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Professor Jesse Miller

I used to love shrimp cocktail. When I was four years old, I would constantly ask my mom for more shrimp everytime we would go to a family gathering or party. They could not believe how much I loved it at such a young age. Now, I hate shrimp cocktail. At some point, I asked my mom what shrimp was. She told me that it was an animal that comes from the ocean, and that I was eating its tail. This was repulsive to me. I still ate chicken and other meats that my mom fed me. Because I didn't see the animal being killed, I didn't know where any of these things came from. Americans generally operate under the "out of sight, out of mind" mindset. As long as they do not see and hear animals being killed, they are content with eating them. In this sense we are selfish. We kill animals for their meat but we are upset seeing them slaughtered. In David Foster Wallace's essay, "Consider the Lobster" he discusses the paradox between the value of money and the value of the life of the lobster. In Hal Herzog's "Animals Like Us", he discusses the logical math behind animals who are sacrificed to feed a cat and the ones fed to a snake. In her podcast, Kaitlyn Doughty discusses the idea of families being more involved in the cremation process which makes the listener a bit uncomfortable. Even though David Foster Wallace, Hal Herzog, and Kaitlyn Doughty discuss topics that seem to have little similarity, each makes the point, through different avenues, the reality of American values. Americans live in the contradictory space between what they say and actually do. They value lucrative industry over the lives of lobster, emotions over logic, and ignore the harsh realities of the death as if they did not exist.

Commented [MC1]: Two points here. 1) Is it more we are selfish or that ignorance is bliss? You mention out of sight, out of mind mentality, and that seems less selfish if people don't think about the topic in general. With ignorance is bliss, its more like they aren't aware or refuse to accept what is going on. 2) Have some form of transition between your previous ideas and references the articles. It seems like you just jumped into the next thing, and it would flow better with a transition.

Commented [MC2]: Is there any other way to start these sentences? It seems a bit repetitive. Also, did you provide enough background information on each article. It gives a good quick idea about what each is about, but since there is not a lot of information I feel like you might have to explain them more in the body paragraphs where you should be getting to your opinion

Commented [MC3]: Your thesis is very intriguing and I really like the direction you will be taking this. However, your opinion on the matter is not apart of your thesis. At the end you could say that they are a disgrace or like you are angry to be associated with those types of people. Something to make your voice a little more present in it.

David Foster Wallace begins his piece describing a festival but quickly dives into moral issues when he considers that lobsters should not be boiled alive in the way that we so thoughtlessly do. We don't personally slaughter cows, pigs, and chickens, but we boil lobsters in our own homes. Why is the culture surrounding these two animals staunchly different? What is it that allows me to drop a live lobster in a pot, but not able to kill a pig? When asking myself this question, I thought about the fact that lobsters do not squeal or cry out in pain when they are killed, and there is no blood. Blood is something that bothers many people. Why? The answer is simple: because humans have blood, we know what it is like to be bleeding - it hurts. We cry out in pain when we are injured, and we can sympathize with animals who are able to utter these expressions of pain. The lobster does not bleed, it does not cry out for help, and it is an ugly-looking crustacean. These facts cause people to believe that lobsters do not feel pain. People who rely on the lobster industry for livelihood believe this as well. David Foster Wallace shares the story of a local man, "Dick --- whose son-in-law lappens to be a professional lobsterman and one of the Main Eating Tent's regular suppliers --- explains what he and his family feel is the crucial mitigating factor in the whole morality-of-boiling-lobsters-alive-issue: "There's a part of the brain in people and animals that lets us feel pain, and lobsters' brains don't have this part" (Wallace 504). We do not actually know if a lobster can feel pain, but we want to tell ourselves that they don't because we don't want to think of ourselves as bad people. We find ways to justify this practice because we do not want to give it up with the amount of money it brings into the economy of Maine. This essentially puts a price on the lobsters life.

In his essay, Hal Herzog explores the paradox of emotions over-riding logic when it comes to the meat required to feed a pet cat versus a pet snake. It is widely accepted that more people have pet cats than pet snakes. Snakes scare a lot of people because they are foreign, and

Commented [MC4]: Can you quote Wallace with ideas that lobster can feel pain or one where, or earlier in the paragraph where you list the questions. David Wallace says something similar about why lobsters and not other animals.

