

**XV**

THE HARPER ANTHOLOGY

**S T U D E N T W R I T E R S**



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Harper Faculty:

Would you like to submit your students' writing for a future issue of this publication? If so, please use the tear-out submission form on pages 159-160 of this issue.

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# Foreword

Dear readers,

Do you like the cover of this year's *Harper Anthology*? (*I'll tell you what, I love it, and I think Matt Nelson, Harper's graphic designer, deserves a promotion on the strength of it.*) The cover captures the spirit of the book, entirely. An anthology like this one is a gathering of humanity, where minds are shared, where if we read, we have the great opportunity to wear someone else's glasses, and I had planned to devote the entire foreword to this idea. Something happened, though. I took a look at some of the world through the lenses of my esteemed (and now retired) colleague, Julie Fleenor.

Friday night, July 18th, 2003, I sat at my kitchen table, saying to myself, sometimes audibly, "left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right," as I reviewed the proofs of this 15<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Harper Anthology*. This was just one of the many strange little behaviors involved with the lengthy production process for this annual publication. It made for quite an exciting Friday night!

Two hours after going "left, right" in my kitchen, I was in my basement, at the computer, having just read the copy of Julie Fleenor's Afterword to this edition (and you can read it, too, on pages 157-158, and have an experience similar to mine). It was nice for me to connect with a writer like Julie and be reminded of some of the ways a writer gets some work done, because after so much reading and teaching, I sometimes feel I no longer know how to do what brought me to this point.

In the Afterword, titled "The William Prufrock Furniture Company," Julie provides us with a few ideas for generating fiction, and these ideas are just as suitable for generating other types of writing, as well. Among other things, she suggests that writers must read other writers and engage in dialogue with them; that news reports, anecdotes, and overheard conversations can be the germs for good writing; that dreams (and other people's dreams) should be written down and can be the source of material for writing.

So: last night, Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, I had a travel/adventure dream that made for a great Thursday night. I

was in a mountainous area at the Pakistan/Afghanistan border, in a rocky valley, with my eyes focused on an old railway tunnel entrance, high up in the arid mountains. I have never been to Afghanistan or Pakistan, but I have been through Tehachapi Pass in the Mojave Desert of California a few times. It is a similarly mountainous area with many railway tunnels, so perhaps that is where the imagery came from—or maybe from a video about the Khyber Pass. At any rate, "there I was," as 1960s cartoon legend Commander McBragg might have said, on an expedition to reach that tunnel, up there in the mountains. I was not alone—I had a guide along with me, an older man, as well as my family, but we were going to approach this tunnel differently. We were going to do it the hard way, following a narrow path that ascended out of the valley along a narrow, rocky ridge, toward the summit (and the tunnel) a few miles away.

As I began to learn in this dream, we were not the only people here making this expedition—or this pilgrimage, as it turned out to be. As we neared the summit, and the tunnel came into view, we began ascending a wooden stairway over a series of warm mineral springs and pools, steaming away, full of bathers. I paused to take pictures of this sight, using a disposable camera. The stairs were by now crowded with other pilgrims in swimming suits, who had used the climate-controlled tunnel system within the mountain (not the narrow sun-beaten path we had taken), to reach the summit (and surprisingly, the fountain and plastic water slide at the top of it). When I got to the summit, I hesitated, before sitting and sliding down into the pool below. After splashing around a bit, I followed some other people to an overlook, where a rocky, expansive mountain valley on the Afghan side of the mountain could be seen. A Pakistani man near me took pictures of landmarks that he observed in the valley, and he was overcome with emotion, because he had not seen them in so long.

The trip down the mountain was not as arduous as the ascent. Along with hundreds of others, I used the series of slides, tubes, stairs, and passageways through the interior of the mountain to finally reach the valley back in Pakistan (or was it Barstow, California?). In one case, though, I could not fit through one of the slide entrances, so an attendant let me through a back passageway to a huge rotating plate, which spun me slowly to a slide that I could manage. In another case, the slide—just a hole in the

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## Foreword

ground, straight down—appeared to be closed off with some sort of soft tissue, but people were just jumping in and disappearing through it, like through a manhole, trusting that they would come out the other side. I followed, probably experiencing something like birth, but ended up at yet another set of wooden stairs, then more slides, stairs, steps, gates, and finally a parking lot in the valley. I never did get to see my car, or anyone else's, for that matter. At the end of the dream, I was still walking, though not alone. I had seen many family members and been surrounded by helpful people through the entire descent, though we would sometimes separate and then rejoin.

OK, as I am about out of space, I need to do something with this. Julie, are you on your way down from the mountain? Am I out of the funhouse yet? Can you show me what to do? Should I go for the corny analogy? Yes? Do what you feel, she says. OK, here it is.

I think I used to be a writer. Now, I am primarily an editor. Editors do things the hard way—they have to take the rocky path, under the withering sun. They put in the missing commas, italicize or underline the names of books, correct typographical errors, remove superfluous language, smooth out awkward passages, find missing bibliographic information, and work with authors, intermediaries, designers, and typesetters, over the phone, via e-mail, and in person, to bring others' creations into print. Editors also read, reread, and reread. And reread. And read some more. Their once perfect vision is shot, like mine was, in their mid-twenties. On the way up the mountain, the summit looks awfully small in the distance, but the deadline looms large, always somewhere near the inside of the right eyeball, under the editor's adventuring cap. And, judging from this editor's dream—full of tunnels, slides, stairs, etc—editing, like everything else, most assuredly has some sort of unhealthy relationship with sex—but don't get me started. To edit is to edit is to edit is to edit. Left, right, left, right, left, right. Up the mountain. Down the mountain. There's a rock I didn't see last time. It's been moved exactly one centimeter.

Though it sounds like awful, solitary work, I am honored to do it, because when I work on a project like this, an anthology, I am immersed in all humanity, if just for a little while. I am one of a crowd on a rocky path—I am with 46 student writers and 27 contributing faculty—I am wearing many more pairs of glasses than are on the cover of this book. I am with a gathering of esteemed authors, from Albert Camus to Shel Silverstein. I am with David Sommers, Ralph Ellison, and Booker T. Washington;

Donnelle Fuller, Jessica Walsh, William Shakespeare, Ophelia, Desdemona, Kate, and Beatrice. I am with Anthonii Sanders for 38 years of life experience, all over the world, sitting and drinking with him in the Penny Road Pub. I am with Paul Rollins, Robert Lowell, Andrew Wilson, Tom DePalma, Colonel Shaw, and a legion of African-American soldiers who gave their lives in the U.S. Civil War. I am with Bevin Murdock and Frida Kahlo as they courageously decide to live, and I am with Lisa Duwe and her relatives as she, and they, courageously learn how it is to die. This is truly an anthology. This is truly humanity. As the editor, I am privileged to have been at the center of it.

With me up the rocky path and down the many stairs have been the faculty judges for this year's anthology: Paul Bellwoar, Charles Brown, Barbara Butler, Judy Kaplow, Kurt Neumann, Catherine Restovich, and Andrew Wilson; expedient and patient typesetter Deanna Torres; understanding and creative graphic designer Matt Nelson; steady and efficient print shop manager Peter Gart, and the many print shop staff members whose hands and time are part of this book; supportive and open-minded Dean of Liberal Arts, Dennis Weeks; tenacious and gracious English department chairs Seema Kurup and Kurt Neumann; earth mother and publications professional Bernadine Clune, who hired me into my first editing job and helped me at the last minute to find Melissa Mares, an excellent proofreader and editor, to help with this publication.

Bernadine Clune, in fact, showed me how to go “left, right,” when reviewing a set of page proofs. It is an activity that only a publications person would know about, and it involves reviewing the set of pages to see how many articles start on right-hand pages (desirable, because the book opens to them and they are very visible), and how many start on left-hand pages (not as desirable, because titles on left-hand pages are less likely to jump out at the readers). If too many articles start on left-hand pages, the condensation of a four-page article into three will fix the problem throughout most of the book. It worked for this book; 28 of the 44 articles start on right-hand pages.

Finally, on this path, there has been Julie Flenor, who has taught many how to go “left, right,” up a mountain—and who reminded me very recently that if I can edit and dream, I can also write. Thanks, Julie, for letting me wear those glasses. And thanks, all.

Kris Piepenburg  
Chair, *Harper Anthology* Committee

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# The Insanity Defense

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Michelle Anselmo;  
Debbie Baiocco; Katie Unzicker  
Course: English 101 (Composition)  
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

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Assignment:

*In a collaborative group, research a topic well enough to educate an unformed audience about it, and also to eventually write argumentatively about some aspect of the topic. Collaborate on the research as well as the writing.*

Is the defendant innocent or guilty? Is he or she sane or insane? Was the defendant mentally capable of knowing right from wrong? These are the tough questions 12 randomly selected jurors need to decide. Although it seems like everyone these days is using an insanity defense, only 1% of felony cases plead not guilty by reason of insanity. The insanity defense was used in the disturbing cases of John Wayne Gacy, Dr. Lee Robin, and Marilyn Lemak, and all three cases had different outcomes. It is almost comforting to think of these individuals as insane, because the alternative, being sane, makes it even harder to understand how they could possibly have committed their unthinkable crimes. All three cases happened much too close to home: right here in suburban Chicago. Whether these defendants knew right from wrong at the time of their crimes is difficult to know for sure. The jurors on these disturbing cases had a hard job. Whether or not these defendants had insanity, lunacy, madness, derangement, mania, delirium, or dementia, or whatever it may be called, something must have been very wrong with these individuals for them to have committed such horrible crimes against other human beings.

## Overview and History

The insanity defense is defined as “the claim of a defendant in a criminal prosecution that he/she was insane when the crime was committed” (Dictionary.law.com). Sometimes this insanity defense is combined with the defendant being described as having been temporarily insane. Being temporarily insane is defined as “a defense by the accused that he/she was briefly insane at the time the crime was committed and therefore was incapable of knowing the nature of his/her alleged criminal act” (Dictionary.law.com). No matter how a defendant pleads at the onset of a trial, it will still come down to proving it to a jury of his or her peers.

The insanity defense has its roots embedded in centuries of legal tradition. As early as the 13th Century, the English Lord Bracton established the principle of mental deficiency in human behavior. He said that some people simply do not know what they are doing and act in a manner “as to be not far removed from the brute” (qtd. in Melton 188). From that concept, “insanity” came to mean that a person lacks the awareness of what he or she is doing and therefore cannot form an intent to do wrong. Since there was no malice in the intent of his or her actions, then technically there could be no guilt. The standard for insanity in the courts was determined to be such that a “man must be totally deprived of his understanding and memory so as not to know what he is doing, no more than an infant, brute or a wild beast” (Melton 190). This “wild beast” standard was the insanity requirement of England’s courts for over a hundred years, and any defendant who attempted to use the defense had to prove he or she lacked the minimum understanding of a wild animal or infant. It wasn’t until 1843, when a man named Daniel M’Naghten committed a murder that would forever alter the history of jurisprudence in the Western world, that this changed.

In 1843, Daniel M’Naghten, a Scottish woodcutter, shot and killed Edward Drummond, secretary to England’s Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, in London. He acted under the belief that he was actually shooting the Prime Minister, because M’Naghten believed the Prime Minister was plotting against him. When M’Naghten reached trial, his attorneys pleaded that he should be acquitted because he was obviously insane and did not understand what he was

## The Insanity Defense

doing. M’Naghten later was acquitted of the crime. Later that same year, the House of Lords issued the following ruling:

To establish a defense on the ground of insanity, it must clearly be proved that, at the time of the committing of the act, the party accused was laboring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing; or if he did know it, that he did not know what he was doing was wrong (qtd. in Melton 191).

This edict became known as the M’Naghten Rule, and over the century, this was the standard for the insanity defense. As for Daniel M’Naghten, after his acquittal, he was sent to Bedlam and other institutions where he languished in the world of the insane for several decades, until he passed away in 1863.

### Case 1—John Wayne Gacy, Jr.

John Wayne Gacy’s murder trial began Feb. 6, 1980 in the Cook County Criminal Courts Building in Chicago. The members of the jury, who consisted of five women and seven men, listened as prosecutor Bob Egan talked about Gacy victim Robert Piest’s life, his gruesome death, and how Gacy was responsible for his murder. Egan told them about the investigation into Gacy, the bodies beneath his house, and how Gacy’s actions were thought-out and lucid.

If he had been found insane, Gacy would have become a ward of the state mental health system. Furthermore, there is no time limit on the incarceration of such a person. In many cases, they are set free when they are deemed mentally stable enough to reenter society. This is what the defense believed was best for their client. An insanity plea is usually very difficult to prove. Although prosecutors were stung by Gacy’s insanity plea, it was something they had expected and for which they were well prepared.

Following the friends and family of the victims came the testimony of those who worked for Gacy, who had survived sexual, and usually violent, encounters with him. Some of his former employees told of his mood swings and how he would trick them into being handcuffed. Others told of how he constantly made passes at them while at work. The testimony continued for the next several weeks, including that of friends and neighbors of Gacy, police officers involved in the investigation and arrest of Gacy, and psychologists who found Gacy sane

during the killings. Before the state rested, it had called some sixty witnesses to the bench.

In an effort to prove Gacy’s insanity, the defense called to the stand the friends and family of the accused killer. Gacy’s mother told of how her husband abused Gacy on several occasions, at one time whipping him with a leather strap. Gacy’s sister told a similar story of how she repeatedly witnessed her brother being verbally abused by their father. Many people who testified for the defense told of how Gacy was a good and generous man, and how he helped those in need and always had a smile on his face. Lillie Grexa took the stand and told of how wonderful a neighbor he was. However, Mrs. Grexa did say something that would prove damaging to Gacy’s case. She refused to say that he was crazy; instead, she said she believed Gacy to be a “very brilliant man.” That statement would conflict with the defense’s story that he was unable to control his actions and was insane.

The defense had called Thomas Eliseo, a psychologist who interviewed Gacy before the trial. He found that Gacy was extremely intelligent, yet he believed that he was suffering from borderline schizophrenia. The other medical experts testifying on behalf of the defense gave similar testimony, stating that Gacy was schizophrenic, suffered from multiple personality disorder, or had antisocial behavior. They additionally stated that Gacy’s mental disorder impaired his capacity to understand the magnitude of his criminal acts. In conclusion, they all found him to have been insane during the times he committed murder. After the testimony of the medical experts, the defense rested its case (Bardsley par. 8).

The defense insisted that Gacy was insane and out of control at the time of the killings, and they pointed to the testimony given by the experts during the trial. After the closing arguments, and the testimony of over a hundred witnesses over a period of five weeks, the jury was left to make their decision. It took only two hours of deliberation before the jury came back with its verdict. The courtroom was filled with silence, and everyone within stood at attention when the jury marched in with its verdict. The silence was broken when the court clerk read, “We, the jury, find the defendant, John Wayne Gacy, guilty...g”

Just after midnight on May 10, 1994, Gacy was executed by lethal injection. For his last words, Gacy snarled, “Kiss my ass” (qtd. in Lohr par. 32).

### Case 2—Dr. Lee Robin

On August 13, 1988, Dr. Lee Robin of Palatine took an ax and attacked his wife, Annette, as she lay in bed sleeping. Evidence showed that she had awakened and gotten out of bed, but he continued his attack until she was lying dead on the floor, in a pool of blood. Dr. Robin then took his 2 1/2-month-old daughter, Denise, and drowned her in the bathtub. Afterward, Robin called the Palatine Police Department, reported that there was a problem, and sat on the staircase as he waited for them to arrive.

At the time of the murders, Dr. Robin was being treated for depression. In fact, only a week before the murders, he had attempted suicide. At one point, Robin said that he killed his wife and child because he was the devil and he was killing them out of mercy. Another time, he said that he didn't know why he had killed his wife, but his reason for killing his daughter was that he didn't want her to have to grow up without a mother (O'Connor 5). Although Dr. Robin admitted his guilt, three doctors (two psychiatrists and a psychologist) testified that Robin was suffering from severe depression. Consequently, in October 1988, the court found Robin mentally unfit to stand trial. However, in May of 1989, he was finally deemed fit to stand trial after the psychologist who had previously examined him found that his depression had improved enough that he would be able to assist his lawyers in his own defense (O'Connor 5).

In September of 1989, Lee Robin was found guilty by reason of insanity for the murders of his wife and daughter. This verdict was issued by Cook County Criminal Court Judge James Bailey after three experts in mental health testified that due to Robin's severe depression, he was legally insane at the time of the murders and did not understand that what he was doing was wrong. Although Robin was being held at the Elgin Mental Health Center, it wasn't until a month later that he had a hearing to decide whether or not he should be committed involuntarily to the Illinois Department of Mental Health (IDMH) (O'Connor 5). Under the Illinois law at the time of the murders, defendants such as Robin remain in the custody of the IDMH until the IDMH doctors find that the defendant is well again and a judge agrees that the defendant is no longer mentally ill. After that, freedom is gradually reintroduced, beginning with short unsupervised outings (Kuczka, "Palatine Murders Relived..." 1).

Many people are against defendants using the insanity defense to literally "get away with murder." For that reason, in 1981, the Illinois General Assembly passed a law that allowed for a verdict of guilty but mentally ill in criminal cases. What that means is that if someone is convicted of this charge, they are treated for their mental illness *and* they must serve their prison term (Kuczka, "Fleeing Killers No Rarity..." 1).

After Robin spent a mere four years at the state-run Elgin Mental Health Center, two of his doctors came before Cook County Judge James Bailey to seek permission for Robin to take trips away from the facility in order to go to off-site doctor appointments. They were unsuccessful. Again, in December 1997, after six years at Elgin Mental Health Center, Robin was once again denied unsupervised trips away from the facility. He was, however, granted permission by Circuit Judge James P. Flannery Jr. to move to a less secure area of the center.

In October of 1999, Judge James P. Flannery agreed with Robin's doctors that Robin's illness was successfully being controlled by his medications and agreed to allow Robin to leave the Mental Health Facility and move into government subsidized housing over the next 90 days. At this point, Governor George Ryan intervened and ordered the Illinois Department of Human Services to hold Robin against the judge's order, until the case was reviewed by an appeals court (Higgins, "Governor Tells State Agency..." 6). Ultimately, in spite of the Cook County state's attorneys appealing the decision to release Robin all the way up to the Illinois Supreme Court, Robin finally won his freedom. In May of 2001, after only 12 years at Elgin Mental Health Center, Robin was released to a center in Chicago for chronically mentally ill people. During his stay there, Robin has to submit to blood tests, and his medication doses are monitored by the doctors to assure that he is keeping his condition under control (Higgins, "Doctor Who Killed Two Wins Release" 1).

The Lee Robin insanity defense verdict was a pivotal one in the state of Illinois. It captured the attention of even the governor of the state, leading to new legislation that would require the patient at the state mental hospital to prove that they are no longer a danger to themselves or anyone else. Previously the burden was on the *prosecutors* to prove that the patient was still dangerous (Higgins, "Doctor Who Killed Two Wins Release" 1).

### Case 3—Marilyn Lemak

On March 4, 1999, Marilyn Lemak purposely fed her three children peanut butter containing some of her own sleeping medication. She then put her children to bed and one by one suffocated them with her own hands. Afterwards, she put on her wedding dress, slit her wrists, and stabbed a photograph of her husband and his new girlfriend.

According to her attorneys, Lemak was severely depressed and delusional at the time that she murdered her children, and she thought that she and her children would be reunited in a happier place (Buchanan par. 9). As such, they decided to use the insanity defense.

The prosecution depicted Lemak as a woman who murdered her children out of revenge—to hurt her husband, who was seeking a divorce and had already begun dating someone. They used the fact that Lemak was remorseful after what she did; therefore, she knew that what she had done was wrong (Buchanan par. 8).

It has been getting increasingly more difficult for attorneys to get a verdict of “not guilty by reason of insanity.” According to Andrea Lyon, a DePaul University law professor and director of the school’s Center of Justice in Capital Cases, “Juries are hostile to it because they think the person is getting away with something. Prosecutors say, ‘Being depressed is not an excuse for murder,’ and that resonates with the jurors” (qtd. in Buchanan par. 5).

In this case, Lyon was right. After three weeks of testimony, the jury convicted Lemak of first-degree murder. This conviction made her eligible for life in prison or the death penalty. In the end, the prosecutors decided against pursuing the death penalty and on Monday, April 8, 2002, Ms. Lemak (now known as Marilyn Morrissey) was sentenced to life in prison with no chance for parole. After the verdict was delivered, the children’s father, David Lemak, gave an emotional statement, saying, “My family and I believe the punishment most befitting Marilyn Morrissey is to spend the rest of her life in prison. There, she will have to live each day with the knowledge of the horror she is accountable for” (qtd. in Coen par. 11).

### Conclusion

Insanity as defense has been recorded and used in courts since the year 1226, although the legal definition of insanity continues to evolve with time. As cases are won

and lost, the legal system continues to test the limits of this defense.

In these cases, which used the insanity defense, only one defense team convinced the jury that the defendant fit the legal definition of insanity. Each defendant had his or her excuses as to why they committed these horrible crimes: Gacy was physically and mentally abused by his father; Dr. Robin was depressed and thought he was the devil; and Lemak, who was depressed, also claimed that she was delusional. Regardless of their reasons, these individuals, insane or not, were held accountable for their crimes. Gacy was imprisoned and later executed, Dr. Robin spent 12 years in a mental health institution, and Lemak will be spending the rest of her life in jail.

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Evaluation: *This is a thorough, compelling investigation that educates effectively, makes good use of research, and prepared the individuals of this group to each write well-informed argumentative essays on this topic. Also, the paper is evidence that collaborative research and writing can be successful.*

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# In the Name of Social Change: A Literary Tour of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century China

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Courtney Bishop

Course: Literature 208 (non-Western Literature)

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

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### Assignment:

*Students were to complete short essays at home, in response to three of four essay questions, as part of the exam on Chinese literature.*

### Part 1

*Instructions:* Use the biography of Lu Xun and the copy of the story “Diary of a Madman” to answer this question: Through its grotesque exaggeration, what point is Lu Xun’s “Diary of a Madman” trying to make? Please summarize Lu Xun’s basic beliefs in the beginning of your response, to provide context for the reader. In the body of your response, be sure to quote from the story to support your answer.

In “Diary of a Madman,” Lu Xun expresses his desire to change the mentality and living conditions of ancient Chinese ways, to have the Chinese people of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century become modernized, and have the people accept that change is inevitable and necessary. He uses the phrase “eat people” to represent the Chinese way of pushing undesirable things behind and “forgetting” about them, or even to say they “take in” or consume the undesirable aspects in their society, pushing these things to the backs of their minds and conveniently placing them aside to die so they do not have to deal with them.

Thousands of years of oppression and suppression had left little room for hope of change; the Chinese way of denying negative aspects of life had been in effect for so long that the people grew an abnormal fear of “different” opinions, not wanting these opinions to grab hold of society and cause drastic change to a way of life that they had been accustomed to for generations. Every generation grew more and more afraid of anything that could induce change, whether or not that change would be for better or worse, because they were too afraid to try. Lu Xun’s character explores history to reveal that this mindset has been going on for four thousand years, and China has not changed in so long that it needs to, or it will never reach the levels of power and prosperity of the other countries in the world. Modernization is the key aspect of Lu Xun’s ideals, and his anti-isolationist ideas were developing during the time he spent as a student in Japan, where he could view China’s ways of life from a foreign perspective instead of the four-thousand-year mindset he was strung along with when he lived inside of China. His time abroad led Lu Xun to see how far back China was set, and how far forward China *could* spring if only

the Chinese saw out of their box and viewed the world as he did. His main character, the writer of the diary, is the bearer of Lu Xun's ideas and the voice with which he speaks his mind to the readers. He hopes to spark a strain of thought within his fellow Chinese people, to make them less fearful of change, and bring them out of the ancient ways to try a new type of government that could be more beneficial than the old.

"Diary of a Madman" begins with an opening that simply introduces the characters, so when the diary is opened, the real story is set in place. The "madman" is a young man who sees that his society needs change. However, everywhere he looks, he is labeled as an atrocity to the public eye, and he realizes that the people are trying to do as they have always done for thousands of years – "eat" him (31). The expression of "eating people" in this story represents the way the Chinese have pushed away or "done away with" anything in life that they were fearful of, and in this story, anyone that thought differently or could "induce change" was feared over all. The writer of the diary is surrounded by people who try to push him out of sight, who try to keep his voice down and assimilate him back into their society quietly, because they fear what he can do. When the "madman's" brother brings in a doctor to examine him, the doctor tries to tell him that he'll be better in a few days of peace and quiet, and tells him not to "let [his] thoughts run away with [him]" (33). The doctor simply hopes that the "radical" behavior the madman is expressing, the thoughts that Chinese culture was repressing and that it was necessary to change society, were simply just the madman's thoughts running rampant, almost as though he were thinking too much and should forget the matter entirely, so everything will "return to normal." Of course, the madman knows that his thoughts are not "insane" or "radical," but necessary to advance society past its ancient mindset and into the modern world, and he would not suppress his thoughts because he did not fear those who tried to suppress *him*. He knows that they are trying to make him fearful of them by showing their disdain for him to his face, pushing him aside and telling him he isn't sane, and even the children are taught to hate him, even though he had done nothing wrong to the children

at all and did not deserve their hatred. He knew that the children's minds had only been tainted with the ancient ideals, just as generations after generations of Chinese had been taught for thousands of years; and so although the children did not have any reason to hate him, they did only because their parents told them to hate him, that they had to hate him, and that's exactly what he desires to change.

He knows that the society members who are trying to repress him are more afraid of what he'll do than his fear of them and their attempts to frighten him into submission. He says he isn't "a *bit* afraid. Even though I do not eat human flesh, I still have a lot more courage than those who do" (33). When he brings this entire idea of "eating people" up to another young man, the man at first makes do, thinking that the "madman" is simply joking; but then the madman continues, and as the young man takes the madman more and more seriously, the young man denies that anyone is being eaten at all. The madman insists that it is happening, spouting out evidence that "They're eating people in Wolf Pack Village this very minute. And it's written in all the books, too, written in bright red blood!" (37). The young man catches on to what the madman is really implying, cowering back in fear and resorting to the same excuse that China had been using all those centuries ago, saying, "Maybe they are, but it's always been that way..." (37). And, straight to the point, derived directly from the mouth of Lu Xun, the madman replies, "Just because it's always been that way, does that make it *right*!?" (37). The meaning behind the entire story is held in that line, and the young man cannot win the argument against the truth, weakly insisting that the madman was simply wrong and that is that. The madman returns to the thought that the young man must have been taught to think that way by his parents, and must have already passed this way of life on to his own children.

Section nine of "Diary of a Madman" indicates a broadening in the madman's perspective, when he comes to the realization that the Chinese are not only afraid of those who want to induce change in society, but they are afraid of each other as well, so afraid that no one speaks up about anything and everyone is always

“...watching each other with suspicious looks in their eyes” (37). He finally writes down that the only thing these paranoid people really need is to give up that fear and accept change, because it is inevitable, and its creeping up on them makes them only more and more fearful of what it will do. But of course, he realizes as well that the Chinese people “...all join together to hold each other back, and talk each other out of it!...They’d rather die than take that one little step” (37). The Chinese of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century suffer through terror and oppression because of class differences, the rich toying with the poor and making them suffer, but the oppressed do not try to change these ways, simply because “it has always been this way,” and they are more afraid of change than of the ones who are hurting them from higher on the social strata. When the madman finally brings this topic up to his brother, whom he also labels as a cannibal, the entirety of Lu Xun’s ideas are stated together. The madman says that, when society decided to “eat” him, his brother did not just refuse to prevent it, but joined them as well, implying that his brother was not strong willed enough to even save his next of kin from the oppressing society, and should be ashamed. The madman says that all the people need to do is “turn back – change – and then everything would be fine. Even though people may say, ‘It’s always been like this’, we can still do our best to improve. And we can start today!” (39). The madman notes also that some people are very aware that society needs change, but, like his brother, they are too afraid to stand up for it and continue with the ancient ways of “eating people” and suppressing evolution. People come to listen to the rantings of the “madman,” and in anger, his elder brother sends them away, saying they need not listen to these ravings. The madman sticks to his ideals, though, yelling out loud to the people that they *can* change, and the world will make them change even if they do not see it now; he refuses to suppress these thoughts, and he does not let anyone else eradicate them from his mind, because he knows what he believes in and will not be swayed to fear them as much as they fear him.

In the very end, the madman restates that the change needs to start as soon as possible, no more waiting, and hopes that “Maybe there are some children around who still haven’t eaten human flesh” (41). He wants to pass

on his *own* ideals of revolution to the children, instead of the ancient oppressive ways. He knows that the only way to bring about this change is to embed this thought into the minds of those who have not yet been tainted with the ancient ideals, and they are the ones who must take up the challenge of altering the views of an entire nation.

## Part 2

*Instructions:* Write an analysis of Mao Zedong’s poem “Dialogue of the Birds.” What point was Mao trying to make in the poem? What might its place be in Chinese history? Please focus on quoting from and explaining the details of the poem in orderly fashion. Here, it would help to divide the poem into sections, and explain one section at a time.

Mao Zedong’s poem “Dialogue of the Birds” can be interpreted in a few different lights, but what seems adequate to say is that the two birds, a crow and a sparrow, respectively, represent Mao himself, as the crow who sees the “truth of the world,” in a dialogue with a questioning member of the Communist party.

At the beginning of the poem, the crow keeps his eyes on the world; he surveys everything and comes to the conclusion that no one is safe and everyone is in danger inside these “walled cities where humans dwell” (5). The “walled cities” represent the inside of China, which has terrible living standards and internal warfare, poor becoming poorer, and people dying and being taken away as “enemies of the party.” The “horizons lit by gun flash / shell craters all around” seem to be the results of The Great Leap Forward, which had ended officially five years before Mao wrote this poem. The “horizons” are the Chinese lands and people, hit by the “gun-flash” of the terrible attempt at developing the country too quickly; the “shell craters” are the results of this “Great Leap,” the immense amount of death and the crops that rotted in the storage rooms, the people who still lived with the traumatic after-effects. All of these horrible events “startle” the sparrow, or “awaken the minds of the Chinese people” who do not want to live in these conditions any more, and begin to dream of moving to a better country (8).

The sparrow says there is a “fairylad” somewhere out there, which could represent America or Europe

(13). This fairyland seems wonderful, with more than enough food for everyone, better living conditions, and great money-making ventures (15 – 17). The crow spits in the face of this dream-world, saying that it is not true in the least, and nowhere is anyone living in such a paradise (18 – 19).

Of course, this poem is pro-Communist propaganda in a time where Mao's people are disheartened at the terrible quality of leadership and lifestyle, completely inverse of what was promised when the regime came into power in 1949. Mao wants to make them think that there is no better place than China, and that everyone around the world is suffering. Perhaps the images of the "walled cities where humans dwell" in line five represent the rest of the world outside of China, and that Mao is saying they are terrible places to live, with worse living conditions than China; he depicts all of the "rumors" of better lands with opportunities for all as merely rumors, and nothing more. Mao, as the crow who "rises ten thousand miles" and surveys all the lands of the world, makes himself all-powerful and so, when he tells his people that the rest of the world is just as bad or worse off than China under his rule, they (or the sparrow, as it may be) simply believe what he says to be the truth. This poem is the world as he wants his people to see it, so they remain loyal to the Communist party, and particularly to himself over all, and it represents exactly how Mao wants his people to view him: as the big crow who watches over and "protects" the working-class sparrows, seeing all and knowing all and having them believe his word to be the only truth.

### Part 3

*Instructions: Write an essay about how one of these stories—"Festival," "I Am Not a Cat," "13 Happiness Street," "Hut on the Mountain," or the foreword to "Dialogues in Paradise"—features at least three of the principles of "the familiarization of the uncanny" in modern Chinese literature, as outlined in the handout of notes from David Der-Wei Wang's essay "Chinese Fiction for the 90's." To provide context for the reader, write a short summary of the story before you begin to discuss how the story exemplifies this trend.*

A Cheng's short story "Festival" depicts the horrific reality of life during the Chinese Cultural Revolution through the lives of rural youths who had to endure it; in the story, three young children grow up in a society where the adults violently struggle to show who is "better" than the other, and who is more "loyal" to the country. The children grow up accustomed to warfare and hatred, completely naïve to the violence as something they should detest. Guns and bloodshed are just aspects of their daily lives, seen as nothing more than something the adults do, without question as to why they do it. The period of time depicted in this short story reflects the Cultural Revolution in China, when factions around the country battled each other to prove which group was more "loyal to the country," or who did the job better. Neighbors and relatives were pitted against one another, although both groups were trying to achieve the same goal. In the end, these groups feuded more than accomplished any of their initial goals of "helping the country," simply killing each other in an internal game of war. A Cheng "familiarizes the uncanny," or brings the less pleasant aspects of life forward, in a bold but also very subtle way, making these aspects of life as common and petty as taking a walk, although they are obviously much more serious than the author makes them seem on the outside. A Cheng brings forth the horror of life in China during the Cultural Revolution, showing it from the perspective of the children who were surrounded by internal warfare and "allowed to watch executions" as though they were nothing out of the ordinary, ending in the accidental deaths of the children who are caught in the crossfire of feuding factions, whose members were the children's own fathers.

The three children in this short story have fathers who are part of the two separate factions. The two boys (Xiao Long and Xiao Rong) have fathers in one group, while the father of the girl, Xiao Qin, is a member of the opposition. Though the children are told not to play with each other, the children place the strange adult world aside to have fun, as children do. One night, Xiao Long's father announces at dinner that during the evening his faction will battle against the other faction for rights to the irrigation ditch; he is excited that there

will finally be some entertainment and that he can finally use the gun he purchases at the beginning of the story. Xiao Long, more excited about the Children's Day celebration being held the next day, does not pay heed to what his father says and sneaks out of the house at night to play with his friends in the irrigation ditches. The three children play with a flashlight, innocently flickering the light on and off. The light from the flashlight is seen by the hidden faction members on either side of the ditches, who do not see the children but just the flashing light. They take the flashes as signals from the "opposing" side to shoot. The children then watch a show of bullets that they think are pretty flashing lights, reminding them of their most fun-filled times, like when visiting the blacksmith or the New Year's firecrackers. They jump up and flick on the flashlight to bring back the bullets they do not know are deadly, and in the midst of their naïve excitement, the fathers, members of the two factions, unknowingly kill their own children in needless, cold blood.

This story brings to light many of the disturbing, tragically ironic aspects of Chinese culture during the Cultural Revolution. "Festival" is a story written to make a strong point against internal violence, the naïve persecutions of man against fellow man. A Cheng desired to bring a change to the people of China, showing them with his tragic message that this way of life was wrong, and that the children were the ones who were being hurt the most; the very future that the Chinese government strove to protect was being massacred at the hands of the ones who bore them. Not only were thousands of adults being needlessly killed, but the children grew up not knowing right from wrong, being fed prejudice and hatred from the day they were born. A Cheng shows the terrible aspects of this way of life from the minds of the unknowing children who had to endure it. It is difficult for a reader who comes from a different background and era to emotionally understand why the children do not become afraid when they hear gunshots, think that guns are only meant for killing other people, watch executions without regret, and are even pushed to celebrate the beatings of opposing faction members, because people of other backgrounds were not raised with such events as merely casual aspects of daily life.

Xiao Long's mother is a vague voice of reason that echoes the reader's subconscious during the story, trying to protect her family from killing others and being killed themselves. Although she is far from effective, she still requests that people be more sensible with this destructive power they hold. She first asks Xiao Long's father to aim his gun "...at the sky, so he wouldn't hurt anyone. But he told her that's what guns are for – hitting people" (130). Later on the same page, she watches her husband and Xiao Rong's father argue, asking them that they "...Don't argue when [they've] got guns in [their] hands" (130). And when the two men walk away, her son Xiao Long tries to follow them in curiosity, but his mother "...ran over and grabbed her son, muttering angrily, 'Haven't you seen enough killing already?'" (131). She is the one who is vaguely defending A Cheng's point of view, like his voice is breaking through the story to try and change the minds of the men who live these murderous lives, who only walk away and chuckle, like the woman said nothing of importance at all. This voice suggests a change needs to be made, and A Cheng hopes the readers catch this subtle sense of reason, if not the many other unsettling events in this story that occur between the innocent minds of the children and the equally naïve minds of the rivaling factions.

The lives and mentalities of children are comparable to the child-like mentalities of the single-minded faction members in "Festival." The events of the story represent the grotesque aspects of life in China during the Cultural Revolution, which became something "normal," or something just seen as casual life. The grotesque internal warfare and executions, beatings and terror alongside children playing in the streets, and festivals of old customs alongside new festivals that celebrate destruction and murder became familiar, everyday aspects of life. The most grotesque aspect of all was that the children did not know the adults were doing wrong, that they were killing each other to achieve a worthless goal that would never be accomplished because they were too busy pushing each other down to get there. A Cheng describes guns and murder and beatings as though they are nothing to fear at all, like they are supposed to happen every day without question as to why. And in the end, the adults who behave as naively as the children

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playing war, but with bigger, more destructive toys, not only kill each other but their own children as well. They end their lives not just with guns and explosions, but by keeping the children restricted to a deadened life without hope for better; schools are shut down, families and once-friends are beating each other in the streets, and executions and violence and war occur meaninglessly, without a glimmer or a word that it could be ended, that life could be different and changed for the better.

“Festival” shows that China’s future is being killed physically and mentally, and A Cheng wants the people to read his story and see that internal warfare is only leading to horrific destruction; like Lu Xun before him, he wants China to see that the country needs a change, and the Chinese people should make their goal something that they can all work together to achieve. A Cheng wants the people to place down their arms and celebrate their ancient festivals of life, like the Children’s Day festival that the three youths were looking forward to on the day they were killed. Through this short segment of Chinese life during the Cultural Revolution, presented through the naïve eyes of innocent children who desire fun and play, the familiarization of their horrible and “uncanny” lives is made clear. “Festival” depicts the factions as emotionless and oblivious when the children die, caring more for power and prestige than the lives of their own families, showing that the China of that era was in need of a change for the better.

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Evaluation: *This is excellent literary analysis, and the three short essays combined provide a nice sketch of trends in China during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

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# Cinder Block Versus Supercomputer

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*Bryan Clodfelter*

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

*Write a persuasive essay.*

One of my pet peeves afflicts me when I walk through my dad's office, through friends' homes, through school labs, and through colleges. As I travel down the hallways and through offices, Windows computers are on the vast majority of desks. This can't be right! I grew up watching my dad working on an original 128k Macintosh, and I learned at an early age how to open things up, type, and play games (I loved the original MS Flight Simulator and KidPix—a kiddy drawing program). Since I grew up using a Mac, some people might say that I'm biased. But I'm not. My dad always worked on PCs in his office, and I grew to know the ins and outs of Windows almost as well as the Mac OS. Minesweeper was a fun game that the Mac didn't have, and I liked the way the Start menu—in later versions of Windows—gave me access to all of the applications without having to go through folders. Basically, the only thing that I don't know how to do on Windows is to network two computers together. With that said, let's talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each system, and see which one would be a better choice for most users.

The answer that I get when I ask, "Why do you have a PC instead of a Mac?" is almost always the same. "There's no software for the Mac. All the applications I need to run are only for Windows." This is simply not true. While certain applications designed specifically for certain fields are mostly written for the PC and never make it to the Mac, almost all mainstream software that is on the PC is also on the Mac. At the moment, there are over 16,000 Mac applications available! Although a lot of them are ported (copied from one computer format to another) from the PC, the porting process ensures that Mac users get only the best applications because the companies who port them must look at the program and decide which programs are most likely to sell. Mac users have all of the important mainstream applications, and they don't have to wade through stacks of lookalikes and cheap copies. Who cares if the PC has 80,000 applications? You don't need 50 different versions of Bob's Word Processor 3 and Joe's Super Spreadsheet when you have Microsoft Office—the superior office productivity application! You simply don't need 80,000 applications, and it makes it a lot simpler to choose between software packages.

Another complaint that PC users often voice is how terribly expensive the Mac is. A comparable Mac costs about twice as much as a PC, they claim. All I can say is that they're right about *the cost of acquisition*. My Mac cost \$2,600, while my friend bought a comparable PC with a monitor for about \$1,400. Looking down the road into the future, I will pay next to nothing to maintain my computer, while my friend will be constantly paying for updates and replacing hardware as things go bad on his Dell. Thus, the total cost of ownership evens out as I save time and money by not troubleshooting and restarting my computer after every crash. The UNIX underpinning of the Mac OS system takes a lot of credit for this stability. According to *Computerworld Magazine*, Mac OS X has an "extremely stable kernel that's almost impossible to kill" (Thompson). The reason why I pay more for a Mac is because Apple Computer builds every Mac in-house. Apple has control over every aspect of each machine's construction, and thus they can perfectly integrate it with the Mac OS X operating system. Obviously the main reason why PCs are unstable (and cheaper), is the fact that computer manufacturer A—who has no control over Windows—makes a case for the computer, then buys a processor from Intel or AMD, the memory from manufacturer B, the hard drive from C, and so on for every component. Nearly every piece of every PC is made by a different manufacturer and mixed together with an OS (Windows) that has to make large compromises to run on all sorts of different machines. The result is chaos, which Windows users know all too well as they enjoy the benefits of erratic system behavior. Naming these problems has become an art: "plug and pray," the "blue screen of death," and "system clog" (the odd tendency of Windows to *slow down* over time for seemingly no reason at all) are some of the humorous terms for Windows errors! To sum this all up with a comparison, you pay less for a Chevy or Honda, but if you really want a great machine, you spend more and get a Cadillac. Since you bought a better car, you enjoy it more and it lasts longer. In the long run, you save money! For example, my dad's original "128k" Mac from 1984 still works fine! Most PCs last only 4 to 5 years, and by the third year, they're often unstable and

fussy. If his (and my) computing needs didn't grow more demanding every year, we could have saved at least \$10,000 by refusing to purchase another computer! So, we see that although the cost of acquisition is lower for the PC, the stable, higher quality Mac evens out the total cost of ownership over the course of a few years.

The holiest of holy wars in the computing world has raged over whose GUI (GUI stands for graphical user interface—pronounced "gooey") is the most stable and easiest to use. Apple has always had the advantage (and curse) of a vocal, fanatical user base that debates every feature and shortcoming of the Mac OS. Microsoft is notorious for disregarding its customers' requests; if it needs to innovate, it simply looks toward Apple for new inspiration. Although the line between Mac OS X and Microsoft XP is closer than it was in the early days of Windows, there are still key differences that make the Mac OS X GUI the clear winner. Windows is still subject to certain oddities, such as: crashes (even when nothing is running), startup freezes, sound glitches, and even random hard drive corruption! It still spews incomprehensible error messages, and its various controls are in odd places. Even though some praise the mandatory organization of files and documents on the PC, the ability on the Mac to clutter your computer and desktop up with all sorts of files pushes the clutter from your head into the computer, allowing you to work more efficiently.

One of the major headaches of Windows is that there are drivers for everything—even the mouse and keyboard! In Windows, before you can plug in a mouse, printer, scanner, or a digital camera and expect it to work with the computer, you have to first insert a CD and run through the driver installation. Although Microsoft claims that you can "plug and play" with many devices, I still save my work, and then I cringe as I plug in anything to my laptop for fear that I'll have to restart the computer and repair damage to my files. On my Mac, I confidently plug and unplug everything that I can lay my hands on, whether or not it was designed with the Mac in mind. Such random plugging and unplugging of devices would wreak havoc on a PC, even if the proper drivers were already installed. But I don't even need to bother with them. It's practically impossible to overload

a Mac. A while back I simultaneously plugged in two modems, a PC Firewire hard drive, a USB Compactflash card reader, a game controller, scanner, two printers, and an Ethernet crossover cable connected to another Mac, and the whole thing ran fine while surfing the net, downloading new system software, and burning a CD! Years ago, Microsoft became a laughing stock when its version of plug-and-play horribly backfired with Windows 95. It even crashed (the world's introduction to the blue screen of death) during Bill Gates' demo! Users who tried to plug-in devices without installing drivers were greeted with the blue screen of death, lost documents, and worse, corrupted system files, requiring them to reinstall Windows 95. Mac users dubbed the process "plug and pray!" Many business users stubbornly stuck with Windows 3.1, citing Windows 95's instability. Fortunately for me, my Mac hums along, calmly mounting and unmounting devices with nary a hitch. The worst thing I've experienced is a PC scanner that refused to mount. No crashes, reboots, or reinstalls! I love it!

As the Mac works, it does so with unsurpassed style. The beige box of the PC looks horribly boring compared to the sculpted crystal, chrome, and silver "Quicksilver" theme of the new Power Mac G4s. Apple Powerbook G4 laptops are encased in titanium and crowned with 15.2-inch widescreen displays! The new iMac looks like a snow and chrome easel! Adorning Mac OS X's Aqua interface are gently throbbing buttons, slightly transparent fade-away menus, and the flashy Dock. One of the smallest—yet most pleasing—features of the Mac OS is anti-aliased text. Words can't describe seeing web pages and word documents in smooth sculpted text; it makes reading articles and documents a joy, not an eyestrain. All of this flash would be nothing without function, however. Stability is the keyword of the Mac OS X operating system; its foundation is laid on the UNIX operating system on which most universities, governments, and Fortune 500 companies base their servers. I've had my new Mac (running Mac OS X 10.2.2) for a year now, and I've only experienced two crashes (both of which occurred in the original version of OS X). What about my friend with the Windows XP Dell? His computer crashes at least two times a week! My two-year-old Windows 98 lap-

top crashes about twice a day. Honestly, how can you work at your best when your computer robs you of your energy and creativity? It's a well-known fact that people who use Macs dominate the creative field of filmmaking, digital photography, and art. Many professionals have high praise for the Mac:

'I've run every Unix GUI that's ever shipped — for about 30 minutes. I hate them all,' says Chuck Goolsbee, vice president of technical operations at Digital Forest Inc., a Bothell, Wash.-based application service provider with 400 Macintosh servers in its data center. His conclusion: 'Apple has done a great job with the GUI.' (Hall 30)

Even if you're not a creative artist, the creative power that the Mac can unleash in you can be extraordinary. If you switch to the Mac, you'll experience an unbelievable amount of mental relief from having a computer that works for you, instead of against you. Windows crashes too often for you to really be able to concentrate, and its interface raises the stress level of most users without them even realizing it! Working on a PC often gives me a headache. When that happens, I run to my Mac! Even though I don't particularly look forward to writing long essays, I'm having fun writing this essay on my Power Mac G4 while blasting John Williams' "March of the Ewoks." It's impossible to have fun with an unstable, uncreative computer!

Nothing represents America's history of tinkering better than the history of the Mac. Back in the late 1970s, two college students, Steve Jobs and Steven Wozniak, dropped out of college and got jobs at Atari and HP. Working together, they started Apple Computer in 1976 with the Apple I. Back then, DOS was the only computing standard—no one ever dreamed of a better way to run computers. Soon after the first Macintosh was released in 1984, Microsoft, headed by Bill Gates, copied the Mac OS and called it Windows, simply changing the names of objects. The trash can became the "Recycling Bin", and the Macintosh HD became "My Computer." Of course, it took them three versions to get it working. People still call Windows 3.1 "Mac '84!" Bill Gates copied the Mac and is rich because of it, but not because he's creative; he just recognized a

great product and had a big enough company beforehand to mass-produce it and swamp all competition with its overwhelming marketing clout. Some people might argue that Microsoft is maintaining fair business practices and is allowing competition. I need to incorporate Bill Cosby's favorite sarcastic remark here: "Riiiiiiight!" Apple lives simply because Microsoft allows it to live. There's always been the dream that Apple will grow and unseat Microsoft from its throne. If Apple Computer ever did threaten Microsoft's market share, Bill Gates would instantly squash Apple. So why doesn't Microsoft kill Apple right now while it only has a 5% market share? If Apple didn't exist, the Feds would cry "Monopoly!" and Microsoft would be broken up. So for the time being, Microsoft needs Apple to keep up its pretense of a fair market. It may be interesting to note that Steve Jobs, the CEO and co-founder of Apple, has a voluntary annual salary of \$1! A businessman like Steve Jobs would never do that unless he loves the cause. Contrast that with Bill Gates, who has earned an average annual salary of about \$2 billion per year! That's about \$63.80 per *second*. Who loves the computer, and who loves the money? It's not going to make you a bad person if you go out today and buy a Windows PC, but instead of supporting the inferior, megalith copy-cat, you should support Apple's creative inspiration and its tinkering spirit which makes it and so many inventors before it great.

