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Objectives Essay

Washington DC is home to some of the most defining moments in American history. From the 2017 Women's march to Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, DC has been at the center of social and historical movements for over 200 years. With all its rich history, DC today holds the same importance to the future of our nation today as it has to past generations. This is why I am applying to the Stanley E. Degler program.

My main objective in applying to this program is to understand the DC area for my future career and what journalistic opportunities are available to me there. The DC area has always intrigued me due to its rich history and importance to social issues here in the U.S. Having an internship as an undergraduate is something I need to do in college to gain experience in the media industry.

Social justice is a large part of my life and interning in DC would put me at the heart of issues related to women, the LGBTQA+ community and people of color. DC is where the protesting and lobbying happens and where decisions that can change people's lives are made..

In addition to being a Print and Digital Journalism major, I am also a History major. One goal of mine for this experience is to discover how journalism and history coalesce. Not only do I want to know how they work together, but I want to know what jobs include both those fields of study since I am passionate about both.

With this program, I hope to gain a variety of skills. First, I want to get a feeling for the media industry in DC since that's where I want to work post-graduation. I want to gain more experiences in the mediums of social media and magazine writing. Social media has the ability to impact thousands of people and shape opinion on various issues. Social media also gives people access to events, coverage and public figures never before seen in history. Magazines are becoming increasingly trendy with niche audiences and have strong roots in human interest stories. That intrigues me because humans are complex and full of stories. These are the two fields I want to focus on post-graduation.

I also hope to gain an understanding of how social media, and media in general, is shaping DC. This curiosity does not just apply to politics and Capitol Hill, but the surrounding areas and the variety of people that call the DC area home.

Networks and networking are integral to finding jobs and opportunities. Through the DC program, I hope to establish myself and create a network of people that I can utilize in my future endeavors whether that be for jobs or something else. I will make connections with the staff I work with and spend time at social gatherings getting to know people employed in the DC area.

As I mentioned before, history and media are something I want to explore in DC. By the end of the program, I want to understand how those two subjects can be used together for my future employment. Besides employment, I want to understand how media and history influence politics and how they all feed off of each other. Today's world is increasingly media driven which is impacting politics but how does history play a role in all that? I want to learn that answer during the DC program.

I have a variety of skills that will help me in my future internships. I am a strong writer and have been featured in publications such as the Daily Collegian and Her Campus at PSU since 2017. Before college, then I was a writer and editor of my high school newspaper. I have over six years in journalistic and feature writing that will help me in internships. My writing skills are versatile as well. Not only am I proficient in journalistic writing but I am proficient in feature writing, poetry and fiction writing. These different styles of writing all inform each other and make my stories dynamic and entertaining.

Besides writing, I have marketing experience. For the past year I have been the Sponsorship Director at Her Campus at PSU. I publish branded writing and social media content. I know how to work with companies and follow their guidelines for sponsored Instagram, Twitter and Facebook posts. We often have many sponsorships going on at one time so I have practice with organization and planning so that sponsorship deadlines can be met. As sponsorship director, I've worked with Garnier Fructis, Simple Health, Her Campus HQ and Carefree. In addition to Her Campus, I am currently the marketing director for the Healthcare Systems in Costa Rica embedded course program here at Penn State. In this position, I have run the program's Instagram and online website. I have also created a recruitment video for the program. The website is run through Wordpress, and this has given me a proficient understanding of the program and how to post content. Wordpress was also the platform I used to publish content for my high school's online newspaper, which I helped develop. My experience in social media and marketing would make me a valuable intern to companies in DC.

In addition to social media, I have over six years of experience using the Adobe Suite. I am proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, Premiere and InDesign. I have practice using Photoshop and Lightroom from taking two years of advanced photography in high school and various other times in college. I have experience using Premiere from when I was a videographer at the Daily Collegian in Spring 2018. I have a basic understanding of InDesign from using it during all four years working at my high school newspaper.