Commented [MC5]: Lappens to happens. Also you don't need the whole quote. You can paraphrase the first part and then just quote the ending

Commented [MC6]: This would be a good time to quote Wallace again with factual evidence about a lobster's nervous system and that they can feel pain. With this, you can templates from TSIS to counter argue the lobster's don't have this part quote

they kill mice and swallow them whole. Cats on the other hand are considered cute lovable creatures, but the reality is that cats kill recreationally, meaning they do not always eat their prey. When Herzog did the math, he concluded that “a medium size pet-boa constrictor needs less than five pounds of meat a year. A pet cat requires far more flesh. At two ounces a day, the average cat would consume about 50 pounds of meat in a year. Objectively, the moral burden of enjoying the company of a cat is 10 times higher than that of living with a pet snake” (Herzog 4). The reality is that the cat consumes more meat than the snake, but we are more comfortable feeding the cat from the can than watching the snake devour the live mouse in our homes. How is this different? The cat is eating more meat, but it is the concept of comfort for us humans. We do not feel guilty opening up a can of tuna for the cat because we didn’t personally kill that fish, and we didn’t watch it die. When we feed a mouse to a snake, we are putting the life of that animal in our hands, and we know that it is our fault that it died. Even though it is partially our fault that the tuna died by acting as the market for tuna fishing, it is a lot more “in your face” when it comes to the snake eating the mouse. It is similar with us and the foods we eat. Since we do not have to kill the animals ourselves, we chose to ignore the methods applied in getting from farm to table because it is someone else’s job. In my hometown, our local meat shop is called Shield’s Meats. While this is simply named after a family, it ironically acts as a shield for the community. There are slaughterhouses and meat shops all over the country that act as shields for the American people, protecting them from the sights and horrors of animals killed for meat. If this industry did not exist, we would be forced to raise and kill our own animals. Under these circumstances, I hypothesize that many more people would be vegetarians.

Commented [MC7]: Can you relate this to the Wallace piece? If you can relate the pieces together more fluently it will help your thesis statement since you mentioned in your introduction that all of the articles are related so make sure you do it.

Commented [MC8]: Can you find another quote about this? If you can find something to further support your opinion it will help your argument become stronger.

Commented [MC9]: I really like this idea and how you connected humans with predators. You could combine Wallace and Herzog’s voices and make this into a new paragraph. You would probably get points for TOT. This could also work to transition to the mortician by saying like all humans are morticians and predator because we kill and then cremate it in our stomach

Commented [MC10]: How do the people who work in it though? Do they complex emotions over their job v. personal life. Do they even think about what they are doing, or does it come natural just not thinking about it? In your intro ppl who don’t think about it are selfish so would this make them selfish too?

Quotes from DFW

“It is, at any rate, uncomfortable for me, and for just about everyone I know who enjoys a variety of foods and yet does not want to see herself as cruel or unfeeling. As far as I can tell, my own main way of dealing with this conflict has been to avoid thinking about the whole unpleasant thing” (Wallace 505).

Quotes from NPR

“And when you have the opportunity to be there with a dead body and really look it in the face and stare your own mortality in the face, it's a real clear message that you too are going to die. And that message is missing from a lot of our culture right now. And I would argue that this is one of the best ways to get that back” (Doughty).

“I'm thinking, as you're speaking, about whether I'd want to see those changes in the body that you're talking about, whether I'd want to see the life slowly leave and the body transform and grow cold, whether I'd want that to be my last memories of somebody who I loved” (Gross).

“People who have what's called home wakes or home funerals almost universally really have a glowingly positive experience because any - any hesitation with seeing the body really is overcome as it happens, especially if you're washing the body, if you're washing the hair, if you're dressing the body. It's incredibly empowering, and you feel like you are doing the absolute best thing you can for that body” (Doughty).

Part of Conclusion

I stepped on a kitten once. I was babysitting my neighbors kids, and they had just gotten a cat. I was washing dishes and I stepped back into the kitten. The poor thing yelled and scurried across the room to hide under the couch. I called my mom and cried because I thought I broke it.

Conversely, if I see a spider in my bedroom, I will yelp and quickly grab a tissue to squish it.

Why is my emotion difference between the cat and the bug? I killed the bug and not the cat, but

I felt more remorseful about the cat. If it is a big bug, I will grab it in the tissue and flush it down the toilet because I don't want to squish it. Why do I feel this way? I don't want to feel the bug squish. I would rather let it drown in the toilet. This is selfish of me.

Commented [MC11]: I really like your conclusion, you should continue with this and tie it in to what you learned in the other articles so you now better understand why you consider one over the other

Commented [MC12]: Hi Jordyn
I am impressed with everything you have so far. One thing you can do it make your argument stronger is incorporate quotes more, so it shows your readers you have done your research. Along the lines of sources too try compare or relate the sources with one another since this paper is supposed to be based on Wallace's piece. Refer to some of the templates in "they say I say" for inspiration. Also regarding your thesis, you need to make your voice more prominent, but you are very present in your body paragraphs. Overall it looks really good, keep it up