

INSIDE ENGLISH 1010
Volume 10
2026
A JOURNAL OF FIRST-YEAR WRITING

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University of Wyoming • Department of English

Inside English 1010

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Inside English 1010
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Faculty Acknowledgments

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 issue of Inside English 1010!

During the 2025-2026 academic year, our program welcomed a terrific cohort of first-year graduate instructors who have brought great spirit and intellectual curiosity to their teaching in the 1010 classroom. Combined with our wonderful second-year graduate instructors, they've made up a strong cohort of instructors who have done impressive work in our English 1010 classrooms, some of which is included in this issue of our writing program's journal. We're excited for everyone to read it.

Also of note, our team of faculty involved with 1010 leadership has evolved, as it does. We are fortunate to have Shelby Hutson and Allison Gernant return this year as exceptional mentors in the program who play such an important shaping role in instructors' development. Beyond that we have been delighted to welcome previous Director of Writing Kelly Kinney back to the first-year program as a mentor, as well, and we have all benefited from having her experience and expertise being part of the mix. Also, Rick Fisher moved into the Associate Director role this year. His background working in WAC and UW's University Studies Program's COM sequence, along with his interests in writing pedagogy, genre literacy, and AI, make Rick an incredible addition to our group. Finally, it has been a pleasure working with Joe Saufley, second-year MA student and the editor of this journal issue, as the Assistant Director of First-Year Writing. Joe was an indispensable part of our fall colloquium and offered steady peer support for our new and returning graduate instructors during the fall before turning much of his attention to the editing process of this journal issue.

That editing process is fairly involved, as the group of graduate instructors and the students whose work was selected for inclusion in this issue can attest. We have had a terrific group of graduate instructors involved in reading submissions and making selections for the issue, including Kathleen Walker, Grace Langeberg, Shelby Dodds, Liz Youngman, Emily Wilmot, Virginia Herboldsheimer, and Hosanna Greene. We're grateful to all of you for the work you've done! On the heels of the editorial board's process, Joe has worked closely with the excellent student writers represented in these pages to refine the essays they developed in 1010.

I would like to say a few words about the writing included here, but before I do, I would like to outline-briefly-the assignments that gave rise to these essays. First, the Visual Analysis (VA) assignment asks students to find a visual text— typically (but not always) a static advertisement or public service announcement—and offer an analysis of its rhetoric—including attention to the rhetorical appeals and historical context of the ad— after offering a thick description of its content. Our second assignment, the Researched Argument (RA), is a more conventional persuasive researched piece wherein writers identify a research question and then assert and defend a thesis, marshaling evidence from secondary sources and addressing counterarguments. Finally, the Rhetorical Storytelling Project (RSP) asks writers to consider the persuasive power of storytelling as a rhetorical act-in-community, taking

their own personal narrative and connecting it to existing issues and conversations to enrich and contribute new perspectives to those conversations.

The student writing selected by the board for this year's issue is strong, varied, and compelling. The included VA samples take on the work of visual rhetorical analysis, carefully examining both visual text and the historical/rhetorical context that gives rise and meaning to those texts. As usual, our students range of interests and texts is striking, stretching from Andrew Sharum's visual analysis of a World War I propaganda poster, "Only the Navy Can Stop This," which examines a range of embedded symbols in the text to understand its messaging, to Sidney Neff's, "Nature's Students," a smart analysis of visual rhetoric in a Spanish ad campaign promoting outdoor education. Additionally, Carson Deeds' "Jeans or Genes, What Do You See?" demonstrates the suppleness of rhetorical analysis in his work with a contemporary ad from American Eagle that generated much pop culture conversation and controversy last year.

The Researched Arguments here in this issue find students identifying a research question and engaging with existing research to fashion a thesis-based argument that considers and engages with counterarguments. Katie Bolden's "Gender Bias and Medicine in the Modern Era," which considers key question about obstacles women face when seeking informed, tailored health care. Anna Steinle authored the second RA in this issue, "Controlling an Annual Ailment: The Best Cheatgrass Management Strategies," an essay that considers intersecting challenges that property owners and government entities face in taming cheatgrass, a recognized Wyoming nemesis.

For the Rhetorical Storytelling Project (previously the Public Genre Assignment), students consider ways in which personal narrative can be used to engage rhetorically with broader conversations and community interests, and those included here developed essays that position stories as a kind of evidence capable of casting light on such issues. Hayden Bybee, for instance, uses personal experience with family illness and injury to explore the challenge of depression faced by so many in "Grief and Gratitude." Eleanor McCoy's "The Trashy Friend" considers how wild animals and humans interact in ways that preserve their mutual safety and well-being, even when that means marking off separate-but-intersecting worlds of existence. Finally, in "Outgrowing You," Briana Munoz gauges the evolution of relationships and the struggle to maintain trust and liberty across distance.

We are grateful to our student writers for sharing your work with both current and future students and instructors in 1010, and that gratitude extends to all students who submitted their writing to be considered for publication. We would also like to thank the instructors who nurtured students' thinking and writing in 1010, contributing to the development of the essays published here. Thanks, as always, to all who teach in the 1010 program. Your creativity and commitment create space for our students to thrive.

Finally, thanks to the English Department and all who support the work of the 1010 program. We hope you enjoy the issue!

Michael Knievel

Letter from the Editor

It is my honor, as this year's Assistant Director of First-Year Writing, to spotlight the 10th anniversary of this publication and a decade of outstanding writing from UW students. Publishing anything consistently for 10 years is no simple feat, and, to that end, I want to recognize the students, editors and advisors that kept this journal cruising along. The tireless work of former contributors continues to shine on with each ensuing publication, a legacy the 2026 installment aims to uphold.

When it comes to this year's production, I have no shortage of people to highlight, but I will gladly start by focusing on the stars of the show: our eight student writers. These students worked hard throughout the revision process to sharpen their writing. They tackled tough, timely and transgenerational topics, brought flavor, fun and focus to their words and showcased their versatility and vulnerability as writers and human beings. Their efforts, as in any year, are a reflection of the work done by many of their peers across all English 1010 classes.

The students and their writing remain the feature of this journal, but its publication would be an impossibility without the mentorship of the First-Year Writing Program leadership team and assistance from an incredible editorial board. It is fair to wonder where this journal would stand without the guidance of Dr. Michael Knievel, Director of the First-Year Writing Program. Mike's wisdom, warmth and work ethic flow throughout the program and both indirectly and directly trickle down into these pages. His support and insight has buoyed this journal for much of its existence, and this year is no different. The presence of Dr. Rick Fisher, in his capacity as Associate Director, has also greatly enhanced the program and this publication. Thank you both for your service, skill and support this year!

Speaking of support, the 2026 *Inside English 1010* editorial board brought it in spades. While I tended to a family crisis in the early stages of 2026, they went above and beyond what is typically expected of the board, stepping up to not only read, review, and discuss submissions but also come alongside selected students in the initial revision process. Thank you Shelby Dodds, Hosanna Greene, Virginia Herboldsheimer, Grace Langeberg, Kathleen Walker, Emily Wilmot, and Liz Youngman. Your unwavering dedication to this university's 1010 students was deeply and richly evidenced by the time and effort you supplied to this journal.

In the first edition of *Inside English 1010*, founding editor Dr. Kelly Kinney talked about "charting new waters" with an inaugural publication. Ten years later, the waters are no longer new, but they are still well worth charting. The journal has undergone its fair share of changes since 2017, but, at its heart, it remains exactly what it was created to be: a means of celebrating UW students' writing and offering that writing as a resource for students and instructors. As this letter, and my time as the Assistant Director, comes to a close, I remain grateful for the opportunity to punctuate this journal's first decade, and I revel at the thought of what the next 10 years, and more, will bring for the first-year writing program and this publication...and the sensational students at their core.

Cheers to all those who have made, and will continue to make, this journal possible,

Joseph Saufley

How to Use Inside English 1010

It is time to kick off another issue of *Inside English 1010*! Before presenting the main course, the students' writing, I want to set the table in these next few pages. The "How to Use *Inside English 1010*" section has been included in this journal since its inception, a testament to the publication's potential as a powerful resource for instructors and students. The vast range of genres, topics, techniques and voices presented in these pages gives weight to the claim that *Inside English 1010* exists as a resource for everyone: from writers who took English by storm in high school, to those dreading the thought of a college writing course, and from long-time instructors, to incoming GTAs getting their first shot at teaching FYW. No matter your background, I am confident the writing in this journal will offer you something for your FYW journey. Discovering what that "something" is makes this reading experience exciting and, ultimately, resourceful. Keep turning pages and diving in until you find it!

