



Reflective Essay: A Reasonable Purpose

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Our Purpose

We, as human beings, are made to engage and interact amongst each other. Personally speaking, oftentimes, there is little will to surround me and most people. There is a lack of authenticity and lack of substance that emerges from most individuals. These thoughts and feelings established towards certain individuals are mostly deflective and self-generated thoughts. I also carry qualities and traits for why being around people can be draining and predictable sometimes. Based on the socialization, within our given settings, we all create bias and categorize other individuals through subjective stereotypical tropes and archetypal personality types. We can grow to become like dark clouds, swelling with abhorrent taste toward others. An individual's engagement with another is tunneled through societal crafted bias, which may lead to high tension, and ultimately, ends with disengagement. This is a problem because the principle of engaging as a human being has been muddled and lost worldwide. Continuous confusion on human interactions becomes more evident, especially from the standpoint of expanded criminalization by judiciaries to exert their power in courts, as well as an American globalized infusion of its patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity.

Upliftment and collaboration amongst one another are key components in sustaining different institutions, of which we all exist and are a part. When creating different sectors for civilization, these are some of the main characteristics that have historically shown how fulfilled and successful we can all be. Pinpointing this issue is significant because increased judgment, extortion, and shaming of individuals, particularly to or from men, diminishes their ability to uphold their life's awaited destiny.

As a man in the criminal justice system, there is constant pressure to pursue a passion and preserve its purpose. Whether you are breaking the law or protecting the law, men on all sides have given themselves a purpose. That is the first part of this excerpt, finding out why it is crucial to identify what drives your existence. When there is little will to engage, there is little purpose. We find the reasons for why we exist through the engagement of others. If you have little to no clue what it is that you want to do in life, then you find it more difficult to feel content with yourself. Though, there is a difference. We find reasons to live by engaging with others, but solely existing around others just to be associated with them should not be the goal.

One main example of this can be seen through gang violence amongst men in lower impoverished communities. The book *The Gang's All Queer* by Vanessa R. Panfil (2017) looks at how men in gangs come to terms and begin to understand both their masculine and gay identities. These particular groups are built on the foundation of current members and members previously deemed lavish and cool. In this case, members of gangs exist to be associated with other gang members of their group. They aren't interacting with one another to build on and find new fulfilling reasons to live. Although navigating the queer identity in general, through all facets of life, is very challenging and complex, the main takeaway from this is how masculinity is constructed for these men. Masculinity tells the men, in this context, that they have to adopt a hegemonic way of thinking and behavior, rather than being allowed to conduct themselves with free will.

Men in these sorts of gangs have had to assimilate to a form of masculinity that has dominated and been established everywhere

throughout. This kind of masculinity is hegemonic masculinity. This term was coined by Antonio Gramsci. It describes the idea that society has agents who are dominated and consent to this authoritative rule without the use of force by a single leader. It's a collective consciousness that is coerced and forced through the consensus of groups. In the early stages of this term, hegemony was solely for referencing capitalistic gain and control. Hegemonic masculinity is a practice and a social identity that subordinates anyone who does not exhibit certain male-attributed traits. The majority of people believe men should be muscular, heterosexual, tough, stoic, and dominant. These are the generalized notions that come to mind when thinking about the entire group that consists of men. Nobody is committing a crime by not acting "like a man." But, in the lens of hegemonic masculinity, behaving in an opposite manner is frowned upon since the majority of people have a consensus of masculinity for men as a hegemonic agent. This term is good for understanding how one society may have dominating ideals that are significant to them as opposed to another place. It's important to distinguish what the dominant ideals of most members of its community are because those will be the hegemonic agents in effect. This term does minimize the exertion and influence individuals can have to make an impact that affects the majority groups in that society. This idea is instilled and forced upon us by the consensus of the dominant group, so any individual who opposes this will not be heard or understood. The term hegemony is derived from Marx's influence, with capitalism being a hegemonic agent. Marx believed that capitalism was a conflict derived from the majority group, who perpetuated capitalism as the main economic way of living.