Technical skills are important but so are people skills. I have strong soft skills from being an Orientation leader for Penn State in 2019. To be an orientation leader, I took Higher Ed 303 at Penn State which is a leadership development class. As an orientation leader, I was responsible for disseminating information to a group of 20 students every new NSO program. I have strong teamwork skills from working with other orientation leaders during the summer and working towards a collective goal of welcoming the class of 2023 to Penn State. I am flexible and

adaptable due to many experiences during NSO where the weather would keep us inside, technology would cause problems and staff members needed someone to take over when they were sick or helping a family. My communication skills are strong from this job as well. I can give presentations and focus on important information while keeping audiences engaged. My communication skills are strong because I have excellent public speaking skills. I can speak in front of small groups, like when I had groups of 20 students during NSO Day 1 programming, and large groups, like when I was assigned to the student panel for NSO Day 2 programming and spoke in front of 300 parents. I performed these tasks on multiple occasions so I have ample experience talking with other people and presenting information. These soft skills give me the opportunity to excel socially in work environments and in internships. Technical skills are only half the job in many of today's employment opportunities. This excellence in social and soft skills makes me a dynamic candidate for internships and for this program.

I am also a leader and have leadership experience during my time here at Penn State. As an orientation leader, I was a role model for incoming freshmen and knew how to take charge of my small groups. I also am the president of Survivors and Allies United, a newly formed club at Penn State that advocates for the end of sexual assault and harassment for undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty of the university. In addition to being the president, I was also a founding member of the organization back in January 2019. Being the president of Survivors and Allies United has developed my communication and leadership skills. I run meetings, plan events, email members and provide support for the members of my organization.

For internships, I am interested in either social media/PR or magazine writing. Social media is prominent yet not utilized by many companies, and I am willing to help them with that. My interest in magazines stems from the fact that the content lends itself to more creative freedom and more time to know the subject of the story. I am comfortable writing breaking news but I prefer to write feature stories. For employers, I am very much interested in social justice organizations and public figures who advocate for justice. On the other hand, I would also be open to interning and doing social media/PR for museums and places that deal with history since that's my other major. I am open to either option.

Thank you very much for the opportunity and reading this. Washington DC is the pulse of this nation. It's where decisions are made and lives are changed. The area has a rich history since its founding in the 18th century. Social justice lies at the heart of many of the issues in Washington today like reproductive rights, immigration and gun reform. With my background and interest in social justice, I would gain meaningful experiences from being in this program. DC's historical background also compliments my history major and interest in the subject. DC is the place where things happen, where they've always happened and I want to be a part of that. I want to see how the past has impacted our nation today and how the issues we're talking about now will impact our nation in the future.

Writing Sample 1

"Strength and Courage"

How Sisters on the Runway reaches those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault

- [Hannah Nelson | The Daily Collegian](#)
- Apr 16, 2018
-



A model looks over her shoulder while sporting Penn State apparel during Sisters on the Runway's third annual fashion show in Alumni Hall in the HUB-Robeson Center on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

Max Petrosky

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It all began with a call for help.

Alex Couch needed a place to turn to, a place with resources, a place to help her escape.

"I unfortunately found myself in an abusive relationship between my senior year of high school and throughout my freshman year of college," Couch (senior-communication sciences and disorders major) said via email. "And had to seek out help from the Centre County Women's Resource Center."

Now, Couch is the president of the Sisters on the Runway chapter at Penn State.

Sisters on the Runway is an organization across colleges in the eastern United States that raises money for those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault by having a fashion show.

Penn State's 4th annual SOTR fashion show will be held at 7 p.m. on April 17 at Heritage Hall in the HUB-Robeson Center. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$4.99. In addition to the show, there will also be a silent auction and performances from various dance groups and musicians on campus.

“The planning and organization is sometimes stressful, but our hard work pays off when we are able to ultimately give back to CCWRC,” Couch said. “My favorite part is definitely seeing all of the community help we’ve received. Each model walk is sponsored by a different company, such as Macy’s and Lion and Cub. They are allies in our mission to stop domestic violence.”

Those involved with SOTR often have stories that motivate their involvement.

“I began my sophomore year after a friend of mine reached out and told me about this cause,” Couch said. “Since our organization entirely benefits the CCWRC, I so strongly felt the need to give back to the very place that helped me through the hardest place of my life and ultimately saved me.”

The reach and message of Sisters on the Runway is what moved head of models, Elle Roberts.

“I got involved with Sisters on the Runways as a model my freshman year, spring of 2016,” Roberts (junior-early education) said in an email. “I saw the way the fashion show really does reach people. I saw the effects of the organization and was exposed the cause of domestic violence awareness. It hit me in a different way and I knew I had to be involved [more].”