This section begins with an overview of English 1010's three main assignments and ends with suggestions for how FYW instructors and students should approach this journal as a resource. I would like to eagerly acknowledge the work and writing of former Assistant Director of First-Year Writing and 2025 Inside English 1010 Lead Editor Makayla Kocher, who expertly revamped and expanded this section in last year's issue. Makayla's writing, which was kept with her permission, makes up the remainder of this page, as well as the next page, with updates occurring where appropriate. If it isn't broken...don't fix it!

Brief Overview of the English 1010 Assignments

In the **Visual Analysis (VA)** paper, students are asked to examine a visual text, such as an advertisement or public service announcement (PSA), using rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) to inform and persuade an academic audience. Students describe the visual and its historical context while using visual analysis techniques, before offering an overall evaluation of the visual's rhetorical effectiveness. The types of visuals used for this assignment can range from historical to present day, from posters to billboards, and from wartime propaganda to social issues or the everyday advertisements students see on social media.

In the **Researched Argument (RA)**, students learn to use source location and evaluation, synthesis, and structure to make an academic argument. Some students have, and others have not, encountered this type of writing in their high school English classes; thus, in 1010, we approach this assignment with various strategies. Students are encouraged to pursue a topic that piques their curiosity. Throughout the process, students learn to engage with different and contrasting perspectives, develop an annotated bibliography, and recognize the variability of argument building and structuring. As with the examples in this volume, the assignment fosters critical thinking and proficiency in academic writing.

The **Rhetorical Storytelling Project (RSP)** asks students to tell a first-person, memoir-style story about being a member of a community of their choice. The RSP is likely the most variable in terms of design and instruction, incorporating creative writing, storytelling, and document design. This variability is why the student samples in this volume vary in tone, seriousness, topic, and community addressed. Unlike the Visual Analysis and Researched Argument, the RSP is not a thesis-driven academic genre; instead, students' rhetorical focus is on conveying a central message or insight, leaning into personal experience, and developing a strong emotional connection with a public audience.

A Pedagogical Tool For Instructors

1010 instructors,

You are encouraged to utilize this volume (and others) of the *Inside English 1010* journal as a resource for sparking classroom discussion and considering your pedagogical approach to each assignment. As mentioned above, the range of topics is wide in the VA, RA, and PGA. It is exciting and demonstrates the broad array of ideas, interests, and perspectives of our 1010 students. This serves as a hopeful reminder for you to embrace your students' curiosities and to ensure that student voices and opinions are heard and welcomed in class. Invite your students to move beyond commonly selected topics. Ask them to do a free-write on topics, hobbies, and curiosities.

Engage with these samples alongside your students to help inspire them and to assist them in visualizing what the assignments can and do look like. Remember that each assignment varies slightly from year to year and that the ways the assignments are taught and understood will impact the outcome of the essays.

As you read through these samples, pay close attention to how students addressed the different assignments. Consider how these topics are relevant to current events in 2025-2026. This is important as it suggests not only students' interest but also how topical selection can be drawn from our everyday lived experiences. Also, carefully note the techniques used by students. For example, in the **VA**, observe how the student's thesis statement serves as the argumentative cornerstone that filters into each topic sentence. In the **RA**, consider how effectively integrating quotes enhances the student voice and how the placement of the counterargument—woven throughout, in a specific paragraph, or in multiple places—affects students' structure and argument-building approaches. In the **RSP**, note how paragraph structure and tonality become more colloquial while student voices are enriched by the design of the assignment. Throughout the samples in this volume, you will notice a common thread: the development of student voice, the importance of analysis (visual or textual), and the presence of rhetorical tactics and appeals. There is much more that each of these genres and the samples here can offer, so read with an eye toward how these samples speak to instruction and how they can impact your approach to teaching these assignments.

Consider also reading the next section closely. While addressed to students, it can serve as a space for reflection and innovation in teaching the VA, RA, and RSP.

A Guide for Students

1010 students,

Inside English 1010 showcases work in a variety of genres taught in English 1010. The essays included in this journal were written by UW students in the calendar year preceding publication and were recommended by instructors who feel this work represents some of the best their students produced. If you're a student reading this introduction, you are probably enrolled in English 1010, and likely haven't written in some— or even all—of these genres before. *Inside English 1010* is a resource designed for you; these essays will clarify evaluation criteria for the major assignments and will model rhetorical strategies that you will learn and practice in your own writing this semester.

While you read the **Visual Analyses**, consider how the writer uses textual evidence to support their claims about the use of logos, ethos, and pathos. Are they supporting their argument using visual evidence like words, images, colors, and image blocking? Do you notice how the writer builds their argument from general observations to specific textual evidence?

When you turn to the **Researched Arguments**, note how the writers narrow their topics into specific arguments. What kind of evidence do the writers use to support their claims, and how do these claims build towards their theses? How are paragraphs organized? Is there strong synthesis in the research? What makes the introductions and conclusions effective?

Finally, with the **Rhetorical Storytelling Project**, pay specific attention to the ways writers incorporate personal experience and pathos into their work. What other types of evidence do they use? How is the writing style of the RSP different from the VA and RA? How do writers engage storytelling and adapt their approaches for different audiences?

The students who wrote, submitted, and revised their pieces for this issue will be the first to admit that their writing is not perfect. Their imperfections, however, might ironically be the most perfect part of this whole journal. Reading these high-quality samples is one thing, but critically evaluating them, and asking yourself what you would or would not have done differently, adds a whole additional layer to this journal's utility. Don't just enjoy these works, peer review them! Closely examining the writing in this publication will help you recognize what is and isn't effective in your own writing. Use these essays as a model and inspiration for your own English 1010 works, and know that there is not simply one way to write an extraordinary essay!

The editorial board of *Inside English 1010* wishes you a semester filled with interesting reading, engaged discussion, and good writing. Work hard, have fun, and write on!

Visual Analysis

Nature's Students

by Sidney Neff



Figure 1: "Wise Nature."

Humanity's dominant perspective on nature perceives it as a system to be scientifically dismantled and dissected rather than as a teacher with valuable lessons to offer. Fundación Global Nature's visual (Figure 1) proposes that we become students of nature, so we may understand how to respect and protect her. Fundación Global Nature produced an effective campaign in 2024 to persuade educators to structure their lessons in a way that fosters children's knowledge and experiences of nature, beginning with an invitation to hold classes outdoors on World Nature Day. This image appeals to pathos through vivid detail and color, logos through illustrating hands-on learning, and ethos through establishing credibility with the producer. By using these rhetorical appeals, the visual text successfully persuades educators and parents that by fostering children's interaction with and learning from nature, they will gain an understanding of and a respect for Mother Earth.

In order to understand this visual, we must first recognize the elements that the author portrays. The visual's setting is in the middle of a biologically rich forest. One of the most noticeable elements is the value, evident in the rays of light streaming through the trees, illuminating a bull elk standing atop a hill. At the bottom of the hill, on both the left and the right, children sit at desks looking up at the bull elk, symbolizing a class listening to a lesson from their teacher. Between the children, a stream of crystal water flows down further representing a classroom structure. An abundance of trees, greenery, and animals are present throughout the scene, indicating a lively ecosystem. At the very top of the image, in a clearing of trees, a V formation of birds fly west with a distant mountain in the background. In the top left corner of the image, there is the text "Nature is Wise. Let's Learn From Her" (Figure 1).

The historical context of this image provides insight into the primary audience and the timing of this message. This campaign ran in Spain in April of 2024. The campaign was possibly inspired by the COVID-19 lockdown which led to an increase of children's screen time. Spain had one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe, lasting 44 days (Janssen). For six weeks, children were not permitted to leave their homes for any reason except for medical emergencies (Janssen). The lockdown kept children from being outdoors and influenced the time they spent on digital devices. The percentage of children exposed to smartphones and tablets during confinement rose from 38% to 87.1%, increasing in accordance to the age of the children (Cartanya-Hueso et al.). Furthermore, 67.5% of children under 48 months were exposed to smartphones and tablets on a daily basis during COVID-19 confinement (Cartanya-Hueso et al.). Children growing up in the midst of the pandemic were affected by the lack of outdoor time and increased use of digital devices, which prompted the publication of this public service announcement (PSA) advocating for children to interact with and learn from nature. Furthermore, Fundación Global Nature clearly makes an effort to teach schools and students how to be environmentally active and the importance of doing so. Their approach is highlighted by a quote on their website which reads, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn" ("Working in the Field"). The foundation engages in many projects that involve working with schools to promote an immersive environmental education ("Working in the Field"). Their publication of this ad was an extension of their goal to blend nature and education through hands-on experience.

