

RhetTech

Undergraduate Journal in Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication

Volume One

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RhetTech

Volume I

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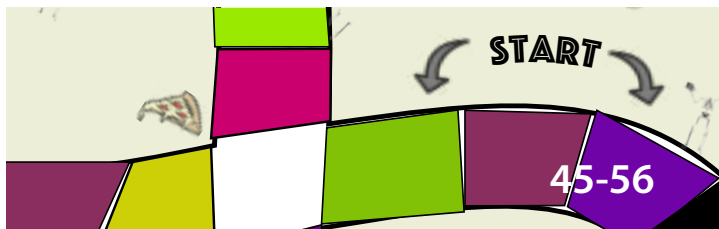
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Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *RhetTech*!

The *RhetTech* Editorial Board is excited to share some of the best work from around the country in the disciplines of writing, rhetoric, and technical communication. This body of work represents seven unique pieces from authors in six different states. The work published in this volume consists of several genres, including a podcast, a video, a short story, and a board game. Though these genres are quite different, what these pieces share is excellent writing, keen audience awareness, and a focus on relevant contemporary issues.

This inaugural issue represents the beginning of a new journal, but also builds on a long legacy of student-run journals in the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication at James Madison University. The first of these iterations would come in 2000 with a journal titled *e-Vision*, which focused on showcasing excellent writing from JMU first-year writing students. In 2013, *e-Vision* was replaced with *Lexia*. *Lexia* expanded its scope to include the publication of student work from across the WRTC major and minor (including first-year writing).

In the fall of 2017, *RhetTech* was established to publish high-quality compositions in a variety of genres from students working in the disciplines of writing, rhetoric, and technical communication across the country. The name ‘RhetTech’ refers to the genres of works that the journal accepts: ‘Rhet’ refers to Rhetoric, and ‘Tech’ refers to Technical Communication. The journal considers a variety of content for publication, with a focus on multimodal works.

Each phase of the journal—from putting out the call for papers, to vetting the submissions, to working with revise and resubmits, to laying out the pages—is done by the student editorial team with guidance from their faculty adviser. The *RhetTech* Editorial Board is very excited to share this first issue, and we hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Sincerely,
The *RhetTech* Editorial Board

More Than a Footnote:

The van der Horsts, Anne Frank, and World War II Resistance

By: Victoria Noriega

Faculty Advisor: Professor Hearst

Introduction

In the summer of 2017, we participated in the UGR Summer Research Program at Pace University in New York City where we prepared a publication titled “The Helpers of the Secret Annex: A Guide for Students.” Written to assist students and educators who are reading Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl*, the guide offers profiles on each of the helpers who risked their lives to hide Anne Frank and seven others in the Secret Annex during World War II. While researching Miep Gies, we learned that she and her husband, Jan, were also hiding a Dutch college student, Kuno van der Horst, who had refused to swear loyalty to the Nazis. This additional rescue by the Gies family was unknown to the others in the Secret Annex; therefore, there was limited information available about Kuno. For instance, Melissa Müller devotes only a few pages to him in *Anne Frank: The Biography*, and Miep Gies mentions him for a total of two pages in her own 1987 memoir, *Anne Frank Remembered*. Additionally, there is so little information regarding Kuno, we are to believe that there has never been a single photo of him published before. Although the available material was scant, we included most of the information that we could find about him in our Guide.

After the research was published, Kuno's family reached out to us after finding the Guide through the Pace University Digital Commons. This occurrence opened up more information concerning this hidden figure of history. Kuno's wife Hendrika, who was his girlfriend at the time, was involved in being a third-party helper to Anne Frank and those in the Annex. This research project aims to shed more light on how Kuno, Hendrika, and Kuno's mother Catharina survived during World War II, what they did to resist an evil regime, how they helped Anne Frank and seven others, and argues that these individuals deserve more attention than what they have received.

The team would like to thank Nasreen Hussein, Jennifer Irwin, Jennifer Crespo, and Dr. Sue Maxam of the Pace University Office for Student Success. We would also like to thank Drs. Erica Johnson and Kristen di Gennaro in the Department of English, and the Dyson College of Arts and Sciences at Pace University for institutional support. Our deepest appreciation goes to Dr. Gertjan Broek at the Anne Frank House and Museum in Amsterdam for his patient assistance and advice and Carolyn Stewart and David Cassuto for an interview translation. We offer special thanks to Karen van der Horst-Storms, Michael Kunz, and Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz, who shared documents and exclusive, never-before-published photographs of several family members. Michael and Marjanne cooperated cheerfully and complied quickly with our frequent requests for further information and clarifications and encouraged us to take on this new project.

Most of the information in this paper comes from oral histories in the form of memories and reminiscences by the principals that were transcribed, and that were provided to us by the van der Horst-Kunz family. In the absence of documentation, we should note that oral history, while quite valuable, is often subject to the distortions of time. The Anne Frank House addresses this issue rather well on its website: "Historical reliability of the interviews: No matter how invaluable these eyewitness accounts are, time and later experiences will have influenced people's memories. It is essential to verify the oral history against primary sources and, if necessary, to qualify the stories."

Victoria Noriega '20

Elliot L. Hearst, Faculty Advisor

Pace University

New York, NY

August, 2018

PART I: Kuno and Hendrika

Kuno van der Horst

Kuno Ludewijk van der Horst was born in Hilversum, Netherlands on Mar. 24, 1920. Kuno was a student hidden by Miep and Jan Gies, two of the helpers of the Secret Annex, during World War II. He attended a technical college and at that time Germans were forcing students to sign declarations of loyalty in order to stay in college. Anyone who refused to sign was punished by being sent to Germany for forced labor. According to Kuno's mother, Catharina van der Horst, she told her son to go into hiding even if he had heard they arrested her (C. van der Horst). Miep and Jan Gies, who were also quite busy helping to hide the family of Anne Frank and four others, began to shelter Kuno in their house during this time as well. Miep had taken Kuno as reciprocation because Kuno's mother, Catharina, was hiding Miep's landlady Mrs. Stoppelman in the van der Horst residence. When Catharina asked Miep to hide Kuno, Miep did not hesitate to accept. In Miep's memoir *Anne Frank Remembered* she states, "Just as Mrs. van der Horst was hiding Mrs. Stoppelman, we felt an obligation to reciprocate and hide her son" (Gies and Gold 149). Miep and Jan never told Otto and Edith Frank they were hiding Kuno, as they realized this knowledge would place them in even more danger, and they did not want to upset them further. Because nobody who was hiding in the Secret Annex knew of Miep and Jan's activities in this regard, there is no mention of Kuno in Anne's Diary.

Kuno worked for an insurance company in Amsterdam, but the occupying German government prohibited the employment of young former students and he was forced to resign. During this time, it was very dangerous for younger people who were in hiding to do fun

things such as going to the movies or being with friends. According to Miep, Kuno would spend most of his time home alone in the apartment, where he would often read and play chess. Miep assumed that he would go out to take a stroll from time to time, but she never directly asked him. She wrote, "Always, there was Kuno's small chessboard lying open in the house, in the middle of a game that he was playing with himself. He could take all the time he wanted to think through a move. He had nothing but time" (Gies and Gold 150).

Melissa Müller is one of the few Anne Frank biographers who mentions Kuno, and she notes



Fig. 1 Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

that “he tolerated confinement in his room poorly and had to be called to his senses when he left his hiding place without telling anyone, usually to pursue his passion for horse races. In his case . . . it was not only his own safety that was at stake but that of his helpers and of all the other people dependent on their reliability” (285). In late March 1944, Kuno decided to go to a horse race and that afternoon officers came and arrested him and a few other suspicious-looking individuals, taking them to a German office in The Hague. Everyone was questioned, but Kuno was lucky to be the last one interrogated which gave him time to prepare his statement. He was able to form an alibi by saying he was working for the insurance company. At that point, Miep and Jan decided it would be safer if Kuno returned back to Hilversum rather than stay with them in the event that Nazis came to look for him there. After some weeks when nobody had come to investigate, he returned to Amsterdam to be with Miep and Jan.

After the raid on Otto Frank’s Secret Annex on August 4, 1944, which resulted in the arrest and deportation of all of the eight people hiding there, Miep, concerned that she might be under surveillance, thought it would be best if Kuno went back to Hilversum. Once he was back he recounted stories of how the living conditions in Holland had become worse over time, how people would no longer see Jews unless they were hidden in someone’s home, and the eerie fact that young men were also no longer out in the streets. Kuno later stated, “I myself lived in our plant in Hilversum to be able to work there without going outside” (K. van der Horst). Since Kuno had prior success with his false identification card, he risked visiting his mother’s home for dinner and visiting his girlfriend, Hendrika, at her house.

After the Allies rushed through Belgium, Kuno recalls that their situation became more serious. He called that day “Crazy Tuesday.” Once the

Allies stormed Belgium, the Germans and Dutch Nazis fled but when they returned, daily life in Holland became much worse. According to Kuno, rationing dropped below living standards and people were forced to buy most of their food on the black market. Kuno later recalled, “Rationing became gradually very bad, just about sufficient to live without working, if you wanted to do some work, you certainly had to buy more food on the black market and that of course is the reason why the black market grew so big and that everybody completely accepted it” (K. van der Horst). Coal supplies stopped completely, which caused the gas and electricity to turn off as well. Manhunts were underway for every man between the ages of 17 and 50 to be sent off to fight. Kuno describes an average day during this period:

Between 8 o’clock at night and 4 o’clock in the morning nobody was allowed to go outside. Though at exactly 4 we went out in the woods to cut ourselves a tree which has to be in our backyard before it became light. A thin tree was not much worth to burn in the stove; that is why we always tried to get a big one, up to 20 inches in diameter. Coming back at 7 o’clock, often soaking wet of snow or rain, we got a cup of faked coffee and sometimes something that had to be a sandwich. If we still had enough stock of cut wood for the day, we went back to bed. If we didn’t, we started to saw for the rest of the morning. At about 12 o’clock we had breakfast, consisting of a big plate with musty rye boiled in water, without sugar or any fat, but a little bit of essence to overcome the musty taste. To cook this meal, we had to make a wood fire in the stove, but that did not yet burn enough to heat the room. Though our first afternoon work was to raise the room temperature high enough to stay in and that took us mostly about 2 hours.

Another job was to clean the kerosene lamp we were lucky to have. The rest of the afternoon was spent by preparing dinner out of the things the women had managed to bring home during the day. This was, by far, the most difficult part of our life and it had to be left entirely to the women, because it was impossible for the men to go outside in broad daylight. After dinner and the dishes, we sat for a while around the kerosene lamp often playing a game of cards. Reading was not very easy in the dim glow of the lamp. About 9 o'clock we finished one more day by going to bed. (K. van der Horst)

Müller adds the following information to her discussion of Kuno:

After the liberation of Holland, he moved to the United States, married his young love Henny, and joined his father's business. In 1935, Hendrik van der Horst had developed a chrome plating process that radically increased the durability of motors and other machinery. He was on a business trip in America when the United States entered the war. Returning to Hilversum was no longer an option for him, and he founded the business that still exists today under the name United van der Horst, Ltd. (268)

In an email to the authors, Kuno's daughter, Marjanne Kunz, relates that "Kuno was a sickly child, had stomach problems and ulcer surgery in his late thirties, and ultimately, his weak heart gave out . . ." (Kunz). Müller adds that "After the war, Kuno van der Horst maintained some contact with Miep Gies, and Otto Frank. He died in Dallas, Texas on May 17, 1968, at the age of forty-eight" (268).

Hendrika Bouedwijn van der Horst

Hendrika Bouedwijn was born in Arnhem in the Netherlands on August 18, 1922. In 1926, when she was four years old the family moved to the town of Baarn. Hendrika graduated from elementary school, went on to finish secondary school and college, and then, like many young people her age, found steady employment. Her job at The Providentia Insurance Company on Heerengracht Street in Amsterdam placed her in close proximity and contact with some important historical figures. Hendrika worked nearby the warehouse which was located at 263 Prinsengracht in Amsterdam. This is possibly one of the most famous and important addresses in World War II history, as this is where Anne Frank hid along with seven others while she composed her memoir that came to be published in the United States as *The Diary of a Young Girl*.



Fig. 2. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.



Fig. 3. The Baarnch Lyceum, a secondary school in Baarn, NL that Henridka Boudewijn and Kuno van der Horst both attended. *Courtesy of Dr. Henk van Ommen, Baarnch Lyceum.*

Afgewezen geen.
 BAARN, 22 Juni. — Baarnsch Lyceum. Eindex.
 H. B. S.-diploma A. Geslaagd de dames: H. B.
 Boudewijn, W. Bronsveld, A. M. Ch. Israël, A. J.
 Molenkamp, C. J. de Muinck Keizer, L. F. Stier-
 hout, D. W. Tegelberg, C. vor der Hake, H. Vunde-
 rink, P. van der Zee; en de heeren: A. D. Bak-
 ker, jhr. A. W. van den Brandeler, P. Doorne-
 kamp, J. C. van Es, E. H. van Kempen, W. van
 der Leck, R. R. P. van der Mark, F. van der
 Meer, G. Roozendaal, J. van Silfhout.
 KAMPEN, 22 Juni. — H. B. S. Gemeentelijk

Fig. 4. *De Telegraaf*, 22 June 1940. Newspaper announcement of secondary school graduates. Hendrika's is the first name listed here, as "H.B. Boudewijn," a graduate of the Baarnch Lyceum. *Courtesy of Michael Kunz, Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz, and Dr. Gertjan Broek at the Anne Frank House. Digitized by The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library).*

In 1999, Hendrika was interviewed about her life and experiences and she shared the story of how she came to know Miep Gies. Miep was one of the small group of people who helped the Frank family and their four friends survive in hiding for two years in the small apartment hidden behind her employer Otto Frank's place of business, that came to be known as the Secret Annex. She sat down with James Warlick in Terrell, Texas where she had lived for a period of time after the war:

And through . . . well . . . underground channels, and friends of friends, they found out that I was working in Amsterdam, right around the corner from where his office was, and since I lived in a rural area, they introduced me [to] this Miep, and Miep asked me if I sometimes could bring some food that was not rationed to Amsterdam, and bring in . . . because she said, 'I have some nephews who really eat a lot of food, and there just isn't that much.' Needless to say, I had no idea that the food was all for the Frank family, and that's just a small part. So every time that I could get some food in my home town without coupons I would take it to Amsterdam and go to the office, and, um, I don't know how many times I was, at my lunch hour, at the office . . . I never, never, had any inkling that there were all these people there hiding. Never knew about it, until after the war, when I was living here in Terrell, Mr. Frank called me. And he said, 'I am in the States for the filming of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Miep Gies gave me your name, and I just want to personally thank you for what you did.' And I said, 'I didn't do . . .'

I had forgotten all about it! I didn't do that much. There were, all over Holland, there were people hiding people, and everybody knew that they were at risk, but you did it. (Warlick)

In this same interview, Hendrika discusses the outbreak of hostilities and a topic that comes up often when one looks at this period: the choice between doing nothing, collaborating, or resisting. There are many factors that must be considered when one is faced with a situation that concerns not only one's political sympathies and beliefs, but also the health and welfare of individuals and families. Hendrika recounts listening to an illegal radio, which was one of the most common and simplest forms of resistance that many Jews in hiding engaged in. However, there were other far more dangerous acts of resistance that were being engaged in which she touches on here as well:

There were Dutch people that were in sympathy with the Nazi movement, and then of course on the 10th of May in 1940 when everybody woke up, sure enough, you had all these planes coming over, that all the German bombers, they bombed the city of Rotterdam, and the Dutch army tried to fight but it only lasted five days, then they were all . . . that was the end of the war. So then, all of a sudden, the country was under the German . . . Nazi rulers, and they appointed a, uh, a commander, in The Hague, and the Dutch government had fled to England, so they wouldn't be caught and be kept in prison. So then little by little, life changed in the Netherlands. First they started saying, well, everybody has to bring a radio to City Hall because everybody was secretly listening to the BBC—the British Broadcasting Company in London—and they were giving messages how to organize underground work, and all different phases of the underground, like how to bring shot down pilots back to England through all kinds of channels, how to hide people, how to antagonize the Germans, so we were not allowed to listen to that. Of course everybody had

[unintelligible] radio in those days, so what you did, you went to City Hall and you gave your crummy radio and you kept your good one, and you were hiding it in a closet, and you could listen to it anyway. So that's how it started, and then soon after that, there were the steps taken that all the Jewish people outside Amsterdam all had to come into Amsterdam and, um, in a certain part, and they had raids on the Jewish people and they were carried off. Where, nobody knew. Nobody knew really, about the worst concentration camps until after the war, when all this came to light. Every time it got a little bit worse. Then we had to have ID cards. Then checkpoints to have an ID card that was not showing that you were Jewish. Then you had to have rationing coupons. Of course, our life went . . . we had less food, less provisions in the stores, and everybody did as much as we could to help the Jewish people. But personally, I was not, in the beginning, too affected by the changes in the war. (Warlick)

Thus, Hendrika and Kuno van der Horst, who would eventually become man and wife, were both resisting the Nazi regime that was occupying their homeland and they were taking these actions unbeknownst to one another. Resistance during this period in Holland took many forms. There was a worker's strike, which paralyzed the economy for a period of time. Additionally, when the order came down that all Dutch Jews must wear a yellow star similar to the ones that were in use in Germany, many non-Jewish citizens began wearing them as well in a moving show of solidarity that confounded the Nazi attempts at identifying Jews for persecution. There were underground resistance rings and Jan Gies, Miep's husband, was very active in one of these units. Of course, one of the most dangerous

forms of resistance, but the most humane of all was the clandestine sheltering of Jews.

when the order came down that all Dutch Jews must wear a yellow star similar to the ones that were in use in Germany, many non-Jewish citizens began wearing them as well in a moving show of solidarity

In another account titled "Working in Amsterdam," Hendrika discusses additional activities that she, along with Miep and Jan Gies, engaged in. Hendrika's reminiscence also adds some details concerning her relationship with the Gies family, as well as with her future husband, Kuno van der Horst:

The husband of Mrs. Van der Horst was in the United States on a business trip when Germany invaded Holland on May 10, 1940 and he was unable to return to Holland. Nobody thought the war would last long, and in the meantime, Hendrik established business contacts in the States and received word through the Red Cross that his family in Holland was all right. His oldest son Hans, who had fought in the Dutch army, had gone to the South of France (unoccupied part) and stayed there during the war. His son Kuno was a university student in Delft when the war broke out and his daughter Rosemarijn was still in high school. (H. van der Horst)

In this account, Hendrika offers some interesting background into the origins of her relationship with Kuno and goes into detail concerning Kuno's time at university and his refusal to sign the loyalty oath. As mentioned before, this refusal was one of many acts of resistance that the Dutch citizenry engaged in. Hendrika recounts that she and Kuno met on Feb. 18, 1939, and that he went on to become "a student at Delft [University]." By this time, many of the anti-Jewish decrees that had infected Germany were becoming enacted in Holland as well, and Jewish faculty members at Dutch schools were being dismissed. Hendrika's reminiscence continues:

Students and other professors rebelled against this with the result that the Nazi government closed all universities for fear of rebellions. All male students became targets to be picked up for forced labor in Germany in the factories. The German factories were short of men since all men were enlisted in the army. Lots of these Dutch students acquired fake ID cards with a birthdate to make them a few years older (too old to be a university student). Kuno found a temporary job and was living with his mother and sister in Hilversum. (H. van der Horst)

In her later years Miep Gies, now quite famous being the last surviving helper, had her own website, which continues to be maintained after her passing at the age of 100 on Jan. 11, 2010. Her activities with Jan concerning Kuno are mentioned, albeit briefly:

As the war dragged on, it became increasingly difficult to obtain the daily groceries for the eight hidens and for Jan and Miep as well. Since the spring of 1943, Jan and Miep also had a Dutch student in hiding in their own home on Hunzestraat. This student had refused to sign the German oath of allegiance, imposed on all students.