Though some may view fashion and domestic violence awareness as two completely different things, Couch and Roberts believe the two go hand and hand.

“Fashion is a very empowering part of a person,” Roberts said. “It’s how you present yourself to the world each day. To me, using fashion is taking back that power that abusers take from their victims.”

Roberts said fashion has the power to convey messages without saying a word.

“I think our fashion show says, ‘This will not continue’ and resolves to eradicate this issue by bringing awareness to it,” Roberts said.

For Couch, fashion is the connection point between all chapters of Sisters on the Runway.

“The fashion show aspect is just a fun way to culminate our yearlong efforts in raising awareness,” Couch said.

For those affected by domestic violence, it can be hard to get out. Helping out and raising awareness are key to the healing process, according to Couch.

“Our efforts to raise awareness and funds for the center are done in hopes that we can make a difference in this town and to help educate the public. It’s important to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship, but it’s also equally important to know how to help a victim heal and move on,” Couch said.

Not only does the work of Sisters on the Runway impact the lives of others, it has also left a lasting impression on the people involved with it.

“Being a part of this organization means giving each victim a chance at a new life,” Roberts said.

“It is terrifying and dreadful that some people have to go through this. A relationship with a partner or family is supposed to be one where you feel safest, and for these victims, it is the opposite. No one should suffer abuse, especially not at the hands of a partner or family member.”

For Couch, her experience at Sisters on the Runway has helped her overcome her own personal experiences with domestic violence.

“Being in SOTR means the world to me in my own healing,” Couch said. “I have found comfort in the support from the members of this organization.”

Couch said she has transferred her energy into giving back to her community through SOTR.

“As a survivor, I hope that our work will give other survivors the strength and courage to come forward and share their stories,” she said. “One story can reach a victim, and we hope that it saves them.”

Writing Sample 2 from History 421: History of Women in Medieval Europe

Genesis and Gender Structures

By Hannah Nelson

Creation narratives serve as some of the most influential myths in societies. They are the rule books of civilization. These stories show the structure of society, its values, and its importance in the context of history. One of the more well-known narratives is the book of Genesis. This story

serves as the foundation for many prominent religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. These stories also serve as a way to reinforce cultural habits and justify them.

In the context of women, Genesis portrays women, Eve specifically, in many different ways.

These subtle differences have led to many interpretations about the rights of women, their purpose, and their character. Arguably, the biggest difference sparking from this text is the treatment of women in society. So, how have people used Genesis throughout history to argue for egalitarianism or hierarchy and how do these arguments contrast? What passages serve as basis for arguments of hierarchy and which for egalitarianism? As author John Flood writes,

“Yes, it is true that the majority of the accounts of her were negative, but they were negative in significantly different ways. At the same time, the more positive depictions of Eve should not be forgotten. Eve is useful neither as a shorthand for women nor for the oppression of women; her history is too rich and varied” (Flood 6).

HIERARCHY

Western society has culturally placed a negative outlook on Eve. There is some merit in this interpretation. Eve was the one tempted by the snake in Eden. She eats the forbidden fruit thus causing the downfall of man. Her actions serve, for some, as a verification that women are weaker than men. Thomas Aquinas was one prominent medieval theologian who articulated the superiority of man.

“Objection 1. It would seem that the woman should not have been made in the first production of things. For the Philosopher says, that the female is a misbegotten male. But nothing misbegotten or defective should have been in the first production of things. Therefore woman should not have been made at the first production. Obj. 2: Further,

subjection and the limitation were a result of sin, for to the woman was it was said after sin (Genesis iii. 16): Thou shalt be under the man's power; and Gregory says that, Where there is no sin, there is no inequality. But woman is naturally of less strength and dignity than man; for the agent is always more honourable than the patient, as Augustine says," (Aquinas 136-137).

Aquinas argues for the perpetuation of hierarchy in this passage. He states that the world will never not have hierarchy because sin will always be around. These structures of power are something people cannot overcome, he implies, because structure was built in during Creation; structure is mandated by God essentially. Specifically, Aquinas focuses on order to back up his claims. Because man was made first, it was the most important. Another aspect of Genesis that he draws upon is that of Genesis 3. While it does say that woman should be under man's power, Aquinas takes this as man has power over woman in every situation.