The visual appeals to pathos through the elements—vivid detail, value, and color—in an effort to evoke the feeling of serenity and portray the outdoors as a desirable, educative place. The value found in the image draws attention to the bull elk, but also inspires a feeling of hopefulness. In addition, the visual incorporates realistic details to make the scene feel more impactful and immediate, as if the viewer is in nature experiencing this event. The vibrant and cool colors inspire feelings of peace, comfort, and serenity. The appeal to these emotions is a strategy to make the audience feel a longing to be in the outdoors and experience nature. Elements found in the visual paint the outdoors as a calm and desirable learning environment while also blending education with tenderness. By resonating emotionally with the audience, the PSA compels them to consider the benefits of restructuring education to include being in and learning from nature.

This campaign builds ethos by featuring the logo of a respected foundation in Spain, Fundación Global Nature (FGN). FGN is a widely known and admired nonprofit in Spain. It was founded in 1993 and has grown to produce environmental projects at the national and European levels ("Working in the Field"). FGN established a respected and successful reputation, shown through the achievement of more than 30 awards, both national and international ("Working in the Field"). FGN's reputation for success and dedication is carried through to the campaign, making its message seem trustworthy and important. The credibility of this foundation also inspires the audience to see the power of this message. FGN is dedicated to protecting nature, and their advocacy for children to learn from and in nature shows the audience how significant this idea can be, not only for the children, but in the effort to protect nature as well. FGN's credibility aids its delivery of the overarching message: we must learn from nature in order to protect and respect it.

The visual uses the rhetorical strategy of logos to appeal to the logic of the argument and persuade the audience by reason. It is logical to think that while learning about something, if you have the opportunity to experience it, it is beneficial to do so. Hands-on learning is very effective at improving information retention because it involves both physiological and psychological impacts of the learning style (Arnholz). Being able to touch or see something is much more productive and powerful than only reading about it (Arnholz). The visual turns an animal into a teacher and an ecosystem into a classroom to emphasize the message that by fostering children's learning in and from nature, they will learn valuable lessons that could not be taught by a teacher. When learning something, it is of great value to seek immersion in the concept and experience the process. The visual makes the argument that there is much more insight and knowledge to gain when learning directly from the source: Mother Nature herself.

Following the campaign's release, the concept of outdoor learning gained significant attention in Spain, inspiring several initiatives starting in 2024 and 2025. Its vivid imagery successfully paints the outdoors as a desirable and beneficial learning environment, leaving its viewers with a longing to achieve this in education. FGN published a powerful and overall effective campaign, but, upon further analysis, it is revealed that there is a large component that may negatively affect how this campaign is received by its viewers. While the campaign was successful in growing the movement for nature-based education in Spain, this image appears to have been created using AI, which undermines its message. AI has proven to be very bad for the environment, and the producer of this message is a foundation that is dedicated to protecting the environment. The PSA, with its AI-generated appearance, conflicts with the intention behind FGN. This issue can make the foundation seem untrustworthy and dishonest, transferring that distrust through to the PSA's message. Overall, FGN produced a campaign with a powerful and productive message, but they undermine their credibility and weaken their argument by appearing to use AI to convey this message.

We live in a society where anthropocentrism is all-consuming and the wisdom of Mother Nature is being casually forgotten. In a world of arrogance and overconfidence, we forget the importance of listening to and learning from those who hold greater knowledge, with nature herself existing as perhaps the greatest knowledge keeper. Analyzing this PSA, along with all PSAs, is important because we interact with them frequently, and they can influence our thoughts or shape our perspectives. This visual is an example of how easily a picture and words can alter our feelings about something and lead to a movement of change. Through the PSA's powerful rhetorical appeals, especially pathos and logos, FGN aims to create a world where we all desire to learn in and from the outdoors. From this experience, we will grow a unique understanding and respect for Mother Nature.

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Only the Navy Can Stop This

by Andrew Sharum



Figure 1: "Only the Navy can stop this."

History demonstrates that in times of crisis, persuasion rarely arrives gently; it often takes form in symbols meant to sway the public. William Allen Rogers' cartoon "Only the Navy can stop this" (Figure 1) seeks to encourage U.S. Naval recruitment and action to halt the German U-boat campaign in the Atlantic. Created in 1917 as a recruiting poster for the Navy, it uses bold imagery to convey a message of patriotism and support for the Naval forces. By strategically employing pathos to instill a sense of duty, ethos to leverage the Navy's credibility, and logos to present a logical argument, William Allen Rogers' 1917 recruiting poster became a powerful propaganda tool that effectively rallied support and encouraged participation in the U.S. Naval efforts during World War I.

In this poster, a German soldier presses through knee-high water in a storm, wearing a Pickelhaube, the spiked helmet worn by German troops during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His black button down uniform has the traditional Prussian Eagle on the front plate and Iron Cross medal around the neck replaced with the pirate skull and cross bones. His sleeves are rolled up to his elbows with blood dripping from his hands and the sword and dagger he wields. A clean ornate blade hangs from his side as the tide breaks against his shins. In the abyss behind him, Stygian waves curl in the bearing of his sword. Below the tide he is wading through, the corpses of many women and children can be faintly seen as he walks over them. With a cold, stern glare, his eyes look past the viewer as if they aren't there. In large text, colored the same as the blood on the weapons, is written the phrase "ONLY THE NAVY CAN STOP THIS" (Figure 1). A large black underline separates that phrase from very small

prints that read from left to right, “The U. S. Navy Publicity Bureau gratefully acknowledges its indebtedness to the New York Herald for the reproduction of Mr. Rogers’ cartoon” and “Printed by the U. S. Navy Publicity Bureau, N. Y.” (Figure 1). Rogers uses line shading to draw attention to the German soldier, and his much darker figure becomes the focal point amid the foul weather surrounding him. Another feature that helps contrast the soldier, as well as making the monotone setting around him grim, is that he is the only part of the picture with color aside from the text that gives the piece its name.

A proper understanding of the rhetorical techniques used in this image must be based on the background against which they are used. The submerged bodies of women and children on whom the German is standing probably allude to the 1915 sinking of the *Lusitania*, a civilian passenger ship downed by the U-20, which resulted in the deaths of about 1,200 people out of the 1,960 who were on board (Library of Congress, n.d.). Rogers reinforces this theme in other works that depict or directly reference German attacks on noncombatants to stir public outrage such as ‘Here lie “the facts”’ (Rogers, 1915) and “When you fire remember this – Enlist in the Navy” (Rogers, 1917). By 1917, Germany’s return to unrestricted submarine warfare further inflamed tensions, creating the emotionally charged and political climate in which Rogers’ recruitment poster would have been immediately understood by its audience (The National WW1 Museum and Memorial, n.d.).

The poster uses logos through its appeal of a strong navy being the only way of combating the U-boat campaign in the Atlantic. By referring to the sinking of civilian vessels, the image implies that only the U.S. Navy can prevent actions like the sinking of *Lusitania* from continuing. More logos could have been incorporated by including statistics, such as the tonnage of ships sunk by German U-boats up to that point. The logical deduction that a stronger maritime force would reduce the targeting or sinking of civilian ships aids in emphasizing the urgent need for manpower in the U.S. Navy and reinforces the visual’s effectiveness in presenting enlistment as a rational response.

Secondly, W.A. Rogers’ reputation as “Greatest of Present Day Cartoonists” (Maxwell, 1909) prior to this work adds significantly to his credibility and ethos. The Navy and The U.S. Navy Publicity Bureau’s endorsement of Rogers’ cartoon lends authority and credibility to the image’s message. Supporting the Navy and creating recruitment cartoons and propaganda leading up to and during the war strengthened Rogers’ credibility as a trusted figure. His signature in the bottom right corner serves as a visual claim of authorship, reinforcing this credibility by signaling that a respected artist stands behind the poster’s message. Rogers’ consistent ability to make cartoons in line with national interests and public sentiment further enhances the ethos of the poster. This combination of authoritative sources and a respected creator reinforces the message’s reliability and persuasive power.

