

## Global Perspectives A-Level Log

8/22- I reflected on my question that I thought of over the summer: Is the view of U.S. military members undeservingly positive? This probably needs some reworking of the wording, and I need to look into how much evidence there is.

8/23- I don't know if my question is too much of an opinion, so I may need to think of a different one.

8/24- "We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us" –Winston Churchill. How much military work is really protecting America?

8/25- Another subject I could write my paper about is homelessness, because this is a prevalent problem in my community. A correlation between homelessness and addiction would be interesting to research.

8/26- I assisted AS students with APA citations in order to sharpen my skills and help them learn. I have a group of four students that I am supposed to help throughout the school year. In assisting them, I hope I will be able to improve my teaching skills, which will in turn help me to be able to convey more complex ideas in my paper and to others in the future.

8/29- IN JROTC I am doing a service learning project that has to do with feeding the homeless, so a paper related to that subject would be interesting to research concurrently with a physical project that is related to my paper.

8/30- How can homelessness be eradicated in America? How can national social services be improved, like welfare and unemployment? How far should social services extend in America. Generally, I agree with more liberal policies, which often include broad social services. I wonder if researching this subject more will change my views.

8/31- A controversial issue in American politics is how much citizens should be provided for by the government. Should the government be responsible for making sure their peoples' living standard is up to par? This may be an issue of freedom if you look deeper. Being independent and providing for yourself is a big

American value. I believe this is illustrated well in Ayn Rand's "Anthem", where the character escapes the overbearing government and lives off the grid, providing for himself. If the government takes one's tax money and gives it to others who aren't working for money themselves, is that infringing on the taxpayer's independence and right to their own hard-earned money?

9/1- On an episode of "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia", a comedy show, the characters develop a drug addiction and decide to sign up for welfare and unemployment so they can live an easy life. This is a satirization of Americans "leeching" off social services. As many republicans will say, people can sit around all day not doing anything, while still getting money and food provided to them for free.

9/2- According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, housing is a human right. This could be one reason in an essay on why homeless people in America should be provided for. Or, if I were to write an essay on the extent of social services, I could use that as support for government help to citizens. The problem is, the definition of human rights is very broad and may be different according to different people.

9/5- I was given a fallacy assignment from AS student to make comments on. While grading in-text citations I had to look up the format, and this helped me to relearn APA citation, which is very important in Global Perspectives papers. I find that when I look over other people's work, it helps me to criticize my own and continue to improve. Peer-reviewing other essays is especially beneficial when I am trying to pull together my final paper, because I get ideas for smoother transitions and validation techniques, etc.

9/6- The National Coalition for the Homeless states that "38% of homeless people were dependent on alcohol and 26% abused other drugs" (2009), but also that substance abuse is often a result of homelessness, and not a cause. There is a widespread stereotype that homeless people are addicts, and this information supports that many are. However, even though some are addicts, I feel that this stigma is damaging to a lot of struggling individuals, even if they are sober.

9/7- Dr. Crihfield wants two questions finalized by the 20<sup>th</sup>. So far, I know mine are related to homelessness/social services. I want to research more on addiction

also, so I am going to go to the library to get a book on the subject. I feel that a book, as opposed to an article, will give a more solid and well-thought out position. Another question could be about homelessness and LGBT youth. This is a common problem, as parents sometimes kick their kids out of the house when they come out as gay. This doesn't get much attention outside the LGBT community, but recently it is drawing more attention due to activist work, like Miley Cyrus' charity The Happy Hippie Foundation.

9/8- According to the True Colors fund, a homeless LGBT charity, up to 40% of homeless youth are LGBT-identifying, while only 7% of the general youth population is LGBT. Most of them were forced out of their home, as opposed to running away. Clearly, this is a big issue, and one that is very personal to me and many teens I know. Being a gay teen myself, it saddens me to think about the people in my community that are struggling and risking their lives in sex work (higher percentage of homeless LGBT people are sex workers) just because of their sexuality/gender identity.

9/9- According to NationalHomeless.org, LGBT kids are two times less likely to graduate high school. Perhaps my essay should focus on a broader subject than just homelessness, and maybe discuss the overall struggles of the young LGBT community. I discussed this subject with Dr. Crihfield and some questions were brainstormed. Should social services be provided specific to LGBT people? Should LGBT people be identified (like to provide special services)? Nature vs. Nurture: Why are people gay?

