

B-

Portfolio

Cover Letter

Through out the semester, several problems presented themselves during the process of putting together my research paper. The one problem that served as my largest obstacle was that of finding an angle to write my paper from. While I am quite clearly against eating disorders, and so are the sources I consulted, I struggled with organizing my sources and presenting the material in a way that would not look like a simple report. ✓ I feel that the approach I chose was successful. By addressing the fact that all of my sources had the same basic ideas on eating disorders, but also including that some sources focused more on one specific theory than other sources, I was able to demonstrate the major arguments of why people develop eating disorders. I am pleased with the way this is portrayed in my paper, especially considering how challenging this was for me in the beginning of my process. Another area of difficulty for me was in sustaining the importance of my topic from one paragraph to another. I feel that I was successful in keeping the main idea of my paper at hand but was not able to do the same for the significance of the issue of eating disorders.

My wordiness within papers also seems to be keeping them from having a better sense of flow. All though I was able to correct this situation in a few places through editing and revising, there were still some areas where I have run on sentences but when I attempted to correct them, the information did not come across correctly. The last paragraph of the research paper demonstrates this. Another example of my wordiness can be found in my autobiography, more specifically, the third sentence of the opening

✓
paragraph. I tend to spew out lengthy sentences whenever I am writing on my emotions or opinions, but I feel that this sentence would not accurately portray my thoughts on the topic without the excess of words.

The fact that the road I took in creating my final writing portfolio was a bumpy one seems to me to be apparent in the final portfolio itself. While some of my work, the final research proposal and paper in particular, still contain some holes, I feel that this is because of my lack of experience in writing a large research paper rather than because of a lack of work or effort.

If nothing else, my research journal serves as a looking glass into the process I went through in creating my final product. Since the topic of eating disorders is one that has been overdone to a point, I struggled to find a more refreshing way to present it and I think that this shows in my journal. I was always focused on the research and creation of every one of the projects presented within this writing portfolio and feel that I have done a better job in organizing my information and thoughts for this project more than I have on any others in the past. Therefore, for my first major freshman writing project, I am pleased with the overall results, even with the holes.

There is no Place like Home

I definitely had my reservations about moving away from Spokane. I knew that I would miss my friends, but I was looking forward to starting a new life and escaping my past. I was eleven years old and the thought of moving to a town that I had never been to before was a little scary. The most frightening part was that I was going to live with my mother. The two of us are so much alike in the way that we are pushy and stubborn, that when I look back on it, I am convinced that I must have been out of my mind to voluntarily place the two of us under the same roof. Who knew that this would prove to be one of the best decisions I would ever make?

This new town was the place where I got into some trouble, made many friends, as well as a few enemies, and became part of a community. It was the place where I grew into myself; it was where I grew up. Even though I lived in Spokane for eleven years, that little town beneath the ski hill up north where one can always hear the coins from the casino dropping will always be my home.

It was not long after moving when the teenage years arrived. I was thirteen and in the eighth grade when I had my first kiss with my first big crush. Some say that they were excited or even terrified at their first kiss, not me. I was too embarrassed to feel anything; embarrassed by the fact that our braces had just made that clinking metal sound together. It was not what one would call a magical moment, but it was memorable nonetheless.

Before I knew it, I was fifteen going on sixteen and I was just beginning to date my big eighth grade crush. Those were the days when I would get butterflies in my stomach just from seeing him walking down the halls, and that was a great feeling. It was an exciting year full of firsts, including the first presidential election where I was old enough to care. It was November of 2000; the Clinton administration was winding down to an end and then came the election. "Bush or Gore, who's it going to be?" That was the question on minds across the nation, even in my little town where the biggest politics *me* of all had to do with gossip about the mayor and bringing home football titles. While the battle between the red and blue states went on for days, all eyes were on Florida and the infamous recount.* That was the week when every one of my teachers decided that the week's work load should be in relations to the news, making the weight of the 2000 election unforgettable.