Pathos is the strongest appeal used in Rogers' cartoon, a strategy that proved effective during the war as nearly two million American men volunteered for service (National Archives Foundation, n.d.). The grim imagery of the German soldier wading through water over the dead women and children evokes a strong emotional response from the audience. The dark stormy background and the callous glare give a sense of immediate danger. By drawing the German soldier to resemble Otto von Bismarck—Germany's influential 19th-century statesman often associated with Prussian militarism and authoritarian power—Rogers appeals to the then existing disdain toward Germans with stereotyping. This use of stereotyping allows this propaganda to influence the audience's perceptions. The bold red text reading "ONLY THE NAVY CAN STOP THIS" reinforces the emotional message by asserting the U.S. Navy's role as the sole protector against this evil. The combination of visual elements and text primarily focuses on negative emotion to elicit a patriotic protector response in the military-aged male.

Overall, W.A. Rogers' poster is highly effective in delivering its desired message. The combination of strong grim imagery and bold red text evoke strong, mainly negative, emotions, making the pathos the forefront appeal. The poster employs logos by arguing for the U.S. Navy's necessity in halting the U-boat campaign. Credibility established by Rogers' reputation is bolstered by the endorsement of the U.S. Navy and its Publicity Bureau. The use of stereotyping effectively taps into existing sentiments that aid in guiding the viewer's perception of the poster. Despite its many strengths, the visual still could have been improved by incorporating statistics or possibly a sash around one or more of the victims with the names of sunken civilian vessels. Despite this minor shortcoming, the poster's overall impact in rallying support for the U.S. Navy and overall war effort is undeniable.

Rogers' poster ultimately demonstrates how visual rhetoric can shape public sentiment during moments of national crisis. Its imagery and messaging aligned with the cultural anxieties of 1917, transforming fear of submarine warfare into a call for collective action. The influence is reflected in the nearly two million American men who volunteered for service, demonstrating how powerfully such imagery shaped public willingness to enlist. By instilling a sense of duty and patriotism, "Only the Navy can stop this" played a crucial role in mobilizing manpower for the U.S. Navy and offers a strong lesson on the power of military recruiting ads and propaganda in shaping public sentiment.

About the Author

Andrew Sharum is an Environmental Systems Science major and Rangeland Management minor at the University of Wyoming. He began his degree work after eight years of service in the U.S. Navy. His time in service, along with a deep interest in philosophy and theology, shaped his interest in land stewardship and informs the perspective he brings to his writing.

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Jeans or Genes, What Do You See?

by Carson Deeds



Figure 1: "Selling Jeans or Eugenics?"

Visual media is a very useful and efficient method of communication, from the propaganda posters of World War II to simple clothing ads in a fashion magazine. The power of visuals lies in their ability to quickly capture attention and deliver a short, intentional message. A great example of modern visual media is American Eagle's "Sydney Sweeney has Great Jeans" ad campaign. It is an interesting example to analyze, given the reaction it garnered from a mainstream audience. The ad makes an effective argument by using pathos, Sydney's sex appeal; ethos, her authority as a fashion model and celebrity; and logos, the implied argument that if the consumer buys their jeans, they will be like Sydney Sweeney.

This particular piece of visual media depicts the popular actress Sydney Sweeney wearing a blue denim jacket and jeans, matching the color of her eyes. She lies on her side, propping herself up on her right elbow in an alluring pose in front of a simple gray backdrop. Sydney's blond hair drapes over her shoulders, framing her head in the top left corner of the advertisement. Her facial expression is rather stoic, the expression a typical fashion model would wear, her left eyebrow slightly raised as she looks directly at the camera. The design of the ad balances this naturally asymmetric image by placing the ad's message on the right side of Sydney's head. So, the viewer's eyes are immediately drawn from the left side, her face, to the right side, where the message "American Eagle - Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans" lies in white and light blue letters. This visual uses a simple color scheme, relying mostly on Sydney's appearance to grab the attention of onlookers. The ad campaign is a textbook example of 'sex sells' in advertising, but other subtle techniques are present in this visual as well.

One of the most interesting things about this advertisement is its rhetorical context, such as its audience. Sydney Sweeney is a classically beautiful woman with blond hair and blue eyes, and her entire persona as an attractive woman is used to help support the argument for buying American Eagle's jeans. However, in recent times, many companies have shifted towards more inclusive and body-positive advertisements due to responses from progressive critics decrying the lack of diversity. Historically, there have been many ads using an appeal to female beauty to market a product, such as the 1980s Calvin Klein jeans ad featuring Brooke Shields. Shields' campaign received massive backlash from critics, since she was only fifteen when the commercials were released, and used sexual innuendos to market the company's product (Allaire). Despite the firestorm, this campaign was highly successful for Calvin Klein. Similarly, Sydney Sweeney's American Eagle ad has caused another uproar, given the recent shift to more body-positive and diverse advertisements. This context is a key part of why the visual was so effective in executing its goal of marketing the product.

Given the recent atmosphere of advertising and this sudden switch back to more traditional appeals, the American Eagle visual caused significant controversy. The play on the word "jeans" caused many people to accuse the company of racism and white supremacy. In many heated social media threads, users "complained that 'good genes' is a dog whistle to white supremacists; one viral post labeled it 'literal Nazi propaganda'" ("Selling Jeans"). Others praised the return to traditional beauty standards. While the advertisement itself may have received a variety of responses ranging from backlash to praise, the real question remains: was the ad effective in convincing the consumer to buy the product?

American Eagle's ad campaign is effective primarily because of its use of pathos, to influence people's emotions. Sydney Sweeney is, by traditional beauty standards, very good looking, which appeals to many viewer's desires. This visual advertising focusing on being traditionally attractive, especially for clothing, has been used for a long time with positive results. Using a beautiful woman to appeal to the emotion of desire in a visual is a classic technique for marketing a product. Sydney's suggestive pose grabs the viewer's attention, as well as the disinterested, detached facial expression, like a fashion supermodel's face. The colors of the background, a simple white-gray, point all eyes toward Sydney as the focal point of the visual. Even if this is a rather straightforward method, pathos is definitely well used to forward the argument for buying American Eagle jeans.

The second appeal this visual employs is ethos, by using Sydney Sweeney's sizable following to establish credibility. Sydney Sweeney is a popular actress and celebrity who draws a good amount of support. In general, celebrities are usually agreed upon as an authority when it comes to fashion, at least by their fans. Another way ethos works is by using the person's influence on their fans to argue a point. Of course, Sydney is not able to prove that American Eagle's jeans are the best or longest-lasting in the textile industry, but her fans would view her as a fashion authority and therefore be more likely to buy American Eagle jeans specifically.

Finally, the ad makes an appeal to logos, or logical arguments. This visual's logical argument is rather hidden, and not particularly strong, but still very present. In advertisements, an indirect argument is sometimes more effective than direct persuasion. The claim that American Eagle's campaign makes is if the consumer buys their jeans, they will be like Sydney Sweeney. This is not clearly stated in words; rather, it is implied heavily by the overall appearance of the visual. The average person is now able to wear the same jeans Sydney is wearing, and be more like her. People see an attractive person and subconsciously think to be like that person, by doing the things that they do. This is a rather weak and shaky logical claim but still usable. A visual can be less strong in one area of rhetoric and still be effective at communicating its argument due to its overall argument. This particular ad campaign is a great example of such a technique.

Now, to answer the question: did this visual achieve its goal? The campaign did generate significant controversy, with plenty of news coverage and backlash. It even gathered the attention of President Donald Trump, who praised Sydney's collaboration in the ad. All the spotlight on the company led to a 23.5% increase of American Eagle's stock prices (Feitelberg). The impact was clear: the ad was definitely successful at capturing people's attention. Despite the controversy surrounding the deeper meaning of the advertisement, and the denouncing of the campaign by many as racism and eugenics, it did undoubtedly gain the general public's interest. So even though the way the creators of the visual went about delivering the message was very questionable, they did achieve the goal of the company.

American Eagle's ad campaign with Sydney Sweeney makes an effective argument based on her looks, authority, and hidden persuasion. This visual has importance for everyone, as the way it was received clearly shows a cultural shift from the body positivity movement in advertisements. This ad is the stark opposite of what people have seen over the past few years and become alienated from, so, given its success, the culture may shift to the other side of the spectrum. However, what direction things take is up to us as a society. The future of advertisement depends on what people find interesting; whether we see this sort of visual as racism and eugenics or an unfortunately-worded appeal to buy jeans because of a pretty model.

About the Author

Carson Deeds is from Lander, Wyoming. He is an undergraduate student studying mechanical engineering. In his spare time Carson loves to go mountain biking and skiing, as well as spending time with his family and his dog.

