Camie Olsen

Professor Maureen Mathison

Writing 3870

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**Comments/Corrections will be highlighted and bolded.**

Jacob Walkingshaw, Fish Care, September 3rd

The social practices Jacob partakes in through the community of tropical fish care would include internet etiquette (or “netiquette”), plenty of hours of careful research, and possibly even traveling to conventions, just to name a few. Saltwater fish care is meticulous work which requires a lot of space within one’s environment, a little bit of time each day, and finances to run especially large and extravagantly displayed aquariums. In order to run a successful multi-layered ecosystem, the owner of the aquarium would have to familiarize themselves with chemistry, to make sure the pH balance in the water is livable, as well as biology to know how these extremely different organisms can cohabitate and how they might best function, such as living in schools or living alone, dietary needs, water temperature, lighting, and so forth. Because it is a niche hobby, enthusiasts flock to the internet to share their experiences as well as their questions regarding fish care; the difficult part is deciphering which advice is best suited to your needs. It can be very tricky and with how fragile and complex an ecosystem can be; it’s likely for first-time owners to start and then restart their personal projects multiple times. **Very strongly written opening paragraph. I think you did a good job here, it flows easily.**

The social power dynamics involved in this hobby are certainly diverse and difficult to dissect. Because it is a rather uncommon hobby, aquarium enthusiasts frequently meet online through forums. Forums can help one decide who might be more knowledgeable, as it is common for forums to implement a point system; those with more seniority and experience who frequently give advice would have the most points, and those who are new to the forum would need to participate in order to earn those points. However, because not everyone is an internet mogul, someone who might be very experienced by studying saltwater biology might not be listened to over an individual who has been breeding and selling fish as a job for some time. Both are good sources of knowledge, but because the latter has the online reputation, his word would be more credible under the scrutiny of online discourse. Because Jacob is so new to the saltwater fish care community, he might have trouble deciphering who is giving trustworthy advice and who is not. Another angle to consider would be the power dynamics between Jacob and a pet store employee. Because saltwater fish are very fickle, what may work for one individual may end up killing another’s ecosystem; pet stores and individual sellers and breeders have different resources and goals. For example, pet stores sell items which cater to the more casual hobbyists. They often sell tanks which are much too small for the fish they claim they can hold in order to make money, simply because people are unaware of the fishes’ housing needs. And because the lifespan of fish seems rather small in comparison to our own, one would not question the death of a fish in an environment that supposedly fits their needs. When customers are informed, the power dynamic changes; should more people become aware and start paying for the correct-sized tanks, the pet store would need to change their inventory to better reflect cruelty-free standards. This would help improve the quality of the aquarium’s life and perhaps promote longevity of the fish as well. **Good job with incorporating the concept of power into the discussion. I think this is a key element of our coursework, and you used really clear examples to illustrate how this works.**

**Feedback**

1. **I enjoy your writing style greatly, I think you have a good tone and voice. Your essay was easy and enjoyable to read.**
2. **The essay does end a little abruptly. I would add in a couple of sentences to summarize and conclude.**
3. **I would recommend adding some of our course readings into your essay. I believe they are required according to the grading rubric. I think course readings would help reinforce your points.**
4. **Overall, I think you did a nice job here. A little more fleshing out in regards to your argument would be beneficial, but it’s clear you have a good understanding about what you’re writing.**