The year 2000 was a big one for me not only because I had a new president, but I also had a steady boyfriend, I got my license, and I got my first car. That SUV and I had some rough times together. Unfortunately, so did a street sign, a rock wall, a couple of garbage cans, and a handful of birds. Down the road a little ways, I feel in love. Her name was Wanda, Wanda the Honda that is. Wanda was my new, and much more gas efficient, car. My driving skills, however, did not get an upgrade. I learned that the hard way after a cat, a rabbit, a car, and a speeding ticket for going thirty over the limit.

Besides driving fast, I was living fast. High school was great and it flew by before I even realized it was over. Graduation also came and went in a hurry, so I quickly set out to truly enjoy my new found independence. I did the whole, get a tattoo

and travel around Europe, thing. Then it was time to leave my comfortable small town world, and set out for the unknown.

That brings me to where I am right now, college. Nothing is as scary as I had originally thought it would be; I am actually very excited to begin this new chapter of my life and I finally know who I am. I think that I carry with me a small piece of every year from my past; just enough to keep me from forgetting what helped shape the person who I am today.

I am still the young girl who manages to find embarrassment in life's simplest mishaps from time to time, as well as the teenager who gets a rush from taking chances in life, and yes, I am still an awful driver. As poor of a driver as I am, Wanda is still by my side and together we wait for Fridays to go see that big eighth grade crush.

* The New York Times, "The 2000 Election; The Recount; Bush Holds Slim Lead Over Gore as Florida Recounts," By David E. Rosenbaum, Page 24, Column 1, Friday November 10, 2000.

Research Proposal

Eating Disorders have been around for ages and are having physical and mental repercussions on their victims. These life-threatening diseases are a growing problem among America's young women and there lies a challenge in the treatment for the eating disordered because there are people who either do not recognize that they have a problem, do not want to know that they have a problem, or are scared to ask for help. What are some of the main causes of eating disorders in our society and why do so many young women fall victims to them? There are many variables when it comes to why an individual has developed a problem and it is important to take a closer look into the minds of those who have been afflicted.

Eating disorders are still a serious problem and as a society we should take a look into the mind set of people with distorted body images, who do not realize how quickly their health is deteriorating. Most importantly, we should look at the development of eating disorders within an individual while examining the nation's obsession with weight and size. Hillel Schwartze, author of "Never Satisfied," states, "What causes the most damage is not the actual weight itself, but the fear of weight." ("Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic") Schwartze's words may be confronting one main issue of eating disorders, the human fear of weight gain.

Eating Disorders:

The Beginnings of Disordered Eating, Thinking, and Living among Young Adult Females me

When there are between five and ten million women in the United States suffering from the same type of illness (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 1), is it not safe to say that there is an epidemic at hand? When there are girls admitting that they would rather die from complications caused by anorexia or bulimia rather than pass their ideal weight on the scales (Gordon, Richard A. 140), then something within American culture is seriously wrong. Eating disorders have been an ongoing struggle with millions of American young women and girls for decades, and that does not seem to be a secret within the general public, but what about the stories behind the disorders? What has caused millions of women, many who are well-educated and otherwise seemingly healthy, to develop such severe physical conditions (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 15)? There is not exactly a large fan-base for eating disorders amongst the American population, and certainly not one within the medical field, but physicians and authors on the topic do debate over the exact *causes* of the disorders and what serves as a trigger to the onset of an eating disorder such as Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia. /gon

These are disorders that can infect anybody. These disorders do not care what age, race, or sex you are, but they are predominantly more common among young, Caucasian, females. Over ninety percent of those who suffer from an eating disorder are female and eighty five percent of the cases begin while the victim is going through their

adolescent years (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 30). Eating disorders are documented more often in Caucasian women than in any other major race within the United States and some think that the reasoning behind the numbers could be that since the majority of the upper and middle class are comprised of Caucasians, they may have more resources available to them for treatment (31), and without treatment, there is no documentation of the disorder. Another idea is that African American cultures value a larger female body more than any other American ethnicity. What happens then, to an African American girl who assimilates into a Caucasian culture (31)?