9/12- I got a book from the library called "Teens and LGBT Issues" by Christine Wilcox. It has many graphs and facts from primary sources regarding problems that many young LGBT people encounter. It says that 4,000 beds are set up in United States homeless shelters for young people, and only 350 are for LGBT teens. Also, 33% of LGBT youth engage in risky behaviors within 48 hours of homelessness. This behavior includes drugs prostitution, and theft. A survey from the National LGBTQ Task Force reports that 26% of gay males questioned were kicked out of their homes when they came out.

9/13- I brought up the idea of writing my A-level paper on LGBT youth homelessness to my friend and she said that there could be more important things to write about. I brought up the statistic about the amount of LGBT

homeless people compared to the amount of LGBT kids in the general population and she instantly changed her mind because she didn't know how big of an issue this is. This goes to show how overlooked this huge problem is. How can we expect anything to be improved if no one knows what's going on?

9/15- With Sarasota LGBT Pride Fest exactly one month away, I've been reflecting on the specific struggles of LGBT people in my community. A few months ago, there was a movement to let transgender students in my county schools use the school restrooms that correspond to the gender they identify as. This is still a controversial issue in North Carolina, and the US Department of Justice even got involved. This is more than just an issue of states' rights. Should transgender people be able to choose which bathroom they use?

9/19- I had a conversation with Dr. Crihfield about the writing quality of my logs. I need to reflect each day about how my research affects me and how its coming along more.

9/22- The North Carolina Bathroom Bill states "Public agencies shall require every multiple occupancy bathroom or changing facility to be designated for and only used by persons based on their biological sex", meaning transgender people, those who identify as a gender that doesn't correspond with the sex on their birth certificate, can't use the bathroom of the gender they identify with. Many people support this law because they think cisgender men may dress as women in order to use the women's restroom and commit sex crimes. An article from TIME states "while there are some past examples of heterosexual men dressing up like women to gain access to women's spaces, there's no record of that behavior increasing when there's an LGBT non-discrimination law on the books". Personally, I think the occasion of rape by a person pretending to be transgender would be very rare, and the negative affects of this bill outweigh this cautionary doubt. Of course, this would need to be researched, but I predict that it doesn't happen very often and the argument, as TIME stated, is just a red herring.

9/26- The Huffington Post states that "Spokesmen for police departments in Iowa, Hawaii, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Texas have all gone on record stating that NDOs (Non-Discrimination Ordinances) do not result in an increase in the number of reported rapes or sexual assaults in their jurisdictions". Although

these spokespeople's jurisdictions may not be representative of every town in America, the quote shows that in these 13 states that allow trans people in the correct bathrooms, rape has not been an issue like many anti-NDO supporters say. The Post also states that there has been only one case of a person abusing an NDO for sexual assault, and it was in Canada. This is in the 35 years since NDOs first came about. As far as I can see, there is no counter-argument against NDOs, but that could be because of my personal bias and opinions. I will have to research why people think trans individuals can't use their bathrooms, if there really is any reason besides transphobia.

9/27- According to Wikipedia, 7 states have proposed bathroom bills that would require people to use bathrooms of their sex assigned at birth. Only one has passed in the US, In North Carolina. Because 6/7 were either voted against or vetoed, this may mean that the US is more progressive with trans issues than many give credit for. However, just because the government chooses not to explicitly discriminate, this doesn't mean that individuals support this decision. The largest issue many still have is that it is dangerous. Jody Herman, an academic at UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute, did a survey that may conclude the opposite. It states "Eighteen percent of respondents have been denied access to at least one gender segregated public restroom in Washington, DC" and "Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported experiencing at least one instance of verbal harassment in gender-segregated public restrooms". However, the definition of verbal harassment was extremely broad, and ranged from strange looks to verbal threats and being followed. Still, this survey shows that transgender and gender-queer individuals are uncomfortable in gender segregated bathrooms. Even if they are legally allowed there, people still make them feel unwelcome. A solution that may arise here is gender neutral bathrooms, in addition to binary options. However, many places may not have the money to expand bathroom facilities to add another restroom.

9/29- My instructor told me to make a concept map of my topic on order to visualize how many questions I could form out of a broad subject. I am admittedly having trouble figuring out a debatable and interesting question, but I know I want it to be related to gender or sexuality issues. Next week, A-level students will be helping the AS-students form questions for a practice essay, so hopefully I can get some practice and apply that in finalizing my own topic.