In conclusion, we see that the Mac is clearly the superior machine. Although Windows users claim more titles, Mac users have all of the important ones, without the hassle of going through tons of extra applications of dubious quality. Since the Mac works better and longer, and since you don't waste time dealing with crashes, the total cost of ownership is about equal that of the PC. Mac OS X is clearly the smarter and more stable option of GUIs. Mac users take for granted abilities and conveniences that PC users only dream about. Finally, the Mac works with unsurpassed style. *I want* people to see my computer; hiding my Mac beneath my desk seems to be an insult to its painstaking design. To sum it up, if you want a computer that looks like a cinder block, stifles innovation, ruins your work, and funnels your money into Microsoft, buy a Windows PC. The makers

of Advil and Tylenol will love you! If you want a computer that looks like a 22<sup>nd</sup>-century supercomputer, pushes you to your creative limit, and gives you extra time to do what you wanted to do in the first place (play games, watch movies, socialize), buy a Mac—and get on with your life. Friends don't let friends do Windows. Don't you, either!

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Evaluation: *It was a genuine pleasure to have this student in my class, and this essay proves why. Bryan's topic is unique, and his writing is lively and often funny. More than that, his conviction shines through in each and every sentence. There's so much more to say about Bryan's defense of the Macintosh computer. For now, let it be enough to add that this is a first-class, highly convincing English 101 essay, one of the very best I've seen.*

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# What Do I Know About Terrorism?

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Ravali Krishna Davaluri

Course: English 201 (Advanced Composition)

Instructor: Tony Hammer

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## Assignment:

*In this advanced composition class, students were asked to choose a topic of significance for their writing project. They were to begin by writing a personal essay explaining what their topic means to them, how they learned about it, and how it affects them. Rav, a student from India whose family now lives in the United States, chose terrorism.*

I saw someone die today. I was riding my bike down the main road to my friend Rakesh's house for a game of cricket and in this procession of people, who were celebrating by the road, I saw a person shoot, shoot the leader of the group while he was delivering a speech, his victory speech. I didn't know what to do. I took a sharp left, immediately, and rode two blocks and made it to my friend's house, but by then the police had arrived and there was at least a police truck on every intersection.

I told my mother about it, I told my school counselor. My counselor asks me not to be afraid. She tells me, in this country, in a place like this, these things happen. She asks me to read about "it" in the newspaper, watch the daily eight o'clock broadcast of news, that way, she says, you'll be more familiar with things around you, it won't be so hard on you.

I started reading the newspapers, *The Deccan Chronicle*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Eenadu*. I read at least the headlines now, I look at the local sec-

tions closely, I try to find similar incidents, I try to look at things in the "reality" sort of a way.

The local edition of *Eenadu* says the man who killed the leader, the leader from the same parade that I saw, has been killed at a shopping mall, fifteen miles away from where I live. The police say the suspect was fleeing when they tried to arrest him. So, they shot him in public, outside a shopping mall, in front of thousands of people, hundreds of children, possibly younger than me.

There's Hizbul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba on the north; Bodo terrorists to the east; People's war group (popularly called PWG or The Naxalites) in the East, central and south-central; LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) down south; and west and northwest is where Khalistan terrorists used to be. All of them claim they're fighting for freedom. The Naxalites say they want a separate communist state for themselves, LTTE wants to liberate and make a new country of the Tamil world, Khalistan terrorists say they want a separate Sikh world, and Hizbul-Mujahideen says "Azad Kashmir." My high school social studies teacher says India is the biggest democracy in the world. India, she says, is a democratic, secular, socialistic republic.

The governments change, the new ones, they promise again. The chief minister vows to eradicate Naxalites. The chief minister says he's given the "shoot at sight" orders. "We have enough police force, we'll bring in the paramilitary commandos if we need, we'll use the new MI helicopters we bought from Russia but we won't let innocent people die."

There is a new announcement in papers from the Naxalites, they have declared a *bandh* (closedown) of state businesses for a day in protest of the new Chief Minister's agenda. "We will destroy every business organization that runs on the day of the *bandh*." The schools in our town are shut down. The next day newspapers claim that the Warangal public school, which refused to close, was shut down by the Naxalites and equipment worth thousands was destroyed, several students were hurt in the process. The school has no comments.

The entertainment section is full now, so much so that the newspaper had to publish an extra page. There are three new movies that are released, and they are: *Era Sanyam* (Red Army), *Era Mallelu* (Red Jasmynes), *Era Poratam* (Red Fight), all antigovernment, supporting

## What Do I Know About Terrorism?

the People's war group Naxalites. The reviewers give their "thumbs down" and condemn these movies, they say that these movies promote antigovernment feelings among people. The talk shows are suddenly talking about people's freedom of speech.

There are six fundamental rights, my teacher says: equality, religion, speech, freedom, education, etc. But nobody here, including me, remembers the five fundamental duties our constitution states.

India blames cross-border terrorism on Pakistan; 70,000 people have died in Kashmir until now. Pakistan blames the RAW (Indian intelligence agency) for internal disturbances. Sri Lanka blames Tamils in India for supporting LTTE in their country and India blames Sri Lankan LTTE for the death of regional leaders.

Flash forward six years, and I'm a student at The State University of New York at Buffalo. I wake up on this Tuesday morning and I'm on my way to the dining area for some breakfast. I see my friend, Amit, on my way there, and he says, "The food sucked, dude! By the way, somebody banged an airplane into the World Trade Center. What kind of moron would be so blind!" And I'm thinking it's a single engine plane or at most a Learjet.

Here I am, having my cereal and daily dose of cappuccino, and one of the towers collapses, right in front of me, on the huge 50-inch screen, slowly tilting a little to the side, and everybody around me is cursing and calling god.

My mom and dad, they live in Chicago now, they call me. My mom says all our relatives in downtown Chicago are with us (in the suburbs) now. We're all safe, she says, nobody has attacked Chicago yet.

Three days later she is telling me, if somebody asks you what your name is, tell them it's Krishna (my middle name), because there have been some incidents here. Every once in a while, I meet a friend who says, "I never knew Amit and Aalekh are from the Middle East." My friend AI says we have to bomb Afganistan, we have to get them. He says there is a new kind of nuclear bomb, it destroys everything without any radiation, now is the best time to test it.

Nobody has attacked Chicago, yet.

I'm still reading the newspapers, only now, it's on the internet. What used to be *The Deccan Chronicle* is

now *deccan.com*, and *The Hindu* is *thehindu.com*, and *Eenadu* is *eenadu.net*. Eenadu tells me about 1,500 Naxalites were killed last year, 500 more than the previous year. About 73% of them were below the age of 35. What India achieved in two years, Osama bin ladeng achieved in a day. What they both achieved, their "victories," America is going to achieve sooner, and with their action started last November, Israel and Palestine have surpassed what they all achieved; Palestinians increment in tens with their suicide bombers, and Israelis increment in periodic hundreds and thousands with military actions.

I'm watching CNN and there are busses, restaurants, discos, everything imaginable, destroyed. People carrying bodies everywhere, their noses covered, refusing to breathe the stench of death. Everything's now black on black, that's the preferred color for people blown up by bombs; red is for people who'd like to get shot, and dirty white is for people running from death. I'm watching HBO's documentary, and there are people falling down from the World Trade Centers, and every now and then I hear a thud, the sound of people falling down. Thud! and there is silence, everyone stops a second, their time of mourning, and turns around to get to work, not realizing that in a few minutes every piece of whatever there is, is going to come crashing down.

It's al-Qaeda, it's Hezbollah, it's Hizbul-mujahideen. It's Laskhar-e-toiba, it's LTTE, it's PWG, it's The Bodo terrorists. It's India, it's Pakistan, it's Israel, it's Palestine, it's America. Everyone, now, has a reason to kill.

Terrorism might not be the right word, but it's the only word I can find.

Nobody has attacked Chicago, yet.

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Evaluation: *In his essay, the writer joins together two events in his life—one from when he was 12 years old and the other—September 11—to explain what terrorism means to him. The result is an important essay that helps all of us understand the effects of terrorism on young adults.*

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# My Years at Thistle Court

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Matt Day

Course: Reading 099/English 100  
(Learning Community)

Instructors: Barbara Butler and Chris Poziemski

Assignment:

*Write a descriptive essay about a place from your  
childhood that remains important to you today.*

In my younger years, I spent much of my time with my granddad Len in his low-income house at number 57 Grenville Road, Aylesbury, in the county of Buckinghamshire, England, located 45 minutes from Oxford and one hour from the city of London. This was the place where my dad had spent his teenage years. The house was a decent size with an average front garden and a big back one where my grandfather grew rhubarb. In the area, I remember that all the houses matched in their yellowy-white-cream colour and that not all of the houses contained driveways. Some cars in the street were parked straight and carefully, similar to books shelved neatly in a library. I also remember the next-door neighbours: Mrs. Hinton, a blonde who lived on the north side, and Mrs. Turner, a tall, white-haired woman who smoked and lived on the north side. Dad and her son Kevin have remained in touch since childhood. Near the church green on Churchill Avenue lived Mrs. Wheeler, who we used to see on a regular basis. I can't really remember much about Granddad's house, as it was in 1987 that he decided to move into Thistle Court senior citizens' independent living programme. The big house had become too much to keep up after Nanny's death in 1983; it was because of his move that Granddad and I had such a strong bond.

I have great memories of the people I met at Thistle Court. Granddad's room was on the second floor at the end of the long corridor. Walking into the room, I was greeted by a brown foldaway table and a coat rack with his navy blue blazers hanging on it. In the main living space on the left side of the room sat a big brown cabinet, in which Granddad housed ornaments of importance and photo albums. At the end of the cabinet was this telephone, the old-fashioned type with the loud ring instead of the up-to-date direct dialing ones. In this cabinet, he kept a stash of his favorite candy away out of my sight; however, I soon could find his big packets of Trebor Bassett extra strong mints and licorice allsorts. Also, in a gray newspaper rack, he kept his weekly *Navy* magazine. He had his armchair positioned in front of the TV, which was housed in a cabinet similar to the other. He had family pictures dotted around this cabinet, in which he also kept his precious cricket and football books. He had a big record player, with records of Val Doonigen underneath it. Next to the record player rested

## My Years at Thistle Court

another chair, and above this hung a picture of a navy ship from his navy days. By the window were a table littered with old yellowed *Daily Mail* newspapers and a glass cabinet full of tea-party-china.

In contrast to the clean living room, the kitchen was a dirty place, with its walls bare of decoration but stained yellow from cooking grease. By the window sat a table with one chair, and opposite the chair sat the cooker. One thing that I disliked about his flat was the carpet; it was brown, with orange, black, and blue in it, and it certainly had seen better days.

I remember his neighbours clearly; Mrs. Baker, a blind woman who lived in flat number 20, opposite Granddad's, always used to give me candy that I would devour secretly, as I didn't want Mum or Dad to find me eating and ruining my dinner in the evenings. Next door to Mrs. Baker was Mrs. Nobel, a hard-of-hearing lady who always had the television turned up so loud that it could be heard outside in the corridor. Opposite her was Mrs. Rhodes, a miserable old girl who thankfully died soon after Granddad took up residency. Mrs. Rhodes would never acknowledge my presence when she saw me. Rather, she would stare anywhere but at me when we met, out in the corridor.

Other residents I met there include Mr. Cook, who lived in flat number 9, and who walked with a Zimmer frame; Mr. Flynn, a white-haired and blue-sweatered man who lived in number 11 and always issued me English toffees, which I always enjoyed; and Charlie, who was blind and lived in number 13, and who had a white telephone with big numbers.

Thistle Court has left many striking impressions on me and many wonderful memories with me. I still think often of the time I spent there, and I am grateful to have spent so much time with Granddad, who was quite simply the king of Thistle Court.

For Leonard Aris Day, 1918-1999.

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Evaluation: *Matt writes a moving tribute to his grandfather. Vivid diction, imaginative imagery, and memorable characterization enhance his reminiscence.*

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# The Story of the Atom

Paula A. Ding

Course: Chemistry 121 (General Chemistry I)

[Honors Program]

Instructor: Barbara Weil

Assignment:

Read the article "The Story of the Atom"  
and write a short essay on it.

Galileo once said, "All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them." Today, we have brilliant minds perusing highly abstract research using the most advanced technology. In a world where genetic cloning and nanofabrication are standard in the scientific community, the existence of the atom is a trivial fact, a "truth" that we've known for, what seems like several centuries and is easy to comprehend, thanks to the work of numerous scientists. In reality, however, this was a truth that took thousands of years and several men all over the world to discover. "The Story of the Atom" was an enlightening article that manifested the triumphs and tribulations that were prevalent for scientists that lived in the pre-20<sup>th</sup> century.

I was impressed by several aspects of this document: first, the sheer brilliance of each scientist; second, the perseverance and inability of each individual to be swayed by their more conventional peers; third, the ability to continue with their work despite adverse conditions; fourth, the unintentional collaboration of the "atom" researchers; and finally, fifth, their openness to possibility.

Often, I take for granted that several scientific absolutes were once mere hypotheses. I was amazed that scientists like Democritus, Dalton, and Einstein were able to derive the information they did from the few facts and observations they had. It is a testament to their sheer intelligence and mental acuity that they could prove these conjectures and make them the universal postulates that they are now.

Science is always touted as an "objective" study. While it requires that scientists remain objective in their openness, it also allows people to be subjective in what research they choose to believe and utilize. Thousands of years ago, Democritus claimed that the smallest substance in the universe was an "atom." Socrates chose not to believe Democritus' statement and thus influenced the rest of the world and the progression of the "atom idea" for several centuries. However, the idea would return and persevere despite continual mockery, speculation, and doubt. Scientists are often given prestigious accolades and occasionally even became celebrities. However, those that can succeed despite hardship are truly deserving of commendation. I was particularly impressed by those who persevered in the

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face of ridicule: Boyle, who continued to study air and gases even while the king “mightily laughed”; and Boltzmann, who fought for the “atom idea” while most scientists of his time rejected and mocked not only the idea, but him, as well.

Some scientists faced other adverse conditions, like poverty and misunderstanding. Dalton was a member of an impoverished family that at times probably could not afford food to eat. However, he did not give up his interest to find a career where he could earn money for his family. Instead, he was able to persevere and pursue his studies, and, despite his earlier misfortune, was rewarded for his ideas. Einstein also faced adverse conditions. Although his family was better off, he was misunderstood as a youth and as an adult. As a result, he faced difficulties finding support to pursue his studies. Yet, he persisted and eventually, he was recognized for his studies. Due to his tenacity, the existence of the atom is now a universal truth.

This article also showed me the need for publishing scientific research, which can help lead to major advances. Each of these men was able to build upon their predecessors’ findings and hence, they collaborated, even though it was unintentional. Brownian motion is an example of this. If Brown had not published his findings on the random movement in water, it is possible that Einstein might not have been able to provide the logic behind the existence of atoms and molecules.

The most prominent characteristic of the scientists noted in this article was their openness to the possibility of the atom. Despite their skeptical peers and the ridicule and adverse conditions that existed, these individuals maintained an open mind to the idea of the atom. Without this attribute, who knows if the “story of the atom” would have ever existed?

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Evaluation: *Paula captures some outstanding points about science and the characteristics of scientists.*

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# Beowulf and the Dragon

Kim Diorio

Course: Literature 23g (English Literature to 1800)

Instructors: Richard Johnson and Kurt Neumann

Assignment:

*In a speech after the hero's death, Wiglaf expresses regret that his friends could not persuade Beowulf to leave the dragon alone. Write a brief essay in which you express your view on this subject. Is Wiglaf right, should Beowulf have left the dragon alone? You should consider such aspects as what the dragon was doing to the country and its denizens, the apparent absence of anyone else to cope with the dragon, the hero's motives, and/or the responsibility of a king for the welfare of his people, and/or the role Fate plays in the outcome of the battle between Beowulf and the dragon.*

The Germanic society that Beowulf inhabits is a savage place, where human life is fleeting and guided by cruel fate. Fate, however, is kind to Beowulf, allowing him to outshine his contemporaries with heroic deeds and achieve the only type of immortality known to his community: prolonged fame after death. Within the context of his universe, Beowulf's demise at the hands of that most menacing of creatures, the dragon, is entirely fitting. Destiny has allowed Beowulf to accomplish great deeds during his life and to meet a heroic end.

In examining the role of fate in Beowulf's death, it is important to first look at destiny as it manifests itself throughout his life. Even though Beowulf is an impressive warrior, his triumphs in battle are more attributable to divine intervention than to his own strength or skill. In fact, Beowulf is only able to win a fight entirely by his own merit against his least challenging opponent: Grendel. By contrast, Beowulf requires assistance from God, in the form of a gigantic ice sword, to win his underwater battle with Grendel's mother. Similarly, Beowulf needs Wiglaf's help and God's approval to vanquish the dragon. In his critical essay "Beowulf," Fred C. Robinson writes, "The poet seems to suggest that the very best of men might be very strong and awesomely courageous, but only the forces of evil in the world enjoy truly supernatural power" (150). This is true to an extent; but God also enjoys supernatural power, and Beowulf's success in his last two fights can only be attributed to divine intervention. It is thus evident that God or the divine force at work in the poem is shaping Beowulf's destiny as a warrior.

When dealing with the role of fate in Beowulf's death, it is also necessary to realize that both the pagan Beowulf and the Christian poet view destiny in much the same manner. Beowulf realizes that he is at the mercy of destiny, and during his final boast he says, "what occurs on the wallg between the two of us will turn out as fate, / overseer of men, decides. I am resolved" (2525-27). Similarly, the Christian poet writes about Beowulf's last battle: "After many trials, / he was destined to face the end of his days / in this mortal world; as was the dragon" (2341-43). Whether the divine force in the poem is viewed as Christian or pagan, the end result is the same: Beowulf is destined to perish.

## Beowulf and the Dragon

Beowulf's fight with the dragon and his subsequent death were his destiny because he was the only person who could have liberated the dragon's hoard. This is evident in the text. The poet writes:

The huge cache, gold inherited  
from an ancient race, was under a spell---  
which meant no one was ever permitted  
to enter the ring-hall unless God Himself,  
mankind's Keeper, True King of Triumphs,  
allowed some person pleasing to Him---  
and in His eyes worthy---to open the hoard  
(305&-7).

From this passage it is obvious that if Beowulf had not fought the dragon, then nobody else would have been able to do it. The poet goes on to write:

whoever robbed it [the hoard] would be  
guilty of wrong  
and grimly punished for their transgression,  
hasped in hell-bonds in heathen shrines.e  
Yet Beowulf's gaze at the gold treasure  
when he first saw it had not been selfish  
(307&-5).

The text suggests that, even though Beowulf does not want the treasure for himself, his death is his reward for fulfilling his destiny.

Beowulf's slaying of the dragon is not only predestined; it is also heroic. One reason why Beowulf's actions are heroic is that the hoarding of treasure is antithetical to the ring-giver ethos, which says that the king must distribute wealth among the people. When Hrothgar describes a selfish king's death to Beowulf, he says, "When the body he was lent collapses and falls / prey to its death, ancestral possessions / and the goods he hoarded are inherited by another / who lets them go with a liberal hand" (1754-57). The dragon is similar to the selfish king because he has also accumulated riches that he cannot use. Beowulf is the inheritor with the "liberal hand." In the essay "Christian and Folkloric Tradition in Beowulf: Death and the Dragon Episode," Judith Garde links Hrothgar's statements with Beowulf's heroic destiny. Writing about lines 3074-5 of the poem, she remarks, "He [the poet] is reiterating Hrothgar's unequivocal observation that prosperity is God's alone to bestow, and that his God-fearing hero was demonstrably the man for the task" (338).

According to Garde, Beowulf has been chosen by God to heroically liberate the hoard and to die as a result.

Beowulf's killing of the dragon is also heroic because dragons, both in Germanic legend and in Christian mythology, are the most frightening and powerful creatures on earth. For example, the Germanic story of Sigemund the dragon-slayer appears in the Beowulf poem, when a minstrel recounts his exploits (874-914). Sigemund had fought many creatures prior to killing a dragon, but it is his fight with the dragon that makes his fame. Robinson notes that Germanic audiences would have been familiar with the dragon in the Sigemund tale. He also writes that the dragon that killed Beowulf "seems to be much the same kind of creature" (149). The most famous dragon in Christian literature is just as fearsome. He appears in a third-century tale about St. George. In the tale, as recounted in Dr. Karl Shuker's book *Dragons: A Natural History*, George has just converted to Christianity when he hears of a dragon that is tormenting the kingdom of Silene and threatening to kill the king's daughter. Realizing that the dragon is "a corporeal manifestation of evil" (60) that embodies all that he has "pledged to confront and conquer" (60), George vows to vanquish it. After he succeeds, he manages to convert the entire kingdom of Silene to Christianity. Obviously, in both Germanic and Christian mythology, dragons are forces to be reckoned with. Or, as J.R.R. Tolkien writes, in his seminal essay "Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics," "The dragon is no idle fancy" (20).

Given the fierce reputations of dragons, Beowulf's fight is all the more impressive. His killing of the creature will outshine his earlier triumphs and ensure that he, like Sigemund, is always remembered as a great warrior. In lines 2836-42, the poet writes: "There were few, indeed, as far as I have heard, / big and brave as they may have been, / few who would have held out if they had had to face / the outpourings of that poison-breather." Beowulf's death at the talons of the dragon is also particularly fitting, because, for one so heroic, death by natural causes or at the hand of a human being would be disappointing. As Tolkien writes, "Nowhere does a dragon come in so precisely where he should" (38).

As a result of his brave deeds and his heroic death,

Beowulf dies with the highest of honors: prolonged fame. It is important to note, however, that Beowulf's passing is bittersweet. Rather than keep the dragon's hoard, his tribe chooses to bury him with it. They are also left vulnerable to invasion by violent neighbors. In his book *Gold-Hall and Earth-Dragon: Beowulf as Metaphor*, Alvin A. Lee sees Beowulf's fame as, tragically, the only way to transcend the savagery of the Germanic world. He writes, "It [the poem] provides a better way than the monstrosity and wild destructiveness of feuding. The tragedy is that the better way leads out of the lived history of men and women and into the eternity within which their actions are known" (241). Through Beowulf's heroic deeds, he manages to transcend the violent and fleeting world he inhabits. Unfortunately, his death is still tragic, because, in his absence, his tribe is left to fend for themselves.

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Evaluation:

*Negotiating neatly      nasty literary pitfalls,*  
*Kim carefully      collects her evidence*  
*And deftly defends      her decision*  
*To tackle the tricky      topic of Fate*  
*In this paeon of      pagan prowess*  
*Against the crafty criticisms      of her cranky profs.*

# The Role of Social Support in Hospice: Compassionate Care for the Dying

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Lisa Duwe

Course: Sociology 215 (Social Psychology)

Instructor: Charles Johnston

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## Assignment:

*Write a paper approximately ten pages in length that summarizes the literature of the concepts or theories that you choose to write about and then illustrates, through your own personal examples and life experiences, how this particular concept is relevant in your life, present and/or future work, your experiences in college, or your understanding of a particular social problem.*

**Abstract:** As human beings, we will all face death during our lifetime, and we will experience the death of family and friends. How we approach the dying process has changed over the years, and research has shown that it is possible to achieve a good death experience. Hospice has the ability to help families understand, manage, and cope with terminal illness, by providing palliative care for terminally ill patients and their families. The philosophy of hospice encourages a full support system and network that provides families with state of the art medical and nursing care along with practical and emotional support during the final stage of life. It is the

uniqueness of the hospice program that allows patients to live their final days surrounded by loved ones in their own homes or in a homelike setting. The support of family, friends, and the hospice staff provides a caring, compassionate, and loving environment where the terminally ill patient can die with little pain, in peace, and with dignity and respect.

For human beings, life is a journey that begins at birth and ends at the moment of our death. Once born, we are thrust out into the social world. We are born into a family. As part of the family, the experiences of life and death are shared with one another. Families rejoice in the birth of a child and mourn the death of a loved one. Within the family unit, each person has his or her own style of coping during times of stress. In the case of terminal illness, people grapple with the concept of death in their own unique ways. Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identified five stages through which most terminally ill patients progress (Neigh, 2000). These five stages include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages represent the typical range of emotional development terminally ill people may experience. Not every person progresses through each stage, and an individual's emotions may overlap, causing him or her to experience the stages in differing order from the sequence proposed by Kübler-Ross. (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2002). Hospice understands this and applies Kübler-Ross' theory to best meet the needs of the patient.

To help the terminally ill travel through the final journey accompanied by family and friends who share the dying experience with them, Dr. Kübler-Ross advocates home care rather than institutionalization for the dying. She believes that patients and their families should take an active role in decision-making and that they should be allowed total freedom of choice. This idea of dying at home is not new. In days of old, births and deaths at home were commonplace, with family in attendance for assistance and support. Since that time, medical advancements have led to the development of freestanding facilities such as hospitals and skilled nursing centers. These healthcare centers provide

sophisticated care for terminally ill patients. Often, medical intervention has the capability to extend a patient's life by utilizing aggressive measures. These treatments are usually quite painful and, often, they do not improve the quality of the patient's life. Furthermore, they are rarely curative.

In our society today, death is associated with pain, suffering, and fear, but Dr. Kübler-Ross has proposed that death is really the final stage of growth in life, that dying is a natural process and patients can achieve a good death if their emotional, spiritual, and physical needs are met (Brant, 1998). For these patients and their families, dying in a healthcare facility can be a very frightening, lonely, and negative experience, and one they seem to have little control over. Most families have actually been given little or no information about the actual dying process because of society's and medical personnel's discomfort with discussion about it. In the past, medical schools have devoted little time to educating physicians about dispensing spiritual and holistic care and support to terminally ill families. Nowadays, the hospice philosophy is changing the death experience for many families. No longer is it necessary or acceptable to feel alone, afraid, and without control over one's own final phase of life. The impersonal and mechanized healthcare system no longer offers the only solution for the terminally ill during their final days. Since its inception in the 1960s, hospice has been offering families a loving alternative choice for family care during one of the most difficult journeys of life. This paper will focus on the important role that social support plays in the lives of hospice patients and their families and will include information from several experts in the field along with personal reflections about my experiences with hospice care.

Hospice has opened many minds and hearts and has already made a positive impact on those families that have been fortunate enough to experience the hospice philosophy of care firsthand. In offering dying patients and their families physical, emotional, and spiritual support, hospice has empowered terminally ill people and has allowed them to regain a measure of control over their lives. As it used to be in days of old, families can once again experience the joys and sorrows of the

final journey, together. In hospice care, an interdisciplinary team of professionals whose goal it is to educate, encourage, and support families throughout the dying process is utilized. The hospice model of care is tailored to fit the individual needs of each family, and the transition from life to death occurs at home, or in a home-like setting, where family and friends surround the patient, with the patient and his family expertly guided through the dying process by members of the hospice team. The hospice philosophy views life as a journey: "Its goal is to help people complete life's journey with hope, comfort, dignity, and companionship" (Hess, 1999).

Hospice views the patient and his or her family as one unit of care, and whole and proper care requires treating the entire family, not just the terminally ill. The ultimate concern of the hospice care team is to help the family achieve a good death for the terminally ill patient. In a study of patients, family members, and healthcare providers, six components were identified as necessary for a good death. The first is appropriate and successful pain and symptom management. The second is the ability to make decisions. According to one researcher, in hospice care, patients felt

empowered when they participated in treatment decisions. Bad deaths were often described in terms of patient feelings of being disregarded, family concerns about suffering, and provider feelings of being out of control and not able to provide good care (Stujduhar, 2001).

Open communication amongst all parties involved allows for maximal involvement of the family in the decision-making process.

The third component of a good death, preparation for death, involves the healthcare team educating the patient and his or her family about the terminal illness and also providing further explanation about the dying process itself. Here, information is given regarding what transpires after the patient dies. It has been shown that families are interested in knowing about the physical and psychosocial changes that occur during the dying process. The fourth component, completion, refers to "faith issues, life review, resolving conflicts, spending time with family and friends, and saying

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goodbye. Issues of faith, although highly individual, were often described as integral to healing at the end of life and became more important as physical decline occurred” (Stujduhar, 2001). The fifth component is to offer ample opportunity for the terminally ill person to contribute to the wellbeing of others, and the sixth and final component is affirmation of the person as a whole (Stujduhar, 2001). This involves not viewing the patient as just his or her illness, but understanding that the illness is only a portion of who he is as a biopsychosociospiritual person. Most of the components demonstrated to be necessary for a good death are already integrated into the hospice philosophy; that is why hospice is so successful in meeting the needs of the dying.

Social, emotional, and spiritual support are hallmarks of hospice care. Hospice, by its design, sets up a self-imposed social model for dying families. The hospice team along with the patient and his or her family form an emotional bond during the dying process. All the individuals compose a unified group, which promotes cohesiveness as they work together toward the common goal of achieving a good death experience for the patient. Through the unity of the group, hospice provides the social support system and necessary resources to help families of terminally ill patients face the challenges of caring for the dying loved one. The needs of the patient and his or her family are assessed and addressed constantly by the hospice healthcare team, and the multidisciplinary approach used in hospice care gives the team members the ability to effectively meet the needs of the patient and family. This support system is lacking for terminally ill patients who lay dying in hospitals today. In these cases, there is no specially trained interdisciplinary team available to help families navigate through the dying process. Hospitals are designed to offer curative treatments and have not been adequately prepared to offer holistic support when cure is not within reach.

When a patient enters hospice, an initial interview is set up with the patient and his or her family, and an assessment of needs is undertaken. The team encourages the patient to make choices about his or her medical care, and they offer information and explanations about what will happen to the patient during the course

of the illness and how the dying process will occur. The patient is encouraged to ask questions and openly discuss personal thoughts and feelings, including any and all fears, anxieties, and concerns about death (Beresford, 1993). The hospice staff seeks to empower the dying patient with both independence and control over matters of daily living; hospice philosophy suggests that even though patients are dying, they can still be active participants in living. The initial assessment also includes review of the family unit, specifically with regard to their unique needs and concerns. Families are also well informed about the expected course of what the dying process entails. Those members who will take on the role of immediate caregivers are strongly given encouragement and are educated about how to best care for their terminally ill loved one along with themselves during this stressful and challenging time.

In order to better understand how hospice works, one must understand the responsibilities and roles of the various team members. The following is a description of the professionals that comprise the hospice team and their respective responsibilities to the families they serve. Each member is a valuable component of the healthcare delivery team whose ultimate goal it is to help a patient and his or her family achieve a good death experience. The individual members of the team function as one cohesive unit whose aim it is to, “work with patients and their families to meet their specific needs and health goals within a holistic framework” (Sheehan & Forman, 1996, p. 21).

At the top of the hierarchy in a hospice is the medical director. The medical director is a physician who has advanced knowledge in pain management and has thorough understanding of the needs of the terminally ill. The medical director is committed to the hospice philosophy and serves as liaison between various team members and the medical community at large. If a patient’s personal physician chooses to discontinue his or her relationship with the patient, the medical director may serve in the capacity of the patient’s physician (Buckingham, 1996).

The patient’s personal physician is the individual who first must certify that the patient is terminal. For the purposes of hospice criteria, this means that the patient

is reasonably expected to be life-limited by his particular illness, and it is anticipated that the patient has six months or less to live. The personal physician consents to hospice care and approves the written plan of care for the patient. He or she also signs off on any subsequent changes to the care plan. As hospice does not utilize lifesaving measures, the personal physician signs a do not resuscitate (DNR) order for the patient. The hospice team members remain in close contact with the personal physician on a regular basis as the patient's illness progresses. Every patient in hospice is required to have a personal physician directing his or her care.

The nurse provides clinical medical care for the patient, becomes intimately involved with patient and family, and plays an integral role in day to day management of the patient's care. He or she is in constant communication with the patient, family, physician, and other members of the healthcare team. The nurse regularly performs skilled physical assessment of the patient and is the eyes and ears of the physician. "The nurse's responsibility is for the total patient—for all of the needs or issues important to the patient related to terminal illness" (Beresford, 1993, p. 33). The nurse also must be keenly sensitive to addressing the patient's verbal and nonverbal emotional and psychological issues. Physical symptoms of pain and discomfort are known to be exacerbated by such things as fear, anxiety, and family conflicts, etc. The nurse must be an attentive and caring listener. It is of utmost importance that the patient feels free to articulate any relevant or bothersome thoughts. Of course, the nurse must be a skilled technician in performing the various medical procedures and care required to effectively manage the terminally ill, but the nurse also serves as a teacher, providing education regarding the skills necessary for the family and friends who serve as immediate caregivers in the day-to-day care of the patient.

Nurses provide 24-hour emergency on-call coverage on evenings and weekends. When a patient is in the final stages of dying, it is the nurse who sits with the family and attends the patient. If the patient expires with only family present, the nurse is the first one called to go to the family's home. The nurse then follows hospice procedure and contacts the appropriate

parties, such as the funeral director and other parties. The nurse handles any other pertinent matters during this time.

Also providing personal care for the patient is a nurse's aide or home health aide. The aide provides personal care assistance with activities of daily living. While family is most often charged with these responsibilities, some patients cherish the professional skills that an aide may provide. This may be as simple as a massage after bathing or a little extra TLC for skin or hair care.

For psychosocial support, a hospice social worker is invaluable. The social worker is concerned with the patient's environment and personal relationships. This may involve administrative duties including assisting with financial issues or legal issues, funeral planning, or matters of insurance, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. The social worker is very knowledgeable in finding and utilizing community resources that improve the quality of life of the disabled. The social worker also provides family counseling, the focus of which is on personal and family concerns about dying, familial conflicts that could be resolved through discussion, and any other pertinent psychosocial issues that, if dealt with, would improve quality of life for the patient. The social worker holds family conferences frequently in hopes of resolving pertinent issues and to maintain open lines of communication between all parties concerned. Addressing and resolving personal concerns and conflicts is one of the most crucial components of successful hospice care and ultimately may allow the patient psychological peace and comfort during the last days of life (Beresford, 1993).

Clergy, counselors, and other guides are available to provide spiritual care for the patient and family. Hospice philosophy suggests that spiritual needs are important and should be addressed, "whatever they are and however the patient chooses to define and understand them" (Beresford, 1993, p. 40). The experience of coping with terminal illness affords families an opportunity to forgive, heal, and accept all that relationships and life have brought. For many families, religious beliefs and practices can furnish endless support and comfort during difficult times. According to Beresford

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(1993), “spiritual care focuses on the following four needs: the need to reflect on the meaning of life, the need to tell one’s life story, the need for belonging and community, and the need for hope” (p. 41). A hospice chaplain, the patient’s own religious leaders, or various members of his or her congregation may provide spiritual care. Regardless of a patient’s religious affiliations, one aspect of spiritual care that is crucial for everyone concerned is the aspect of hope. In this circumstance, hope is not sought in terms of cure but rather for comfort, for a painless, dignified, and peaceful death. The goal is not to force patients to accept death, but rather to encourage them to move toward acceptance. Encouraging family members to talk about their future plans helps to prepare them for death. How patients view death and dying is often connected to how they see their family (I-Iume, 1991).

There are various therapists who work as part of the core hospice team. These may include physical, respiratory, occupational, and speech therapists. These therapists employ their particular treatment modalities and specialties to assist the patient in developing new ways to accomplish tasks of daily living that have become difficult or seemingly impossible to manage due to terminal illness. Examples include tasks such as bathing, dressing, eating, communicating, and ambulating.

Trained volunteers are also widely used for support services in hospice. According to the Hospice Association of America, early hospices were founded and operated by volunteers and, “These dedicated people continue to be the backbone of today’s hospice” (Foundation for Hospice and Homecare, 1994). Hospice volunteers receive training in communication skills, and they provide compassionate support for both patient and family. They often provide assistance and companionship. Over time, just as is common with nurses, many volunteers become part of a family’s routine and develop lasting friendships with the family.

Other ancillary members of the healthcare team may include a pharmacist, who manages pharmaceutical issues, and a dietician, who evaluates nutritional needs of the patient. Art or music therapists may use their particular skills as well.

Lastly, we consider respite care workers. These pro-

fessional individuals provide short-term relief for family members, which allows them time for needed rest, away from the stresses involved in daily care of a terminally ill family member. Hospice staff members or volunteers provide respite care by taking shifts in a patient’s home. If a more extensive time of respite care is needed, a patient may be placed in an in-patient facility where a number of rooms have been specially designated for respite care, and care may be provided for a predetermined length of time.

The entire philosophy of hospice care rests upon the goal of meeting the special needs of terminally ill patients and their families. The entire hospice team works efficiently, compassionately, and lovingly as one fluid unit to provide the best medical and interpersonal care for their clients.

Throughout the dying process, family members are educated and trained regarding how best to serve the needs of their loved one. It has been shown that family members who are “...informed and supported while delivering care will be less anxious, better able to integrate care into their lives, and will see the experiences of caring in a more positive light” (Given, 2001, p. 214). Once the patient passes away, the next portion of hospice care begins. While the patient is no longer in need of hospice services, the remaining members of the patient’s family are just beginning the next part of their journey, and they can and generally do receive great benefit from hospice aftercare services. If a patient dies in a non-hospice facility, there is no follow-up care for family members available. This is not the case with hospice. Bereavement support is an essential component of hospice philosophy. After the patient dies, a new team of caregivers, collectively referred to as the bereavement team, takes over care for the remaining family members. The hospice team usually includes, “a bereavement coordinator, one or more professionally trained grief counselors and support group facilitators and bereavement volunteers—generally people who have experienced and worked through significant losses in their own lives” (Beresford, 1993, pp. 59-60).

The bereavement team usually commences its services with a family home visit about one month after the death. A family assessment is performed at that time,

and a plan of care is formulated. As the needs of each family are different, so too is the level of care that is required during the time of bereavement. Phone calls or family visits are usually undertaken at one, three, six, and nine months after death. Bereavement programs offer an assortment of support services. Individual and family counseling may be provided, and support groups meet on an ongoing basis. Seminars about the grieving process are often offered, and a host of literature about the subject is made readily available for families (Buckingham, 1996). Most literature and seminars are based on models of successful coping during the bereavement period. Topics include, "understanding the grief process; understanding the normal symptoms of grief; learning more effective ways to manage stress and loss; expanding and utilizing support networks; surviving holidays and other special days; and recognizing growth and recovery" (Janson, 1986, p. 132). Offering a variety of support systems for families allows hospice to provide very necessary tools that help families heal and move forward with their lives.

Commonly, hospices hold social events that provide a unique opportunity for grieving families to meet one another, in a warm and friendly environment, at which they have the opportunity to talk about their feelings with others who have shared the similar loss of a loved one (Beresford, 1993). During the terminal stage, it is normal that family members tend to lose the opportunity to participate in activities and social situations that had previously involved their free time. As caregiving becomes the priority and, eventually, when it comes time for the caregivers to step back out into the social world, contact may be difficult to initiate (Janson, 1986). One way to gently ease back into circulation again is through hospice-delegated social events. These structured activities are filled with other families who have traveled the same road and are grieving just like themselves. Sharing similar hospice experiences allows for a sense of kinship and openness that one might not find elsewhere.

Additionally, some hospices offer memorial services for those patients that have died during the previous year. Typically, hospice bereavement care concludes at about 13 to 14 months after the patient has died. For the

immediate family caregivers, it has proven helpful to encourage involvement of extended family members such as siblings, in-laws, parents, cousins, and others in the grieving process of the caregiver (Bass, Bowman, & Noelker, 1991). By fourteen months after the death, most people have completed the grieving process in a psychologically healthy manner and have resumed their normal pre-death activities of daily life.

According to studies of family health after a member dies (Hume, 1991), hospice bereavement services can be directly linked to facilitating successful completion of the grieving process and promoting well-adjusted behaviors in family members. Most family members report great benefit from the supportive models used in aftercare. The relationships established between themselves and the hospice staff during hospice care are frequently fondly remembered, and all the vast knowledge that was gained during the course of the loved one's illness have become integrated into family members' daily lives. The overall satisfaction and success of hospice is that it offers families much needed physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and resource supports during one of the most difficult and meaningful times of their existence. Hospice delivers not only the advanced medical skills necessary to manage terminal illness, but also provides the trusting, caring, and loving connection required to achieve a good death experience for the family. This special relationship fosters growth of the human spirit and inner self for all involved. Hospice care is one of the most loving choices one can make to assist a family struggling with the impending death of a loved one.

Hospice has played a significant role in my own psychological development, with regard to issues of death and dying. I have had three personal experiences with hospice care. The first two experiences were with two older relatives, both of whom had lived very long and productive lives when they became terminally ill. The third experience was very different because it involved a young woman: one of my closest friends. She was in the prime of her life and was both a wife and mother of a young son when metastatic breast cancer caused her death. Each death experience was unique, yet the common thread of hospice care ran through each tapestry. The basic philosophy of hospice care remained constant

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throughout each of my experiences. However, because each situation and person was unique, each experience provided me with a unique window in which to view the final chapter of a human being's life. Hospice of Northeastern Illinois was enlisted by each of the three families to help them navigate the uncharted course of dying and bereavement. In all three opportunities of working with terminally ill patients, I was awestruck by the individuals' inner strengths and abilities to adjust and cope with their looming deaths. These events gave me the opportunity to see what social psychologists study at length, the power of people when placed in certain situations. Being in such close proximity to death, I was witness to the most intimate and personal relationships between family members; each family member had such differing reactions to the circumstances. These experiences were truly unique opportunities to witness the humanness and rawness of emotion that such difficult circumstances force upon people.

My first experience with hospice came when my husband's grandfather was diagnosed with terminal cardiovascular disease and bladder cancer. He was in his late eighties and had lived on his own for about 15 years, since his wife had passed away after prolonged illness. Edward had cared for his wheelchair-bound wife for about eight years while she was unable to care for herself. In fact, for the last several years, she did not even recognize him. I never knew Edna, Edward's wife, as she had passed away before I came into the family. Edward was a rather gruff man of few words. He had mowed lawns for "old people," most of whom were younger than himself, until he developed heart failure in his mid-eighties. After he became ill, I took over responsibility for his medications and became the liaison between his daughters and the doctors. As I worked for physicians and was trained to care for patients, I became the logical choice to intercede. Edward never believed that he needed medication in order to live, and he firmly believed that the doctors and pharmaceutical companies were only after his money. He grudgingly took his medicine from the daily pill organizers I filled on a weekly basis. This afforded me the ability to know if he skipped any of his meds. He managed mostly on his own for about a year and a

half when family received word that his situation had become terminal. He was hospitalized with congestive heart failure, and during this time he was found to have advanced bladder cancer that would require him to have an indwelling catheter placed permanently. He went to a skilled nursing facility for about three months, and then it was decided that it would be better for him to be in his own home.

The decision was made to bring him home where family members would provide round the clock care for him. Hospice was called in, and a family assessment and plan of care was completed. A nurse would come four times a week, and a nurse's aide would assist with a makeshift shower three times a week. For the duration of his time with us, we managed the rest of his care ourselves.

Edward never spoke with his daughters about dying. He knew he was dying, as he had signed informed consent for his care with the hospice intake coordinator. On several occasions, his pastor came, and they spoke a little about the manner in which Edward had lived his life, and in a remote way, they danced around the issue of dying. He was a devout Christian who attended church on a weekly basis until he became homebound. I feel very fortunate that on three or four occasions he spoke to me in a roundabout way about his upcoming death. I have come to the conclusion that he was able to talk with me because he felt comfortable with me, and also, perhaps because I had married into the family, which meant that I did not have any personal claim or involvement with family matters. I also think that I was more open and receptive to his personal concerns than his daughters were. I had grown to love him as a surrogate grandpa and only wanted what was best for him, regardless of the family implications. When he did speak about dying, it was always in reference to seeing his wife again. Edward's body had worn out, and every task had become difficult. He had lived his life as a manual laborer. Life had been difficult and physically demanding, and he had always worked long hours in order to provide for his family.

The final stages of dying were very hard on Edward physically. He had lived his life with strong conviction and purpose, and he left this life with the same. I prayed

for him to pass on my watch, and he did. During the final days of his life, the hospice nurse was in attendance every day, and on the last day, she stayed with the family for several hours. She had explained to us that because he had been such a fighter during his lifetime, his body systems would continue to fight up until his last breath. She warned us that he could linger on for days. The nurse had explained the final stages of dying to the family, and we knew what to expect. I felt a deep need to stay over on that particular night, even though his two daughters were present and planning to spend the night as well. Many of his bodily functions were shutting down, and I thought the end could be near. On that fateful day, I could sense that Edward was hanging on for some specific reason. I encouraged each family member to say his or her good-byes as I thought perhaps that was what was keeping him tied here. In the evening, Laura and Rae, Edward's daughters, had gone to sleep, and I had remained awake. Every fifteen minutes or so I would go in to his bedroom to check on him and to hold his hand. I spoke to him about his wife and his other relatives that had passed away before, and I encouraged him to let go when he was ready, to join his wife. I assured him that we, the family, would all be fine and would look forward to meeting him again some day. Occasionally, as I spoke to him, the quality of his respirations would change. I do not know if it was because his mind was registering what I was saying or if his body was sensing the touch of my hand, or if it was just my imagination, but no sooner had I stepped out of the doorway, following a short prayer for him, he breathed his last breath. The troubling mechanical sounds his lungs had been making for most of the day ceased. I don't know how long I stood in the doorway before I slowly stepped back in to the room. I took my stethoscope and listened to his heart and lungs for about 20 minutes before I truly believed and accepted that he was gone. I woke his daughters and told them he had died. It was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do.

Shortly afterwards, I phoned the hospice nurse, and she came over to the house. It was she who pronounced him dead and attended to his personal needs. She phoned the funeral home, and the funeral director came

within half an hour. All of this took place between the hours of midnight and four in the morning. The final hours after his death were a blessing, thanks to hospice. The hospice nurse spoke with us and guided us through the steps and processes of what needed to be done. The hospice nurse attended the funeral, and then a hospice bereavement team member phoned both daughters on various occasions for about one year after Edward died. None of the family members participated in bereavement aftercare. Edward's daughters handled things just as he had done, quietly and privately. The grieving process was different for all of us. The severity and duration varied from person to person. I often watched with a keen eye, wondering what other family members were thinking and feeling during this mourning period.

Many extended family members and friends attended the wake and funeral for Edward. They had come to share with one another cherished memories and stories about Edward's life. It was a very special time for all there. Everyone seemed to take comfort in the knowledge that he had lived a long and good life. The time had come for him to take his place in heaven, beside his wife.

Our family did not utilize all the services that hospice has to offer grieving families. We were given literature about the grieving process, and most of us read it. We were very pleased with our hospice experience. Edward had been promised that he would not suffer in pain and that his death would be peaceful. He had been treated with state-of-the-art pain management, and he was at peace when he died. Everyone in the family was glad to have been able to honor his wishes to die at home. He passed away in his own bed, covered with a quilt that had been handmade by his wife. We all felt that we had done our best in caring for him even though we sacrificed a great deal of our own lives in order to best serve him. I, for one, have no regrets. I had been able to say and do everything that was within my power to make his final days on earth pain-free, meaningful, and peaceful. I have grown immensely from my first death experience with the hospice philosophy of dying.

The next opportunity came two years later, when Edward's sister decided she had suffered enough in this life and that hospice would allow her the opportunity to die in the manner in which she chose. Rebecca was 90

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when she died. I had become a close friend to Rebecca while Edward was alive. The physician that I work for was her attending physician, and that relationship tied me to her medical care. Rebecca's sons and daughters-in-law had all agreed to sign on for hospice care. Rebecca sought much needed pain relief as a top priority from hospice. Her physician and her hospice nurse worked tirelessly to achieve the appropriate mix of opioids to achieve maximal pain relief but also to allow her to be alert and responsive.

Rebecca lasted only one week in hospice care, and I believe that she had willed herself to die when she had felt it was time. Her eldest son, who lives out of state, was able to come for a visit. It seemed that this visit gave her a sense of peace, and the two were able to spend quality time together. Her other son and his children and grandchildren had also been frequent visitors, as they lived close by. In fact, on the last evening before she slipped into a coma, there were 25 family members present to visit with her. She was alert and reminisced about her life. She laughed, joked, and seemed to bask in the warmth of love that surrounded her that night. I had a funny feeling that night after everyone left, so I decided to spend the night in case her in-home caregiver required assistance. Rebecca and her sister Grace lived together, as they had both become widows. A caregiver had been hired to help them around the house, and she was present that evening as well. The hospice nurse estimated Rebecca would live at least another week or two, but that was not my impression. I thought the time would come much sooner. Unfortunately, I was correct. That following morning, we could not awaken Rebecca; she had slipped into a coma. I had to call her family and tell them that the final stages of dying had commenced. I felt rather ill at ease letting them know because I suspected that she would not come out of the coma and be able to communicate with them. I felt sorry that they had not had further opportunity to talk with her before she slipped away. The family had truly believed that she would live longer and they would have time to say what needed to be said. She lingered in the coma for two and a half days but never regained consciousness. Her immediate family members were able to visit and spend time with her during these final days and bid farewell to her in their own private ways.

