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English Composition II

Professor Mangini

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***Just Say YES!***

 American culture is just as brutal and heart wrenching, yet accomplished and beautiful as many other cultures are. But, when it comes to handling how we go about learning about it can be difficult to understand. America has always categorized their citizens by groups and majorities, not personally. We’ve separated church and state and that has been made pretty clear. The bitterness we all taste when the government is involved in anyway is because we think about our money being taken from us, and being used towards something that isn't all that necessary. When in fact it actually is, but its kept a secret which makes us feel demeaned. Without us, there would be no-one supporting the finical aspect of things. *"The first thing I think when I hear United States is a world power." - Pedro Ivan Gonzalez, 35.* We may have power, but with great power comes great responsibility.

 The way people in America are treated it’s like we are robots and we are being controlled constantly by our government. Honesty and trust is something every human lacks, when you think about it at the end of the day were all in this together. A democracy can be hard to function due to many people wanting a word, but instead of shying away from the words spoke, we should listen, embrace and learn about them. Treating each other like an actual human beings can go very a long way. With that said, let us ask ourselves, who are the big components that have a huge influence on our perspective on illegal drugs? Our social systems have it. Why? because its what we know, not everything, but enough to form an opinion. This includes the media, our government and prison systems. There are many more, but these are the few I would like to discuss. I’m asking you to read it and weep, get more information, and dig deeper.

 There are a lot of debates when it comes to drug and narcotic use in the United States, but I am here to talk about one specific drug that has the potential to make the United Sates something better than it already is, Marijuana. I am not going to discuss how the drug should be decriminalized or medically offered, but instead I will elaborate why this drug should be completely legalized and federally approved across the nation. There are a few major topics that could make people really understand that marijuana is not all bad when the *natural* *plant* can make people who are ill to be healthier, physically and mentally and letting the people express their inner abilities with joy not shame and crime rates going way down.

 First and foremost, marijuana consumption/distribution is a non-violent crime that results in the imprisonment of lots of lower/middle class citizens, which results in these individuals having a serious criminal record that could potentially ruin their lives for a non-violent crime. Even the words, non-violent crime is a contradictory in itself, is it a crime of no one is being hurt? This results in these individuals struggling to obtain jobs,“to better themselves”, and be productive in society. Instead, society tells you you're bad, you're lazy, you're just no good. When actually you are just as worthy as everybody else. This is when people rebel and become someone they shouldn't be because that is where society placed them. I am not saying society determines your future but, it definitely has a huge footprint.

 In Michael Moores documentary, *Where To Invade Next* he interviewed a man in Portugal who he called “the drug tsar”. His name was Dr. Nuno Capaz, he explained to Moore how drugs being legal for the past 15 years has had the opposite effect on crime rates. The explanation was something Moore, and his viewers did not expect. Moore asked “Wait a minute, you're saying that by decriminalizing all drugs, not throwing people in jail, drug usage went down, not up?” Dr. Nuno Capaz Ministry of Health responded with a nonchalant “ Mhm”. ***(Where To Invade Next, Michael Moore, 2010)***. This is an act of their government putting trust in their citizens and to put their risk of life on them, and the result was just what I expected.

 Putting people behind bars for not harming anyone but potentially themselves is gruesome and makes no sense if you really think about it. The Doctor goes on by saying “ When you think about drug users, everybody thinks about those small 10% that are causing problems. People don't think about the 90% or people that are not causing any troubles although they are using illicit substances” Moore responds with “ I mean they may be bringing sadness to their marriage or their family or…” Nuno interrupts saying “ So? So does *Facebook* are we going to illegalize it?” ***(Where To Invade Next, Michael Moore, 2010)***.

