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Food Waste in the United States

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Dr. Turner

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My project is centered around the food waste problem in the United States and around the world. I choose this topic because I found it to be incredibly impactful on a micro and macro level, meaning smaller communities around the United States are significantly affected as well as the world as a whole. Food waste is disproportionately affecting lower-income communities and african-american communities, while also being a major contributor to global climate change. State and federal institutional racism is placing landfills within communities most at risk and the most disenfranchised. Food waste is the largest single contributor to landfills, with individuals/families wasted a tremendous amount of food every year. I would say that my key finding or thing that I learned from this project was the elimination of food waste can combat a variety of issues. While we fight wasting our food, we are also fighting institutional racism, global climate change, and food scarcity- all crucial issues that need to be dealt with over the next decade.

My first text that I chose to do was a video lecture with key statistics and finding that I collected on a scholarly basis. I wanted to share the facts and crucial information that people need to know about food waste in the United States. This was my most analytical approach of the three texts I used because I found it important to create baseline understanding of food waste and how it differently impacts communities. That is why I focused on landfills specifically, because they are placed in areas in which the government believes is most “politically expedient”. This is a further abuse of power and a clear example of institutional racism that plagues african-american communities throughout the United States. Food waste is a huge contributor to the need for additional landfills all around the country. What I would like to see, personally, is for the United States to change to a more sustainable model of food production and change the overall culture of eating in America. This creates a greener, safer, sustainable, and more healthy country- the benefits are endless. The intended audience for this particular text is a more broad audience because I think it is unspecific to any person or any country. I wanted to create a video that

could reach people in a way that could push them to personally change, or advocate for policy to change. This text is simple but conveys a lot of information that people need to really formulate a perspective on the food waste issue around the world.

My second text was a social media post that I created via Canva, a graphic design website. I wanted to create a social media post chain because I felt like I could specifically reach students at Butler's campus. I included some ways to personally challenge yourself to reduce food waste as well as including a post about the Food Recovery Network. I felt it crucial to include the Food Recovery Network because it was a student-created organization that helps dining halls reduce food waste. They do some amazing work and I hope that people were able to look them up based on my post. If we could create a "chapter" here at Butler, I am sure that it would make a huge difference. I also targeted this social media post to be posted on Earth Day because people will be flooded with information on how we can make the world a greener and healthier place. The engagement on the post will have more success, I believe, on days such as Earth Day and other nationally recognized days.

The third text that I created was a poem or short story that I felt was a dive into the inner thought process of most people in the world today. I wanted to create/write something that anyone can relate to, and I felt this poem certainly did that. While we understand the existential nature of the climate crisis, so many lawmakers and politicians are not willing to treat it as such. Not only are our elected officials letting us down, as individuals we are also not doing our part all the time. I wanted to write something that showed how grim we understand the outlook of the future can be, while also juxtapose it with how that outlook is fleeting. The nightmare is something that could technically become the reality for a generation in the future, but yet we do not always have it on our conscious. When the student in the story has a nightmare about a future without combating climate change and food waste, he understands that there are serious repercussions. Yet when he sees that he has wasted food himself, he throws it away and goes on with his life, forgetting the dream really ever happened. I found that to be the most impactful thing that I have learned throughout this entire semester, while I have understood the facts of climate change and the seriousness in which we must act, we too often only let the feeling stay momentary. Knowing that there is

a crisis is one thing, acting upon it is something completely different. It is past the time from which it is necessary to act, we must take action now. I felt that this text intended audience was generally everyone, to shout out the way in which we can individually make a difference but also understand that we have to stay vigilant and focused on fighting the climate crisis.

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