To avoid being arrested and deported to Germany, he had to go into hiding and had found a safe place in Jan and Miep's home. This means that Miep had to go shopping every day for eleven people in total. Less and less was available, so the range of choice diminished accordingly. She felt like a hunter, continually on the prowl for her 'ever-hungry nestlings'. 'But slowly, I was turning into an unrelenting scavenger, and would make do even with scraps. I could not allow myself to get sick. I could not allow myself a holiday.' ("Biography: Helping the Hiders")

I was turning into an unrelenting scavenger, and would make do even with scraps. I could not allow myself to get sick. I could not allow myself a holiday.

In some biographies of Anne, as well as in Miep's own memoir written with Alison Leslie Gold and titled *Anne Frank Remembered*, mention is made of Miep and Jan's Jewish landlady. These references to a Mrs. Stoppelman are sketchy and merely state that she was also being hidden in another location in Hilversum by Kuno's mother, Catharina. Hendrika refers to this individual as "Mrs. Samson." The use of pseudonyms in Anne's original Diary is just one of the issues that complicate the Anne Frank story. The real names of the helpers were used in more recent subsequent editions of Anne's memoir, as they

became widely known and any possibility of danger had passed. However, some people continued to use the pseudonyms, including Miep, who even late in her life would often use the names Kraler, Koophius, and Elli when she was referring to the other helpers: Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman, and Bep Voskuijl, respectively.

Miep's memoir was originally published in 1987, and at that time Miep continued the practice of using pseudonyms for everyone connected to Anne's story, including Mrs. Stoppelman who is referred to as Mrs. Samson in Miep's memoir. In an afterword for a 2009 edition of *Anne Frank Remembered*, Miep explains the pseudonyms and reveals the real names. Referring to later editions of Anne's Diary Miep explains, "Both the definitive and critical editions use real names, so there is no reason for me to maintain secrecy about identities any longer Our landlady Mrs. Samson's real name is Mrs. Stoppelman" (Gies 255). In her own recollections, Hendrika acknowledges using Miep's memoir as a reference in some of her other reminiscences. In the interest of clarity and continuity, we have reverted the pseudonyms back to the real names where we quote from Hendrika's memoirs in this paper.

Hendrika recounts her involvement with Mrs. Stoppelman's hiding with Catharina van der Horst, her association with Miep, and very importantly, her providing food to Miep. While the food was ostensibly meant for Kuno, Hendrika states that some of this food was also used to sustain the eight people that Miep was hiding in the Secret Annex as well, which would make Hendrika another one of the Franks' helpers, albeit unwittingly:

Miep and Jan Gies rented rooms from a Jewish lady, Mrs. Stoppelman. Constantly, the Nazis held raids in Amsterdam looking for Jews and many were arrested. It became extremely dangerous for Mrs.

Stoppelman to stay in her home and she had to find a hiding place. One day Miep and Jan came home and found Mrs. Stoppelman gone. Mrs. Stoppelman found a 'safe' place through many contacts in the town of Hilversum with Mrs. Hendrik van der Horst. I often visited there on weekends and was informed of Mrs. Stoppelman hiding in their house and met Mrs. Stoppelman. When Mrs. Stoppelman heard that my place of business in Amsterdam was almost around the corner [from] Miep's office, she asked me if I could go to Miep on my lunch hour and ask her for some articles of her clothing from her house. She had left her house with only the bare necessities. I did this and this is how I met Miep Gies. Miep and her husband visited Mrs. Stoppelman several times.

On one of these visits, Mrs. van der Horst asked if she could have a word with them. She told them that Kuno had refused to sign the loyalty oath at the university. The universities had been reopened under the condition that each student who wanted to attend had to sign a loyalty oath not to rebel against the Nazi regime. Thus, Kuno was not safe at home anymore and also had to go in hiding. Miep and Jan immediately said that he could live with them in Amsterdam at the Hunzestraat. This was a rather safe place for him as the address was in a predominantly Jewish section of Amsterdam and the Nazis mostly looked for Jewish people there during their raids. Neither Kuno, his mother, Mrs. Stoppelman, nor I knew that Miep and Jan were hiding the Franks.

Now that I knew Miep and she knew I was working close to her office and that

I lived in a suburban town surrounded by farms, she asked me one day if it would be possible for me to acquire some food without rationing coupons. By that time all food in Holland was rationed. One acquired rationing coupons by going once a month to City Hall and showing your ID card. The Frank family was supposed to have fled Holland and Miep was faced with the fact of obtaining enough rationing cards through underground channels. Any food was very welcome for Miep and she pursued many contacts; a butcher and greengrocer close to the office were on the 'good' side and she knew them well. My father taught a vocational school in the evening to supplement his income. He was an architect by profession but the depression years in the 1930's and later the war made designing houses a meager source of income. During the war he also tutored farm boys and was often paid by them with food from the farm. This was the extra food I often took with me to Amsterdam and delivered at Miep's office. I never knew about all the people hiding there. Kuno stayed with Miep and Jan till the Frank family, the van Pels family, and Mr. Pfeffer were discovered and sent away to concentration camps.

Without telling Kuno more, Miep told him that they were in danger and he had to leave, which he did. The reason Miep gave me for needing food was that she made meals for Kuno and other students. I often visited with Miep, Jan, and Kuno on weekends and Miep always invited me to stay for dinner. With Kuno gone from her house which I knew, she told me that she did not need any more food. This was in August of 1944 and in September

1944 the Dutch railroads went on strike following instructions from the BBC and underground. The trains stopped running until after the war and my commuting to Amsterdam came to an end. (H. van der Horst)

On July 14, 2003, an interview was conducted by Gerlof Langerijs with a relative of Mrs. Stoppelman, Meier Stoppelman, who was born in 1915. A relevant excerpt from this interview, as translated from Dutch by David Cassuto in 2018, reads as follows:

The hiding of Mrs. Stoppelman with Mrs. van der Horst was not without its problems. She felt very lonely and deserted and so on her initiative, Jan and Miep visited her regularly. She also wrote them from Hilversum. The van der Horsts were members of The Reformed Church. At a certain moment she seemed to want to convert to this Church, why it does not seem to be clear. Mrs. Stoppelman . . . thought that the Reformed faith would make her inviolable. She regularly left the house to walk on the heather, leaving the family in great distress. These changes in character and faith were also the cause of the fact that Jan and Miep could no longer live with her in her house in the Hunzestraat, also because her husband and son had returned. (Langerijs)

Hendrika regularly spoke to students and other groups about her experiences during the war years, with the belief that it was crucial to continue recounting these stories to younger generations. As an individual who was so closely connected to the Anne Frank story, and who contributed to the efforts of the helpers of the Secret Annex, hers is a tale that should be told. Hendrika van der Horst passed away at the age

Kuno and Hendrika eventually married, moved to the United States, and raised a family. Hendrika continued to correspond with Miep and Jan, and she sent this letter to them in 1988:

Cuba, N.Y. January 21, 1988

Dear Miep and Jan,

Since my last letter we have had the Christmas season and New Year and I like to wish you both much good for 1988. It was a busy but pleasant time here with many visits from children and grandchildren. I hope you are both well and that the winter does not bring too much cold. Up till now our winter is pretty good, usually we have a lot of snow in this area, but this year more in the western part of the country.

The last schoolday before the Christmas-vacation I spent, as usual, at the Cuba School to talk about life in Holland during the occupation. The eight's grade English class (five different classes) reads around this time the "Diary of Anne Frank" and the teacher, Mrs. Linda Botens asked me years ago if I would be able to give a talk about life in those days. It has become a tradition now and always the last schoolday before the Christmasvacation. The schoolroom has many pictures, newspaper articles, much of what Mrs. Botens has collected through the years, displayed on the walls. I bring what I have in identification cards, rationing coupons, books, etc. and chat with the children about the time Hitler became leader and the consequent ~~fallaxings~~ happenings during the occupation. The children always ask many questions and have a lot of admiration for all the things Miep did for the Frank family. This year I was able to tell them that you are both living in Amsterdam and also about the new book which Mrs. Botens ordered in the meantime. It is also already available in several libraries in this area. An alumnus of the Cuba school visited Europe last summer and visited the house on the Prinsegracht (Anne Frank house) There are thus now generations of children acquainted with the Frank family and all the work done for them by you.

Cuba is a village of about 2000 people with a Central School system, elementary school in one building and Junior High and Senior High in a building across. Children living outside the village are being bussed back and forth. I live four miles outside the village at a small lake. Around the lake are about 300 dwellings, half of these summer-winter residences.

In the Buffalo newspaper (delivered at my house) I read that a miniseries of your book is in the making and I presume that you are very busy with this. I am looking forward to this with interest. Do not feel obligated to write me back in this busy time. I hope you are both interested in my stories about our life.

With many heartfelt greetings,

Fig. 5. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

of 95 in Cuba, New York on Mar. 3, 2018. She was survived by five children, sixteen grandchildren, and twenty-three great-grandchildren.

From her obituary:

She was employed at the Providentia Insurance Company in Amsterdam. During her time with this company, she met Miep Gies, Otto Frank's secretary, and regularly used her lunch hour to secretly provide food to be passed along to those in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Holland. Only after the war and the publication of

the Anne Frank diary, did Henny realize the food she supplied had helped sustain the Franks and others hidden in the secret annex of Mr. Frank's business. For over 20 years, Henny gave talks at local schools and organizations about World War II and her connections with the Frank family. ("Hendrika Berendina van der Horst")

On the following pages, we reproduced images of two original postcards signed by Miep which she sent to Hendrika's family in 1939, prior to the German occupation of the Netherlands:



Fig. 6. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

~~Herst~~

Recto

Postcard
1



Postcard
2



Fig. 7. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

PART II: Catharina van der Horst



Fig. 8. Catharina van der Horst in June, 1949. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz

Resistance Activities and Sheltering of the Persecuted

In late fall of 1943, Kuno's mother, Catharina van der Horst, met a woman named Menalda. Menalda worked to bring Jews to safety and find places to hide them during the war. She was looking for a home for a brother and sister with the assumed names of Paul and Beppie—Catharina never knew their real names. These two young people had false papers, but because sheltering Jews was so dangerous nobody wanted to take them in. The siblings were already staying with someone at the time, but the woman hosting them was becoming quite anxious and her husband feared that her paranoia would attract trouble. Catharina, whose husband Hendrik was in the United States running his chromium plating plant, decided that she would take them in. They came over to her house late at night, escorted by their current host. Their current host was disappointed that his family could not continue to hide them, but

he recognized that the siblings would be in danger if they stayed at his residence. This was a rather common situation, as those who were in hiding moved around often in an attempt to avoid discovery.

Beppie, who was 19, would teach 11-year-old Paul every day for several hours since Jewish children were banned from all of the schools. She was afraid that if they did survive, he would go back to school and find that he had fallen too far behind in his studies. This was a widespread concern of young people who were in hiding, something Anne Frank writes about repeatedly in her Diary. Beppie also helped around the house by cleaning the dishes after dinner. She would often engage in late-night conversations with Catharina, confiding in her that she refused to take this time for granted, knowing that they could be arrested at any moment. In fact, Beppie's fiancée had been killed already. After a week, the siblings fled to a farm in the eastern part of the country and then moved again to another farm because untrustworthy neighbors had seen Beppie. Fortunately, their mother was in the same part of the country and she was able to see them regularly.

Catharina lost track of Beppie and Paul until the fall of 1944, when a woman named Mrs. De Boer came to see her. Catharina was shocked to learn that the woman she had known previously as Mrs. Kruger had adopted the name of De Boer because of her involvement in the war resistance. Mrs. De Boer was applying for a job as a housekeeper not far from where the van der Horsts lived and needed a recommendation. Catharina learned from Mrs. De Boer that the children were still doing well, but that Menalda had been betrayed by a spy who was pretending to look for a home for a Jewish friend. She was arrested and sent to

prison and then later sent to the concentration camp of Vught. Prisoners there had to perform forced labor, there was never enough food, and severe punishments were often meted out. Menalda was released after nine months and immediately began helping people in distress once more.

Another woman by the name of Betty de Leeuw moved from house to house every four or five days. She was in her twenties, was a leader of a boy's club in her spare time, and before the war had a good position in an office. When all the Jews in Hilversum were forced to go to Amsterdam and live in the ghetto known as the *Jodenbuurt*, Betty began going from one acquaintance to another. Each host would pass her to a new one, until one day she was sent to the van der Horst's by a cousin. Betty stayed with them for a few days, but told Catharina that she would do many different types of work if she could find a permanent place to stay. Catharina ended up taking her to a village eight or nine miles away where her niece, Maja, lived. Maja, who had recently had a baby and needed some help, hit it off with Betty immediately and decided to test out the arrangement. Maja's husband had some qualms about her engaging in such dangerous activities, but once he noticed that everything in the house was proceeding smoothly and that Betty was improving their living conditions, he stopped complaining. However, Betty made a mistake. She spoke with her fiancée's 14-year-old, non-Jewish sister. One day, the sister was questioned about her brother's fiancée's family because none of them had shown up to the ghetto as they were directed to. At first, she denied any knowledge of this, but according to Catharina, the young girl was harshly interrogated until she finally gave in and told them Betty's address.

Two Gestapo officers came to Maja's house to arrest Betty and harass Maja about providing shelter to a Jew. Maja and Betty had made up a story beforehand in preparation for a situation

such as this one. Maja had kept a receipt for an advertisement she had placed in a local newspaper as evidence in case they were questioned, which helped the two concoct a story that Betty had presented herself in response to Maja's advertisement for household help. She planned to say it never occurred to her that Betty might be Jewish, so she never looked into it. The two girls were questioned separately and their stories matched up, saving Maja from being arrested. On the other hand, Betty had to pack her things and was taken away. She never came back.

Betty's brother, Paul, changed houses every day, arriving late at night and leaving the next day at the same time. He had stayed with the van der Horsts three or four times and just as many times with their cousin. Paul would do all of the housework that he could, scrubbing the floors, sawing and cleaving wood, and more. He was arrested one night in the street and jailed in the tiny cell of the police office, but managed to escape through a small window in the bathroom. Paul continued with his routine of wandering until he found a hideout in a private forest where he stayed all winter, without fire or any other source of heat. His fiancée would go there once a week to bring him food, which was difficult because she did not possess a supply of ration coupons. Catharina lost track of him, but a few days after the liberation of Holland she saw him in the crowd celebrating. He told her he was the only one of his family who had survived. He said that his father had owned a butcher shop that had been seized by the Nazis, but once he got it back he hoped to get married.

Catharina had another woman hidden in her home for 14 months. Not even her own mother, who would visit them three times a week, knew she lived with them. During the second month that this woman was with them, Catharina met a young Jewish girl, a nurse, who was staying with a friend of her cousin. The girl told her that

her stepmother, who was not Jewish, was an important member in a resistance ring that was providing people with false papers. Catharina was able to get a new identity for the Jewish woman in her house and later one for Kuno, as well. She soon had many customers contacting her for new identity cards and they all received them. The wait would sometimes last for weeks because when one of the links of the chain ended up in German hands, everyone had to go into hiding until they were sure that the Germans had not succeeded in getting useful information out of the prisoner.