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Researched Argument

Controlling an Annual Ailment: The Best Cheatgrass Management Strategies

by Anna Steinle

Without immediate action, a noxious plant species may overrun the western United States. *Bromus tectorum*, commonly known as cheatgrass or downy brome, is an invasive annual grass that is problematic in the American West. Invasive plants are nonnative to a region and have undesired effects. Far from a local problem observed only by individual ranchers, the danger of cheatgrass is noted by government agencies and major publications such as the Wyoming Livestock Roundup. Cheatgrass is a prime example of an unwelcome invasive. It is an annual grass, meaning it completes its life cycle in only a year and reproduces exponentially. It takes over entire areas, choking out other species and creating a monopolized plant community known as a monoculture. Once cheatgrass is the dominant plant in an ecosystem, it is very difficult to eradicate (Hewlett). Therefore, land managers must fight cheatgrass before it envelops their grassland systems. Many management techniques exist, but there is debate on which is the most effective, cost-efficient, and practical. Though each region differs, the best overall cheatgrass control method is a combination of herbicides and preventative measures. Government agencies must assist landowners as much as possible in implementing these tactics.

Why does *B. tectorum* pose such a problem? First, cheatgrass germinates earlier in the year than other plants, as reported by microbiology researchers (Bradbury et al. 1). As a result, when other grasses sprout in the spring, cheatgrass has already grown all winter. This advantage means native perennials have difficulty outcompeting cheatgrass (Bradbury et al. 1). Additionally, according to a personal interview with Jess Butler, Converse County Weed and Pest Supervisor, seeds that fall on the ground form a seedbed. Butler stated that “not all seeds germinate the first year,” and can be viable up to three years. Even when the living plants are removed, the seeds still pose a problem for the next year (Butler). In addition, *B. tectorum* has barbed seeds that easily latch onto materials like animal fur and human clothes or hide in the crevices of vehicles. These large seeds are spread extensively by animal and human activity. Grazing animals rarely eat mature cheatgrass since the barbed seeds irritate their mouths. Once a cheatgrass stalk goes to seed, no animal will consume it (Butler). Even if they did eat it, the nutritional quality would be very low. A field could be filled with cheatgrass, but be entirely inedible for livestock and wildlife (Hewlett).

Most dangerous, however, is the annual’s ability to fuel wildfires and engulf the burned land. Cheatgrass is extremely flammable and poses a major fire hazard. In their article detailing the response of cheatgrass to herbicides, Kluender et al. note, “Cheatgrass causes larger and more frequent fires and can also quickly establish after fire” (432). Since cheatgrass fuels fires, this creates a cycle: cheatgrass invades an area, catches on fire, spreads, then burns again, destroying plant communities and diversity in the process. Williamson et al. observe in their report on cheatgrass risk factors that these wildfires decrease sagebrush, grasses, and forbs native to Western rangelands (664). Pervasive, unprofitable, and dangerous, cheatgrass drives land overseers to find an adequate defense.

Many methods to combat cheatgrass have been tested, but not all of them are successful long-term. Prescribed fire is one option that could hypothetically destroy cheatgrass and reduce its available seed supply without introducing chemicals. Unfortunately, cheatgrass is adept at invading burnt land. When fire destroys sagebrush and other native species, nutrient availability increases, and cheatgrass has room to multiply (Williamson et al. 676). Managers unwittingly provide *B. tectorum* an ideal habitat when they use prescribed fire. Similarly, the bioherbicide *P. fluorescens* provides a possible solution, but is ineffective in practice. *P. fluorescens* is a microbial species that reportedly suppresses cheatgrass. In a report by Custer et al., when researchers introduced the *P. fluorescens* bacterial colony into soil to combat cheatgrass, *P. fluorescens* could not establish itself in the soil for more than a year. Even at high doses, *P. fluorescens* does not survive (Custer et al. 3). It could not “suppress the invasive annual grass over subsequent growing seasons” (Custer et al. 2). As mentioned earlier, because of cheatgrass’s capacity to form a seedbed, any effective method must last for at least three years. Since the biocontrol *P. fluorescens* is useless for long-term cheatgrass control, managers should not consider it as an option.

Alternatively, livestock managers propose intensive cattle grazing as another natural method to eliminate cheatgrass. Intensive grazing involves fencing cattle in a small area and forcing them to eat all available forage. Livestock grazing could theoretically reduce undesirable forage while still creating profit. However, this idea is very difficult to put into practice. Intensive grazing requires a lot of labor between fencing a small area and moving the boundaries frequently enough to give the cattle sufficient forage. To worsen the problem, cheatgrass has a very short green period when cattle will consume it (Butler). It is unviable for owners to intensively graze a large area for the multiple required years to eliminate a cheatgrass population.

Even if there are enough other grasses to support a regular grazing system, cattle as cheatgrass suppressors are still not adequate. In an area with mixed cheatgrass and native grass, the cows tend to eat native grasses first, such as perennials (grasses that live more than three years). Perennials are crucial to the ecosystem’s health, as “maintaining or increasing the abundance of native perennial grasses can increase resistance to cheatgrass” (Williamson et al. 676). Native grasses form a protective barrier by covering bare ground and by using the nutrients cheatgrass requires (Reisner et al. 1040). When livestock producers let cattle roam in a cheatgrass-invaded section, native grasses are reduced, and cheatgrass prevalence increases. Williamson et al. and Reisner et al. note a strong positive correlation between livestock grazing and how much cheatgrass researchers found in an area (Williamson et al. 677; Reisner et al. 1044). This effect of grazing on cheatgrass is unfortunate for ranchers who need to graze pastures for their livelihood. Nevertheless, continuing to graze cattle in cheatgrass-contaminated areas will worsen the issue and must be avoided whenever possible.

To destroy cheatgrass long-term and counteract infested pastures, herbicides are currently the best option. The two most popular *B. tectorum* herbicides are imazapic, sold under the brand name ‘Plateau’, and indaziflam, sold as ‘Rejuvra’. Imazapic kills stalks that have already grown, while indaziflam prevents seed growth for three years (Butler). Since one eliminates the current population and the other keeps it from returning, the two herbicides are most effective when used cooperatively, removing up to 80% of cheatgrass cover (Kluender et al. 437). Managers should use the two together, since no other current option can completely eradicate *B. tectorum*. In large areas,

managers spray herbicides using airplanes. Aerial application is useful on a large scale and provides a realistic option for organizations managing large areas. If managers use herbicides, they can completely remove the cheatgrass epidemic rather than merely subduing or reducing it.

Some advocate against the use of indaziflam, saying it negatively impacts the soil microbiome. Indeed, indaziflam does change soil microbial content and reduce organic matter (Bradbury et al. 8). Indaziflam opponents argue that this is an irreversible change. Some view permanent soil alteration as a more significant concern than cheatgrass invasion. However, native plant communities are not negatively affected by herbicides. Kluender et al. “did not observe any herbicide-induced, nontarget decreases in... bunchgrasses” (437). Indaziflam does not have a negative long-term impact on native plants, and future research may show possible positive effects. Conversely, cheatgrass negatively impacts soil content. According to Stark and Norton, cheatgrass drastically increases nitrogen content (808). Cheatgrass thrives when it has access to excess nitrogen. Therefore, *B. tectorum*’s ability to change soil composition gives it a competitive advantage over perennials. As a result, cheatgrass creates its own ideal habitat and crowds out other plants. Unlike indaziflam’s benign modification, cheatgrass inflicts a soil adjustment that promotes further infestation and degrades plant communities. Managers should not exclude herbicides as an option because of an unfounded fear of negative microbial impact.

Unfortunately, herbicides cost a lot, and many managers cannot afford to protect their own land without help. Jedediah Hewlett writing for the Wyoming Livestock Roundup reports that indaziflam and imazapic combined cost approximately forty-six dollars per acre, and aerial application fees can cost twenty dollars per acre or more (Hewlett). Any additional applications further increase costs. To combat this, some government agencies offer a cost-share program to incentivize herbicide treatment. Butler states, “In Converse County, we do a fifty-fifty cost-share... and it’s still costing the landowner twenty-eight dollars an acre... if you have a 10,000 acre ranch, that’s a lot of money” (Butler). The cost to fight cheatgrass causes many landowners to dismiss herbicides as an option.

In response, conservationists and governments should unite to assist landowners in their battle against cheatgrass. If one of the government’s missions is to protect the environment, assisting with the battle against invasive species should be a priority. Local or state governments could help landowners by subsidizing herbicides, offering grants, or applying tax credits. These actions would incentivize landowners to fight cheatgrass today instead of leaving the issue for tomorrow’s generation. The public could help by promoting cost-share programs in local areas or by collecting money to sponsor herbicide applications. Despite the cost, every manager with financial capability must attempt an attack on the cheatgrass epidemic to prevent its havoc on land productivity and biodiversity.

