

Washington

New cycling scandal confession

10/11/13



Tony Abbott today confessed to using a potent cocktail of testosterone, steroids, human growth hormone, hair restorer, fire retardant, miconizolamene, caffeine and banana-peel extract to enhance his performance. He apologised to his supporters, and expressed regret that the cocktail didn't work.

Year 10

Lesson Three

Using Language to Persuade

- a. Students to analyse the following articles using the following four steps for analyzing persuasive language in persuasive texts:
 - i. Circle the main contention
 - ii. Identify the main tone of the article
 - iii. Underline or highlight any examples of persuasive techniques you can identify
 - iv. Consider the effect these techniques might have on readers

The New York Times

May 4, 2013

A Child's Wild Kingdom

By JON MOOALLEM

IN a couple of weeks, my daughter will turn into a dolphin. Right now, she's a fox. Last year, she was a cricket.

That's just how it works at the Montessori school where she goes. Instead of "4-year-olds" and "5-year-olds," or even "preschoolers" and "kindergartners," each class is given an animal name and, at the end of every school year, the children graduate into being a different species entirely, shape-shifting like spirits in an aboriginal legend.

It can be a little alarming to step back and realize just how animal-centric the typical American preschool classroom is. Maybe the kids sing songs about baby belugas, or construction-paper songbirds fly across the walls. Maybe newborn ducklings nuzzle in an incubator in the corner. But the truth is, my daughter's world has overflowed with wild animals since it first came into focus. They've been plush and whittled; knitted, batiked and bean-stuffed; embroidered into the ankles of her socks or foraging on the pages of every storybook.

Most parents won't be surprised to learn that when a Purdue University child psychologist pulled a random sample of 100 children's books, she found only 11 that did not have animals in them.

But what's baffled me most nights at bedtime is how rarely the animals in these books even have anything to do with nature. Usually, they're just arbitrary stand-ins for people, like the ungainly pig that yearns to be a figure skater, or the family of raccoons that bakes hamantaschen for the family of beavers at Purim. And once I tuned in to that — into the startling strangeness of how insistently our culture connects kids and wild creatures — all the animal paraphernalia in our house started to feel slightly insane. As Kieran Suckling, the executive director of the conservation group Center for Biological Diversity, pointed out to me, "Right when someone is learning to be human, we surround them with nonhumans."

SCIENCE has some explanations to offer. Almost from birth, children seem drawn to other creatures all on their own. In studies, babies as young as 6 months try to get closer to, and provoke more physical contact with, actual dogs and cats than they do with battery-operated imitations.

Infants will smile more at a living rabbit than at a toy rabbit. Even 2-day-old babies have been shown to pay closer attention to "a dozen spotlights representing the joints and contours of a walking hen" than to a similar, randomly generated pattern of lights.

It all provides evidence for what the Harvard entomologist Edward O. Wilson calls "biophilia" — his theory that human beings are inherently attuned to other life-forms. It's as though we have a deep well of attention set aside for animals, a powerful but uncategorized interest

waiting to be channeled into more cogent feelings, like fascination or fear.

Young children have been shown to acquire fears of spiders and snakes more quickly than fears of guns and other human-manufactured dangers. And in this case, the researchers Judith H. Heerwagen and Gordon H. Orians offer one logical, evolutionary explanation: if you are an infant or toddler spending a lot of time on the ground, it pays to learn quickly to fear snakes and spiders. Fear of big predators like bears and wolves, on the other hand, doesn't kick in until after age 4, around when the first human children would have begun roaming outside of their camps.

Children also fixate on animals in their imaginative lives. In her book "Why the Wild Things Are," Gail F. Melson, a psychologist at Purdue, reports that kids see animals in the inkblots of the Rorschach test twice as often as adults do, and that, when a Tufts University psychologist went into a New Haven preschool decades ago and asked kids to tell her a story that they'd made up on the spot, between 65 and 80 percent of them told her a story about animals. (The heartbreaking minimalism of one of these stories, by a boy named Bart, still haunts me: "Once there was a lion. He ate everybody up. He ate himself up.")

The psychologist David Foulkes concluded that 61 percent of the dreams that children have between the ages of 3 and 5 years old are about animals. But as kids grow up, Dr. Foulkes found, the percentage of animal dreams goes down. By the time they are 12, it's only 20 percent. At age 16, it's 9 percent.