Catharina never knew anyone in the ring besides a Mrs. Van de Hoeven, who was providing the false documents, but she knew that the forms for the identity cards that they had were being stolen from stock in Amsterdam. This meant that the cards were official and not merely passable imitations. Catharina later learned that one of the employees who had been signing legal identity cards was also cooperating with the resistance ring and signed around 200,000 cards illegally. While this put him in grave danger, he came through the experience safely. Catharina helped many people obtain a new name and many of them had fingerprints for these cards made by Mrs. Van de Hoeven in the van der Horst's house. They would travel to the house with the cards hidden in their clothing so that if anyone was being detained and forced to undress for a search, the cards would not be easily found. Catharina knew of a priest doing the same sort of work who traveled with a supply of forged cards in his left pocket, and his own in the right. One day he was on a train, and there was a general check being conducted. The priest was asked to show his identity card, and unfortunately—possibly nervous about being questioned—he ended up reaching into the wrong pocket. Catharina recalls that it ended up costing him his life and several other people's lives as well.

The Family Home is Seized and Occupied



Fig. 9. The van der Horst home at Alexanderlaan 22 in Hilversum. While Hendrik was stuck in the United States and unable to return to Holland after the German occupation, Catharina moved to another unknown address on Diependaalselaan. One of those two houses is the one that was seized by the Germans, but exactly which one it was remains a mystery at the time of this writing. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

On Nov. 3, 1943, two uniformed Germans came to the van der Horst's door and demanded to inspect the house. Since Catharina had been hiding a Jewish woman in her home, she told the soldiers to wait in the parlor so that she could finish "getting ready." Instead, she was giving herself enough time to sneak the woman out of her home. Catharina then showed the soldiers around, pointing out several negative qualities about the house in an attempt to deter them from wanting to seize it, but they still seemed quite interested in occupying the property. After inspecting other houses in the neighborhood, the soldiers came back with a decision to use the van der Horst house to shelter officers. Catharina was given just 10 days to move out and she was ordered to leave all the furniture behind, except

the beds, items of old family property, and the crockery. Catharina joked, "Well, suddenly many things were very old and had been in the family for ages" (C. van der Horst). She later found out that having 10 days was extremely generous, since most families were usually given just two or three days to move out. If they complained about having to leave, they would only have a few hours to vacate the premises. She was very unhappy but she knew that crying would not change anything. She recounted thinking that, "these are only your things and as long as there is not one of the family in a concentration camp or going to be executed, you better keep your head up" (C. van der Horst). She knew the Germans loved to see the Dutch people disheartened, and she did not want to give them that satisfaction. They began packing and looking for a new place to live.

The van der Horsts soon found another home with a woman from the Dutch East Indies. The family was very pleased living with her and stayed in the home for 10 months. The woman went on to become one of their long-time good friends. Three weeks after the Germans moved into their house, they called Rose van der Horst over to show them how to use the kitchen stove, since it was not working properly. Rose noticed that all of their carpets and rugs had been replaced so Catharina went to the captain and complained. He found out that the rugs had been moved to another house and he brought the items back. The belongings of the two houses were mixed up so much that Catharina recalls a sergeant going on leave with a nice Persian rug.

They were finally allowed back in their house with all of their belongings just in time to prepare for winter with no heat and light. The van der Horst property had originally been part of an oil heating facility, and there were still supplies there which she had never used since the Germans entered the country. She realized that when she originally left the house, she had covered up an

oil tank in the garden with some oil left over from before the war. She had not expected to have any need for it when she covered it up, but she just wanted to prevent the soldiers from getting their hands on as many things as possible. When they uncovered it, they found that the tank had about six inches of oil in it. They were elated to have something to help them through the winter. With the help of their neighbor's oil cans and an old-fashioned pump from the plant they ended up collecting over 100 liters of the now-precious substance. The neighbors, of course, got some of the oil in appreciation for their help.

Rationing and Conscription

Their living conditions grew so difficult that there was no longer any food, and they could not get any in exchange for oil. Moreover, since the eastern and northern parts of the country did not contain highly-populated cities there was a higher availability of food in those regions, and people began to take bicycle trips in search of supplies. Catharina states that on Dec. 12, 1944, Rose and Henny began their first trip. They had two days cycling, two days bargaining, and two days coming back on even heavier bicycles. Their destination was about 90 miles from their home. The girls went to collect wheat, rye, bacon, sausage, eggs, butter, and rabbits. Rose and Henny had begun to go with their neighbor, but he was too afraid of the airplane noises and he dove into the bushes every time he heard a sound in the air, so they left him after three days. Catharina warned the girls to hide the bacon and butter well, as they were valuable and there were rumors that soldiers would confiscate such desirable and scarce items for their own use. For instance, when the neighbor came home first, soldiers stopped him 10 minutes outside of Hilversum and robbed him of his eggs, butter, and bacon, but left him with the rye because it was less valuable. The girls came home the following day with all of their extra supplies tied inside the legs of their ski pants so all the food came

back safely. Although this worked out very well for them, the food was gone rather quickly and the girls had to go back again within two weeks.

The girls continued to travel to buy supplies and return to Hilversum. They went the day after Christmas to buy food for New Year's, but it was becoming more and more difficult to obtain necessities. Rose and Henny had traded more oil and clothes than they did the first time and even then, they were sent away without anything. They did, however, have enough wheat and rye to make bread porridge for two weeks. Catharina also obtained a goose that same week. She states that she had to pay 110 guilders for it, but it improved their meals for a whole week. After their simple but enjoyable New Year's Eve, Henny began to feel sick. She became awfully ill that night, but there was no way to get her medical help due to the evening curfew. Early the next morning, Catharina got a message out to a doctor and he came with the serum for diphtheria, which is a severe infection of the nose and throat. Henny was sent to the hospital the same day. The household lost their best housekeeper while she stayed at the hospital for three weeks, but fortunately, she returned without any complications. Catharina had to bring her back on the rear rack of her bicycle. She describes their January: "I had a very busy time in January without Henny's help as Rose went on a solo food trip. I had to do a terrible lot of washing, disinfecting the bedding Henny had been using, and I was practically without soap. I felt awfully tired and old at the end of January" (C. van der Horst). The impact of merely one of the family members being unable to work affected the entire household in profound ways.

In the winter and spring, the main food they were able to procure with their ration cards was sugar beets. Catharina recalls how difficult it was to make syrup out of them: "Peel them and cut into blocks, cook, drain, and thicken" (C. van der Horst). Since men were the ones that were

usually home, they were the ones stuck with the job of the extracting and thickening of the beets. She reminisces about a time on her birthday in February when there were six men talking about how to cook the beets and the process that went into properly preparing them. She jokes that it was interesting to see men engaging in kitchen talk when it was usually the women who were told they did too much of that. After some weeks it was decided to give up thickening and they used the sugary water to cook the rye flour. It saved them a great deal of work and wood and the kitchen was not as damp. The sugar beets that should have been thrown out were kept so they would have something to eat when they could not deal with the pangs of hunger. They made porridge, cookies, and pancakes out of them. Even though no one really enjoyed these dishes, no one would admit it. They all ended up getting dysentery, but it was better than walking around with an empty stomach. Catharina also mentions that they could get a warm meal from the Central Kitchen:

Each family had to send someone with a pan or a bucket to get it; often we had to wait for hours in line for it. But when you happened to be five minutes too late and they were in time, you did not get a drop. It always was a sort of soup except once a week a hotchpot of beets or sauerkraut. The soup soon got thinner and thinner and finally was cooked of potato peels (the Germans ate the potatoes) with here and there a lost bean or pea swimming around in it. Sometimes you could detect a small eye of greasy nature. The color was bluish and the smell awful. I need not say a thing about the taste. At home we often thickened it with a bit of rye flour, but that could not better the smell or taste. The kitten refused to eat it until it got weak on its legs and finally preferred eating the stuff to dying. (C. van der Horst)

The waiting for oil to be back on their ration cards seemed endless and the delivery continued to be put off. On Jan. 31, 1945 it was finally restored and Catharina went to get in line that morning. The snow was finally thawing, but it was turning into a thick layer of slush, which was still dangerous. She had to wait four hours to have her bottles filled with oil. She described feeling "indescribably cold and wet then but still felt happy having all that oil which we needed so badly" (C. van der Horst). She got home by walking through the snow, as it was much too dangerous to ride her bike and she did not want to lose the oil. She then received the news that her husband's sister was very ill. Determined to see her, Catharina walked because the condition of the roads grew worse every minute. The slush was so deep that the water ran over the edge of her boots many times. When she finally completed her long, arduous journey, she learned the sad news that her sister-in-law had already passed away. With Hendrik in the United States, Catharina was the only close relative able to make funeral arrangements.

Arranging funerals had become a very difficult thing to do at this time, as the undertakers began to run out of materials. She obtained a hard-to-find wooden box, but Catharina says that it could hardly be called a coffin. Not long after this, people were being buried in cardboard boxes with wooden frames and soon after that in Amsterdam bodies were being wrapped up in big sheets of paper and taken to the cemetery, with several of the departed in one carload. Catharina wanted to give her sister-in-law the most decent funeral as possible. She could only invite some cousins living in Hilversum since all of her siblings could not make it because it would take them an entire day to bike there and no one could ride this distance due to the poor road conditions. Catharina did not even have a method of relaying the message to them that

their sister had died, since there was no mail or phone service at this late stage of the war.

Catharina recounts that in order to procure food for the funeral it took her a trip of seven hours for just one quart of milk. The weather was getting worse with high winds and people were no longer giving out food since everyone's supplies had run so low. Catharina recalls feeling depressed, tired, and hungry. Times were becoming harder and harder for them; it was becoming difficult to even survive. In February, two additional trips in search of provisions were made. The Germans announced on March 1 that food trips would no longer be allowed because the traffic of hungry people was so dense that the roads were turning black. They decided to close the two bridges over the river Ysel, which made it impossible to reach the eastern or the northern parts of the country. Catharina recounts their last food trip:

I went together with Henny the last days of February going from farm to farm, trying to get food for clothes and oil but generally we were sent away without anything. We had enough money with us but nobody was interested in money, and we felt like beggars. I changed at last a nice knitted dress of my deceased sister-in-law for a big sack of potatoes. This was, however, a terrible heavy load for our two bicycles. We divided it in four parts and hung it on both sides of the back wheels. A friend of Rose gave us ten pounds of wheat and a miller acquainted with my mother was so kind to give us ten pounds of ground rye for a pre-war price. We managed to get five eggs, in five different farms. This was all we could collect on this trip and we knew it was the last possible one. (C. van der Horst)

Even with eating as little as possible over the next two weeks, the point was coming that there

would be no goods left at all. Then came the news that the Swedish Red Cross had been bargaining with the Germans and were being allowed to send food to the three hungry provinces of Holland without the Germans taking it. The Swedish consul was appointed to oversee the operation, and every two weeks they would receive one whole loaf extra per person and a half-pound of margarine. They would finally have white bread, which had not been seen in five years, and no one had butter or margarine in the last six months. Catharina said that when she first came home with three whole loaves and three packages of butter she was “crying from pure happiness” (C. van der Horst). Some people would eat an entire loaf of bread in one day and would get sick the next, but her family did not overindulge. It felt quite luxurious to have white bread and margarine every two weeks. Due to this slight improvement in the availability of food supplies, people who were on the verge of dying could be saved. When Catharina was on a Swedish ship coming to America she tried to explain to Swedish people what their help had meant to them, but she would still become too emotional to talk about it.

War's End

Later that month on March 24, which was Kuno's birthday, the weather was lovely so the family sat with their doors and windows open. Since the Allies were doing well, the family was in good spirits looking forward to the end of the war coming soon, even holding a small family party that afternoon. Catharina describes the scene: “I had a very tiny bottle of gin and everyone got a very small glass to celebrate the birthday and then came the wonderful news that the Allied armies had crossed the Rhine into Germany. We just had to celebrate that too and pinched the last drops out of the bottle for a second drink, hardly more than a thimble full, but we were happy” (C. van der Horst). This marked the beginning of the end of a horrible time in their lives and for their country.

Once the Allies crossed into Germany, the Germans had much to worry about concerning their own troubles and the word spread that it was no longer dangerous for young men to show up in the street. This finally allowed the family to plan Kuno and Henny's wedding. The date was set for April 26. There had been news a few days before the wedding that the war would be stopped for 10 days to allow the Allied planes to drop food parcels in the three famine-struck provinces, but they did not know when that would be. On the day before the wedding the fighting was so close that shooting could be heard all day. Catharina said, “It was like music in one way and on the other side I was very much afraid that it could disturb the wedding party the next day” (C. van der Horst). The town where Henny's parents were living was shelled that night and the Germans were “going in masses in the direction of Amsterdam, full retreat” (C. van der Horst). The entirety of the next day Catharina said she had an uneasy feeling and she realized it was because she could no longer hear the shooting anymore. She worried that the Allied armies had been thrown back again, but it became apparent that it was the first day of the 10-day ceasefire, allowing the Allied forces to give them food. After that the fighting never started again—the war was finally over for them.

At the conclusion of hostilities, Hendrika, like many other Dutch women, created a Victory Skirt, or in Dutch, a *Nationale Feestrok*. According to Jolande Withuis,

The patchwork pattern was meant to symbolize how society, composed of many very different and loosely connected individuals, could and should become a concordant ‘whole’. Just as the little pieces of cloth in the skirt, although completely different in colour, shape, size and structure, together formed a new whole in which the pieces blended

together - so Dutch society, after the horrendous war, should become a whole that was more than its parts, to which all the components, new and old, bright and ugly, would contribute their share. (295)

Very few of these skirts exist today, and the van der Horst descendants still possess Henny's, which serves as a physical and tactile reminder of this difficult period in world history as well as in their own family members' lives. Whereas many of the memories associated with this skirt are traumatic, its beauty also attests to the sacrifice and heroism that so many individuals engaged in as they struggled against fascism as it invaded and took hold in their homeland.



Fig. 11. The back of Hendrika's Victory Skirt. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.



Fig. 10. The front of Hendrika's Victory Skirt. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.



Fig. 12. The van der Horsts residing in the United States after the war. Top (left to right): Hans, Hendrik, Kuno
Bottom (left to right): Catharina, Sonja, Rosemarjin (Rose), Henny. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

Kuno van der Horst has always been a rather mysterious figure, viewed by many as little more than a footnote to history, and as an individual placed firmly on the periphery of the Anne Frank story. This paper reveals a more fully-rounded portrait of an entire family with deeper connections to Anne, to her helpers Miep and Jan Gies, and as individuals who carried out their own acts of resistance and defiance against an evil regime, which they engaged in at great personal risk to themselves. With the generous cooperation of the van der Horst family we are now able to publish photographs of Kuno, as no images of him had been seen publicly anywhere before. We have also filled in some of the blanks in his story, having been granted access to his written personal post-war memories. In addition, we have also recounted the story of Kuno's

wife-to-be at the time, Hendrika, whose family had personal ties to Miep Gies even before the outbreak of the war and the arrival of the Nazis in Holland. Hendrika's accounts of providing food to Miep that was originally meant for Kuno but that also sustained the Frank family while they were in hiding, and of receiving a phone call of gratitude from Otto Frank after the war, may have great historical significance. Finally, the experience of Kuno's mother Catharina, and her own courageous effort in sheltering Jews, is another bright light that shines amidst the darkness of World War II and the Holocaust. The van der Horsts are much more than merely a footnote to the wartime experiences of Anne Frank—theirs is an extraordinary story of courage, resistance, and gestures of humanity as well.

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Tech and My Reading and Writing Literacies

<http://bit.ly/techandreadingwriting>

By: Jasmine Thomas

Transcript:

*[Curtain opens to reveal a girl standing.]
[Happy music plays in the background.]*

"Hey! My name is Jasmine Thomas and let me tell you how my life became digital."

[A globe is plugged into the wall and electricity comes from it.]

"In our technology-oriented society, it is nearly impossible not to own anything digital or electronic. It is almost unrecognizable from the society that my grandparents, and even parents lived."

[Jasmine's family tree showing grandparents and parents is drawn.]

"And now as new technology keeps replacing old ones, new technologies come with new things to learn and memorize."

[A happy young Jasmine stands next to the Los Angeles Library.]

"Technology has made a huge impact on my writing and reading literacies. For example, as a kid, I loved going to the library, because it was where I got most of my books."

[A young Jasmine sits in the library with the praises of her parents and grandparents above her.]

"My parents praised me for being the voracious reader I was, and my grandparents complimented my studious habits."

[A child Jasmine holds a book, which turns into a pre-teen Jasmine holding a kindle, which then turns into a teenage Jasmine holding her phone with I-books apps.]

"But as the years went by, those books converted into e-books on a kindle or a nook. And then those turned into simply downloading a pdf version on I-books on my phone. However, the same activity that my parents praised me for, started to make them skeptical."

[An annoyed Jasmine on her Ipad reading the online newspaper and typing an email to her teacher. Her parents yell at her to "Get off the phone" and "You never read anymore!"]

"All they saw was me lazily sitting on the couch, PLAYING with my phone, when in reality, I was reading the news. Or I was typing an email to my teacher. Since I wasn't physical writing anything down, to them, it looked like I wasn't getting any work done."

[A little house surrounded by a forest in India is drawn. Jasmine's grandma is shown harvesting fruit.]

"and as for my grandparents, they lived a more rural and simpler life. They had a telegram, and earlier versions of a telephone – but they were hard to use. It was pretty much useless to be playing around with these new

technological devices when there was actual work to be done."

[The following text shows up on the screen, followed by the URL for where the information came from.]

"According to The Washington Post, in 1985, 100% of US households had no internet."

[Jasmine's dad as a 15-year-old is drawn besides 15-year-old Jasmine. 15-year-old Jasmine has electricity running through her body.]

"That meant when my dad was 15 years old, he did not know anything about the luxury of having internet at home. So different from 15-year-old me, who was basically powered on electricity."

[An old lady looks up at "PDF" and asks "You peed on what?"]

"So to my dad's generation, something like a PDF meant nothing. To me, it was a tool that I used for reading daily."