In combination with herbicides, prevention techniques should also be used by land managers to limit cheatgrass. When landowners prevent initial cheatgrass spread, there is less threat to begin with. Managers should carefully monitor both known cheatgrass colonies and uncontaminated areas. This keeps land managers aware of cheatgrass prevalence and helps them decide the best course of action. Both public and private land users can prevent the spread by cleaning seeds off vehicles, shoes, or anything else that could carry seeds into new areas (Butler). Another prevention strategy is to avoid ineffective control tactics such as prescribed fire or intensive grazing. Instead of

intensive grazing, livestock owners should reduce grazing in cheatgrass-prone areas. Moderate grazing prevents perennial plant loss, which in turn hinders cheatgrass spread (Williamson et al. 677). Though limiting grazing seems like it would negatively affect livestock producers, the benefit gained from preventing cheatgrass spread is more valuable than the extra forage. Both offensive action through herbicides and defensive action through prevention are needed to eradicate cheatgrass.

Despite *B. tectorum*'s aggressive attributes, herbicides minimize the risk of the invasive grass taking over pastures. Herbicides are the most compelling option because of their high efficacy, ease of application, and extended utility. A combination of prevention techniques and herbicides will slow, stop, and hopefully one day reverse the spread of this ecosystem virus. Agriculturalists and conservationists together must fight cheatgrass before it dominates the West's natural grasslands. Furthermore, managers must resist the temptation to ignore this costly problem, or to exacerbate the problem by continuing to graze cattle in cheatgrass-dominated areas. Not only landowners, but also anyone concerned about the future of American rangelands must join the fight by preventing seed spread and by advocating for proactive cheatgrass control to local officials and ranchers.

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Gender Bias and Medicine in the Modern Era

by Katie Bolden

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death for women in the U.S. and affects around 44% of the female population (“About women and heart disease,” 2024). It is one of the primary examples of the gap in medicine between men and women. Cardiovascular disease refers to a multitude of different diseases that affect your heart and blood vessels. According to John Tone, a historian of medicine at Georgia Tech, “men have always been used as the normative person in medicine” (Masci, 2003, background section, para. 11). The association of cardiovascular disease with men has sidelined medical research for women and has made them a “special group” within the medical world despite making up 51% of the population. As a result, there is “a disparity in treatment and care that individuals receive based on their gender” (“What is gender bias in healthcare?”, 2024, para. 1). When it comes to women’s health, especially cardiovascular disease, gender bias is still prevalent as demonstrated in cultural misconceptions, inadequate education, and non-representative research.

Misconceptions of medical conditions still hamper the ability for women to be adequately treated. According to Bantayan et al. (2025), there’s a common misconception with not just the public, but also among medical professionals that women are less affected by certain diseases or health concerns and that they can be treated the same. The misconception within health providers can especially be seen in a random survey conducted by the American Heart Association, which, per 500 physicians, determined that although both genders were at similar risk, physicians deemed women at lower risk of heart disease and less were likely to refer women for diagnostic tests (Mazure & Jones, 2015). This study also found that “fewer than 1 in 5 physicians knew that more women than men die each year from CVD” (Mazure & Jones, 2015, para. 6). These studies were made 30 years ago and, therefore, it could be assumed that conditions for women with cardiovascular disease would be fixed, but this is not the case: “In January 2021, women living with heart disease shared their stories with national experts and healthcare stakeholders and each story included ‘years of ‘normal results’, being told ‘it is all in your head’, incorrect diagnoses of ‘asthma’ or ‘anxiety’; all resulting in missed and delayed diagnoses of heart disease among women” (Johnson et al., 2021, para. 1). Gender bias is still fully in effect because cultural assumptions like cardiovascular disease being male dominated result in women being pushed to the side and left untreated. However, there is another factor that makes cardiovascular disease difficult to spot in women.

Cultural misconceptions also persist through the uniformed idea that medical conditions exhibit similar symptoms in both men and women, and this makes diagnosing and treatment more difficult for women. Women are more likely to experience atypical symptoms for cardiovascular disease, and these atypical symptoms are unknown to both medical professionals and the public alike. Sue Brooker details her experience with cardiovascular disease in the 1992 film *Wisdom of the heart: Women and heart disease*. Booker reported one of her legs being really swollen, and suffering from a persistent cough. Although she now knows she had a heart attack, at the time she just thought she had bronchitis. In that same film, a woman named Josephine McLaughlin recounts how she

experienced a gripping pain in her back as she ran and believed she had a hernia, despite these symptoms stemming from heart problems (Singer & Annau, 1996). These injuries are far from the symptoms most people would think of for cardiovascular disease. Since there isn't an obvious connection with these symptoms, it's understandable why the general public wouldn't be able to diagnose a woman experiencing these as having cardiovascular disease. This doesn't, however, explain why "only 22% of primary care physicians and 42% of cardiologists felt adequately prepared to assess CVD risk in women" (Johnson et al., 2021, para 3). To put this into perspective, 6/10 medical professionals who have specifically studied how the heart works feel unprepared to assess cardiovascular disease risk in women. This could and has led to the suffering and death of women because they aren't able to be diagnosed and therefore be treated. This discrepancy in female diagnoses calls for a complete overhaul in how we teach medical care for not just cardiovascular disease, but for diagnosing all diseases for women because it's unlikely that cardiovascular disease is the only gap in women's health. One major area this may be accomplished is in how we research diseases.

Gender bias can be seen in the long history and continuing problem of lack of representation of women in cardiovascular research. As of 1993, the National Institute of Health (NIH) was required to include women in research trials. Prior to the law, government sanctioned research didn't have to include women at all, and in some studies, they didn't. In 1973, one of the first trials testing the effect of estrogen on the prevention of coronary heart disease was solely conducted with men and was published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (Mazure & Jones, 2015). Hormone therapy would continue to be used by postmenopausal women for the next 20 years to prevent heart disease despite only observable data available to support. In later reports, it was found that long-term hormone therapy would become a risk for cardiovascular disease (Hodis & Mack, 2022). Although there have been improvements in medical research, it's important to understand the past as context for the present. Although this study was more than 50 years ago, and it's obvious that things have changed, the research was still used to prevent cardiovascular disease for millions of women. People didn't think to question the study despite the grossly flawed research conducted. Ultimately, this prejudice against women is informed by the overall cultural feelings on how men and women operate. It took almost 20 years for cardiovascular preventative care to reflect science, and it would be unwise to blindly believe that this gender bias has been completely destroyed.

Fifty years later, cardiovascular research still doesn't accurately represent or include women. From 2017 to 2023, there were 1079 cardiovascular clinical trials. Of all participants, only 41.0% were women (Bantayan et al., 2025). Although this may sound positive, especially since historically, women made up 0%, women make up 51% of the population. There should be no applause for the bare minimum. Studies should be representative of the population affected. It is unfair to women to have their number one killer be unreliably researched.

Drug trials demonstrate gender bias because they have such awful participation ratios despite their importance. The drug trials for cardiovascular disease have a female participation rate of 34.2% (Bantayan et al., 2025). It could be stated that the research from drug trials could be generalized to both sexes as both men and women did participate in the trials and the drugs are meant for men and women alike. However, because the ratio is so

skewed, the findings can't be fairly applied to both sexes. It heavily favors the effects it has on its male population, and they simply can't be as effective for their female demographic with only one third of participants being women. It also opens the door for unintended side effects for women who take the medication.

Unrepresentative research can also be seen through the lack of sex-specific reporting in trials. Sex-specific reporting isolates sex by itself to analyze differences in effectiveness and side effects of a product. According to a study conducted by several cardiologists, "despite longstanding advocacy, fewer than one-third of phase 3 CV trial publications report sex-stratified outcomes" (Bantayan et al., 2025, para. 1). Sex-specific reporting is essential, especially in trials with fewer women because even if there's a smaller sample size, the data extrapolated from men doesn't drown out possible differences in data within the female group. For example, symptoms or side effects that solely affect women are downplayed and seen as an outlier. Sex-specific reporting is especially important in cardiovascular disease because, specifically in cardiovascular disease, women tend to experience these at different ages than men.

Many cardiovascular disease conditions typically manifest in women later than in men. Despite this, there still tends to be upper-age limits in trials. Although NIH has passed legislation to include a broader age range representation, many older women aren't included in these trials (Bantayan et al., 2025). This difference in age should be common knowledge, especially if the researchers are comparing the results from their male and female participants. But they aren't. Failing to include older women greatly increases the risk to the entire female population for cardiovascular disease. The gap in men's and women's medicine is still prevalent because trials in medical research still don't accurately represent women.