9/30- Today I led a group of AS-level students in doing a scavenger hunt activity. They went around school finding things and doing activities that the group of A-level students in my class period wrote. After it was completed, Dr. Crihfield had the A-level students write a 600-word reflective essay on the experience. I am grateful for this assignment actually, because it required me to go back to the syllabus and review the AO2 requirements for the reflection.

10/3- The Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal religious organization, says “As Unitarian Universalists we believe every person is born with dignity and humanity, and that includes their gender expression. We practice that belief by creating welcoming and inclusive spaces”. They include a page on their website of why gender neutral bathrooms are necessary and how to easily include one. Since it seems like it would be expensive for everywhere to have one, maybe my question could be “Should there be gender-neutral restrooms available in all public spaces?”.

10/6- For my paper, I was thinking of creating my own survey. I could give out anonymous surveys in my classes asking people’s sexuality and if they have ever been discriminated against for it. This would be interesting to compare how straight versus gay people perceive and receive harassment. I am inspired to do this by the “Meninist” and “straight pride” ideas. Believers of these tend to be alt-right politically, and accept the idea that men and straight people experience the same amount of discrimination as women and LGBT people. I personally believe that these people are essentially invalidating the struggles that the LGBT community has been facing since it came about, but a survey may yield eye-opening results that might disprove my opinion.

10/10- I got two new books- [Delusions of Gender](#) by Cordelia Fine, PhD, and [The Fate of Gender](#) by Frank Browning. I purchased personal copies of each so I can annotate. I am surprised that I found such reputable books on this niche topic, but I suppose that the debate of human identity has been researched for centuries. I’ve started [Delusions of Gender](#) and plan to use some research from it in my proposal that is due Friday. Using books for research provides a compilation of a large variety of sources that may provide further ideas for what to look into.

10/11- In the book, [Delusions of Gender](#), Dr. Fine discusses the theory of “male brain” and “female brains”. For hundreds of years, some scientists have stated

that there a fundamental difference between the physical aspects in the minds of men and women. This, they believe, is what causes the difference between men and women, where women are more caring and empathetic, while men are ambitious and analytical. Dr. Fine sarcastically states “What awfully good luck that these womanly talents should coincide so happily with the duties of the female sex”. She says that because society is becoming less openly sexist (some may call it politically correct), people don’t blame the fact that some women seemingly inherently possess “womanly traits” on enforced stereotypes like we could have 50 years ago. So, Fine states, “eyes swivel to the internal”, and people believe that it must be something within women that make them warmer and better relaters, and something in men that make them more business or leadership oriented. Is this just justifying stereotypes? Fine goes on to talk about how, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, women did not go to school or have political power, but they were thought to be “naturally inferior” because the men were smarter and more powerful, despite the obvious advantages of males. Fine believes that these “essential differences” are really just conveniently reflect the majority opinion, and we need to take a “closer look at our society and our science”. [This relates to my question because part of is about what makes a person choose an alternate gender identity. I will look into research that supports that there are inherent differences between men and women, which would support that gender identity is not a choice. On the other hand, I will continue to look at Dr. Fine’s book because it discusses studies that support the argument that stereotypes are the cause of the difference.](#)

10/28- My proposal got approved and the comments said to “decide at an early stage on the perspectives that you wish to present” in order to have a more focused paper. Because this paper will actually follow my thought process in developing my own opinion, I am not sure which side I should represent. I will most likely just present each side and then make a judgement at the end. I may change the layout once I have all my sources compiled.

10/31- A phenomenon that Fine discusses in Delusions of Gender is gender priming. She states “when the concept of gender is primed, people tend to perceive themselves in more stereotypical ways”. When people are made to recognize their gender (like filling out their gender before a survey) they fit themselves into gender stereotypes. This research could support that gender is chosen, and when non-binary person chooses to identify as such, they may mold

their identity to fit these expectations. However, just going off hypotheticals is not good enough for me, so this example would need more support if it was in my paper.

11/3- Dr. Fine states “without any intention of bias, once we have categorized someone as male or female, activated gender stereotypes can then color our perception”. This is supported by studies that involve employers evaluating candidates for different jobs, but the two job descriptions are almost identical, with one difference: job title. One had a stereotypically female title, executive secretary, while the other had one perceived as male, executive chief of staff. The employers then evaluated candidates for the position, they got the same resume, but some papers had female names and some had male. As expected, the female name was hired as secretary, and the male name was favored for chief of staff, despite both people and jobs being the same. Going back the original quote, I will need to reflect on this more, or ask a classmate what they think this could mean for my research. It is a good source and I feel that it would fit into one of my arguments, but I need to refine my interpretation of it.