 “In Colorado, for instance, the number of 18-to-25-year-olds using alcohol on a monthly basis fell by four percentage points between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. That’s the group with the highest propensity to use marijuana, suggesting that a number of young adults are opting to smoke weed instead of get drunk now that the option is available to them.” ***Christopher Ingraham, The Washington Post - December 13, 2017*** . Had these individuals not been criminalized in the first place, there would be no need to waste money on the prison industrial complex to imprison these people and inhibit their role in society. Meaning less money taken out of your pay check every two weeks.

 Degrading someones life for consumption of marijuana makes no sense to me when it can be easily joked about over social media, movies and more, yet the consequences are beyond words.

 *Deviance*, an assumption that people who are involved in non-cultural activity are viewed as criminals or outsiders. Deviant behavior is not necessarily a violation of legal codes; the term was designed to include the study of criminal behavior and also incorporate the study of social norm violations ***(Deviance. (2001). In J. M. Palmisano***) I can understand why people do such a thing because it is a reminder of what is right and wrong. In all, police officers follow the orders of the law in all ways possible, but why be arrested for something that still occurs so frequently behind bars. Like I said before, its a contradictory within itself.

 Our medical care is the best, period. These advocates stressed that those who suffered from debilitating conditions such as cancer can have a better quality of life through use of marijuana. The term “medical marijuana” is used to describe marijuana that is grown and used for these therapeutic purposes.***("Medical Marijuana." Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, edited by Gale)***. This product brings the twinkle back in their eyes and pigment back into their skin and an appetite for four. Marijuana can be an alternative to prescription drugs.”…a group of 176 chronic pain patients in Israel over seven months and found that 44 percent of them stopped taking prescription opioids within seven months of starting medical cannabis.”***Could Medical Cannabis Break the Painkiller Epidemic?***[Jeremy Hsu](https://www.scientificamerican.com/author/jeremy-hsu/) on September 1, 2016. This making the top money making industry be put on pause. Every citizen deserves to be taken care of whether you're poor or filthy rich, so finding a common ground couldn't be a bad thing. Knowing that you'll be taken care of for whatever circumstance in times of need by one of your fellow citizens certainly gives the patient and me more gratitude, than an extra 0 on my check.

 Lastly, and most importantly, consumption of marijuana can help your inner creativity grow and open within itself. Marijuana can be used for medical and recreational uses and either way, the negative outcomes are minimal and not life threatening, unlike others, that actually are legal but besides the point. Artists that take part in use because of the inspiration they feel. As with so many of the psychological and neurological effects of the drug, it appears that cannabis' effect on creativity depends on various factors including existing mental health and frequency of use. ***(Sensi Seed,*** [Seshata](https://sensiseeds.com/en/blog/author/seshata/), [Consumption](https://sensiseeds.com/en/blog/category/consumption/), 2013). Sometimes used as a leeway to something unimaginably beautiful. I do not see marijuana as something to be afraid of or look down upon to someone who uses because it all has to do with the stereotype we've put them into. We are afraid of the idea of it, not the actual thing. We are a nation of opportunities, and if people need that little push to start and want to express it by consuming marijuana then so be it, we shouldn't be penalized for opening our minds to something more.

 With that said, I do understand the other point of view from teachers and parents and even peers that marijuana has its pitfalls when the laziness kicks in and the lack of motivation happens, but I will disagree with how it can be used as a gateway drug for bigger and badder things. The drug isn't necessarily the gateway, its the person consuming it. There are people who smoke weed and that is all they need but others want more and that is a risk that he/ she puts on themselves.

 In conclusion, I have understood the pros and the cons when it comes to legalizing marijuana, but I'm many cases the pros override the cons. Yes, we have states that legalized and decriminalized it, but having it legal across the border can put peoples minds at ease. Having police officers jobs less demeaning to their citizens, but instead to protect them. So my question lands at why should something so innocent with minimum health flaws be punished in such a cruel manner? Our social systems are inconsistent and money hungry, I say its time for peace and love to be spread out more often and even if we don’t know it all doesn't mean its all bad because were all in this together whether we like it or not.

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