It could be argued that cardiovascular disease is simply a blip in women's health. It is certainly an area that needs to be explored more but isn't representative of the entirety of women's health. For example, research into reproduction has been at an all-time high and according to Megan Smith, the Director of Project Development for the Men's Health Network, breast cancer gets four times as much funding as its male counterpart of prostate cancer (Masci, 2003). On top of this, if there was a gap in gender, there shouldn't be anymore as, since 2014, "seven government agencies — including the NIH and — now have offices that specialize in women's health matters and advocate on their behalf" (Masci, 2003, Para. 14). However, this can be explained in that diseases that aren't strictly female in nature get sidelined.

In 2011, the Review of Studies of Emergency Medicine for Inclusion of Gender Effects on Health Outcomes was published and found that although the majority of published studies which focused on emergency medicine from January 2006 to April 2009 reported gender as a demographic variable, only 18% of the studies examined health outcomes by gender (Mazure & Jones, 2015). Male and female physiology are a basic variable that changes a lot in how diseases express themselves and the best way to treat them. There is a clear pattern within emergency medicine: if it affects both men and women, women consistently get less coverage. The agencies mentioned are integral to

maintaining the progress that has been made and to hear women's experiences in order to make further changes that make male and female medical care the same. Additionally, if the leading cause of death for not only women but also all demographics isn't getting the correct attention that it deserves, then it's hard to believe that this isn't happening for other less common ailments.

Despite the social progress that has happened across the past 50 years, there are still massive problems in how we conduct ourselves that causes the disparity in how much focus is given to men versus women in the medical field. It's important that the work that has been done – increases in female participation, leadership, and awareness – not blind us to the very prominent gaps in medicine, like under-representation in trials, cultural misconceptions, and inadequate education. The disparity in medical care affects all parts of the medical process: the research, diagnoses, patient treatment, and more. The best way to fight inequalities and injustices is to be aware of them so we can be conscious of the ways we can contribute to, or fix, the problem.

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Rhetorical Storytelling Project

Outgrowing You

by Briana Munoz

My phone buzzed as I saw the traffic light change colors through my dorm window.

“You’ve been distant lately,” spilled out of his mouth as I picked up.

“I’ve been busy,” I told him.

“Busy. Right. Is that what we’re calling it now?”

My jaw tightened. I knew this wasn’t really about my busy schedule. He was constantly accusing me of flirting with other guys. And these “other guys” were merely classmates and members of my church.

“You’re different,” he said.

“Of course I’m different. I left home. I’m starting over.”

There was an unsettling silence. “So where do I fit in?”

The question hung between us like static. And that was the moment I realized he didn’t.

“I don’t think you do anymore.”

He exhaled. “Wow. Just like that?”

Me: “No, not ‘just like that.’ I can’t keep pretending everything’s fine when it’s not.”

Still together, yet still avoiding eye contact. Using the term ‘we’re good’ like a shield, hoping that it would keep me from grieving us. The silence that followed was heavier than the wind hitting my window.

Him: “So... that’s it?”

My throat ached. “Yeah. I think it has to be.”

I waited for him to say something, to yell, to beg, to argue, but he didn’t. Just breathing on the other end, like he was already gone. I thought I heard him snuffle, but I didn’t ask. He hung up.

I sat there with the phone still in my hand, staring at the wall full of our pictures. Outside, the wind kept pushing against the window. I wanted to feel something—anger, relief, heartbreak—but all that came was a dull numbness. It was as if I was stuck inside the Émile Friant’s ‘The Lovers (Autumn Evening)’ painting (Figure 1) where two lovers are standing side by side, their eyes looking in each other’s direction but like two parallel lines never to intertwine. The fading warmth captures a moment that’s already slipping away. Their closeness doesn’t feel permanent, it feels fragile, like something they’re holding onto because they know it won’t last much longer. The painting captured what I couldn’t put into words, the pain of holding on to something that was already slipping away.

I had mutual friends with him long before I actually knew who he was. He stood out, this tall, goofy, blonde boy whose smile seemed to brighten up the room. Over the rest of the trip we were on, I found excuses to drift towards his group. I laughed a little louder around him and flirted with the subtlety of a brick. He was a guy, clueless in the most endearing and frustrating way. But why would he even look my way? Something shifted by the end of the trip. We exchanged numbers. And as the bus rolled back toward home, little did I know I was getting in line for the most unexpected, confusing, and impactful roller coaster of my life.

I was bold, very bold. I practically inserted myself into his life with the confidence of someone who had already decided how the story would go. After the trip, we hadn’t talked much, at least not in any meaningful way. But some time later, on a random impulse that felt more like fate disguised as chaos, I asked him to go shopping with me. No grand plan, no overthinking, just a simple “why not?” After wandering around stores together, we ended up at Denny’s for dinner, sliding into a booth like we’d been doing it for years. Like we’d found our own little universe at a sticky Denny’s table at 10 p.m.

In the beginning, he was perfect in all the ways that make a girl feel seen. He pumped my gas. He opened every door like it was second nature. He refused to let me walk on the sidewalk closest to the street. Back then, he was this gentle, caring version of himself. What more could I have possibly asked for?

Somewhere along the way, things started to shift, slowly at first, like a door quietly closing until one day I realized it had slammed shut behind me. The version of him I got in the beginning wasn’t the version I ended up with. What started as sweetness turned into something tighter, smaller, almost suffocating.

Soon, I was constantly monitored. No more going out to hangout with friends, or talking to male co-workers, since, after all, he and I had started off as friends. A rule dressed up as “concern.” He would take the phone and scroll through my messages, double-checking conversations that were innocent the first time and still innocent the tenth. And every time I handed it over, I felt a little piece of myself shrink.

When I left for college, everything intensified. I thought distance might give us space to breathe. He checked my location constantly. If I was somewhere he didn’t approve of, he’d call. If I didn’t respond fast enough, I was in for

a nasty lecture. The nagging and assumptions which went on for months. The exhausting, never-ending suspicion that I must be out with another guy. It wore me down.

“Have you ever love[d] somebody so much you can barely breathe when you’re with ‘em?” This line from “Love the Way You Lie” by Eminem had a hold on me. I started walking on eggshells, every action calculated, every word softened, every decision run through the filter of “Will this make him mad?” I felt myself folding into a version that was smaller and more careful. He’d get angry that I was changing, like my growth was a personal attack. I was living in a tiny, confining space he built around me, and somehow I’d convinced myself that squeezing into it was love.

Outgrowing someone can be both painful and necessary. College, new friends, and new responsibilities push us to grow. Outgrowing people isn’t about abandoning the past, it’s about making room for a healthier, stronger version of yourself. Leaving home forced me to grow in ways that my past relationship couldn’t keep up with. In choosing myself, I began to flourish. I felt more confident, independent and proud that I loved myself enough to let go. I found a sense of belonging among others who are also learning to let go of what no longer serves them, because letting go may become the only way to breathe again.

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Figure 1: "The Lovers (Autumn Evening)"

The Trashy Friend

by Eleanor McCoy

It was a stormy night. At barely 7 years old, I thought I was already 18 in maturity. The rain never scared me. As a kid, my unwavering compassion mixed with my bold bravery had me not only humble but also ready to take on anything. I didn't know it at the time, but when the rain cleared out, I would take on a new adventure that would lead me to transform my perspective on love and friendship.

When the sky was clear and I could see the sun peaking out between the clouds, I grabbed a container filled with dirt to collect worms. A hobby that usually didn't end well, due to the lack of air holes in my favorite container. While searching the ground outside my house for more worms, I noticed something strange behind the air conditioning unit. A family of panda cats was huddled together for warmth. One baby was awake, shivering. I felt horrible for the baby that was left stranded and alone. I decided I needed to take it upon myself to help, which I didn't know at the time was doing more harm than good.

The response that I had is described by researchers as pet attachment. In stressful situations, such as what the panda cat was in, attachment systems activate to promote animal survival (Faner et al.). This helps explain why, even as a seven-year-old armed with nothing but determination and questionable confidence, I felt a responsibility to rescue the panda cat. The panda cat attachment system was kicking in and, for me, the connection was not only for love but survival. I fully believed that it was time for me to step up as not only a caregiver but a friend, but I would soon learn that this is a lot more complicated than just offering comfort and support.

