

Project 3: White Bunny

White Bunny (Sophie Jerwick)
English 603B: World Literature with Professor Bump (Red Hawk)
March 9, 2016

WORD CHOICE, CONCISENESS, DOCUMENTATION

Part I

Ethics defined by, "avoiding causing unjustified harm"¹ is not enough. Merely avoiding harm by turning a blind eye has the potential to perpetuate oppression. Instead, ethics must be defined by an active approach to decrease and heal suffering.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:44 PM

Comment [1]: P

By behaving ethically, one fulfills an obligation to improve the wellbeing of those being treated immorally. To stand by the wayside and focus solely on the moral code your own life, while others suffer, is unethical. For example, during the Holocaust, many Germans watched while Jews and other racial minorities were discriminated against as the Nazi regime gradually increased its systematically racist legislation. By the UGS definition, a German could placate him or herself by thinking that they are not the ones "causing unjustified harm." Their passivity and apathetic decision to do nothing contributed to the horrors of the Holocaust. Their inability to advocate for the persecuted was, by definition, unethical. The more virtuous choice is to stand-up, speak up, and take action in order to fight unjustified harm, not merely avoid it.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:44 PM

Comment [2]: W

The UGS workbook continues, "There is more to ethics than choosing not to harm others. . . . Ethics is also about promoting the good."² However, promotion is still not enough. While advocacy is a socially just action, it is not inclusive of fighting oppressive structures. Promotion implies only doing good-works, not moving to break down unethical issues. Within the example of the Holocaust, the term "promotion" has no place. There was no way to promote Jewish business or Jewish culture without defying the German government. Those who took truly ethical actions did not "promote the good," they fought the bad. Taking in families fleeing Nazis, sneaking children out of Jewish ghettos: acts that are much more about defying injustice than "promoting good." Promotion seems to imply that we can only take ethical, positive steps forward in the position that we are in, as opposed to pushing against the root causes of the issues that we face.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:46 PM

Comment [3]: C

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:47 PM

Comment [4]: GOOD

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:48 PM

Comment [5]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:48 PM

Comment [6]: W S

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:49 PM

Comment [7]: W S

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:51 PM

Comment [8]: W O: LOGIC?

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:51 PM

Comment [9]: S

¹ Deni Elliot, "Ethical Challenges: Building an Ethics Toolkit," in *Bump's Course Anthology*, ed. Jerome Bump (Austin: Jenn's Copies, 1978), A142.

² Elliot, "Ethical Challenges: Building," A142.

Furthermore, the workbook claims, "In the range of choices, what is "ethically prohibited" are those involving "intent to harm, neglect, lack of care for consequences, lack of attention to others, vice, and voluntary ignorance."³ This is not inclusive of passivity. The decision to behave selfishly in an environment possessing the resources to create a more ethical world is also ethically prohibited. Ruling out a "lack of attention to others" is close, but does not seem to be quite synonymous with empathy. To be knowledgeable, but still choosing not to act is wrong. In *Moral Dystopia*, Lawrence Lessing, Harvard law professor, claims, "There are so many ways to rationalize doing the easy thing. And it's really easy for us to overlook how our inaction to step up and do even the simplest thing leads to profoundly destructive consequences in our society."⁴ To stand on the sideline while injustices occur is not moral. To only "promote" other instances of fairness instead of confronting cruelty is not enough. To be knowledgeable, but passive, lacks empathy: an easy, yet unethical choice.



⁵A more proper definition of ethics is based in activism. Including both avoiding causing unjustified harm, and actively seeking to end unjustified harm. My personal values reflect this definition. It is my obligation as an able-bodied, well-off, Grade-A-educated person to use the privilege and opportunity that I have been born into to help others. This desire to make change for the benefit of all beings showcased itself after we watched *Earthings*.

³ Elliot, "Ethical Challenges: Building," A142.

⁴ Maureen Dowd, "Moral Dystopia," in *Bump's Course Anthology*, ed. Jerome Bump (Austin: Jenn's Copies, 1978), A115.