Because I was not part of the immediate family, I do not know what bereavement services the family used, if any. However, Rebecca's daughter-in-law told me that they had been contacted by hospice after her death and that they had appreciated the thoughtful calls. I also know that they, too, were very pleased with the choice of hospice care for Rebecca and that she had died a very dignified and peaceful death surrounded by family members and her hospice nurse.

I was not in town on the day that Rebecca died. It was very difficult for me to leave her home on the morning before her death. I knew in my heart that I would not see her again alive. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the wake and funeral because my husband and I were out of the country. It was very difficult for me not to be in attendance for either service because I felt as if I did not have adequate opportunity for closure. I had bid her farewell on the day I left, but I believe there is a sense of completion one feels after attending a wake or funeral. Family and friends are gathered during the somber occasion to support one another, and it has been my experience that this time can also serve as an intimate and special opportunity to share personal thoughts, feelings, and memories. After I returned to town, I heard bits and pieces from family about the funeral service and wake, and that many memorable and meaningful moments had been shared between Rebecca's family and friends.

It took me several months to achieve a real sense of closure and peace after Rebecca died. I grieved privately and was eventually able to go to her grave to pay my final respects, but I believe that it would have been easier for me to complete the grieving process if I had been able to mourn her passing accompanied by all the others, at the funeral service.

My most recent encounter with hospice care came when one of my best friends, Anna, succumbed to metastatic breast cancer about a year and a half ago. She courageously fought her battle with cancer for about ten years. Anna never could accept the fact that she was dying. I believe that it was the only way she could cope with the reality of her situation and still continue to muster all her strength to spend quality time with her son and husband. Anna's son was only 11 when she died. After much family discussion, hospice

services were engaged to help the family manage Anna's care. The horrific pain that Anna endured daily was not being adequately managed by conventional medical care, and it was felt that hospice could better address the situation. Within a short time, hospice nurses were able to conquer her severe pain. They used an arsenal of medications to provide her with pain relief, yet she was still very alert and able to function. Activities of daily living were a constant challenge for Anna, but the kind and caring hospice staff were always anticipating and addressing her needs in this regard. Despite her situation, Anna always greeted everyone into her home with a warm smile. She always had a funny or witty remark ready whenever she spoke to someone. The hospice staff worked very hard to make Anna's last days comfortable and meaningful.

I was a frequent visitor in Anna's home for the last two months of her life. In fact, there were three of us who took turns caring for Anna while her husband was at work. The hospice team was wonderful in supporting Anna, her family, and those of us who were part-time caregivers. The staff realized early on that Anna was not psychologically ready or able to fully realize discussions about her upcoming death. They lovingly respected her wishes and worked around them. On the other hand, Anna's husband was always kept well informed about the progression of her illness. He discussed the situation at length with Anna's nurses and doctor, and he prepared himself for the inevitable. In fact, he told me sometime later, that he had been mentally preparing himself for her death for several years, ever since he had learned that she would eventually lose her battle with cancer.

For everyone involved, the most difficult situation involved Anna's son Matthew. Many lengthy discussions were held regarding what and how much should be told to Matthew regarding his mother's grave condition. Both the hospice psychologist and social worker offered valuable insight and input in this regard. They addressed these issues, along with many others, with Anna's husband and her family. During the last week of her life, Anna's son came to realize and understand that she would be leaving him to go to heaven. I do not think he really had the cognitive ability to understand the emotional impact of her death. For a number of years he had watched her become sicker, but I don't

think he fully understood what was happening. I don't think many children are capable of understanding the permanence of death and its impact on a family. Thankfully, on the night she died, he slept through all the commotion that occurred during her death. He did not become aware of her passing until his father awakened him. Anna's husband, sister, brother, sister-in-law, and nurse were all with Anna when she passed away. The body was prepared before Anna's son came in to see her. Matthew and his father spent time with Anna and were able to say their goodbyes together. The support the family received at this time was remarkable. Anna's husband said that he could not have managed without the support of the hospice team.

Subsequent to his mother's funeral, Matthew was enrolled in a bereavement support group for children his same age. He attended the group for several months. The children's support group seemed to provide him the opportunity to begin working through his loss and his personal feelings about it. At eleven, he was still a child, and as such, still in the formative process of maturing. His self-concept was not fully developed, and his understanding of his place in the world was not yet established. It was for these reasons that it became so important for him to appropriately process Anna's death and its impact. About a month after Anna died, her husband told me that Matthew had suggested it was time for his dad to find a new wife so he would not need to feel lonely. That lone comment made me realize how little children really understand about the significance of life and death. With all its expertise, hospice was able to guide this child through the grieving process, in a healthy manner, so that he could continue his normal maturation process despite the horrific loss, the death of his mother.

Anna's husband also attended a bereavement support group for some time. He, at times, felt a bit out of place. He said it was because he had been preparing himself for her death for such a long time while most others in his group had been caught off guard by the sudden death of a spouse. Anna's husband is a very shy and quiet man. I was encouraged that the hospice bereavement team had gently nudged him to attend support group and that he complied. No matter how one anticipates loss, the magnitude of the resulting emotions always seem to be greater than one can or should

## The Role of Social Support in Hospice: Compassionate Care for the Dying

have to bear alone. It has taken a long time for Anna's husband to resume a normal social life. He has recently begun dating a nice woman, and they seem to be happy with one another. Matthew also seems to be adjusting and appears happy.

Anna often discussed with me how she felt about her husband dating and possibly marrying again. She had overwhelming fears that she would be forgotten. I always tried to speak from my heart and tell her that she could never be forgotten. The impact she made on all those who knew her is everlasting. Her son is her living legacy, and her husband will always carry with him the family traditions they started together. Both are forever changed because of Anna's presence in their lives, even though her life was not a long one. I, for one, will never forget the lessons I learned from her. She taught me courage in the face of adversity and that love beyond all else lasts into eternity. One person *can* make a difference in the lives of others. In this case, the hospice team was able to fulfill their promise of a good death experience for Anna and her family.

It is my sincere opinion that hospice fulfills a very necessary role in the lives of terminally ill patients and their families. The social support system that is inherent in hospice provides families with the necessary physical, emotional, spiritual, and social support to help them manage and cope with terminal illness and the death of their loved one. Because hospice provides a unique social support structure for families, they are able to address and meet the family's needs. This is contrary to the care provided at hospitals or other non-hospice medical facilities, where the facilities are not designed to support the emotional, spiritual, or social needs of the terminally ill and their families. Consequently, dying in one of these establishments can be very frightening and may lead to a death that is not peaceful or dignified for the patient or his family. Hospice has proven that its multidisciplinary team has the knowledge and the technical ability to change, for the better, the dying experience of the terminally ill. With hospice care, families can come together and grow in compassion and love while caring for their dying loved one. The philosophy of hospice will continue to grow and flourish in our society because it educates, encourages, and supports families during a

very difficult time in their lives. The promise hospice makes to all who utilize its services is that no one need ever make their final journey alone, in pain, or fearful, because the caring and compassionate hospice team will accompany them to death's door and will journey along side their families during the period of bereavement. That is the legacy of hope that is hospice.

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Evaluation: *Lisa has written an exemplary paper in response to this assignment. Her explanation of the theory, structure, and goals of hospice therapy, along with her movingly rendered life experiences, make this paper a convincing argument for hospice care.*

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# The Handkerchief in *Othello*: From a Symbol of Fidelity to Infidelity

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Tricia Elliott

Course: English 102 (Composition)

Instructor: Elizabeth Turner

Assignment:

*Plan, compose, critique, and revise  
an interpretation, supported with research,  
of William Shakespeare's Othello.*

The handkerchief in Shakespeare's *Othello* is Iago's tool of manipulation. In a tragedy of bare emotions, the handkerchief arouses strong emotions in all the characters that touch it. The handkerchief arouses feelings of love, fidelity, and magic, and then ultimately betrayal, jealousy, and infidelity. According to Harry Levin, the handkerchief "becomes a talisman of life and death" (563). For Iago, the handkerchief represents power over Othello, a way to manipulate Othello to suit Iago's desire. As the handkerchief changes hands through Iago's careful manipulations, the symbolism of the handkerchief changes from that of fidelity to jealousy to infidelity.

The handkerchief first appears in Act III as Desdemona tries to use it to soothe Othello's headache. The significance of the handkerchief is not known at this point, and it is referred to as a napkin. As Othello states, "Your napkin is too little" (3.3.303). The handkerchief is brushed away by Othello and lands on the floor. Although this appears an insignificant event, it serves as the trigger for Iago's scheme. The act of brushing away the handkerchief by Othello can be interpreted as him brushing off the affections and love of Desdemona. As stated by Robert Heilman, "In rejecting her attention, Othello really rejects the magical powers of love..." (534). Not only is Othello providing Iago with the opportunity to obtain the handkerchief, he is also turning away the love of his wife. By using the term little to describe the napkin, Othello implies that not only is the napkin little but Desdemona's love is too little, as he is starting to doubt her love based upon information from Iago.

Iago's initial accomplice in the scheme is his wife, Emilia. Moments after the handkerchief falls to the floor, Emilia picks up the handkerchief. Upon picking up the handkerchief, she states, "I am glad I have found this napkin. / This was her first remembrance from the Moor. / My wayward husband hath a hundred times / Wooed me to steal it, but she so loves the token" (3.3.306-309). Emilia provides the audience with the significance of the handkerchief. It was the first gift from Othello to Desdemona. Desdemona cherishes the handkerchief, as it represents Othello's love. As stated by critic Harry Berger, it "...first appears simply as a

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love token given by Othello to Desdemona and therefore treasured by her" (385). For Emilia, the significance of the handkerchief has changed from a napkin to a token. It is no longer just a napkin, an insignificant item, but a token symbol of the love between Othello and Desdemona. Iago has pestered Emilia to retrieve or steal the handkerchief, and she took advantage of this first opportunity to get the handkerchief to give to Iago. However, Emilia describes Iago as "wayward," giving the audience additional insight into Iago's headstrong, willful, and capricious behaviors. Emilia realizes that Iago's desire for the handkerchief is probably not for noble reasons but does not challenge him.

Shortly after Emilia retrieves the handkerchief, Iago enters the room, and he delights that Emilia stole the handkerchief. However, Emilia corrects Iago that she did not steal it. As Emilia states, "No, Faith. She let it drop by negligence" (3.3.327), referring to Desdemona. By stating that she came upon the handkerchief by faith and not stealing, Emilia is trying to absolve herself of any wrongdoing. The term faith could be interpreted as fate, which associates magic or destiny with the handkerchief. To have fate intervene in the situation makes the audience think that it was inevitable that the handkerchief was dropped and Emilia would pick it up. There is magic associated with the handkerchief.

After Emilia leaves the room, Iago lets the audience in on his plans. He states, "I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin / And let him find it" (3.3.337-338). The scheme involving Cassio is presented clearly by Iago. For this act, fate is not intervening. To Iago, there is no magic in the handkerchief. It is just a piece of cloth that he can use to manipulate the emotions of Othello. Iago confirms this when he states, "Trifles light as air / Are to the jealous confirmations strong / As proofs of Holy Writ" (3.3.338-340). Iago refers to the handkerchief as a trifle. It is something of little value to him, but he is benefiting from other people's emotional attachments to it. By expressing his view of the handkerchief, he is revealing his plans of manipulation. The handkerchief will serve as proof or confirmation of Desdemona's infidelity to Othello; it serves as proof as strong as the scripture or Holy Writ to someone as prone to jealousy as Othello.

Due to strong feelings of jealousy, Othello is constantly reacting to the whereabouts of the handkerchief. As stated by John Hughes, "But there is nothing in which the Poet has more shewn his Judgement in this Play, than in the Circumstances of the Handkerchief, which is employ'd as a Confirmation to the Jealousie of Othello already raised" (385). Hughes was one of the first critics to interpret the representation of the handkerchief. He is pointing out that trifle things, such as the handkerchief, can easily sway jealous people. Iago seizes the opportunity to distort the meaning of the handkerchief to his advantage. Iago knows and sees how jealous Othello can be and uses the handkerchief to inflame the jealousy even more. As Othello looks for proof of his jealous feelings, he commands Iago to provide that proof: "Villain, be sure though prove my love a whore! / Be sure of it. Give me ocular proof" (3.3.375-376). Othello wants to see the proof with his own eyes to confirm the infidelity. Othello uses the strong term of whore to emphasize the seriousness of proving infidelity. Othello wants Iago to be sure of the accusation; however, Othello succumbs to Iago's mere images of alleged infidelity. Iago offers up the handkerchief as the ultimate proof to be seen by the naked eye.

In Act III Scene IV, Desdemona realizes the handkerchief is missing and asks Emilia the whereabouts of the handkerchief. Emilia responds, "I know not, madam" (3.4.17). Iago is succeeding in his wayward manipulations. Emilia lies to Desdemona, and the handkerchief becomes an integral part of the tangled web of deceit and lies that Iago is weaving. E.A.J. Honigmann brings to light that Emilia was afraid of Iago. According to Honigmann, "Had she not been afraid of Iago the truth might have come out and Iago's plot would have collapsed" (110). Due to Emilia's fear of Iago, she lies to Desdemona. Emilia shares her husband's view of the handkerchief, that it is a trifle. If not, she would have been more honest with Desdemona. Emilia does not understand the true symbolic nature of the handkerchief and how Iago is using it to drive the jealousy of Othello until it is too late. The web of lies becomes very tangled at this point in the play. As Honigmann points out, Emilia could have easily foiled

Iago's plot at this point by revealing that he was given the handkerchief.

While the handkerchief is supposedly missing, Iago is working on Othello. Iago twists the situation so Othello sees the handkerchief as a symbol of Desdemona herself. If Desdemona is willing to give someone her handkerchief, she must be willing to give of herself as well. One of Iago's twists is to lead Othello to believe that the handkerchief represents Desdemona's virtue or goodness. This goodness is tainted when the handkerchief is perceived to leave her hands and given to another man. As noted by critic Harry Berger, "When the handkerchief is first given, it represents her virtue and their chaste love, but it later becomes a sign, indeed a proof, of her unfaithfulness" (386). Berger uses key words such as virtue and chaste love to reinforce the symbolic nature of the handkerchief to represent Desdemona as pure, decent, and honest.

Later during this same scene, Othello enters and asks Desdemona for a handkerchief. She offers a handkerchief; however, it is not "the" handkerchief. Othello discusses at length the significance of the handkerchief, and how it was a charmed gift given to Othello by his mother. His mother received it as a gift from an Egyptian witch as a charm to keep her husband's love (3.4.51-62). Through his explanation, Othello claims that his mother used it to keep his father faithful to her. For Othello, the handkerchief not only represents love, but also marital fidelity. As stated by Wolstenholme Parr, "Hence has Shakespeare judiciously taken occasion to confer a sort of preternatural importance on the handkerchief that was the last fatal confirmation of his jealousy" (397). The preternatural importance of the handkerchief lets the audience know that the handkerchief is taking on meaning beyond normally found or expected. With Othello placing importance on the handkerchief and its origins, Iago can easily manipulate the handkerchief and the situation. The handkerchief takes on an abnormal strength and power of its own, as Robert Heilman concurs. In his essay, he states "The handkerchief is a talisman: kept by a wife, it guarantees her husband's love; if it is lost or given away, 'his spirits should hunt / After new fancies'" (4.3.58-63) (534). Heilman reinforces the power and

magic of the handkerchief by referring to it as a talisman, which is anything that is thought to have magic power. If the handkerchief is lost, so too will the love be lost, and the person, or spirit, will seek another person. With these stories, symbols, and magic woven into the handkerchief, it becomes easier to manipulate the situation from love and purity to perceived jealousy and betrayal. Ultimately, Iago reinforces the significance of the handkerchief so that Othello believes Desdemona is unfaithful, which would then lead to Othello's downfall.

At the end of Act III Scene IV, Cassio has the handkerchief and gives it to Bianca. He asks Bianca to make a copy of the handkerchief, as he likes it. Cassio states: "I know not, neither. I found it in my chamber. / I like the work well. Ere it be demanded - / As like enough it will - I would have it copied" (3.4.183-185). Bianca immediately becomes suspicious and thinks that Cassio has another lover to whom the handkerchief belongs. The handkerchief now represents suspicion and infidelity. Bianca sees the handkerchief as a sign of Cassio being with—and perhaps loving—another woman, even though he states to have only found it. Bianca leaves with the handkerchief. Critic Harry Levin argues it is no mere coincidence that the handkerchief passes from Desdemona to Bianca, but as a sign of purity bewhored and love confounded with lust (563). The significance of the handkerchief changing hands from Desdemona to Bianca is the transition from a symbol of love and fidelity to that of infidelity. Levin goes on to state, "Desdemona and Bianca, with Emilia midway between them, stand at the polar extremes of womanhood" (563). Desdemona represents love and purity initially, whereas Bianca is Cassio's prostitute, representing lust and infidelity. The two women are polar opposites.

The significance of Bianca touching and having the handkerchief is the loss of virtue and goodness. The handkerchief also becomes ordinary, not unique, as Cassio asks for a copy to be made. If more than one of the same handkerchief exists, it loses its power and magic. According to James Calderwood, "The whoring of the handkerchief fetishizes the whoring of Desdemona." Desdemona and the handkerchief become one and the same. If the handkerchief has been in the

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hands of Cassio, then so has Desdemona. Calderwood also states, "For to 'take out the work,' as Bianca is asked to do, is to copy the handkerchief's pattern and thus to degrade the irreplaceable magic talisman to the status of repeatable common property" (102). The once pure handkerchief was now in the hands of a prostitute and in the process of being copied. It would no longer be unique and pure, paralleling Desdemona. Although Iago could not have predicted what Cassio would do with the handkerchief once he found it, the chain of events worked in Iago's favor. Iago could not have planned this course of events any better if he tried.

As the scene proceeds, Iago states, "But if I give my wife a handkerchief-" (4.1.9). Iago continues to bring to Othello's attention the missing handkerchief. If a husband gives a wife a handkerchief, it is an important token of love and honor. Iago does not finish his thought but plants the seed that there is more to be said, thus contributing again to the significance of the handkerchief. As Othello states, "By heaven, I would have most gladly forgot it. / Thou sadistg- O, it comes o'er my memory / As doth the raven o'er the infectious house, / Boding to all - he had my handkerchief" (4.1.19-22). The raven is a foreboding symbol, as it is one related to the plague. Iago has jogged Othello's memory about the handkerchief, at the same time stirring up a sense of foreboding. If Othello had forgotten about the handkerchief, the manipulations would have failed. According to Kenneth Burke, "For the handkerchief will sum up the entire complexity of motives. It will be public evidence of the conspiracy which Othello now wholly believes to exist..." (42). Iago nudges and pushes Othello, continuing to play on his emotions. The handkerchief serves as the public evidence of the infidelity. Iago's motives are complex, as are his actions and words. Iago is constantly planting seeds, ideas, and thoughts in Othello's mind. When an opportunity arises with the handkerchief, Iago is able to reinforce the thoughts and produce evidence to evoke feelings of infidelity. Burke uses the term conspiracy to describe Iago's actions; Iago uses the handkerchief as a tool of manipulation in his conspiracy to bring down Othello. The other people in the play that touch the

handkerchief are part of the conspiracy but do not know it, except for Emilia. A conspiracy means a working together, but many do not know they are part of the conspiracy. It is really Iago and the handkerchief conspiring against everyone.

At the end of Act IV, Scene I, Bianca gives the handkerchief back to Cassio with Othello watching. As Othello states, "By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!" (4.1.148). To Othello, this is the proof that supports what Iago has been telling him. According to Harry Levin, "Shakespeare invests it with romantic mystery as a magic symbol of Othello's passion and a mystic omen of Desdemona's murder, since it will provide the ocular proof that seals Iago's calumny" (563). Calumny means a false and malicious statement meant to hurt someone's reputation; Levin is pointing out that Iago uses the handkerchief to poison Othello's thoughts of Desdemona. The handkerchief is the ocular proof that Iago needs to carry out his plot. Iago is trying to ruin the reputation of Desdemona by proving through the handkerchief that she is being unfaithful to Othello. Iago references Desdemona being foolish, which intensifies the feelings of infidelity. He states, "Yours, by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath given it his whore" (4.1.163-164). Iago points out the obvious change of hands of the handkerchief, which not only characterizes Desdemona as dishonest, but also foolish. Once Othello has seen the handkerchief in the hands of Cassio and Bianca, he has the proof that he needs, and jealousy develops into a rage that takes over. Levin, through his writings, points out the transition of the handkerchief from a symbol of love to infidelity to an omen of murder. With Othello's jealous rage culminating, murder enters his mind.

Similar to Levin, Faith Nostbakken writes about the transition of the handkerchief: "Its appearance and reappearance as it changes hands—from Desdemona to Othello to Emilia to Iago to Bianca to Cassio—increases the dramatic tension by drawing visual or 'ocular' attention to the lie that gradually entangles and destroys the main characters" (125). The handkerchief plays a role in this play, an almost human role. The tan-

gled web referred to by Ms. Nostbakken makes the handkerchief a key instrument of destruction. Iago, however, is the one that is manipulating and scheming to achieve the end result of Othello's demise. It does not appear that Iago is impacted by the death of the others, but he is pleased that Othello is out of the way. He has achieved his goal.

At the end of the play, Emilia reveals the truth about Iago and the handkerchief. She states, "...That handkerchief thou speak'st of / I found by fortune and did give my husband; / For often, with a solemn earnestness, / more than indeed belonged to such a trifle..." (4.2.232-235). Emilia confesses that she gave the handkerchief to Iago, a handkerchief that carried too much interest for something so insignificant from her perspective. The tool of Iago's manipulations ironically becomes only a handkerchief again. Levin states, referring to Othello, "...his world is brought down in ruins by the wave of a handkerchief, the neat trick of a wily conjuror abetted by circumstance; cunning has done its best, and luck its worst" (563). Iago is the wily conjuror that through certain circumstances achieved his goal. Because the handkerchief is woven into the play with such symbolism, the actions of Iago are plausible. For Othello to get upset and jealous over a plain napkin would seem ridiculous; however, a handkerchief given to his beloved wife as a token of his love and fidelity makes the actions and reactions real, and Iago's manipulations successful.

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Evaluation: *Tricia's essay is an effective interpretation of Othello. It's a model essay.*

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# Economically Feasible Methods of Protecting Brazil's Amazon Rainforest

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Kevin Farrell

Course: History 121 (Latin American History)  
Instructor: David Richmond

## Assignment:

*Research and present a current issue or problem facing a Latin American country today. Propose a course of action for addressing this problem.*

In recent years, the destruction of tropical rainforests has resulted in a greater public outcry than it once did. No rainforest quite compares to Brazil's Amazon, the largest such forest in the world, and indeed it is the Amazon that has received the vast majority of attention. The existence of the Amazon rainforest is of tremendous importance to Brazil—and also, ironically enough, to its economy—which makes the issue of deforestation all the more pressing. The Brazilian government should recognize once and for all that the Amazon is essential to the national welfare. By the same token, it must implement a series of ecological policies that acknowledge the economic factors that drive deforestation and reconcile the need for protecting the rainforest with the needs of capitalist development. Should the government impose a carbon tax, replace destructive subsidies with ecologically sustainable but nevertheless profitable ones, and protect as national forest the entirety of the Amazon rainforest, it can succeed in balancing environmental and economi-

cal concerns. This topic is important because it affects the world environment and policy within unique ecosystems.

The Amazon rainforest is home to an enormous range of animal and plant species. The number of species in the world's tropical rainforests has never been established, because many of these species have yet to be discovered; however, 2 to 3 million, or two-thirds of the earth's species, may be an underestimation (Whitmore 58). A more conservative estimate suggests that the rainforests, which cover only a twentieth of the earth's surface, are home to over 50 percent of all living organisms (Lewis 14). The plants and animals in the rainforest play a crucial role in the world's biodiversity. This biodiversity does more than create a tingling feeling in the hearts of environmentalists. *The Economist* explains some of the more tangible reasons for promoting biodiversity:

The strongest argument for conserving biodiversity is to protect the 'ecosystems' on which humanity itself depends. Diversified ecosystems protect watersheds, local rainfall, food supply, and soil. The Amazon ecosystem is so vast that it creates its own climate. Most rainfall is recycled, and the forest affects light reflection, cloud formation, regional rainfall and temperature ("Saving the Rainforest").

Even if the Brazilian government does not care about the long-term threat of global warming, which the Amazon also keeps in check, these other domestic concerns pose a real threat to the country. Uncontrolled flooding, irregular rainfall, and soil erosion will cause billions of dollars in damage, to say nothing of the human anguish and disruption to everyday living. Thus, a foresighted Amazon policy must include ways of dealing with deforestation, which results in the loss of species diversity. Only biodiversity can preserve a stable and healthy ecosystem.

There is a second reason—with its own economic bent—for supporting the biodiversity of the rainforest. It is related to the pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. Mac Margolis explains,

Once a species is eliminated, no laboratory can conjure it back again. And as tropical forests contain so much of the gene stuff that is vital

for our own lives—curare for anesthesia, the rose periwinkle for leukemia or Hodgkin's disease, quinine for malaria, and a dozen analgesics, not to mention the possible keys to pest and disease controls for agriculturee depleting the species pool is lighting the long fuse of a time bomb for humanity (140).

The value of the Amazon rainforest, much like the number of species living within it, cannot even be assessed at this point in time. Unless the forest is protected, Brazil may miss out on a golden opportunity to supply the world with cures for its diseases. Moreover, as *The Economist* argues, there are agricultural consequences to extinction: "All crops, garden plants, and domestic animals have wild ancestors.... Their continued viability depends on the maintenance of the genetic diversity of their ancestors, which alone makes possible the breeding of new strains" ("Saving...").

Brazilian environmentalists must appeal to the economic effects of deforestation in order to have any hope of stopping it. Therein lies the current dilemma. Brazil's economy depends on the products of deforestation, especially timber and cattle. Tree cutting and burning results in the destruction of far more Amazon rainforest than all other factors combined (Coffee). There has always been a demand for Brazilian hardwoods, which explains why such enormous tracts of land have long been deforested. In more recent years, government subsidies have encouraged vast projects that clear the forest to open grazing land for cattle. These two industries have supplied jobs for hundreds of thousands of Brazilians, but they have come at a terrible price. Although the worst deforestation in the Amazon's history has ended, the rainforest continues to be depleted at the steady rate of about 12 percent annually (Morano and Washburn).

One of Brazil's continual problems is that it benefits from developing at the expense of the rainforest. On the one hand, Brazil cannot afford to resist the economic opportunities presented. On the other hand, it has failed to impose regulations on the destruction of its forests or, in some cases, simply does not have the resources to enforce them. The government needs to search for innovative methods of raising revenue while still protecting the land. A particularly effective way of doing

this would involve carbon credits. Since the world must decrease carbon emissions in order to combat global warming, and developers inject tremendous amounts of carbon into the atmosphere when they build over the rainforests, the Brazilian government could charge nations and companies for the right to emit carbon under the condition that they discontinue their plans elsewhere. These carbon credits might provide Brazil with \$2 billion per year and simultaneously keep the Amazon rainforest intact ("Is it Possible...").

In addition to charging for development and pollution on its land, the Brazilian government must change its economic policies. It must pay special attention to the items that it subsidizes because, *The Economist* observes, "deforestation has been as much an economic as an environmental disaster" ("Managing the Rainforests"). This may seem hard to believe, but it is true. In the past several decades, loggers have ripped out a stretch of forest and then burned the rest of the land, thinking that agricultural potential would make the land worth more cleared than as untouched forest. Farming turned out to be unprofitable, and many people committed fraud or used their new "farms" as tax shelters for other businesses ("Managing..."). Hundreds of thousands of square kilometers now lay abandoned in Amazonia, with nothing to show for the deforestation.

In the last few years, the government has reduced these subsidies and closed some of the loopholes. Good-quality forested land can be worth 40% more than cleared land ("Managing..."). Unharmed woodland can yield a profit indefinitely. Using reduced-impact logging, companies can divide a forested area into 30 blocks, one of which is exploited each year, before being left alone for 29 years. ("Managing..."). This method provides enough time to re-grow the lost forest. It can even be more profitable than traditional, reckless logging because it leaves the oldest trees, which would otherwise be cut down, to re-seed the block with new trees ("Managing...").

The government, if it subsidizes anything, should subsidize reduced-impact logging. Ecologist Robin Chazdon discovered that "in secondary forests that are 15 to 20 years old, the overall abundance of species that

have medicinal uses is higher compared to the older forests" (qtd. in Morano and Washburn). Furthermore, younger forests consume more carbon dioxide than older forests, which make careful deforestation more effective in fighting global warming than does leaving the rainforest alone (Morano and Washburn). And as far as illegal logging is concerned, more foreign and domestic consumers of hardwoods are demanding that timber be independently certified as the product of reduced-impact logging, which has led to a decrease in such illegal activity ("Managing...").

Another threat to rainforest destruction is the increase in population. With Amazonia's population on the rise, there is a need to find ways to support the new people. Various projects have employed locals as fruit and plant collectors, and projects are underway to train villagers to grow trees and fruits on their own small plot of land. They can realize a decent living with such techniques ("Managing..."). The United States should follow through in giving Brazil the money it has promised to support such work.

Not to be overlooked is the idea of placing the entire Amazon rainforest under government protection. Some of it could be designated a national park and be deemed untouchable. Most of it could be made into a national forest and placed under strict regulation for cutting, which would be conducted under reduced-impact guidelines. The enforcement for the government's mandate must be stronger than it currently is. This will require money that Brazil does not have at the moment, but carbon credits could provide the revenue needed to run a national forestry service equipped with satellite imaging. According to *The Economist*, "Combined with better land registration, improved satellite imaging should help to monitor, and thus prevent, deforestation.... A state laboratory is downloading satellite images and comparing them with a computerized land register to spot breaches of the often-flouted national forest code" ("Managing..."). Enforcement of responsible rainforest protection policies is a realistic expectation, especially as Brazil's government cleans up some of its historical corruption.

A combination of carbon credits, economically enticing subsidies for reduced-impact logging, and federal protection of Brazil's Amazon rainforest can make possible the preservation of the environment without compromising the country's economic needs. It is only when the economic and environmental needs are unified and seen as compatible that the problem of deforestation will be resolved. "Ecoagriculture," the set of strategies being devised to curb conflicts between agriculture and biodiversity, is slowly producing results. One can reasonably expect improvement in the next five years. The health of the world's ecosystems—and Brazil's in particular—depends upon it.

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Evaluation: *Kevin has an excellent, concise thesis that makes his paper well organized. He uses a variety of sources and evidence to carefully support his ideas.*

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# Which “Bard Girl” Are You?

Donnelle Fuller

Course: Literature 210 (Introduction to Shakespeare)

Instructor: Jessica Walsh

## Assignment:

*Respond to the plays we've read in a way that demonstrates textual expertise and offers a compelling argument. I encourage creative approaches.*

William Shakespeare gave many of his female characters very different personalities. They all react differently when it comes to “matters of the heart.” Some are lucky in love, some are not, and some don't want to be within ten feet of it! Take this quiz and find out for yourself which “Bard Girl” you are most like! I'll tell you if you have the most in common with Desdemona, Ophelia, Beatrice, or Kate. Tally up your score and read about which character's personality and life decisions you relate to the most. Then, read the other profiles for a character analysis of three other infamous “Bard Girls.” To badly mangle a famous Shakespearean quote, “If quizzing be the food of love, read on!”

- 1) You hear a rumor that you are going to be asked out on a date by the captain of the basketball team. He's cute, he's popular...but he's not the same race as you. You:
    - A. Say yes! Who cares about racial differences? It's your life, isn't it?
    - B. Ask for your dad's and brother's opinions before saying yes...if they approved.
    - C. Make fun of him before reluctantly admitting that it would be kind of fun to hang out with him...that is, seeing as how he already admitted to liking YOU.
    - D. Spit on him and run away, ranting and raving.
  - 2) Men love you for your \_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
    - A. Sympathetic, liberal mind.g
    - B. Innocent demeanor.g
    - C. Sharp, witty mind.g
    - D. Men don't like me.g
  - 3) You're most likely to end up with:
    - A. Whoever tickles your fancy, especially if he'sg “different from all the other boys.”
    - B. Whomever your parents like.g
    - C. A funny, independent guy who can hold hisg own with you.
    - D. Whoever dares to beat you into submission.g
-

## Which “Bard Girl” Are You?

4) Which bad boy behavior would annoy you most?

- A. A jealous boyfriend who doesn't trust you.
- B. An ex-boyfriend who plays mind games with you after breaking up.
- C. A boy who would rather put you down than admit he likes you.
- D. A boyfriend who only puts up with you because your dad is paying him to.

5) If you were a fruit (described by another), what would you be?

- A. Papaya—Exciting, refreshingly different, and fun for those who are open to new experiences!
- B. A grape—you don't exactly stand out, but you are somewhat of a mystery (Seeds? Seedless? We can't tell!)
- C. Pineapple—Tough on the outside, sweet on the inside.
- D. A crabapple with a worm in it—need we say more?

Okay, now tally up your score and find out which Bard Girl you relate to the most.

If you picked:

### Mostly A's

You are most like *Desdemona*! It's likely that you are impressed by a man with muscles, power, and popularity. However, this is not to say that you are shallow. Like *Desdemona*, you don't care what others think; if they don't like your guy, tough! *Desdemona* knows that she has sound judgment even if her father doesn't believe that she does. If you fall for a guy that perhaps your father doesn't like at first, you are not going to waste time crying about it. You'd much rather use your independent spirit and open mind to find a way to show Daddy how good your boyfriend is to you. It is important to understand, though, that *Desdemona* did not marry *Othello* just to upset her father; she genuinely loved him. You, too, don't rebel just to upset those you love; you are much happier trying to show them why you think the way you do. *Desdemona* is also very

loyal and honest. When she's accused by *Othello* of cheating on him, she stands her ground. She would never stoop to saying she did cheat just to get *Othello* to leave her alone. *Desdemona* is proud of her honesty policy and would never violate it by lying or giving in to false accusations. You'll remain true to your heart (and your beau) until your dying day.

### Mostly B's

You are most like *Ophelia*! Sure, you like boys...but only if Daddy lets you. In *Hamlet*, we first meet *Ophelia* after she and *Hamlet* have already broken up. She is already somewhat jaded about love. Her breakup with *Hamlet* didn't go very well, and she is now healing from a broken heart. The *Ophelia* we see in the play seems to have adopted a “never again” stance toward *Hamlet*. She doesn't try to win him back over; in fact, she wants to let him know it's over for good. In Act III, Scene II, *Ophelia* does not respond to *Hamlet*'s odd attempts at flirting with her. She does this because she wants to assert that she is no pushover; *Hamlet* hurt her, and she wants him to know that she cannot be fooled into loving him again. *Ophelia* has now turned to her family for direction and advice. She listens to *Laertes* when he tells her to beware of men, and she lets *Polonius* use her in his scheme to see if *Hamlet* is lusting after her. It is possible that *Ophelia* is now listening to her family because she made a bad dating decision in the first place. It is plausible that she only fell in love with *Hamlet* because he was out of her league. Because such a powerful individual had his eye on her, she might have succumbed to his affections without thinking of the repercussions of dating royalty. Asking for her family to guide her is perhaps the only alternative *Ophelia* sees, as she is very young and probably inexperienced with love aside from her relationship with *Hamlet*. Although this seems like it would be a good decision for *Ophelia*, it is probably not the best route for you. Alas, *Ophelia*'s life ends tragically too soon, so she never had the chance to date anyone besides *Hamlet*. Since it is unlikely that you will be committing suicide due to your ex-boyfriend murdering your father, you will probably live to have many chances to date others. Don't be so concerned about making

everyone else happy that you might be driving a potential suitor away. You're curious about love, but the overprotectiveness of those you trust make dating decisions hard for you. Avoid overemotional guys or those who are out of your league, and you'll be fine.

### Mostly C's

You are most like *Beatrice*! You are a firecracker who is not afraid to speak her mind. Beatrice seems very unapproachable to all of the possible suitors in the play. Truly, the only reason she ends up getting married is through the manipulation of her friends. She would be too proud to ever admit that she had feelings for any man. Even though it might appear that she only fell in love because her friends made her think Benedick loved her in the first place, in truth, she needed the push. It is very possible that pride was the only thing that kept her from admitting to being in love. Perhaps she developed this pride because she saw other friends get hurt by men in the past. Look how she reacted to Claudio's slander of Hero. Beatrice would rather give up Benedick forever than let Claudio tarnish her cousin's good name. Clearly, this proves that Beatrice is afraid of being hurt herself by a man. Therefore, she developed a saucy demeanor that would chase any potential suitors away before they had the chance to hurt her. Beatrice was probably only being very rude to Benedick because she was taking on the role of the schoolgirl who pinches the boys because she actually likes them. Like Beatrice, boys might think of you as more of a sister or a funny, feisty friend...and to the outside world, that's fine with you! You'd rather be "one of the guys" than be one guy's gal! However, in your heart of hearts, you secretly want to be a girly-girl, head over heels in love. Find a man whose mind is almost as impressive as yours (and who swears he will treat you well), and you'll be a match made in Heaven.

### Mostly Ds

You are most like *Kate*! Like Beatrice, you have a sharp, witty tongue. Alas, there is no softer side to you. Kate is very jaded about love because none has ever come to her. Instead, she has had to spend her life watching men practically beat down the door to get to

her sister. This is probably because her father always favored her sister. It's likely that Bianca always acted very sweet to adults just to make Kate look worse because she is prone to naturally speaking her mind. This might have resulted in Kate not trusting any man, because her father never believed that his little Bianca was just as free-willed as Kate. Kate has every reason not to be kind to men. Her father even lets Bianca's suitors speak ill of Kate. It is very embarrassing for Kate when her father tries to marry her off before her younger sister; therefore, Kate deals with it the only way she knows how. She acts like she does not want to get married at all. After a while, she comes to fully believe that she does not want to get married at all. Kate must keep her tough exterior to keep her dignity. Like Kate, something in your life must have turned you away from the idea of falling in love with a man. Not even one little particle of you is screaming to be swept away; you're just screaming. Men are the ultimate insult to you. Even if you find a man brave enough to take on the challenge of subduing you, you will never be truly tamed. Kate is the original feminist, and like her, you are determined to prove that you can get along in the world without being tied down to a man who will probably just end up hurting you.

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Evaluation: *Donnelle's writing is both hilarious and insightful. She completely understands the characters and connects her readers to Shakespeare in a contemporary, irreverent fashion.*

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# The Southern American Epic

Bethany Gates

Course: Literature 112 (Literature and Film)

Instructor: Kurt Hemmer

## Assignment:

Choose a film and the text it is based on and explain whether or not the film was able to capture the essence of the literary work.

Film technology has ventured into a whole new frontier. Modern film is loaded with computer graphics and technological wonders only dreamed about years ago. Moviemaking has become as much a science as it is an art. Joel and Ethan Coen's *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, a loose comedic adaptation of Homer's epic *The Odyssey*, is a technologically advanced movie, but it captivates audiences with its timeless themes. The story, setting, and cast contribute and complement each other to produce a 21<sup>st</sup>-century rendition of the ancient Greek epic. In an interview, screenwriter/director Joel Coen elaborates, "This interpretation is a very American story, as all our stories are. It's so specific to a region and a time. But on the other hand, it's based on a story that's familiar to everyone" (qtd. in *Rotten Tomatoes*). *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* successfully communicates the journey theme of *The Odyssey* through storyline, characters, setting, and musical presence.

*The Odyssey* is the story of Trojan War hero Odysseus' journey home to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus in Ithaca. The Coen brothers capture this story by using a definitive part of American history to tell the adventures of Ulysses Everett McGill on his own journey back home. Odysseus and Everett alike endure many trials and tribulations throughout their adventures. While Odysseus encounters gods, goddesses, spirits, and flesh-eating monsters, Everett confronts the powerhouses of 1930's culture and society (which are just as frightening for him). No matter what occurs along the way,

both of their journeys are fueled by their love for family, desire for redemption, and longing for home. Discussing Odysseus' predicament with Zeus, Athena says, "But such a desire is in him merely to see the hearth smoke leaping upward from his own island, that he longs to die" (3). The foundational theme of *The Odyssey* is of the successful journey home against great odds.

*O Brother, Where Art Thou?* captures this theme of faithful pursuit against mysterious and sometimes divine powers. Yet, the film cannot capture the magnitude of Odysseus' story without the contribution of specific characters. For this theme to be effective in the movie, certain significant characters must affect Everett's own adventure. The Coen brothers ingeniously took well-known characters and adapted them to their Southern epic. Polyphemus the Cyclops, King Menelaos, Helen, Penelope, and Odysseus are all represented in the film.

Polyphemus the Cyclops is the beastly Bible salesman, Big Dan T. Both characters are large, one-eyed, arrogant, loud, and grotesque. Polyphemus is characterized by Odysseus as a "towering brute...a wild man, ignorant of civility," (151) and he calls him a "mad, unbearable,... bloody monster!" (155). Just as Polyphemus is more animal than human, so is Big Dan T. He uses his nose to guide him, smelling out opportunities to steal, lie, and beat up anyone he chooses. In *The Odyssey*, Polyphemus actually eats some of Odysseus' men (153). Big Dan T squishes their beloved horny toad (thought to be Pete, under a spell) and brutally beats up Everett and Delmar. Even with apparent differences, Big Dan T and Polyphemus, respectively, treat Everett and Odysseus terribly.

The King Menelaos character in the film is Governor Menelaos "Pappy" O'Daniel, a loud, obnoxious, fat man with a hot temper. Likewise, King Menelaos is continually described as "the red-haired captain," (54) often given to fits of extreme emotion (54, 58). King Menelaos uses Odysseus to win the Trojan War and reclaim his wife (56-60), just as Governor Menelaos uses Everett and his friends, the newly famed Soggy Bottom Boys, to reclaim his popularity amongst the voters. Oddly, the Mississippi governorship plays the part of Queen Helen, wife of King Menelaos, because both men in book and film fight for "her."

For a twist in the story, the Coen brothers created the Penny character to be the very opposite of Penelope. In

*The Odyssey*, Penelope is tirelessly loving and faithful. She desperately longs for her husband Odysseus, finding ways to trick and steer off her persistent suitors (12, 22). On the other hand, Penny has been very quick to replace Everett with her new fiancé, Vernon Waldrapp, because she wants a responsible, hard working, money-making husband. This might present some discrepancy in the film's representation of the book, but with a closer look, the two women are quite alike. Penelope is often thought of as the epitome of a good wife, but even though she remains faithful to Odysseus, she does present a different side. Antinoos, one of the obnoxious suitors, describes this quality to Telemachus: "The suitors are not to blame—it is your own dear, incomparably cunning mother. For three years—and it will soon be four—she has been breaking the hearts of the Akhaians, holding out hope to all, and sending promises to each man privately—but thinking otherwise" (21-22). Penny displays this same devilish quality because she is very hard to please and consistently tricks Everett into doing things for her. Ultimately, Penny and Penelope both want a "bona fide man."

The Odysseus character, Everett, appears to be the opposite of the "master mariner," in some ways, but he really is very similar. Odysseus is heralded as a great war hero and larger-than-life representation of divine humanity. Even Zeus remarks on his attributes, "Could I forget that kingly man, Odysseus? There is no mortal half so wise; no mortal gave so much to the lords of open sky" (3). Odysseus possesses masculinity, handsomeness, courage, leadership, athletic ability, and intelligence (87, 106, 179, 242, 361, 358). His counterpart, Everett, is very attractive, vain, talkative, arrogant, and intelligent, but he suffers from a get-rich-quick mentality. For example, Everett started to practice law without a license and then wound up in jail. Of course this left Penny without a husband to care for their family of seven daughters. Obviously, Everett does not give a lot of thought to choices or important responsibilities. He is fairly rash and tries to make success through risky business. Everett is far more comedic than Odysseus, but they both share an uncanny intelligence and conceit. In essence, both men redeem themselves through their journeys. Everett does so by changing his criminal ways, getting a good job, and faithfully trying to please Penny, rather than pursuing Odysseus' bloody revenge.

Just as the theme, storyline, and characters connect *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* to *The Odyssey*, so does the film's setting. The Coen brothers place the film in the 1930s Depression-era American South, which clearly displays the desperation, hopelessness, and need for change exhibited throughout Odysseus' saga. Like war-torn Greece of Odysseus' day, the South is broken and poor due to a deflated economy. A landscape shot begins the film, communicating a desert-like quality to life. Homer sends the same message when he describes Odysseus' unknowing return to Ithaca, "And then he [Odysseus] wept, despairing, for his own land, trudging down beside the endless wash of the wide, wide sea, weary and desolate as the sea" (236-237). In ancient Greece, the gods controlled much of life, often using mortals as pawns for their own benefit. A dramatic change occurred with Homer's tale because Odysseus, very much flesh and blood, began to treat the gods as equals. For example, once Athena has told Odysseus that he has landed on Ithaca, Odysseus tells a long, exciting lie about his adventures, never giving his true identity (238). Athena smiles and responds,

Whoever gets around you must be sharp and guileful as a snake; even a god might bow to you in ways of dissimulation. You! You chameleon! Bottomless bag of tricks! Here in your own country would you not give your stratagems a rest or stop spellbinding for an instant? You play a part as if it were your own tough skin. No more of this, though. Two of a kind, we are, contrivers, both. Of all men now alive you are the best in plots and story telling.... (239)

In the 1930s, much of America was undergoing a similar change in power. From politics to religion, individualism and the New Deal were beginning to take shape and reform modern American life. The controls of yesteryear, religion and pompous politicians, were beginning to fade out with educational free thinkers and mass communication. Music began to help mold American culture. This power struggle is apparent in the movie's counterpart to the Trojan Horse sequence, where Governor Menelaos and Candidate Stokes square off for votes. Everett, Delmar, and Pete have just sacked a Ku Klux Klan meeting and are now the featured band for a town banquet. The boys' identities are

hidden due to fake beards. Therefore Stokes does not realize that they are the criminals who ruined his Klan meeting. As the three Soggy Bottom Boys begin to sing “Man of Constant Sorrow,” for which they have become famous, Stokes realizes their identity and becomes enraged. He violently opposes the band and calls for their arrest. In turn, the crowd hisses and removes Stokes from the banquet. Governor Menelaos then takes the stage by dancing to the music and pardoning the Soggy Bottom Boys. This smart political alliance gives the struggling governor the popular support and votes he needs. This is a perfect example of how the media was beginning to control the country’s values and political standings. For both Odysseus and Everett, the control of life and belief systems was beginning to shift. The cultural, situational, and temporal setting of *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* is a creative connection to the changing society of Homeric Greece.

The music’s quality in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* displays further the shifting powers of time. The role of the music in the movie is not only one of a kind, but plays an active part in the story. Music is a character itself. Just as Odysseus is a pawn for the gods, Everett is at the mercy of the music. Everett rarely makes any decisive step of his own volition because most of his journey comes to him through a musical intervention. For example, in the beginning of the movie, a blind, singing prophet wheels by Everett, Delmar, and Pete just when they need an escape out of the cornfields. The jailbirds jump on the cart and listen as the “no name” blind man tells them of their future treasure. The music of the prophet catches their attention. Another significant example of music’s god-like intervention occurs when the boys record “Man of Constant Sorrow” and thus become the famous Soggy Bottom Boys. This recording, brought on by the joining of guitarist Tommy Johnson to their trio, leads them to great success in the final chapters of the film. For Odysseus, the gods’ rescue and punishment consistently alter his course, eventually bringing about his return home. For example, Athena comes to his rescue from the beginning, arguing on his behalf to Zeus on Mt. Olympus (81). She consistently comes to help him; she is the one who restores him (235-236, 243). The musical quality of *O, Brother Where Art Thou?* tells the story of Everett, just like Homer singing the story of Odysseus.

Although the events of the film contrast somewhat with the book, this approach proves to be an even greater link to the epic tale. The foundation of *The Odyssey*’s popularity is its attention given to unexplainable suffering and tribulation. Throughout the ages, humanity has had to deal with the issue of confusing and often undeserved problems. The events in life just don’t seem to add up or explain themselves. Some think of it as chance while others believe it to be destiny or fate. *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* capitalizes on this ageless tale of struggle without exploiting *The Odyssey*’s grandiose events. Just as *The Odyssey* draws its reader into the adventure through exciting and mythological climaxes, so does *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* It maintains an Odyssean plot, but with a few unpredicted, unexpected twists in the story. This rendition enables the Coens to create more suspense and expectation for the audience. The indirect approach makes *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* more interesting and unpredictable, which is an underlying theme carried throughout *The Odyssey* itself. Homer developed the story so as to create questions for the reader and propel them to continue in the adventure with Odysseus. The contradictions in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* make the audience wonder how Everett will succeed like Odysseus. Creatively, the Coens create moods similar to those of Homer’s epic, through the use of contrast and unexpected outcomes, while maintaining the major theme.