On a grand scale, there is peer-induced pressure on all men for a variety of reasons, but specifically, within the criminal justice system, there are hegemonic agents in place. The example mentioned above, on men in gangs, shows a social construction of what it means to be defined as a man, meaning made for these men who ensue in violent acts, coming head to head with those who represent and defend the law. Is this part of their main purpose in life? I don't really believe so, but do I believe acts that they do commit are heinous and uncalled for. It's mainly part of proving their worth through acts that characterize their identity. In typical cases, a man finds his purpose in the practices of hegemonic masculinity. These hegemonic practices heavily influence those who are in confrontation with the law. As a judge or lawyer, your duty is to abide by and carry out the laws in place. The laws made are based on a patriarchal model, which is reflected across all our major institutions in the United States. This model dictates that the man, also considered the head of household, is superior to their partner. For those who uphold and protect the law, patriarchy and the hegemonic forces that drive it, are a main indicator that highlights their desire to pursue a purpose. A man has to prove himself in this world and oftentimes, it is hard to do so when any behavior not characterized as hegemonic masculinity is shunned. A judge or a lawyer who defends the law has to do so without any emotional impact or sentimental constraints. An insensitive nature, especially towards plaintiffs and defendants, is depicted as a masculine hegemonic trait.

On the opposite side of this, men who are chased and persecuted by the law enact their behavior within the tropes of hegemonic masculinity. Men who are a part of gangs, embezzlers, thieves, and murderers, are just a few examples of hegemonic agents at play when being identified and labeled as criminals. Defiance is another characteristic of hegemonic masculinity. Men who are defiant to the point of breaking the law and getting exposed for it showcase how impactful hegemonic masculinity is in our country. Many men find their purpose through the embodiment of their assigned gender. All the aforementioned traits of hegemonic masculinity leave little discrepancy to indulge in any behavior that is not considered as such. Finding what drives our purpose in this world through our behaviors should not be confined by the standards and notions of traditional masculinity and the system of patriarchy.

Judicial tenure shows the assimilation of judges in a courtroom, oftentimes by giving lengthier sentences and harsher penalties. Their longevity in the judicial justice system inherits what they would deem a power in the most righteous form. This “power,” possessed by a judge is the most outdated and egocentric form of upholding the law. Strength and power are also characteristics that generalize notions of hegemonic masculinity.

Let’s strip this back a little and look at how we’ve come to be socialized within our respective cultures. We find meaning in life through the interactions we have with each other, especially growing up in our families from infancy to adolescence. Internationally, violence within family dynamics is seen as a recurring problem. Criminalization and punishment for crimes regarding family violence have been held to a higher standard, but the crime themselves never plateau. In the book *Perceptions of*

Family Violence by Esperanza Camargo Bernel (2009), the author assesses a regional area within central Mexico to see if family violence there is influenced by the patriarchal structure in America. If it is not the system of patriarchy, then perhaps it is hegemonic masculinity. Between these inquiries, Camargo (2009) wants to understand if this family violence ensues from the historical economic dependency women have had on men. Her findings showed that more violence among families happens when one parent makes the sole decisions for the family. When both parents had equilibrium in their decision-making, it was less likely to be violent in the household.

Globalization is the spread of information, goods, technology, and jobs across cultures and national borders. If historically, women are deemed to be dependent on men, then globally, every institution and facet of society is infused with men as superior beings. Camargo's (2009) study shows just one national location that is heavily impacted by the patriarchal and masculine hegemonic notions of America. There are countless nations and countries left unmentioned, which mirror the effects places like central Mexico have experienced because of the impact from America.

Strength, defiance, and power are some of the characteristics used to describe this notion of hegemonic masculinity. It is to be mentioned again that even if you are not displaying these traits fully and effectively, there are still ways to find a purpose in living. Whatever that is, it should just be genuine. With this sought-out purpose, you should not hurt yourself or others, and never limit the possibility of finding a new purpose. Some individuals, particularly men, are coerced and molded into patterns of behavior and a system of beliefs that hinder their sought-out individu

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purpose. Some individuals, particularly men, are coerced and molded into patterns of behavior and a system of beliefs that hinder their sought-out individual experiences. Don't limit your abilities to what is deemed acceptable. Surprise people and always make them expect the unexpected. This is a parting of light words to anyone who's ever felt empty without a purpose in life, from one life wanderer to another, we're still here to seek and look around.

Instead of emphasizing the expansion of criminalization for future prospective felons, let's attack it at the source. Look at family dynamics, how children are raised to be from their parents, and how they're socialized in their given settings. There are many generations of families who never acquired the opportunities to excel in their own given lives. Of the many families who have struggled for decades and centuries, gaining capital to propel your next family's generation is often impossible, but very important. In the last fifty years, children from families involved in violence caused a huge turnover rate for the industrial prison complex and its prisoners. The school-to-prison pipeline for kids is just as alarming as ever, with ever-increasing incarceration rates nationwide. My hopes for future legislative reform include a program that cuts this transition of children going from public schools into the prison system. A way for the criminal justice system to be involved is to not only oversee someone's right-to-counsel but also have preventative measures for it. With little will, there is little creation. And with little creation, there is no will to explore the lack thereof.

References

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