⁵ "Warsaw Ghetto," Wikispaces, 2016, accessed March 9th, 2016, <http://svdp-annefrank-8.wikispaces.com/Warsaw+Ghetto?showComments=1>

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:52 PM
Comment [10]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:52 PM
Comment [11]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:52 PM
Comment [12]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:53 PM
Comment [13]: PR

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:53 PM
Comment [14]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:54 PM
Comment [15]: PR

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:12 PM
Comment [16]: W C

My decision to become vegan after watching this documentary is a candid example of my activist values. I was given not only a piece of information about the suffering of another being, but also a direct way to attempt to alleviate that suffering. Of course, I leapt at the opportunity to help (yes that was a bunny pun.) It was not merely avoiding causing unjustified harm, by keeping the same diet I had before, without increasing my animal-product intake. It was not promoting the good, like teaching others about the sustainable benefits of an animal-free diet. It was not an avoidance of “ethically prohibited actions,” like merely paying attention to the documentary. It was a decision to change my lifestyle in order to live more ethically: an active choice, and then transition, meant to make the world a place with less suffering, even if it meant less dairy-based ice cream for myself; A small, personal sacrifice meant to better the big picture.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:55 PM
Comment [17]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:13 PM
Comment [18]: W C

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:56 PM
Comment [19]: W S

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:56 PM
Comment [20]: W

Part II

My personal values reflect this empathy and activism. I believe that every step, every contribution has the potential to make a difference. The tower motto, "Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Will Set You Free,"⁶ is only functional to me when paired with progressive movement, because apathy to me is synonymous with containment. Choosing to be idle when given the truth traps me, and it is action that sets me free.

In the larger picture, I believe truth is defined by personal narrative. A person's story and pure emotions are indisputable. Statistics, laws, and analysis cannot overturn the way a living being feels. Learning these fundamental truths sets me free from ignorance. Personal experiences, both my own and others', give me another piece of the world to widen my view.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:57 PM
Comment [21]: GOOD

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:57 PM
Comment [22]: W

When these narratives are instances of suffering, whether it is hearing a child describe how difficult it is to continue daily life after her mother was deported, or watch an animal be skinned alive, my empathy for these truths invokes a need to take action. Standing up for change, instead of just sitting on this information, is my freedom.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:57 PM
Comment [23]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:58 PM
Comment [24]: W

I believe that I can make the strongest impact fighting sexism, because it is my core narrative. Although multiple social issues are incredibly important to me, whether it be the Black Lives Matter movement, or LGBTQ rights, being a woman is my central identity. Other suffering that I feel empathy for is confronted in movements that I can stand in solidarity with. However, I cannot speak on behalf of the core narrative from my own personal experiences. I can be an active ally for beings from all different backgrounds, but the area in which I can make the most difference is feminism. As a feminist, I can tell my own truth, my own narrative of being treated unfairly for my gender, and act to reverse this culture for all women.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:58 PM
Comment [25]: W

Culture is an imperative term to use here, because legislation, media, expectations and rhetoric do not all contribute to my experiences of sexism. We live in a sexist culture

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:59 PM
Comment [26]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 2:59 PM
Comment [27]: W

⁶ John 8:32, "Bible," in *Bump's Course Anthology*, ed. Jerome Bump (Austin: Jenn's Copies, 1978), A75.

where no single policy prescription or campaign can make a complete reversal. Systematic change, of both culture and strategy, is required.

“One camp subscribes to the famous quote often attributed to though leader Peter Drucker: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Other folks believe that pitting one against the other creates a false dichotomy and that we need both. Interestingly, I’ve yet to find a strong argument that strategy is more important than culture. I think that everyone agrees *in theory* that “who we are” is at last as important as “what we want to achieve.”⁷

It is who we are and what we have experienced that forms to what we want to achieve. From personal example, losing points in debate rounds because my voice wasn’t as deep and assertive, and therefore preferable, as my male competitors, or being nicknamed “sweetie” or “darling” by male attorney’s in the office I clerked in over the summer, was the personal truth that opened my eyes to the action necessary to set myself and other women free from this subjugation.