[Jasmine's grandfather in his youth is holding a piece of paper, which changes into him growing older and getting more confused and frantic at the speeding background around him.]

"And for people who relied on the knowledge of writing on paper and lived in slower times, our world is pretty disorienting and fast paced."

[A pencil is drawn, as well as a desktop computer and a laptop.]

"And not only did I have to learn how to handwrite perfectly, like my grandparents and parents did. But I also had to quickly learn

how to type on a desktop and later on a personal laptop."

[Someone texts their boss about their work. Clicking noises fill the screen.]

"and then when newer and better phones were out, I had to text and use both the text lingo and emojis, but also proper business text etiquette.

[A running clock is drawn, and the time is passing fast. A frantic Jasmine is pleading for society to wait for her.]

"All of which needed to be practiced enough, so I can type ad text fast in order to have a grip on our fast-paced society."

[Jasmine impatiently looks at her watch. Tick Tock fills the screen.]

"Because my generation values speed and efficiency."

[Words and letters fly all around a stressed-out Jasmine.]

"The newer technologies increased my computer literacy and technical/digital literacy. Both of which allowed me new ways to write and read.

[Jasmine's mom tells her that the printer is broken, when it is just not plugged in. Jasmine is annoyed.]

"Because it wasn't enough how to use a computer; you needed to know how to use it the right way. Knowing which application to use was just as important as knowing how to turn it on."

[A doctor's coat, a stack of money, and a thumbs up is drawn. Followed by the logos for Microsoft word, PowerPoint and Excel.]

"and to get a good reputation, job, and position in modern America, you needed to be proficient in Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Without it, it was hard to apply to jobs, book appointments, and do certain things."

[Jasmine in her school uniform is drawn. She is drawn sitting next to a red-haired friend having their pencil and paper being replaced by a tablet. The tablets catch on fire and the two students are horrified.]

"Making sure my writing and reading skills were proficient enough on a computer and other digital devices was important, especially after my school replaced the paper California standardized testing for the online SBACK testing. And now that we were graded with these new technologies, it was crucial to know the ins and outs of them.

[Two versions of the test are drawn, but the right answers get harder with follow up questions.]

"In a way, this new way to test our reading and writing was better, as the test adapted to what answers you gave, and changed the test according to the student's strengths and weaknesses."

[Jasmine receives her tablet and laptop from her teacher. There is a long line of students behind her. The scene changes to two students walking up the same staircase at the same time]

"Even our school recognized the changing advancing society and wanted us to be prepared once we were out of school. Many schools like mine, provided lpads, tablets, or laptops to every single student regardless of economic status because they wanted every student to have the same opportunities and same strong footing."

[An encyclopedia is drawn. An 'x' is drawn over it. A computer screen is drawn.]

"In school, teachers aren't enforced to emphasize learning how to use a paperback encyclopedia. Rather, they focused on how to access online encyclopedias and databases, like Gale E-books, and online public libraries."

[Fake news shows up on the screen and many different advertisements pop up.]

"And with this emphasis on finding information on the world wide web, students had to learn the skill to properly judge if a source is credible. Something that wasn't as big of a problem back then as it is now."

[A Wikipedia page is drawn up showing fake news.]

"You will soon learn that Wikipedia isn't the best source of factual evidence."

[A handwritten paper and a typed copy of the same words is drawn. The typed copy is being edited using an online spell and grammar check. The typed one gets an A while the written one get an F.]

"And now that pretty much every student has a technological device for their reading and writing, it was important to me to make sure the efficiency and quality of my writing matched on paper and online when transferring and changing to new modes."

[Jasmine is smiling with an illuminated sign that says "Technology" above her.]

"Although it does seem extra complicated now that technology has come into play, I believe technology has improved my writing and reading literacies for the better."

[Jasmine's dad as a young teen asks his friend to read his paper and give feedback. The friend responds that he will return it in two days.]

"While many of the older generations depended on face to face meetings in order to get corrections and feedbacks, I have the ability to have face to face meetings and online meetings."

[Jasmine holds up sign that reads "writing," which is connected to different places on the map. It changes to Jasmine sitting on her bed at home with her laptop. Her friend across the country reads and edits Jasmine's paper from her own home.]

"Programs like Google Docs has given me the option to share my work and get instant feedback on my writings from my friends and professionals from the comfort of my own home."

[Jasmine reads her tablet in her room. Jasmine listens to a podcast on the bus. A plane and car is also drawn. 12 books are turned into a single tablet.]

"I can read and write anywhere. In my bed, on the bus, or even on the plane. And I think we can all agree that it is easier to carry one tablet with endless options of books than lugging that same amount in our backpacks."

[The screen is split into two: Black vs White. The screen changes to read the word "Unique" in rainbow colors. The screen goes back to the black and white screen and is blended into gray.]

"Which brings me to the idea, that technology has given me freedom of choice in my writing and reading. Unlike before, where there was only one answer and only one way to present, technology has allowed me to be unique and flexible. Instead of simply black and white, my writing and reading is now in that murky gray area, and not at the extremes."

[Jasmine talks to her grandma in India on facetime. Jasmine talks to her mom on the phone and asks her mom to "tell her another!"]

"And now there is more opportunities to find things I like quickly, like being able to hear a story from my grandmother on video chat, getting books on Amazon without actually traveling to the library, or reciting my speech to my mom on the phone."

[The screen has the words "Improvements" in a bad plain way and in a super extravagant way. The word "Gain" fills the screen.]

"With new technologies, there comes new improvements to my existing literacies and a gain of new ones."

[A bunch of flashcards becomes the app Quizlet. The app logo of Kahoot appears on the screen.]

"Writing flashcards have turned into writing Quizlets. Playing bingo and jeopardy on paper, have turned into playing an online game of Kahoot."

[Jasmine stands on the side with the words, "It is no longer a choice. It's a demand." appearing beside her.]

"And I believe that it is no longer a choice to change with technology, but rather a demand."

[Jasmine's parents ask "Why are you always on your phone? Get off your device and go out into the real world."]

"So next time you ask your kid, 'Why are you on your phone all the time?' or 'Can't you get off your electronic and get out into the real world?'"

[Jasmine sits at her desk thinking. Many words about literacies and technology appear all around around her.]

"Consider that maybe they have to be on it in order to achieve the same level of success that their grandparents and parents had."

[Jasmine stands on the planet earth holding many electronics and traditional style writing tools. The words "The future is digital" appear on the screen.]

"Because to my generation and the next, the real world IS digital."

[The video ends with Jasmine sitting as happy music plays in the background. The words, "Jasmine Thomas, Seton Hill University, Professor Kuhn" appear on the screen.]



Policy Brief on Mental Health on U.S. College Campuses

Following the American Psychological Association's Guidelines

By: Matthew A. Long

Executive Summary

This policy brief's intended audience is the United States Department of Health and Human Services. This brief aims to address the failing state of college counseling centers in the United States. While college counseling centers are receiving a surge in demand for mental health services, they are unable to provide an equivalent amount of resources to treat every student. The following brief will outline in detail the shortcomings of current mental health policies while providing the framework for future reform, which will increase accessibility and equitable treatment. With existing infrastructures in place, U.S. colleges are failing to provide adequate services to every student. Given as such, U.S. colleges need assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its councils in meeting the increased need for mental health services and supporting structures for students.

Statement of the Issue/Problem:

How should the United States Department of Health and Human Services respond to the growing demand for adequate mental health services on United States college campuses?

Background:

In the past decade, the number of students who visited campus counseling centers grew by 30 percent, while the average enrollment at U.S. colleges only increased by a mere 5 percent. This 25-percentage-point difference reveals why the nation has reached what could be called a “campus mental health crisis.”¹ Colleges in the U.S. have also seen an increase in the number of LGBTQ students on campus, who are more likely to experience issues with their mental health due to various stressors.² For many students, college is their first time living independently, and combined with the high expectations of academic achievement and difficulties faced when acclimating to a new environment, students are likely to experience a range of mental health issues.

The Healthy Minds Study³, conducted by the American Psychiatric Association in 2016, found that 61 percent of students who were officially diagnosed with a mental illness did not receive treatment, and the National Survey of College Counseling Centers⁴ conducted in 2014 found that 86 percent of students who committed suicide never

received treatment from their college’s counseling center. Several other similar studies found that over half of all college students who reported considering or attempting suicide had also not received treatment from their respective colleges.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services Interests in this Issue:

The United States Department of Health and Human Services’ mission is to “enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans.”⁵ Considering U.S. college students are included in this definition, the current failing state of college counseling centers in the U.S should be a paramount concern to the department. As Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, you, Alex M. Azar II, should see the consequences of keeping these current and outdated policies in place. It is evident that mental health reform is not a prioritized policy on the department’s agenda, but it is necessary in order to speak true to your mission. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness⁶, approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. is affected by a form of serious mental illness. Pushing for greater mental health services on U.S. college campuses would be an early form of prevention and would lead to less reports of serious mental illness in the nation. It is in the departments best wishes to address this issue and work towards a

1 Terry, C. (2017, July 21). Mental Health on College Campuses(Rep.). Retrieved November 6, 2018, from National Council on Disability website: https://diversity.ucsf.edu/sites/diversity.ucsf.edu/files/NCD_Mental_Health_Report_508.pdf

2 NAMI. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/find-support/lgbtq>

3 Eisenberg, D., & Lipson, S. K. (2016). Home. Retrieved November 10, 2018, from <http://healthymindsnetwork.org/>

4 Reetz, D. R., Ph.D., Bershad, C., Ph.D., LeViness, P., Ph.D., & Whitlock, M., Ph.D. (n.d.). National Survey on College Counseling Directors(Rep.).

5 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). HHS.gov. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/>

6 NAMI. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

more sustainable and effective mental health program, which would in turn save the United States \$193.2 billion a year in lost work due to mental illness⁷. Providing U.S. colleges with the adequate resources to meet this surge in demand is beneficial to not only public health, but to our economy as well.

Pre-Existing Policies:

The United States government has previously implemented policies to address issues concerning mental health, but while the federal government is currently acting to reform mental health services on U.S. college campuses, nothing has been passed. The Mental Health in Schools Act of 2015⁸ intends to revise eligibility requirements and make it easier for U.S. colleges to receive grants or contracts that provide for comprehensive trauma and mental illness treatment. The Saving Our Next Generation Act proposes to direct the United States Department of Health and Human Services to award grants to eligible colleges; these grants fully cover and provide resources for mandatory mental health screenings. The intended revisions under this act would result in proper mental health care for every diagnosed student. On the larger scale, the Americans with Disabilities Act⁹ is precedent in mental health reform because it defines mental illnesses as a valid health condition, and provides legal protections to those with a mental health condition and grants them workplace rights. For U.S. college students, this means they can register their mental health condition with their school and receive adequate services. The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 and the Affordable Care Act¹⁰ require individual and large-group health plans to cover mental

health treatment and include it as a benefit. For many students at colleges that require them to pay for treatment, this makes services more financially accessible.

Policy Options:

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has a number of different routes it can take when addressing this issue. The first policy option is to not act and continue to collect data from U.S. college counseling centers to see if and/or how the states respond. This gives the department the chance to examine policy measures taken by state governments. By this measure, the department can analyze policy efficiency, develop evaluative criteria, and assess the need for further policy in mental health reform.

The second policy option is to improve access to mental health services on U.S. college campuses. Federal, state, and college funding limitations for counseling centers are the number one problem impeding students with mental health illnesses from receiving proper treatment and support. By mandating that U.S. colleges allocate more funding towards their on-campus counseling centers, they can afford to hire and train more staff members. This decreases and ultimately eliminates waiting lists for counseling appointments, creates better support strategies, and increases accessibility. With this policy option, U.S. colleges could meet the surge in demand for mental health services with an appropriate amount of resources for every student.

Lastly, the third policy option for the United

7 NAMI. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

8 Current Mental Health Legislation. (2018, October 03). Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/current-mental-health-legislation>

9 Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace and the ADA. (2018, November 14). Retrieved from <https://adata.org/factsheet/health>

10 How Obamacare improved mental health coverage. (2018, November 04). Retrieved from <https://www.healthinsurance.org/obamacare/how-obamacare-improved-mental-health-coverage/>

States Department of Health and Human Services is to allow mentally ill students to take reduced course loads. Current federal guidelines for financial aid, categorical programs, and other services discriminate¹¹ against students who are mentally impaired and seek assistance, and revoke their support and eligibility. With this policy, students are able to take less credits in order to manage their symptoms and get back on their feet. They can maintain their financial aid eligibility if they do so, and they are at less risk of becoming seriously mentally ill.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Policy Option:

First Policy Option: Leave it to the States

Advantages:

- No immediate cost.
- Time to assess policy capacity.
- Can evaluate effectiveness of State-policy.

Disadvantages:

- Need for reform will still be present.
- States may not respond.
- States may have ineffective policy.
- States may require more funding or federal loans or grants.
- May worsen the problem or create more.

Second Policy Option: Increase Funding

Advantages:

- Directly addresses underlying cause of problem.
- Colleges can hire and train more counseling staff.
- Increased accessibility to students.

- Enhances and protects the health and well-being of American college students.

Disadvantages:

- Costs money.
- Could decrease funding in other areas.

Third Policy Option: Credit Reduction

Advantages:

- Greater symptom management for students.
- Students retain financial aid eligibility.¹²
- Reduced course loads become more commonly accepted.
- Decreased student drop-out rates.

Disadvantages:

- Extended times for degree completion.
- Loss of tuition money.
- Creates need for distinct definition of mental illness to avoid malpractice.
- Financial aid would require more funding.

Recommendation:

When evaluating the benefits and shortcomings of the listed policy options, it is evident that increasing funding for college counseling centers is the best approach. Doing this at the federal level will increase the amount of adequate mental health services on U.S. college campuses, and will prove to be the most effective, efficient, equitable, and feasible approach for the United States Department of Health and Human Services: it is financially possible, addresses the needs of every student, and is supported by many in Congress. This course of action fits in with the department's mission and is the most socially

11 Vecchio, P. D. (2017, March 20). Meeting the Growing Need for Behavioral Health Services on Campus. Retrieved from <https://blog.samhsa.gov/2017/03/20/meeting-the-growing-need-for-behavioral-health-services-on-campus>

12 Financial Aid & Mental Health Disabilities. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://namisantaclara.org/resources/financial-help/>

feasible when compared to the other alternatives. Leaving this issue up to state governments will potentially lead to greater disparities and may result in a greater need for federal oversight. Reducing course loads for mentally ill students is a step in the right direction for mental health policy, but does not solve the root cause of this issue. Therefore, it is evident that increasing funding is the best way for the United States Department of Health and Human Services to respond to the growing demand for adequate mental health services on United States college campuses.

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Gender Definition and Expressions of Sexuality in Janelle Monáe's "Pynk"

By: Meg Matthias

As the opening notes of Janelle Monáe's "Pynk" plays, Janelle and a car full of women roll down a sandy, pink desert road in a convertible. In a convertible similar to *Thelma and Louise's*, it seems as though they just completed the jump from one side of the canyon to the other. The PYNK Rest Stop and Inn is displayed in the style of a drive-in movie theater sign, pointing to a drive-in movie theater. The twist on the western is introduced and the music video to "Pynk" begins with soft snaps in the background and a cast comprised of women of color.

"Pynk" fits in a long tradition of music videos becoming a kind of political pop, existing in conversation with conventions left over from the 1980s and '90s. Its cast is made up entirely of black and other non-white women who are often featured in a state of undress and close ups of underwear-clad behinds are



Monáe introduces the viewer into the world of "Pynk" (screenshot from 0:20)

not uncommon. Quick cuts between scenes show the women to be perpetually in action, as the background and featured characters often make eye contact with the camera. The characters are laughing and playful, throwing a beach ball in the pool and posing cheekily in matching sunglasses. These scenes give the impression that the women have control over their own actions. These choices are a

direct response to '80s and '90s hip-hop that exploited women (especially black women) as accessories to the artist. Anderson (2018) writes of this tradition:

The black woman's backside has been fetishised [sic] as an object of mute and even contemptible spectacle, certainly since the rise of commercial hip hop in the 1980s...More recently, the "black bottom" has been weirdly appropriated by Kim Kardashian at one extreme and Miley Cyrus at the other. In Monáe's video, black women's bottoms are presented playfully as something both for and about black women, as she and Thompson alternately rise from an undulating sea of upturned backsides.

By establishing black women as the holders rather than receivers of a sexualizing gaze, "Pynk" works against exploitative videos like Sir Mix A Lot's "Baby Got Back," in which he objectifies the bodies of black women dancing around him. In the candy-colored world of "Pynk," women express desire for each other and themselves rather than men. In fact, no men appear in the video. "Pynk" works against presuppositions that hip-hop and pop music videos are, as shown by Sir Mix A Lot or Miley Cyrus, purely about the erotic pleasure of the viewer, or sometimes of the male singer. Exploitation of black female bodies is a tradition of the genre, as they are "formed into inanimate objects for a visual experience through their clothing, dancing, actions, and sometimes speech" (Forte 2017). When Monáe rubs actress Tessa Thompson's¹ head as it appears between her vulva-esque pants, in a nod to clitoral stimulation, her

action asserts the validity of women's position as the bearer rather than the object of desire.



Thompson acting as the clitoris in Monáe's anatomical costume in "Pynk" (screenshot from 1:03)

In the same scene, "Pynk" highlights female sexual pleasure to argue that women should not be ashamed of receiving it and, as is further implied, to not be ashamed of self-stimulation nor receiving sexual pleasure from another woman. Monáe is joined in her vagina pants by unnamed dancers costumed in the same way, placing them on a level of equality to suggest that, though Monáe is singing the background music, she is not the only character whom the video's arguments apply to. The scenes in which Monáe does not appear are similarly frenetic and active as the ones she is featured in, establishing the world of "Pynk" as nearly utopic—an all-woman, anti-hierarchical paradise.