What exactly is it about the American popular culture of the twenty first century that is driving so many young women to distort their bodies in the gratuitous manners that they do? Even the “flappers” of the 1920’s displayed signs and symptoms of eating disorders with their thin bodies and gaunt faces, but that, unfortunately, was one “craze” that did not disappear with the passing of a roaring decade. Now, those who have eating disorders appear in greatest numbers among female teenaged athletes, female college students, and hard working businesswomen (Silverstein, Brett PhD 18). Therefore, some of America’s youngest and most hard-working females are falling into dangerous lifestyle patterns that come with developing an eating disorder.

Not only are eating disorders affecting the lives of women from coast to coast, but the amount of reported cases has been increasing rapidly. It has been reported that during the 1980’s, Bulimia was so common around college campuses it was practically considered to be a fad and not much thought was given to them by the student community. According to Richard A. Gordon, the author of *Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic*, the attitudes towards Bulimia and other eating disorders across U.S.

college campuses have been described as, “comparable to pot-smoking.” This presents a great problem when something so detrimental that affects a young person’s health so rapidly is overlooked and placed low on the level of medical concern as to be compared with something such as smoking Marijuana, that does not have the same, fast-acting and physically harmful affects that serious eating disorders do (Barrett, Jennifer Ozols).

With eating disorders becoming more and more “acceptable” or perhaps, tolerated, among today’s young females, the chances of intervention are much less likely and this may be leading to what some have come to call the Copy Cat Syndrome (Thompson, Kevin J. 120). The Copy Cat Syndrome is exactly as it sounds. As some young women see the physical affects of an eating disorder as appealing within someone in their life, they are more likely to pick it up. One might say that eating disorders can reach a point of contagiousness if given the right circumstances. Not all sources on the topic of eating disorders, however, will agree that the lifestyle of disordered eating is something that one person can simply “catch” from another person.

When it comes to determining what it is exactly that causes young women to develop symptoms of disordered living, thinking, and especially eating, many sources will agree (Marcontell, Gordon, Field, Lemberg) that there cannot be one single root from which all eating disorders grow, but that there are certainly other basis on which these disorders can be derived from. The major question presenting itself in modern medicine concerning eating disorders is, what are the most influential factors that are leading young women to develop such illnesses? It is difficult to find any source that will rule out one of the major arguments for what causes eating disorders, because most address

and acknowledge all of the major suggested causes. There are, however, sources who will stress the strength of one cause over that of another.

One of the three most heavily discussed theories on which eating disorders are developed is based on the anxiety that a young female faces in her own home, from unexpected life tragedies, stress, and from the pressures she receives from those who are closest to her (Gordon, Richard A. 98). This is the theory that places more emphasis on the psychological aspect of eating disorders, rather than the physical viewpoint. One source has suggested that eating disorders really are not about food at all by stating, "The thoughts and behaviors having to do with eating, weight, and body image are symptoms of deeper psychological conflicts and issues that drive the eating disordered behavior" (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 30).

If a girl is raised in a home where either the parents or siblings often make an issue out of weight, size, or body image, the child is more likely to develop some sort of distorted body image when it comes to her own body, which then has great potential to develop into a full blown eating disorder (Field, Alison D.). Aside from the direct pressures at home, many young women experience hardships such as the loss of a friendship, the loss of a loved one, and extreme stress. College women are especially vulnerable to many of the feelings that may lead to depression or a state of mental discomfort after leaving home. Some of these feelings may branch from dealing with many new stressful situations such as balancing a busy schedule, or dealing with sexual relationships and as Marcontell suggests, eating disorders are often times indicative of other underlying problems just as a fever indicates physical problems such as the flu.

Marcontell also mentions that while looking at family structures in the development of an eating disorder, it is also important to take into consideration genetic factors. When parents are overweight, the child is often ashamed and will sometimes develop a fear of following in their parents' footsteps and look towards eating disorders as the answer to their weight problems, which they may or may not already have.