This passion connects me to all other women, half of our population. This issue spreads from beyond treatment in professional life, to sexual assault, domestic abuse, reproductive rights, political power, and beyond. I cannot think of a facet of life where sexism does not play some part. Anywhere that culture exists so does this issue, because our society is built around it.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:14 PM

Comment [28]: W C

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:01 PM

Comment [29]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:01 PM

Comment [30]: PR

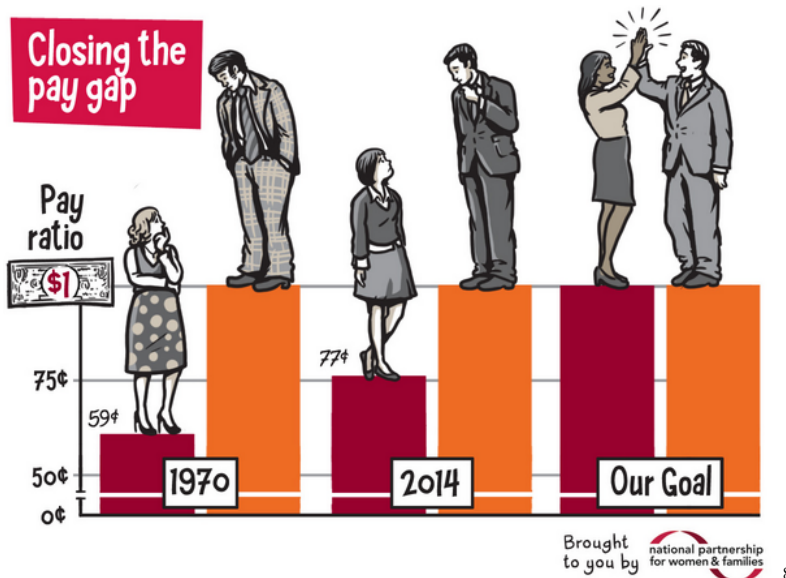
Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:02 PM

Comment [31]: W

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:02 PM

Comment [32]: W?

⁷ Brene Brown, "Daring Greatly," in *Bump's Course Anthology*, ed. Jerome Bump (Austin: Jenn's Copies, 2012), 43.



My leadership in this area is based in my inability to stay quiet when confronted with such truths. I possess the efficacy to challenge the status quo even when I am acting alone. The story of the boy and the starfish, cited in my previous blog, accurately illustrates this feeling,

"Son' the man said, 'don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!' After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said...'I made a difference for that one.'"⁹

My outspoken personality and unreserved views may induce judgment from some, but to me, these thoughts are a small price to pay for the chance that my words and decisions can make some impact. I walk around with a bright orange, "ABORTION ON DEMAND AND WITHOUT APOLOGY" sticker on my water bottle every day, because even if it gives me some side-eye from those who don't agree, maybe it will get someone else to think twice about their views on reproductive rights. I push myself to be a confident leader, student, and person, in hopes that I can break the mold of society's expectation that women should be more docile than their male counterparts. I volunteer,

⁸ "Closing the Pay Gap," The Stream Blog, 2016, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/the-stream/the-stream-officialblog/2014/4/8/on-equal-pay-daymanyurgefurtheraction.htm>

⁹ Loren Eisley, "The Starfish," in *Bump's Course Anthology*, ed. Jerome Bump (Austin: Jenn's Copies, 1978), 751.

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:03 PM
Comment [33]: W

learn, and organize, in hopes that an hour of my time can make some sort of a ripple effect. If I can encourage others to care as much as I do about this topic, then maybe I can spark an exponential change.

I am empathetic towards truths of suffering, using activism to set us free.

Word Count With Quotes: 1751

Word Count Without Quotes: 1420

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:04 PM

Comment [34]: GOOD

Jerome Bump 3/15/2016 3:04 PM

Comment [35]: C cut?