In the album notes for "Pynk," it is described as "a brash celebration of creation. self love. sexuality. and pussy power!" It asserts that "PYNK is the color that unites us all, for pink is the color found in the deepest and darkest

¹ Thompson appears in the video for "Pynk" as well as Monáe's music video "Make Me Feel," an ode to sexual fluidity, and her video album *Dirty Computer*.

nooks and crannies of humans everywhere... PYNK is where the future is born" (Sodomsy, 2018). The pink filter on the video—and, of course, the pink *Thelma and Louise*-esque convertible, pink pool floats, pink sunglasses, pink costumes, and pink desert backdrop—acts as a visual reminder of the color pink's association with womanhood and femininity, as well as with the vagina, which repetitively acts as a synecdoche² for women.

The lyrics of the chorus, sung breathily by Monáe and punk artist Grimes, argue for the same yonic imagery and exercises of sexuality:

Pink like the inside of your, baby
Pink behind all of the doors, crazy
Pink like the tongue that goes down, maybe
Pink like the paradise found

Pink when you're blushing inside, baby
Pink is the truth you can't hide, maybe
Pink like the folds of your brain, crazy
Pink as we all go insane

With the color scheme, lyrics, vulva pants, and the underwear that asserts that the vagina is "Great Cosmic Mother" and "grabs back" (a reference to Trump's "grab 'em by the pussy" comment, thus establishing the video as a political response) in block lettering, the music video "reclaims, among other things: the colour [sic] pink as a deeply powerful feminine symbol; the vagina as a universal place of origin" (Anderson, 2018). "Pynk" works within the framework that the body is a political object and that pop music is a place to make a political statement to the President of the United States.

In a continuation of political action, the purposeful misspelling of the title—"pink" with a y instead of an i"—alludes to the feminist action that (phonetically) excludes men from female spaces by spelling "women" as "womyn." This nod ties Monáe's song to feminist ideology by, title alone (if the repeated vaginal imagery was not enough), aligns itself with the feminist movement, specifically the third-wave.



Monáe drives a pink convertible through a pink landscape (screenshot from 0:02)

² A figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole.

Though Monáe pays homage to the term without referencing the cultural criticism of it as trans-exclusive³, she and Tessa Thompson each made statements that, while the video is not subtle about its nods to “pussy power,” the video praises women both with and without vaginas.



Tweet from Thompson, 2018



Tweet from Monáe, 2018


Acknowledgements to trans women exists discreetly in the video, most notably as one shot shows an unidentified woman swinging a pink baseball bat between her legs as a phallic image. In scenes in which Monáe and others appear wearing their vagina pants, a few women always appear without the pants as well. Here, the video references intersectional feminism by including women who hold more than one marginalized identity.⁴

At the end of the video, it returns to a previously used, wide-shot of Monáe and Thompson leaning against each other in the desert, alone. The peaceful shot is immediately juxtaposed by several quick cuts: an untying string bikini, popping bubble gum, and two final, hyper-saturated close-ups of Monáe’s face and the flower-lined roof of a building. This pairing establishes Monáe as narrator and creator of the world of “Pynk” by showing them in conjunction, both with the same bright pink lighting and almost alienating, zoomed-in lens. “Pynk” ends with a final assertion that its titular color is a stand-in for women and for female sexuality. As Monáe’s face and voice fade out, the lyrics leave no question to the video’s, and presumably Monáe’s, opinion on the subject: “Pink is my favorite part.”

3 The term “womyn” has been adopted by trans-exclusive radical feminists (women who exclude transgender women and non-binary people from the feminist movement and from women-only spaces) who use it as an excuse to prevent trans women from accessing female spaces by claiming they are not “womyn-born-womyn” and thus, not allowed. Because of this history, the use of the term in feminist movements, writing, or online platforms is often criticized by trans activists and allies.

4 Forte (2017) writes of intersectionality that “instead of only being discussed in terms of race and gender, other elements must be considered: citizenship, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class, age, colorism, etc.”

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Tough to Swallow

By: Christine Kovacs

Context Essay

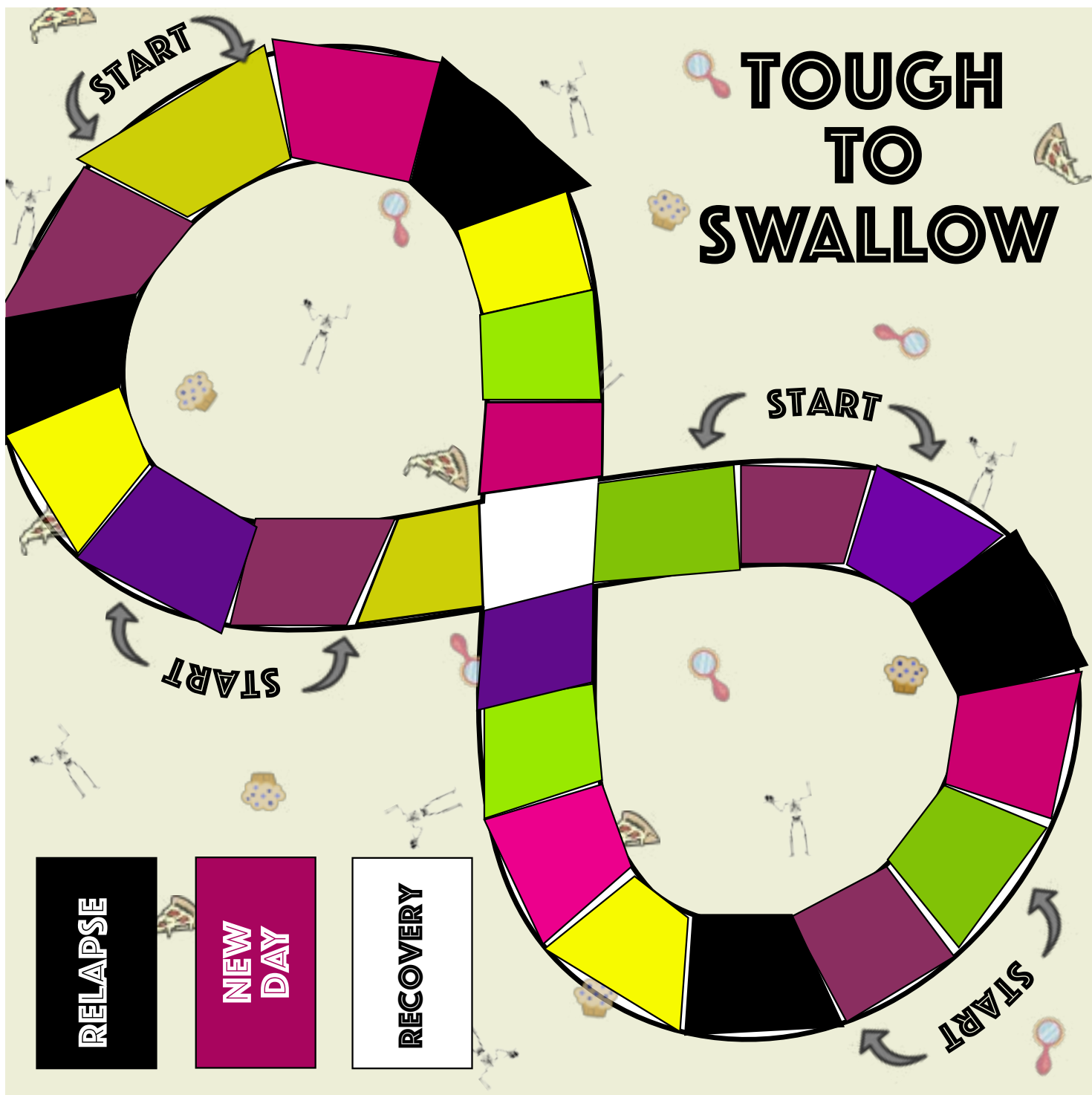
Tough to Swallow is a playable, tabletop board game designed to replicate the experience of having an eating disorder (ED). The game uses glimpses of my experiences, both small and serious, to demonstrate the frustrating and non-linear journey of developing, having, and recovering from an eating disorder.

The game comes with playing cards, instructions, and a game board. To play the game, the player will use three card types: New Day (anecdotes from small, random moments from my experience), Relapse (anecdotes from moments I felt I had relapsed into unhealthy behavior), and Recovery anecdotes from moments I felt I had made genuine progress). The player will begin on any colored square, and follow the commands of the cards as they play. Each card will have a command, but the commands are confusing and contradictory (for example: “move 1 step forward, 3 steps back”). This is meant to simulate the disorienting and frustrating nature of EDs, and since the tiles on the board are shaped in an infinity sign, the player will feel trapped and unsure of how to win.

Tough to Swallow is more than just an artistic exploration of my relationship with my ED; its main purpose is to function as a real, playable game. The rules are coherent, the cards are comprehensive enough to perpetuate around 20 minutes of solo play, and the board itself is built to a regulation size. I imagine the board game sitting in the waiting room of a therapist's office, a health clinic, or on a high school's guidance counselor's desk. I can see it functioning as a tool that could help someone with an undiagnosed ED recognize their destructive behavior, as well as a way to build empathy between those who have an ED and their community who may not understand them. The ways in which Tough to Swallow violates typical board game convention does not affect its ability to be played in real time. If anything, these breaks from convention (single-player, circular commands, a lack of an ending) emphasize aspects of EDs that may be counterintuitive to those who are trying to understand it, whether it is they who are struggling with an ED, or someone they know.

While my first goal for this game was to build empathy between players by encouraging personal interaction, I also see Tough to Swallow as delivering an important and necessary message about EDs. I believe that the way the media often characterizes EDs does a disservice to those who actually struggle from them. An ED does not have to be late-stage bulimia or anorexia to be dangerous, and we as a culture should not wait until it becomes late-stage before intervening. Tough To Swallow's secondary function is to educate all of its players on the nuances of an ED, and show the range of dangerous behaviors as well as how they can escalate. I've had people tell me that because I was never hospitalized for my ED, that means it wasn't "real" or "serious." This kind of thinking perpetuates EDs, because it is exactly what I would tell myself when I was in my darkest place with the disorder. I hope this game can enlighten and change that line of thinking, and help those suffering receive the help they need from people who are willing to recognize that they need help at all.

I envision Tough to Swallow fulfilling both of the purposes I've mentioned above. I imagine some will read the instructions, my cards and look at the game and consider it from an artistic angle, forcing them to rethink how they define EDs and board games. From my experience with peers interacting with the game, I also believe that some readers may pick up a die and play a round or two, just to get a feel for my message. Both of these functions align with the purpose of the *RhetTech* journal—to use technology to communicate my message in the most convincing, effective medium possible.



NEW DAY



You run into your cross country coach from high school. She says “You were never heavy but wow have you slimmed down.” You feel amazing. You take selfies all day and skip dinner. Lose a turn.

NEW DAY



Your roommates come to you, concerned. One of them brings it up while the other is in the shower. You're surprised and embarrassed. You tell her you don't know what she's talking about. She says she loves you. You brush it off. But you can't stop thinking about that conversation. You choose to eat in the morning. Move forward 1 space.

NEW DAY



You've mastered splitting your time with different groups of people and telling them you ate with the other. No one suspects a thing. Skip to the next relapse square and then roll again.

NEW DAY



You haven't eaten all day. You drank coffee to purposely curb your appetite. You feel exhausted, but you're proud of your self-control. Move back 1 space but roll again.



NEW DAY

You come home from Spring Break and your mother rejoices about how skinny you are. She says “She didn’t gain the freshman 15, she lost the freshman 20!” to anyone who will listen. Skip to the next relapse square.

NEW DAY



You open up to your older brother about your eating disorder. You tell him you’re in therapy. You haven’t told your parents. He cries. He says its his fault. He says he’s sorry. You forgive him for what he has done and absolve him for what he has not. Move forward 3 spaces.



NEW DAY

You’re having a normal day and haven’t thought about your body much at all. You walk past a dark glass window, but you intentionally don’t look. Your heart races anyway. Move forward 2 spaces and back 1.

NEW DAY

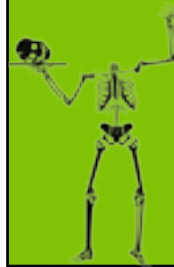


You’re seventeen. You’re writing a story with an anorexic character. Your mother compliments how chilling and realistic sounding it is. You accept the compliment. You don’t realize yet that you’re writing about yourself. Roll again.

NEW DAY

You're sixteen. You're googling "fat people" to see if you look like the images that show up. You pull on your stomach and your arms. You consider not eating for a couple of days. But then your dad calls you down for dinner. You eat, and you don't think about what you googled until you're in bed that night. You decide against not eating. Roll again.

NEW DAY



You've just run six miles. The only things you've eaten today are unsalted baby carrots and a Chewy granola bar. You eat a banana. You feel light headed but mostly just light. Move forward 1 space but then lose your next turn.

NEW DAY



You're having a normal day and haven't thought about your body much at all. You walk past a dark glass window, and catch a glimpse of yourself. You think you look skinny. You smile, and walk a little taller for the rest of the day. Move forward 3 spaces and back 4.

NEW DAY



You're having a normal day and haven't thought about your body much at all. You walk past a dark glass window, and catch a glimpse of yourself. Your face turns red and you look away. You feel humiliated. Your skin weighs heavy on you all day and you wish there was less of it. Move forward 1 space and back 2.

**NEW
DAY**



You ate a sliver of birthday cake even though you promised yourself you wouldn't. You think about it for a week. Move back 1 space.

RECOVERY

You admit to yourself that you have an eating disorder. It's the hardest, scariest thing you've ever done. You admit that you want to change, even though part of you is so scared to let it go. You choose to write about it for a creative writing class. You choose to share it with your professor. Move forward 3 spaces.

RECOVERY

A work colleague mentions the free counseling sessions available at the counseling center on campus. You ask her how you make an appointment, and if you're allowed to talk about stuff that doesn't involve school. She shows you the website and gives you the phone number. Move forward 2 spaces.

RECOVERY

It's maybe your 10th time talking to your counselor. She asks about your most recent dysmorphic episode. You tell her. She asks what you know about your body. You think for minutes. You begin to cry. You realize for the very first time that you don't have an image of yourself that's grounded in reality. Move back 2 spaces but then take 3 more turns.

RECOVERY

You're planning on going clubbing tonight. You try on an outfit and step in front of the mirror. You're confused--you can't recognize what you see. You feel sick. You want to crawl somewhere dark and never be looked at again. You sit in your room and you grip your arms tight. You breathe. You change. You feel better. You choose to go out. You have fun. Move forward 5 spaces.

RECOVERY

You go home for summer break. At the family barbecue, you eat an entire burger. You only feel a little guilty. Move forward 1 space.

RECOVERY

You raise your hand to share your idea for this project with your capstone writing class. You say the words "eating disorder" out loud. Your heart pounds the whole time. You feel okay after. Move forward 1 space.

RELAPSE

You're getting dressed to go tailgating with your friends. You've been planning this all week and you're excited. Your roommate's in the other room when you make the crucial mistake of looking at yourself too closely in front of the mirror. You don't go out. You don't tell your roommate why. You cry and you cry and you cry until you feel as empty as you wish you looked. Move back 6 spaces.

RELAPSE

You haven't eaten all day. You realize this and you feel good. Move back 4 spaces.

RELAPSE

You're at work at a retail store. A woman approaches you and asks when you're due. You tell her you're not pregnant. You go to the back room. You sit on the floor. You sob. You don't eat for three days. Move backward 10 spaces.

RELAPSE

You buy a blueberry muffin for lunch. You can only eat half of it before you feel bloated and nauseous. You realize your stomach has shrunk so drastically that you can't even eat an entire muffin one sitting. You smile. You feel small and girly and pretty. Move back 8 spaces.

RELAPSE

You're stressed out. The world around you is unforgivably fast. You don't have time to eat, you rationalize, so you don't. You know that time isn't the reason. You don't eat anyway. Move back 2 spaces.

RELAPSE

You step in front of the mirror and tug on the zipper of your favorite skirt. It fits a little different. You feel your entire body go warm. Then cold. You don't remember collapsing, you don't remember slicing up your arms with tiny half crescent cuts. You lie on the tile floor of your bathroom. You try to make yourself throw up, but you can't. You hope your mom doesn't hear. Start over.

TOUGH TO SWALLOW

Do you intentionally go days without eating? Have you become obsessed with exercise and controlled by food? Will you fight to stay alive? Are you willing to recognize the need to fight at all?

Tough to Swallow™ is a tabletop single-player board game. Experience the terrifying thrill ride through the mind of an individual who has endured/does endure an eating disorder (ED), disordered eating (DE) and body dysmorphia. Feel the frustration of those who struggle to eat, not eat and over-eat every day. Each game lasts between 10-20 years, although some games may never end at all. Around 50% of the people who play report winning entirely, the vast majority of them purchasers of the Tough to Swallow™ expansion pack.***

Nearly 8 million Americans, (7 million women, 1 million men) have an eating disorder. These disorders develop overwhelmingly before age 20, and Anorexia Nervosa is 12 times more likely to kill a girl 15-24 than all other causes of death combined. But Anorexia Nervosa is only one side of the spectrum for EDs. Eating disorders are defined as irregular eating patterns accompanied by obsessive distress or concern with the body and body image. Almost all people who have had or do have EDs have also engaged in disordered eating. Disordered eating is characterized by many of the eating behaviors recognized in eating disorders, but with less frequency and severity.

While those with ED/DE are not always inflicted with body dysmorphia, and vice versa, the two are often linked. Body dysmorphia, or Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), is a psychiatric condition in which victims are plagued with persistent and intrusive perceptions of imagined or slight flaws in one's appearance. These intrusive thoughts can become so frequent and severe that they can seriously diminish the quality of life for affected individuals. It is estimated to affect between 5-8 million Americans.

