

A Banana's Identity Crisis

By Lana Elsehemi

I have this strange, unadulterated hatred for bananas. Is it a fruit, vegetable, or some random power food apes need to survive? Bananas have a strange similar taste to cough medicine. If I need potassium so severely, I could get it from potatoes. Some like bananas, which seems fine since everyone has an acquired taste, so by all means, enjoy this “fruit.” PBS described Bananas as a fruit but not a fruit (Mach, A., & Reed, C.). Why does society overcomplicate the simplest parts of life for no reason? Why must we mess with the identity of something as simple as food? A tomato is a fruit, but we mix it with vegetables, while an olive is a berry, and strawberries aren't berries at all. If someone asked me publicly about my opinion on bananas, I would probably say something like, “The worst of the fruits, if you can even call it that.”

Bananas look simple; they're yellow, and we often associate that color with happy things. Bananas have the same effect, like in *Curious George*, a show embodying a child's potential in science, handing them the key to a possible future with a monkey and banana. Being a children's show, it portrayed the world through rose-colored glasses. One with animal friends and a deceitful representation of a banana, calling it a fruit and a good one at that. According to the same PBS article, a banana is apparently an herb, distantly related to ginger. Ginger, the worst of the roots, but a respectable one at least.

I have the same issue with bananas as I did with the rainbow as a kid. I learned that the last color was purple, only for me to discover it was both indigo and violet instead. That being the most significant news I could receive as a first grader set the bar pretty low for my interests. Even today I feel surprised to know that those two colors are just shades of purple, and saying purple at the end of the rainbow just had a nicer ring to it. The world

expects me to keep track of so many unnecessary, overcomplicated changes; frankly, I need clarification.

Society acts like a bored, toxic partner with nothing better to do than argue. The banana represents how a human's touch can mess with its innocence. For example, *The One Hundred*. Netflix shows don't hold the best reputation and yet we subject to an unhealthy addiction of binging their shows with terrible endings. Still, the viewers argue whether the ending of the *One Hundred* honored the seven seasons or ruined them. Even though the viewers gain almost nothing from their debates, they still do it and why? Because people love their drama, even if they don't fully understand it. If it sounds complicated, then it must be brilliant, right? The more complex, the better. Be as confusing as possible. And the lack of good television gives the group of ignorant thirty-year-olds a reason to band together and come up with a new name for "Earth." Maybe Ted would be a better one? But a banana as a fruit? Out of the question. Tomorrow it'll be classified as some strange fungi distantly related to Dead Man's Finger.

Cambridge Dictionary calls this the "Complexity bias," while I call it a thorn in my side. We look at something simple that, and for whatever reason, we can't understand so we assume it is incredibly complicated (Farnam Street). So, if it is, in fact, simple, we complicate it to heal our egos. Slapping a fancy name on something intends to give it a strange sense of importance. Dubbing someone a knight is great and all, but I doubt it has any effect on whether they get to skip the line at Walmart. With every situation come exceptions, and some call for complexity. However, in the majority of events, the complexity bias looks like some poor attempt of trying to appear intelligent. Mary Poppins sang an entire song about supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, possibly the longest most

ridiculous word I could think of. Nobody even classified it as a word until Disney turned it into a song. And why wouldn't it, with its long and fancy sound to make us feel superior? In fact, society would have probably tainted our dictionary with their complicating tendencies long ago, flaunting their knowledge like a peacock does their feathers, not really knowing the impact it has. Which is little to none.

A good friend of mine and I have this monthly occurrence where he calls me up to check in and always says, "So, what's the Lana drama?"

I hate that question more than I do bananas. Whenever I reply with, "Oh nothing, all is good, pretty calm on my end," he always sighs and claims that life is boring.

"I like drama," he will say, "it keeps life interesting." It seems that he begs me to punch him through the phone. What is wrong with a bit of peace of mind? He thrives off of my headaches, which feels both unfair and psychotic. This small, irritating occurrence somehow represents most people. Without complications, their lives look dull; with them, life is stressful and challenging to manage. What an incredibly hostile species we are.

Conspiracy theories are the root of all our complexity troubles. Bad luck can't just be luck, so we blame the random black cat that stumbled on our path. An ominous "threat" because the cause of our natural disasters sounds more comforting than accepting the fact that bad things happen. It represents how we take back control and stick our collective tongue out at fate. That's just even more ridiculous than the whole banana is ginger's cousin thing. Not everything has a reason, and we need to learn to accept that; we should leave things as they are: raw and honest, untouched by society's confused hands.

I can understand the thought process for medicine and electronics though. We need to know every step and what it means to ensure it works. While when it comes to tomatoes,

finding out it's a fruit has no effect on my life. I still eat it in a salad. The act of overcomplication acts as a safety; the more we add, the more information there must be, so in reality, no action must be taken. A banana is a fruit, but it's not; it might just be a stem or a root. Maybe it's some alien seed sent from Mars; society will not let it go, no matter what it is. They enjoy digging to entertain their minds and confuse everyone along with them with no actual end goal.

Humanity's abuse of other's trusting nature turns me into some seventy-year-old woman who'll sit on a porch and yell at kids who step on my lawn. I've grown bitter and angry over dumb things such as daylight savings and credit card interest. My beef with the world started with bananas and the rainbow and has subsequently evolved into an overvaluation of how our world works. I find it funny how I've overexplained how overexplaining is damaging, but let me say that bananas really are the bottom of the fruit barrel. Regardless of the baggage that comes with it, the texture is strange. Curious George was onto something with wanting to live above an Italian place; I would take a meatball sub over a banana, even if the meatball sub was renamed Kevin.

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