Similarly, fears of exotic beasts like lions and sharks peak during preschool, then are gradually replaced by more sociological terrors, like kidnapping and not fitting in at school. I found a melancholy subtext in this research — the way our grittier human world intrudes on, and then finally blots out, even the wildlife in children’s heads.

Still, it’s also true that we foist animals on our children. Adults have always tended to see kids and animals as vaguely equivalent, or at least more like each other than like us. “Children,” Sigmund Freud wrote in 1913, “show no trace of the arrogance which urges adult civilized men to draw a hard-and-fast line between their own nature and that of all other animals.” Kids begin life naked, unable to speak, and appear motivated only by instincts and urges. Like a pet dog, a baby needs to be fed, housebroken, and taught to sleep through the night without howling.

For Freud, this animalness was problematic: socializing children meant molding their wildness into humanity. But these days, it’s easy to feel that *society* needs the taming — it’s despoiling so much of the natural world. And so, unsettled by the loss of wild things and places, and separated from those landscapes in the cities and suburbs that replaced them, we may be prone to romanticizing our wild children the same way we sometimes romanticize wild animals — as purer and gentler spirits than the society we’ve brought them into.

I’m not arguing that seeing a link between kids and animals is an exclusively modern phenomenon — that it’s some anxious, overcompensatory affectation of nature-deprived Americans, like those

elaborate stone shower stalls, made to look like waterfalls and grottos, or the Paleo Diet. The link has always been there. (Dr. Melson notes that many of the oldest, prehistoric toys discovered include animal-shaped rattles and little wooden crocodiles.) But the meaning we wring from that connection clearly changes over time. In short, maybe we keep giving animal stuff to kids because their imaginations already brim with animals. But maybe, now, it's also the other way around: maybe we long to see children and animals together, as free creatures living in an innocence we've strayed from.

THERE'S really no way to know: most psychology research about kids and animals dissects children's one-to-one relationships with pets, not their abstract feelings about wildlife or the many representations of it they encounter. The best investigation of those vicarious relationships I found dates from 1983. That was when Stephen R. Kellert, a social ecologist at Yale, and Miriam O. Westervelt, of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service interviewed kids at 22 schools in Connecticut, in grades 2 through 11, to gauge their attitudes toward wildlife. What they discovered is an obvious but deflating truth: little kids *are* like animals, too necessarily consumed by their own interests to register much concern or compassion for other animals in the abstract.

Kids under the age of 6 especially "were found to be egocentric, domineering, and self-serving," Dr. Kellert later wrote, summarizing the study. "Young children reveal little recognition or appreciation of the autonomous feelings and independence of animals" and "also express the greatest fear of the natural world." It was the younger kids, not the

8th or 11th graders, who were more likely to believe that farmers should “kill all the foxes” if a particular fox ate their chickens; that it’s O.K. to slaughter animals for fur coats; that most wild animals are “dangerous to people”; and that all poisonous animals, like rattlesnakes, “should be gotten rid of.” It was the younger kids who were more likely to agree with the statement “It’s silly when people love animals as much as they love people,” whereas virtually none of the teenagers believed it was silly. Most second graders agreed with the statement “If they found oil where wild animals lived, we would have to get the oil, even if it harmed the animals.” Eleventh graders overwhelmingly did not.

“Our society frequently romanticizes young children’s attitudes toward animals,” Dr. Kellert has written, “believing that they possess some special intuitive affinity for the natural world and that animals constitute for young people little friends or kindred spirits.” But the data was clear: the younger the kids, the more “exploitative, harsh and unfeeling” they were — the more their relationship to wildlife was based on the satisfaction of “short-term needs and anxiety toward the unknown.” Older kids wanted to go camping in wildlife habitats; younger ones wanted “to stay where lots of other people were.”

We like to imagine our children as miniature noble savages, moving peacefully and naked among the beasts. But they’re more like the colonists: greedy, vindictive, wary, shortsighted and firing panicky musket shots at any rustling in the woods. It’s not their fault. They are behaving like children.