Follow the footsteps of a victim and survivor, and see if you can persevere through the confusing and tumultuous journey of being absolutely and totally controlled by food and your reflection. Recovery is possible, but it's not linear; it's messy and confusing and contradictory. When you play Tough to Swallow™ you're a winner with every roll and a loser only when you call it quits.

****The expansion pack is not included with this game, but may be purchased through talk therapy, enrollment in support groups and other forms of treatment. It includes: a larger board with 4 more "Recovery" spaces, 10 more "New Day" spaces and an exciting path that leads off the board--allowing the player the chance to truly win the game. Additional "Recovery" cards are not available for purchase, but may be earned through hard work, perseverance and getting the help you need. For more information, please call the National Eating Disorder Association helpline: (800) 931-2237 or visit their website at <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>.*

Sources: the Anxiety and Depression Association of America: <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/related-illnesses/other-related-conditions/body-dysmorphic-disorder-bdd>, Eating Disorders Victoria: <https://www.eatingdisorders.org.au/eating-disorders/other-eating-disorders>, Mirasol Eating Disorder Recovery Center: <https://www.mirasol.net/learning-center/eating-disorder-statistics.php>

TOUGH TO SWALLOW

OBJECTIVE

To be thin, to be in control, to stay alive, to keep playing.

CONTENTS

- 1 Tough to Swallow™ board
- 1 Deck of “New Day” cards
- 1 Deck of “Relapse” cards
- 1 Deck of “Recovery” cards
- 1 Die
- 1 Personal Item to Serve as Token--the more precious, the better

PROCEDURES FOR BEGINNERS

Set out the Tough to Swallow™ board.

Shuffle all three sets of cards, “New Day,” “Relapse,” and “Recovery,” and place them in their designated spots on the board.

Using a personal token of your choice--a ring, a watch, a hair scrunchie, a collectable coin, a small toy, a pin, a bookmark, or other cherished knick-knack--begin on any colored square.

Roll a single die.

If you land on a colored square, select a card from the “New Day” pile and perform the action required.

If you land on a black square, select a card from the “Relapse” pile and perform the action required.

If you land on the white square, select a card from the “Recovery” pile and perform the action required.

Place all discarded cards at the bottom of their respective decks.

Reshuffle the cards as necessary.

The game ends when you are too exhausted to continue playing.



Lyrica

By: Barbara Hoefer

Betty climbs into bed with her blonde hair in a braid, not looking forward to another night of lying there for hours before she falls asleep. She covers herself with a pink blanket her Mom crocheted, and lays on her stomach, her head turned to one side. As soon as she closes her eyes, the war begins once again— the fight to not think in bed.

Ugh, I just can't sleep. Brain, shut up! Betty checks the clock: 12:30 a.m., already half an hour has gone by. She gets up, puts on her soft bathrobe, and reads an interesting math article. With heavy eyelids, she goes back to bed. While laying on her side and relaxing to a heating pad on her neck, her mind goes, *I have a test this week...I won playing Scrabble*

tonight...ham for dinner was good... Betty gets up again with a tense chest, annoyed that it's already 1:30 a.m. She leans her heavy head on her hands and drinks warm milk at the glass table in the den. After a while, Betty lifts her heavy body off of the couch, and climbs back into bed. *I'm dead-tired.* She finally falls asleep 40 minutes later.

Betty and her Dad patiently wait in her neurologist's office. On the brown desk, is a thick yellow folder with Betty's name on it full of all the epilepsy medications she has been on in the past. Betty drinks peach Snapple to try and stay awake as her eyelids get heavier and heavier. She reads over her list of problems

to tell Dr. Luciano until she hears footsteps quickly getting louder and louder.

Dr. Luciano rushes into his office with a big smile and says, "Hey, how're you doin'?"

As she closes her eyes and leans her head forward, Betty replies, "I still can't sleep at night; I want to get off Topamax."

Dr. Luciano starts to quickly type away. As he keeps typing, he asks, "How've your seizures been?"

Betty takes a sip of Snapple as she searches through her sleepy mind for the right words. "They're getting worse. Every week I have at least 3 seizures, and my Mom and Dad say they're lasting up to 15 minutes now." She takes a deep yawn.

The doctor's smile goes away, and he turns towards Betty. "That doesn't sound good. Seizures longer than 10 minutes can damage the brain, and bad sleep only makes seizures worse. Let's try Lyrica instead of Topamax. It's both an anti-seizure medication, and it helps people sleep."

Betty looks up, making eye contact with the doctor, and says "Sounds good."

After typing away for a few seconds, Dr. Luciano scribbles down the drug name and the dose to take in the morning and night, barely readable. He jumps up from his chair, quickly shakes Betty's hand and says, "Great seein' ya!" as he rushes out the door.

Betty steps off the noisy bus and walks across her shady tree-filled yard to the front door. *Home from college at last. Seems like I was on that darn bus forever.* She turns her key into the doorknob, pushes open the heavy door,

and walks into the den. It has a brick fireplace, a dark brown chair and a long white couch, along with a TV and a backyard patio. *Wait, did I bring my bag inside?* She looks around the room filled with brown walls, then looks toward the floor. *Oh, it's right here.* She walks into the kitchen, a room of 50's fashion with a green counter and medium-brown cabinets. Betty empties her blue lunch bag, and then glances around the ranch-style house.

Betty gets excited as she walks through the house, seeing that nobody's home. She decides to watch TV and walks back into the den. *Wait, why did I come in here? There's the door to the patio, the couch...oh, to watch TV.* She sits on the chair and daydreams for a moment, staring down at the red rug below her. *Maybe I should bike instead. Or should I do homework? Or play the piano?* After staring at the brown wall for a few seconds, she can finally grasp a thought. *Um...I guess I'll do homework since that's most important. I'll need some caffeine to think easier.*

She walks into the kitchen and pauses. *Wait... What did I want to get?* Her mind feels like it's in a deep fog. She closes her eyes, trying hard to think, and soon a feeling inside tells her to open the fridge. *In the fridge there's juice, water, milk...oh, there's iced tea, I'll take that.* Betty rolls her green backpack into the dining room, and sits on her brown, cushioned chair at the wooden table with four flowery placemats. She unzips her backpack and takes out her history and math notebooks, along with the assigned homework.

Betty decided to do her favorite subject first: math. As she takes a sip of iced tea, she thinks, *Okay, question one says, 'What's the product of 28 x 34?'* Betty stares at the wooden bookshelf across the room, daydreaming for 10 seconds. Looking back at the problem to recall the

numbers, she reads: *28 x 34—got it. Okay, 28 x 34 is 30 x 34 minus 2 x 34, which is...um....* She looks at the numbers over and over again, then closes her eyes and tries to mentally see the numbers, but all she can see is darkness. After three tries, Betty decides to carefully write out the numbers, as stating each out loud. *1020-68=1020-60-8=960-8=953...I mean 952. FINALLY. Ugh, I miss being a human calculator.*

Betty hears the garage door open in the den. *Oh no—Dad got home, the peace and quiet is over.* Her father walks in wearing a black suit and blue tie, and places his heavy work bag on the beige dining room chair. He has light blue eyes and dark brown hair, along with a happy smile.

"Hey Betty!"

Betty looks up and rubs her eyes after the light blinds her.

"Hi."

"Guess what someone told me at work today?"

"What?" she replies in a low voice, while leaning her head on her hand.

"That you could work as a nursing home aide instead of being a medical data analyst." he says joyfully, as his smile gets bigger.

Betty looks down and stares at the red rug for a moment.

"I love math, and I want to stick to that major. Plus, I'm interested in the...what's the word...medical field after all of my medical problems I've had."

He crosses his arms and says, "I think it's perfect for you!"

Looking away, she can feel her chest tensing up ... *Why is he so pushy?*

"I don't know...I'm a little shy."

He puts his hands on his hips, and says, "don't you like helping people?"

"I guess. But number crunching is fun! And medical research is helping people too, using numbers instead of being social." A small smile forms on her face for a few seconds.

"That's true; you've always loved math. But with the problems you've been having mentally, I'm not sure if math is the best for you. Look into it! I think this job would better suit you."

Hmm...maybe he's right? I have to work so hard to use my head on Lyrica.

Unable to decide, Betty looks down and goes, "um...okay."

Dad walks back into the kitchen. Betty looks up the average beginner's payment for being a nursing home aide: \$20,000—and then for a math major: \$40,000. *What?! That's twice the salary of the job Dad mentioned!* Tears fill her eyes. *I'll tell Dad no...um...but it's so hard to think on Lyrica; should I listen to him?* Betty feels stuck between a rock and a hard place. She leans her face in her hands, and cries hard.

I love math class. It's competition day again, me against the calculator.

My high school teacher asks, "What's the square root of 729 minus the square root of 81?"

As students start punching it into their calculators, I immediately say "18."

"How about 57 times 15?"

After two seconds, I go "855," beating the students' calculators again.

Shocked, the students ask, "How do you do that?"

"There's a trick to every calculation. You just have to find the patterns."

Betty stands up and reaches for the ceiling after studying for hours, then walks into the kitchen. *Why did I come in here? Was it for a drink? Oh, I see Mom and Kathy lined up getting dinner; that's right, it's dinner time.* She waits in line to get her meal, behind her sister Kathy. Kathy has short brown hair, long earrings, and just started college towards an accounting degree.

Betty starts to get her dinner. She fills half her plate with green beans, one-fourth with the fried chicken, and the rest with yellow rice. After staring at her white plate full of food for 10 seconds, she thinks, *wait...I took too many green beans; let me put some back, and get some more chicken.* She glances at her plate for another 10 seconds, trying hard to think about how much she wants. *Wait, now I have too much chicken, and a little too much yucky rice.* After putting some of both back and getting more green beans, she looks at her portions, again. She starts to feel hot from the frustration as her Dad walks up behind her.

"Are you almost done? I'm hungry."

"Sorry Dad, it's just so hard to choose."

"Okay, please finish soon."

Dad walks into the den and watches TV for a minute.

Oh, I guess I'll just stick with what I have.

Betty glances at her plate once more.

"Okay Dad, I'm done."

Dad rushes into the kitchen as Betty begins to leave.

"Remember to look into that job I told you about."

Scared to tell him what she found, she replies, "Uh...okay."

Mom, Dad, Kathy and Betty are seated at the wooden dining room table with the chandelier on.

"I got an 80 on my history test today," Kathy says.

That's right, I did good on a test I got back today too! What was it...um...math? Yeah. Betty closes her eyes and covers her ears, trying to ignore everyone around her talking. *What did I get...90? Oh, that's right: 95. How do I say it? I... got...a...90-no, 95...on my...math...what's the word? Homework? No, test. I got a 95 on my math test.* Betty opens her eyes, and waits a minute to speak, repeating the sentence mentally over and over until there's a pause in the conversation.

"I got a...95 on my...math test."

Kathy replies, "We're not talking about tests anymore. You interrupted my soccer game I was talking about!"

Betty's chest tenses with stress. *I hate how it takes forever just to say one sentence! And they don't even care about my grade.*

"My soccer team won five to nothing!"

I have a question coming, I can feel it...come on, words! Betty looks at her meal and thinks hard. *What...state? City? Oh, town...did you p...um... pl...plum? Play? Okay.* Seeming like forever, she repeats the sentence in her head, until silence fills the room. "What town did you play in?"

Dad replies, "Huh? I didn't play today, I worked-in Riverhead, like always. Don't you know that already?"

"I meant...what you guys were-um-talking about before."

Kathy turns to Betty. "What?"

"Your sparks...no, um...sports."

As Kathy rolls her eyes she says, "Oh, in Southampton."

I feel like I have the brain of a 100-year-old.

Tired from studying, Betty drags her feet into the kitchen to do the dishes. "Boom, boom, boom" ...*what is that?* Betty looks towards the den. *Oh, music from Dad blasting his movie like always.* She gathers the plates, pots and pans together. *What else is there?* She looks around the kitchen and collects the cups and plastic containers.

Betty looks at the corner of the counter. *Oh wait, I forgot the...what's the word? Utensils. All set.* Enjoying the warm soapy water, she starts to taste salt in her lower throat. *Uh oh, a seizure could be coming.*

"Dad, please turn down the...um...TV."

"Okay, but I still need to hear it." He turns it down slightly.

Just ignore it, stay focused. Betty scrubs a lunch plate used for spaghetti. *Getting the tomato sauce off this plate takes forever. Oh no, the salty taste is increasing!* Betty's awareness gradually gets worse as her mind begins to feel like she's half asleep.

"Dad, please turn it down more! I...can't...think!"

Similar to when one is dozing off, her focus just about disappears. *Where's...the...dish drain?* She tries to put the plate into the dish-drain, when suddenly, she drops it. The sound of the crash causes Dad to come rushing in. "What happened?" He looks at the floor. "Another plate broken? Please try to be more careful."

Betty just stares straight ahead at the brick wall. She starts to mumble and rub her pointer and middle fingers together on her right hand.

"Oh, I see, you're having another seizure."

Mom rushes in and asks, "What was that crash?"

Dad points to the broken plate on the floor.

"She must have dropped it when her seizure started."

Her parents watch her as she stands, stares, and continues to mumble nonsense. They watch the clock and stand near her to make sure she doesn't fall over. After seven minutes, she stops mumbling, stares 15 more seconds, then starts to look around the room.

Mom asks, "Betty, are you okay? Can you hear me?"

"Um...what?"

"Are you okay?"

"Oh, yeah."

"You just had a seizure." Dad says.

Mom calmly tells her, "Lay down and relax, I'll finish these."

Drowsily, Betty whispers, "Okay. I...can't...think...need to...nap."

"Watch out for those plate pieces."

"Okay."

While Betty holds the counter to balance, mom sweeps the plate pieces out of Betty's walkway. She slowly walks to her bedroom next to the kitchen, lays in her beige bed and falls asleep as Mom cleans up the pieces and finishes the dishes.

About an hour later, Betty's Dad walks into the kitchen and pours out the extra ice from his beer glass. The noise wakes Betty up, but she feels back to normal, mentally. She walks into the kitchen where Dad is refilling his ice-trays and gulps down some apple juice to rehydrate.

He makes a big yawn. With heavy eyes, he asks, "Did you look into going towards a nursing home aide?"

She looks up and down a few times before saying, "Yeah. I love math and research, so I plan to um... stick with that." She tenses up, not looking forward to his reply.

"What's wrong with the job I mentioned?" His face becomes concerned.

"I googled the...um...beginner's pay, and the job you mentioned pays only twice...I mean half of the medical research job." Betty turns away, facing the wall as her eyes begin to tear up. Dad puts his hand on her right shoulder, and she turns around.

"Don't cry. I just want what's best for you, and how you're doing right now doesn't seem so good," he says as he gives Betty a big hug.

"I know, but math is what suits me best." Betty takes in a deep breath as Dad keeps hugging her.

"Okay, just keep the nursing home aide idea in mind, and look into it some more. You might like it more than you think!" He puts his glass near the sink, walks away and says, "I'm going to bed. Goodnight!"

"Goodnight."

Betty closes her eyes and thinks about what her Dad said, along with all the ways that Lyrica is negatively affecting her. *Now I don't know if I'll succeed in the future; I'm scared. If I can't do math, and I can't use my head for anything, then what is there to life?* Betty goes to her room, sits on her bed, and cries until her eyes start burning.

Fifteen minutes later, she quietly sneaks into the kitchen, takes a steak knife from the brown drawer, and puts it against her wrist. Touching a large vein, she pushes hard, back and forth. When it gets close to bleeding, she suddenly remembers

her favorite high school teacher repeating, 'Do your best, do your best...' *Um, maybe there's a way out of this, just do my best.*

The next day, Betty stays home from school, spending hours staring at the wall, as she becomes more and more worn out from crying. At 3 p.m. as Betty finishes her first meal, her mom comes home from work in a striped skirt.

"Betty, I called your neurologist today and told him you had another long seizure. He's concerned, and wants to see you soon, so I made an appointment for next week."

"Okay." Betty's eyes fill with tears.

Mom's eyes quickly widen as she asks, "What's wrong?"

"I wish I didn't have epilepsy! I have nothing good in my...what's the word...future." Betty leans her heavy head on her hands.

Mom lights a lavender candle to help Betty relax, and sits down. With a joyful voice, she says, "Try thinking positive. You're great at math, crocheting, playing the piano, and more!"

Betty cries out, "But you don't understand!" She starts to breathe quickly and heavily.

"What don't I understand?"

Staring at the floor, in a low voice Betty says, "Never mind. No one would understand unless-um-unless they could be put into my body." She starts to cry, hard.

Mom stands up and says, "Come here, sweetie. I love you."

She hugs her for what feels like 15 minutes. Betty's spirits are uplifted and soon she stops crying. She closes her eyes to focus better on what she's trying to say, as she continues to lean her head on Mom's shoulder.

"It's just that I can't use my head anymore from... Neurontin? Topamax? No, Lyrica. I forget what number I'm up to when I try to count my-um-crochet stitches. I can't use my head to calculate. I can't even decide what to do from being so mentally tired all day."

"Let Dr. Luciano know when you see him. Maybe he can put you on a different drug for your seizures."

Betty takes a step back. "Won't he get mad? I've had to get off so many different meds already from the side effects bothering me. Keppra made me behave psychotic, Vimpat-no, Ritalin-made my bone density very low, Tegretol gave me migraines...I could go on forever!" Feeling exhausted, she lays on the couch.

Mom puts her warm hand on Betty's ice-cold hand and says, "He won't get mad. It's his job to not just control your seizures, but also to make sure you're not suffering on the drug you're taking."

Betty closes her eyes for 30 seconds, trying hard to decide.