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Evaluation: *Bethany makes some astute and fascinating connections between the film and the text that would be easily missed by a passive reader.*

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# An Escape from Society

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Pati Geittmann

Course: English 10I (Composition)

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

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Assignment:

*Describe a "holy spot," a place where you once loved to go, or maybe a place where you still love to go.*

Seeing my bank statement was enough to make me vomit. Negative three hundred and eighty-four dollars was what it read. How in the world did I let my bank account go into the hole? Anger slowly seeped through me as I remembered how it all took place. I paid all of my credit card bills on time so that I could save money to pay for my portion of rent for the apartment. Little did I know that my credit card bills had somehow sucked extra funds out of my bank account and then some. My stupidity and forgetfulness had started this whole mess. While writing out the checks for my bills, I had failed to log each of the remaining balances into my checkbook. I had no money, no sympathy from my parents, and a rent payment that was due in two days. Frustrated by my predicament, I crumpled the statement and threw it across the room. I grabbed my hair and wanted to pull hard, but I didn't. Desperately needing to escape, I grabbed my car keys and went out the door.

Driving down the long snakelike driveway, I saw what I called my second home in the distance. I listened to the sound of the crushing gravel as my tires slowly rolled over it. My car came to a halt in front of the synagogue, my temple, my heaven: the barn. The barn was a large white homelike building with gray trim. It quietly meditated on the blanket of green grass that glistened when the sun struck the glaze of morning dew. The undisturbed aura embraced me as I stepped out of my vehicle. Serenity had a domino effect on my muscles; it started in my toes and crept its way up. Enlightened, I slipped into a state of nirvana. Buddhists describe nirvana as a freedom from and extinction of desire, passion, and illusion, and attainment of rest, truth, and unchanging being.

I paused, took a deep breath, and absorbed the remnants of the barn. A mosaic of bittersweet fragrances such as the sweet alfalfa hay, horse manure, and oats lightly sprinkled with molasses diffused through the barn and permeated the outside air. I remembered the times when my babysitter dropped me off at the barn and never stayed because the smell gave her a headache. Even though it was a putrid stench to her, it was a welcoming fragrance to me.

At the end of the barn, a fat gray cat leaned against

the sun-warmed cinder block, cleaning her stomach with long, languid strokes of a bright pink tongue. A few feet away, three identical gray kittens rolled in the dust, then jumped gleefully into the air, their backs arched in feigned aggression. I smiled. Often I had wished that I could enjoy the laziness and stress-free lives of the barn cats. I guess that is why I chose to go to the stables as an escape from my own life. The barn is where I live my pseudo-life as a free spirit.

I walked down the long aisle of stalls where the horses restlessly stirred, eager to receive their breakfast. I finally came upon my own horse's stall. It had a shiny brass nameplate that said "LOO LINCOLN," and Loo's soft leather halter hung neatly on a hook nearby. "Loo, come here boy. I have some treats for you," I sang out in a motherly voice. At the sound of my voice, he lifted his head out of the pile of hay he was eating, nickered softly, and patiently waited for me to open his stall door. When the stall was open, he rushed out to greet me and then stuck his nose by my jean pockets, motioning for a treat. Carefully, he lipped the carrot that I presented and greedily wolfed it down. I reached for his leather halter, slipped it over his head, and fastened a lead rope on his halter to guide him out of his stall. I then attached a set of cross ties to his halter so that I could groom him without hanging on to him.

Quickly, I ran a soft goat-haired brush over his dark coat and then stepped back to study his features. Loo was truly a beautiful horse. His head was like a sculpture, with pricked ears, a wide intelligent forehead, a slightly dished nose, and flaring nostrils. The muscles beneath the sleek, gleaming coat were firm and well developed. The long, seemingly fragile legs were straight and powerful. With a dark bay coat and a black and silky mane and tail, he stood majestically at 16.1 hands tall. On his neck was a small indentation called the "devil's thumbprint." In old horse myths, it meant that the horse had a fiery personality and an innate talent for speed. In actuality, it was a concave indentation from when his little hoof pressed against his neck when he was curled up in his mother's womb. The depression in his skin was about the size and shape of a thumb. When I was through grooming, I put on his saddle and bridle, tightened his girth, and led him outside.

I pulled down my stirrups and stepped up onto the mounting block. I gathered the reins in my left hand, slipped my left foot into the stirrup, and swung my right leg over the saddle. My right foot found its stirrup, and I was ready to ride. I was in no mood to practice anything in particular. I just wanted to ride and have a little fun. Loo and I set off at a brisk trot down one of the grassy avenues between the black-fenced pastures.

The farm stretched in every direction. Behind us were the long, low-slung breeding and yearling barns. Farther up the drive was the training area (for the horse racing people), with its own complex of stables and oval track. Beyond that were staff quarters, hay barns, and machinery sheds. All of it was surrounded by acres and acres of rolling land.

I took my usual trail ride route, cantering up and along the crest of the hill overlooking the farm. The view was incredible. We paused for a minute to look. Mornings were the busy time on the farm. In the training area, I could see horses being walked and cooled. Others were being exercised on the big track or in the smaller, yearling-walking ring. Grooms (people hired to groom and take care of the horses) and exercise riders moved purposefully around the stable yard.

My cheeks were glowing from the fresh air, exercise, and the pure joy of being out riding. I couldn't think of anything more exhilarating, and for the moment, I could forget all my worries. "Okay Loo, let's ride up to the lane and then gallop down the straight stretch," I said excitedly. He nodded eagerly as he understood what I was saying. We cantered off the crest, then trotted through the patch of woods. As we came out of the woods and around the bend, we faced a long, wide, grassy stretch where the horses in training were exercised off the track. I pulled Loo to a stop. I reached down to shorten my stirrups, then settled myself in a jockey's crouch high over Loo's withers. I was too big and tall to be a jockey, but the child in me still liked to play pretend! Knowing what was to come, Loo perked up his ears and snorted.

I gripped the reins firmly with both hands, grasping a chunk of Loo's mane as well. My stomach swelled with flutters and my heart filled with enchantment as my make-believe derby began. "Go!" I shouted. I felt

Loo's powerful hindquarters bunch up beneath him as he sprang into his gallop. In my fantasy, Loo and Secretariat galloped side by side for a few seconds. Then, Loo slowly drew ahead. I leaned low over his neck, allowing my arms and shoulders to move in rhythm with the stretching action of his stride. I loved this: the power of the horse's muscles bunching and pulling us forward, the wind whipping in my face and through my hair, and the sound of Loo's snorting breaths and pounding hooves. We finally reached my imaginary finish line. Loo had beaten Secretariat in the Kentucky Derby.

Three-quarters of the way down the lane, I stood slightly in the saddle and began pulling Loo up. My old horse was enjoying the gallop as much as I and wasn't anxious to slow down, but the training yard appeared just ahead. He eased his stride down to a canter, then a trot, then I gradually slowed to a walk. His coat was lightly lathered with sweat. Winded by so much excitement, I slouched in the saddle, relaxed the reins, and cooled him down by walking back to the jumper barn.

When we got to the barn, I hopped down and checked my watch. Barely on time for my schedule, I frowned at the thought of having to leave so soon. I removed all of Loo's riding equipment and rubbed him down. Our bonding time occurred more at this point. I cleaned Loo like a mother bathing her child. We had a close relationship, and I loved him more than anything. Loo was always the highlight of my day. I ran over an itchy spot on his back with the brush, and I laughed as I watched him poke his nose out, close his eyes, and move his head in delight. He looked back at me and bobbed his head as if to thank me. I fed him one last treat and reluctantly put him back in his stall, realizing I must leave for work. I eased into my car, buckled my seat belt, adjusted my mirror, and happily drove off. Giggling to myself, I reflected back on my "Kentucky Derby."

Life is a game of golf. (Don't worry: I'm still talking about horses.) Sometimes you swing and you miss, and other times, it will hook to the left or slice to the right; sometimes, the hook or slice is a turn for the worse or a turn for the better. Then, there is the perfect hit where the ball soars right down the center of the

fairway. I could only wish for one of those. My swing frustrated me. Unfortunately, I swung, missed, and to make things even worse, my ball dribbled off my tee, landing only a few inches away. My life was tiring and busy. I was in tremendous credit card debt even though I had been working fifty hours a week. I wanted to run away from my problems, even just for a moment. When situations such as these occurred, I went to the barn to see my horse. My horse is my passion in life, and it is my motivation and drive to "suck it up and move on." I can always count on my trusty steed to carry me away from the busy city called Life. Winston Churchill once said, "There's something about the outside of a horse that soothes the inside of man." My inner peace comes from the simple act of grooming my horse; I am aware of his firm powerful physique, his soft eyes, his velvety coat, and our mutual dependence. We have created a bond that diverts all attention from self-concern to pure devotion through an indescribable force.

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Evaluation: *This paper is a near-poetic reverie. Moreover, Pati's essay is timely, even critical: the gas-powered motors and countless brands of gadgetry keep pressing upon us, and we could all probably use some time in meditative seclusion.*

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# Van Sant's Villain

Kristina Giovanni

Course: Literature 112 (Literature and Film)

Instructor: Kurt Hemmer

Assignment:

*Explain how successful My Own Private Idaho was in capturing the themes of Shakespeare's Henry IV Part I.*

Making a film is sometimes a collaborative enterprise. Often, directors combine their imaginations with those of authors from the past. One such director, Gus Van Sant, decided to incorporate William Shakespeare's historical drama *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, with a vivid depiction of Seattle street life in the 1990s. As a result, we see the rather two-dimensional fifteenth-century characters come alive in Van Sant's film *My Own Private Idaho*, starring Keanu Reeves as Scott Favor and the late River Phoenix as Mike Waters, who both portray two young homosexual prostitutes trying to survive on the harsh city streets.

Van Sant's interpretation of *Henry IV* does not waver too far from the original plot of the drama. In Part 1 of *Henry IV*, Prince Hal has disgraced his father, King Henry, by taking up with a band of low men and thieves, such as his close companion, the former knight Sir John Falstaff, instead of attending to his royal duties as the crown prince of England. Similarly, in the film *My Own Private Idaho*, Scott (Prince Hal) has run away from his father, the mayor of Portland, and is a part of a gang of street kids, whose leader is Bob Pigeon (Falstaff). Toward the end of both the play and the film, Prince Hal and Scott are both on the road to reformation, and, at the end of these respective works, they have both completely denied their former selves and everything they have done. Despite the similarities, however, there is one significant difference in the film which is not in the drama: Scott and his best friend Mike are homosexual prostitutes.

There have been many transformations of classic fictional characters into modern Hollywood characters, causing the original image to be shifted in a negative or

positive way, depending upon the opinion of the directors and producers. Old stories are always being told in new ways, but when Van Sant decided to make Scott not only a modern version of the classic Prince Hal, but also a male prostitute, he created something completely new that the original Hal was certainly not. Van Sant does this for a specific reason. He could have left Prince Hal the way he was in *Henry IV*, and made Scott just another street punk, but he didn't. Van Sant is trying to make a statement about the character of Prince Hal in his version by introducing Hal not only to a seedy underworld, but also exposing him, and his audience, to the gritty reality of it. Van Sant, through his version of events, wants the audience to know that Shakespeare's Prince Hal should not be seen as a hero, but as a villain.

Van Sant had seen through Prince Hal's guise and created what he believed was the true prince's form—Scott Favor. Making Hal a street hustler may not have been Van Sant's idea in the beginning, though. There were a few documentaries and after-school specials back in the early nineties, when the film was made, about street kids and their stories. Van Sant could have just picked up on an already controversial topic to create a buzz around his film as a way to generate more publicity. But, even if this was Van Sant's motive, it was still a stroke of genius on his part. These Shakespearean characters, in their original form, were so flat and two-dimensional that they could have been molded into anything, and it would have worked. They could have been con artists, bank robbers, or even carnies for that matter; anything would have fit, but making these men male prostitutes is what made them believable. Adding a sexual element to the story shows the vulnerability and defenseless desperation of Bob and Mike, and how that was taken advantage of by Scott's deleterious handling of their emotions.

Anyone who has ever read the plays knows that Prince Hal has a darker side that was not fully explored by Shakespeare. There are several scenes in Part 1 of *Henry IV* where Prince Hal declares to no one in particular that he will one day leave the brothels, back alleys and his companion Falstaff to become a worthy heir of his father's fortune. He says, "I'll so offend to make offence a skill, / Redeeming time when men think least I will" (1.3.223-24). This may seem right for Hal because he can only be worthy of his title by being an obedient son who stands by his father's side. In the process, however, he

will have turned his back on Falstaff and his promise to help Falstaff and his other friends out of poverty. Even though we may feel badly for Falstaff because he is abandoned, it isn't until Van Sant's visual portrayal of that same scene where Prince Hal rejects his former mentor, that we utterly despise the Hal character, Scott, and begin to embrace the Falstaff character, Bob, as the true hero of the play. Van Sant uses the sexual aspect of his film to intensify what we already assume to be a deep bond between Scott and Bob. Falstaff's betrayal by a friend is one thing, but Bob's betrayal by a lover is much more mournful, and we can empathize when Bob then dies of a broken heart.

Bob, however, was not the only companion of Scott's who was hurt by his deceit. Mike, played by River Phoenix, is Scott's best friend and is a narcoleptic, homeless prostitute who is desperately searching for his wayward mother and a return of the affection and love he feels towards Scott. Scott refuses Mike's advances and believes "two men can't love each other." Scott is in an earlier scene where he and a band of other boys are the models featured on the front covers of male porn rags. Scott declares that he'll only have sex for money, "because once you start doing it for free, that's when you grow wings . . . and become a fairy." He obviously doesn't want to admit that he is also a homosexual like all the other boys, and just like Mike. Being the son of the mayor of Portland, Scott doesn't *have* to prostitute himself in order to survive like the others do. It seems as though he's just doing it for fun; it's as if he's been "slumming" for over three years. Scott goes from being a rebellious child to being a deceitful manipulator. In the play, Prince Hal's calculating behavior was masked by the jovial, jesting relationship he shared with Falstaff; in fact, after comparing the play to *My Own Private Idaho*, it seems as though Hal's conniving has been underestimated.

Scott's blatant insensitivity goes far beyond the painful manhandling of his closest companions' emotions. One such incident happens shortly after a scene featuring Scott and Mike, who are on their way to see Mike's brother. During the night, Mike professes his love for Scott. Scott denies having feelings for Mike in that way, and, later in their journey, Scott meets a girl. He makes no attempt to conceal his feelings for her, especially when in front of Mike. Mike has to suffer through listening to Scott and his girl, Carmilla, making love at night in the

room above him, and we can tell that Mike is heartbroken. Scott knows how Mike is feeling, but he doesn't seem to care. Scott ends up taking off with this girl and leaves Mike stranded with only some money and a cheap excuse. The vulnerability that comes with the act of sex and deeper feelings of love causes these characters to put themselves out on a limb that they wouldn't have been on before. Mike and Bob are rendered defenseless when they show their intimate feelings to Scott, and their hearts are then broken when Scott rejects their love and affection. The vulnerability that comes with these feelings is what causes us to watch Scott more intently, and it is the key to seeing his character's true essence.

Through the use of sexual emotions, Van Sant appropriately captures Prince Hal's essence. Prince Hal was seen as a disobedient young boy in Part I of *Henry II*, who may have been a thief for the simple fun of it, but who was also seen as a hero in the end. Van Sant's version of events, however, does not portray Prince Hal as admirable. Van Sant noted that Hal was more than an unruly boy: he was intelligent and knew what he was doing. Hal was devising his return to his father, planning his actions, and calculating his eventual betrayal of his friends. Van Sant saw through Hal's guise and effectively displayed the actual Prince Hal to the world in his film *My Own Private Idaho*. He accomplished this effectively through the added sexual emotions in the main characters' relationships. By modernizing these Shakespearean characters into homosexual prostitutes, Van Sant reveals their vulnerability, renders them defenseless, and shows how Scott so easily takes advantage of their loyalty and love. Van Sant wants us to know that Prince Hal is villainous and his victims are the real heroes.

#### Works Cited

- My Own Private Idaho*. Dir. Gus Van Sant. Perf. River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves. Columbia Tristar. 1991.  
Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV Part 1*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1994.

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Evaluation: *Kristina presents a provocative theory about Gus Van Sant's use of Shakespeare's material and intelligently explains the use of homosexual prostitutes in My Own Private Idaho.*

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# Backed into Corners

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*Kristina Higgins*

Course: English 102 (Composition)

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

*As part of the final exam, students were to write an essay in response to David Mamet's play *Oleanna*.*

*Oleanna*, written by David Mamet, is a cleverly written play dealing with different people's subjective interpretations of the same set of events and facts. Using an academic, university setting, Mamet demonstrates the subtleties of social conversation, showing how easily communication can turn into miscommunication between different types and classes of people who do not or cannot change their perspectives for varying situations. Woven appropriately throughout the plot is also a debate of the nature and necessity that college education has in our society today. The story revolves around only two characters: a professor named John who is always somewhat distracted by his own intelligence and success, and one of his students, named Carol, who at first appears to be ignorant and green, yet becomes attentive when she sees an opportunity to play a victim.

During the first act of the play, a distressed Carol goes to John's office to discuss her failing grade in his class. Rather than sticking to traditional academic advice, the professor launches into a diatribe covering his entire philosophy of modern education, some of which Carol finds to be offensive. The reader does not sense any real animosity between the two at this point, although both the reader and the professor are stunned to learn by the beginning of act two that Carol has gone to the tenure committee to file a formal sexual harassment complaint against her teacher. John's many attempts to come to a settlement between them have little effect, resulting in only more misunderstandings and misinterpretations on Carol's part. By the third act, John and Carol have completely reversed their power positions. Carol is now fully in control of the situation, speaking clearly and unhaltingly. John sits, desperately attempting to find some chance of reconciliation, knowing she has now filed rape charges against him, and that his job, reputation, and security—of himself and his family—are all on the line. Feeling backed into a corner after Carol pushes him too far, John physically attacks her in his office, bringing her victim act to its fruition.

Very early in the play, Carol is quick to blame her social and economic background as part of the reason she feels overwhelmed by the material in John's class. This flimsy excuse would be unacceptable under any

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circumstance; while a person's background can influence, or limit, one's past exposure to knowledge, brain power is certainly not socioeconomically determined. She repeatedly states, "I don't understand," yet as John speaks, and tries to get his ideas across to her, she cuts him off, yelling out another, "But I just don't understand!" She states again, repeatedly, that she sits in class, and she read his book, and still, nothing makes any sense to her. Perhaps she reads the same way she listens, with both eyes and ears glazed over, as though waking from a twenty-year-long slumber. Perhaps if she would listen, would read, would comprehend, she could form intelligent questions about that which she is supposed to learn. Carol expects those around her to do her thinking for her, to open her brain and just put the "understanding" inside. It is easier for her to claim, "I don't know" without trying to know, than it is to get some of her dusty synapses firing by *trying* to understand, by whatever means are necessary.

Some people, however, cannot or choose not to think. They can memorize facts, perhaps learn to work out some figures, but they are herds of unoriginal sheep. These are usually the same people who use their personality deficiencies or their circumstances in life to convince others that they are owed something, by someone, in reparation for some unnamed injustice that has been done to them. John wondered aloud if a college education was appropriate for these people, wondered if they actually gained anything, if they eventually imparted richer contributions to society based on knowledge they gained through their studies in higher education. At the same time he spoke, the light of his own words must have blinded him, as he was speaking directly *to* one of the people he was talking *about*. In his eagerness to share his genius, to mold a young person's mind, to have intellectual dialogue with someone, anyone, it seems, he opened up like floodgates to someone who was not on the same intellectual plane as he.

John has been a university professor for long enough to be up for tenure. He dominates the conversation with Carol, as though he lives for telling people what he knows. He is a teacher, and that is what he is supposed to do. He also expects, craves even, for people to respond to him, or to challenge him, just so he can make

them *think*, make him think. His inflated ego and lack of professionalism, however, are revealed through his puffed up terminology and inappropriate choice of subject matters. In the first act, he discusses how "tests...were designed...for idiots. By idiots" (708). The Tenure Committee has "...people voting on (him) that (he) wouldn't employ to wax (his) car" (708). He speaks without any regard whatsoever to his audience. In this case, Carol immediately appears as an impressionable girl, certainly not one inclined towards this objectionable topic of conversation. An inevitable question would be asked in her mind: If she cannot pass a test made by idiots, what would that make her? For another student, however, one more inclined to question "the system" or bureaucracy, the line of conversation may be completely appropriate.

The second act displays an in-depth view of the professor, as someone who has been wrestling with conflicting personal and professional issues for a very long time. He makes comparisons of who he was in his youth and what he thought he would become to what he actually did become. He sees that while, as an intellectual, the process of tenure is "a joke," as a person who has worked hard for himself and his family, tenure is something he wants, something he is "covetous of." He now says the process is "a *good* process" (715). At times, she becomes frustrated and upset, and he grabs her to calm her down. There is nothing sexual in the act, but in an implied way, he is desperately trying to reach out to anyone that he can, to find some sort of understanding, some sort of bond, which *is* crossing an invisible line.

The once naïve student also unexpectedly takes a turn into a very different kind of person by act three of the play. Her vocabulary suddenly improves, and her very sentence structure becomes much more complex. She no longer stammers, and she forces the professor to listen when she speaks. She is fighting for a cause. She is fighting on behalf of her and her "group," the nature of which is never specified in the text. She resents the professor for the kind of person that he is, and holds him responsible for perpetuating gender inequalities, including those embedded within the English language. John makes a reference to the tenure committee, calling

## Backed into Corners

them, “Good Men and True,” to which Carol replies, “...it is a demeaning remark. It is a sexist remark...” (718) since there is a woman on the committee, and “...to overlook it is to countenance continuation of that method of thought” (718). While her effort to change the feminine from being the “marked” case in the English language is an admirable one, humiliating and forcing a professor out of a job is not the way to do it. She has taken notes throughout the semester, about the professor’s references to females in his class; yet, maybe she would not even be in his office complaining of a failing grade if she had been paying more attention to the actual subject matter in class. He sometimes called the females “dear,” or “girls,” or complimented them on their personal appearances. While this last point is hardly defensible by any means—as comments such as that are wholly unnecessary—in this context, they are hardly offensive. If, one were to be offended by these types of gender-differentiating comments, as one does have the right to be, one could bring it up anonymously, face-to-face, or in the classroom. In fact, perhaps the intellectually starved professor would enjoy an in-class heated debate on the topic.

What would Carol gain from the professor’s dismissal, from suing him for rape, or pushing him so far? Carol has found herself an excellent opportunity to pass a course that has been giving her difficulty, to support her so-called causes, the only source of her self-worth, and gain the sympathy of the school, her family, and her “group.” She succeeds at being a victim. In an opposite way, she can hold herself in the same esteem that the professor holds himself in: a God-complex, as she herself called it. She holds all of the control in the situation, saying she will drop all charges if she gets him to agree to ban his own book from the university’s reading list, causing him humiliation, and causing him to topple off his God-like throne, so she may finally make her ascent up to it. John is fully aware he is “pedantic,” and he makes no apologies for it. Carol completely misrepresents herself for the strict purpose of twisting the nature of events so they are most advantageous to her, and her character personifies the reason that people must choose their words and actions so carefully in every situation they encounter. People such as Carol, taking every word,

meaning, and gesture out of context, are making communication between human beings harder, if not impossible. That is not to say that John was justified in his physical abuse at the end of the play. Living in a civilized society, that behavior is unacceptable, and John, being a teacher, is supposed to extricate himself from situations such as that as quickly and as much as possible. There is a certain point, however, when people feel the cold, hard wall against their backs. A primal survival instinct takes over, and like animals whose very lives are being threatened, they will lash out.

## Works Cited

- Mamet, David. *Oleanna. Making Literature Matter: An Anthology for Readers and Writers*. 2nd ed. Ed. John Schilb and John Clifford. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003. 699-729.

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Evaluation: *This is a sharply written, well-focused analysis of this play. Kristina wisely sees the difficulties in these characters’ intellectual stances.*

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# My Favorite Artist

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Karina Jameson

Course: Speech 101

(Fundamentals of Speech Communication)

Instructor: Louise Perry

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Assignment:

*The eulogy is a speech in praise of an individual; the speech of praise pays tribute to a person for distinguished qualities, characteristics, and talents.*

Pablo Picasso once said, “There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who, thanks to their art and intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun” (*Famous Quotes*).

When I was growing up, I learned to appreciate art. I have always liked all kinds of art, but my favorite type has always been painting. I admire the ability of an artist to express him- or herself through colors and shapes in a simple piece of canvas. I not only had a favorite type of art, but a favorite artist as well. This artist is a very unique person, and her artwork has influenced me since I was a toddler. I had the opportunity to follow her career closely. I observed her talent improving over the years. Once a simple novice, she is now an award winning master.

This artist is very talented. Her skill is one of the things that I admire most about her. She expresses herself through colorful interpretations of the world around her. I grew up admiring her artwork because of her ability to make simple pictures take on a life of their own. As I look at this artist’s work, I feel myself being

absorbed into the scenery. I picture myself sitting on the porch of a cozy house, watching the trees twist and bend as the autumn wind sings its song. A swing twists and turns as it hangs from the branches, just as the leaves twist and fall as if they were red and gold angels descending from heaven. The sun filters through the clouds and reflects off the sea as if on a silver mirror. As I walk along the golden beach, I watch the fish dance on a clear silk tapestry. The boat bobs up and down in the water like the breathing of a child in a peaceful sleep. The wind blows through the grassy hills, making the grass sway like lovers embracing in the moonlight.

I can sit hours in front of her art and imagine myself: walking along a wooded path, watching a pair of macaws caressing each other, and seeing a sailboat collecting the winds on the open sea. Whether she recreates sceneries, flowers, fruits, animals, or people, they are all full of feelings and colors. My favorite picture is a peaceful path in the middle of the woods which makes me feel comfortable and in harmony with nature. It is a quiet place where I can hear only the birds singing and the wind whistling through the trees.

The talented and magnificent artist I am referring to has been very close to my heart. She has helped and guided me through the most difficult times in my life. As I gaze upon her works hanging in my home, I remember how much she means to me. She is my mother.

My mother can spend from an hour to several days on a single piece of artwork, but the results are always stunning. I have seen her bring tears of joy to people’s eyes. Family and friends are proud of the work she has given them and envious of the works she has given to others. I have never seen anyone either as talented or as passionate about her work.

My mother has given me much more than an appreciation for art. She has been my sole support for the majority of my life. She has been a shoulder to cry on, a friend to laugh with, and a guide through difficult times.

Since January 1988, when my father died, my mother has shown me her strength. I was very close to my father and was merely a child when he died. My mother held my hand and supported me through my time of

## My Favorite Artist

sorrow. She regularly expresses to my sister and I how proud he would be of us. She never let us forget how much he loved us. My mother made sure pictures of my father were always mounted on the walls, making him a regular part of our lives.

I remember going to school just before Father's Day, and my teacher spending the day teaching us how to make a little gift for our fathers. The first year after my father died, this was very difficult for me. I listened to the other children's excitement of making something for their fathers, and I was envious of their enthusiasm and crushed that I had no father to give my gift to. Nevertheless, I poured my heart and soul into my project and decided to give the gift to my mother. She was overjoyed by my gift, and from then on, I always looked forward to Father's Day. She played the role of both parents for me. For many years, she was the father I no longer had.

I know it was not easy for my mother to raise two children on her own. However, I always feel secure when she is around. I feel that nothing could ever happen to me.

My mother taught me the importance of family, love and friendship. My sister and I both know how strong she is. We also know how hard it was for her to drive us to do well in school. We know it was difficult to give us the things we needed. We realize how much she has struggled in her life to make us happy.

My mother has shown me that my sister could also be a close friend. Through my mother's coercion, my sister gave me advice about friends, boyfriends, and school. She taught me about the good things in life and the advantages of being a good person. My mother was right about my sister; she could be a very close friend.

My mother took us to many wonderful places and showed us the beauty of our country. On one trip, we visited the land where her ancestors molded the future of our country. I remember when she took us to a small town and showed us a monument created as a tribute to her great-grandfather. It was an impressive likeness; his eyes had the character of a man who was strong, proud, and noble. Yet, his eyes also showed a rare gentleness: a gentleness that gave the person he looked upon a feeling that he could be trusted. I found it remarkable to visit

this monument. In this statue, I saw my mother's eyes.

Much like any teenager, I had many questions about myself and about my life. My mother always tried to console me and teach me a better way to solve problems. She held my hand when I cried and took care of me when I was sick. She would make me laugh when I was sad. Whenever I had nightmares, she was always there to comfort me. Now, being so far away from her, I miss her constant support.

Some people live their whole life without knowing who their mother was. Some children do not spend enough time with their mothers, nor do they appreciate the special people mothers are. I cannot imagine being who I am without my mother's help. She is definitely the strongest and most talented person I have ever known. She knows the meaning of love. She cares about other people. She is the sweetest person I know.

Someone once said, "A friend is a hand that is always holding yours, no matter how close or far apart you may be. A friend is someone who is always there and will always, always care. A friend is a feeling of forever in the heart" (*General Friendship Quotes*). I feel that this statement best describes my feelings toward my mother. She taught me how to be a good person, how to be honest, how to respect people and most important of all, how to love someone. She is my idol and my best friend.

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Evaluation: *The speaker distinguishes qualities, characteristics, and talents about the individual by drawing life comparisons to painting; she writes with the artist's passion, expression, and ability to interpret the world.*

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# Lost Innocence: An Analysis of the Poem “Innocence”

Heather Jefferies

Course: Literature 105 (Poetry)

Instructor: Barbara Butler

Assignment:

*Write an analytical essay about your own poem.*

Take a moment to close your eyes and go back to a time in your life when everything was peaceful, life was simple, and anything was possible. Now take a deep breath and smell the freshly cut grass as the sun peeks through your bedroom. Today is your birthday. As you stretch, you hear your mom making breakfast in the kitchen down the hall. Mmm... smells like pancakes. She must have fresh strawberries since they are your favorite. Shh... do you hear that? Dad is in the living room placing your presents under the coffee table. All your friends are coming over later for the big party.

Why is it that when we were younger, things were so simple, so easy, and so predictable? I wanted to address these questions in my own way and to show the transitions in our lives from childhood to adulthood by looking at just one day of our lives, repeatedly throughout the years. “Innocence” uses visual imagery along with repetition to create a smooth flow from each stanza as the child in the poem matures. The poem is also put together in such a way that it grows and matures with the reader from one stanza to the next. “Innocence” is a poem that lets the reader reminisce about the past, feel for the speaker as they grow together, and learn about life.

“Innocence” can be broken down into two sections, each containing four stanzas. The first four stanzas bring the reader and speaker together as the background is set with visual images of the balloons and gustatory imagery with the “ice cream of all flavors” (3). Through the use of imagery, the readers are able to

go back in time to their childhood and days of kindergarten class, to high school and college, all the way back to their adult lives. This can be seen by the number of guests as well as who the guests are. In the beginning, the child is young with “tons and tons” (5) of friends, while in the last stanza of this section, “[j]ust a few people” (25) come to the party.

The last four stanzas of the poem are different from the first in that they are no longer in the past. They are now in the present time of the speaker’s life. The speaker has grown into an adult and now speaks out to the reader of the feelings and emotions in the present. The speaker begins to take shape in this section with the use of “I” and “my,” as in lines 36 and 37: “I paused for a moment / right there in my footsteps.” Here, the speaker pauses to take in the surroundings, which for some reason bring the footsteps to a halt, unlike on any other day. The use of “my” in the first four stanzas is used only to give ownership to the name written in the “frosty letters” (2). The growth of the speaker is also seen in the use of punctuation as the poem progresses. In the beginning, the words are in order but have no structure and just ramble on as would a child who is speaking, as seen in lines 5 and 4, where the word “balloons” belongs in the fifth line even though it is in the fourth: “ice cream of all flavors balloons / fill the house red green blue and pink.”

Through the use of repetition, the first four stanzas flow beautifully as they are bound together as one section, separate from the last four. In each stanza, three

## Lost Innocence: An Analysis of the Poem "Innocence"

### Innocence

A huge chocolate cake with frosting  
and candles my name in frosty letters  
ice cream of all flavors balloons  
fill the house red green blue and pink  
tons and tons of kids from Mrs. L's  
kindergarten class pin the tail  
on the donkey breaking the piñata  
and running for the candy

A large chocolate cake with frosting  
and candles  
strawberry and vanilla  
ice cream balloons fill a room  
all the kids from  
study hall spin the bottle

A small cake,  
probably from Jewel  
balloons in a bag.  
Forgot to blow them up  
about half of our guest list  
even bothered to show up.  
Truth or dare

A slice of cake  
from the party before.  
Last year's balloons.  
Just a few people,  
A bottle of beer  
a carton of smokes.  
Condoms just in case.

elements are repeated. The first is the cake, which in the beginning is accompanied by candles and ice cream, but which in the end is just one slice "from the party before" (23). The guests that show are the second element, the number of which shrinks in size between stanzas. The last element is the activity to take place at the party. The games start out innocent with a game of pin the tail on the donkey and a piñata ready to burst, sending sweet-smelling candy down to the ground. The games proceed later in the poem to "spin the bottle" (14) and "[t]ruth or dare" (21), while the fourth stanza's activities consist of "A bottle of beer / a carton of smokes / Condoms just in case" (26-28). In this section of the poem, the child who once never thought of one's own sexuality as a game has gone from good wholesome games to his or her first kiss and even first sexual experience all in just a matter of four stanzas.

Life is not always fair and life is not always easy, but it does have its ups as well as its downs. I have been told by some that "Innocence" has a depressing outlook on

Just the other day  
on the way home  
from the office,  
lights spilled out  
onto the streets from  
the plain little  
house on the corner.

I paused for a moment  
right there in my footsteps.  
It sounded like  
laughter.  
I reached toward the light:  
painfully, my hand impeded  
by an impenetrable field of glass

I saw balloons,  
ice cream, and a cake  
'til the little girl's mom  
shut me out with the shades.

I miss my name  
written in frosting.

life and by others that it carries with it a sense of truthfulness and realistic outlook on life, but it was not meant to be a depressing poem. I wrote "Innocence" to express my feelings and thoughts about the part of us that dies as we grow older and learn more about the world. Some of us are lucky enough to stay young at heart for all of time, but for those of us who lose our childish innocence, the world will still bring us much knowledge and happiness along with much sorrow. If you dare to close your eyes once more and go back to the morning of your birthday, with mom in the kitchen and dad in the living room, would you want to open them again? If you could see, once more, balloons, cake, and ice cream, would you miss your name, "written in frosting" (48)?

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Evaluation: *Heather writes both an evocative poem and an illuminating analysis of it. Her talents as poet and as essayist are most impressive.*

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# Before and After

Julia Kang

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Lisa Carriere

Assignment:

*Students were asked to integrate three past writing assignments into one larger compilation paper using narration, description, and dialogue.*

The sun shines down upon the ocean. On the horizon, a cloudless periwinkle sky merges with an undulating Gulf of Mexico. Closer to shore, the waves gently lap at the feet of a young woman, washing away the dainty footprints she leaves in the moist sand. The gentle breeze weaves its way through her dark, chin-length bob. The plain cut of her T-shirt and shorts do not hide the fact that her once angular and awkward body has now softened into womanly curves. There is a serenity that surrounds her and a calmness that belies her youthful age. At 20 years old, when most of her friends are in constant turmoil over their lives and their future, she is eerily tranquil. It seems strange to her that other people her age could be so immature and put so much emphasis on outer appearances. Perhaps it was because she learned early on the value of judging someone not for whom they appeared to be, but who they really were. She had been through enough anguish over trying to please others, trying to fit in when she did not, and pretending to be someone other than herself. She knew that denying one's true self would lead to much heartache. It was, unfortunately, a hard learned lesson.

The young woman pauses to turn and look out at the endless ocean. It did not look like an ocean, not that she knew what an ocean looked like. This was her first time standing at the edge of her known world. The ocean, however, did not look all that different from the beach she lived by in her youth. Although Lake Michigan was some 700 miles north of where she was currently standing, it appeared to be the same sky, the same sand, and the same water she had seen countless times in her life. When she thought of Warren Dunes Beach, she invariably thought of the small town that became the setting of her most profound suffering. She tilts her head up toward the sun and closes her eyes. She can smell the salty tang of the ocean as its scent is carried to her by the breeze that delicately caresses her face. She can hear the lapping of the waves along the shore and see the sun's light shooting through her closed lids. Its radiant warmth gives her comfort as she lets her mind drift back in time.

"I hate this place, I hate them and I hate you!" she screamed, her face dark with furious teenage angst. She meant it. She did hate everyone. She abhorred this

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small town, she despised the people, four in particular, and she loathed her parents for making her move here.

“Julia, Julia!” She could hear her mom calling as she ran into her room, slammed the door, turned the lock and threw herself onto her bed with a dramatic flourish that only a teenager was capable of. She could feel her heart pounding, threatening to jump out of her chest. The blood roared in her head, making her feel light-headed. Hostility rolled through her whole body, making her muscles so tense that they hurt. She was becoming quite accustomed to this feeling, this nearly uncontrollable anger. She was 13 years old and filled with so much fury. It was not normal. Life would not be so miserable if they had stayed in Chicago, she thought. She had friends in Chicago, people who really liked her and did not think of her as a know-it-all because she was smart. In Chicago, there were lots of things to do, places to go, and people to meet. This place was the complete opposite and absolutely wretched.

Berrien Springs, Michigan. There were no three words in the English language that she despised more. This place was so unbelievably antiquated that it was like stepping onto the set of an old, silent, black-and-white movie. There were only two stoplights in the entire town, for goodness sake! Many of the stores still had original signs from over 100 years ago. What had to be the only drive-in movie theater left in the entire world was located on one street corner. Modern places, such as McDonald’s and Dairy Queen, were established in buildings that were erected before their conception. The only sounds Julia ever heard were the gears of a bicycle and the sporadic passing of an automobile. She needed noise. She was used to constant movement. She needed to see the muted, yellow glow of the street lamps. Falling asleep without the humming of car engines and the noises of city nightlife was close to impossible. The buzzing of the various insects outside grated on her nerves relentlessly. All in all, it was a pretty miserable place to live.

As much as she disliked Berrien Springs, Julia hated the people more. When she had first moved to Michigan, she, admittedly, had a bad attitude. Still, when she became friends with Teresa, Ann, Christine, and Angela, she was happy. Having four friends her age

was much better than having none at all. They had appeared to like her, and she had thought she was becoming good friends with the girls. However, that all began to change when it became apparent that she was different from the others. In a few short months, she had established herself as valedictorian, first chair flute, and even won the coveted “Outstanding Youth” award. Her teachers loved her, and her classmates thought she was some kind of genius. But that was not all. Julia, despite the fact she had lived in the States since she was a baby, could speak Korean fluently and was what adults would call an all-around “good girl.”

In a small town where gossip spreads faster than an oil fire, the parents quickly heard about all of Julia’s successes. They began to compare their daughters to Julia, telling them that they should strive to be more like her. It was bad enough to have a city girl come in and show up all their inadequacies. They absolutely did not need to be told that they should emulate her. The girls stopped calling and hanging out with Julia. They did not invite her out anymore and did their best to make sure she knew that not only would she never fit in, her presence in itself was unwelcome.

Julia did not understand why her friends were rejecting her. She did not think she was any smarter or any better than the other girls were. In an effort to regain their friendship, Julia began reading fashion magazines. She experimented with clothes and makeup and tried to be like the other girls. It became another reason for them to hate Julia. Reading many magazines and experimenting in countless hours of makeup trials had made her somewhat of an expert. She became more knowledgeable and better at applying makeup than the other girls. She now wore clothes that were more fashionable than those of the other girls. Julia tried to share her knowledge with them. She wanted to show Teresa, Ann, Christine, and Angela that she liked the same things they liked. She wanted to show them that she could be one of them, too. They just hated her more.

Eventually, she stopped trying. She could not handle it any more. It was too hard for her to smile while the people she thought of as friends talked badly about her and played cruel pranks. The absolute worst was when they had asked Calvin to pretend that he had

broken up with his girlfriend for her. It was supposedly an April Fool's prank, yet they never told Julia that it had all been a joke, and they had carried their charade a little too far to have it be considered all in jest. Julia slowly withdrew into herself. She did not talk to anyone. She felt utterly rejected and alone, which was why she laid on her bed with tears pouring from her eyes. She never knew how awful life could be. If things ever become good, I am never going to take it for granted again, Julia vowed. But at the moment, it did not seem like things were ever going to get better. It hurt. Everything hurt. Her heart ached so much it felt like a physical pain, like Arnold Schwarzenegger was squeezing her still-beating heart in his big, meaty fist. Julia curled up into a ball of misery as she once again sobbed into her pillow. For the first time in her life, she wondered what it was like to die.

The laughter of children close by brought Julia out of her reverie. Wow, she thinks. I have come a long way. If only I had known then how things would turn out. It would have made the pain much more bearable. If only I had known that all that misery would eventually bring me peace of mind.

"Julia, I wish you could see yourself the way I see you. Then you would know what an amazing person you are. I miss you when we don't talk and I can't imagine what my life would be like without you," her friend Allison told Julia. It had been one of those times, when Julia would revert back to her old self and lament the fact that she was not pretty enough or popular enough. Allison was not a person prone to giving out compliments, so the fact that she said this touched Julia immensely.

"You know, you have an inner joy and it shows. You're always smiling and happy and you care about others. You're a good person," Allison had gone on to say. Julia pondered this statement for a moment and realized that it was true. For the first time in as far as she could recall, she was happy. She had found a balance between individuality and conformity, and criticism no longer bothered her. She had learned to appreciate her intelligence and maximize her talents. She had found strength within her, and in doing so, had found peace. Yes, Julia could declare that she was a happy person.

It's kind of nice thinking about the past, Julia muses. Once again deep in thought, she does not hear her friends coming up behind her. Suddenly, she feels an arm wrap around her waist and another behind her knees as she is swung up against the hard, muscled chest of one of her friends. He runs into the ocean with her in his arms and unceremoniously throws her into the water. The water instantly soaks her to the skin. At one time, she would have worried about what people would think of her when she came out of the water looking like a drowned rat, with her mascara running and her hair plastered to her head, but not anymore. She emerges sputtering, laughing, and promptly initiates a water fight.

I'm happy. I'm really happy, she thinks. Laughter brightens her face, joy radiating from her like a beacon of light. I can do this, she realizes. I can fight the waves of tribulation and the undertow of despair and emerge a better, stronger and happier person.

Life no longer scares her. She is ready to accept whatever life has to offer. She feels the waves of water coming from every direction, and does quite a bit of splashing of her own. Peace has finally found her, and she is happier now than she has ever been. Julia realizes that she cannot wait for the rest of her life.

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*Evaluation: This essay is a moving exploration of that "feeling of vertigo when who you are and who your peers say you should be conflict," as the author herself puts it. Her writing and experience encourages those experiencing these struggles—and delivers continued strength to those who have overcome them.*

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# Killer Snakes,

# Hitler,

# and

# “Hey I Almost Died, Where the Hell’s the News Crew?!?”

## The Role of the Media in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*

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Michael Kendall

Course: Literature 115 (Fiction)

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

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### Assignment:

*Discuss the role of media and technology, or the relationship between humans and technology, in Don DeLillo’s White Noise.*

Nearly all aspects of American culture are attacked in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*, an amusing postmodern observation of our society. Everything from family structure and academia to consumerism and advertising are satirized to create an extreme portrait of America circa mid 1980s, and in many ways now. J.A.K. Gladney, the narrator of the story, is a professor at the local College-on-the-Hill in the little town of Blacksmith. At this school, J.A.K. is chairman of the highly respected department of Hitler studies, a curriculum he pioneered. J.A.K. and his fourth wife, Babette, live somewhat happily with their four children, each parent contributing two from previous marriages. An interesting send-up of the dissolution of the traditional nuclear family structure that grew in the 1970s, the Gladney family resembles something of a twisted Brady Bunch. Babette, a “full-souled woman” as J.A.K. describes her, teaches a class in posture once a week and reads tabloid articles to a local old blind man. J.A.K. and his friend Murray Jay Siskind, an ex-sportswriter and new member of the faculty, enjoy deep debates and conversations about life, death, shopping, and television. Midway through this relatively uneventful sitcom-esque slice-of-life, a major turn occurs when a train car carrying a poisonous chemical tips over. The chemical, called Nyodene D, is released into the air, forcing the citizens of Blacksmith to take refuge in a nearby karate school, where they are given varying accounts of what exactly direct exposure can cause. This segment gives an amusing poke at the idea of the power of suggestion. The final segment of the novel deals primarily with J.A.K. and Babette’s fear of death, and how far they each are willing to go to relieve this fear.

Throughout this novel, there is a rampant fascination with the media. This fascination manifests itself in several forms. Whether it be in recalling dead celebrities, getting pleasure from the absorption of catastrophic event news coverage, or the characters’ craving for media attention from traumas they themselves experience, the communication and entertainment medium is an ever-present, almost tangible entity, similar to how it can be in real life.

The Gladney family has an intense fascination with the media, as do most of the characters in the novel. It is a mandatory ritual for them to watch television together on Friday nights. There seems to be a television in nearly every room of the house. Throughout the story, the television is like a seventh member of the family, or at least a character in itself. The text is littered with small snippets of dialogue, phrases, and advertisements being emitted from the TV, in addition to lists of products, symptoms, and diseases recited by various characters. A passage in which J.A.K. is reflecting on the fear of both his death and his wife Babette's is broken up by the phrase, "MasterCard, Visa, American Express" (DeLillo 100). At one point, J.A.K. observes a woman walk down the street, muttering "a decongestant, an antihistamine, a cough suppressant, a pain reliever" (262). Later on, as he peacefully watches his daughter Steffie sleep, she mumbles the words "Toyota Celica." While these sporadic messages don't always directly reflect what is occurring, they represent the manner in which the constant bombardment of slogans, jingles, and mascots can implant themselves deep into one's subconscious, sometimes outlasting memories of major events. Murray sums this up in the statement "I've come to understand that [television] is a primal force in the American home...like something we know in a dream-like and preconscious way" (5g). A way to demonstrate this phenomenon in real life: stop random people at Harper College and ask them if they can remember Christa McAuliffe and the Space Shuttle Challenger tragedy. Then ask them if they remember the Trix cereal ad campaign, "silly rabbit, Trix are for kids!" Chances are it would be the latter that most students who grew up in the 1980s would remember.

At one point in the story, Vernon Dickey, Babette's father, visits the Gladneys. While conversing with J.A.K., he asks, "Were people this dumb before television?" (249). Equally accurate in the portrayal of the masses' fascination with television, this represents the disconnection many older members of our society feel toward modern technology. While he's portrayed as the minority in this story, he voices a small bit of reality that pokes through the generally satirical tone of the novel.

The Gladneys take great pleasure in watching news coverage of major catastrophic events. Although aware that he is a part of it, this fascination baffles J.A.K. and forces him to consult a fellow department head about what it is that creates such a massive appetite for this kind of information. The comrade responds by explaining, "Because we're suffering from brain fade. We need an occasional catastrophe to break up the incessant bombardment of information" (66). In discussing a car crash seminar he is teaching, Murray explains to J.A.K. that when watching such events, people should "look past the violence...there is a wonderful brimming spirit of innocence and fun" (219). The overwhelming amount of exposure given to the 9/11 tragedy seems like a good example of this concept's existence in real life.

Another extension of the obsession with media in the novel are the constant references to celebrities, especially dead ones. During the same conversation in which J.A.K. is informed of the "brain fade" concept, some of his colleagues get into a rather heated discussion about where they were when James Dean was killed. This is an amusing send-up of the old "where were you when Kennedy was shot" conversation piece. One of J.A.K.'s colleagues goes on to cite actor Richard Widmark pushing an elderly woman down a flight of stairs in the film *Kiss of Death* as the greatest influence on his life. In addition, Murray is trying to convince the chairman of the school to let him start an Elvis studies program similar to J.A.K.'s Hitler studies.

