

Opinions

Excessive photo editing dishonest, misleading

As if the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show weren't enough, creating the perfect body image has become

a part of everyday life for so many women, and billboards, television shows and photographs have skewed what beauty really is.

Retouching. Altering. Changing. All of these words point to the overarching goal:

improving. The lighting and setting may be fine,

but photographers and editors often seem to find something wrong with the subject of a photo, often a person.

So, why not just erase a few pounds in a few seconds? What about adding shimmer to an eye or height to a model — what's the harm in that?

The answer is simple: everything.

There is a reason I always wanted to be a photojournalist — to tell the truth. To capture a moment that often cannot be described adequately in words. But too often a moment has been "made better" through smoothing over a person's face, brightening their hair color or removing an unwanted item in the foreground.

But what good does this really do?

This doesn't show the moment that actually happened. It makes it fake. And this is what makes women today believe they aren't good enough. I am a victim of it. At some point, I'm sure that most women, let alone college-age women, have fallen victim to it. We all want to be as pretty as the girl on television. Or in a magazine. Or on a billboard.

"Fix one thing, then another and pretty soon you end up with Barbie," said Hany Farid, a professor of computer science and a digital forensics expert at Dartmouth in an interview with The New York Times.

It's true — once the software is learned and used, it's hard to quit, to suppress the desire to make the girl that much skinnier or to make the subject look a little bit more like you want in order to convey a certain message. Take TIME magazine's 1994 O.J. Simpson cover. TIME used Simpson's mug shot as its cover photo, and it probably would have been OK — if Newsweek hadn't run the same photo in its original form.

TIME darkened Simpson's mug shot, making him look more sinister and, in turn, guilty. This is a prime example of photo manipulation, an example of why it should never be done.

A news publication is supposed to be unbiased and tell a news story as it is, without offering any opinion or advice. Yeah, a lot of people thought Simpson was guilty, but that doesn't mean a news organization gets to publicly announce its view. Why do you think so many people don't trust the media anymore?

So please, keep the photo retouching to a minimum. I admit I alter the brightness and contrast sometimes, but this is to better show the action of the photo and bring clarity, not to make up what is not there. Just watch what you do.

It's not worth it to lose your reputation as a photographer just to look 10 pounds skinnier.

Let's stick to the facts instead.



Kate Riley
Columnist

Students: The Pendulum needs you

Past year has been challenging, but not without rewards

It's not often a 15-year-old girl determines her life course while stuffing JCPenney inserts into a small

eight-page weekly newspaper at the crack of dawn. But then again, I consider myself one of the lucky ones.

I based my entire college decision on finding a journalism program and newspaper I admired. I remember

Anna Johnson
Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

visiting Elon and pressing my nose up to the glass door of the old office of The Pendulum, an actual bank building, and imagined what it would be like to be on staff, wondering why they had a vault.

Now I'm facing an all-too-real reality. It's my last edition as The Pendulum's Editor-in-Chief. It might be the most bittersweet moment of my life.

I never thought in my two and a half years on The Pendulum staff that I would organize our 2010 midterm election coverage or fall in love with crime reporting. I didn't expect to move offices twice or conquer my fear of public speaking. And I couldn't have imagined finding some of my best

friends and a second home.

The staff I've had the privilege of working with this past year has continued to amaze and surpass all of my expectations. There have been many occasions when I've sat back just to marvel at the passion and level of dedication that resonates with these Pendulum staffers.

There've been countless sleepless nights. Yet, regardless of the hours sacrificed, this staff has been able to produce quality news and entertainment for the student body and greater community. A vibrant free press is necessary for the health of this community and I've enjoyed seeing this news organization take stronger stances on issues deemed important by the student body.

These changes couldn't have occurred without the help and devotion of so many staff members. A particular thanks goes out to our seniors: Rebecca Smith, Lauren Ramsdell, Justin Veldhuis, Sarah Carideo, Nick Zanetti, Eva Hill, Brian Allenby, Elizabeth Everett, Julia Murphy, Julia Sayers, Amanda Bender, Sam Calvert, Jack Rodenfels, Bonnie Efid, Jack Dodson and Ashley Jobe. The Pendulum will hate to see you go and I wish you all the

best in your future endeavors.

