



# ABC CLARION

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## The Fat Acceptance Movement

by Angelina Li

If you have been following social media or pop culture, you are probably aware of the recent direction that the fat-shaming movement has gone in. The media has begun to showcase “plus-size” models and celebrities, setting out the idea that big is beautiful. Pressure and outrage from women of many different sizes have begun to push many industries to display women of larger sizes, even if it has been limited so far. Known as the “fat acceptance movement”, it is a social movement where people seek to change anti-bias in societal attitudes.

Like many social movements, the fat-shaming/fat-acceptance movement came in several waves. During the first wave, around the early twentieth century, obesity was seen as detrimental to human efficiency and an interference to labor productivity. In the late 1960's, the fat acceptance movement began. In New York City, 500 people participated in the “fat-in”, where they ate,

protested, and burned diet books. Later on, the Fat Underground was formed to protest the growing bias of the scientific community. Its members were inspired by a feminist group called the Radical Therapy Collective, which believed that many psychological issues arose from oppressive social practices.

The second wave consisted generally of spreading fat acceptance ideas to mainstream culture. Towards the end of the twentieth century, fat acceptance became more incorporated in research papers and literature, and the activism grew. The third wave acknowledges other complex issues such as sexuality, race, and class along with obesity. With the rise of technology, many people began posting blogs to protest size discrimination.

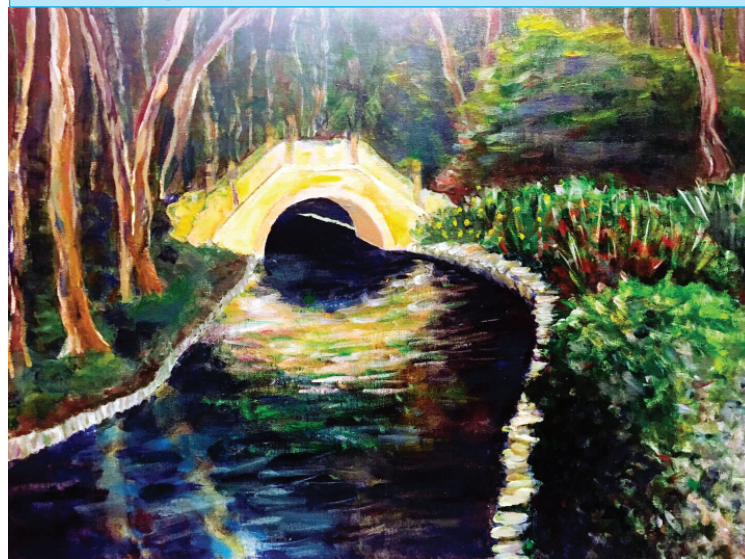
This movement highlights the hatred and discrimination many obese men and women face, though obese women are more subjected to the pressure. Societal attitudes often ridicule and

criticize obese people and even suggest that they are objects of pity or that their size reflects their character in some way. Activists argue that overweight people often experience discrimination in areas of transportation, employment, education, healthcare, and the media.

The fat acceptance movement has faced both support and criticism. Some have justified their discrimination on social media by citing that obesity is linked to serious health concerns, and thus should be criticized. Others have posted that people's lifestyles are their own business and their own choice, so people should stop worrying about and criticizing other people. Health professionals have voiced their concern over people ignoring the health risks studies have shown to be associated with obesity. Boston Globe writer Cathy Young stated that while she recognizes the importance to fight against self-loathing, a line must be drawn for acceptance of an

## Beauty in Nature

Drawn by Audrey Zhou



“unhealthy status quo”.

While many women have begun to embrace their larger sizes, they've also begun to attack skinny women, accusing them of eating disorders and calling them “sticks”. They have justified themselves by saying that being that skinny is not a healthy lifestyle and it should not be supported - a similar argument made

against them- Oh the irony! Others have also jumped in to say that skinny-shaming is nowhere near as bad as fat-shaming and that skinny people have “skinny privilege” and are not as affected as fat people are by the verbal abuse. Being unhealthy is nothing to be celebrated. But neither is hurting other people - fat or skinny.

## A Push for *Our* APUSH

by Oscar Chen

APUSH. Otherwise known as Advanced Placement United States History. Without a doubt, it is a challenging course, but I shouldn't complain about personal problems. In fact, it is more important to focus on something fundamental to our rights as students of a “free” school and citizens of a “free country”.

After all, the basis of U.S. history is rooted deep within the fertile soil of democracy. As our history grows from the seeds of revolution planted by the Founding Fathers, the people must continue to nurture it year after year. Although the trunk cannot be uprooted today, branches of the tree are still being snapped off dangerously.

Liberties are threatened not because of the lack of human rights enumerated in constitutions around the world. The concept of free choice in the U.S. is not being obstructed in the way we have witnessed in the past with outright acts of prejudice.

The freedom of the individual in the 21st century is actually guaranteed politically to a greater extent than before.

No, the threat is due to the puppet show of society that controls how generations of people must think and behave. Unlike the egregious manipulation that saturates any corrupt system, the most effective form of brainwashing is done quite subtly. The invisible forces that pressure us to make certain decisions that are approved by our society: they are the true culprits that silently silence our voice.

Often what's written on paper isn't what we see in reality. Thus, the definition of free choice is skewed. The individual can technically be “revolutionary” and challenge the norm. However, with the walls of societal pressure surrounding him or her, that means he or she will be at odds with his life, his community, and his world.

As a result, the right of the in-

dividual is constantly under attack, starting with the student in the school. It is deemed an honor to tackle APUSH as a vigorous course. Vice versa, it is deemed a disgrace to give up and leave in failure. Stuck in the middle, the students' free choice becomes no choice as they proceed with APUSH to preserve their pride and dignity rather than face ridicule and disrespect from both peers and elders.

Then why bother valuing the democratic ideals that the educational system, if it has failed in spite of its importance in U.S. history, AP or not?

Because it matters.

Ownership of a person's future should not be dictated by an established decree. It's time students are allowed to make a push for their own APUSH. It applies to any class—it shouldn't evolve into an elective option, but course selection for schedules can be liberalized. Students could possibly structure their

coursework according to how they see fit.

Now I will entertain the retorts to this argument, because free choice is essentially hindered. I understand that course diversity yields more well-rounded products of society. That being said, independence is crucial to the progress of our civilization. If people can choose their own paths, innovative efficiency would skyrocket in response. Time is precious for all, so for those who understand their career direction, pursuing subjects related to these interests would lead to more refined learning rather than disengaged staring.

Fighting the system has always been a struggle, especially over contested issues like education. Yet overcoming these obstacles to address the significance of greater choice for the younger generation can make a difference. I am not detracting from the value of any specific class. Instead I am analyzing how restrictive the educational system can be.

Let's end this push for our APUSH by emphasizing why

American society should stop encroaching on its citizens and be more open to basic reform.

If society truly believes that it is putting us in a more “Advanced Place”, it should back it up by giving us the green light to choose without jeopardizing our personal image or future. Students can be another minority that government controls without deeper concern for their fates.

However, even if we might be the orphans of the American Dream, we are still the descendants of natural law. If the U.S. proclaims life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to be unalienable rights, I say the happiness belongs to the people, not them.

By them, I mean the silent elitists that might not support free choice for all individuals. But we the students absolutely value it. Let's protect the branches of the liberty tree from destruction and demolish the walls of societal pressure.

Let's remember: It is our happiness, not theirs. It is our APUSH, not theirs.

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