Yet another interesting aspect of the fascination with media present in *White Noise* is the belief that part of the importance of surviving a catastrophe is the news coverage one receives afterward. This is expressed in the anger and disappointment some of the characters show after experiencing traumatic events that don't result in the coverage they feel they're entitled to. While J.A.K. is waiting at the local airport for his estranged daughter Bee's plane to arrive, another might narrowly avoid perishing. There is a crowd listening to a man recount what had happened on the plane, when Bee finds her father. After observing the situation, she asks J.A.K. where the media is. He tells her that there is no media in Iron City, the location of the airport, to which she

responds, “They went through all that for nothing?” (92). Later on in the novel, Blacksmith is shaken up by a chemical spill. A thick cloud of Nyodene D is released into the air, forcing the citizens to flee to a karate school for safety. An older man paces around the room the victims are crammed in, with a television in his arms, demanding to know why there is no news crew covering what they just horrifically experienced. “Don’t these people know what we’ve been through? Shouldn’t the streets be crawling with cameramen and soundmen and reporters? Shouldn’t we be yelling out the window at them, ‘Leave us alone, we’ve been through enough, get out of here with your vile instruments of intrusion?’” (162). He goes on to question, “Even if there hasn’t been great loss of life, don’t we deserve some attention for our suffering, our human worry, our terror? Isn’t fear news?” (162). This segment is an interesting take on the effects of constant media saturation on our society. Indeed, it seems we have reached a point where people have become reliant on the constant feed of information. Without meaning to sound cold or insensitive, it does in many ways seem at times as if part of the reason people who survive something life threatening are so traumatized is for dramatic value, to evoke pity from people watching at home.

A young man named Orest Mercator, a friend of J.A.K.’s eldest son Heinrich, is introduced in the story by his plan to get himself in the world record books. Orest is training to sit in a tank filled with poisonous snakes. When J.A.K. probes him as to why he would even consider doing something so dangerous, the potential for death seems to have no effect on him. It’s interesting how this concept foreshadows what was to come in real life. Sensationalized “reality”-based television programs are immensely popular right now, most of which feature people degrading themselves, forcibly confronting their worst fears, and even intentionally subjecting themselves to life-threatening situations in the name of media attention (and usually, a hefty cash incentive).

Media is as important a character to *White Noise* as any of the actual characters are. Whether it be in questioning where one was when James Dean died, craving the constant fix of catastrophe coverage, or sleep-talking car slogans, the media’s constant flow of information is as much a necessity to the characters of the novel as the air they breathe. It was mentioned once in a class discussion that the society created in this novel has no religion. This seems incorrect; it appears that media is their religion.

### Works Cited

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Evaluation: *Michael’s analysis of this thread in DeLillo’s novel is perceptive and lively, and his strong use of textual examples leaves the reader convinced of his point.*

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# Which Way?

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Kimee Le

Course: Art 105 (Introduction to Arts)

Instructor: Corinne Moran

Assignment:

*Analyze a work of art displayed on the Harper campus. Consider the formal elements and how they are arranged according to the principles of design to form the composition. In addition, examine the content of the work of art and propose underlying meanings or themes.*

As I was walking through the Liberal Arts Building one day, my attention was captured by an artwork hanging on the wall, *The Cleansing*. I immediately felt an intense hostility toward it. After thinking about my reaction, I have come to interpret the artist as someone who lived a troubled life. The imagery is depressing and violent. The title, therefore, must signify that through the interpretation of the artist's life's woes through the act of drawing, he finds catharsis. The print delineates the artist's hardships and catharsis through its iconographic details. Iconography literally translates to, "picture-writing," and, like words in a book, the pictorial imagery can tell the viewer a story. As I began to analyze the print, I found my eyes were first directed to the middle. My interest was then taken to the right, to a figure with upraised arms. From that point, the iconography directed my eyes around edges of the print in a clockwise direction.

Starting in the middle of the print, there are two faces. I realize that they are the focal point. A focal point is a specific part in a work of art which immediately seizes and holds the viewer's attention. The larger frontal face, with his torso also in a frontal pose, dominates the print. In front of the large man's torso is a miniature man. The miniature man within the larger man symbolizes the soul of the artist. The reason for my interpretation is due to the fact that the larger man has outstretched arms that are adjoined to the miniature man. The miniature man balances a dagger on the tip of his tongue. This symbolizes that experiences in the artist's life left a "bad taste" in his mouth. The miniature man's eyes are closed, and his tongue sticks out, giving the impression that he literally just had a taste of something bitter. The safety pin on the right side of his chest signifies that despite his troubled life, he tries to keep order and sanity. A safety pin closes and clasps tight, to hold together items or objects, and this could be why the artist used the safety pin to portray how he tries to "hold" his life together. On his right arm, there is a mouth smoking something that appears to be a marijuana joint. Perhaps the artist suffers from drug abuse.

The larger man wears a knit cap. I believe that this man is the artist himself. The artist intentionally wears his cap over his eyes to help exaggerate the expression of

## Which Way?

fear on his face. The artist's lips are a shade of red, with what seems to look like lipstick. The iconography here suggests the possibility that the artist is confused with his sexuality; perhaps he is transsexual. Artists sometimes create works of art that reveal their hidden desires, found, as Sigmund Freud suggests, in their subconscious.

As my eyes move clockwise, there is a series of characters, situated around the large and small man, that in different ways are being "cleansed." A character in the upper right hand corner is, just like the large man in the center, blindfolded. In addition, his arms are raised in the air. This gesture usually signifies a cry for help. This figure may denote the artist is in desperate need for help, but the blindfold he wears tells us that the artist does not know how or where to seek help. There is a heart next to the figure, and the heart is pierced with sharp objects. The piercings could mean that the artist suffered from emotional wounds; perhaps the artist was betrayed by a lover.

At the bottom of the print, there is a man's head. His eyes are red-rimmed, and he looks extremely angry. The anger in the man's eyes reflects the anger of the artist. Implied lines in works of art are lines that are completed by the viewer. The angry man's eyes gaze toward the left of the print, where there is a portion of a female body. At the portion of the body, there is a splash of blood, which implies the death of the female. The death of this female may signify the artist's failure in relationships with women. The legs of the female are covered in tear shapes and at first glance, it looks like hair. In modern society, women often shave the hair on their legs. Depicting hair on her legs may again be hinting toward the artist's hidden transsexuality.

The upper, left-hand corner shows a man standing in profile. This man seems at peace. He exhales. The exhaling represents the artist cleansing his soul from all that is bad. The profile figure is situated on the right side of the large man—the man I believe to be the artist. In medieval art, the right side is the side of good; therefore, this figure symbolizes good. The exhaling figure could also be a depiction of the artist's guardian angel. In medieval and early Renaissance art, in paintings like *The Lamentation*, by Giotto, we see tiny floating figures above Jesus. They are angels. As the profile figure

exhales and begins to cleanse his soul, the devil shows up (he floats down from above) and tries to tempt the artist. The artist refuses temptation and releases the troubled life he once knew.

The two most prominent of the work's formal elements are line and color. Formal elements, such as line, color, texture, and light and dark, to name a few, are the building blocks of an artwork. They are used together to create a unified composition.

Implied lines in works of art are lines that are completed by the viewer. The implied lines in this work of art move the viewer's eye around the entire print, beginning with his struggle with drug abuse, next to his failure in relationships with women, and finally, the implied lines take the viewer up to the visualization of his catharsis. Even at this moment, the artist confronts temptation, but he ultimately defeats temptation and exhales.

Color is also prominent in this work of art. The artist has gone through many trials and tribulations and despite all of the chaos, he uses a saturated yellow background. The color yellow is typically associated with happiness and sunshine. The radiance of yellow can also symbolize new beginnings. The yellow color surrounding the artist signifies that in the midst of all the darkness revealed through the iconography, there is ultimately a "cleansing" and therefore healing. Through healing there is a new beginning—there is hope.

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Evaluation: *Although the writing assignment only asked for a formal analysis of an artwork, Kimee analyzed the artwork in two ways. First, she looked at the composition formally. She examined how the artist used color, line, shape, and light. She then took her analysis to the next level—she ascribed meaning to both the formal elements and the iconography. The first level of analysis takes observational skills and a comprehensive understanding of art vocabulary. The second level takes a creative mind and ingenuity. Good work!*

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# Rainbow's End

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*Sheri A. Luzzi*

Course: Journalism 235  
(Magazine Editing and Design)  
Instructor: Susan Dennison

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Assignment:

*Interview someone and write a  
third-person article profiling the subject.*

The late October breeze chides the 26 sailboats still moored in the Wilmette Harbor. The boats bob about as if dancing to a playful children's tune. But Carl Sangree doesn't have time for child's play. He has work to do. Lots of it. He has to get his sailboat out of the harbor, and he only has a few hours of daylight left to do it.

So far, Carl has had to do all the work alone—taking everything off the boat, cleaning it, and removing many of the masts and riggings. It is a massive undertaking for a 75-year-old man, even one as spry and unscathed by the aging process as Carl.

"I couldn't stand doing this more than once a year," he says, reflecting on the annual fall ritual that all the members of the Wilmette Harbor Shores Club must endure.

But for Carl, forgetting something may mean the end of sailing forever. His insurance would not cover the cost of a new boat; neither would his modest fixed income.

"All these old boats don't have much value. It would cost a fortune to replace," he says, referring to his boat,

the Rainbow's End, one of the old Rainbow class of boats.

The Rainbow's End will be spending the winter exposed to the elements on the grassy area adjacent to the harbor. Forgetting something might prove fatal to the boat's ability to survive the ravages of a Chicago winter.

"There's a good deal of tension. You've got to remember everything," says Carl.

He squats on the deck of the boat, playing tug-of-war with a temperamental bolt, his frail hands racing against the clock. In less than one hour, his boat will be hoisted from the water and placed on its trailer.

The laid-back whirring of an approaching dinghy catches Carl's attention. His young neighbor Sam has come to help. Carl has taken the quietly confident 16-year-old under his wings and taught him the art of sailing. Now, Sam returns the favor.

They greet each other briefly and get to work on the boat.

Carl and Sam work well together—the older mentor and younger sailing buff—and quickly finish dismantling the external mechanics of the boat.

Carl, clearly relieved that phase one has been successfully navigated, sits down and pops the top off a ginger ale. A calm settles over him as his clear, blue eyes soak up the surrounding beauty. He reflects on the more amiable springtime rite of passage when warm water beckons and the boats return to the empty moorings.

"Spring is harder work, but the psychology is much better," Carl says, "because you're looking forward to the sailing."

The aging sailor reflects on his good fortune, his normally unadorned manner of speaking waxing uncharacteristically poetic.

"The independence, freedom, motion you get from sailing is the same as you get from horseback riding or dancing," Carl says as he peers across the harbor. "There's a lot of motion to sailing. A lot of rhythm."

Independence. Freedom. Motion. Traits that define Carl and gifts that he gave to his partner in sailing and in life, his wife Gail. Despite suffering from polio, Gail embraced Carl's love for sailing. On the boat, she could become one with the rhythm of the water despite being tethered by leg braces and the use of crutches.

In the 1970s, Carl built a small house by the lake in Winnetka so the couple could be near a boat launch. Gail never got to live in the house. She died, after a bout with cancer, just eight years after marrying Carl.

"They were only eight years, but they were the most beautiful eight years of my life," Carl says.

Carl has lived alone for 30 years since Gail's death. No one could replace what he had with Gail and nothing could replace his love for sailing. He lost Gail. He could not bear to lose the boat. He has to make sure it makes it safely on shore and through the harsh winter. He has to.

The sailboat has been emptied, cleaned and stripped. Phase two approaches: the dramatic hoisting of the boat out of the water.

"This is sort of like 'zero hour' in the trenches of WWI," says Carl.

Zero hour, when the soldiers leave the protection of the trenches to face the enemy.

"I just want to make sure it goes smoothly, that it goes off without a hitch," says Carl, taking one last swig of his ginger ale.

A teenaged girl from the harbor crew arrives in a dinghy to take Sam and Carl to the dock where the boat will be hoisted from the water.

Carl nervously oversees the operation like an expectant father assisting in the delivery of his first child. He scrutinizes every move the crew makes, leaving only once to pull his trailer up to the dock.

The derrick crane is positioned over the 2,000-pound boat. Two straps dangle from the crane's steel beam like monstrous garter belts. The crew laces the straps around the hull of the boat. They lift it out of the water to a level just above their heads. The keel and rudder extending below the blue deck of the Rainbow's End make it look like an upside-down beached whale.

The crew scrapes the slimy dark-green algae from the "whale's" belly and sponges her clean. The Rainbow's End is then deposited securely onto its trailer. Carl smiles for the first time since the ordeal began several hours earlier.

"The final phase," he says triumphantly as the sun begins to set in the autumn sky. "This is the toughest part, wrapping the boat in swaddling clothes."

The evening air has turned chilly. The crew has

retired to the club to toast their hard work. Any bystanders have gone home. Only Carl and Sam remain.

They work tirelessly to dress the boat in its protective tarp, but the strong winds make it difficult. The winds lash the tarp into an untamable frenzy. It will take more than two people to tie it down.

Fortunately for Carl, a few friends arrive to lend a hand.

After another hour of hard work, the Rainbow's End is ready to be put to bed for the winter.

"I think we've done all we can do," Carl says, surveying the swaddled boat.

Everyone congratulates each other with handshakes and smiles all around.

The group turns to leave. Just then Carl spots something near the rear of the boat.

"Sorry... we didn't get the lights covered," he says.

He pulls on the taught tarp while trying in vain to think of some way to correct the problem.

Someone puts a comforting hand on Carl's shoulder and reassures him that everything will be all right.

"It will have to be," Carl says. The aging sailor walks away, leaving his beloved Rainbow's End nestled securely under the harbor lights.

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*Evaluation: Sheri went through two strenuous editing jobs on this article to bring it to one thousand words. She also took photos that accompanied the article for the class project. She did an outstanding job capturing the heart and soul of her subject.*

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# Love Me as I Love You:

## A Response to Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband"

Delia Malone

Courses: History 210 (American Women's History)  
and Literature 224 (Women in Literature)  
Instructors: Sharon Alter and Elizabeth Turner

### Assignment:

*In this linked class, the assignment was to select a reading from either Literature or History and to respond to it creatively with incorporation of both history and literature. In addition to the possibility of rewriting a story's ending or creating a eulogy for a historically important woman, students were to submit a narrative. The narrative describes the creative project.*

If ever two could reach Paradise, then we,  
For a truer soul than yours, there cannot be.  
If ever there was potential in a man,  
To grow with me and love me, if you can.  
Though gold shines dull in the brilliance of your smile,  
Love without oneself is hardly worth the while.

So insatiable is my love's appetite for thee,  
That often I do forget my love for me.  
Thy love must see this inclination,  
For this would be my soul's devastation.  
So while we do, let's love unselfishly  
Then loving each other, we may love endlessly.

"To My Dear and Loving Husband," by Anne Bradstreet, is a poem that reveals not only a woman's affection toward her spouse, but also a reflection of her particular situation in history. So acute is her poetry to

her circumstance but so universal her emotion that I thought that it would be the perfect poem to take. Taking a piece so drenched in its own history and making it modern, I would show the universality of emotion through time and space.

A Puritan in the 1600s, Anne Bradstreet is indicative of her times, living in the religious fervor of the New World. The Puritan faith instilled a moral code based on the hope for salvation through redemption. Puritans, carving out an existence in the wilderness of the newly "found" North America, were faced with constant death and disease, a fact which reaffirmed their belief in the certainty of impending death. Life, to the Puritans, was so brief in comparison with the eternal world that awaited, making the worship of God the purpose of a Puritan life. Anne Bradstreet was unable to reconcile her love for her husband and her love for God, which created a theme in many of her poems. Fearing that her love for her husband may be stronger than her love for God, Anne writes "To My Dear and Loving Husband" to tell him that she does, in fact, worship him, but he must be second to God so that the two can live eternally together.

In recreating Anne's feelings, I felt that the poem would be simplistic without a conflict as heart wrenching as Anne's. Anne is afraid that her worldly love of her husband may send her pious soul to hell. Though I had this idea for this poem at the beginning of the semester, I wasn't actually able to create a realistic conflict at that time. Not until we began to study the last 50 years of the woman's history did I find a conflict that I could understand well enough to write about; this was in the feminist movement of the 1960s. As I understood the material, women felt that their education and goals were secondary to those of their husbands. Staying home and fulfilling the roles their mothers had been able to execute without an education, these women felt cheated of their own identity. This is the problem I try to address in the rewriting of Anne Bradstreet's poem. I saw that the conflict of losing oneself held enough weight as to contend with Anne's damnation.

I kept the most basic elements of the form of the poem the same. My poem "Love Me as I Love You" is also written in two stanzas of three couplets each. As

**Love Me as I Love You: A Response to  
Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband"**

Anne did, I attempted to make every couplet almost an independent statement, with all statements being part of the theme. In keeping the form, I tried also to keep the meaning of some of the couplets. For example, I started both the first and second couplet with "if ever," which I thought was an important phrase in the poem because it made the poem seem so definitive, differentiating it with authority from schoolgirl poetry.

The second couplet of Anne's poem ends in a challenge, which I also keep, but the stark contrast of the challenge I put forth versus Anne's challenge is the first opportunity to compare themes. As the speaker of my poem asks if her lover can live up to his potential and love her, she implies that this may not be an easy task. The complication in loving a woman comes when that woman is liberated in thinking and sees herself as a person equally deserving of everything the man claims for himself. Anne's challenge seems the antithesis of my speaker's challenge; she challenges the audience to find a woman who has ever been happier *in* a man than herself. The simple preposition "in" tells us that this woman is subordinate to her husband in a manner that permeates everything, so that she no longer exists outside of him.

In the last couplet of the first stanza, when Anne is praising her husband's love, my speaker begins to voice her conflict. In the next two couplets (the first two of the second stanza), Anne continues to praise her husband's love. I thought about making my statement about conflict in the last couplet as Anne does, but by making lines which Anne devotes to praise more critical, the evolution of a woman's mind is much more apparent. Retaining some of the imagery Anne uses to praise her husband, the speaker of "Love Me as I Love You" begins to explain her conflict. As the poem was so loving, I tried my best to keep a positive spin on my speaker's conflict, and I found I could do that by making the loss of herself possible because of her intense emotions for her lover, over which she has no power. The loss of power to emotions shows its universality because it is Anne's same conflict, though she is trying to preserve her eternal soul, not her personal identity. As Anne's last couplet presents her conflict and her proposed solution, my speaker's last two lines are her

solution. The speaker of "Love Me as I Love You" finds her salvation in the unselfishness of love. If love is executed truthfully, her lover, who now has the knowledge of this conflict, will love her enough to protect her against her own loss of power.

Finally, the title gave me a lot of trouble. Though I wanted to keep the direct address of Anne's title, I most definitely didn't want to address the marital status of the lover my speaker is addressing. Anne's title reflects her poem; the majority of her poem is devoted to the praise of her husband. I saw that my poem also had praise, but the last stanza seemed to be almost instructions to her lover on how to keep the speaker's love, and so I titled the poem "Love Me as I Love You." The title is closely linked to the first couplet of the second stanza, which explains that the speaker's love is so great for her lover that she forgets to love herself. If he loves her as she loves him, there will only be happiness in their future.

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Evaluation: *Delia Malone's creative project is an outstanding incorporation of both history and literature. She places Anne Bradstreet's poem within its literary and historical context while also rewriting the poem. In Delia's revision of the poem, Delia reflects a contemporary theme with the title, "Love Me as I Love You." Moreover, the narrative reveals a creative synthesis of history and literature, plus Delia's understanding and analysis of that synthesis.*

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# Neanderthal Gender Roles: An Examination of Lewis Binford's Model

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Gina Matthiesen

Course: Philosophy 190 (Feminist Philosophy)

Instructor: Barbara Solheim

Assignment:

*Select and present an issue that both interests you  
and is related to our course content.*

## Introduction

While one may think that researching Neanderthals may not apply directly to feminist studies, such research could have a lot of impact. For example, many people believe that human sex roles have been fixed since the dawn of time. Were this idea repeatedly and publicly proven to be untrue (as it has been academically by anthropologists and others), feminists would have a powerful tool to deflect criticism of their research. Neanderthal research could push gender studies even further back into human evolutionary history. While the fossil record often does not leave direct evidence of social relations between the sexes, various other sources such as tools, debris patterns, and tooth wear can be used to make reasonable inferences. In this paper, I will discuss some general Neanderthal research and then examine a model of Neanderthal gender behavior proposed by Lewis Binford, an anthropologist at Southern Methodist University.

## What is a Neanderthal?

Neanderthals were a group of hominids who lived in Europe and Central Asia from about 200,000 to 30,000 years ago, during the ice ages. Hominids are members of the family *Hominidae*, bipedal primates which include the genus *Homo* (modern day humans are *Homo sapiens*) and the Australopithecines. In other words, hominids are humans and all of our two-footed, upright-walking cousins and ancestors. For more detailed information on hominids, see summaries by Paul Jordan<sup>1</sup> or in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*.<sup>2</sup> Both sources give detailed information that is aimed at the general public.

Neanderthals are certainly not the hunched-over, stupid brutes of our popular imagination.<sup>3</sup> Their posture was upright like ours, and their brains were on average a little larger. They made sophisticated tools (commonly referred to as the Mousterian tradition), constructed

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Jordan, *Neanderthal: Neanderthal Man and the Story of Human Origins* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1999) 130-170.

<sup>2</sup>Steve Jones, Robert Martin, and David Pilbeam, eds., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992) 231-251.

<sup>3</sup>James Shreeve, "In Our Images of Neanderthals, We Haven't Always Let the Facts Get in the Way of What Makes Us Feel Best," *Smithsonian* 25 (Sept. 1994): 17-18.

## Neanderthal Gender Roles: An Examination of Lewis Binford's Model

simple shelters, cared for their sick, buried their dead, and most likely used language. I will expand on these characteristics in the following pages. In many ways, Neanderthals were similar to anatomically modern human beings (*Homo sapiens*). In fact, some anthropologists, such as Milford Wolpoff, see Neanderthals as an ancient physical (the problematic idea "racial" in popular terms) variation of *Homo sapiens*. Others, such as Christopher Stringer, believe that Neanderthals were a very closely related cousin (*Homo neanderthalensis*).<sup>4</sup> Erik Trinkaus and others hypothesize that Neanderthal and modern human anatomy emerged around the same time, yet occurred in drastically different environments. While these two forms could interbreed (and seemingly did so in Eastern Europe), for the most part they stayed distinct. In other words, according to this view, some Neanderthals are our ancestors, but most are not.<sup>5</sup> Basically, Neanderthal evolution is still hotly debated by anthropologists, paleontologists, and now even geneticists.<sup>6</sup>

### What Did They Look Like?

As mentioned earlier, Neanderthals walked upright, with a gait similar to ours.<sup>7</sup> However, their bodies were much more robust ("big-boned" or "muscle-bound" in popular terms) than ours, and their lower legs and arms were proportionally shorter, both of which are adaptations to cold climates.<sup>8</sup> Males were on average about 5'6" and females were about 5'3" (91). Stringer compares these heights to males and females in a few modern populations. For instance, modern European males and females are 5'7" and 5'3", respectively (92). While Stringer and others do not really discuss this seeming

lesser amount of sexual dimorphism (male and female body differences) in Neanderthal height, it could have played a social factor.

Neanderthal skulls were long and low (ours are high and round) and housed a large brain. The average brain size of modern humans is 1400 cc; Neanderthal brains averaged 1500 cc.<sup>9</sup> While this difference in brain size and shape has been considered important by some,<sup>10</sup> Stringer argues that we do not know what, if any, significance these differences may have had.<sup>11</sup> Both sexes had prominent brow ridges and large muscle attachments of the jaw and neck (83-84). Their faces projected forward with a long, large protruding nose, "swept-back" cheeks, and a "weak" chin.<sup>12</sup> Males and females had large teeth that show a lot of wear caused by using the mouth as a vice to hold hides, meat, and plant materials for processing.<sup>13</sup>

In general, Neanderthal females and males had large faces with powerful jaws and worn teeth. Both sexes had robust skeletons with large muscle attachments and powerful yet flexible hands.<sup>14</sup> Skeletal evidence suggests that Neanderthals used more thrusting, rather than throwing, movements with their arms (349). Their legs, ankles, and feet were designed to withstand heavy muscular stress, which implies that their lifestyle was quite vigorous.<sup>15</sup> The best word to describe Neanderthal anatomy is "powerful."<sup>16</sup>

While we may wonder about Neanderthal eye, skin, and hair color, such traits are not preserved in the archaeological record. Most anthropologists believe that these people probably had pale skin since they (like modern Swedes for instance) lived in conditions of low sunlight.<sup>16</sup> Bjorn Kurten, a paleoanthropologist, describes Neanderthals as having blond hair and blue

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<sup>4</sup>See Erik Trinkaus and Pat Shipman, *The Neanderthals: Changing the Image of Mankind* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 243-383 or Ian Tattersall, *The Last Neanderthal: The Rise, Success, and Mysterious Extinction of Our Closest Human Relatives* (New York: Macmillan, 1995), 106-116 for the details of this debate.

<sup>5</sup>Trinkaus and Shipman, 411-419.

<sup>6</sup>See Trinkaus and Shipman, 386-396 for detail of genetic work, or Associated Press. "Human Origin Theory Gets New Twist: Interbreeding", *Daily Herald*, 8 March 2002, 1:10 for a quick summary.

<sup>7</sup>Tattersall 15.

<sup>8</sup>Christopher Stringer and Clive Gamble, *In Search of the Neanderthals* (New York, Thames and Hudson, 1993) 91.

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<sup>9</sup>Tattersall, 11.

<sup>10</sup>See Jean Auel, *The Clan of the Cave Bear* (New York: Random House, 1980) for a literary treatment of such differences.

<sup>11</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 82-83.

<sup>12</sup>Tattersall, 12-13.

<sup>13</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 77. See Tattersall, 164 for a good photograph of this characteristic wear.

<sup>14</sup>*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*, 349.

<sup>15</sup>See Stringer and Gamble, 93, 95, and Tattersall, 157-158.

<sup>16</sup>For a complete description of Neanderthal anatomy, see Stringer and Gamble, 73-95 or Tattersall, 10-17.

<sup>16</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 95.

eyes in his novel *Dance of the Tiger*.<sup>17</sup> Jean Auel gives them brown hair and brown eyes in *Clan of the Cave Bear*.<sup>18</sup> Most people might guess that Neanderthals had a lot of body hair, but there is no archaeological evidence to support such a view.<sup>19</sup> Outside of mummies (Neanderthals did not use this burial practice), hair is generally not preserved in the archaeological record.

### Some Points on Neanderthal Behavior

The first stone tools date back to about 2.4 million years ago and are associated with *Homo habilis*.<sup>20</sup> Neanderthal tools were well-crafted and commonly produced using what anthropologists call the “Levallois” technique.<sup>21</sup> This tool tradition is often called the “Mousterian” or the “Middle Paleolithic” in research literature. Basically, Neanderthals and anatomically modern humans (often referred to as “Cro-Magnon” when the Middle Paleolithic is discussed) made a variety of Mousterian tools that included blades, scrapers, and hand-axes. These tools were more efficiently crafted and variable in style than those of earlier hominids (such as *Homo habilis*), and yet less efficiently crafted and variable than those of later human populations. While the making of stone tools is stereotypically considered a male activity, anthropologists have shown that this popular assumption is completely false.<sup>22</sup>

Most Neanderthal archaeological sites are located in caves, which preserve materials rather well. They used fire for cooking, light, and heat, but rarely constructed formal hearths.<sup>23</sup> They did, however, construct wind-breaks of mammoth bones in both cave and open air sites, although this behavior does not appear to have been common.<sup>24</sup> Neanderthal living sites are generally

characterized by the lack of a structured use of space (148-149). Ian Tattersall, among others, argue that this lack of structure is associated with foraging rather than what we call hunting and gathering (152). Lewis Binford has studied Mousterian stone tool assemblages in France and has put forth a novel yet controversial theory of Neanderthal foraging behavior that I will discuss later in this paper.

Neanderthals intentionally buried their dead. The first solid evidence of such behavior was found at Shanidar Cave in Iraq.<sup>25</sup> While anthropologists proposed complex burial rituals at one time, these myths have been shattered by more careful and current research.<sup>26</sup> Burials may have had ritual value, or they may have been a convenient means of corpse disposal. Some of these individuals, such as the “Old Man” of La Chapelle-aux-Saints or Shanidar I (two very famous Neanderthal burials), had debilitating health problems that would have required long-term care by others.<sup>27</sup> Neanderthals obviously cared for their sick and injured in some fashion.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, most anthropologists agree that Neanderthals used some form of language. Complex communication by apes (or other animals) and true language are not the same.<sup>29</sup> The Neanderthal “voice box” was positioned differently than ours, but other important structures such as the hyoid bone (our “Adam’s Apple”) are identical.<sup>30</sup> The linguist Philip Lieberman has concluded, based on anatomical evidence, that Neanderthals were capable of language yet most likely could not produce the full range of sounds found in modern languages.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Bjorn Kurten, *Dance of the Tiger: A Novel of the Ice Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 34-36.

<sup>18</sup>Auel, 10.

<sup>19</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 95.

<sup>20</sup>See John Haywood, *The Illustrated History of Early Man*, (New York: SMITHMARK, 1995) chart on pages 8-9 for this and other “firsts.”

<sup>21</sup>See Stringer and Gamble, 149 for a quick explanation of this technique, and Paul Mellars, *The Neanderthal Legacy: An Archaeological Perspective from Western Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 56-94 for a complete review.

<sup>22</sup>See Joan Gero, “Genderlithics: Women’s Roles in Stone Tool Production,” 163-193 for a full discussion of this issue.

<sup>23</sup>Tattersall, 148-149.

<sup>24</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 156-7.

<sup>25</sup>See Trinkaus and Shipman, 336-341 for details.

<sup>26</sup>See George Constable, *The Neanderthals* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1973), 97-102 for an example of older archaeological views, and Stringer and Gamble, 158-165 for an extreme current view.

<sup>27</sup>See Stringer and Gamble, 94-95 for a description of the “Old Man” of La Chapelle-aux-Saints, and Tattersall, 108-111 for the Shanidar 1 individual.

<sup>28</sup>See B. Bower, “Neanderthals Show Ancient Signs of Caring,” *Science News* 160, issue 11 (2001), 167 for a short yet complete discussion.

<sup>29</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 88.

<sup>30</sup>Tattersall, 172-173

<sup>31</sup>See Tattersall, 170-173 or Stringer and Gamble, 88-91 for more complete summaries of this research.

### How Did They Live?

What was daily life like for Neanderthals? Early on, anthropologists argued that Neanderthals exclusively hunted the large herd animals of the ice ages, such as woolly mammoths or aurochs (giant wild cows). Elaborate hunting rituals, "bear cults," and cannibalism have all been proposed as Neanderthal religious beliefs.<sup>32</sup> Some of this research was based on the belief systems of modern hunter-gatherers, but much of it seems to have been pure fancy. Many anthropologists have since researched and reworked these ideas and have debunked many old myths.<sup>33</sup> Newer models of Neanderthal behavior focus on subsistence (getting food and resources) and settlement patterns. Neanderthals are proposed to have been "foragers" rather than "collectors."

The main difference between "foraging" and "collecting" is the amount of forward planning involved.<sup>34</sup> Foraging is an "opportunistic process" in which people make use of any resources encountered (151). Foragers need to plan routes that will maximize their chances of finding resources, but they generally do not store food or other items as a buffer against lean times.<sup>35</sup> Collecting, associated with modern hunter/gatherer populations, involves a great deal of forward planning.<sup>36</sup> Collectors often store food and other goods and will carefully monitor their resources. The work of Lewis Binford, Mary Stiner and Stephen Kuhn, and John Shea and Philip Lieberman all expand in various ways on this distinction.<sup>37</sup> Lewis Binford's work is of particular importance to feminist studies because he proposes very distinct gender roles for Neanderthal men and women; in fact, he proposes that they lived mostly separate social and economic lives. He is known and respected among his colleagues for his originality, creativity, and iconoclasm.<sup>38</sup>

Binford was part of a team that excavated the Combe

Grenal cave shelter in France in the 1960s. Data analysis was rather overwhelming until the 1980s, when this information could be analyzed with the help of computer modeling.<sup>39</sup> Binford reports to have found two separate zones of activity, the "nest" in the center of the cave and an outlying area located nearer to the entrance. The "nest" is characterized by ashy (low-heat) fire deposits, simple and expediently made tools of local stone materials, and splintered long bones and cranial fragments (48). Marrow extraction was probably the main activity in the "nest." The outlying areas contained high temperature fires, more finely made stone tools of non-local materials, and the very ends of animal long bones (48). Animal butchery was probably the main activity of the outlying area (it doesn't have a simple or catchy name). The long bones and crania fragments in both areas were often part of the same individual animal, which shows that these areas were in use at the same time (49).

Neanderthal women were processing marrow and plant resources in the "nest," according to Binford's model. They foraged locally for plants, small animals, and other resources such as stone for their processing tools (50). Men, on the other hand, foraged for larger animals and other resources such as stone farther away from the rock shelters. They probably ate the fleshy parts of their animal food while away from the "nest" and periodically returned to the rock shelter with marrowbones and crania for the women to eat (50). This model is a direct contrast to modern hunter/gatherers, where food is collected and shared by all.<sup>40</sup> Binford argues that Neanderthal men and women probably interacted mostly to mate. He notes that there is no evidence of family units, such as a common sleeping or food preparation area.<sup>41</sup> Since men were not regular inhabitants of the "nest," they were not competing with each other for female attention very often (50). Binford states that in this type of social system, mating choices would

<sup>32</sup>See Constable, 104-114 for examples of older ideas of Neanderthal ritual behavior. See Tattersall, 94-96 for a current critique of the "bear cult" research.

<sup>33</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 162-165.

<sup>34</sup>Tattersall, 151.

<sup>35</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 164.

<sup>36</sup>Tattersall, 151-152.

<sup>37</sup>See Tattersall, 151-156 for a summary of these researchers' ideas.

<sup>38</sup>See McEllars, 359 or Tattersall, 151.

<sup>39</sup>See Joshua Fischman, "Hard Evidence", *Discover* (Feb. 1992), 48-51 for an interview with Binford about this research.

<sup>40</sup>Tattersall, 152 and Fischman, 50.

<sup>41</sup>Fischman, 50.

be dominated by women (50). His ultimate goal is to get anthropologists and others to understand that modern humans and Neanderthals may have entirely different sensibilities about the world (51). There is no reason to assume that they are inferior versions of *us*, as has been the unspoken view in much earlier research.

### Criticisms of the Binford Model

This somewhat strange model has been criticized on several fronts. First of all, Paul Mellars points out that Binford's model and data have yet to be published in a peer-reviewed format.<sup>42</sup> Mellars further argues that the distribution of tool use could rather simply be based on function rather than social roles (359). For example, butchery tools would naturally be found in areas where animals were butchered. These areas would most likely be located away from centers of social activity (such as the "nest"), since butchery is messy. The "nest" is probably a common social area for all members of the group, since it is located in the middle of the living area (360). Again, function rather than sex roles separates these areas. Mellars also questions if the tools found in the "nest" and outlying areas are really so different in their manufacture and material type (360). Paul Mellars states that "I see no reason to interpret any of these claimed patterns in explicitly sexual terms" (360). Even Binford admits his associations of tool materials and sexual roles is not "rock-solid."<sup>43</sup>

Further criticism comes from the discipline of socioecology, according to Mellars.<sup>44</sup> Socioecologists argue that men, women, and children have to share food in order to ensure the long-term survival of the group. Nor does Binford's suggestion that women collected and ate mostly small mammals and plant materials reflect the archaeological record very well. Binford himself states that "there are no small mammal bones in the shelters."<sup>45</sup> However, he does suggest that small

mammals were eaten "on the spot" when caught, so their remains would be deposited elsewhere. Nor do plant foods make up more than a minor component at any Neanderthal site.<sup>46</sup> Chemical analyses conducted on Neanderthal bones prove that their diets consisted mostly of meat.<sup>47</sup> Finally, only Binford proposes such a radical separation of the sexes. Mary Stiner and Stephen Kuhn, for example, propose a similar strategy of local and non-local foraging that in no way implies Neanderthal men and women living separate social and economic lives.<sup>48</sup>

Evidence collected from Neanderthal bodies, such as injury patterns and muscle attachments, also contradicts Binford's hypothesis. Stringer and Gamble mention that stress fractures on Neanderthal skeletons suggest that they were killing animals at close quarters.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, one of Erik Trinkaus' students, Tony Berger, found that Neanderthal injuries were similar to those of modern day rodeo riders (falling or getting kicked by animals, for example).<sup>50</sup> None of these authors mentions any difference of injuries in male and female skeletons. Furthermore, any discussion of Neanderthal bodies mentions that men, women, and children all had large muscle attachments and were all powerfully built.<sup>51</sup> If there is no difference in injuries and/or physical formation, we must assume that men and women had similar lives. Marsha Ogilvie's research on the femurs and muscle attachments in anatomically modern human populations reinforces this assumption.<sup>52</sup> She finds that female and male femurs of hunter/gatherer populations are similar in robusticity (strength and shape) since women and men in these societies have similar roles. With the introduction of agriculture, women's femurs became smaller and less robust than men's. In these societies, women stayed closer to home and the crops while men remained mobile hunters. Men's femurs became smaller and less robust, too, as

<sup>42</sup>Mellars, 359.

<sup>43</sup>Fischman, 50.

<sup>44</sup>See Mellars, 361 for further citations.

<sup>45</sup>Fischman, 50.

<sup>46</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 161.

<sup>47</sup>B. Bower, "Neanderthals' Diet Put Meat on Their Bones," *Science News* 160, issue 11 (2001), 167.

<sup>48</sup>Tattersall, 153-154.

<sup>49</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 164.

<sup>50</sup>Rick Gore, "Neanderthals," *National Geographic* 189 (1996), 27.

<sup>51</sup>Stringer and Gamble, 95.

<sup>52</sup>Jake Page, "Seeing Fingers Decipher Bones," *Smithsonian* 32, no. 2 (2001), 98.

**Neanderthal Gender Roles:  
An Examination of Lewis Binford's Model**

they gradually became more sedentary (less mobile) themselves.

**Possible Future Feminist Critiques**

The criticism that I have not seen of Binford's model would point out how similar his proposed Neanderthal sex roles are to our present-day American stereotypes of ideal male and female behavior. He is proposing that men literally "brought home the bacon" while women occupied themselves at home. Our American ideal is similar—men should go to work and women should stay at home. Lewis Binford is an American archaeologist and (like us all—let's not single him out) has to have been influenced by this stereotype. There are some rather unfair criticisms of Binford and his model of Neanderthal behavior on the Internet (no sources worth citing—type "Binford," "Neanderthal," and "women" into a search engine to see some examples). He certainly does not imply that women did not provide for themselves or make their own tools as such personal, non-peer-reviewed Internet sites suggest. I have no doubts that he is attempting to make anthropologists understand that they cannot just assume that Neanderthals lived like modern hunter/gatherers. He has strongly criticized earlier anthropological research for portraying Neanderthals as "inferior" versions of modern hunter/gatherers. However, Binford's model, while widely praised for its boldness, strikes me as rather conservative.

I would love to see more feminist researchers jump into evolutionary debates such as this one. Pushing gender research further back into time, as long as it is done with care (I don't want to see any more "bear cults," for example), could be a powerful tool in explaining human behavior. We need more evidence and vigorous debates, not assumptions. There is certainly hope for destroying male and female stereotypes yet!

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Evaluation: *Gina's choice of subject matter is inherently significant from the perspective of feminist thought. Her research is careful, thoughtful, and elegantly presented.*

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# The Refuge of Caddying

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Kevin Merkelz

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

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Assignment:

*Write a persuasive essay.*

Is it a job? No, it's an experience. The shroud of a pre-dawn mist, the dew-soaked grass glistening in the early morning hours, and the camaraderie of a band of eight men (or perhaps the odd girl or two) out of doors for the sole purpose of recreation and diversion all contribute to compose an experience that couldn't be farther from the usual drudgery of minimum-wage teenage jobs. But then again, where could one find a job so perfect? Surely such an occupation only exists in the land of fairy tales or the minds of the insane. Conveniently enough, such a job is played out every summer upon golf courses around the world. The job is caddying. Fresh air, exercise, short hours, and unrivaled pay make for a teenager's job like no other. Still, the options of slugging it out at the cashier station in Jewel or folding racks of clothes at The Gap remain, and oddly enough, many teens embrace the fluorescent lights of retail instead of the vibrant sun of caddying. In fact, even when I confront my friends about the truth concerning the miniscule pay and mostly unrewarding experience of their jobs and suggest they begin caddying, they deem the idea absurd. Of course, they aren't content to merely reject my offer, but always seem to slip in a few comments concerning the drawbacks of caddying. At times my friends "dis" my job by

citing the hard physical labor involved, or by quoting the undeniable favoritism involved as well as a multitude of other reasons. Regrettably for them, caddying wins out every time.

Although there are multitudes of ways to go the extra mile for a golfer and receive a better tip, caddying in its most basic form is simply toting a golfer's bag of clubs throughout a round (or "loop") of golf. However, since simply carrying the bag never results in a gratuitous tip, I have gleaned many tips and sometimes subtle tricks of the trade from observing other, more experienced caddies. Pacing off yardage from the golfer's ball to the hole, addressing golfers as "sir" or "ma'am," displaying a personality, and even offering advice concerning club selection at times all contribute to allowing me to better serve the golfer and—most importantly, from a caddie's standpoint—receive a larger tip.

While the work of a caddie may appear downright leisurely to some, the majority of teenagers seem to disagree. When discussing and debating whose job is better with friends, many play the "elements" card, citing how much the pros and cons of caddying ebb and flow with the weather. True, a rainy afternoon may discourage a few golfers from tramping the fairways, but many people would be surprised to find how many are undisturbed by the rain. In fact, at Inverness Golf Club where I caddie, play is only suspended if lightning appears, and essentially every golfer sticks it out in the rain. "Okay," my friends say, "so maybe the rain doesn't grind a day's work to a halt, but what about the long, hot afternoons in July? Those must be torture." In some respects, this is true; there's no casually tossing aside the fact that treading several miles beneath a scorching sun while carrying a 45-pound bag isn't exactly pleasurable in the moment, but the bounty reaped from such a grueling midsummer day more than pays for itself. Not only do I receive my monetary payment, but tanned skin, exercised muscles, and lungs bathed with invigorating fresh air are also included in the package deal; let me know when mopping floors at the local Cineplex includes those benefits. All in all, I find the element of relying on and dealing with the forces of nature to be an enlivening part of my job; not knowing if tomorrow will bring refreshing rain or stimulating rays of sun keeps the monotony of most jobs for teens at bay.

## The Refuge of Caddying

Though over 100 new caddies arrive for “basic training” each spring, less than 30 stick it out for the remainder of the year and following years. Obviously, such a high dropout rate would seem to signal that perhaps my argument is flawed; perhaps caddying *isn't* what I've cracked it up to be. After all, if caddying were the amazing job I claim it to be, why do over 70% of all new caddies each year leave after only a few short weeks? In short, it's not the job that's lacking; it's the kids. Not that it's necessarily their fault, it's just that initiate caddies, or “B” caddies as the official term goes, are unknown to the caddie master, unskilled in the job itself, and usually uninformed. Thankfully, remedying these so-called “shortcomings” of caddying is easily accomplished.

Being recognized and known to the caddie master is undoubtedly the single quickest route to enjoying the job. After all, it's the caddie master who assigns caddies to their golfers each morning and consequently leans toward assigning the high-paying golfers to caddies whom he knows. Undeniably, when over 100 beginner caddies arrive in May, it's impossible for the caddie master to become acquainted with each and every new caddie. This leads many new caddies who are assigned underpaying golfers and receive understandably little recognition from the caddie master to feel unnoticed and lonely, causing them to jump ship prematurely. I, like every other caddie, paid my dues those first grueling weeks but thankfully stuck it out. Each week as I returned to caddie, I noticed a hint of recognition in the caddie master's eyes. First it was simply my name, then perhaps my face, and then he would be inquiring if I would be available to “loop” at the golf club's large tournaments. As the summer drew to a close, my phone number resided near the top of his list of kids to call when a caddie was needed. All that was required from me was a few weeks of perseverance until I was recognized by the caddie master and assigned the desired golfers.

Inverness Golf Club's “basic training” for caddies consists of five identical single—albeit short—days of instruction. A group of 14-to-15 year-old high schoolers walk up the gray stone path from the employee parking lot to the caddie shack and await the arrival of the cad-

die master. The caddie master may run the session one of two ways: either he commences it by sliding in a caddie training video tape and then bringing the group outside to follow an experienced caddie working for three holes in a mock round of golf, or he might begin with the three-hole run-through and conclude with the training video tape. Either way, every caddie-to-be watches the video and observes the mock training session a total of five times. Needless to say, such training is more than sufficient to prime caddies for their first loop...at least for those who pay attention during their training. Unfortunately, this is not often the case. Slacking and joking around during their 5-day instruction period causes many initiate caddies to arrive at the golf club for their first loop without a clue as to what to do. From that point, it only goes downhill. A lackluster first loop usually means a small tip, lowered morale for the new caddie, and finally, after feeling financially cheated and emotionally squashed, the fledgling caddie dejectedly leaves the job. How could this happen? After all the time and training spent on coaching a new class of caddies, why do so many drop out simply because they are at their wits' end when it comes to doing their job? Surely, the instruction provided by the golf club must be inadequate if the amount of new caddies lost early on is so high! Wrong again. The golf course provides more than adequate training activities and programs, and it is the job of the caddie-to-be to attempt to glean as much information from the training sessions as is in his power, so he is prepared for his first loop. Yet again, the so-called pitfalls of caddying fall directly on the shoulders of the kids applying for the job, not the job itself.

One final complaint beginning caddies hold against the job is how little they know about the schedule around the golf club. Caddies arriving at 5:30gAM on days when the first set of golfers tee off at 11 o'clock bemoan the hours wasted in the caddie shack when they could have been better spent in sleep. Indeed, my first few weeks were no different. I would originally only work on the weekends: Saturday and Sunday mornings. Those mornings guarantee not only early tee-times but also a multitude of golfers. However, as the season went on, I began to attempt to work during the week as well. Unfortunately, “attempt” is in fact all I could do.

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After several times of dressing up in my caddie uniform, driving to the golf club only to wait around the caddie shack and finally dejectedly return home, I decided to inquire of someone as to how the schedule around Inverness worked and when were the best times to caddie during the week. Soon, I was trekking the fairways on Tuesday mornings for ladies' 18-hole, Wednesday afternoons for men and their guests, and Thursday mornings for the ladies' 9-hole league. What had seemed like an odd and hopelessly irregular schedule was now an outline for how I planned my week, and all that deciphering the system required was asking a few simple queries of the caddie master. Many caddies lost each season might still be caddying under the warm sun and fresh air had they simply asked a few questions.

"True," many of my friends would say, "Caddying does indeed have its perks, and is in some ways perhaps even superior to retail, but other such jobs have their undeniable benefits as well." Citing advantages such as scheduled work hours, work environments unaffected by weather conditions, and the spontaneity of encountering new people and customers each day, my friends would argue in favor of their retail occupation. And indeed, scheduled work hours can be a great convenience that the occupation of caddying lacks; I have many times driven to work only to have the golfer I was assigned to decide to catch up on sleep instead of golfing, leaving me out of a job for the day. However, I would much rather accept the rare instances of a golfer not showing up and have an incredibly flexible work schedule, rather than the security yet rigidity of many jobs that teenagers have. Not only do I choose flexibility over rigidity, but I also embrace serving the same golf club members day after day over interacting with new and interesting customers in retail stores. Why? Why do I make such a seemingly absurd choice? I choose the slight monotony of caddying for the same people again and again over assisting new customers each day because of the pay and because of the minute amount of time it takes to earn such pay. After all, not every customer at Jewel/Osco tips the cashier \$50 after he rings up the customer's groceries. At Inverness Golf Club a hardworking Honor Caddie—the highest of

three levels of caddies—can earn upwards of \$60 for four hours of labor and even a "B Caddie"—the lowest rank of caddie—may earn almost \$40 for the same work. In fact, professional adult caddies fare just as well as teenaged caddies. The PGA of America pays the caddies \$2,500 for the week [of a tournament] and the caddies are also paid their normal fee by their players, a rather substantial amount even for an adult. Thus, even though the normalcy of retail employment does provide certain comforts, the perks of caddying undeniably outweigh such comforts.