A second and lesser known theory of what triggers the onset of eating disorders is that of women striving to fit in and be successful in what they view as a man's world. The women who fit into this category are not only looking to take on the male dominated professional world, but to also gain a sense of control in their lives when it seems like there is nothing much that they have physical control over (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 23). With more and more women climbing to the top of the business ladder every year, many have found it difficult to handle the intense level of male competition and have therefore had to fashion ways in which they can feel more competent.

With women searching for a respectable status and feeling of empowerment, many are taking on new roles that are accompanied by new and smaller bodies. One author has described the attempts by women to appear less feminine by cutting their hair and starving themselves in order to appear more "mannish and shapeless" as "the period of female reduction" (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 15). This theory also suggests that many women are turning to eating disorders as a way of having control over some aspect in their life. Dr. Debora Marcontell stated that women who have developed an eating disorder typically have very high needs for control and often feel as if they have very little say in what goes on in their lives. Therefore, by being able to control their bodies, even if by means of an eating disorder, they feel better equipped to take on other daily

challenges that they may face, especially in a high stress work or educational environment.

A third popular theory on why eating disorders occur, and one of the most discussed among literary sources and within the media itself, is based upon the idea that Hollywood, the media, and society as a whole is creating a national image of what beauty is and how society, specifically young women, should act, dress, and most importantly in this context, the way they should appear. Even the stars of "reality" television seem to be becoming better looking and more toned as the shows progress and become more popular and full of sex. While so many Americans are becoming somewhat fanatical over diet pills and get-thin-quick deals, none of it comes without a price. ✓

With American consumers spending over thirty billion dollars every year on dieting products (Gordon, Richard A. 152), it would be easy for some to say that society is putting a great deal of pressure on Americans to lose weight and it is having the hardest impact on young women. With products and fashion magazines constantly using the same type of beautiful women in their ads, not only are they successfully selling their products, but they are simultaneously planting an image of female perfection within the minds of millions of Americans. Everyday Americans are subjected to images of beautiful young women being used as "sexual and seductive charms in marketing" (Lemberg, Raymond) with figures that not only are often times digitally doctored, but also unattainable for many women. As an American grows up with a television in their home and is constantly exposed to images portrayed as perfection and has been raised in an environment surrounded by pop culture, one may get exhausted of the relentless assault of commercial imagery which promotes thin body types as the ideal figure. good #3

Although a large part of the nation's concern with weight in the past decade has been due to the rising number of obese adults and even more concerning, the increasing number of overweight children, the documented amount of eating disorders among young women is on the rise (Field, Alison E.). While obesity is a dangerous epidemic spreading throughout the nation, some sources would argue that because there is so much negativity being placed on people who are overweight, it is casting somewhat of a stigma over anybody who is not healthy looking, or in other words, not fat (Field, Alison E.). All of this could possibly be imposing an actual fear of gaining weight. While celebrities and Hollywood seem to take most of the public heat for promoting the idea of thinness as the one of the musts in American Beauty, it is not without good reason.

While all three theories of why women develop eating disorders tend to be acknowledged by many sources (Silverstein, PhD, Field, Gordon, Marcontell, PhD) there is one that is openly discussed more often by the public. Perhaps it is simply because the media is an easy target for placing the blame on what drives women to want to change their bodies by such extreme measures as eating disorders, but those who are under the Hollywood spotlights and behind the cameras tend to be the ones who are most frequently credited with causing insecurities among American women and teens alike. Television, newspapers, magazines, internet, and radio, these are the mediums that inform Americans of what is going on in the world. All of these sources of media serve as a form of entertainment, as well as showcase the nation's latest fads, fashions, and often reveal what has become known in Hollywood as the new "it girl." As the nation watches celebrities grow and shrink in size, whether it be through television series' or in the tabloids, the negative focus is almost always on the person who has gained weight.

