

## ENGLISH: LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

### Article: “Overprotective parents stifle growth.”

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There is no ‘right’ way to raise a child, but rather, many different ways. Recently, parenting styles have come under scrutiny, as publicised in ‘The Daily News’. Retired principle Jane Brown adopts an authoritative tone in her opinion piece “overprotective parents stifle growth”, encouraging her intended parent readers to stop “mollycoddling” children and create children that become “resilient adults” that can “cope with life”. In direct contrast, Jack Lee’s anecdotal reply ‘Reality check’ alerts readers to the inherent dangers of our “weird” world which warrant strict parenting. The accompanying photograph of the young boy situated between the pieces highlights the fragility of the future generation, and the need to “handle [them] with care”.

Jane Brown’s professional history as a school principal instantly lends credibility to her opinion, dealing with the raising of children, which a principal would be familiar with. Brown appeals to eh parental instinct to secure the best future for their child to convince readers that they must stop “supposedly ‘protecting’ our young people from the stark realities of life”. Indicating it is “perfectly clear to me, as a professional” that parents “stifle growth”, Brown manipulates readers to also be deemed as “professional” and consider her stance on parenting style. Using inclusive language, Brown establishes the shared responsibility of the readership for creating “defenceless young people”.

Brown’s listing of the manner in which parents “mollycoddle” children by “running little errands”, providing a “continuous taxi service” and “obediently bringing the lunch when it is forgotten” depicts parents as enslaved to their children, and Brown’s condescending tone evokes a sense of shame amongst such parents. In order to change such an image, Brown’s alternative liberal parenting style increases in appeal. Drawing on the parents’ desire for the child to be successful Brown vehemently insists “children need to make mistakes, experience rejection and maybe hurt themselves to learn how to cope with life”. Brown diverts reader’s attention to the bigger picture – children’s lives, and in order to become “resilient adults”, coerces parents to allow children to experience “real pain and deal with disappointments”.

Brown’s metaphor that parents are “wrapping young children in cotton wool” is effectively depicted in the visual. A young boy is central to the image, lying in a foetal position which accentuates his vulnerability, surrounded by wool. The accompanying sign encourages viewers to “handle with care”, depicting the fragility of the current generation. The bird’s eye view of the boy makes it feel as though the reader is the parent that the child is looking up to for protection, or perhaps for release from his overprotective surroundings. The image clearly evokes the parental instinct to protect the child, hence does not quite compliment Brown’s sentiments. However, it effectively depicts our current, “overprotective” parenting style.

Drawing on studies by the “children society in Britain”, Brown substantiates her claim that “denied opportunities” to live life now will result in “depressed, overaggressive, antisocial and delinquent” children. The listing of descriptors which carry such negative connotations position protective parents to reconsider, for the sake of their child. Referring to the “mountain of evidence” backing Brown’s claim, the reader envisages compelling reasons to stop “stifling” children and help them to “develop the skills to become fully functioning adults” which is in the interest of all parents.

Jane Brown’s article appeals to the logic and emotions of parents, while Jack Lee’s piece in response is solely an emotional appeal. Title ‘Reality check’ and written by a male, the accompanying piece provides a whole new perspective on the issue. As a parent himself Jacks’ readership can take confidence in his opinion and his use of first person further personalises the issue. Utilising short, succinct sentences Jack overwhelms the reader with the “dangers” of our “weird world”, blaming everything from cars, newspapers, family room, films and documentaries.

Labelling cars as “lethal weapons”, Jack’s loaded language makes the reader visualise the “evil” which surrounds us, unlike the “good old days” of Lee’s grandad. The sense of “no escape’ from the modern world’s “tragedies” juxtaposed with the once upon a time “hassle” free world manipulates the reader to accept that our current protective parenting styles are mandatory.

As a parent, Lee’s sentiment that “I want my kids to be able to survive in this crazy world” mirrors that of most parent readers. Subsequently, stating children “need to be safe and secure”, Lee encourages parents to accept and maintain their protective guard to ensure kids are “sure of something things” - “love and hope”. All individuals deserve to live alongside “hope and love” and so Lee appeals to the reader’s emotions and everyone’s equal right to help and love. Concluding with the warning, children cannot “make a difference... if they are traumatised” consolidates the readers’ resolve to continue to protect kids and avoid the “worse” alternative.

Jack Lee’s piece in conjunction with the visual appeals to parents to continue to protect children so that “[children] can make a difference”. On the contrary, Brown stresses the importance of creating “resilient adults” by stopping “mollycoddling” children. As a parent, Lee reaches out to the parent readership. Likewise, Jane Brown’s authority as a ‘principal’ provides substance to her claims. However, the fact that she is a ‘retired principal’ could allude to the fact that her parenting styles are antiquated – the world “has changed”, as Lee points out, weakening her stance. All-in-all, Lee and Brown both use emotive appeal as a potent tool of persuasion to portray their differing views on parenting in their capacity as a parent and principal, respectively.