Ambrose was another theologian wrote about Eve, though during the third century. One passage of conflict concerns Eve's creation in Eden and Adam's creation outside of paradise. Ambrose addresses this by saying,

“ Note the fact that man was created outside Paradise, whereas woman was made within it. This teaches us that each person acquires grace by reason of virtue, not because of locality or of race. Hence, although created outside of Paradise, that is, in an inferior place, man is found to be superior, whereas woman, created in a better place, that is to

say in Paradise, is found to be inferior. She was first to be deceived and was responsible for deceiving the man,” (Flood 23).

This argument looks at character not just the facts of Genesis. Ambrose makes a case for physical hierarchy but also virtuous/ emotional hierarchy. Instead of using man’s strength and physique, he uses virtue superiority to justify hierarchy. Since Eve was fooled, she must not be as emotionally strong, thus making man superior.

EGALITARIANISM

Though commonly seen as arguing for hierarchy, there are some who see other parts of Genesis and think it advocates for equality between men and women. Instead of Eve’s temptation, the creation of Eve is often the focus for this argument. While it’s not consistent across the writings of theologians and philosophers, glimpses of this egalitarian mindset pop up in places. St. Augustine of Hippo’s writing *On the Good Of Marriage* features this glimpse.

“...God willed to create all men out of one, in order that they might be held in their society not only by likeness of kind, but also by bond of kindred. Therefore the first natural bond of human society is man and wife. Nor did God create these each by himself, and join them together as alien by birth: but He created the one out of the other, setting as sign also of the power of the union in the side, whence she was drawn, was formed. For they are joined one to another side by side, who walk together, and loot together whither they walk,” (Cornish 19).

Augustine interprets the creation of Eve as a symbol of partnership, not one of complete male dominance. He makes a point of focusing on the bonds described in Genesis which he concludes are important in the eyes of God. Like mentioned before, it is the rib that serves as the pinnacle of his argument. Since woman is from man, more specifically his rib, they are linked not in a way that puts one on top of the other, but next to each other. Having the “union in the side” advocates for partnership and balance as opposed to command over woman. Augustine takes this part of Genesis and analyzes the physical descriptions but also the metaphorical descriptions to argue for a more equal partnership between the sexes.

The Fall is traditionally thought to have been Eve’s doing but Adam also eats the forbidden fruit so he too has a role in it. This is the logic guiding first century theologian Anastasius Sinaita in some of his writing on Genesis 2 and 3. In *Anagogicarum Contemplationum*, Anastasius evaluates Adam’s gullibility.

“Why did the serpent not attack the man, rather than the woman? You say he went after her because she was the weaker of the two. On the contrary. In the transgression of the commandment, she showed herself to be the stronger, truly the man’s ‘assistance’ (*boethos*). For she alone stood up to the serpent. She ate from the tree, but with resistance and dissent, and after being dealt with perfidiously. But Adam partook of the fruit given by the woman, without even beginning to make a fight, without a word of contradiction—a perfect demonstration of consummate weakness and a cowardly soul,” (Kvam 93).

Anastasius is breaking the perfect, dominant image of man in this piece. In doing so he is supporting the idea of a more equal partnership between man and woman. He is clear in pointing out Eve's strength, which in this instance is her dutifulness and integrity. This moral strength portrayed by Eve is again seen by other holy women in the Bible like the Virgin Mary. Eve, if Genesis is taken allegorically, is the representation of womankind. The logic of women being the moral keepers, or having that strength, is illustrated in this passage and perhaps influenced the perpetuation of that logic into modern times.

CONCLUSION

Like any ancient story, there is not one way to interpret it. Oral traditions put into writing often carry discrepancies each time they are first written down. The same could be said here for the story of Genesis; it can be taken many ways. Writers, philosophers, and theologians will be arguing over its "true" meaning well into the future. And Eve will always be an enigma, showing the flaws and strengths of humanity. For some, she is naive and inferior. Others see her as a model for integrity and morals.

This story is not just a story, it's a guide and a blueprint for the nature of humans and of society. This society is different depending on the person. Genesis allows for a hierarchical structure in society with man on top. But looked at in other ways, Genesis preaches egalitarianism and partnership between the sexes.

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