In the end, even though caddying sports such benefits as fresh air, exercise, flexible hours, and outstanding pay, the truly unique aspect of caddying that ultimately sets it ahead of the pack is its value as a refuge. The world seems to scream, "Buy this! Do that!" Local malls are filled with kiosks and shops brimming with useless items that the vendor deems paramount to be purchased. Air conditioning, strobing colored lights, and flashy window-banners all contribute to an air of fraudulence and consumerism. Rolling fairways, leafy oak trees, lush grass, refreshing breezes, and the companionship of a group of golfers offer a starkly contrasting respite from the hustle and bustle of the shopping center. Instead of spending my working hours in the hurried and consumer-oriented arena of retail, caddying transports me to a slower pace of life where golfers go for relaxation and recreation, and I am allowed to share that with them.

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*Evaluation: I think this might be a paper composed by a terrific student for an English 101 class. On the other hand, maybe it's a finely crafted treatise—written by a young man whose wisdom belies his age—on the redemptive power of nature. On yet another hand, perhaps it's a warning, both humorous and grave, to the writer's young peers to remove themselves as quickly as possible from the soul-killing, carcinogenic, fluorescent light-rays of retail. On still another hand, this might be the beginning flashes of a writer whom we'll all hear from again, perhaps sooner than later.*

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# The Motion Offense

Peter Merkelz

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

## Assignment:

*In your essay, define something—some word, some concept, something. Use a wide variety of definition techniques: example, negation, etymology, etc.*

Every year during the month of June, people from the United States and worldwide gather around radios and televisions to see the best basketball players in the world compete in a seven-game showdown. The event: the NBA Finals, where the best team from the Eastern Conference meets the best team from the Western Conference. Viewers will cheer on their team, they will taunt the opposing team when they score, and they will comment how the officials always favor the opposing team. Yet although fans will applaud a good play, most are clueless as to *how* the team executed that play. They did not observe where the team members started on the court, how they moved on the court to become open for a pass, or the sequences of passes that allowed the scorer to catch the ball. When I watch basketball games, I usually will catch most of these techniques. Obviously, I was not born with this gift, but instead, I have acquired it from years of playing and watching basketball. The offense that my team has run for four years is called the motion offense. In the NBA, the offenses are *much* more complicated than the motion

offense. However, from my understanding of the motion offense, I have begun to recognize the more advanced offenses of the NBA.

The motion offense is not an offensive scheme where players run in haphazard motion during the play. Nor does it refer to an offense attempting to force the defenders to run in constant motion. Instead, the motion offense is a brand of offense that allows excellent shooters to get open for an outside jump shot. Now, it is important to understand that the motion offense is not designed to be just one play. Instead, it allows players to move within a basic set of rules. For you to completely understand the motion offense, you will first have to learn some basketball terminology. In basketball, five players from a team can be on the floor at the same time. Each of the five players has a different position. The first of these players is the point guard. Since he is responsible for dribbling the ball up the court, since he is responsible for calling out which play to run, since he is responsible for telling his teammates where to move if they are at the wrong place on the court, and since he is required to distribute the ball evenly to his teammates, the point guard is the most important player on the court. The second position is the shooting guard. As the name implies, this player usually will do the majority of the scoring. The shooting guard has to be a very excellent yet selfish player. During the final minutes of the game, the shooting guard must demand to have the ball, and then he must execute by making shot after shot. The third position is the small forward; this player is very similar to the shooting guard except that he is normally bulkier and taller than the shooting guard. The fourth position is the power forward. This player must be the primary rebounder and do most of the tough defending. The fifth and final position is the center. The center is just a taller version of the power forward; also, the center is usually the primary shot blocker on the floor.

Now, in the motion offense, players get open by utilizing something called a pick. A pick involves two players working together to get open. The first player signals to the second that he is going to “pick” for him. This is accomplished by the first player running toward the second player and then stopping at the last instant next to him. Then, the second player will run next to the

first player (they should actually have their shoulders rub against each other). Hopefully, the defender that is guarding the second player will be forced to run into the first player. This allows the second player to be wide open for a shot. The last bit of terminology you must know is something called the lane. The lane is rectangular-shaped and is fifteen feet long and twelve feet wide (in the NBA). Its length begins underneath the basket and extends to the free throw line. Now that you have at least a basic knowledge of basketball, I will explain the concept of motion offense.

As the name implies, one would expect a great deal of motion to occur during this offensive set. That is exactly the goal of the motion offense: to have everyone on the team moving on the court at all times. The thesis of the motion offense is “one pass away, pick away” (a player is one pass away if that player is within ten to fifteen feet away from the ball; a player is two passes away when it takes two passes of ten to fifteen feet to reach the player). The expression “one pass away, pick away” essentially means that if a player is one pass away, then that player should go and pick away from the player with the ball. Thus, if a player without the ball is one pass away from the player with the ball, the player without the ball should go and pick. Conversely, if a player is more than one pass away from the ball, then he should wait for a teammate to come pick for him. Every time the offensive set begins, the alignment is the same: the point guard dribbles the ball up the court while the center and the power forward line up at the top corners of the lane while the shooting guard and the small forward line up at the bottom corners of the lane (hence the players without the ball will essentially form a “box”). Then, on the point guard’s signal, the center and the power forward go and “pick” for the shooting guard and the small forward. This should make sense since both the center and the power forward were one pass away, and the shooting guard and the small forward were two passes away. Hopefully, either the shooting guard or the small forward will be open for a shot. But if neither of these players is open, the process is repeated all over again: the players one pass away will go and pick for the players that are two passes away. This process is repeated until someone has an open shot.

I have played basketball in an organized league since fourth grade, but it was not until I was a freshman in high school that I played in a truly competitive league. From grades four to eight, I played in a park district league that was organized more to teach kids the fundamentals of basketball than for competition. Thus, when I began my freshman year, I was in for quite a shock. Fortunately, I adapted quickly to the faster, more competitive league. The team I played on—called the Thunder—was not an IHSA team, but during the season, we would play some IHSA caliber teams. As I mentioned earlier, my team always ran the same offense: the motion offense. At first I was extremely lost in the offense, but after a practice or two, I began to understand the concept of the offense as well as how to execute it. Every year that I was on the Thunder, we were always somewhat undersized. Although we were always shorter in size than the opposing team, through our speed, defense, and excellent shooting we always made the game competitive. Thus an offense like motion (designed for teams with good shooters and five well-rounded players) was ideal for our scrappy, undersized team. Using this offense scheme, my team would always surprise the opposing team who normally greatly outsized us. Instead of letting the opposing teams easily defend us inside, using our offense, we would force their taller yet slower players to guard us outside, where we could use our speed to our advantage. I remember one game specifically, where the team we played easily outsized us and also were much more talented. In fact, every one of their players easily outsized all of our players. To make matters worse, only five people on our team showed up for the game (thus we had no substitute players). Near the beginning of the game, they were not taking us seriously, being very careless with the basketball and turning the ball over often. Yet, as the game wore on, we kept using picks and our motion offense to free up our shooters. Soon, they became worried that such a small and seemingly inexperienced team would defeat them. As the game continued into the fourth quarter, it became obvious that the opposing team was becoming frustrated. When their top player was forced to come out of the game because of foul trouble, they lost their composure. Through our tough defense, we stole the ball from them time and time again.

## The Motion Offense

Eventually, we won the game by a slim margin of five or six points. Thus, due to our offense of movement and picks, we beat a more talented and athletic team.

Although the motion offense is ideal for an under-sized team like ours, it is only efficient when all five players do their job correctly. Consequently, if one teammate does his job improperly, the entire offense becomes pointless. For instance, if a player mistakenly goes to “pick” the wrong player, then one side of the court will have more players on its side than the opposite side. Ideally, in the motion offense one would always want the floor to be evenly balanced; in the event that the floor becomes unbalanced, the only way to resolve this is to restart the offense from the beginning. In a way, the motion offense is similar to the human body. If one part of the “body” does not function correctly, the entire body suffers. For example, if the eyes would suddenly stop functioning, the entire body suffers by being unable to see. In the same fashion, if one of the players does not perform the job correctly, the entire offense system suffers from that player’s inability to execute the task. Therefore, if just one player fails, the entire offense will fail.

From the first basketball game in the nineteenth century, in which the final score was 1 to 0, to current basketball games, in which some NBA teams average over one hundred points a game, basketball’s offenses have drastically changed. Now, to put it blatantly, the motion offense is a very simple basketball offensive scheme. Although it might seem difficult on paper, it is actually quite straightforward when demonstrated on the basketball court. There is a wide gap between the simple motion offense and the offenses of the NBA. Today, the most effective offense in the NBA is the triangle offense. This offense, created, developed, and refined over the years by Tex Winter, was the key to the Chicago Bulls’ six NBA championships during the 1990s. More recently, Phil Jackson asked Tex Winter to come and help coach the Los Angeles Lakers. With this new offense, the Lakers have thrived and have won three consecutive championships beginning in 2000. Although all the options of the triangle offense (also called the triple post offense) are too complicated to explain, the theme of the offense is simple: three

players form a triangle on one side of the court, while the other two players set up on the other side of the court. The idea is to always maintain a triangle of three players during the duration of the offensive set. Thus, offenses have greatly evolved from the basic give and go play to the much more complex triangle offense.

Although the motion offense in a nutshell can be expressed in the simple phrase “one pass away, pick away,” it has much more importance than that short idiom. The offense, though with simple guidelines, can be instrumental in the winning or losing of a game. From my years of learning, applying, and becoming an expert of the motion offense, I have a greater appreciation of the game of basketball. I now understand the great amount of preparation and hard work that professional basketball teams complete before the actual game takes place. I am astounded by the great amount of knowledge that each NBA player must have to compete in this extremely competitive league. In addition to all the offensive sets a player must know, he must also understand all of the defensive sets his team runs. Furthermore, the player must recall all of this information while he is playing, running up and down the court at top speed. Hence, the best players are both outstanding students of the game and excellent ballplayers. Through the motion offense, I have realized how enjoyable this complex game is to study, watch, and play.

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Evaluation: *I love this essay. Surely it's difficult, extremely so, to define basketball's "motion offense," but this painstaking student managed to do so clearly and thoroughly. Some real work went into the composition of this paper.*

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# Life, Pain, and Passion in Frida Kahlo's Art

Jessica Crow Mermel

Course: Humanities 110 (Women and Creativity)

Instructor: Elizabeth Turner

## Assignment:

*Research and compose an essay on a creative woman, focusing your efforts on interpreting several examples of her work.*

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo met the need for self expression by painting her own reality. Revealing self portraits comprise one third of her entire body of work. Painting was not only therapeutic for her, but a means of opening a window into her self, of digging deeper into reality (Waberer 16). Kahlo lived in immense physical pain for 27 years of her life and endured 32 torturous operations (Fuentes 12). Her self portraits serve as a biography, a diary of physical and emotional trauma and an expression of the loss, loneliness, and fragility she felt. Her horrific images are not meant to entice pity, but to connect her with the universal suffering. She herself is pain symbolized. She does not let her anguish render her mute; visually, she confronts and articulates her painful feelings of loss and betrayal. Her portraits record her heroic epic, a journey of a courageous woman who, by facing her painful, ugly reality, discovered truth and self-knowledge (Fuentes 16).

On a fateful, rainy day in September 1925, nineteen-year-old Frida Kahlo and her boyfriend, Alejandro Gomez Arias, boarded a freshly painted, new wooden bus bound for Coyoacan. Frida and Alejandro were enjoying an intense political and philosophical conversation when a trolley turned onto the street the bus was crossing. Slowly, the trolley collided into the bus and pushed it against the wall of a building. The bus

stretched so much that Alejandro's knees met the knees of the person sitting across from him. Finally, the bus exploded into pieces. Bodies, like wooden splinters, flew everywhere. A bleeding Alejandro stumbled to his feet to look for Frida. What he found was gruesome. A metal handrail had impaled Frida, entering her hip, crushing her pelvis, and exiting through her vagina. Her clothes had been blown off in the explosion. Gold dust that a painter on the bus had been carrying covered her naked, bloody body, making her look like a gilded statue of a ballerina (Drucker 24g- 25).

The accident with the trolley changed Frida's life forever. She was expected to die. Her spine was broken in three places; her right foot, which was already malformed from polio as a child, was crushed; her collar bone and two ribs were fractured; her left shoulder was dislocated; and her pelvis was broken in three places (Drucker 26). Pain would be a constant companion for her the rest of her life. Although her spirit was weakened, she fought to live. Confined to bed in a body cast, she begged her father to let her use his paints that she always yearned to play with. He lent them to her, and her mother had a special easel built above her bed. Her life as a painter began. She became her own teacher by copying the master painters from her father's art books to learn technique. She let her instincts guide her. She chose to fill her first blank canvases with what surrounded her every day, her friends, family, and most of all, herself (Drucker 89). These early paintings did not reveal her pain and suffering; they were full of life. She was not yet ready to look at the reality of her life (Drucker 32).

Frida inherited a strong sense of determination from her father. She was not willing to let her crippling accident stop her from participating in life. She renounced pity. Frida became compulsive about painting self-portraits. She fastened a mirror to the canopy above her bed so she could see herself. This was the beginning of her record of the events in her life and her emotional reactions to them (Wendler). Later, she would say, "I paint myself because I am so often alone. I am the subject I know best" (qtd. in Fuentes 16).

One cause of great sorrow and anguish in Frida's life was her inability to carry a child to term because of

the injuries that resulted from the bus accident. She felt betrayed by her own body. She became pregnant three times and lost all her children to miscarriage or therapeutic abortions. In 1932, Frida joined her beloved husband, the famous Mexican painter Diego Rivera, in Detroit for a mural he was working on. She began to miscarry her child when she was only three months pregnant. She was rushed to Henry Ford Hospital, where she lost her baby. The pain she felt from the loss of her child seemed unbearable, yet she painted Henry Ford Hospital, 1932, after the event to express her feelings of loss (Wendler). In the painting, a forlorn Frida lies naked on a cold, steel hospital bed, hemorrhaging onto a white sheet. She clutches her abdomen, still swollen from pregnancy. The bed lies in a barren landscape with industrial buildings and smokestacks representative of Detroit, a city she hated. Tears pour out of Frida, expressing her sadness. Symbolic objects float around her bed, connected to her by ironically festive red ribbons resembling umbilical cords, which she holds to her stomach. A snail hovers above the head of the hospital bed, representing the painful slowness of the miscarriage. A dead male fetus levitates above her. He depicts the "little Diego" that she longed to have. A medical model of the lower female torso also floats in space above her. At the bottom of the painting lies her broken pelvis, which prevented her from carrying her babies to term; an orchid, given by Diego after the miscarriage, which also symbolizes her external genitalia; and an autoclave, a device used in hospitals for sterilizing medical instruments (Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital*). This painting is done in the same style as the *retablo*, or ex-voto paintings that inspired Frida. The *retablos* are small religious paintings on wood or metal, depicting horrifying accidents, disease, or implements of torture with prayers of thanksgiving for mercy to the saints or the Virgin (Waberer 14). She collected these small paintings and displayed them in her home. Like the *retablo* paintings, life was depicted as it was felt, not as it was seen (Kettenman 35).

Frida's relationship with physical pain and the loss of her health is depicted in several of her paintings. In 1944, her health was deteriorating rapidly, and she was forced to wear steel orthopedic corsets. Frida painted

*The Broken Column* in 1944 to express the disintegration of her body and to illustrate the pain she endured. Once again, her body was betraying her. In the painting, Frida stands half nude, wearing a steel corset. Tears stream down her face as tiny nails pierce her body all over. The largest nails drive into her chest above her heart, to symbolize the intense emotional grief she also endured (Kettenmann 68-69). Through a gaping wound in her chest, a broken Ionic column is revealed (Kahlo, *The Broken Column*).

In her painting, *Tree of Hope, Stay Firm*, 1946, Frida portrays herself after a spine-strengthening operation she endured. The painting depicts a split in her personality. There are two Fridas. One Frida lies naked and vulnerable on a hospital bed in a daytime landscape. Her back is toward us, exposing large, bleeding scars on her back. Next to her sits a bold, strong, upright Frida in beautiful Tehuana costume, contrasting the weak, scarred Frida. The forceful Frida lives in the nighttime landscape with the moon, a symbol of womanhood. She holds in one hand her corset, and in the other, a flag that reads "Tree of hope, stay firm." This Frida is courageous and optimistic, though surrounded by darkness (Kettenmann 71). The painful degeneration of her health is represented by the deep cracks in the earth which mirror the scars on her back (Kahlo, *Tree of Hope, Stay Firm*).

In *Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940, Frida stands before a background of lush green leaves. Her joined eyebrows are accentuated to look like the wings of a blackbird. A dead hummingbird worn around Frida's neck mirrors her eyebrows. In Mexico, the hummingbird is a talisman for luck in love and fertility, but this hummingbird is lifeless, like her womb. It hangs upon a necklace of thorns that are making her neck bleed. Butterflies with wings of lace and dragonflies with heads of flowers fly around her hair. The delicate wings of the butterflies and the fertile flower heads of the dragonflies contrast with the dead hummingbird and necklace of thorns. Her pets, which she lavished love on like they were her own children, are pictured behind her, but they are not comforting companions in this painting like they are in others. There is the sense of betrayal portrayed by the pets.

They personify someone she loves who, in return, hurts her. The monkey is picking at her thorns, pulling the necklace even tighter, and the cat hunches its back and looks ominously at the bird. The painting speaks of the pain of betrayal and the loss of trust that Frida felt with her own body, for her inability to have children, and probably also with her husband, Diego, who was constantly having affairs with other women (Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorny Necklace*).

One of her most famous paintings is a double portrait entitled *The Two Fridas*, 1939. This painting was done after her divorce from Diego and helps her sort out and cope with that loss and betrayal. In the painting, the two Fridas are connected by their hands and the circulation of their blood. On the right sits the Mexican Frida dressed in the Tehuana clothes that Diego loved to see her in. She wears her whole, healthy heart on her blouse and holds an amulet with a picture of Diego as a child. She wrote often in her diary that she felt like a mother to Diego, and this maternal role is depicted in many other paintings. Blood pumps from the amulet through the Mexican Frida's whole heart and into her alter ego, the European Frida. The bodice of her white, virginal Victorian dress is torn to reveal a broken heart. She tries to close the artery with a surgical clamp placed near her sex, but this is unsuccessful. The rejected Frida is in danger of bleeding to death as the blood drips onto her dress, mingling with the decorative flowers emblazoned on it (Kettenmann 52). *The Two Fridas* was one of her largest paintings, possibly to reveal the gravity that the loss of love had on her (Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*).

Frida was the theme of her own art. Nietzsche once said, "Whoever has built a new heaven has found the strength for it only in hell." For Frida, her art was her heaven, and the strength of the art was her personal hell (Fuentes 24). She used her art as an exploration of herself. Her experiences, her pain, her love of life, her sensuous vitality, her deepest dreams and fantasies, and her fears and hopes were manifested in her art. She declared everything as sacred in her paintings. The darkness was given equal intensity as the light because she believed in the interrelatedness of all things. She fearlessly lays out her life for us to behold, and her life becomes our own. She exorcised her suffering through

her paintings to make it bearable. She believed no one would ever want her paintings because they were so personal. but her pain of loss and betrayal is universal. It is the suffering of all humanity; especially feminine suffering (Drucker 89). Diego once described Frida as "a unique example in the history of art of someone tearing open her breast and heart to state the biological truth and what it feels like" (Waberer 9). Indeed, Frida's art shows the viewer exactly what it feels like to be Frida, by the agonized poetry she lays down on the canvas.

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Evaluation: *Jessie's essay is a well-written piece, and it includes thoughtful interpretation of Frida Kahlo's paintings.*

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# An Absurd Question

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*Colleen Miller*

Course: English 102 (Composition)

Instructor: Paul S. Bellwoar

Assignment:

*Write a literary research paper.*

Albert Camus' *The Stranger* is a short novel that explores the absurdity of life. Though simply written, the story is anything but simple. It leaves the reader with unanswered, complex questions about Mersault and what appears to be his philosophy of life: existentialism. At the base of this philosophy is the idea that man has control of his own freedom. He chooses to do as he pleases, but at his own risk (Spanos 6). He may not expect guidance from others because to an existentialist, the presence of God or some other divine being is denied. Man is his own god (Spanos 8). He lives for the moment and leaves no room for regrets. Unfortunately, it is truly impossible to give existentialism a clear definition. It relies on the individual's relationship with the world. All existentialists look at the philosophy differently. Everything is subjective. However, there are two categories they tend to fall into, one being the man that conforms to society, consuming and producing day in and day out, and the other being a man that lives a trying life, ignoring the pressures of society to become the common man (Spanos 2). Mersault seems to live like the latter. One thing all existentialists believe is that everything in life is uncertain but death. It is this inevitable death that pushes Mersault to reevaluate his beliefs while in prison. Throughout the novel, the reader questions Mersault's beliefs as well. In the novel, there are incidents that support the claim that he is an existentialist, and there are incidents that also object to this idea. In my opinion, the absurdity of the philosophy makes it impossible to determine whether Mersault is an existentialist.

Before attempting to understand where Mersault stands philosophically, it is important to look at the beliefs of his creator, Albert Camus. In an interview, Camus clearly stated that he was not an existentialist. In fact, his essay entitled "The Myth of Sisyphus" was actually "directed against the so-called existential philosophers." He did, however, claim that he was an atheist. This is true for many existentialists (Camus, No, I Am Not..." 345-47). What pushes many people to believe that Camus was an existentialist despite his denial was his connection to the philosophy of the absurd. Though never trained as a professional

philosopher, he was concerned with the question of life's worth (Rhein 11). He said that this philosophy of absurdity was just an idea that had yet to conclude much. It was simply something to expand on (Amoia 81). Camus defined it as "the divorce between man and life. [It is] the desire for clarity in an irrational world." Man can either "yield to the nothingness" or live his life taking all that he can get. "Absurdity is the revolt against death" (qtd. in Amoia 82). Contrary to existentialism, Camus believed that an absurd man knows he is "not really free" (Camus, "Absurd Freedom" 302). Because "What freedom can exist in the fullest sense without assurance of eternity?" (Camus, "Absurd Freedom" 301). A common misconception of Camus' philosophy of the absurd is that life is meaningless. In fact, he said that people should not feel hopeless. They should attempt to find an answer to why they exist, even though it would forever be in question (Camus, "No, I Am Not.g." 345-47). He was never satisfied with the simple conclusion that if nothing has meaning, the world is absurd (Camus, "Encounter with..." 356). With all of this in mind, it seems clear that Camus would create an absurd character who is not an existentialist. However, many of Mersault's thoughts and actions persuade the reader to believe that he is an existential character.

The story is written in the first person. When literature is written this way, the reader is often provided with insight, explanations, and feelings. In *The Stranger*, the reader finds his (or her) way into Mersault's shoes but seldom enters his mind. He clearly describes in a plain style what is going on in his life; however, he rarely gives a motive for his actions and neglects to show any emotions (Showalter 28). For example, the book begins with the following passage:

Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe. I don't know. I got a telegram from the home: "Mother deceased. Funeral tomorrow. Faithfully yours." That doesn't mean anything. Maybe it was yesterday. The old people's home is at Marengo, about eighty kilometers from Algiers, I'll take the two o'clock bus and get there in the afternoon. That way I can be there for the vigil and come back tomorrow night (3).

This information is all factual, but it is void of any emotion at all. By saying that the date of his mother's death has no importance, the reader can only assume that Mersault's relationship with his mother was not very loving. It is impossible to determine much of anything. He plans his travel arrangements as if he has to be back home for an event or an appointment. Of course, he does not state why it is necessary for him to return the following night. The narration continues this way throughout the novel. This expresses Mersault's tendency to live life as it comes, which is natural for an existentialist. It seems as though everything that happens is given the same importance. Maman's death is no more important than his plans to take the bus (Showalter 29).

His statements also portray him to be an incredibly passive man. This is true even in situations given high significance by the common man. Advancing his life to the next level does not appeal to him. Mersault is uninterested in the idea. He could have traveled to Paris and changed his life, but he claims that "people never changed their lives. One life was as good as another." It happens again when Marie asks Mersault if he loves her. His response is that "it didn't mean anything but that he didn't think so" (35). At a later date, the discussion is along the same lines. It ends with a marriage proposal from Marie, to which Mersault responds that "it didn't make any difference to [him]" and that "[they] could if she wanted to" (41). He says this line over and over again. Nothing matters to him. These incidents suggest that Mersault is unconcerned with planning a future. A marriage has no meaning, just like a promotion or anything else. He refuses to plan his future because he does not live for the future. By saying to his boss that "One life is as good as another," he gives the impression that he is happy with the life he already has. He chooses what he will do at each moment, and he takes all he wants out of his life. Mersault is completely preoccupied with the present time, which makes him accept his life as it happens (Brée 143). This is an existential quality.

Mersault achieves this satisfaction in life by being a hedonist. He never denies himself physical pleasure if the opportunity arises. At his mother's funeral, he

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smokes a cigarette. He contemplates whether or not it is appropriate, but once again he decides that it does not really matter either way (8). He eats when hungry, drinks when thirsty, and never denies himself an opportunity to smoke. He takes advantage of Marie in the same way. It appears as though the pleasure they find in each other is purely physical. Whether it is at the beach or the movies, Mersault kisses and fondles her until they finally find their way to his bedroom. The narration stops there, but it is clear that they have sex whenever they see each other. Mersault cannot refuse himself these opportunities because it is necessary to do as he pleases to really live his life. He feels this way because he knows that everyday existence does not have much meaning. He figures that he might as well make the most of it.

Salamano, Mersault's neighbor, is introduced in the story to reveal the idea that everyday human existence is absurd. Salamano's only companion is a scabby, old dog. The two of them take the same walk every day, and Salamano always pulls the dog, beats him, and then swears at him. The dog continuously follows behind him anyway. Mersault says "it's the same thing everyday" (27). Once Salamano loses his dog, he mourns deeply for him because after his wife died, the dog was bought to become his only companion. He is worried about the dog's safety. Mersault is uninterested in Salamano's problem because it has nothing to do with him. He advises him to get a new dog (38). Mersault does not understand Salamano's pain. He has never been emotionally attached to a living thing like that. When his mother dies, he never sheds a tear, nor does he even wish to see her. He is even annoyed that he has to take time out of his day to go to her home. Mersault lives for himself, and he only worries about himself. He knows that eventually, everything ends the same way. Everyone will die one day. He refuses to ignore this fact, as most of mankind does. He appears to have come to terms with it.

In a discussion with his "pal" Raymond, the two men conclude that death is "bound to happen" (33). There is no reason to get hung up on it. Mersault is good at this. During his mother's services, he refers to her as "the

dead woman" and "the body" (11,14). This is a peculiar choice of words for a son to call his recently deceased mother, but it makes sense in the context. This word choice does not mean that Mersault did not love his mother. It does not even mean that he is insensitive. To Mersault, Maman no longer has any importance in the world. She is a corpse and nothing more. An existentialist must look at death in this manner because he is only concerned with the existence of man, hence the term existentialism.

Mersault continues to act and speak in this existential manner during his murder trial. While in prison, he occupies himself by reading the same newspaper article over and over again. The article is about a Czechoslovakian man who tricked his mother into believing that he was a wealthy tourist. He stayed in her hotel, and overnight she and his sister murdered him for his money. The following morning, upon discovering their fatal mistake, they both committed suicide. Mersault feels no mercy for this man. He concludes that it is the man's own fault that he was killed because people should "never play games" (80). Mersault seems to abide by his own rules. He refuses to conform to society, which is why he is considered to be a "stranger." He accepts the consequences and feels responsible for himself. For this reason, he feels that a defense lawyer is unnecessary in his trial. He is ready to admit his crime and suffer the punishments decided for him. He speaks about the crime with officials when his lawyer is not present, because he has nothing to hide. He refuses to "play games" for his lawyer. After explaining that his "physical needs often got in the way of his feelings," Mersault concludes that he is not happy that Maman died, he just is not sad. Death is a part of life. The lawyer asks if he would say that he held back his feelings during the service. Mersault decides not to participate in this simply because it is untrue (65). He is unwilling to pretend to be someone he is not. If not feeling emotion at his mother's funeral is incriminating evidence, he would just have to deal with it. This is part of being responsible for his actions.

The most convincing argument to support the idea that Mersault is an existentialist is a pair of statements he

makes about life while in prison. He says that “everyone knows life isn’t worth living, [and that there is] nothing more important than death” (184, 110). These two sentences practically summarize the philosophy. The whole idea of existentialism arises from the question all philosophers ask: what is the meaning of life? Since the only certainty in life is death, it has to be the most important part. It is the only thing that all living things are guaranteed. However, Mersault’s understanding of this idea is nothing but a starting point, much as it is for Camus. This belief should be a major factor in the way Mersault lives his life, and for the most part, it is.

Up until this point, it appears as though Mersault lives up to his own expectations by feeling satisfied, not worrying about the future, and being responsible for himself. All three of these qualities are evident in existentialism. However, only certain parts of the story have been looked at. Mersault does not always abide by them. According to the definition of the term existentialism, a man should do as he wishes and if there are consequences, he must suffer them. No one is responsible for what he chooses but himself. Therefore, it is implied that an existentialist must never feel guilt for something he has done. Mersault occasionally feels guilty throughout the novel. For example, when he arrives at his mother’s home, the director tells Mersault that he was his mother’s only support. Mersault immediately feels the man is criticizing him. He is about to explain himself, but the director interrupts him to tell him that he understands why Mersault chose to put his mother in the home. Mersault did not have the time or money to care for Maman properly (4). This is very true. But either way, Mersault has no reason to be concerned with this man’s opinion about him. However, he takes it into consideration and allows himself to feel guilty. Judgments are bound to be made, but they should be of no importance to him because his choice to put his mother in the home was right for him and for her. His decision really should only matter to him and his mother, so anyone else’s opinion is irrelevant anyway.

On another occasion, Mersault attempts to blame someone else in order to relieve himself of his feelings of guilt. For example, once Mersault finds out about his

mother’s funeral, he takes off work to attend the vigil. He tells us,

I asked my boss for two days off and there was no way he was going to refuse me with an excuse like that. But he wasn’t too happy about it. I even said, “It’s not my fault.” He didn’t say anything. Then I thought I shouldn’t have said that (3).

Of course Maman’s death is not his fault, but he chooses to attend the services. If Mersault’s boss is rude and unhappy about it, it should not matter. Mersault makes his decision based on his own beliefs and needs. When deciding to attend, he did not think of his boss because his boss does not matter. He does what he wants to do, and he should not feel like he is wrong for doing so. He has no right, according to existentialists, to attempt to take the blame off of himself. No one made him miss work that day but himself. Mersault could have skipped the vigil. If he had, he would have been judged by others anyway. The judgments of other people are inescapable. Even if someone makes the right decision in the eyes of society, it is inevitable that the person’s actions will be critiqued by the people he or she knows. Once again, if Mersault is an existentialist, the opinions of other people should not matter to him. He should only care about what he thinks, but this clearly is not true.

This brings up another issue. Existentialists should never feel regret. By choosing to do what they want, they leave no room for regret. They do not deny themselves their desires. Mersault regrets killing the Arab. He knows it is a mistake because it is a choice that takes him to a world of unhappiness. This is evident when he is speaking with the Chaplain. He says that if given another life, he would want “one where he could remember this life!” (120). Mersault wants to remember what happens after he kills the Arab so he never falls into a situation to commit a crime similar to that one ever again. It is odd for Mersault to even admit that he had in fact wished for another life because previously, he claimed that one life was as good as any other because they all ended the same way. Mersault is a character that will sometimes say something and then do another. He constantly is contradicting himself,

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which makes it very difficult to understand where he stands.

In a preface to *The Stranger*, Camus said that “In our society, any man who does not weep at his mother’s funeral runs the risk of being sent to death.” In an explanation for this statement, he declared that he was simply trying to say that Mersault was condemned by society because he refused to conform to social norms. He had a passion for the truth. Mersault refused to “play the game” (Camus, “Preface” 336). This is true when it comes to Mersault’s trial, but it is a different story with Marie. Mersault is not very concerned with her feelings. After agreeing to marry her, they go for a walk. While on the walk, Mersault describes the local women as “beautiful.” He then “asked Marie if she noticed. She said yes and that she understood what I meant” (42). This minute part of their discussion is proof that Mersault does actually play games with Marie. He doesn’t clearly say that he will be unfaithful to her, but the message is implied. By saying that Marie understands what he means, the reader can only conclude that this was his intention. It is strange that Mersault is not straightforward with her about this. When she asks if he loves her, he knows the response he should give is not the one she wants. This does not stop him from saying what he truly feels. He never holds something back to save someone else’s feelings (Showalter 63).

Mersault also contradicts his feelings about absurd existence. He once said it was not worth it to live life (114). Yet, when Mersault is faced with death, he considers what would happen if he were pardoned. Despite his belief that it does not matter when and where a person dies, he realizes that he would be overcome with a “delirious joy.” He knows that it would take all his strength to rationalize the situation (114). He is telling his mind to behave in a way that it is unwilling to behave. This pushes the reader to wonder whether he really believes this about death, or if he is simply trying to persuade himself to be unafraid of it. This obviously shows that Mersault has not completely accepted death. He may believe that life is absurd, but he would not give it up if he was not forced to.

Perhaps Mersault is just terrified by it. The end of existence is a difficult thing to confront. He found that even when he was happy in his prison cell, he continuously listened for the footsteps of the guards:

Even though I would rush to the door at the slightest shuffle, even though, with my ear pressed to the wood, I would wait frantically until I heard the sound of my own breathing, terrified to find it so hoarse, like a dog’s panting, my heart would not burst at all, and I would have gained another 24 hours (113).

He is completely afraid at this point for the day that the guards will come to take him to the guillotine. His words express his fear graphically. It almost seems impossible for him to be more petrified. When he is not listening for his fate to approach him, he has time to evaluate his life and what his beliefs are.

Throughout the whole absurd life I’d lived, a dark wind has been rising toward me from somewhere deep in my future across years that were still to come, and as it passed, this wind leveled whatever was offered to me at the time, in years no more real than the ones I was living. What did other people’s deaths or a mother’s love matter to me: what did his God or the lives people choose or the fate they think they elect matter to me when we’re all elected by the same fate...(121)

This “dark wind” he speaks of is death. It lurks in his future, and its presence “levels” his opportunities by making them seem irrelevant and unimportant. He concludes that life is absurd and that people are ignorant to believe that they have sole control over their freedom. According to existentialists, man does not have complete control of his freedom. Mersault is against this idea, much like Camus is. However, he still yearns to live this day to day existence. He thinks back to Maman. “So close to death, Maman must have felt free then and ready to live it all again. And I felt ready to live it all again too” (122). He understands at this point that though life is irrational, it is worth living. Knowing the absurdity is what gives him the opportunities to find happiness. It is at this time that he realizes that he does value life (Rhein 21).

When Camus was creating Mersault, he attempted to make a man without a conscience (Brée 142). Mersault said during his stay at prison, that “I have never felt remorse for anything” (100). Unfortunately for the reader, Camus has never said that he intended for Mersault to be an existentialist or even an absurd man. This is up to the reader to decide. It is clear that the evidence is there for both sides. At times, Mersault seems to be an existentialist, and at other times, he almost seems to be against the philosophy entirely. His thoughts do not help the situation because he often says one thing and does another. His contradictions only confuse the reader. But with a philosophy that has no sound structure, the subjectivity of it all makes it difficult to understand what criteria even classifies a man as an existentialist. There are hundreds of existential quotes throughout the novel, and then there are a handful that are against existential views. To agree with the philosophy, must one accept and abide by all aspects of it? Even this appears to be subjective. Existentialism, like most philosophy, is difficult to understand. Literature is always open for discussion because it is not always completely clear what the intent of the author is. In this situation, the story is clear, but Mersault is not. It is impossible to decide where he stands philosophically.

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*Evaluation: In examining the slippery slope of existentialism and the paradox of Mersault, Colleen pieces together an excellent scholarly argument. She not only demonstrates a sound understanding of Camus, his philosophic views, and the various views of philosophers around him, she has a keen eye for analyzing the rhetoric of The Stranger in order to determine wherer Mersault fits or doesn't fit certain philosophies. To me, her thesis illustrates a sense of understanding that unasking the question is sometimes better than answering it.*

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# How to Succeed in an Interview to Get Your Child into a Prestigious Elementary School in Japan

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*Miwa Murase*

Course: English as a Second Language 069  
(Writing IX)  
Instructor: Linda Dunne

Assignment:

*Write an essay describing a process.*

It is said that too much emphasis is placed on educational background in Japanese society. You might think your child should go to a good college to live a happy life. To go to a good college, it is necessary to get into a good high school. To get into a good high school, your children must study at a fine middle school, and so on and so forth. It seems almost everybody casts a doubt on this issue, but when it comes to his or her own child, that is another story. If you think it is still crucial to get your child to enter a prestigious elementary school, you and your child have to do well, especially in a family interview. Therefore, to succeed, make sure you follow these steps:

## **At Least a Year Before the Interview**

The father must be seriously involved in bringing up the child. Generally, Japanese men are so busy that they hardly have time to take care of their children, especially when they have to earn a lot of money to get their children into a fine private school. However, the interviewers want to evaluate the father's involvement in discipline and education, and often ask both the father and the child questions about it. Remember, your child could tell the truth.

Your family should have various activities for leisure, both indoors and outdoors. Use your weekends to do different family activities such as going to a museum, having a picnic, and visiting grandparents. The interviewers want to know your contribution to your child's curiosity as well as your effort to strengthen the family ties.

Give priority to the traditional annual events. Schools with a long history are often conservative. They want to know if your family is a "decent" one with traditional values. Here are some frequently asked questions: How do you celebrate the New Year holidays? What do you like about Children's Day? What do you do on your birthday?

## **Six Months Before the Interview**

Make your child strongly believe that the school he or she is trying to enter is one of the best places in the whole world, even better than Disneyland. You should take your child to some annual events that the school holds, and/or make an appointment to take a look at what is going on there. You must look very happy and enjoy the trip. You also may want to say something like "I like the neat uniforms the students wear" or "The boys and girls here look so happy."

## **Three Months Before the Interview**

Eat properly every day. Needless to say, a proper diet is necessary to keep you and your child robust to get through the tough time. Besides, interviewers often ask your child questions about his or her dietary life so that they could guess as to what kind of family the child belongs. If your child is asked about the meal he or she had the day before, a cheeseburger and fries is one of

the worst answers. When asked the favorite food, he or she could answer, "I like spaghetti with meat sauce, but the sushi my mother makes is my most favorite food."

### **A Month Before the Interview**

Rehearse an interview as many times as possible. Parents often get more nervous than their child does, and their nervousness could influence the child. It is natural to get tense in any kind of interview, but you are supposed to use your tension in a positive way. You and your child can do this by practicing often. Make sure you make a pleasant atmosphere when you practice, so that your child can take it as a fun game to play. You can find a lot of books and web information about how an interview goes. There are also many cram schools offering trial interviews.

Teach your child how to sit properly, how to use formal language, and how to talk with eye contact. It is also important for them to speak clearly and cheerfully to give the interviewer a good impression.

When you receive the letter from the school to confirm the appointment, show it to your child and say something exhilarating like "The teachers would like to meet you because they hear you are such a good boy or girl. You would like to meet them, too, wouldn't you?"

### **On the Interview Day**

Express how glad you are that the day has finally come and how happy you are to be invited. Eat nutritious yet lighter food for breakfast. Suggest that you are planning some fun after the interview.

Suits in navy blue are the "safest" choice for you and your child to wear on the very day. Mothers and daughters should not wear pants, though. Modestly designed, well-tailored suits are preferred. However, you do not have to get Chanel or Armani. Sometimes interviewers do not like the showing off if you wear something distinctively expensive.

Do not arrive at the school too early. A long waiting time could bore the child. Thirty minutes before the appointment is the right time to enter the waiting room.

Relax. The interviewer does not intend to be mean to you and your child after all. Trust your child and do not get frantic even if he or she gives a strange answer.

When the parents are asked a question, the father should mainly answer, unless the interviewer says the question is for the mother. This also makes you look like a traditional family.

When you finish, never forget to praise your child, whether or not you are satisfied with how the interview went. There are times that your efforts are not rewarded properly. You and your child are already winners if you get through all the preparation above. Now you have strong family ties, many precious memories of family fun, a good dietary habit, and, at least, a fine suit. Good luck!

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*Evaluation: Miwa turned a process essay assignment into a culturally enlightening piece in which parents everywhere can be reminded of the stress and the silliness involved in pushing their children.*

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# Rising from Darkness

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*Bevin Murdock*

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Catherine Restovich

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Assignment:

*Write a narrative essay recalling an incident  
in which you faced a serious setback.*

The grass felt slippery and wet beneath my bare feet as I slowly made my way through a forest. As I was walking, my senses came alive; I took in every element these eminent woods had to offer. The smell of a recent rain filled my nostrils as I took a breath, while a beautiful duet between the grasshoppers and bullfrogs was sung to the steady beat of my heart. My eyes danced along with the small rays of light on the ground, created by the moon as the cool summer breeze brought the trees that loomed above me to life. I stopped to look around, realizing I did not recognize my surroundings. Cautiously, I turned in a circle, assessing my environment, knowing I should be fearful of this foreign place, but oddly I felt safe, not threatened. At that moment I noticed a warm softness that was comforting against my body. With a puzzled expression on my face, I looked down and saw I held a thick white towel, covering my nakedness. As I contemplated where the towel had come from, I began my descent toward the comforting hum of the water, feeling an unknown force drawing me closer to my destination.

As I continued my journey through this strange yet magnificent forest, the trees began to part where finally, I could see the moonlight reflecting off the surface of a brilliant lake. My attention focused on the consistent lapping of the waves, while an overwhelming need to feel the constant motion of the water moving against my skin took over my senses. Carefully, I took a step down from the grassy ledge that gave way to the sandy beach. As my weight settled, I felt the velvety sand slip through the spaces between my toes, adjusting to my presence. As I stood in the open, no longer protected by the caring trees, the breeze was forceful, whipping my hair around my face, reminding me of Mother Nature's strength.

A forlorn howl from a wolf broke the silence of the night. His cry was answered by three others, each at a different pitch, creating a haunting harmony. As the poignant melody continued, I closed my eyes and lifted my face toward the glowing moon, savoring the chills and cries of the four wolves sent up and down my spine.

As the wolves continued their provocative refrain, I opened my eyes slowly and lowered my head, remembering the dark depths of the lake and their call for me. Feeling restricted, I removed the white towel that still clung tightly to my frame. I let the towel slide slowly to the ground, while the moon captured me and filled my senses, bathing my naked body with its light. Another crisp breeze from the lake wrapped itself around me, pulling me toward the water. Feeling as though I were floating, I allowed the gentle wind to guide me into the soothing waves of the lake.

The breeze tenderly placed me in the water. I carefully put one foot in front of the other, moving deeper into the moonlit lake. As I enjoyed the silky water rise up and down my calves as each wave endlessly came to the shore, eagerness to be surrounded by its cool purity overcame my conscious and unconscious mind. Reaching down to the waves, I cupped my hands to catch a little bit of the beauty this lake held. After filling my hands with water, I straightened and released the chilling liquid on my breasts, captivated by the exciting sensation of each water droplet as it ran down my stomach and legs, back to the source from which it was stolen.

The rhythmic movement of the lake was irresistible; I could no longer hold myself back from my aching need to be as one with its power. The urgent cry of my soul, wanting to be cleansed by this serene lake, drowned out all sounds of the night. Succumbing to this cry, I dove in, letting the cold water cover my entire being. Fearing that I was an unwanted presence in this body of water, I swam quickly into the quiet depths. The deeper I swam, the more I realized this lake accepted my company. Relief swept over me, and I slowed my urgent pace.

My mind became aware of all that surrounded me. Even though my eyesight was useless in this darkness, an overwhelming sense that I was not alone took over my being. Frightened of this presence, an alarming pressure began to rapidly build in my chest. Suddenly, this lake had become a cage that I was desperate to be freed from. Starting to panic, I turned my head back and forth, not knowing which way to go, wanting to escape the unknown. Attempting to breathe, I swallowed a mouthful of water. My eyes flew open as I choked on the liquid I had desired so much to be a part of. I realized that if my lungs did not receive the oxygen they were burning for, I would forever dwell in this place.

As my movements became more exaggerated, an intense awareness came over me, and I felt a soft yet powerful touch embrace my entire being. Without warning, I was set in motion. Completely trusting this unknown force that held me, my struggling ceased. For a moment, I was blinded by a dazzling white glow. I closed my eyes, beginning to comprehend what was occurring. Believing I was in the transition from life to death, faces of the people I loved ran incessantly through my mind.

Not having the power to fight what was controlling me, I helplessly wanted to cry out, "No! This is not what I want!"

As if in response to my silent plea, the beautiful glow faded to black. I opened my mouth to yell for help, expecting to once more breathe in water, but surprisingly, when I took a breath, I inhaled air; wonderful, oxygen-filled air!

My eyes slowly parted to see where I was. I cried out, ecstatic to see the beach where I had left the white

towel. Exhausted, I swam for shore with the knowledge that I had conquered the darkness. My limbs could barely push me through water that felt like quicksand. I fought to keep my head above the surface, terrified of the shadows below. Tears of relief ran down my face when my feet touched the bottom of the lake. I waded slowly to shore, breathing deeply, attempting to control the spinning of my head.

When I reached the sandy beach, the air was cold, and I resented the empty feeling within me. Grabbing the white towel, I wrapped it around me, savoring the warmth and comfort it brought. Without hesitation, I stepped up onto the grass, and began to move down the familiar path that had invited me to this place. In the distance, I heard the forlorn howl of a wolf. Ignoring his cry for my return, I cautiously continued to put one foot in front of the other, determined to pursue my destiny.

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Evaluation: *Bevin's controlled writing style calmly takes the hand of the reader and guides him or her to this reclusive body of water. She captures a tone that is simultaneously Gothic and pastoral. Her careful description allows the reader to join her on this personal journey. As our goosebumps reach their height, we reach out to share her white towel.*

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## “Such a Mad Marriage Never Was Before”: Kate and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*

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Rachel Natale

Course: English 102 (Composition)  
Instructor: Elizabeth Anne Hull

### Assignment:

Write a research paper of approximately 2,000 words, using the MLA style. The bibliography must contain at least five sources cited, one of which must be a scholarly book, one an article from a scholarly journal, and one from the Internet.

Some plays have created much controversy, and *The Taming of the Shrew* is no exception. People have debated about such things as Petruchio’s methods of “taming” and Kate’s speech at the end of the play. Many people think that Petruchio’s methods are harsh and Kate’s final speech contrived, but neither of these are true. Petruchio uses psychological methods, not aggressive or barbaric ones, to tame Kate, which allow her to still be witty and intellectual, but also happily married, at the end of the play. Throughout the course of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Kate and Petruchio’s relationship grows from one of verbal sparring and disagreement to one of peace and balance.

Kate, called “Katherine the curst” (1.2.127) by just about everyone, “wants admiration—in fact, she wants a husband; but she feels that her lack of self-command has become an insuperable obstacle to marriage” (Snider 3). Kate’s actions and speech do not help her in attracting a husband, but it is really no wonder why Kate

acts the way she does. Hortensio and Gremio make fun of her, and her father favors Bianca over her. As Velvet D. Pearson points out, “[Kate] is surrounded by men who want to buy and sell her. Baptista, like any smart merchant, wants to get rid of his unpopular goods before selling his prize, Bianca, off to the highest bidder. He even stands by and allows Gremio and Hortensio to insult Kate and doesn’t deign to reply to her ‘I pray you sir, is it your will/To make a stale of me amongst these mates?’ (1.1.157-58)” (232). The assumption that, because Kate is a shrew, the insults don’t bother her, is incorrect. “The fact that she is a shrew does not mean that she cannot have hurt feelings [. . .], indeed a shrew may be defined—once she develops beyond a mere stereotype—as a person who has an excess of hurt feelings and is taking revenge on the world for them” (Heilman lxxviii). Kate’s shrewishness leads to taunting from other people, but their taunting leads her to become more shrewish—a vicious cycle that can only be broken by someone willing to tame her.