During the past year I've also worked closely with The Pendulum's adviser, Colin Donohue, who has provided constant support, feedback, advice and encouragement on our constant pursuit of perfection. Our webmaster, J.D. Parsons, has also worked with our staff as we continue to become a web-first publication and we appreciate all of his efforts.

The gains this year will not be lost with the incoming staff. Caitlin O'Donnell, the incoming Editor-in-Chief, is a talented journalist that consistently and continuously leaves me in awe. She's picked a vivacious

staff that will continue to push the administration when it is in the wrong and challenge the status quo. I am so excited to see what they accomplish and how they continue to improve.

But they will need your help. This is your newspaper. The Pendulum needs your voices. Give us your story ideas and what you want to see in your news organization. Tell The Pendulum staff when they're right and when they've missed the mark. You can shape the future of this organization and your perspective is vital for its continued success.

A vibrant free press is necessary for the health of this community and I've enjoyed seeing this news organization take stronger stances on issues deemed important by the student body.

Elon is our school, but are we our school's keeper?

The Elon University honor pledge states, "On my honor, I will uphold the values of Elon University: honesty,

integrity, responsibility, respect." The university's website states this applies not only on campus, but "in locations and at events not occurring on campus," "in locations abroad" and "in situations involving technology as a means of recording or

communication."

Essentially, wherever you go, you represent Elon. Every first year student is supposed to attend the Call to Honor ceremony during the fall of their first year and sign said pledge.

On the other hand, it states if you go to a school and something bad at that school happens, you are also associated with that unfortunate event.

Take the recent scandal at Pennsylvania State University. Emily Kaplan, a columnist for The Daily Collegian, Pennsylvania State's student newspaper, wrote a piece titled "Our pride should not change, we are Penn State." She writes about going home for Thanksgiving break and being pestered by family members and friends searching for a thought on the incident and that she got strange looks when she wore a Pennsylvania State football shirt to the grocery store.

She writes, "We've been thrust into the roles of ambassadors for Penn State. That doesn't mean

we always have to defend the university. I don't know about you, but I'd have a hard time doing that wholeheartedly. Instead we must prove that this scandal and these men aren't what Penn State is all about. We are so much more than that."

Kaplan may think that and want to preach. It is an admirable plan of action in the face of this horrible tragedy. But, I wonder, is it realistic? The actions of Jerry Sandusky have placed a black mark on that university forever. Whenever anyone thinks Penn State, they will now associate it with sexual abuse gone unreported for way too long.

Here at Elon, students are reminded that all of their actions reflect not only themselves, but the university and all the organizations with which they are involved.

The reason? Because we are Elon students. When people who know us look at us, they will think we are an extension of Elon. That includes everything from academics, values, beliefs. When an Elon student does something, it reflects on the university. That is the point of emphasizing our

connection with Elon no matter where we are in the world. But, as evidenced by the Pennsylvania State incident, as Kaplan described, what our university does reflects on us, as well.

The matter at stake here is this: we are our school's keeper just by signing up to take classes and live here. Is it fair? Unfortunately, yes. By attending this institution, we allow ourselves to be made statistics on the website and happy students in brochures and admissions videos. Does it take away some of our individual diversity? Sure. In the "real world," if you don't count college as that, we can be fired from our companies from how we reflect on them, even if it does not break the law or offend the majority. Elon senior running back Jamal Shuman, for instance, was suspended from the team for the last two games for comments he made on Twitter.

It may not be fair to us as individuals, but it is a fact of society. So we sit here in our classrooms and dorms, representing Elon as one student body because that's the deal we signed up for. The way we do that, though, is entirely up to us.



Zachary Horner
Columnist



At the Pennsylvania State-University of Nebraska game, students show they still have pride in their institution. In recent weeks, many students have reported being repeatedly asked about the scandal, although no undergraduate students were actually involved at all.