The new television show, *Fat Actress*, is a useful example of a celebrity under the microscope because of her weight. The star of the new series, Kirstie Alley, has been promoting her show by openly discussing her battle with weight. Perhaps not everybody sees the harm in this, but if one were to pay close attention, it would become apparent that Alley constantly puts herself down for being overweight by making “fat jokes” and references that her weight is destroying her life. While there is nothing wrong with the actress wanting to lose weight because her size is putting her health in danger, she is putting others young women and teens in danger of developing an eating disorder by the way she is choosing to go about it. In an interview by Matt Lauer from the *Today Show*, Alley comments on how she is too fat for a boyfriend and specifically uses the term, “when I get skinny” (Alley, Kirstie). Rather than saying that she wishes to lose weight, Alley is implying, whether she knows it or not, that she wants to be *thin*. This choice of words combined with the idea that it is difficult to find romance after putting on extra weight may be installing a fear of weight gain into young female minds.

While supporters of the family and stress based theory of eating disorders, such as Marcontel, or the gender power struggle theory, such as Silverstein, make valid and points that do in fact apply to thousands of women with eating disorders, not all young women are exposed to the environments that are favorable for those theories. Most young women, however, are exposed to one type of media or another which all too often ^{more} portray not only the ideal woman, but every woman as beautiful, successful, tan, and most importantly very thin with curves in all the right places if anywhere at all.

It does not seem likely that the media is going to change its portrayal of women anytime soon. In fact, two authors did a study on two groups of women who have been

viewed as some of most beautiful women in the country for decades. The two groups of women were Miss America hopefuls and *Playboy* playmates. The study showed that since the 1960's, both groups of women became increasingly thinner and less curvaceous (Gordon, Richard A. 120). If this study is serving as a look into the future of what women are expected to look like in America, then the evolution of high-profile women's bodies will continue to get smaller and more shapeless, while sending out the message to the rest of society that *this* is the way women are supposed to look. The study shows what direction the idealized, not the average, female body is heading in, and the likelihood of seeing or hearing about women who are not the size of models portrayed in an all around positive light is dwindling.

While pressures from society and the media are a leading cause of the development of eating disorders (Gordon, Richard A. 95), the other theories should still be taken into consideration when looking at the individual causes of young women who have developed symptoms of disordered eating. Since it does not look likely that as a society we will be able to completely eliminate eating disorders, one of the best things that we may be able to do to help prevent the development of eating disorders is better educate the youth of America. Simply educating them on the health risks has not done enough; people should be better prepared for the social, family, and professional pressures that they will most likely come across at some point in their lives. Without a better system of education and support for the millions of women who turn to eating disorders in our country, the numbers may very well keep climbing until complications due to untreated eating disorders become the biggest killer of American females.

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* citing: cite, then use pg #'s only until new source introduced.

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Eating Disorders:

The Beginnings of Disordered Eating, Thinking, and Living among Young Adult Females

good opening

When there are between five and ten million women in the United States suffering from the same type of illness (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 1), is it not safe to say that there is an epidemic at hand? When ~~there are girls out there~~ admitting that they would rather die from complications caused by ~~Anorexia or Bulimia~~ ^{surpass} rather than ~~pass~~ their ideal weight on the scales, then something within our culture is seriously wrong (Gordon, Richard A. 140). Eating disorders have been an ongoing struggle with millions of American young women and girls for decades, and that does not seem to be a secret within the general public, but what about the stories behind the disorders? What has caused millions of women, many who are well-educated and otherwise seemingly healthy, to develop such severe physical conditions (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 15)?

is this G's idea? How do you stand on this? Agree?

There is not exactly a large fan-base for eating disorders amongst the American population, and certainly not one within the medical field, but physicians and authors on the topic do debate over the exact *causes* of the disorders and what serves as a trigger to the onset of an eating disorder such as Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia.

good

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These are disorders that can infect anybody. These disorders do not care what age, race, or sex you are, but they are predominantly more common among young, Caucasian, females. Over ninety percent of those who suffer from an eating disorder are female and eighty five percent of the cases begin while the victim is going through their

adolescent years (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 30). Eating disorders are documented more often in Caucasian women than in any other major race within the United States and some think that the reasoning behind the numbers could be that since the majority of the upper and middle class are comprised of Caucasians, they may have more resources available to them for treatment, and without treatment, there is no documentation of the disorder. Another idea is that African American cultures value a larger female body more than any other American ethnicity. What happens then, to an African American girl who assimilates into a Caucasian culture (Marcontell, Deborah, PhD 31)?