Petruchio, “a mad man in his senses; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures,” (Hazlitt 1) comes into town “to see [his] friends in Padua” (1.2.2), but also “to wive it wealthily in Padua; If wealthily, then happily in Padua” (1.2.74-75). As a suitor of Bianca, Hortensio sees Petruchio as an opportunity to marry off Kate in order to free Bianca for marriage. Although Hortensio tries to warn Petruchio about Kate (“[h]er only fault—and that is faults enough—Is that she is intolerable curst/And shrewd and froward” [1.2.87-89]), “Petruchio, apparently experienced in battle, is not deterred by her reputation” (Shirley 2). He assumes, because he has “heard lions roar,” “heard the sea, puffed up with winds,” and “heard great ordinance in the field” (1.2.200-203), that Kate will be no match for him. Without so much as meeting Kate, Petruchio decides to woo her—with excitement even. Later, when Hortensio explains that Kate “broke the lute to” him (2.1.148), Petruchio exclaims, “I love her ten times more than e’er I did. O how I long to have some chat with her!” (2.1.161-162). Petruchio is anxious to meet the woman who will turn out to be his match, and he already has plans working in his head for their first meeting

(2.1.170-180). As it turns out, “[h]is experience prepares him well for the task; he can meet caprice with caprice, and if need be, blow with blow” (Snider 6).

When Kate and Petruchio first meet, they immediately begin to match wits and play off of each other’s comments. Kate matches Petruchio’s greeting of “Good Morrow, Kate, for that’s your name, I *hear*” (2.1.82, emphasis added) with “Well you have *heard*, but something *hard* of *hearing*. They call me Katherine that do talk of me” (2.1.183-184, emphasis added). Right from the beginning, Kate shows Petruchio two things: she is quick witted, and she will not be wooed easily. From this first meeting, the reader gets a glimpse into what future exchanges between Kate and Petruchio will be like. Kate plays off of Petruchio’s word “hear” by using it twice in her reply. Going against what Kate has just said, Petruchio calls her “Kate” instead of Katherine, ten times in his reply passage (2.1.185-190) and confesses that he is “moved to woo [her] for [his] wife” (2.1.194). Petruchio’s “moved” turns into Kate’s “moveable,” “a joint stool,” to which Petruchio replies, “[t]hou hast hit it, come sit on me” (2.1.194-198). In this meeting, Petruchio sees Kate for who she really is—an intellectual, witty woman—and is excited to pull her out from her defenses. Kate and Petruchio continue to play this verbal ping-pong game for four more pages. Even though Kate objects to marrying Petruchio, and as much as she may deny it, there is no doubt from the viewing of this first encounter that Kate enjoys this verbal sparring and that she has met her match.

Peter F. Heaney seems to think of this first exchange as “an act of terrorism,” an “immediate assault,” and most absurdly, “a form of verbal rape” by Petruchio (6). All of these accusations are false. Petruchio is most assuredly testing the waters with Kate, having her prove herself intellectually before he decides to marry her. Judging by Petruchio’s character thus far, he would not be content with a wife like Bianca who cannot hold her own verbally or have her own thoughts. As Pearson points out, “[h]e serves as a mirror in the games they play; [Kate] perceives his ‘insane’ behavior in the same manner in which men see her ‘insane’ behavior. Yet Petruchio, unlike the other men in the play, enjoys his wife’s intelligence and wit, and expends much time and

effort encouraging her how to use them in a challenging way” (240). The same goes for Kate; she would not be happy with a man who would be scared off by her opinions and confidence to speak them. The very fact that Kate stays to talk to Petruchio shows some interest on her part. “Kate must ultimately submit to a male if her life is to be tolerable, and part of her wants to be tamed. Petruchio’s masterfulness undermines her pride in her own aggressiveness, awakens her self-effacing side, and promises to relieve her of the burden of her wildness, which makes her an anomalous figure in her society” (Paris 341). For Kate to be tamed and get married is a good thing, as long as she finds the right man. She, like Petruchio, wants to make sure that she embarks on the journey with someone worthy of her. Petruchio and Kate may have enjoyed their first encounter with each other, but it is during and after the wedding that the real fun begins.

All of Petruchio’s actions toward Kate are intended to mirror her behavior and, in turn, tame her. Denton J. Snider has this feeling about Petruchio: “The course of drama will reveal the true impelling power of his conduct—it is the pleasure which he takes in taming just such a shrew by means of her own shrewishness. . . . His method is clear and logical; serve up her own character to her...” (6). First, Petruchio “disappoints [Kate] by not returning at the time he has promised to wed her, and when he returns, creates no small consternation by the oddity of his dress and equipage” (Hazlitt 3). The way Petruchio dresses at his wedding is just the first example of how he uses unconventional ways of taming Kate. Biondello describes Petruchio’s inappropriate clothing to Tranio and Baptista: “Petruchio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turned; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases; one buckled, another laced; an old rusty sword ta’en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt and chapeless; with two broken points...” (3.2.43-48). It appears to everyone that it is very odd for Petruchio to be dressed like this on his wedding day, “[b]ut as Tranio observes he ‘has some meaning in his mad attire.’ His dress is a parallel to Kate’s equally ‘mad’ attitude which only Petruchio sees as being something which is donned but not so easily doffed as his outlandish garb” (Sanders 2). To everyone

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else, Petruchio’s clothes seem out of place, but to him, they are the perfect way to begin taming Kate.

Petruchio’s second display of taming genius is at his house, during his and Kate’s first meal together, “a travesty of a feast” (Sanders 1). Before the meal begins, Grumio describes to Curtis Petruchio’s behavior on the trip back from Baptista’s (4.1.68-80), to which Curtis replies, “[b]y this reck’ning he is more shrew than she” (4.1.81). In this one line, Curtis sums up Petruchio’s plans and the object of his behavior at the coming meal. “Barking correctives about everything from his slippers to the meat, Petruchio here intentionally mimics Katherine’s shrewishness, admitting later that the faults he finds are ‘undeserved’ (4.1.186)” (Christensen 32). Petruchio and Kate arrive, and Petruchio begins his performance immediately by yelling at his servants for not being at the door when he arrived (4.1.119-121). When the food is served, Petruchio yells at Peter, “[t]is burnt, and so is all the meat. What dogs are these! Where is the rascal cook? How durst you, villains, bring it from the dresser, And serve it thus to me that love it not?” and proceeds to throw the food and dishes at them (4.1.155-159). Kate, probably surprised by and uncomfortable with her new husband’s actions, is, for once and maybe the first time, the voice of reason and optimism, telling him, “I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet. The meat was well if you were so contented” (4.1.162-163), when in the past she may have made such remarks herself.

Bernard J. Paris commented that this scene shows Petruchio “capable of violence by capriciously beating his servants, with Kate vainly trying to intercede on their behalf” (342), but this is not altogether correct. Petruchio’s treatment of his servants is not on a whim. They are helping him prove a point to Kate, and they are not unaware of the reasons behind his behavior. They live with Petruchio and no doubt know his everyday behavior to be contrary to his current behavior. Peter knows what is going on and says about Petruchio, “[h]e kills her in her own humor” (4.1.174). Kate’s vain interception is also part of Petruchio’s plan. He’s helping her sympathetic side to come out and succeeds in doing so. “If it were not for the fact that Petruchio joins her in deprivation of food, Kate would become a woman com-

pletely defeated by a tyrant. Petruchio’s recognition that he is as volatile as she softens his behavior considerably: ‘And better ‘twere that both of us did fast,/Since of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,/Than feed it with such overroasted flesh’ (4.1.173-75)” (Pearson 234). Rather than eating in front of her, or making her leave while he stays to eat, Petruchio leaves the table with Kate, proving his behavior to be not selfish but selfless.

Though the explanation of the wedding night is short, it holds a great deal of meaning. If all of Petruchio’s behavior up to this point had been merely for his own amusement or without reason, he would surely choose to consummate the marriage on the wedding night. Instead, Petruchio chooses to “[make] a sermon of continency to [Kate]” (4.1.176), showing that he is really interested in polishing her character rather than just making her a subordinate wife. He “has the decency to respect Kate’s person on the wedding night, choosing to lecture her on continence rather than enter the marriage bed. Surely this is an action from a many-faceted, sensitive character. Such kindness from a husband was not often the case in Elizabethan or later times; many women were forced to perform in the bridal bed before they were ready” (Dash qtd. in Pearson 234). This action alone defends Petruchio against arguments that he is a domineering man simply looking for superiority over his wife. Undoubtedly, if Petruchio had made a different choice on the wedding night, the play would not be the same.

Through all of his outrageous methods, Petruchio succeeds in taming Kate, and Kate “discover[s] love through the discovery of her own identity” (Bean 66). “In the process of the play, Petruchio has explained to Kate, with the same care and patience that he might have used in training his hawk, how to take her place in the harmony of human society” (Williams 21). Kate has changed due to Petruchio’s taming, and he is even willing to bet on it. At the banquet at the end of the play, Baptista says to Petruchio, “Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio, I think thou hast the veriest shrew of all” (5.2.63-64), to which Petruchio responds, “Well, I say no” and suggests that each man send for his wife, and whoever’s wife comes first will win the bet (5.2.65, 104). Not only is Kate the only one who comes when

sent for—winning the bet for Petruchio—but she proceeds to drag the other women into the room and scolds them for disrespecting their husbands. “Just as Petruchio enjoys making the bet, so Kate enjoys helping him win, as the length and care of her performance demonstrate (Leggatt qtd. in Pearson 237-8). (In contrast, Bianca says to Lucentio after losing the bet for him, “The more fool you for laying on my duty” [5.2.129].) If Kate was unhappy in her marriage or felt that she *had* to make a speech, she would have undoubtedly kept quiet instead of giving a speech praising marriage. It is in Kate’s final speech that the reader sees her at her finest: “[t]hy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign—one that cares for thee” (5.2.146-147). Her speech is not that of an inferior wife, but of a woman who loves and respects her husband. This is the inner Kate that had been hiding all the time. Pearson points out that in her speech, Kate “chooses to emphasize positive aspects of women in the context of marriage” (236), again showing her newfound ability to be optimistic. Kate has grown to love and respect Petruchio and has “achieve[d] a fullness of life that she could not have enjoyed as a conventional shrew” (Shirley 2). She can now be appreciated for who she is by someone who was willing to see her for what she was.

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Evaluation: *Within the requirements of demonstrating her understanding of the range of resources available and the standard formats for documentation, Rachel has developed a literate, coherent argument.*

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# Is There a Light at the End of the Sidewalk?

Lisa Nusret

Course: Literature 219 (Children's Literature)

Instructor: Anne Davidovicz

Assignment:

*Write a literary analysis based  
on works pertinent to the course.*

I went to find the pot of gold  
That's waiting where the rainbow ends.  
I searched and searched, and then—  
There it was, deep in the grass,  
Under an old and twisty bough.  
It's mine, it's mine, it's mine at last...  
What do I search for now?  
(Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, 166)

What is it that humanity searches for? If we happen to discover our "treasure," will we even recognize it? If we cannot, will we ever be sated? Or will this pursuit of happiness consume us? Most important, can these questions be answered in a poem designed for children? One of the greatest contributors to children's literature is Shel Silverstein. Silverstein has delighted audiences for more than twenty-five years with his fantastically unique stories and poetry. Two of his most cherished poetry collections are *Where The Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light In The Attic*. Silverstein uses his unparalleled ability to speak to children of all ages to educate people in many ways. Some of his more effective lessons have been in assisting children to utilize

their imagination, helping parents to better understand their children, and exposing social problems to children in an effective and easily relatable way. For these reasons and countless others, Shel Silverstein has influenced the lives of millions of people around the world.

Silverstein's poetry is difficult to categorize. Although it is geared toward a younger audience, there are certain ideas that will not be fully appreciated until the reader has a better understanding of the world. An example of this can be seen in the poem "The Little Boy and the Old Man":

...The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."  
"I do that too," laughed the little old man.  
Said the little boy, "I often cry."  
The old man nodded, "So do I."  
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems  
Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."  
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.  
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.  
(Silverstein, *A Light In The Attic*, 95)

This poem can certainly be read by a child, but the concept will not be grasped as easily. Although it seems that this notion is overlooked by readers of all ages, a young reader will more certainly not be able to interpret the somber message Silverstein has so effectively conveyed. The tragic reality is that we live in a society that blatantly disregards those who should be our most cherished members. We would much rather abandon these "little people," young and old, than utilize our countless resources to better understand them. Silverstein is able to approach this problem in a simple way, but the poem is still suited for a mature audience. This diverse age-appropriateness is apparent throughout both collections, but this is part of what makes them so appealing to readers. A four-year-old child can enjoy the rhythmic verses of "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too," (Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 16), and in the same book, a thirteen-year-old can easily relate to the story of "Sick" (Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 58), conveying the exquisite agony of little Peggy Ann McKay, a seasoned actress trying to convince her mother to let her stay home from school. Regardless of the difficulty level, each poem is beautifully written, using illustrative language and rhymes.

In addition to his writings, Silverstein also con-

tributed all of the illustrations in each of the books. His drawing style is not overly complicated, but the details he is able to isolate make the illustrations come alive, Silverstein's use of shading and texture are essential to his artistic design. Sometimes the characters are little more than glorified stick figures, as in "Hug O' War" (Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 19). Yet, in other poems, he employs classical artistic techniques, such as the stippling used to show layers of filth on "The Dirtiest Man Alive" (Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 96). Regardless of which style he chooses, Silverstein is able to captivate his audience. Whether the reader is laughing at the king's portrait in "Peanut Butter Sandwich" (from *Where The Sidewalk Ends*), or learning some basic language in "Deaf Donald" (from *A Light In The Attic*), Silverstein never disappoints.

One of the most magnificent aspects of Silverstein's poetry is his incredible ability to inspire imagination. This is beautifully demonstrated in the poem "What's In The Sack?":

What's in the sack? What's in the sack?  
Is it some mushrooms or is it the moon?  
...What's in the sack? That's all they ask me.  
Could it be popcorn or marbles or books?  
...Is it a rock or a rolled-up giraffe?  
Is it pickles or nickels or busted bicycles?  
And if we guess it, will you give us half?  
"What's in the sack?" I'm blowin' my stack  
At the next one who asks me, "What's in the sack?"  
What?  
Oh no. Not you, too!  
(Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 111)

If the text does not encourage the reader to wonder what exactly is in that sack, the accompanying illustration surely will. It shows a man hunched over, hauling an enormous bag of *something*. This *something* is never revealed, leaving the readers to conjure up any number of possibilities on their own. Or perhaps the story of "If The World Was Crazy," from Silverstein's *Where The Sidewalk Ends* is more intriguing:

If the world was crazy, you know what I'd do?  
I'd walk on the ocean and swim in my shoe,  
I'd fly through the ground and I'd skip through  
the air,  
I'd run down the bathtub and bathe on  
the stair (146).

One of the many benefits of reading is that a child is allowed to envision *anything*. The possibilities are endless! Unfortunately, this is not an option for a child playing a video game or watching television. The child can only experience the story through the eyes of the directors and designers. This is a major disadvantage faced by the youth of today. Children find themselves lost without the comfort of their electrical umbilical cords.

This theory can be better explained by examining the story of Silverstein's "Jimmy Jet And His TV Set," a sad tale of a young boy who was constantly immersed in his television shows:

I'll tell you the story of Jimmy Jet—  
And you know what I tell you is true.  
He loved to watch his TV set  
Almost as much as you.  
...He watched till his eyes were frozen wide,  
And his bottom grew into his chair.  
...And his brains turned into TV tubes,  
And his face to a TV screen.  
...And he grew a plug that looked like a tail  
So we plugged in little Jim.  
And now instead of him watching TV  
We all sit around and watch him.  
(*Where The Sidewalk Ends* 28-29)

The illustration that accompanies this story is ridiculous, yet dismal at the same time. It shows poor little Jimmy, plugged into the wall while his family sits in front of him, enjoying their show. Although this is an obvious impossibility, the story still serves its purpose. That picture of little Jimmy should be disconcerting enough to help children realize that the world does not revolve around a television screen, and that there are real people they must interact with in order to function in society. Another example of this would be Silverstein's poem "Channels":

...Channel 7 and Channel 8—  
Just old movies, not so great.  
Channel 9's a waste of time.  
Channel 10 is off, my child.  
Wouldn't you like to talk awhile?  
(*A Light In The Attic*, 87)

This message may be even more significant than that of Jimmy Jet. "Channels" is a reminder to parents that they need to be active participants in their child's life.

## Is There a Light at the End of the Sidewalk?

Contrary to popular belief, it is acceptable for a parent to occasionally turn off the television and engage a child in a real conversation. The more technological advances society creates, the more difficult it is for parents to be successful in this endeavor. Children of the twenty-first century are constantly being inundated with the latest technology gadgets. This should make parents realize that this lesson has an even greater value today. Without any direction, children will simply plop down in front of any available screen. Children should be advancing, not stagnating in a virtual vacuum.

Although Silverstein's writing can be didactic, his messages are often times conflicted. One poem, such as "With His Mouth Full Of Food," tells the tale of Milford Dupree, who refused to stop talking with his mouth full:

His mother said, "Milford, it's crude and it's lewd  
To talk with your mouth full of food.  
...His dad said, "Get married or go get tattooed,  
But don't talk with your mouth full of food.  
...So they sent for the gluer and had his mouth glued  
'Cause he talked with his mouth full of food.  
Now instead of "Good morning," he says  
"Gnu murnood,  
I wun tuk win mny marf furu foog."  
(Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 128)

This poem helps children learn a valuable, albeit harsh, lesson in table manners. Yet on the very next page of *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, the reader finds the poem "My Hobby," which describes a young child's delight with mischief:

I used to think life was a bore,  
But I don't feel that way anymore,  
As I count up the hits,  
As I smile as I sit,  
As I spit from the twenty-sixth floor. (129)

Unlike Milford Dupree, this child is not punished or criticized by Silverstein. If anything, he is somewhat encouraged. The child is enjoying this bad behavior without facing any consequences for it. In fact, Silverstein actually has more poems about rewarding bad manners than correcting them. For every lesson taught, such as "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take The Garbage Out," (from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*), there are two poems to refute it, such as "How

Not To Have To Dry The Dishes," (from *A Light In The Attic*), a poem describing a method of avoiding housework, or "The Googies Are Coming" (from *Where The Sidewalk Ends*), which assures children that "the googies" will not take them away if they are "bad."

What message is Silverstein truly attempting to convey? Should children feel free to misbehave? Or should they learn from his characters' mistakes? The answer is simple: children will respond to both scenarios. No child can be only good or bad; they will undoubtedly be well behaved one moment and become a rage of emotions the next. Silverstein's poetry is conflicted because children themselves are. This is what makes his writing so provocative. He realizes that children need to view both sides of any situation in order to learn the appropriate ways of dealing with life. A reader or parent cannot expect children to believe that every character is virtuous and trustworthy. A child needs exposure to both good and evil, in varying degrees, in order to fully understand the balance of life. Silverstein provides this exposure in a fashion that is easy to connect with and is suitable for children of all ages.

As children grow older, different lessons need to be explored. The focus shifts from a simple definition of what is "good" or "bad" to more complex issues, such as tolerance. This is indeed a difficult subject for many parents to explain because they themselves are often not able to practice what they might preach. Nevertheless, children need to learn how to become tolerant of one another, especially in a society that places so much emphasis on appearances. It seems improbable that a collection of children's poetry would be able to shed any light on this complicated issue; however, often, the answer to life's queries can be discovered in the most unlikely places. Take the poem "Colors," for example:

My skin is kind of sort of brownish  
Pinkish yellowish white.  
My eyes are greyish blueish green.  
...My hair is reddish blondish brown,  
But it's silver when it's wet.  
And all the colors I am inside  
have not been invented yet.  
(Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*, 24)

Silverstein used his tremendous ability to speak to children to convey the message that a person need not fit

into a stereotype or accept a label. Hopefully, it makes the reader realize that the color of his or her skin really does not matter. Although the impact of the poem directly correlates with the age and aptitude of the reader, the lesson can still be appreciated.

Another example of this is the poem “No Difference,” also from Silverstein’s *Where The Sidewalk Ends*. It expresses the issue in a wonderfully simple way:

Small as a peanut,  
Big as a giant,  
We’re all the same size  
When we turn off the light.  
...Red, black or orange,  
Yellow or white,  
We all look the same  
When we turn off the light.  
So maybe the way  
To make everything right  
Is for God to just reach out  
And turn off the light! (81)

Granted, the language is simple, and the idea is not unique. But if a child, a teenager, or even an adult, can read this short poem and gain even the smallest amount of perspective, imagine the impact that person might have on the world.

To conclude, Shel Silverstein has been a constant influence on children’s literature for many years. His rhythmic verses and intriguing illustrations appeal to readers of all ages. Silverstein uses his literary platform to discuss issues that might otherwise not reach children. Whether it be to turn off the television and enjoy the company of our family, or to help us to understand that there are many facets in life, and that it is not easy to assign ourselves to playing only one role, Silverstein is able to express these thoughts in a clear and concise manner. Silverstein’s poetry may even open our eyes to a world that needs kindness, compassion, and understanding in order to sustain itself, and to a world that we may not have realized existed, even though it is ours. Whatever the reason, Silverstein’s writing has the uncanny ability to speak to people; maybe we should all learn to listen more closely.

### Works Cited

- Silverstein, Shel. *Where The Sidewalk Ends*. Illus. Shel Silverstein. New York: Evil Eye Music, 1974.  
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Evaluation: *Lisa poses universal questions about humanity and then explores their answers by delving into the poetry of Shel Silverstein. She reviews its humor, its language play, and its inspirational value in a thoughtful and engaging way. She also explores how his illustrations enhance his text. She has composed a masterpiece of analysis!*

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# The Sweetest Thing

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Gabriella Jiho Orlita

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Catherine Restovich

Assignment:

*Compose a narrative essay that provides a vivid picture of someone.*

Was it a memory of his mother, or just a family tale he heard from his father over the years? He was four or five at the time; he cannot remember for certain. He had a habit of playing with bees. A ray of sunshine beamed through the overhanging canopy of cherry tree leaves in his parents' back garden. His soft orange locks glowed flippantly in the afternoon's sun, gently stroked by the summer breeze. Like confetti sprinkled by the sun, golden freckles covered his face. With chubby little fingers he would mindfully pick up a bee from the flower, then solemnly talk to it, sharing the undisclosed secrets of the universe, and put it back from where it came. This would continue for a while, one bee, one secret, at a time. None of the bees ever stung him, showing their understanding for his earnest knowledge crusade. Suddenly, piercing the boundaries of his clandestine world, a voice came in: "Paul... Paul... Paul David... Come right here. What in the world has gotten into you this time?" His mother stood at the back entrance to the house, waiting for him to join the rest of the family for the afternoon's meal. His father and older brother sat properly behind the neatly set table, staring off impatiently through the kitchen's window, all too ready to start the dinner. He shoved his little hands into the side pockets of his knee breeches, and slowly, not thrilled by the abrupt interruption, shuffled across the lawn toward where his mother stood. Up close he could discern a subtle and sweet aroma of her lavender perfume. With a nagging urgency for her attention, he laid his head on her sun-warmed hand; he tugged lightly on the silky, blue floral dress. Very gently she looked down at him, and with the utmost care put her hand on his unruly red-golden strands and stroked them tenderly. Then, with a soft push forward, she nudged him into the house.

He was a good kid, maybe a little bit too exuberant and intense, but still a good kid. So what if the family's nickname for him was the "Antichrist" and more than one aunt crossed her fingers each time he crossed the threshold of her house. An occasional dent in the law might have happened. Let's say, what if he just happened to hold a stick (very innocently he might add), and the neighbor's kid just happened to walk by and throw a piece of dirt at him, and then the stick just hap-

pened to end up in the other kid's left ear? This is not exactly something that one could have prevented. Even his parents claimed he was an exasperating, but still a good, child. From underneath the orange mop, a pair of blue eyes shone with an unbroken confidence of one who yet knew no fear. The golden freckles basked in the afternoon sun with an unshaken attitude. "A little baked bean," he would comment years later. His childhood drawings from that time, all bright and bold colors, reflected the world around him.

Just about the time he turned fourteen, things began to go awry. Life decided to put its own, more rough strokes on his young life's canvas, marking occasionally gray and dark spots. First, from a perfectly decent face, a nose started to emerge in a very disturbing fashion, considering it seemed to know no boundaries in how far it might go. The chin concluded that it too could render some damage, and it did. Finally, both called it quits. The freckles stayed and became even more prominent than before. Needless to say, his relationship with women changed forever. He picked up chess as a diversion from the constant chaos of unruly thoughts. It was about that time, completely unawares, that a tremendous black blotch stained his life forever, covering its bright colors and intricate lines. It did not seem feasible that anyone could ever restore and make them shine again. An irrevocable injury was caused, or was it?

It all started with the news of his grandfather's passing away. He felt very ambivalent about it. Namely, he did not know how to feel at all. He was supposed to feel sorry, but somehow he felt more oblivious than stricken by grief. The funeral itself—your typical family members' reunion—did not intrigue him a bit. As usual, there was lots of commotion, black veils, crying aunts, overconspicuous hushed prayers by the coffin, and loud exchanges in the nearby kitchen. The burial itself would have been uneventful, except for the fact he was to bury that day all for which he ever cared. It was then, in the midst of the proceedings, that his mother collapsed. Shortly after, she was gone. All happened so quickly, with no warning, almost matter-of-factly. In the hospital, the family was told she suffered a brain hemorrhage. He was so shocked, soaked in despair and

sorrow, that he unconsciously blocked her image, making himself unable to remember what she looked like. The warmth of her caring touch, a gentle hand stroking his hair, a subtle waft of the lavender, and a confident ear at which a secret could be left were all gone.

After her death, as he would recall years later, "the home turned into a house." His father worked long hours at the post office, providing for the family. He was a strict, no-nonsense man, more or less cynical at times, but overall a good and decent man. However, he was not one who would preoccupy his little precious time with things so trivial as a fourteen-year-old's feelings. Neither was his brother, who on occasion would side with his father, and most of the time was caught up in his own affairs anyway. Paul fought with him constantly. "The blood is still on the kitchen's wall," he would remark years later. Sometimes he took long walks along the industrial river banks. Unable to fight them back, his tears mixed and mingled with the murky waters of the Liffey. Feelings of loneliness and abandonment surged within him and more than once were spiked with anger and restlessness. At other times, being home alone, he would walk down the dark stairways into the kitchen, each time hoping, holding his breath, full of expectation—only to encounter an evening dusk settling upon the walls, softly engulfing the place in a mournful silence. The pans and the worn down sink quietly reflected the dead light of the street corner's lamp. How much he wished that at those times he could hear her gentle footsteps, a rustling of her ever-starched apron as she busied herself around the kitchen's counter to prepare a supper for them all. A heavy ticking of the clock would remind him there would be no more suppers together.

Three years passed, monotonous though stormy at times. She appeared out of nowhere. A tiny girl, big mahogany eyes, and a little brown pony tail. He had seen her before but did not pay much attention to her. Then things started to change. Her soft giggle became more apparent, the little sparks in her eyes more visible, her smile almost irresistible. That day she was standing with her girlfriend by her locker after classes. He approached her, and with no hint of inhibition, which came to him naturally, he offered to carry her books

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home. She said, “No.” She told her friend, “I don’t want to be one of Paul’s girls.” Giving up a cause was not one of his traits. In the days to come, he hunted her in the manner of a tenacious miniature schnauzer in heat. He made up for his stature with his cunning wit. He begged, pleaded, followed, and enchanted her with his humor. In the end, whether she was so worn out by his advances, or felt pity for him and could not resist his impish grin, she allowed him to carry her books. A new light entered through the broken cracks of his shattered life. She became his friend, confidante, his best buddy. She made sure he ate, had lunch for school, and had both socks on his feet. With warmth and affection, she picked up where his mother left off. This developed a strong feeling between them, one which would grow even stronger with the years to come.

Now, twenty-three years since he made his first offer, she is still here. She continues to make sure he has on both socks and no soup on his tie. She supports and provides guidance for all of his endeavors, no matter how dubious they may seem at times. He knows she is the one who is always ready to bring him back to earth when he goes off tilting at windmills. And after all that time, she is still fascinated by his devilish grin and taken by the reflection of endless gratitude in the deep blue mirrors of his eyes. She continues to teach him how to rediscover delicate hues of the rainbow, a new palette of colors in his life.

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Evaluation: *Gabriella’s stylistically advanced writing reminds readers and writers of the undeniable power of carefully chosen diction. The craft with which she renders an image is meticulously fluid. In other words, she chooses each word as if there was no choice at all.*

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# A Fly on the Wall

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*Dianne Pizzo*

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Jessica Walsh

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Assignment:

*Write a descriptive essay about a place that is important to you.*

February in Okinawa reminded me of July in Chicago. It was an outdoor sauna; the heat hung in the air. With clothes and hair drooping, I knew any attempt to look fresh and clean was futile. Wafting across the tarmac were damp and earthy aromas mingling with airplane fumes, causing my stomach to churn. My flying companions and I were herded, sheep-like, into a customs room where we stood shoulder to shoulder and watched strangers search through our personal belongings. The needs for showers and clean clothes among us were disturbingly obvious as I wished myself somewhere more pleasant. I suddenly spied a glass wall across the room, holding back an anxious-looking group, including my husband, who had arrived in Japan three months earlier with his Air Force squadron. Using him as a focal point, I breathed through my mouth until finally, I was given my bags and permitted to leave.

People pushed past us to the outside, where the sun became an immediate threat to my pale February skin. Clearly displeased, my husband took me directly to a place that changed my attitude about Okinawa. The Sea Wall, (or just “the wall,” as I would call it), was only

twenty minutes from our house. Affording an amazing view of the ocean, the street that ran adjacent to the wall reminded me of Lake Shore Drive with Lake Michigan in the background. Unlike Chicago, parallel parking was provided along the length of the sea wall, yielding a dozen or so parking spaces.

Standing atop the wall for the first time, I felt invincible, reminiscent of the children’s game “King of the Mountain.” The ocean was magnificent; diamond studded waves grabbed the sunlight and drew it down. I strained my eyes in an attempt to separate the water from the sky. I couldn’t compare this awesome experience to anything in the midwest and had to wonder if anyone born here could appreciate the wall as I did.

Beauty by common definition would not describe the sea wall, so I must have been seeing it through rose-colored glass (as my mother would say). I was fascinated by it as well as humbled by its enormity. The wall snaked down the coast, with no tail end in sight. My problems became much smaller as I sat on the wide gray blocks of the wall. In the noonday sun, the temperatures soared, yet the stones remained cool to the touch. More surprising was the warmth those same stones retained in the evening, making it comfortable to linger at the wall long after the sun went down. The smooth surface and spacing of the stones convinced me that whoever had designed the wall not only expected visitors but considered their needs.

Leaning back and napping on the rocks was a favorite pastime of the elderly, especially. The length of the wall, comparable to three football fields, was clearly its most impressive feature, offering more resting spots than were ever needed. The hard gray slabs overlapped each other, restraining the ocean’s constant waves and tides. So solidly was it built, that even the typhoons (natural occurrences during the summer and fall) could not damage the wall. Debris thrown from the ocean in the form of seaweed or the occasional shell were the only visible signs that a powerful storm had passed.

At the bottom of the wall where the stones touched the ocean and continued their descent into the clear water, a bright green moss grew. Vibrant in color, it contrasted with the weather-worn gray of the steps. Inviting a closer look, the moss’ texture was thick and soft,

tempting me often. After walking barefoot down the twenty steps where I could see the ocean's floor, I took my usual seat on the last dry stone. Clutching the smoothed, hard corners of it, I ran my feet slowly and deliberately across the luxuriously fine blades. The calming effect I received turned this act into one of my few rituals. Lining the edge of the wall, like a miniature hedge, the moss waved harmlessly. Dangerously hidden was the slippery center of the moss, which could send an unsuspecting visitor into the water. With nothing but the deceptive moss to grasp, climbing out unassisted would be nearly impossible.

The native Okinawans and their children fished regularly at the wall. Their ability to walk or even skip from one favored place to another across the slick moss impressed me. Skill and sportsmanship were often tested whenever there was a fish on the line. I witnessed a dizzying dance of balance as an older man searched for his dinner on one visit to the wall. His fishing technique consisted of jerking the pole backward over his shoulder and alternately scooping down into the water with a net. His seesaw movements resembled a chicken pecking at seeds. While the waves lapped playfully at his feet, he swayed to soundless music as I held my breath.

Leaning too far over the water ended his struggle, after a sudden splash caused him unwillingly to release his catch. The man was stunned but wasted little time recovering from the spill. Like a wet cat, he sprang from the water, shaking from the cold and spitting mad. Making his way to the top of the wall, he avoided my eyes in embarrassment, looking tired and defeated. As I stood to offer him an unopened bag of chips, he slowed his advance until he was close enough to touch. With squinting eyes, he examined the chips closely and then turned his attention to me, contemplating. I smiled sympathetically and extended my offering of condolence. I don't know what he said, but the old Okinawan fisherman accepted the chips and I never saw him again, although I think of him from time to time.

The wall was a gathering place for young and old, family and friends. Being culturally disadvantaged, I was rarely afforded the opportunity to interact with the locals. Easily distracted, I was usually content to watch

(with interest) anything of matter, including the care-  
te afternoons skipping rocks  
; tag across the huge steps.  
supervised and often talked  
g turns to yell at the younger  
ones who approached the water fearlessly.

I sat and observed at the wall and listened for the most amazing sound I know. I was never kept waiting for long as laughter rang and then echoed past me. Children and adults sang with the sound of church bells. Their joyful noise carried far from where they congregated, to where I sat, battling homesickness. I hungered for laughter daily. Sometimes, just the sound of others caught up in their light-headed and light-hearted effects were enough to make me forget my longing for home and family. Having a husband in the Air Force meant spending large amounts of time alone. Without excursions to the wall, my loneliness would have been devastating. I admittedly took comfort in knowing my tears were not alone in eroding the wall's stones, when like laughter, my crying had become habitual.

It was possible to fall in love at the wall, or out of love, or to refuse it entirely. I shamelessly spied on a young Okinawan man crying near the feet of a young lady. Speaking rapidly, he begged to be heard. He pleaded for attention with his eyes, yet she was determined to avoid his gaze. Sitting rigidly on the step above him, she kept her eyes fixed on some faraway object, which I couldn't locate. As her admirer produced a small box from his pocket, he ceased speaking and raised the gift toward her. At this time, I could have left the young couple to their business, yet I was compelled to see if the gift would be accepted. Suddenly, the girl sprang up from the step, calling to mind the old fisherman in his plight. A gentle breeze came in from the ocean then, and I could smell her light flowery perfume. She floated, leaf-like, as if caught up in an autumn wind. The young lady spun around silently until she faced the top of the wall. Her skirt swirled around her legs like a dancer's, as gracefully, almost effortlessly, she ascended the stones, never looking back. Mesmerized, the boy and I looked expectantly after her. It was clear she would not return, yet the

young man still remained. Although I sought to comfort him, I had no chips of condolence to offer this time. Instead, I left him in solitude.

The wall was a place to come or go freely. When there was nowhere else to go, or life was too confusing, or when a good laugh or cry or both would help, the wall permitted it. During the three years I lived in Okinawa, I cherished my time at the wall. I experienced many emotions at the wall, some mine and others clearly borrowed. The people that came to fish, watch a sunset, or just sleep were simply strangers, most of whom I never interacted with. We were all looking for something, and we shared that connection. Whether it was companionship, inspiration, peace, or a place to rest, we had needs that the wall would fulfill. The wall was old when I came to Okinawa, and I remain content knowing it will be there, offering the same strength to those who visit it, long after I've left the Earth.

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Evaluation: *Dianne's essay is filled with vivid images and enriching details. She truly brings the reader with her on this voyage of memory.*

# Deciphering Dove's "Daystar"

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*Tracy Ratio*

Course: Literature 105 (Poetry)

Instructor: Barbara Butler

Assignment:

*Write an analytical essay about a poem.*

The days of marriage and motherhood are oftentimes referred to as the most blessed and monumental in a woman's life. These experiences, however, may sometimes fail to bring the anticipated joy and happiness and, instead, prove to be suffocating for some women. Rita Dove tackles this tumultuous topic in her poem "Daystar," in which a mother copes with her need for independence while remaining tied to her family. Through Dove's precise contrasts using imagery and tone, it is evident that the mother depicted in this intense poem is desperately trying to escape the realities of her everyday life by mentally running to a dream world she has created.

An array of circumstances the mother wishes to hide from is scattered throughout the poem. The terminology used creates a negative attitude surrounding these instances, suggesting to the reader that the woman indeed desires a momentary departure from the rigmarole of her life. For instance, there are "diapers on the line, / a doll slumped behind the door" (2-3), which need to be picked up before the mother can think of herself. Her children are also in need of attention, giving her "an hour, at best, before Liza appeared / pouting from the top of the stairs" (12). Her lack of freedom is even more apparent by Liza's adamant demand to know "just what was mother doing / out back with the field mice" (13). Relations with her husband are also unsatisfactory; the mother has to sustain Thomas "lurching" into her, a harsh and biting term to use to describe the act of lovemaking. The downtrodden and heavy hearted imagery used here, created by words such as "slumped," "pouting," and "lurched," magnifies the mother's discontent and provides legitimate reasons for her mental exodus.

The motive established, this hapless female is ready to escape. She "[lugs] a chair behind the garage," signaling that she desires the privacy she seldom experiences (4). During these precious moments, the woman has no obligations—she is neither mother nor wife—and passes time as she chooses. Simple things like floating maple leaves and forgotten cricket skins quietly amuse her while she "[builds] her palace" (16). When life becomes unbearable, she will secretly run away to this palace by thinking "of that place that was

hers for an hour where / she was nothing, / pure nothing, in the middle of the day” (19-22). Chores, children, and husbands will all disappear, virtually ceasing to exist, and when she closes her eyes, she will “see only her own vivid blood” (11). Her time and body may belong to her family, but she alone controls her thoughts and dreams. Utilizing these, seemingly her only possessions, the woman is able to fly away from her domestic unhappiness.

Clever contrasts also add to the intensity and meaning of the poem. The disparity between the harshness of reality and the beauty of the woman’s fantasy helps make the humdrum aspects of her life stand out all the more. The woman’s daily life appears insufferable when compared to the purity of the nothingness of her dreams. Readers are confronted with a lurching, pinching, slumping world and then introduced to a heavenly world filled with palaces and purity. Common poetic devices are unnecessary; the emotion and helplessness of the woman are easily felt thanks to the precision of Dove’s word choices.

The trapped woman’s struggle to cope with daily strife comes to life in Dove’s “Daystar.” Outstanding imagery evokes sympathy and compassion, while creating two conflicting worlds where reality and fantasy clash. An everyday scene is magically infused with conflict, pain, and despair, as a simple woman—who represents many women—s forced to confront her life choices. Through the simple manipulation of vocabulary, Dove majestically portrays the desperate escape of one woman running from truth to secret desire.

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*Evaluation: Tracy offers a sensitive interpretation of the poem “Daystar.” Her sophisticated style and effective incorporation of passages from the poem strengthen her insightful analysis.*

# For the Union Dead: Communiqués from Colonel Shaw

Paul Rollins

Courses: History 212 (Recent American History)  
and Literature 222 (Recent American Literature)  
Instructors: Tom DePalma and Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

*Respond creatively to something  
we've studied this semester.*

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April 1, 2002

It was with quivering fingers that I pried open your mis-  
sive in response to my March letter. Mine was merely a  
rhetorical device. I am amazed it came to your attention,  
but even more confounded that you replied. I am most  
grateful to you even if I must point out that first-class  
mail now requires more than the two-cent postage you  
affixed.

You suggest in your reply that a continuing corre-  
spondence between the two of us might be useful in  
answering certain questions each of us may have. I look  
forward to being of service to you.

This Robert Lowell whom you inquired about should  
be familiar to you. You'll recall that your sister married  
a Lowell at just about the time your regiment departed  
for South Carolina via the transport ship "De Molay." It  
should please you to know this "Rob" is the son of the  
son of the Lowell your sister married. In other words,  
the poet is your great-grand-nephew and proud, indeed,  
was he of you.

Now, I have this question for you. I'm aware you are  
conversant with Latin, having been introduced to that  
language by the Jesuits at Fordham Preparatory well  
before you entered Harvard. You'll note the number of  
the verb has been changed from third person singular

(Relinquit) to third person plural (Relinquent). Does it  
disturb you that 100 years after your death, the words  
used to originally memorialize you have now been  
expanded to include your troopers?

Frankly, I do not know the answer to your question  
as to why the aquarium was razed. Did you know the  
original aquarium? Was it there in your time? I know  
there were several throughout the countries you traveled  
with your father. I think the first one just outlived its  
usefulness. Your grand nephew, "Rob," missed it just as  
I have, gazing in its direction for so many years  
from my perch atop St. Gaudens' memorial. But mark  
my progress. Boston needs parking spaces. Though  
I have been elevated, you still can't see much beyond the  
city boundaries. If you could, you'd realize that  
metropolitan Boston extends for tens of miles in all  
directions. Even the recreation fields you knew so well  
at Harvard now extend far westward, beyond Acton.  
Automobiles are needed to carry people from the out-  
skirts to downtown Boston. Those autos must be  
parked. The aquarium made its departure so as to pro-  
vide a roost for those vehicles when not engaged.

It should be of interest to you that an aquarium does  
still exist. You'll find it about ten miles southeast of  
your present location, along Route 3, right by the  
Kennedy Memorial Library and close by the Boston  
Harbor. Not a bad relocation, I'm sure you'll agree.

You raised a question about the "bronze weathervane  
cod" (940). The cod, of course, was—and is—of great  
economic and symbolic significance to the  
Commonwealth. The item of your inquiry still sits upon  
the peak of the new Aquarium.

Sir, let me ask a question of you now. Your grand-  
nephew (I'm going to call him Rob from now on if you  
don't object) described the machinery working around  
your pediment in unique ways. He used the words "yel-  
low dinosaur steam shovels," "a girdle of orange," and  
"Puritan pumpkin-colored girders" (940). What was  
your reaction to their onslaught—did they frighten you?  
After all, these implements of construction and the pre-  
cautions taken to shore up the buildings in the sur-  
rounding area may have been unfamiliar to you. I'm  
sure you'll agree their vivid colors warn passersby that  
they should mind their step. But the noise and commo-  
tion may have been a disturbance to your repose. On the

other hand, the “Puritan pumpkin-colored girders” may have suggested your Pilgrim heritage.

By your leave, Colonel, I must now bring this epistle to a conclusion. I hope I have provided you with some of the information you requested. I am processing all sorts of questions I’d like to pose to you. I trust it would not be presumptuous of me to suggest we attempt to continue this correspondence.

Your obedient servant,

Paul M. Rollins (Lieutenant, U.S.M.C., ret.)

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April 6, 2002

Dear Lieutenant Rollins,

It is with pleasure that I accept your invitation to an exchange of correspondence. I understand certain of my biographers have referred to my letters to family and friends while I was with the Grand Army of the Republic as the most voluminous and erudite in U.S. military history. Shall we begin?

The yellow dinosaur steam shovels you inquired about did not frighten me, though they did make me curious. To me, they seemed to be some sort of device a detail of sappers would use in “our” war. I quickly learned your modern instruments were noisy, but harmless to one as “out of bounds” as myself. Over the years I’ve been on this Common, looking out at the State House entrance, I have accepted the erratic movement of those carts you refer to as autos. I also understand that such vehicles must be put up in multi-story stalls. Much more fussy than a good steed, I would say.

If you come across that St. Gaudens fellow, please tell him I think he did a marvelous job in portraying my black troopers, and the manner in which he molded myself upon my charger was truly outstanding. That’s called “bas relief,” I believe. That “bell checked Negro infantry” phrase was an interesting one. I presume the poet was referring to the medium in which the frieze was cast. It was the same alloy of bronze and brass used in rendering a church bell. Who was that one who coined that turn of phrase?

With much affection

R. G. S. (Col., G.A.R.)

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April 11, 2002

Dear Colonel,

Yours of the 6th was received and read with fascination today. I pray, however, that in the future you would address me simply as Paul. My military career was long ago, and using the title of rank was simply an affectation on my part to gain your attention.

To answer your two latest questions, let me say that William James, a friend of your family and one-time professor at Harvard, coined the phrase “bell checked Negro infantry” (940). He composed a poem for the dedication of your statue, and that was one of his most telling lines. Had you lived, undoubtedly, the two of you would have been well acquainted. He also penned the words, “you could almost hear the bronze Negro’s breath.” That is attention getting, don’t you think? Do you know when your monument was dedicated in 1897, the surviving members of your regiment—black and white—came back for the ceremony? How does that ballad go, “Old soldiers never die, they just fade away?”

Now, my question for you—Rob’s poem makes the statement, “Their monument sticks like a fishbone in the city’s throat” (940). Do you have a notion as to what he is driving at with those words? When you last saw Boston on your parade to board the steamship De Molay, just two months before the assault on Fort Wagner, the entire city turned out to show their support for your crusade. Do you think Boston in 1963, 1978 or 2002 would be as supportive of your military, of your efforts to integrate blacks into the warp and woof of New England society?

I must leave you now, but, hopefully, we will be conversing soon again.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Rollins

P.S. Just for your perusal, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the poem that your grand-nephew delivered in 1963.

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April 14, 2002

Dear Mister Rollins,

Thank you for your attentive reply to my last mis-sive. I'm deeply touched to know my memory continues to shine among my extended family.

You raised the question about the simile of the fish-bone—of course I do! Up until that silly “new barbed and galvanized fence” (940) went up, there was a news kiosk right below my perch. I could look out and read the front page of the *Globe*. I knew the contemporary citizens of Boston—at least those centering on “Southey” and Dorchester—found the memorial to a white leader of black troopers to be an anachronism. Keep in mind, sir, I was not a pacifist. I was not an abolitionist. Those were not the banners under which I marched. Keep in mind also I was 25 years old almost to the day when I died. I had little time to formulate a political philosophy. If anything, you could best call me a “paternalist.” I suppose that would mean it was the duty of us Caucasians to be mindful of our black brothers as a father would of a child. Had I lived longer, I might have been able to formulate a more complete philosophy relative to the African.

Let me express my sincere thanks for your sending the complete text of Rob's poem. I'm particularly impressed by his description of my physical presence. You know, I actually was quite short—less than five feet, seven inches, but the “compass-needle” (940) metaphor adds several inches to my self-perception. I'm flattered by the subtle meaning of those words. The direction of freedom for a slave was north. By the reference to the “compass-needle,” Rob has compared my Polaris-facing memorial to a signpost of freedom for the black man. But it strains credulity when he states I “wince at pleasure” (940). If you know me at all, you are well aware that once I was sprung from the Jesuits' snare, I did enjoy those pleasures available to my class.

On the other hand, with all this hubbub around the Common, I could enjoy some “privacy” just now. With that, I will take my leave for the present.

Your Comrade,  
Robert G. Shaw

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April 19, 2002

Sir,

It is pleasing to note the degree of familiarity creeping into our correspondence. I note you addressed me as “mister” in your latest letter. “Mister,” of course, is the familiar greeting among civilians and is also the manner in which junior officers of all services are addressed. I'm taking it as the civilian salutation, but I'd much appreciate your use of my Christian name, Paul, in the future.

Here it is Colonel that I come to the crux of my fascination with you as a human being and as a soldier—but more than a soldier—a leader of men. Rob's line is, “He rejoices in man's lonely, peculiar power to choose life and die.*a*” (940). I know how various scholars interpret those words. I would like to have your response.

I await your reply,

Paul

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April 26, 2002

Dear Paul,

Your latest question creates a mental maelstrom for me. Certainly, I could have chosen life. After all, I had everything to live for. All my life I had wealth, so money could not be my goal. I had “seen the elephant,” both at Cedar Creek and Antietam. I needed no other test of my manhood. I had recently taken a beautiful wife. She reveled in the role of the Regimental Commander's wife. Why should I surrender all that?

In truth, there was no one thing. My parents' expectations were such that a governor's personal invitation to take command of the 54<sup>th</sup> was only to be expected. (I actually turned it down at first, are you aware of that?) I was proud of the job I did turning those pieces of black flotsam and jetsam into a fighting machine. People came down the Providence road just to see my “darkies” drill. Many times I fumed at them, even used the “N” word, but did it with purpose. These people were destined to fight (Dunn 165).

Then, that farewell march through Boston! Frederick

Douglass himself looked on admiringly as his eldest son stepped out with our regiment. Then, the adrenaline rush as I stopped before my own parents' house. There on the veranda stood father and mother, and my loving wife. I saluted them with my saber (Dunn 171).

Later, after we landed on the Sea Isles, we successfully led our minions against Darien in a plundering endeavor. We knew we were good. We were so good that nine other G.A.R. regiments parted their ranks to allow us to pass through them to have the "honor" of being the assault force on Fort Wagner. All of these were small, separate episodes. In total, however, they made a snare from which it was impossible to escape. You see, with all that, I could not "bend...[my] back" as I led my "black soldiers to death" (940). By the time we assembled at the assault point on the beach at Morris Island before Fort Wayne, the chalice of choice had been removed from my lips. I was to die.