"Okay, I'll try."

"No one knows how hard it is to live feeling brain-dead!"

6 months on Lyrica, I want to get off. Remember to tell Dr. Luciano to get me off this drug.

Rushing in, the doctor shakes my hand and says, "Hey, how're ya doin'?"

"Okay."

"How've your seizures been?"

"Still once a month."

"How's your sleep?"

"Still hard to sleep."

"Okay, let's increase Lyrica to 200 mg. And keep taking Melatonin."

"Okay."

He starts quickly typing away, and Betty's chest starts to tense up. *Oh, come on, tell him! What do I say? Get me off Lyrica? Can I stop taking Lyrica? What if he gets mad? Should I?*

Very soon, Dr. Luciano quickly gets up. "Okay, great seein' ya! Take care!" He shakes Betty's hand again and rushes out of the room.

Oh, he's too fast for me! I keep missing my chance to put the words together into a full sentence! Creating a sentence is like solving a puzzle. Betty starts to get hot from the rush of emotions; stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression.

In the waiting room, Dad reads the news as Betty sits, nervous about what she's about to say—quickly bouncing her leg up and down. She looks out the window as the morning sun shines on the tall New York City buildings as she keeps trying to decide when to start talking. *The appointment is only a few minutes away; just tell him.*

"Um...Dad, I need to tell you something."

"Hold on, let me finish reading this paragraph." He reads the rest and asks, "What?"

"I want to stop taking Topamax...I mean Lyrica." The room suddenly feels like it's 100 degrees.

"Why?"

"Because it's so hard to think." She closes her eyes and pauses for a moment. "And it's not helping

me at all; I still have many long um...seizures and sleeping is hard still." Tears swell up in her eyes as she starts to sweat.

"Yes, your seizures are only getting worse. But I think it's up to the doctor to decide what to do."

Betty cries out, "No one knows how hard it is to live feeling brain-dead!"

With a confused look in his eyes, he asks, "What do you mean by 'brain-dead'?"

"Lyrica makes me drowsy...all day. The only time it's easy to think is when...there's no distraction: in bed. It's harder to sleep now." Betty takes a long yawn, and leans her head on her hand.

Dad's eyes open wide and his eyebrows go up.

"Really? Why didn't you tell the doctor this? And why didn't you tell me?"

"I've been trying so hard each month to ask Dr. Luciano to get me off Lyrica, but...what was I gonna say? He's too fast for me. Plus, I'm scared that he'll get mad at me for, um, frequently asking to change what drug I take." She starts to shiver from the cool air-conditioning blowing on her wet back.

"Yes, the doctor says it can take many months to get used to a drug and see it's full effect. Let him decide what to do. But don't worry so much; he won't get mad." He rubs her back to help her relax.

"I've been on it for...10 months? No, one year now. Don't you think it's time to try something else?"

"I'm not the doctor, but I guess one year should be enough time. Okay, when we see the doctor today, I'll let him know that you want to stop taking Lyrica, and we'll see what he says."

Betty takes a big sigh of relief, with hope that she may be able to finally stop taking Lyrica.

Coda

I am an epileptic. My seizures began in 1996 at the age of eight. The cause of the seizures is not clear, yet they began soon after my near-death experience of liver failure from Wilson's Disease in December 1995, when I had less than a ten percent chance of surviving without a liver transplant. Growing up after my transplant, I have been prescribed a variety of different epilepsy medications over time, with my complex partial seizures continuing to occur monthly with most of them. But when I turned 17 and I changed from taking Keppra to Topamax, my seizures soon became twice a month, then four times a month, some lasting 15 minutes. I opted for brain surgery in 2008, but that only stopped the seizures for six months—they returned in January of 2009. By then, I had developed insomnia. That autumn, my neurologist prescribed Lyrica, with hopes to both stop my seizures and help me sleep better. The seizures continued to occur once a month, and Lyrica made me so mentally drowsy that the only time I could think without talking my thoughts out was in bed, where it was quiet and dark with my eyes closed. Being so tired all the time, it was hard to put words together fast enough to respond in a regular conversation. After 6 months on Lyrica, deep down I knew I had to stop taking it, for I felt like attempting suicide many times with no hope for my future because of the fear of being a failure in this world. Every month when I saw my neurologist, I wanted to ask him to get me off Lyrica, but I was afraid to ask him, fearing he would get upset. I regretted not asking him to stop Lyrica after I left his office.

Currently, I am a senior at Stony Brook University, majoring in Applied Mathematics and Statistics and minoring in Writing. Luckily, my last seizure was in 2012. That was when I began taking Clonazepam, and my seizures stopped. But unfortunately, beginning in 2009 my brain injury from liver failure (and possibly from brain

surgery) has led to many psychological anxiety issues. These include insomnia, hyperventilating, physical tension, skull pain where the brain surgery was, moments where I feel like I'm living in a memory, and sensitive to fast-paced stress at a job. I have taken control of most of what I listed for the most part, but a few of them still are a big problem for me today.

I want to help people with epilepsy in as many ways as I can. Along with volunteering at Stony Brook Hospital doing research work in the neurology department, I have been fundraising towards a cure for epilepsy. I began this in June 2015, and have now fundraised almost \$31,000.

I want to spread the word on how challenging it can be to have epilepsy. Being an epileptic is not just a seizure here and there; it affects the quality of one's life overall. The medication side effects have a big effect on many people. I have experienced medications that cause migraines, psychotic behavior, facial hair growth, weight loss, clumsiness, and constant drowsiness, just to name a few. And after a seizure, many people like me feel so tired for the rest of the day, unable to do any mental tasks.



History of the Future:

www.soundcloud.com/jepilkin/hotf

By: Brittney McKoy, Catherine Studer, and Johnathan Pilkington

Key: **B:** Brittney **J:** Johnny **C:** Catherine

Intro Music

B: Hey everyone, welcome back to History of the Future - where three nerds talk about the sci-fi stuff they love. I'm Brittney.

J: I'm Johnny.

C: And I'm Catherine.

B: And we're so excited to welcome you back for our topic of the week.

J: Before we jump into things-

B: Jump through time and space?

J: Like I was saying, before we get into things let's once again define science fiction to our listeners.

C: We know you guys have heard it about a million times, but just in case we have some new listeners, we'd like to lay it out for you again.

J: New listeners? Unrealistic.

B: Hey, be positive! You know, sci-fi in its broadest definition is "literature that makes the improbable possible."

C: So hello, improbable new listeners.

B: You too?

J: So the definition of sci-fi we're working with is the one we found from the good old encyclopedia britannica. It says, "*science fiction is a form of fiction that deals primarily with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals.*"

B: And the individuals we're talking about today are totally kickass.

C: Wait, who are we talking about? I'm clueless here, what's going on?

J: We're talking about the history of women in sci-fi literature - both the writers and characters - and the upward progression they've had.

B: Ugh, I'm so hype.

C: So we've had a few, uh, *comments* to put it kindly, about how some of our listeners don't think this is a topic worth discussing. We've been told that discussing the progression of women in sci-fi would be counterproductive because, you know, there have been no progression according to these people.

B: They obviously haven't been reading a lot of sci-fi lately.

C: Or seen a movie. Or talked to a woman. Or done much of anything.

J: So let's prove them wrong. To do that, we gotta start from the beginning. You know what that means.

C: Please no. Please, guys, not again.

J: Introducing the mother of sci-fi and the monster story you all know and love-

C: Come on, every time. Please.

J: Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*.

C: Why does she come up every time? We don't need to keep doing this.

B: She's basically the mother of Sci-fi. Frankenstein actually worked to set up a lot of the popular tropes we see in science fiction today.

J: Oh yeah. Definitely. Mary Shelley published Frankenstein in 1818 at just 18 years old. Now at the time it was published anonymously.

C: Anonymously? Okay, so wait. Even at the time when she published this *amazing* story that's so progressive for women, she couldn't even do it under her own name? She had to quiet- That's nice.

J: She also was not able to write her own introduction. A new introduction was written by her at some other point and then published later.

C: Oh, wonderful.

B: Yeah, wasn't the first one by her husband?

J: Yes, her husband Percy B. Shelley the poet.

C: It looks so bad right now guys.

J: But no one would have taken Mary Shelley seriously if she had published under her real name at the time.

B: Yeah.

C: That's- that's a good point. I read somewhere that, like, a lot of the critics were so hype about it and then when they found out that Mary Shelley was a woman they were like "No, this is a terrible story all of the sudden. We've changed our minds, years later."

B: All of the sudden it has become a terrible story.

C: Yes- yes, because it's a woman. But I think by that time, she had so many people reading it and loving it that they just- they couldn't say anything bad about it because then they looked bad.

B: Yeah, true.

C: So.

B: So.

C: Sorry guys.

B: Sorry, Mary Shelley. Props to you for writing in the time that you did when you were 18 because if I published when I was 18, it would be *garbage*.

J: Women continued to write under pseudonyms even into the 20th century though, just to get published, which I also think is interesting, so.

C: It's even seen in books. Like, even in Sci-fi books a lot of women still have to write under pseudonyms, which is just kind of ridiculous. It's a Sci-fi book, it's fiction! Give the girls some power!

J: Break up the boys club.

B: Yeah, no more boys club. But you'd think that like, characters in a Sci-fi novel wouldn't have to do this anymore? But even like, Valentine in *Ender's Game* had to write under the name Demosthenes - which I think was a Greek orator - for her political blog in the story. So I'm like, it's in real life and in the fictional future that they're writing about? And that's kind of discouraging.

C: Yeah, give the ladies a chance guys. Give the ladies a chance. Got a lot to say.

B: Yeah, and you know who didn't give a lady a chance?

C: Mary Shelley?

B: Yeah, true. The Frankenstein monster immediately, like, in the story when Frankenstein the monster - sorry to come back to Mary Shelley, I know you're suffering.

C: Yeah, we can be done with this topic at any time.

B: Not yet! Okay, so. The Frankenstein monster, I think when he's threatening to ruin Frankenstein the doctor's life, he threatens to kill Frankenstein's wife, which he does later in the story before she even has any sort of impact on his life or character development. So-

C: Nice. So, you could almost say that she created the dead wife trope? Is there a name for that? You would know.

B: Yes, I would know. Why are you calling me out like this? I actually do know, it's called Women in Refrigerators. And that might be a strange name, but it actually came from a comic book from Green Lantern where he comes home after a villain's been threatening him and he finds his girlfriend *dead* and *shoved in a refrigerator*. So it's - I think the villain was trying to motivate him to do something - but anyway, a woman's death, a tragedy that happened to a woman was, like, fodder for the hero's motivation to keep being a hero? Like, I don't know, I don't understand.

C: That's not - that's not good.

J: I remember buying that comic when I was a kid and, completely unexpected, seeing that scene was terrifying. And of course it was written by a

male comic book writer, drawn by a male comic book artist, meant to be shocking - but it was highly disturbing for kids my age to be looking at that kind of material.

C: Well especially too, it's like seeing your mom shoved in a refrigerator, it's not a good thing to see.

B: Or even seeing your future self.

C: Ooh.

B: Like, when I was reading comic books when I was younger and still now, like, a lot of the female leads end up dying to, like, make a more tragic backstory for the main hero. Especially with Spiderman, even I think a new movie came out him and Gwen Stacy, but in the comics too, she was like taken by a villain, I think it was Green Goblin, and she - in the comics - was thrown off a bridge and Spiderman tries to save her-

C: Damsel in distress.

B: Yep, damsel in distress.

C: Constant. But guys, it gets better for women. In the future, now. You know we've got movies with women leads and we've got things going for us. You know, Wonder Woman and all these women that are now being included, strong female characters we can actually, like, read about and watch and learn from. There's some hope.

J: That's true. Hopefully women have moved on from being just plot devices and being actual characters.

C: Wouldn't that be wonderful?

J: Real human characters. Frankenstein was more of a real human character than most of the women in the book.

C: Nice that he got the plot development there.

B: Yeah I'm glad the monster in the story got plot development, but not the ladies.

Musical Interlude

J: Why don't we talk about a success story?

B: What do you mean? I thought pretty much all sci-fi before, like, the nineties was just riddled with mistreatment of women characters.

J: Mostly, yes. But let's talk about Philip K. Dick.

C: That misogynistic asshole? His last name is literally dick.

J: His early work? Not so great. But later on, through his friendship with Ursula K. Leguin, he was able to see the error of his ways and grow. A good example of this is in, uh, one of the early short stories that I read. He literally has a female character, her only, like, use is that someone slaps her and tells her to shut up when she's trying to interject into the plot.

C: Oh, that's not so good.

B: Yeah, RIP.

J: And it's a really great story and it's like, *why?* But later, in books like *Ubik* and things he wrote in the 70's and in the 80's the women are protagonists. They are central to the plot, there wouldn't be a plot without them and they are strong characters that aren't typical or stereotypical, so he did come a long way and Ursula K. Leguin has said that she takes pride in her responsibility for changing his mind about women in Sci-fi.

C: Funny that he only started to see women as actual people, you know, when he started making friends with them and learning about them and learning that they're not just plot devices.

J: I will say, just like a lot of writers like Harlan Ellison, Philip K. Dick did have a number of failed marriages and had some bad relationships which I think a lot of male Sci-fi writers like to just include into- into their work.

B: (sarcastic) *Wow.* I'm so surprised.

C: You're supposed to write about what you know, but maybe you should leave the relationships out of it.

J: Maybe that's all he knew. Maybe that's all he knew.

B: I have another trope I want to talk about you guys, so strap in. Let's talk about Baby Factory.

J: Okay.

C: That- that doesn't sound good. What's Baby Factory?

B: It's not good. So basically Baby Factory, in a nutshell, is when a woman is in a plot just to, like, have children. Um, she doesn't necessarily have to have contact with them, it could be like an alien sort of probing situation- which I hate. Or maybe there's a lot population like in *Handmaid's Tale*. I don't know if you've seen that.

C: *Handmaid's Tale*... I am unaware of what this is. Is it a book, a movie? What?

B: You want to go off Johnny?

J: It is now a very popular show on Hulu. Before that it was a book written by Margaret Atwood and in it she - actually she's defined this a speculative fiction, she doesn't necessarily like being classified as a Sci-fi writer - but she imagines a future in which, um, women under control of the government have children in place of a kind

of infertile society. So most women are not able to have children, the children that they do have come out stillborn so there are a select number of women that have been, uh, basically forced against their will to keep the population.

B: It's kind of a weird power dynamic because there's a bunch of women who are seen as, like, failures because they can't have children; but, these women who *can* are treated so terribly by the women who *can't*, um, because a lot of the time it's like - the husband is married to a wife of an affluent family. And so he gets his own handmaid who is one of the women who can have children. So once a month they have, like, a ritual and they read the bible and they try and make it, like, not gross but it's still gross? But he has sex with her once a month to see if they can conceive a child. And so there's a lot of animosity between the wives and the handmaidens.

C: So this whole book sounds like a no-win for women.

B: Yeah, there's no women that win. You're either training the handmaidens, are a handmaid, or a wife to a man who is super powerful.

C: So it's all bad. It's all bad.

J: Well I think one of the central themes - and I'm sure so much about the show because they're trying to keep the show going - but one of the central themes of the book is being a woman existing in this environment and at all turns resisting, I would even say the temptation for self harm or trying to get out of it in some way and just kind of, like, standing up against this in like the ways that you can. Now this was written in the 80's when - I think Margaret Atwood has said the climate was so insane about abortion and about women's rights but mainly about control of your own body. And she wanted to write something, she wanted to imagine a future in which women

literally lost control of their own bodies and what that would look like.

B: Another interesting thing to mention about *Handmaid's Tale* is the names of the handmaids. You might not know this but Johnny would know. Basically the handmaids lose their own name and become "of," then whatever the name of their husband-master is. So the main character is named Offred which is Of-Fred.

C: That's almost dehumanizing.

B: Yeah, that's the whole point, is their not seen as human, their seen as baby factories.

J: Yeah.

C: Breeders. I'm sorry I keep using that word, it sounds terrible but that's what it sounds like.

J: Spoilers, she doesn't really reveal this until further into the book. You don't really pick up on it, that all the women are named Offred or Ofjames or Ofbob or whatever and then it's pointed out and it's like, *oh my god*. They literally don't even have control over their identity at all. And I've said, you know, before that Margaret Atwood didn't really like being classified as Sci-fi when this book came out. She wanted to be classified as speculative fiction and part of me wonders too if that was because she didn't want to be seen as "breaking up the boys club" or even being involved in that, even though her work is very much so science fiction.

C: Well, you never want the male critics to come after you - so maybe there was a better chance of some women criticizing her work and actually giving her a nice review rather than all the male critics. I think there's like such a low percentage - I don't even remember the numbers - but there's such a low percentage of women criticizing

science fiction, and I'm sure back then it was almost zero women criticizing science fiction that it was probably a really smart move on her part to not enter the genre, even though it sounds very Sci-fi to me. What was the setting?

B: I think it was implied in the book but it's more so in the show, it's against - there's a war going on and a lot of men are sent off to that war and it's implied to be the reason why there was a decline in the birth rate.

C: Okay.

J: It's set in a - basically a dystopian America that looks a lot like our own, but also eerily looks like the 1950's? And it really goes from modern to, like, pre-modern suddenly. There's one chilling scene in the book and in the show in which -

C: Hey, scripts are writing too.

J: All the - suddenly, all the female characters just lose, like - their credit cards don't work and their-

B: Oh, that was so scary.

J: But her male companion is fine, like everything checks out, he's like "What are you talking about?" She's like, "None of my stuff works- why am I- what?"

B: Yeah, and it's like transferred to their next of kin that's a male.

C: That is a Sci-fi move right there. So this is definitely a Sci-fi book, she just got clever about classifying.