11/7- I graded AS scaffoldings and the results were as I expected. The students did not do very well with analysis, but their quotes were very relevant to their topics. I wrote a 600-word reflection on it and Dr. Crihfield commented that she agreed. This helped me because I had to work on my evaluation skills, and writing the paper required me to go back to the rubrics and relearn what Cambridge is looking for.

11/9- In class we watched a TED Talk, which I did last year in AS GP. The students will do a mini scaffolding similar to one I am working on right now. Aiding my group with this will further help me to more strongly analyze my own information for my paper.

11/17 I had a group of four AS students and we had to pick out the reasons and examples that the speaker discussed, since his presentation was unorganized. We had to read over the transcript many times to pick these out, but by really looking into the Talk, we got more experience with presentation organization. They did well, but in the future will need to organize work better in the future.



11/28 We are watching another TED Talk. This time, each student is doing their own mini outline of it, similar to the last activity they did with a TED Talk.

11/29 Over Thanksgiving break I did some reading, but I have a while to go to finish this book, then I have another one to read before December 15<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for the scaffolding is coming up fast, and I will need to start dedicating more daily time to research.

11/30 An idea I have just been thinking about: If someone decided to be “trans-racial”, like a white person deciding to be black, it would be considered extremely racist. Obviously, race is something you were born into, and cannot change, but if one did decide they were somehow born into the wrong race, this would be purely based on stereotypes of this other race that they would perceive themselves to fit into to. So why isn’t this the same with transgenderism? Are trans individuals transitioning based on perceived stereotypes of the other sex?

12/2 Though not a reputable source, Reddit, a website with different community boards, has many discussions based on the topic I am researching. This is good for seeing other peoples’ opinions and getting ideas for research. In one post about whether transgenderism reinforces stereotypes, one user states “Being transgender isn't about liking pink, playing with trucks, or anything like that. It's just a discomfort with their biological sex, which is managed by altering the body to more closely align with the opposite sex”. However, when it comes to non-binary gender expression, many choose to keep their biological sex, and not fully transition. Therefore, I cannot see how this is based on dysphoria of assigned gender if they choose to embrace both sides of the binary. Tomorrow I will read an article addressing these concerns.

12/5 On their website, [rewriting-the-rules.com](http://rewriting-the-rules.com), Dr. Meg-John Barker addresses the concern some women have about non-binary genders: that “we should be about expanding the category of womanhood so that anything is possible within it, rather than grasping for a different gender identity if we find that we don’t feel stereotypically feminine”. I tend to agree with this statement. They also write that many women seemed to be concerned that “by embracing genderqueer or non-binary labels we’re actually supporting gender stereotypes; reinforcing the idea

that the only way to be a woman is to conform to rigid social norms". Another thing I've thought in the past.

12/6 Dr Barker goes on to say "The political – and feminist – aspect of being non-binary for me is about continually pointing out that gender isn't binary: that man and woman aren't the only categories that people can fit within". So do people who identify with genders outside the binary do so as a protest *against* stereotypes? Of course gender identity is personal and different for everyone but this seems to be a logical explanation. By breaking gender norms, they protest the binary and choose to defy it. This seems different than dysphoria that transgender people experience, which may further the alt-right's "special snowflake" argument.

12/7 Feminist author Susan Cox, who has an MA in psychology, states that "non-binary is less an 'identification' than it is a 'dis-identification'". This and the last article I explored has introduced me to an entirely new perspective on the issue. I can now see how non-binary genders are not reinforcing stereotypes. Still, the fad of alternative genders seems to be "misused" (by this definition) by the people that are actually in the community. A quick search for "how do you know you're non-binary?" yields many stories about how people feel like they switch between male and female, or just "don't feel like a man/woman". How can one know if they feel like a man or woman if they are not utilizing stereotypes to determine what each one fundamentally *is*? I guess this can be taken two ways. One: when they say they do not feel like a man/woman, they mean they do not fit into the socially constructed categories and feel they should not be defined by them (the destroying the binary option). Or two: they don't feel like a man/woman because they *don't fit into the categories* and instead enjoy pink AND blue so they must be both man and woman (the reinforcing stereotypes option). As I write this, I suppose both "options" are similar and can each be within one another. This article has explained my own pondering from the entry from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

12/8-9 With a new perspective, I continue to explore my question: Do stereotypes perpetuate alternative gender identities? My answer would now be no, only considering non-binary genders as a protest to the gender binary. I still think that someone choosing to be gender-fluid or something similar just because they want to wear both dresses and suits is an unnecessary label that is based on

stereotypes. I need to find more examples of the latter to have solid evidence in my paper.