What exactly is it about the American popular Culture of the twenty first century that is driving so many young women to distort their bodies in the gratuitous manners that they do? Even the "flappers" of the 1920's displayed signs and symptoms of eating disorders but that, unfortunately, was one "craze" that did not disappear with the passing of a roaring decade. Now, those who have eating disorders appear in greatest numbers among female teenaged athletes, female college students, and hard working businesswomen (Silverstein, Brett PhD 18). Therefore,

Not only are eating disorders affecting the lives of women from coast to coast, but the amount of reported cases has been increasing rapidly. It has been reported that during the 1980's, Bulimia was so common around college campuses it was practically considered to be a fad and not much thought was given to them by the student community. According to Richard A. Gordon, the author of *Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic*, the attitudes towards Bulimia and other eating disorders across U.S. college campuses have been described as, "comparable to pot-smoking." This presents a

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the major suggested causes. There are, however, sources who will stress the strength of one cause over that of another.

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If a girl is raised in a home where either the parents or siblings often make an issue out of weight, size, or body image, the child is more likely to develop some sort of distorted body image when it comes to her own body, which then has great potential to develop into a full blown eating disorder. (FIELD, V) Aside from the direct pressures at home, many young women experience hardships such as the loss of a friendship, the loss of a loved one, and extreme stress. College women are especially vulnerable to many of the feelings that may lead to depression or a state of mental discomfort after leaving home, dealing with many new stressful situations, balancing a busy schedule, and dealing with sexual relationships and as Marcontell suggests, eating disorders are often times indicative of other underlying problems just as a fever indicates physical problems such as the flu.

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A second and lesser known theory of what triggers the onset of eating disorders is that of women striving to fit in and be successful in what they view as a man's world. The women who fit into this category are not only looking to take on the male dominated professional world, but to also gain a sense of control in their lives when it seems like there is nothing much that they have physical control over (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 23). With more and more women climbing to the top of the business ladder every year, many have found it difficult to handle the intense level of male competition and have therefore had to fashion ways in which they can feel more competent.

With women searching for a respectable status and feeling of empowerment, many are taking on new roles that are accompanied by new and smaller bodies. One author has described the attempts by women to appear less feminine by cutting their hair and starving themselves in order to appear more "mannish and shapeless" as "the period of female reduction" (Silverstein, Brett, PhD 15).

This theory also suggests that many women are turning to eating disorders as a way of having control over some aspect in their life. Dr. Debora Marcontell stated that women who have developed an eating disorder typically have very high needs for control and often feel as if they have very little say in what goes on in their lives. Therefore, by

being able to control their ^{body}, even if by means of an eating disorder, they feel better equipped to take on other daily challenges that they may face, especially in a high stress work or educational environment.

A third popular theory on why eating disorders occur, and one of the most discussed among literary sources and within the media itself, is based upon the idea that Hollywood, the media, and society as a whole is creating a national image of what beauty is and how society, specifically young women, should act, dress, and most importantly in this context, the way they should appear. Even the stars of "reality" television seem to be becoming better looking and more toned as the shows progress and become more popular and full of sex. While so many Americans are becoming somewhat fanatical over diet pills and get-thin-quick deals, none of it comes without a price.

With American consumers spending over thirty billion dollars every year on dieting products (Gordon, Richard A. 152), it would be easy for some to say that society is putting a great deal of pressure on Americans to lose weight and it is having the hardest impact on young women. With products and fashion magazines constantly using the same type of beautiful women in their ads, not only are they successfully selling their products, but they are simultaneously planting an image of female perfection within the minds of millions of Americans. Everyday Americans are subjected to images of beautiful young women being used as "sexual and seductive charms in marketing" (Lemberg, Raymond) with figures that not only are often times digitally doctored, but also unattainable for many women. As an American grows up with a television in their home and is constantly exposed to images portrayed as perfection and has been raised in

an environment surrounded by pop culture, one may get exhausted of the relentless assault of commercial imagery which promotes thin body types as the ideal figure.