And maybe, I've come to realize, that's exactly the point. It may not matter whether the connection between children and animals is real or imagined; if watching my daughter chase butterflies on a sunny day feels so good and life-affirming because she's fulfilling some innate impulse — momentarily finding her ecological niche — or only because she's fulfilling some wistful, pastoral fantasy of mine. Maybe it's a little of both. Maybe, as with so many parenting questions, the truth gets lost in that mysterious wilderness between our children's identities and the ones that we are urging them toward.

Ultimately, all these animals that we fill our children's lives with — the frustrated goats who learn to compromise, the worried skunk who makes it through her first day of school, the teddy bear that needs to be hugged and tucked in — are also just proxies. They are useful, adorable props, props that we sense command our kids' attention in some deep, biophilic way. And so we use them to teach our children basic lessons of kindness or self-possession or compassion — to show our kids what sort of animals we'd like them to grow up to be.

Jon Mooallem is a [contributing writer](#) to The New York Times Magazine and the [author](#) of "Wild Ones: A Sometimes Dismaying, Weirdly Reassuring Story About Looking at People Looking at Animals in America," from which this essay is adapted.

Updated May 7, 2013 11:43 AM

More Medicaid, More Health?

Introduction

Thomas Patterson for The New York Times Hannah Lobingier works for an Oregon [program](#) that tries to keep Medicaid patients from relying on emergency rooms.

A [study](#) comparing low-income people in Oregon who received access to Medicaid over the past two years with those who did not, found that those on Medicaid visited doctors and hospitals more often, suffered less from depression and were more financially secure. That said, the Medicaid recipients saw little average improvement in blood pressure, blood sugar and other measures.

[Some](#) have said the study demonstrates that by focusing on routine care, such health insurance provides meager results at great cost. Should health insurance, particularly government programs, provide only catastrophic coverage?

Poor People Have the Same Needs as Others

[Drew Altman](#) is president and chief executive of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

May 6, 2013

The Oregon study uses a rigorous design to add to our knowledge about the impact of extending coverage to a poor population. The interpretation of the study has been far less compelling.

Bottom line: if you were a middle class family with private insurance and your spouse's cholesterol count or blood pressure had not improved in a two year period, would you want to go without insurance protection altogether? If you were a single adult making \$15,000 a year or less, would you feel comfortable with a catastrophic coverage plan with a deductible of several thousand dollars a year?

Would you feel comfortable with a catastrophic coverage plan with a deductible of several thousand dollars a year?

You would do neither of these things, but these are the recommendations several pundits seem to think make sense for low income people based on their reading of the Oregon Medicaid experiment.

Two years out from the start of the experiment, the Oregon study has confirmed significant improvements among the adults who gained Medicaid coverage. Findings of particular importance include greater probability of receiving diagnosis of diabetes and use of medication for diabetes; 30 percent relative reduction in rate of depression; increased visits, prescription drugs, and use of many preventive services, and the near elimination of catastrophic out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Critics have focused on the fact that the study found that Medicaid did not have a statistically significant effect on blood pressure, cholesterol, or blood sugar control. Ideally we would like to see these clinical measures change but they are strongly influenced by behavior and nutrition, which are hard to change in any population in a two year time frame.

There is no reason to believe private insurance coverage for low-income people would have produced a different outcome. And, as the study authors point out, the power of the study to detect changes in health outcomes was limited because of the relatively small numbers of patients who had diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol.

They did find significant improvement in depression, which was by far the most prevalent of the four conditions studied.

Insurance -- public or private -- provides financial protection and access to medical care which low-income people need just as everybody else

does. But it cannot by itself change behavior, alleviate poverty, or guarantee that the medical system is doing all it can to improve health.

May 7, 2013, 9:44 am [Comment](#)

Torture Against Terrorism

By [HANNAH ARMSTRONG](#)

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania — Outside our tent on a beach about 100 miles north of the capital, the Atlantic Ocean was glittering under the midday sun and a fresh tuna was searing on a grill. Inside, the conversation with my Mauritanian friends turned to torture and detention. One described how he'd been chained up naked for weeks; another talked about his brother who had a pin inserted under his fingernails. Both victims had been arrested during a crackdown on political dissidents in 2003, in the twilight of the 21-year dictatorship of Maaouya Sid'Ahmed Ould Taya.