12/12-14 I finished *Delusions of Gender* with just enough time to add some more examples from it to my scaffolding. Though this book had a lot of good information, I may not use it in the actual essay as an example, because I could get them from more primary sources like studies. Getting examples and support from better sources like studies and journals, as opposed to a literature review, may provide better material for this essay.

12/15-16 I did not finish *The Fate of Gender* in time to look for examples to include in my essay outline for Dr. Cihfield, but I finished the scaffolding nonetheless. This book may not yield many useful examples anyway.

12/21-23 I chose to discuss “alternate gender identities” as opposed to sticking to the term transgender. I believe that posing the question like this makes it clear that I am exploring trans and non-binary genders as an alternate to cisgender for the purpose of this paper.

1/3 (all of winter break) I finished my second book, *The Fate of Gender*. Although an interesting read, I will probably not take many concepts from it for the actual essay support, though reading about gender theory and society offered a deeper insight into the issues touched on in my paper.

1/4-6 Radical feminism keeps working its way into the subjects in my essay, so I will include a section on it, probably for an introduction. I think feminism and its development is an important aspect of trans issues.

1/9-11 Often, it seems as if the same people saying “gender is a social construct” are the same people who support non-binary gender identities. The first idea comes from radical feminism, a movement which often does not even believe transgender people to be valid because it is based on a gender binary. The latter from more modern social justice movements designed to make everyone feel valid based on personal choice. Believers of these stated principles are sometimes said to be coddling “special snowflakes”, a derogatory term for people that are viewed as emphasizing their, or even pretending to have, unique traits or conditions, in this case alternative gender identity. Despite the research I’ve done,

I am now even more torn between the points of view, which is becoming frustrating. I need to come to a conclusion for my paper!

1/12-13 As the comments on my proposal said, I need to pick a side early in my paper, and based on the sources I have already compiled, my main thesis will be that stereotypes do NOT cause trans identities. I will discuss feminism, its views on the trans community, and then how these radical ideals are not correct

1/16-18 Decades ago, when intersex conditions were not as well understood in the scientific community, babies born with ambiguous genitalia underwent surgery at young ages to attempt to fully convert them to one sex. A study I found says that within a large sample size of these intersex individuals, many of them retransitioned to their chromosomal sex, despite being raised as another gender.

1/19-20 I think the previous entry may be a good argument for nature in the nature v nurture section of my essay. If people's genders are largely determined before birth, how can gender identities be caused by stereotypes?

1/23-25 There are so many great resources for the topic of gender, including studies with large sample sizes, journal articles from experts, etc. I am glad that I chose this question because it is a good balance of being interesting to me and being researchable.

1/30-31 I am finishing the first draft of my essay, as it is due to Dr. Crihfield February 10 so she can send them to other A-level student peer reviewers. The examples I had compiled in my outline may have seemed like they did not go together to answer my question, but I know how they are tied together in my head. In the essay, the added analysis and evaluation has connected them to hopefully provide strong support for my thesis.

2/1-3 Another A-level student asked for my opinion on an aspect of his essay: he is also doing a "nature vs nurture" kind of argument, and was wondering if he should include a section combining the two. I showed him a quote I am including in my essay:

Saying that everything is 100% nature or 100% nurture is kind of an old-fashioned, erroneous and not very helpful way of looking at how organisms develop. It's not

'nature versus nurture' it's 'How is nature changing under certain kinds of nurturing events?' (Fausto-Sterling, 2011)

2/6-7 Reflecting further on the above quote, I really do believe it is an instrumental part in my essay. If I would have evaluated nature and nurture separately my essay would not truly answer the question I wanted to determine an answer to. I chose my topic because it was something that I saw was an issue in our world, but I had no idea where I stood on it. Through exploring the interconnectedness of biology and society, I have gained a deeper understanding of trans issues today.

2/15-17 I am working on my citations and then will turn in my final essay to Dr. Carihfield. After so long working on something, it feels strange to be complete with it. This course has been really fun, and a good learning experience. I am glad I had the opportunity to dedicate this much time to a subject I am genuinely interested in, sometimes a rare occurrence in school.