Although a large part of the nation's concern with weight in the past decade has been due to the rising number of obese adults and even more concerning, the increasing number of overweight children, the documented amount of eating disorders among young women is on the rise (Field, Alison E.). While obesity is a dangerous epidemic spreading throughout the nation, some sources would argue that because there is so much negativity being placed on people who are overweight, it is casting somewhat of a stigma over anybody who is not healthy looking, or in other words, not fat. ^(Field) All of this could possibly be imposing an actual fear of gaining weight. While celebrities and Hollywood seem to take most of the public heat for promoting the idea of thinness as the one of the musts in American Beauty, it is not without good reason.

While all three theories of why women develop eating disorders tend to be ^{good} acknowledged by many sources (Silverstein, PhD, Field, Gordon, Marcontell, PhD) there is one that is openly discussed more often by the public. ^{Maybe} it is simply because the media is an easy target for placing the blame on what drives women to want to change their bodies by such extreme measures as eating disorders, but those who are under the Hollywood spotlights and behind the cameras tend to be the ones who are most frequently credited with causing insecurities among American women and teens alike. ^{cite} Television, newspapers, magazines, internet, and radio, these are the mediums that inform Americans of what is going on in the world. All of these sources of media serve as a form of entertainment, as well as showcase the nation's latest fads, fashions, and often reveal what has become known in Hollywood as the new "it girl." As the nation

watches celebrities grow and shrink in size, whether it be through television series' or in the tabloids, the negative focus is almost always on the person who has gained weight.

Take the new television show, *Fat Actress*, for example, ^{is a useful} ~~the~~ star of the new series, Kirstie Alley, has been promoting her show by openly discussing her battle with weight. Perhaps not everybody sees the harm in this, but if one were to pay close attention, it would become apparent that Alley constantly puts herself down for being overweight by making "fat jokes" and references that her weight is destroying her life. ^{good}

While there is nothing wrong with the actress wanting to lose weight because her size is putting her health in danger, she is putting others young women and teens in danger of developing an eating disorder by the way she is choosing to go about it. In an interview by Matt Lauer from the *Today Show*, Alley comments on how she is too fat for a boyfriend and specifically uses the term, "when I get skinny" (Lauer, Matt Interview). ^{? correct along}

Rather than saying that she wishes to lose weight, Alley is implying, whether she knows it or not, that she wants to be *thin*. This choice of words combined with the idea that it is difficult to find romance after putting on extra weight may be installing a fear of weight gain into young female minds.

While supporters of the family and stress based theory of eating disorders, such as Marcontel, or the gender power struggle theory, such as Silverstein, make valid and points that do in fact apply to thousands of women with eating disorders, not all young women are exposed to the environments that are favorable for those theories. Most young women, however, are exposed to one type of media or another which all too often portray not only the ideal woman, but every woman as beautiful, successful, tan, and most importantly very thin with curves in all the right places if anywhere at all.

It does not seem likely that the media is going to change its portrayal of women anytime soon. In fact, two authors did a study on two groups of women who have been viewed as some of most beautiful women in the country for decades. The two groups of women were Miss America hopefuls and *Playboy* playmates. The study showed that since the 1960's, both groups of women became increasingly thinner and less curvaceous (Gordon, Richard A. 120). If this study is serving as a look into the future of what women are expected to look like in America, then the evolution of high-profile women's bodies will continue to get smaller and more shapeless, while sending out the message to the rest of society that *this* is the way women are supposed to look. The study shows what direction the idealized, not the average, female body is heading in, and the likelihood of seeing or hearing about women who are not the size of models portrayed in an all around positive light is dwindling.