J: And maybe she wanted to open it up to more readers. There's some people - I'm not saying women or men exclusively - but some people, when you say Sci-fi, they just are like, "Nope, not

gonna read it." So maybe she wanted to open up to new readers to maybe, like, take a look at it too.

C: That makes a lot of sense.

Musical Interlude

B: She's like, in a room where the previous handmaid of that house had been in and she sees a carving in the closet that says "nolite te bastardes carborundorum," and that's a latin joke meaning don't let the bastards grind you down.

C: Oh, okay.

B: And it's not like real latin, it's just like a joke, but seeing that, like, carved into the closet door when she was in her worst state of mind was like encouragement from another woman.

C: So you're arguing that it's female empowerment, even in a place where you're meant to not have any power?

B: Yeah, empowerment's a strong word but I would say like, determination and independence and- what other words?

C: Survival?

B: Survival.

J: Well and speaking as the dude or whatever, but I do feel like it's a narrative that even women today can identify with in certain circumstances, in particular to their lives. Just having to be compiled against their will, but also surviving um, in the world they're in.

C: Well there are still slaves in the world right now and it's really depressing and it's sad to think about, and I feel like a lot of times we don't actually want to put any thought into it because who wants to think about slave trade and rape? It's not a fun topic to think about.

J: Or how much control you have over person, your body, you know?

C: Well look at the rules we have even right now set up, in our own country, in the US of A. It's not looking too good for women right now, but the message of "You can get through it" is pretty- that's a good message to have. I don't know if I appreciate the book so much, but.

J: The message is clear and you give thumbs up for the message.

C: Thumbs up for the message, and the female writer!

J: Ok, there you go. So yeah, that's good.

B: It's interesting that it was popular in the 1980's and it's making a resurgence now.

J: Oh yeah, absolutely. I love that.

B: So I think you can find something to get from it.

C: Maybe a bit of history repeats itself?

J: Well, at protests you see women dressing up like the handmaids which you see whenever there's like a womens march. There were women dressed up like the actual handmaids, which is chilling because when it's done well it's really creepy but it's also like, that's right. You tell 'em. So. Don't let the bastards grind you down.

Musical Interlude

J: Wait you guys, we're getting close to the end of our time and we haven't even done the listener question of the week yet.

B: Oh yeah, yeah! So here it is, you guys. "What modern female character is the best representation of women in sci-fi today?"

J: That's a good question. I haven't even thought about that.

C: Oh, I've thought about that a lot. Like, let me just jump right in here.

B: Yeah, me too. But it's so hard to find a great example because of, um - another trope, watch out! Okay, so this is a newer one, relatively. It's called Born Sexy Yesterday.

C: Why do all the tropes sound terrible? Why do all sound terrible, guys?

B: Because they *are* all terrible!

C: Can't there be a good one? Like the Dog Lives, can't that be a nice trope? The Lady Lives! I'll take the Lady Lives.

B: The Lady Lives, I love that trope. But for this one, for Born Sexy Yesterday, it's basically like - woman comes to Earth, is either an alien or a new life form, and somehow gets herself into sexual situations because she doesn't know better, is basically the idea of that one. As in like, are mermaids Sci-fi? Because I was gonna say Splash.

J: They can be- I was gonna say they can be Sci-fi.

B: I'm gonna just use it as an example. The main character from Splash, she is a mermaid, she comes out of the water and is completely nude and she's like "Oh, look how cool the land is!" And some guys looking like "Holy sh- my god you can't be out here without clothes on!" And she's like "What?" And another example is, there's a new show out for it, Teen Titans. You know Starfire from Teen Titans, she's from another planet and when she first comes to Earth she's an alien and she can learn, uh, languages by kissing people. Like, that's how language. So she makes out with Robin in the first comic then she's like "Oh, nice to meet you," and he's like "What's going on?"

C: See that is where script writing not done so great, also too, her character design - but we're not going to talk about that, we're talking about scripts.

J: What dude came up with that idea?

B: I don't know. Whose mans? She was basically written to be a love interest for Dick Grayson, AKA the first Robin.

C: The whole time too, if I remember, she was just constantly "Oh Robin!" and he was all-

B: He was being rowdy like "Get out of here" and she was like "Robin, but I love you" or like "But we have a friendship festival on my planet, oh you don't think I should hug you? That's not allowed?" That was the whole Born Sexy Yesterday.

C: Nice, so, okay. What happened to you? You're supposed to be the positive one here.

B: I know, I know. What happened?

C: Now I'm going to be the positive one and say that, while yes there have been a lot of bad representations of women throughout the past we're getting better. Let's talk about Star Wars.

B: Yes!

C: I feel like everyone can talk about Star Wars.

Musical Interlude

C: Princess Leia. Beautiful Princess Leia. She starts out as basically this gorgeous accessory, let's put her in the gold bikini, let's make her hot for all the guys and everyone has to fight over her, yada yada yada. Let's look at the new movies, guys. The new movies. She is in command, she is running the rebellion, she does not need a man in her life. Han is away! She doesn't really care. Where did

he go? It's too bad, he's not here, she has other things to do.

B: Too busy running a rebellion.

J: I almost, though, when I first saw Star Wars when I was a kid, I was like, "Dude she is completely badass." Like, she got rescued in the original one or whatever, but it was almost like, "Ugh, you're here. I might as well be reduced." You know? I mean-

C: She has her badass moments in the first- I call them first-

J: Played amazingly by Carrie Fisher.

C: Yes! Thank you Carrie Fisher.

B: Rest in Peace.

C: Yes, we love you.

B: We love her.

C: Mmhmm. While she was depicted as badass by - thank you, Carrie Fisher - her character was written to be the beautiful love interest.

J: For her brother, by the way. Can we just point that out?

B: Ugh.

C: Yes, that's a little bit disturbing. So her character was written to be the gorgeous love interest for these two men and throughout the whole time she has this banter and flirting and that's all her character was supposed to be. Now the actress did a fantastic job of building the character up from that, but that was how the character was written.

J: Absolutely.

C: It was- Leia was a poorly written character. Jump to the future where Leia is getting a second chance and suddenly, she doesn't need men in her life. Like, she can do things without them, she's in command, she's in charge.

J: She was also the only- really, the *only* female character in the original. There was all the other guys but then there was one Leia.

C: Oh yeah, and here's where we get into Mary Sues, because people have had problems with this. The new Star Wars movies have Rey, who is a female lead. She is the main character and guys have had some problems with that because she is strong, she's independent, she finds the guys and saves them multiple times. Multiple times, she saves them.

J: What could be wrong with that? Who would have a problem with that?

B: People who call up Mary Sues.

C: Maybe those listeners who said that there was no progression of women, they might have a problem with it.

J: I do not know what a Mary Sue is, I was not aware this was a thing. So this is a thing.

B: Yeah, it's actually really interesting because of where it comes from. It's actually from fan fiction written in I think the 70's or 80's about Star Trek and it was a character named Mary Sue and she was basically the perfect character. And she had no flaws and if she did have flaws they were just meant to be endearing to the audience, and she had no importance to the plot in general.

C: Now, let's just back to Rey. And discuss how she's-

B & C: -not a Mary Sue!

C: Rey is not a perfect character. Rey is dealing with trauma and past childhood incidents that she can't get over. Rey is basically trapped alone so she does need help and she has plans but they're not such great plans, so she needs support - but she's also extremely strong and powerful and she's learning on her own and she doesn't need people to teach her. She's not a Mary Sue because Mary Sues also usually have that thing where the man has to teach them how to do it right but then she's perfect after she tries. No, Rey fails a lot. But that's ok, we like to see that because we like to watch growth. It's a good thing.

J: And she seems to have a consistent narrative arc, if we're talking like this were a book I would see her as a character that actually has a narrative arch. She just doesn't come on the scene and somehow disrupt the plot without any explanation and then, no, she does, yeah.

C: She's a well written character and I can really appreciate that.

J: So then why do you think, my question is why do you think people see her as a quote unquote Mary Sue?

C: I was just gonna touch on that.

J: There you go.

C: Mary Sues can be used for one of two purposes: To describe a character who is perfect in that way. And there are Mary Sues, I like to call them trophy wives because that's usually what they are and it's not Sci-fi but you usually see it in spy movies where the man-

B: Bond girls!

C: Yes! The perfect wife, the perfect girlfriend, she can do everything. Like, you find out later she can fight perfectly too - she's perfect. A lot of times she ends up dead, but she's perfect.

J: That's not great.

B: Rest in pieces.

C: Or, Mary Sues are used for the other thing. Because we know it's not a good thing to be a Mary Sue, some male critics will like to use the word to dismiss a character who is strong and powerful and who can be looked up to by the audience. So they use it as just a dismissal of, "That's a bad character, we don't to see this, go back to Luke please." No, we want to see Rey. She's freaking awesome. We want to see her fail, and then we want to see her overcome it to succeed. You can't fail and be a Mary Sue.

J: So they're already undermining her potential before she's even had a chance to prove herself as a character. Much in the way that they do with female writers when they try to write science fiction.

B: Yep.

Musical Interlude

C: Want to talk about characters from Star Trek, guys?

J: Sure.

B: Let's go.

J: Let's do it.

C: Okay. Uhura.

B: My love. I love her.

C: She's an amazing character, right?

B: Yes.

C: But at the very beginning she's a telephone

operator. She's the only woman who isn't a sub-character, she's the only bridge crew woman, and she picks up the phone. She could also be described as a Mary Sue at the beginning because she can speak every language, she's perfect, she's beautiful, she gets to be, like, the pretty face on the show. But we have some growth in that as well. In the, I'm trying to figure out a way to say this-

B: The reboot?

C: Not the reboot. The movies that came along later.

J: Oh, the Star Trek films.

C: Yes, the actual Star Trek films.

J: Like the late 70's, I think they happened, yeah.

C: She [Uhura] kicks ass, guys. She goes in and she's like "You think I just know how to answer phones? Excuse you, I'm gonna save all your asses and walk away smiling." She's amazing. And honestly, I'm surprised they didn't get rid of her when it got popular. But I think at that point she had such a following of women and they realized that "Holy crap there's a lot of women watching this too," that they couldn't get rid of her.

J: Well for me, and I'm gonna go off on a tangent, for me it goes to the heart of Sci-fi which is speculating about our futures. So if you're writing a show, you're creating a show, you're writing a book about what the future looks like - you have to understand that there are going to be women, there are going to be minorities, there are going to be all sorts of different people, whether they're in space or on this planet. That just reflects the world around you but on a completely amplified - in an amplified way. So not including women or people of different races or whatever in these futures, you're doing them a disservice.

B: Yeah, like the winner of the Hugo award for the last three years has been a female African American Sci-fi writer. And I think hers is the first trilogy to ever win, like - all three of her books getting the Hugo award. Which is *amazing*. So yeah, it's definitely gotten much better. Sci-fi women, both the writers and the characters came from kind of a horrible, misogynistic past but look at them now. It's discussions we need to have, though - but when we have these discussions I do want to end on a positive note because, like you said, it's changing. It's getting better, and it only can get better in the future.

J: So where do you guys - let's ask. So where do you guys see Sci-fi going in the future? What have you drawn from this, from today's topic?

B: I don't know, I just hope to see more diversity because that just means more perspectives and more interesting conversations like the one we're having now. That's all I can hope for.

C: And I feel like, too- Again, to go back to Star Trek-

B: Yes, go back.

C: My home and my love. In Star Trek too you see a lot of different types of aliens and their making a lot of different races, but we don't even see the women in those cultures either. Like, let's get creative, let's take it to new levels. We have the opportunity, it's fiction, we can do anything with it. How about instead of doing these terrible, awful things we try something new and awesome and see what happens.

J: But I think that, you know, I look at science fiction comprehensively. I've always, I've never really understood why it didn't speculate about futures in which women were central. In my mind, I mean, I think that we are slowly progressing towards a matriarchy - and I think that that

would be *fantastic*. I think that that would solve so many of our problems. But you rarely see, like, speculative fiction in which matriarchies aren't organized like the ones that men run. So I just want to see more, like, creativity when women are involved in science fiction by male writers, but maybe by some female writers too. Like, break up this idea that women have to still maintain the same roles they do in this society. Let's see what they can-

C: Well, female writers are going to play with it more. They're going to take it to the next level and say, "Okay, well, we've seen this before and you know what? We didn't really like it. So let's try something new." And a lot of times that's how we get some really interesting things like Star Trek. That was new! Star Trek was new, it had never been done before, nobody knew if it was gonna work, they thought it was gonna fail, and look where it is now. Now, we have some strong female leads taking charge and it's awesome.

J: I love that you see Star Trek as like, or science fiction and Star Trek, as like very hopeful. I'm so, like, science fiction is the dystopian future that we have to we warned about so that we can prevent, I'm such a pessimist but I love Sci-fi so much, but yeah.

C: Like I said, pop culture is supposed to be, I like to look at is as, very cheerful and happy and progressive. That's what a lot of the messages are in the shows I watch. They're moving forward. Star Trek and Star Wars are huge for me because they're always about, like, taking back what is ours and maybe exploring the future and finding new things and discovering new ways of doing things that are better than they were before. I like to look at it that way.

J: That positivity, I feel like, is missing from a lot of science fiction currently being written-

C: And also in this podcast a lot of times, sorry about that.

J: -and possibly this broadcast but I'm, yes. I'm with you.

B: But yeah, I think there's worth in exploring fully the mistakes of the past and misogynistic place we came from but I think there's also a lot of worth in moving forward and exploring what could be. So, don't beat down on people who are hopeful.

C: Well said.

J: Well said.

B: Wow, thanks guys!

J: Good job.

B: Well, I guess it's about time we wrap it up. This has been History of the Future.

C: Um, I think we're going to title this episode Women in Sci-fi: It used to suck, but it's getting better.

B: That's apt.

J: I like that. I like that a lot.

B: Ok, this has been History of the Future - Women in Sci-fi: It used to suck, but now it's getting better. And we're your hosts, I'm Brittney.

J: I'm Johnny.

C: And I'm Catherine.

B: And thank you guys so much for listening.

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Author Bios

Victoria Noriega

More Than a Footnote

Victoria Noriega grew up in Dallas, Texas and now lives in New York City. Currently a junior at Pace University, she is majoring in arts & entertainment management. Understanding how important a mastery of efficient and persuasive writing will be to her career, Victoria collaborated on two summer research projects with one of her English professors when he asked if she would be interested in working with him. “More Than a Footnote: The van der Horsts, Anne Frank, and World War II Resistance” is the result of the second of those two efforts. Victoria enjoys music and sports, and is especially fond of football, concerts, and the study of world history.

Jasmine Thomas

Tech and My Reading and Writing Literacies

Jasmine Thomas is an 18-year-old first-year student at Seton Hill University. She is in their five-year accelerated physician assistant program with a psychology minor. Jasmine lives in Los Angeles, California with her loving family. She enjoys drawing, dancing, and reading. Jasmine hopes to spread the message of kindness and love to the world through medicine and service.

Matthew Long

Policy Brief on Mental Health on U.S. College Campuses

Matthew Long is a sophomore public policy and administration student at James Madison University. A Richmond native, Matthew is passionate about formulating and implementing adequate mental health policy in the United States. His work includes serving as the director of operations at Dukes for Cathy Copeland for Delegate, as well as holding administrative roles in both Camp Kesem and Delta Phi Epsilon Professional Foreign Service Fraternity. He will be attending JMU’s Global Affairs program in Washington D.C. during the spring semester of 2020.

Meg Matthias

Gender Definition and Expressions of Sexuality in Janelle Monáe’s “Pynk”

Meg Matthias is a junior at Miami University in Ohio studying creative writing, professional writing, and English literature. Her research interests include feminist film criticism and early twentieth-century playwrights (and occasionally the intersection of both). She is an only child, but asks that you not hold it against her.

Christine Kovacs

Tough to Swallow

Christine Kovacs graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Bachelor of Arts in writing and a minor in philosophy in 2018. At Grand Valley, she found her passion exploring modes of communication beyond the written word. She is particularly interested in audience-centered design, and believes that the term “writing” should not be limited to the alphabetic mode. Now, Christine is located in Denver, Colorado, and works as a technical “writer,” but true to her roots, she creates not only written collateral for her company’s clients, but videos, infographics, and any other mode she finds best delivers the intended message.

Barbara Hoefer

Lyrical

Barbara Hoefer has been writing about her epilepsy experiences in personal journals since 2006, and now wants to share what it’s like to have this disease. She is a senior at Stony Brook University, majoring in applied mathematics and statistics, and minoring in writing. She began writing short personal stories about life with epilepsy one year ago. Barbara has also proofread a Calculus IV textbook, and she currently is the head co-author for a Numerical Computing textbook. She is working on her first book based on how epilepsy affects one’s entire life. Barbara Hoefer lives in Long Island, New York.

Brittney McKoy

History of the Future

Brittney McKoy is a junior at North Carolina State University majoring in English with a concentration in language, writing, and rhetoric. She also currently works at the North Carolina State University Tutorial Center as a Writing Consultant for undergraduate students.

Catherine Studer

History of the Future

Catherine Studer helped write and record the podcast History of the Future. At the time the podcast was made, she was working on her Bachelors of Arts in biology with an emphasis on technical writing at North Carolina State University. Despite her major, she, along with Brittney and Johnathan, have a love for science fiction, which contributed greatly to the podcast. Their love for writing and the creative process is also reflected in their work.

Johnathan Pilkington

History of the Future

Johnathan is an undergraduate at North Carolina State University seeking a bachelor’s degree in English with a concentration in creative writing. His interests include philosophy, art history, and, of course, science fiction. When he is not reading sci-fi novels, he indulges in science fiction literary theory (to which he hopes to one day make a valuable contribution of his own). He is particularly interested in writing about the intersection of futurism and identity.