Taya was deposed in 2005, but torture, which has been moored in Mauritania's security apparatus for decades, has continued. Last year, under pressure from France and other Western states, [the government of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz](#) ratified [international conventions against torture and enforced disappearance](#). But this has not stopped Mauritania from using the same brutal techniques — or

France and the United States from feeding it intelligence on suspected terrorists and helping it upgrade its security capacities.

Over the past decade, Mauritania has been a rear base for Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, a pool for militant recruitment and a target of attacks on the French Embassy, foreign tourists and aid workers. Since 2009, when the former general and two-time coup leader Aziz was elected president, the government has waged a dual-track counterterrorism campaign.

Thomas Nybo for The New York Times Nouakchott, Mauritania.

Channeling foreign concern over the spread of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Aziz has upgraded Mauritania's army, police and border security and strengthened regional security cooperation against the fluid, often invisible networks of militants and ideologues that have been proliferating across western Africa and have seized control of northern Mali last year. He has ordered military operations against AQIM bases in Mauritania and northern Mali.

At the same time, Aziz has begun a deradicalization effort by reaching out to the nonviolent Islamist opposition, which previously was repressed. Some 35 Salafists detained under terrorism charges were released in 2010. Isselmou Ould Moustapha, an expert on AQIM and editor of the Nouakchott-based newspaper Tahalil Hebdo, knows of at least five cases in which the mothers of Mauritanian jihadists teamed up with the authorities to call their sons home in exchange for their getting lighter sentences and better detention conditions.

Seeing in Mauritania a key partner for their own counterterrorism efforts, France and the United States have provided it with logistics, [training](#), equipment and intelligence, according to Western and Mauritanian security sources in Nouakchott. A commando fighter with Mauritania's elite U.S.-trained anti-terrorist brigade described to me how American and French forces tip off the local authorities about the location of suspected terrorists. The brigade then dispatches heavily armed units with tracking devices. "It's kill or capture," he explained. Of the Americans, he added: "They teach you so well how to shoot, so the bullet goes straight to the head. Even in your sleep you can shoot."

Moustapha, the AQIM expert, told me, "If there is one area where Aziz has succeeded, it's security — especially crossborder threats — and the population is appreciative." So are Mauritania's foreign backers. The commander of Africom, Carter Ham, vowed to enhance cooperation during an official visit to Mauritania in 2011. Bruno Clement-Bolle, head of security and defense cooperation at the French Foreign Ministry, praised Mauritania late last year for "the very remarkable security leap" it made "in the past two years to restructure its security forces and redefine their mission."

But the costs of this success are great. According to Aminetou Mint Ely, leader of the Association of Women Heads of Households, who regularly conducts prison visits with Amnesty International, Salafist prisoners are often hung naked from a metal bar in the so-called jaguar position, with their hands and feet tied. Then they are beaten or burned with cigarettes.

In May 2011, 14 men convicted of terrorism were taken at night from Nouakchott's central prison. They have not been heard from since. (Several sources told me they are being held at a black site prison in the country's interior.) Amnesty International has documented more than [60 cases of torture](#) in Mauritanian prisons since 2010.

Although Mauritania's commitment to combating terrorism has brought relief to many of its people, for others it has become an excuse for the continued use of torture and other brutal forms of intimidation — all with the assent of the very foreign governments that claim to decry such methods.

1. Students to brainstorm and plan to complete one of these articles for homework according to the guidelines outlined below:

How to write a Language Analysis Essay

Using Language to Persuade

Introduction

In your introduction, identify

- The title of the piece – e.g. in "A disturbing vista from the roof of Villawood"

- What sort of article it is – e.g opinion piece, feature article, news article, editorial
- Where and when it was published
- Audience
- Purpose (generally to persuade reader to accept the author's contention)
- Issue being examined
- The author's contention
- The tone used in the article and how this persuades you

Body Paragraphs

You can choose to structure your paragraphs in three ways:

1. Supporting Paragraphs: Have one body paragraph for each supporting argument.
2. The Predominant Language Features: Have one body paragraph for each persuasive technique used in the article (these could be very short paragraphs)
3. Move through the article chronologically – have one body paragraph for each paragraph of the article (or for several paragraphs of the article if it makes sense to discuss them together)