While pressures from society and the media are a leading cause of the development of eating disorders (Gordon, Richard A. 95), the other theories should still be taken into consideration when looking at the individual causes of young women who have developed symptoms of disordered eating. One of the best things that we as a society may be able to do to help prevent the development of eating disorders is better educate the youth of America. Simply educating them on the health risks has not done enough; people should be better prepared for the social, family, and professional pressures that they will most likely come across at some point in their lives. Without a better system of education and support for the millions of women who turn to eating disorders in our country, the numbers may very well keep climbing until complications due to untreated eating disorders become the biggest killer of American females.

yes - are these factors mutually exclusive?

Yuck!
Fix for better
Flow

Q: Antonio?

Research Proposal Draft.
-printed from Bridge

Eating disorders have physical and mental repercussions on their victims and these life-threatening diseases have been slipping further under our culture's radar while at the same time, becoming more of a problem among our nation's youth.

Eating disorders have been around for ages and our nation has developed programs and institutes that are designed to aid in the rehabilitation of those who are afflicted with one of the many forms that an eating disorder can take on. While these programs are here to help, it can be a difficult process because there are people out there who either do not recognize that they have a problem, or they do not want, or are scared to ask for help. What are some of the main causes for eating disorders in our society and why do so many young women fall victims to them? There are many variables when it comes to why an individual has developed a problem, whether it be with undereating or overeating, and it is important to take a closer look into the minds of those who have been afflicted.

Eating disorders are still a serious problem and as a society we should take a look into the mind set of people with distorted body images, who do not realize how quickly their health is deteriorating, and most importantly, look at the development of eating disorders within an individual and our nation's obsession with weight and size. Hillel Schwartz, author of "Never Satisfied," states, "What causes the most damage is not the actual weight itself, but the fear of weight." ("Eating Disorders: Annotated") Schwartz's words may be confronting one of the main issues of eating disorders, the human fear of weight.

~~EST~~ draft (printed from
Bridge)

I definitely had my reservations about moving away from Spokane. I knew that I would miss my friends, but I was looking forward to starting a new life. I was eleven years old and the thought of moving to a town that I had never been to before was a little scary. Who knew that this would prove to be one of the best decisions I would ever make?

It was the place where I got into some trouble, made many close friends, as well as a few enemies, and became part of a community. It was the place where I grew into myself; it was where I grew up. Even though I lived in Spokane for eleven years, that little town beneath the ski hill up north will always be my home.

It was not long after moving when the teenage years arrived. I was thirteen and in the eighth grade when I had my first kiss with my first big crush. Some say that they were excited or even terrified at their first kiss, not me. I was too embarrassed; embarrassed by the fact that our braces had just made that clinking metal sound together. It was not what one would call a magical moment, but it was memorable nevertheless.

Before I knew it, I was fifteen going on sixteen and I was dating my big crush from the eighth grade. Those were the days when I would get butterflies in my stomach everyday at school, and nothing beats that feeling. That year was a big one for me. I was dating, I got my license, and I got my first car. That SUV and I had some rough times. Unfortunately, so did a street sign, a rock wall, a couple of garbage cans, and a handful of birds. Down the road a little ways, I fell in love. Her name was Wanda, Wanda the Honda that is. Wanda was my new, and much more gas efficient, car. My driving skills, however, did not get an upgrade. I learned that the hard way after a cat, a rabbit, a car, and a speeding ticket for going thirty over the limit.

High school was a blast it flew by before I even knew it was over. Graduation came and went in a hurry, so I quickly set out to truly enjoy my new found independence. I did the whole, get a tattoo and travel around Europe, thing. Then it was time to leave my comfortable small town world, and set out for the unknown.

That brings me to where I am at right now, college. Nothing is as scary as I had originally thought it would be; I am actually very excited to begin this new chapter of my life and I finally know who I am. I think that I carry with me a small piece of every year from my past; just enough to keep me from forgetting what helped shape the person who I am today.

I am still the young girl who manages to find embarrassment in life's simplest mishaps from time to time, as well as the teenager who gets a rush from taking chances in life, and yes, I am still an awful driver. As poor of a driver as I am, Wanda is still by my side and together we wait for Fridays to go see that big eighth grade crush.