

Katie Sullivan

November 2, 2019

English 110 A

Professor Emerson

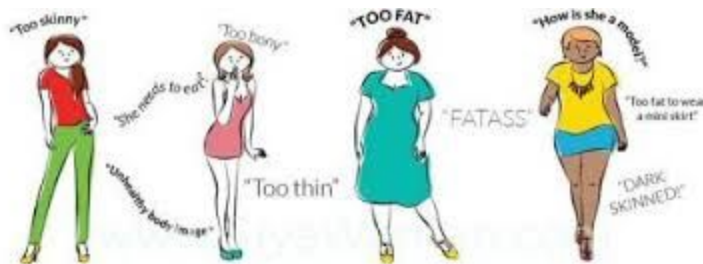


## The Toxicity Behind the Selfie

When I think of the world's biggest problem, I think global warming or inequality, racism, and hunger. All of these things cannot simply have one solution, at least not one that's possible in our world's current state. Granted, as much as I'd love to live in pre- Reese Witherspoon *Pleasantville* (Ross, 1998) idealistic world of utter perfection, that is simply not the case. However, one problem that comes to mind with a feasible solution is the impact of media on the minds of teenagers and young adults. Although seemingly minor compared to the colossal scheme of the world, it still has a lasting impact on much of the world's future leaders and important figures. The media and social media, as well as the newfound culture it has created seriously impact the health of future generations, both physically and mentally. This is supportfully argued in the article titled "Camera-Ready: Young Women's Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness" by Higgins, Widman, Nesi, and Choukas-Bradley in which the varying authors discuss the societal pressures forced upon the young women (and men) of today's society. Yo-Yo Ma's essay, "Necessary Edges: Arts, Empathy, and Education", on the importance of including art in education and emotions mixing with reason. The last essay titled "

The Future of Science... Is Art?" by Jonah Lehrer discusses how for science to progress, art is a quintessential aspect

If you give it some thought, this concept seems crazy: an application for smartphones that allows you to constantly see photos of other people, have them judge you and vice versa, and have addicting aspects to keep the user hooked such as "likes". That is quite literally all Instagram is. With the rising of "Tik Tok", "Snapchat" and photoshop apps like "Facetune", more and more stereotypes are becoming an aspect of society and is only increasing the pressure to look good on today's teenagers. Granted, I use nearly every social media platform almost everyday, so I can attest to the fact that they are, in fact, causing more "lower body esteem, greater depressive symptoms, and a host of other maladaptive outcomes" as well as "body comparisons with peers may provide women with a "standard" toward which to strive...previous research suggests that social media may create a compelling context for online body-related



social comparison "(article). Although a science related solution to this aspect of the media would be to rewire young people's brains to not

compare and contrast everyone else to themselves, that simply is not ideal. Art would be called in from the draft to broaden the scope of what is considered the "ideal" body. Just as the culture of our judgmental and cruel world was adapting to the thought of a "not ideal" body type, it got taken down a peg or two.

Yo-Yo- Ma has found himself put into labeled stereotypes so that society is able

to

process the copious amounts of people it controls. In the essay “Necessary Edges: Arts, Empathy, and Education”, Ma states that we “live in such a measuring society, people tend to put a person in a box they can put on their mental shelf”(5). People tend to see one aspect of another’s life and immediately slap a nametag on it and store it away. For example, someone could see me dancing to a song and label me as a “dancer”, but there is so much more to my existence and persona than the fact that I may dance, but by default I am labeled. This is how social media has trained our minds. We can see one photo of a girl smiling in a cafe, drinking coffee, and think she is happy and her life is perfect, picture perfect if you will. In reality she could be truly unhappy, and struggling to make ends meet or be failing classes. The ideal of perfection is constantly thrust into our minds as we aimlessly scroll for minutes and hours that the idea is engraved into our minds. This translates into real life as well, have you ever found yourself getting ready and presentable to run to the grocery store? Or putting on a good outfit to get gas? Or go to your 8 am class? It may be because it is wired in our brains to stay looking photo ready, and to keep the “Instagram persona” of perfection and permanent smiles. This idea is touched upon in the aforementioned article titled “Camera-Ready: Young Women’s Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness”, that people (especially women) tend to prepare for any social event so that in the case of an impromptu photo opportunity, they will be ready and good to be seen through the screen.

Soon to be paragraph about lehrers confusing af essay tbd

I feel as though my writing of this essay is kind of paradoxical, since I myself am a self aware social media addict, but that also gives me the view from the inside, minus

the spies. I know the effect media has on the mind of young people, especially women. Art could be toyed around with to help resolve this decade old issue, possibly by changing the way people post, as well as what people post. Perhaps society will become aware of its own self destructive tendencies to strive for perfection in any way possible and drop the act. Maybe we could all use a little break from socials, and focus on global warming or inequality, racism, and hunger, and every other issue facing this world that is far more important than the amount of likes your coffee shop post received.

Good job! I really like the topic you picked for your essay. As of right now you are over on the word count so maybe try to re-read your essay out loud and try to see what you can cut out or shorten. Try to add how art can exactly help fix this topic. I feel like you had some really good quotes in here. But as you said you need to add lehrers essay and quotes (it is confusing ahah). I think you have a really good foundation down but theres just little things that need to be added and subtracted like adding a clear thesis and then cutting out sentences that don't really need to be there to follow the word count.

Lila

Naysayer excersize

- 1) Art can solve the issue behind the toxicity of social media and the culture it produces. Using different mediums such as books, movies, or even

artwork in a museum can help to show people how bad social media culture is for your physical/mental health

- 2) One could argue that social media does not effect your health and that people can quit the usage of it anytime they please.
- 3) To this I challenge. Social media has proven to be addictive with aspects such as “likes” and the endless scrolling and entertainment. Social media harms physical health by placing unmatchable stereotypes and body goals on the minds of young teens. This pressure on their growing minds can lead to things like anxiety and depression, as well as body dismorphia and eating disorders in hopes to achieve the perfect body.

I think that you have a really good point, I do remember you saying that you wrote this very late a night which I think made you say exactly what you point was. My biggest suggestion would just make sure with Professor Emerson if you can have a more casual tone to this paper. It is super funny to read and also makes it easy to read through

but I am not sure if you have to have a formal tone in this paper. Overall, I really like the issue that you're talking about, I think it is really important in today's society. You do a really good job of adding in anecdotes which help to further your point. My other suggestion would be to make more rounded examples by adding some more to your examples.

[http://daniellevitin.com/levitinlab/printmedia/2008-The\\_Future-Seed\\_Magazine.pdf](http://daniellevitin.com/levitinlab/printmedia/2008-The_Future-Seed_Magazine.pdf)

<https://elishaemerson.unepportfolio.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/400/2018/09/YoYoMaNecessaryEdges.pdf>

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.une.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=403f90e5-f9c6-43ee-b6bc-da7202904ee8%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=2018-50198-001&db=pdh>

<https://www.healththoroughfare.com/medicine/social-media-increases-the-risks-of-mental-conditions-in-teens/15267>

<http://www.songtre.com.vn/news/gioi-tre/body-shaming-toi-ac-tren-noi-dau-cua-nguoi-khac-41-16141.html>