained by the virtue of right livelihood, including righteous means of earning wealth, which includes the ethics and wisdom of sharing and giving. Buddhism focuses on the pursuit of true happiness, and the pursuit of happiness is at the heart of what it means to be an American.

Conclusion

Buddhism has the profound capability of eliciting new perspectives on the human condition. The broad relativity of Buddhist principles have aided in generating the rising interest of Buddhism across the globe. Buddhist beliefs have been particularly synchronized with the development of American society in the 21st century. As the United States continues to pursue developments in scientific discoveries and economic

development, Buddhism has provided a means by which society can view these important concepts without being pressured or conflicted by their presence. Finding comfort in the ideologies of Buddhism, American's have readily adapted aspects of Buddhism into their daily lives. In doing so, Americans can more effectively evaluate the moral nature, as well as cope with the strain of a rapidly developing society. Buddhism cannot be defined narrowly, for it at once is rational, experiential, ethical, and reflective of the human experience. These flexible, multifaceted aspects of Buddhism are what have enabled it to flourish in the midst of a shifting American culture. As the beliefs of Americans are challenged in the future, Buddhist principles will likely remain resilient and relevant to their lives.

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