I rushed inside, grabbed two pieces of bread, a cardboard box, and an old blanket. I set up a cozy home in the garage, then went back to check on the baby. Its lips quivered from the cold air. The family still slept without the slightest movement. I carefully dropped breadcrumbs, forming a trail to the box. The little guy ate every crumb. I smiled, knowing I had found the perfect friend because, like me, snacks were often the perfect bribe. When he finally entered the box, I gave him some back scratches. Though he never gave me any scratches back, I knew I had made a new companion that day.

Later, I worried the panda cat might still be hungry. I thought of my favorite teacher and most trustworthy source, Ms. Frizzle from *The Magic School Bus*. She never mentioned what to feed a panda cat, so I used my best judgment. I grabbed Lucky Charms and applesauce, setting them next to the newly built home in the garage. I was right again, because he devoured it.

When mom discovered my Panda Cat, she was definitely concerned. She nervously chuckled, "That's not a 'panda cat;' it's a raccoon and not meant to be a pet." I argued that it wasn't my pet, it was my friend, but mom was still concerned, warning me that "raccoons can be dangerous and raid trash cans."

I quickly came to the defense of my friend, explaining he just needed a home and wasn't some trash bandit. When I mentioned the back scratches, mom acted like a heart attack had just seized her. I didn't understand why, but I did learn one thing that day: my mom doesn't like back scratches.

Despite her concern, my mom relented for the time being, and the raccoon and I quickly became inseparable. I spent a week playing, giving back scratches, and feeding it delicious Lucky Charms. Although I never gave it a name, I was sure I had a lifelong friend. One night, though, I overheard my parents talking about the raccoon's future in the living room. I tried to quietly tip toe downstairs closer to listen, but when they heard me eavesdropping, they called me into the living room. They sat me down and explained that animals are happier in the wild, and that we needed to let it go. My parents' reasoning is reflected in an academic article by Oxford Bioscience. Ecologists note that, when animals get food in human-modified areas, it can lead to long-term behavioral changes in wild animals and create conflict over food, harming both humans and wildlife (Fehlmann et al.). Letting the raccoon go wasn't just about my feelings. It was an issue larger than me, and I was intervening too closely with a wild animal. This can undermine their natural behaviors and independence.

After a failed attempt to negotiate, I was forced to accept the possibility of losing my new best friend. As I watched my parents get a small dog cage to move the raccoon into, my heart sank to my stomach and slowly shattered into a million pieces. I considered bailing my new friend out with my Monopoly money, but I was informed that it wouldn't be enough. I knew then and there that I would have to say goodbye to my trashy friend forever.

When we reached the wildlife park, I felt my heart break all over again. I said goodbye, but the raccoon didn't want to leave either. So much so that he ran away as fast as he could, avoiding the deep pain of separating from our lifelong connection. With tears in my eyes, I looked up and saw the wildlife ranger's face. He had a look of despair as he watched this horrible heartbreak unfold. As I reflect on that moment, I started to see how a community works together; my family doing the responsible thing, the wildlife center providing safety and care, and me learning that sometimes it's best to let go for the good of the larger world around you.

That day, I learned this wasn't just about my lifelong raccoon friend. It taught me that kindness and love aren't always about keeping someone close or doing what feels good in the moment. Sometimes, the truest forms of kindness and love mean letting go and doing what's ultimately best for the other person, even if it's hard. This applies not only to wildlife but also to friendships and future relationships, where understanding boundaries and allowing growth are important parts of loving someone.

About the Author

Eleanor McCoy is from Elk River Minnesota. She is an undergraduate student studying Elementary and Special Education at UW. She plans to work with children with special needs. She is a member of Alpha Phi and enjoys raising money for women's heart health through philanthropy. Eleanor loves the mountains in Wyoming and is planning to study abroad. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and traveling.

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Grief and Gratitude

by Hayden Bybee

Late summer of 2021 felt as though it would be a pivotal moment in my life. I was excited to start at a new high school with my friends after freshman year at Douglas County turned out so poorly, due to Covid-19. I had gained hope for my mom's health to improve since a car accident the previous spring caused her so many medical issues. The accident had destroyed both the ligaments in my mother's neck and the family life I'd known. The woman I'd seen that had been seemingly chained to our couch from pain for the past months had finally begun to get back to being herself. It seemed that I'd come to a turning point in my luck, which had been so poor the past two years. Moving forward, I hoped for stability, new beginnings, and an all-around more enjoyable year. Very quickly, before school even started, I learned that you can't always look forward to what you want, only appreciate what you have.

It was an evening like any other, when everything in my world started crashing down around me. I was walking downstairs, humming along to my favorite song at the time. Something in my peripheral vision caught my attention. My mother sat at the dining table in front of her computer. A red flag raised in my mind, as it was unusual for my mother to sit in this particular room.

I walked in, gently prodding, "What's up?"

She looked at me, her expression unrecognizable. Her mouth moved, but my brain failed to process what she said. I blinked, frozen in place before the words hit me. She had cancer. The test results had come back through an email, and the tumor the doctors said was nothing to worry about was 100% cancerous. My knees gave out, and I slumped to the floor. Everything came tumbling down with me, the feeling in my stomach submerging me in an unspeakable weight.

The start of my sophomore year of high school was nothing magical like I had hoped. The days dragged by horrendously slowly and painstakingly similar to each other. Every day was the same to me, like a song on repeat, watching the dull gray clock tick until the day was over. Anger built up in me, bubbling in my stomach, increasing by the hour. It wasn't fair. I asked myself, why, out of anyone in the world, did my mom have to get cancer? She was my person, someone I couldn't imagine my life without.

I lashed out, causing more fights than I can count or remember, most of them coming with my mom. This didn't fix the anger; instead, each argument piled a heavy piece of guilt on top of the weight I experienced since my mom's diagnosis. I tried to quell this issue by isolating myself in my bedroom, lying in bed as long as I could whenever I was home.

I refused to come down for family time, to play cards or board games. I ignored everything my family encouraged me to do. The weight kept me rotting on my bed, watching the ceiling fan lazily turn in circles, while dishes and clothes piled up all around me. I learned very well what rotting, moldy milk smells like, began to wear whatever I could find on the floor, and neglected myself and my hygiene to the point I refused to get out of bed to even brush my teeth. I wanted to do something about these unhealthy habits, to fix them, but something kept me from changing.

The fighting with my mom continued to worsen over the year. A particularly bad fight and what felt like an unbearable amount of self-loathing led me to question why me and my mother were fighting. The realization struck me that I was so angry, and I knew why, but I had been directing it in the exact opposite place that I should have been. I was so lost in what seemed like a pit of water I had been thrown into at the beginning of the year, so blinded by trying to stay afloat, that I pushed away the person I was so worried about losing. My stomach churned with this realization. I felt like an absolute idiot. I made myself a promise that moving forward, I would not take my mother or anything else for granted. The most important thing I did for myself was promise myself to be grateful, even for the smallest things in my life.

Many people struggle with being depressed. In 2021-2023, depression prevalence “was highest in adolescents ages 12–19 (19.2%)” (Brody & Hughes, 2025), giving a focus on which group tends to be the most susceptible to depression. According to the CDC’s findings in these years, depression also had a higher prevalence in women than men but nonetheless is still a major struggle that can affect any age or gender. Coming to accept that I was not just having a rough time, but was depressed, was challenging for me. However, being able to recognize that it was a prevalent issue for people my age was something that helped me admit it and move forward from it. In my struggle with this issue, I found that the thing that allowed me to begin chipping away at the weight I carried was gratitude. I had allowed the issues and the upset feelings inside my mind to blind me from the positives that were still there, and, by opening my eyes to these things again, I started improving my mental health and habits. Gratitude can come from different things for every person, but, for me, it was my family, a warm bath, music, and so much more.

This isn’t simply personal experience, as a study done by the Eastern Washington University showed that “gratitude was inversely related to several unpleasant states, but appeared to show the strongest negative relationship with depression” (Watkins et al., 2003). In other words, the more gratitude a person practiced, the less likely a person was to develop depression or feel depressed. Depression and feeling depressed are overwhelming to deal with. It can seem as though you’re constantly sinking, like you’re in an ocean and there’s no way up, like you’re carrying a fifty-pound weight in your chest that crushes the very breath from your lungs every single day. Depression can make the smallest task, such as brushing your teeth, a massive feat. But it’s still possible to work through this state of mind. Appreciating the joys and gifts that surround you in your life can enable you to fight against the struggle of being depressed and give you the opportunity to begin enjoying your life again.

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