I trust this fully answers your question about my options as I led my troops into the fray.

Affectionately,

Robert G.

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May 1, 2002

Dear Robert,

What a reflective response was contained in your last letter. Thank you. One last question of a psychological nature, and I shall then move on. Your nephew, "Rob," penned these telling lines:

Shaw's father wanted no monument  
except the ditch,  
where his son's body was thrown  
and lost with his "niggers" (940).

Can you describe for me your feelings about that incident?

I await your reply.

With sincerest regards,

Paul

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May 7, 2002

Dear Paul,

You cut to the quick! Never have I revealed this before. With my troopers assembled, I gave the signal to move off. Have you ever been on a Carolina beach in July—in a wool uniform! I carried a saber and a Colt repeating pistol. My blackies carried Enfield rifles—twelve pounds apiece. The sand held us back and taunted us further by running into our boots. For the first two hundred yards, we were raked by the lowered cannon before the rebel rampart, until they could depress the muzzles no further. So, for the final four hundred yards, it was a sprint underneath artillery fire, but into the muzzles of several hundred sharp-shooting Confederates. Little flecks of orange white fire indicated the location of the rifles that opposed us. My lungs were exploding from the exertion, but my men were close on my heels, and I was their leader. Finally, we were at the base of the wall. On the charge, I had had my cap shot off and received a wound that partially snipped off my right ear. Blood and sweat clouded my vision, but my troops—those surviving the dash—were with me.

I selected a spot to scale. It was a low spot between the third and fourth gun emplacement. Hand and foot up the sand barricade I climbed. All around me black faces in blue uniforms were following me—cursing and dying.

Then I was at the top of the parapet. There was a level walkway on top, then a drop into the fort's bowels. I waved my sword to spur on my black troopers. Minie balls knocked the saber from my hand, and other missiles peppered my torso as I fell forward into the fort. My troopers, and I, though dead, had breached the wall—at least temporarily.

I know now that initial charge failed. But it is reassuring to me to know that the more than two hundred and fifty black troopers who accompanied me to Valhalla that day did so through the same common "ditch" (940). My father's decision was the proper one.

With this account, I believe our correspondence

should come to a close. I don't think much more is to be gained by reliving a history long since considered an antiquity.

Always, dear sir, most affectionately,

Robert G. Shaw

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So, my conversations with the good Colonel are now over and, for that matter, my explication of the poem "For the Union Dead" is nearly over also.

The poet makes the point, "there are no statues for the last war here," which is an accurate statement. Though there was in Boston no memorial to Spanish-American war veterans either, the First World War is remembered, if obliquely, through the device of the Callaghan Tunnel—the passageway between downtown Boston and Logan Airport. As Lowell sees it, the only recognition of the Second World War, at least at the time he wrote the poem, is a now fading advertisement of a Mosler Safe that survived the first atomic bomb blast.

Oh, well! Maybe the almost completed "Teddy Tunnel" can be looked upon as a memorial to those who served in World War II and Korea instead of simply a token to a ballplayer who was also a warrior.

But has enough been said here? What has become of the vaunted civility of Boston? Have the citizenry become so callous of the sacrifices of its sons and daughters they can fashion as memorials only constructions that speed them on their ways in and out of the city? Can they no longer take the time from their self-dedicated efforts to reflect on the devotion of citizens past? A commercial depiction of an otherwise momentous event hardly seems the appropriate way to commemorate our nation's greatest struggle.

The poet is not quite through with us. While he has spent considerable time reminding us of those sacrifices made in the nineteenth century to secure equality, he taunts us with the "drained faces of Negro school children rising like balloons" (941). The immediate picture is one of the streets of Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham, Alabama. But, in my mind, I also see flashes of the Boston of Kevin White and Mayor Tobin one hundred years after Shaw. The egalitarian bent of

Shaw's Boston has been superseded by the raucous voices of Southey and Dorchester.

Before the poet bids adieu, he wishes to note the absence of the one-time inhabitants of the old aquarium. Those deep denizens quietly circled about in their glass confines. The fish, "cowed, compliant" (939), nosed about seemingly oblivious to both spectators and their aquatic companions.

Though departed, there remains at least a metaphor of their former presence. Now a different type of fish, one hammered by multi-tonned presses from steel, nose around the grounds of the old aquarium. In gaudy color and with finny protuberances, they bear a striking resemblance to the former aquarium residents. There are other resemblances. Like the fish, these metallic fishes careen on their own way, unknowing and uncaring, with windows buttoned up, oblivious to the antique and hallowed ground they circumnavigate.

*Dulce Et Decorum Pro Patria Mori Est*

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Evaluation: Paul chose to "imagined a dialogue between Colonel Robert G. Shaw—a nineteenth-century Civil War Colonel and the leader of the first all-black military regiment—and himself. And, too, Paul used Robert Lowell's famous poem "For the Union Dead" as a kind of subtext. (We'd studied Lowell's poem in our linked course). There is, in sum, a lot going on in this piece of writing. It's a strange and wondrous response.

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# On the Road of Racism and Rage: Reversing Bigotry (1964-2002)

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Anthonii Sanders

Course: English 100 (Composition)

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

*Identify a struggle you've been dealing with in your life for a significant period of time. Track the struggle from its beginnings up to its resolution or to the present time.*

The reason I explore the road to reversing bigotry is because I truly believe that racism is what defines America. Bigotry was just a rumor that started years and years ago, probably with the creation of man. People always need something, someone, somewhere to reflect negatively upon in order to raise their self-worth, so therefore there's always a scapegoat: a nigger, a blanket ass, chink nigger, injun, white boy, peckerwood. For some people, it is easy to say that these words are sickening. For others, they are in daily use. The road I am still traveling often runs into paths that will lead me to anger or to rage, but by picking up pen instead of sword, I reflect more on the stimulus than on the symptoms.

*The Penny Road Pub has east- and west-facing seats and a liquor display in the center. Off to the right is a stage that I hope to be playing on, unless I get really lucky and end up playing on the main stage, which is upstairs. It's a dark bar, even in the daytime, with wood grain everywhere. It looks like a classic bar. There are bikers in Harley shirts, a blonde bartender, a brunette bartender, and two blonde managers—I think they're sisters. Costa Rican workers speaking in Spanish keep looking at*

*me. One says to the other, "Hola, este Negro to en Espanola,é" and I say, "No puero, Hoy Americano.é" He then offers to by me a drink, but I say "No thanks. I'm not staying long.é" He asks me where I learned Spanish, and I say "years of working in restaurants."*

Often, I reflect on the incidents I have gone through in my life with humor and a tongue-in-cheek sense of benign idiocy, because I don't think a lot of America knows any better about why they're racist, and they shouldn't. Every one of the racists that I've encountered, all the hatred I've encountered, all were begun by a racist who taught a racist, by a hater who taught a hater, onward back into time. Therefore, I kind of view it in a haze and escape it through laughter, because I don't really think that people know any better. And for the ignorant, and those who don't know other words to use or how to use other words, racial slurs are an easy catch. I'm even guilty of that myself—especially in traffic—boy, the names I've used. But in my quest to become a teacher of positivity and history, I write and tell stories that reflect timeless, timely states of affairs or conditions that my students and children have told me almost make them feel as though they were there. This is very pleasing to me. I guess that's why I've always wanted to be a teacher. Even in my music, I teach.

It starts back in Madison, Wisconsin, at Trux Air Force Base in 1964. My father was stationed there. We lived off base in civilian housing. My father had been in the Air Force just 10 years, and already he had 4 children, living on a sergeant's pay. Money was tight, and the schools had not yet been integrated. And we, as an African-American family, were hard pressed to get education. We integrated Saint Mary's Catholic school. The problem with racism in Madison wasn't racism against blacks or negroes, as we were referred to then, but more that the poor whites had anti-Indian prejudices. This is what I view as my first encounter with racism. I was 5 years old. I was on my way to my first day of kindergarten. There was a crowd of what my father referred to as trash and hillbillies. They called me blanket ass, red hide nigger, and grease nigger, and they threw things at my mother, myself, and my brother. The part I find amusing is that they stopped when they saw my father and some of his Air Force friends, white and black,

approach. The loudest mouth of the rednecks said to my father, "Oh, you's niggers. We thought you was injuns! It's okay for Negroes to go to that school. It's Catholic anyways. Just keep your kids away from ours and we'll keep our kids away from yours and everything will be fine." When I looked up into this tall man's face, into his blue-eyed stare, he looked back at me—and I'll never forget this—he said, "little boy, you sure look injun." When I reflect upon this, we did look like Indians. We had long, straight hair, and very oriental looking eyes. For all intents and purposes, we looked exactly like Indians, Native Americans as they're now called, but not back then. Both maternal grandparents of mine have full blooded grandparents of Native American descent.

The reason I reflect so deeply on this particular memory is because my father was previously stationed in Germany, where I was born. As a small child in Germany and even later in Chicago, I never heard the word nigger; I didn't hear it until I moved to Madison, Wisconsin. Not only was it my first experience with school, but it was my first experience with white hatred of people who were not white. I find it most amusing now and found it even hilarious back then that it's usually a large group of whites gathered when racial slurs are being used. As a person of color, I can only guess what racist white people say to each other. But nonetheless, they rarely say it to anyone's face. It's typically when the numbers are enormously in their favor that they even utter these slurs. Growing up, we didn't hear these slurs when there were, say, fifteen, black kids together. But, oh boy, if there was a small group of us, like when I was chased for a whole semester at St. Dorothy's on the south side of Chicago, which my cousins and myself integrated in 1965, there were plenty of slurs to be heard.

*The bikers don't really seem like real bikers because all of their gear appears to be brand new and they all wear Rolexes and expensive jewelry. And none of them are smoking, and I know most hard-core bikers smoke something. One guy has a marijuana leaf tattoo with a deuce of clubs on his arm, which I know to be a symbol of an Irish gang. The others just seem like weekend warriors or part-time bikers—Nubies, as they're called*

*on the West Coast. The blonde and the brunette bartender are in competition to serve shots. It seems that they are looking to me, because I am something different than the obviously boring motorcycle talk that they must've been enduring most of the day.*

The most peculiar part about all of these incidents is that they happened in the North. Everybody knew about racism in the South, but I wonder if people realized that it was just as racist in the good ole North. 1966. One more brother is born. One of my brothers, that is, to my sainted mother who now had 6 boys, who insisted on a Catholic upbringing, which brought us to Saint Theresa's Catholic Church in Santa Maria, California. My father was stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base, where we ran into a whole different kind of racism, and my first rage, my first fight. This time, it was with the Catholic Mexicans against the anti-military and racist white people who lived on the civilian economy and were threatened by the military presence. The fight started over the irrigation ditch where my crew and I did a lot of tricks on bikes and skateboards. These skateboards were made out of boards and rollerskates. The bikes we rode were regular Schwinn's. I guess we were pioneers of concrete tricks. The white kids were well off and often wanted to run the Mexican kids away. They were very status conscious; therefore, they didn't like the military personnel in general. Since there were very few black kids, the large Mexican community allowed us to play with them, and that's who became our crew. We were, in fact, very territorial of our neighborhood, and the white kids wanted to skate our aqueduct. It was 50 to 80 feet tall and, in some places, 100 feet wide. Great speed could be reached on skateboards and bikes. "Getting good air time" was the goal. The fight started when we caught the Anglos on our turf. They were skating and spray-painting the walls of our ditch. We set a trap for them that evening. We emptied a dump truck full of rocks on them in a pretty vicious attack. The next day, the fight really heated up when older white kids came back with bars, sticks, and knives. Several people on both sides ended up in the hospital. Parents were involved. Later, military and state police came to break up the fight. The mayor declared martial law. That was

the time of the Vietnam War. When we left Santa Maria for Turkey, where my father was being stationed, we had to drive cross-country to New York first. I witnessed the anti-war riots as we passed through Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. I'll never forget the protestors. I had never seen people of all colors fighting one foe, as opposed to fighting people over race. In Santa Maria, it had been constant tension between the white migrant workers, the Mexican migrant workers, and the local middle class whites, who were easily inflamed in any incident. One time, I road my banana seat stingray 3-speed bicycle through the middle of an all white Knights of Columbus meeting, and the older white kids chased me for blocks, throwing bricks and sticks. I think it's enormously funny, as I reflect back on it, because the Mexican kids always had better aim. When they tried to scare away the Niggolitos, they always hit them.

*The plaque behind the bar reads "Established 1838." and there are a lot of photographs of railroad workers on the walls. To the left of the stage is this black guy talking to a group of people about BMWs. On and on he goes about the value of BMWs and German engineering and how fast they are. I guess that he must be a salesman or some kind of car dealer. He's got racing gloves on, which I think is really corny because you're only supposed to drive 55 to 65 miles per hour or whatever the speed limit is around here.*

We moved a lot. And I often had to leave my friends behind. My Air Force dad lost a lot of friends in Vietnam. This was very hard for him because he always said he wanted to be "in the shit" to get promotion and because he was an airman. But he was held back by having so many kids. Mom and dad almost split up over the war. In Turkey, it wasn't racism because of color, it was racism because we were Americans. We spent four years in Turkey. From there, we moved back to California—Sacramento, this time.

I graduated from Foothill Senior High School, Sacramento, California, in 1977. Only 37 out of the 214 blacks who graduated that year are still "alive." Heart attacks, overdoses, and car or motorcycle accidents account for most of the deaths. On top of that, 54 of

those 214 blacks are incarcerated for life—when you are in that situation, it's hard to say you're still alive. I was forced to go into the military and was honorably discharged in 1980.

I have fought many battles, both emotionally and physically, but I don't really want to dwell on this aspect and the pain that these times caused in my life. But on occasion, I reflect upon those days, and wonder how the people are that I survived with in the 1980s—pimps, drug dealers, drug users, stabbers and shooters, and lots of girls. However, during my 25 years as an entertainer, on my road to control my rage, I have made light of racism as a stand-up comedian. This is somewhat unfortunate, for a lot of entertainment has to do with racial stereotypes. Where would comedy be without those stereotypes? There were those I liked and loved and joked with and who liked me doing it. I guess I have the gift of gab.

*Right next to me there's this old guy talking about rock and roll. And I'm here inquiring about playing in the bar. And when the manager is talking to me about music, the old guy stops talking about rock and roll and tells me to play some funk, some old style funk, when I play there. He tells me to rock these boring people and "don't play any whiny songs about your girlfriends!" He asks, "You don't, do you?" He keeps saying, "Please don't." And then he says, "Don't ask the manager about racism." Then this drunk older fella says he hates when black guys cry about race and that's why they never get anywhere. And then he asks, "Do you live out here?" I answer yes, and that I hope he's not Klan. Right then he says he hates the Klan and he hates all racism and all crybabies and jackasses that fly by in BMWs.*

Now, I am going to be a teacher. I've seen the best and the worst of America. I have been the victim and the perpetrator of many deeds, some of them above board, some of them below board. And yes, I guess, some of those deeds have been racist. But what I have gained from this struggle is an appreciation for the depth of jealousy and hatred that people can go to, but also my love for my fellow humans. In my historical view and in many ways, scientists have proven that all life started in

**On the Road of Racism and Rage:  
Reversing Bigotry (1964-2002)**

Pangea, modern Africa. Even now, scientists have proven that all human beings share the same prehistoric DNA. In America, there are only two colors that count—red and green. If you don't have blood, you're dead, and if you don't have money, you're dead. So, to me, we're all the same, with just different degrees of stupidity. Only completely bored or completely incompetent people have time to even worry about what someone of a so-called "other race" is doing. All people should just mind their own lives.

*The black guy finishes his drink and leaves, still wearing the dorky racing gloves. Then the old guy's buddy leans across the bar and almost spilling everyone's drinks, puts his hand on my shoulder and tells me that his buddy was in Vietnam and that people are people—yellow, black, blue, or purple—they all suck. "It's just here in the USA they're all liars, two-faced liars, always trying to get to the light ahead of you. Where are they going to anyway? Home to their boring lives. What a bunch of f'in hypocrites." Immediately, behind me, out the window, I see in the parking spaces for bikes only, about nine motorcycles pull up right next to my truck. And as I've decided to leave and I'm getting in my truck, one of the bikers beeps his horn and says, "Nice truck, where's your BMW?" I laugh and say, "Peace out."*

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*Evaluation: We have not all experienced racism in the USA as Mr. Sanders has, and many of us have lived as long or much longer than he has. However, whatever we've experienced, very few of us have lived with Mr. Sanders' attentiveness, and very few of us are able to relate our experiences, past and present, with the personality and detail that make this writing live and breathe. This is highly professional work.*

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# Gentrification in Chicago

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Stephanie L. Simon

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Lisa Carriere

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Assignment:

*Students were asked to write a persuasive essay about an issue in their neighborhood and use appropriate MLA citation.*

The term “gentrification” refers to a return of high socioeconomic status households to certain urban neighborhoods (Liblaw par. 5). Generally, when a particular area of the city has potential for greater amounts of housing, with less commercial quarters, it can be subjected to gentrification. Since the early 1990s, the Ravenswood/Lake View area of Chicago has been subject to such gentrification, which occurs when an area considered middle-class begins to be overrun by a new set of young, working-class people. These new residents have been coined “yuppies,” or young, urban professionals. Yuppies are generally aged between 24 and 34 years old, with white-collar office jobs, which leave them a high disposable income (Neumeyer par. 16). While the Ravenswood/Lake View community is a model neighborhood for progression, through a higher cost of living, it is losing the very residents who helped make it the middle-class area it was until the mid-1990s, when gentrification began.

The area itself is situated north of upper class areas such as Lincoln Park and Gold Coast and is home to a higher ratio of residential buildings to commercial ones.

The neighborhood has lower rent prices than found in the higher-priced Lincoln Park area. The area is also centralized when considering transportation; the “El” runs right through it, and it is easily accessible to both the Kennedy and Lake Shore Drive expressways (Pearce par. 11). The greatest advantage this neighborhood has, however, is with its buildings.

The Ravenswood/Lake View area is becoming an area of greater financial investment. Older buildings are either being torn down to make room for new developments, or they are being converted into lofts and condominiums. Townhouses can also be erected in smaller amounts of space and stacked one on top of another. Existing property is also rising in value; buildings, single-family homes, and two-flats are doubling in value after a few short years (Neumeyer par. 13). Buildings of an industrial means are just as valuable to new business owners, and larger structures can also be converted into lofts. It has become a trend for yuppies to purchase older, Victorian structures and renovate them with their own money, to create their own dream homes (par. 17).

Gentrification has also been correlated with improvements in communities’ schools, children’s facilities, and businesses (Liblaw par. 8). Property values are rising due to neighborhood upgrading done by wealthier residents who fix up dilapidated buildings. Homeowners who have purchased such property in the 1980s or even before are making huge profits, and the whole community is enjoying a growing tax base. Many homes for sale in Ravenswood are selling in as little as 10 days, and way above their list prices (Pearce par. 8). Lots that once contained single-family or two-flat homes can be rebuilt to contain five condos in one building, increasing neighborhood populations.

The downfall of gentrification is that as a neighborhood improves, it also becomes less affordable for its existing residents (Rivera par. 3). While a younger generation wheels and deals its way into the neighborhood, current residents are being pushed out. With new development and renovation, property taxes are rising, and more inhabitants are unable to pay them (Rivera par. 2). In a lot of cases, this means they must evacuate and find other neighborhoods to live in. Senior citizens are also finding it harder to keep up with the rising rent costs,

and they are being forced out of the buildings in which some have lived for their entire lives (Pearce par. 18). Some rely on rent control laws for freedom from rising rent costs, which are met by obvious opposition from landlords (Lydersen par. 23). Lower-income neighborhoods are notoriously more subject to gangs and violence, and people from former middle-class areas are being forced to opt to raise their families there. Another growing problem is that of the “working homeless”—people who have jobs but cannot afford a place to live, even in lower-income neighborhoods (Neumeyer par. 20). Many are finding refuge in Wisconsin and Indiana because affordable housing in Chicago has become unobtainable. Temptation to renovate buildings in lower-income areas into condos is becoming harder for some landlords to resist, which makes the housing available for poorer people extremely limited.

Another concern is that of neighborhoods with changing cultural and age brackets. In the past, the Ravenswood/Lake View area has been culturally diverse, and the ages ranged all over the board. Now, it boasts the highest concentration of 24- to 34-year-olds in the country (*Relocation Guide* par. 3). Some residents are also fearful that the city leaders are conspiring to force residents out to create a predominantly white, yuppie area (Rivera par. 2). Yuppie culture is of mostly single white people, living alone. Some are married, but predominantly, they do not have children. This is quickly replacing the large-family trend that has existed for so many years. Many residents feel that yuppies are changing the neighborhood too drastically, bringing in corporate coffeehouses and SUV dealerships (*Relocation Guide* par. 2). Angst against yuppie gentrification is often displayed on new buildings and billboards advertising the creation of new loft or townhouse community (Liblaw par. 1). “Die yuppie scum” and “yuppies go home” are phrases commonly written on such advertisements.

Ravenswood/Lake View is an area where families purchased homes and rented apartments, and have been living there for years or in some cases, generations. Gentrification has forced many of these residents to sell their homes and rent apartments in more affordable areas. People who were renters to begin with are being forced out by new landlords who wish to renovate buildings and raise rent significantly. Smaller businesses in

the area are finding it harder to succeed, and corporate chains are moving into the vicinity of those small businesses and driving them out. The profits of real estate investment are impossible to pass up for landowners, and vacant buildings in overcrowded areas only create breeding grounds for violence and gang activity. Residents of all communities wish to have a safe, affordable place for their children to grow up. Gentrification has made this dream more difficult to achieve for people of a lower to middle income bracket. It has made the idea of a nice home in the city an impossibility for people who have already lived there for years, but who oppose the increase in property taxes. Elimination of the practice of gentrification will also prove difficult, and unfortunately for the residents of the Ravenswood/Lake View area, it probably won't occur at all.

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Evaluation: *This essay meets all of the assignment's requirements. It is not only expertly organized, it also makes use of properly formatted citations. Lakeview/Ravenswood was Stephanie's home for 17 years, so she writes knowledgeably and confidently, in a way that helps the reader gather a deeper understanding of gentrification.*

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# *Rapunzel* and *Burd Janet:* Damsel in Distress or Princess Charming?

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Holly Slawkowski

Course: Literature 219 (Children's Literature)

Instructor: Anne Davidovicz

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Assignment:

*Write a literary analysis based  
on works pertinent to the course.*

Like many little girls, I remember being captivated by the fairytale stories of *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White*, with their castles, enchantments, handsome princes, and most of all, the beautiful princesses. Now, upon examining these stories years later, I was disappointed to realize that the heroines of these stories are almost interchangeable: young, beautiful girls who are rescued from their unfortunate circumstances by a handsome prince. These heroines have all the odds against them, with evil stepmothers and witches, but none of them seem able, or even willing, to try to get herself out of trouble. The title characters in *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, and *Snow White* are all extraordinarily kind and good, but none show any real sign of intelligence.

I was thrilled then, to find a collection of fairy tales titled *Not One Damsel in Distress: World Folktales for Strong Girls*. This book is full of stories from around the world, in which a quick-thinking female saves the day and often rescues her own Prince Charming in the process. These stories were not created by twentieth-century feminists but have been passed down through

generations just like the other more well-known fairy tales. In thinking about these fairy tales versus the ones I remember loving as a child, I found some similarities between a Scottish tale called *Burd Janet*, and the more traditional *Rapunzel*, as told by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm. Both stories involve young lovers and an enchantress holding one of them captive, although the details are different. The most striking difference can be seen in the title characters, Burd Janet and Rapunzel, who face somewhat similar circumstances, but handle them very differently. Rapunzel, like Cinderella and Snow White, is beautiful but foolish, whereas Burd Janet proves to be a real hero. *Rapunzel* may be an enjoyable story, but *Burd Janet* has all the great elements of a fairy tale, along with a strong, well-developed female character.

Before we examine the similarities and differences between Rapunzel and Burd Janet, we must look at each of their stories individually. Rapunzel's story begins with her parents, who are wishing very much for a child. The woman sees some rampion in the neighbor's yard but can not have any of it, because the neighbor is, of course, a witch, of whom everyone is afraid. The woman grows sick with longing, so her husband decides he loves his wife more than he fears the witch, and he steals some rampion for her. The rampion is so good that his wife must have more, so the husband goes back a second time and is caught by the witch. She offers him all the rampion he wants in exchange for a child, once the couple has one. He agrees, out of fear, so when the child is born, the witch takes her and names her Rapunzel, another name for rampion. When Rapunzel turns twelve, she is locked up in a tower in the wood.

The witch, who Rapunzel knew as Mother Gothel, would go to Rapunzel each day and cry, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair," and she would climb up the girl's long beautiful hair to the tower. Rapunzel would get lonely and pass the time by singing, until one day the king's son overheard her. He watched as Mother Gothel climbed up Rapunzel's hair, and that night he tried it himself: "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair." He climbed up and asked her to be his bride, but since she could not get down, Rapunzel suggested that

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he come every night and bring her a piece of silken rope, so that she could make a ladder and climb down. This shrewd idea is our one hope for Rapunzel, until one day she inadvertently asks Mother Gothel, "Why do you climb up so slowly, when it only takes the king's son a moment?" With that, Mother Gothel cuts off Rapunzel's long hair, and sends her off to "a waste and desert place" (Griffith 72). Then, when the king's son shows up, expecting to see his Rapunzel, Mother Gothel is waiting. He leaps from the tower and is blinded by thorns when he lands. He is forced to wander through the desert, lonely and blind, until years later when he happens upon Rapunzel and the two children she has borne. Her tears restore his vision, and of course they live happily ever after (Griffith 70-72).

*Rapunzel's* blend of beauty, true love, and witchery are enough to delight any child, but the Scottish tale of *Burd Janet* turns these same elements into a more detailed, better developed story, with a very bold young woman. The story begins with a description of a castle called Carterhaugh, which had been taken over by the "Fair Folk," or fairies. Children would go down to Carterhaugh on dares, but no one ever went twice. Young Burd Janet, whose nickname was given by her nanny, was the clan chief's daughter, and she was determined to take over Carterhaugh when she was old enough, since it had belonged to her father's father's father. Sure enough, on her sixteenth birthday, Burd Janet went to Carterhaugh and plucked a single red rose that was blooming and claimed the castle as her own.

Then appeared a young man in front of her, who explained that he had been held captive by the queen of the Fair Folk, and that he was to be sacrificed the following night. The queen made a sacrifice every seven years, and for ten times sixteen years, she had loved the young man, named Tam Lin, and kept him, but now she loved another, so Tam Lin was chosen to die. Only his true love could save him, and Burd Janet decided then and there that she would love him and save him.

The next evening Burd Janet set out, per Tam Lin's instructions, with earth from the garden and a bottle of holy water. She went down near Carterhaugh and waited for the fairy troop. She let the first two horses pass, and when the third went by, she leapt out and pulled

Tam Lin to the ground. They were immediately surrounded by the fairy troop, and the Fairy Queen began to bargain with Burd Janet. She offered gold and silver, then jewels. Burd Janet only hesitated for a moment when the fairy queen offered her Carterhaugh in exchange for Tam Lin. The brave girl boldly replied, "I shall have Carterhaugh whether you will it or no. . . g and Tam Lin, as well" (Yolen 55).

Burd Janet held onto Tam Lin as the Fairy Queen turned him into a serpent, then a lion, and finally a burning brand. She dropped the brand into the well, then poured the holy water in, and out came Tam Lin. Burd Janet then made a circle of protection around herself and Tam Lin with the earth she had brought with her. As the daylight broke, the fairy troop rode away, leaving Burd Janet and Tam Lin to live happily at Carterhaugh for many years (Yolen 48-56). *Burd Janet* has a happy, peaceful ending, much like the one we found in *Rapunzel*.

The two stories are obviously quite different in details and plot, but there are many similar elements found in both. Each story begins, for example, with a description of some forbidden territory. In *Rapunzel*, it is the witch's garden full of inviting vegetables and flowers, namely the rampion, that starts all the trouble. In *Burd Janet*, it is the castle at Carterhaugh, "a strange, forbidding castle" (Yolen 48). These ominous introductions set the tone for both stories and continue to be important throughout each. In *Burd Janet*, much of the action occurs at Carterhaugh, and in *Rapunzel*, the idea of forbidden territory continues with both the tower and the desert. Both stories too have the idea of a forbidden lover, with the king's son visiting Rapunzel each night, and Burd Janet deciding she will love Tam Lin in order to save him.

In addition to their grim settings, both *Burd Janet* and *Rapunzel* contain a set of foil characters, the beautiful youth and the enchantress that holds him or her captive: "Rapunzel was the most beautiful child in the world. When she was twelve years old the witch shut her up in a tower in the middle of the wood, and it had neither steps nor door, only a small window above" (Griffith 71). Her plight is similar to that of Tam Lin, who was "the handsomest young man Burd Janet had

ever seen" (Yolen 51). He had, many years ago, been thrown from his horse and taken in by the fairy queen. He had lived with her at Carterhaugh ever since, "never growing older, never dying" (Yolen 51). In contrast to Rapunzel and Tam Lin, there are Mother Gothel and the Fairy Queen, neither one who seems to be entirely bad. Mother Gothel takes care of Rapunzel and goes to see her every day. It is only when Mother Gothel realizes that the king's son has been coming up behind her back, that she becomes "hard-hearted," sending Rapunzel away, and showing the king's son her "wicked glittering eyes" (Griffith 72). Similarly, the fairy queen has long loved and cared for Tam Lin, but she shows her cruelty by turning on him for another. When Burd Janet sees the fairy troop, "the coldest and most beautiful face" belonged to the Fairy Queen (Yolen 54). The stories of *Rapunzel* and *Burd Janet* have comparable characters, both good and wicked.

Though their backgrounds are different, Rapunzel and Tam Lin are faced with similar circumstances, each being shut off from the world until they meet their true love. In *Rapunzel*, the king's son happens upon a singing Rapunzel and wants to take her away to be his bride. He and Rapunzel come up with a plan for her escape, from the tower and from Mother Gothel. Burd Janet, in a like manner, happens upon Tam Lin while she is trying to take over her inheritance. She is so smitten with Tam Lin that she agrees to face the Fairy Queen and rescue him, and here again a plan is made. This is a turning point for both stories, with the wicked female standing in the way of true love, and this is where each story begins to take a different turn.

The key difference is what the heroine does in each story. Rapunzel stupidly gives the king's son away to Mother Gothel by letting it slip that he climbs up her hair faster than she does. Because of her mistake, Rapunzel is banished, and the king's son unexpectedly finds himself at the witch's mercy. The lovers are separated, and Rapunzel finds no way to help him. She resigns herself to being alone again, although she now has two children with her. Burd Janet, on the other hand, risks her life to rescue Tam Lin, and even when the Fairy Queen tries to bargain with her, Burd Janet stands her ground. The Fairy Queen offers Burd Janet

the one thing she desires most, Carterhaugh, and Burd Janet boldly replies that she will have both. Perhaps if Rapunzel had been so bold with Mother Gothel, she could have spared herself and the king's son years of misery. Instead, Rapunzel is banished and alone until the king's son happens by chance once again to find her. Rapunzel is able, at the very least, to save her true love from blindness when her tears restore his vision, but she is never put through the kind of rigorous test that Burd Janet must endure.

*Burd Janet* and *Rapunzel* are obviously two different fairy tales with different storylines, but there are many parallels in setting, characterization, and plot. What makes *Burd Janet* stand out then, is the exceptional character of Burd Janet herself. Rapunzel is a typical fairy tale heroine; one might interchange her with the title character in either *Cinderella* or *Snow White*, among others. She is young, beautiful, under the power of a wicked mother figure, and rescued by her true love. Rapunzel goes so far as to give away her true love, accidentally as it may be, and she never really finds a way to help herself. She does show one sign of thinking at least, when she tells the king's son to bring her a piece of silken rope each time he comes, but unfortunately she never gets to see her idea through. Burd Janet is young and beautiful, as well, but she is also headstrong and feisty. She fearlessly goes to Carterhaugh to claim what is hers, and she agrees to save Tam Lin at once when she hears that only his true love can save him. She demonstrates her courage and strength by standing up to the Fairy Queen, and thinking under pressure, she is able to follow the instructions that Tam Lin had given her. Both Rapunzel and Burd Janet find themselves a happy ending, but Rapunzel allows herself to be rescued, while Burd Janet really takes the initiative and is the rescuer. Characters like Rapunzel are commonly found in fairy tales, but Burd Janet is a truly unique heroine. It is not a matter of Burd Janet taking on a typically masculine role either, since in *Rapunzel*, the king's son only finds Rapunzel by chance, twice. He shows no more signs of thinking than Rapunzel does, and like many other fairy tale princes, he simply has to show up.

***Rapunzel and Burd Janet:*  
Damsel in Distress or Princess Charming?**

Fairy tales are often appealing because of all the magical elements and the exciting plot twists. Characters are typically less important, and we can see this in *Rapunzel*, which, with its thinly developed characters, still makes for an exciting story. The tale combines a child shut off from the world, a witch, a handsome young prince, and a helpless maiden with long beautiful hair, all in a secret tower in the woods. Similar elements, a child shut off from the world, a band of fairies, a handsome young man, and a foreboding castle make for an interesting story in *Burd Janet*, and the story is more complex with better developed characters. *Burd Janet* is an atypical fairy tale, in that its characters are more developed, and further that the real hero in the story is the brave young girl. *Burd Janet* contains all the things I remember loving about fairy tales, without the cookie cutter fairy tale princess found in *Rapunzel* and other stories. The story of *Burd Janet* is a reminder that not all fairy tale heroines are interchangeable, that some characters handle similar situations very differently, and that sometimes it's the damsel who must rescue her Prince Charming from distress.

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Evaluation: *Holly writes a literate and engaging comparative analysis of two works—one known, one relatively unknown (in North American culture)—with stunning results. Her writing displays sensitivity to language and knowledge of subject matter.*

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# An Awakening

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David Sommers

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Kristin Piepenburg

## Assignment:

Write a research paper on a work of literature, incorporating at least seven secondary sources.

“Battle Royal,” by Ralph Ellison, is a somber, sobering story that brings to light the reality of the free and united American South in the early 1900s. The narrator is a young man with great ambition, hopes, and dreams, a person who believes his dreams can become reality and that the ambitions of one can unite the whole. The white men in the story are depicted as leading, upstanding citizens of the town, men to be respected, but their character reflects the cliché, “don’t judge a book by its cover.” The narrator’s problem revolves around his seeking answers to the ways of the world and learning that how life appears is not necessarily reality. “Battle Royal” reveals the differing ideas on freedom between blacks and whites in the American South during the early 1900s. Racism rears its ugly face in many different forms throughout humanity, unfortunately most often and in this story as a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Ralph Ellison was born on March 1, 1914, in Oklahoma City. Ellison’s father thoroughly enjoyed reading, and named his son after the famed author, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ralph Ellison attended Tuskegee Institute, an all black college, and after three years he left Tuskegee, unable to afford college, and headed to New York. He joined the U.S. Marines in 1943, and it was about this time when his true passion for writing accelerated. Ellison first jotted down, “I am an invisible man” on a piece of notepaper at a friend’s home. “‘Battle Royal’ was first published as a short story in *Horizon* in 1947 under the title “Invisible Man.” It later became the first chapter of Ralph Ellison’s only novel, *Invisible Man* (1952), whose title comes from a phrase at the beginning of the story: ‘But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man!’” (Macdonald 1). Once “Battle Royal” was published as a short story, Ellison continued writing, and seven years later he completed *Invisible Man*. Upon this publication, Ellison went from unknown author to being very famous. His was a rare book from a black author, which caught both black and white audiences. Due to the topics of Ellison’s other writings, many blacks later looked at him as an “Uncle Tom,” “a black person that did what the white men wanted him to do.” Ellison did not accept the idea that black people should create or write just for the black race. For Ellison, “[...] it was important that everything be an integration of both black and white” (Ballard 1). *Invisible Man* is not directly autobiography of Ellison’s life, yet many of his ideals and views are seen in the young narrator.

The narrator of “Battle Royal” is a young man who is confused about his own identity, yet confident and full of hopes and dreams. The battle royal was a fight amongst young black boys, hosted and staged by a group of the town’s leading white men. At the battle royal, the narrator learns a life lesson about the conflict of reality versus ideals. In the beginning of the story, the narrator is confused about where life will lead him, and he has set up his own ideals of how life should be, and yet all of the answers seem to contradict each other and himself as he exclaims, “I accepted their answers too, though they were often in contradiction and even self-contradictory” (Ellison 937). This strongly suggests confusion in the narrator and symbolizes the thought process of many

youth. On the day of the narrator's high school graduation, he delivered a speech to his fellow graduating students. This speech was praised and applauded by his community, and his confidence in his ideals soared. The narrator, in the beginning of the story, also demonstrates self-confidence when he says, "Everyone praised me and I was invited to give the speech at a gathering of the town's leading citizens. It was a triumph for our whole community" (938). In this quote, we sense the narrator being reassured that everyone wants to hear his ideals, that just maybe, he will be the one to make a difference.

Early in the story, the narrator recalls his grandfather's dying words, uttered a few years prior to the narrator's graduation. Here, the grandfather gave a sermon, explaining how one needs to live in the white man's world. This compounded the narrator's confusion. The grandfather stated, "Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins. . . ." (938). At this point, the grandfather was describing how one must masquerade who he really is so that he can fit in with the white world. This, from the grandfather, muddied the waters for the narrator, as he exclaims, "It became a constant puzzle, which lay unanswered in the back of my mind. And whenever things went well for me I remembered my grandfather. . . ." To the narrator, this was like a train wreck; he could either be himself and make a difference or live out his grandfather's instructions and be an "invisible man" (937). These words became the driving force within the narrator.

Through the story, the narrator clashes with many emotions and is confused by the actions and appearances of others. The narrator had thoroughly impressed his own community through the speech he had written, and now he was invited to deliver that speech to a group of the town's leading white people. The narrator felt excitement that this invitation, and the delivery of his speech, would bring down the walls of separation and create the start of social equality. He was going to lead his people into unity, as he states, "It was a triumph for our whole community" (938). This suggests that he was his community's chosen one, and all confidence was in him to lead them out of separation and into true unity.

The narrator, in the beginning of "Battle Royal,"

explains how his people were told that they were free; that socially, black and white were to be separate like fingers, yet, in progress, they were to be one as the hand. African-American educator and community leader Booker T. Washington told this to both the black and white communities, when he gave his very famous speech called "The Atlanta Exposition Address" in 1895 (Washington 948). Booker T. Washington was born into slavery in 1856. Washington was Principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which he founded in 1881 ("Up From Slavery" 1). Washington was "[...] one of the most influential black men of his time" ("Up From Slavery" 1). In the "Battle Royal," the narrator even mentions how he would like to be just like Booker T. Washington. This also reveals confusion, contradiction, and naiveté within the young narrator. The narrator believed he could find "[...] social equality. . . ." (946), whereas Washington believed that one should not strive for social equality. In the Atlanta Exposition Address, Booker T. Washington stated that "Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life" and that "It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top" (948). However, unbeknownst to our narrator, Washington was known to have "[...] secretly funded antisegregationist activities" ("Up From Slavery" 1). Our narrator may have been less confused and held a better stronghold on his ideals had he followed the teachings of Mr. W.E.B. Dubois.

Mr. Dubois was an influential leader in both the black and white communities, starting his career in the early 1900s. He was highly educated, a writer and scholar and a very prominent member of the NAACP at the turn of the century. Dubois was very critical of Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Exposition Address." Dubois criticized Washington's adherence to old beliefs of "[...] adjustment and submission" (Dubois 954). Dubois criticized both North and South; that, yes, the black man must help himself and strive for equality in all aspects of humanity, and that the white leaders of both the North

and South must do their part to assure equality amongst all races. Dubois summed up his views as he quoted the Constitution of the United States: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (Dubois 956). Following the teachings of Mr. Dubois, I believe, would have been closer to the objectives of the narrator.

At the gathering for what the narrator thought was strictly a forum for his speech, the narrator noted the presence of "All of the town's big shots [...] in their tuxedos" (939). This suggests that the narrator saw these men as the leaders of the free world and by their attire, this was a very important day, he thought. The narrator saw, through the white men's actions, a very different picture than what he had painted. The narrator learns that before he can give his speech, he must participate in a battle royal, for the entertainment purposes of the "[...] leading white citizens" (938). Preceding the battle royal, there was a blonde woman dancing for the entertainment. The narrator was shocked as he entered the smoke filled room and heard the voice of the school superintendent that had invited him to the gathering, calling out, "Bring up the shines, gentlemen! Bring up the little shines!" (939). This, to the narrator, is not how leading citizens behave, using derogatory names. As the dance continues, the narrator sees the white men behave in ways that conflict with his ideals of what is real. He sees the white men as animals: one man has a "[...] posture clumsy like that of an intoxicated panda [...]," and as the dancer is carried away, the narrator states, "I could see their beefy fingers sink into the soft flesh" (940). Then mayhem breaks out, and "Chairs went crashing, drinks were spilt, as they ran laughing and howling after her" (940). Now we see into the narrator's mind, as he sees these men as animals in the wild, not big shots or leading citizens. As the white men treat the boys and the blonde woman as animals, they also become animals (German 1). The white men displayed an anger and hatred through their attitudes and behavior that shocked and confused the narrator. As the story unfolds, everything the narrator held to be true was unraveling. The narrator learns that this is nothing but a

game, a cockfight, and he is part of the entertainment.

Not only are the town's leading white citizens behaving like animals, but these African-American boys have now been reduced to animals being preyed upon. This is what the grandfather knew, and what the narrator did not want to believe to be reality. This small, smoked-filled room symbolizes the appearances and behaviors of the white people in part of the South as a whole in the early 1900s. Furthermore, the dancing blonde woman, with the American flag tattooed on her belly, symbolizes the mentality of the free American South in the early 1900s: America is white, and blacks can look and watch but are denied from participating. This dancing white woman symbolizes the reality of the south, as the narrator describes her, "[...] facing us stood a magnificent blonde—stark naked." This suggests the dream of a free America for all; it would be magnificent and beautiful. Yet, when the narrator looks more deeply at the woman, he sees the truth as he describes, "[...] the face heavily powdered and rouged, as though to form an abstract mask, [...]" "[...] impersonal eyes," "[...] smiling faintly," and he says, "I saw the terror and disgust in her eyes" (940). All of this suggests that that freedom dancing in front of them and looking wonderful was really a masquerade, an artificial oasis. The narrator ran through a rainbow of emotions when his map of life clashed with reality; about the blonde, he states, "Had the price of looking been blindness, I would have looked." He wants "[...] to go to her and cover her from his eyes [...]" "[...] to caress her and destroy her, to love her and murder her [...]" (940).

As the battle royal was to commence, the boys were all blindfolded, "[...] with the broad bands of white cloth" (940). The symbolism here is strong; the boys are out of their element, out of their community, and white blindness is forced upon them. The narrator continues, "But now I felt a sudden fit of blind terror. I was unused to the darkness" (941). This symbolizes that the narrator is thrust into reality; he is in the white man's world where he thought not much would be different, when, in actuality, he is a fish out of water and is shocked by what is real. He felt he would maintain control. The reality is, he is controlled.

At this time in history, African-Americans in the

south had been given freedom, yet the whites held them at arm's length; true freedom was to be looked at and admired but not to be had. It is as if the white man holds up a carrot (freedom) as if it were a key to a special club, creating a false sense of hope available to all who will pay the price, to find that the key unlocks a door to an empty chamber.

The narrator's experiences leading up to and throughout the battle royal opened his eyes, as he learned that dreams and theories can be very contradictory to reality. In the beginning of the story, the narrator sums up his learning curve. He says, "It took me a long time and much boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with" (939). This suggests that while the narrator was dreaming and planning what he thought could be, everyone else knew the truth about the reality of freedom outside their community. The narrator goes on to explain what he was told: "[...] they were told that they were free [...]" and "[...] in everything social, separate like the fingers of the hand" (938). Here, he is listening to the description of freedom by his community. This is a contradiction to his feeling, that freedom should be a complete unity between the races. The narrator's grandfather didn't help his ideals, when his grandfather said, while dying: "Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grinsg [...]" (938). This complicates the notions of the narrator, that he can make a difference regardless of majority opinion.

The whole story of the battle royal symbolizes the life struggle and life lesson the grandfather knew laid ahead for anyone in his family who thought they could step out and make a difference in what was reality. The narrator proceeds through his story confused, which is noted when he states, "It became a constant puzzle [...] and whenever things went well for me I remembered my grandfather and felt guilty and uncomfortable" (937-938). Before the evening of the battle royal, the narrator seemed to be making his way with ease, and not understanding what his grandfather meant. Why should the narrator roll over? He was making progress in his community. In the middle of the story, the narrator's ideals start to clash with reality when he sees, "[...] the most

important men of the town quite tipsy" (939). And when he hears, "[...] the school superintendent who had told him to come, yell, "Bring up the shines, gentlemen! Bring up the little shines!" (939), this starts the paint running off the canvas of the narrator's portrait of reality. Even in the thick of the battle royal, symbolizing the true struggle of life, the narrator, maintaining his positive attitude, and thinking he still has a chance, thinks to himself, "Yet even theng had been going over my speech." "[...] I felt that only these men could truly judge my ability" (943). The narrator is still showing his determination to prove to his grandfather that he will prevail.

At the end of the battle royal, the narrator is bloody and beaten, yet still determined to give his speech that will make the difference. During the recitation of his speech, the white men are laughing, talking, moving about. The speech ends with applause, and he is presented with a scholarship to an all black college, and he believes he has conquered. But then what does the narrator hear? A white man in the audience, telling the others, "He makes a good speech and some day he'll lead his people down the right path" (947). No, I don't believe this to be the narrator's intentions. He wants to be a leader of all, not just his people. Yet, the narrator ignored this and moves on as he describes how he felt at this moment: "I felt an importance that I never dreamed" (947). This suggests that he is believing only what he wants to as truth, denying all that he just went through and ignoring the words, terms, and phrases the white men have wrapped him with – the control, limitations, and boundaries.

At the end of the story, the learned reality hits the narrator in a dream. In the dream, the grandfather reemphasizes what he said on his deathbed. Regardless of scholarship prizes with state seals and gold lettering, the white man's definition of black man's freedom is as the narrator reads from his grandfather's version of the engraved document: "Keep This Nigger-Boy Running" (947). The narrator's dream of his grandfather summed up their existence. The grandfather thought that his whole life, he was making a difference, when in the end he knew it was a lie. The narrator thought that he could make the difference. In the end he learned the reality, the truth that freedom was only in the white man's world.

Early in the story, the narrator's grandfather had thrown a wrench into the narrator's ideals when he said, "I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins..." (937). This suggests the grandfather's meaning to be: appear the way they want you to appear and take everything you can, this is the only way. The narrator looked at his grandfather's words as a curse. As much as he wanted to live and be independent and become one people with the white people, he found himself always behaving the way his grandfather said he should behave. Each and every time the narrator saw a glimmer of light to advance by his own means, he was controlled by the white way. One example of this was in the beginning of the story when the narrator was invited to give a speech and he exclaimed, "It was a triumph for our whole community" (938). This suggests that he believed he was right all along and would show everyone in his community that his ideals were real. Throughout the rest of the story, the narrator learns hard that for a black man to accomplish anything requires masquerading through reality and truth, which his grandfather stated, but which contradicts everything the narrator originally stood for.

In the final lines of "Battle Royal," we see the dreams of the young narrator smashed. Even through the hell of the battle royal, the narrator still carried the illusion that he was winning, and that he would get his chance to make the difference, that he would prove his grandfather wrong. He thought he had won, that he was triumphant, and he exclaimed, "I even felt safe from grandfather, whose deathbed curse usually spoiled my triumphs" (947). This suggests that he had done it, that he had shown everyone that his dream was reality. What the narrator truly learns at the end, is that reality is a dream and that his dream with his grandfather is reality.

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Evaluation: *This paper demonstrates a clear understanding of the complicated psychological relationships involved in this story, and the research provides a useful background to the story, illuminating the entire work more clearly for the reader.*

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# The Circle of Life

*Surbhi Taneja*

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: Trygve Thoreson

Assignment:

*Write an essay, in a role of your own choosing, in response to E.B. White's "Once More to the Lake."*

My train arrived at the Mumbai Central station this morning at half past eight, two hours behind schedule. This delay was minor compared to some other mammoth, frustrating delays I had experienced in various train journeys along the length and breadth of the country. I alighted on the platform and was immediately engulfed by a sea of people. The people of Mumbai were starting another hectic, chaotic day of their lives. It seemed like a surreal TV image in which characters were being made to move fast-forward in an artistic attempt to depict pace. I had two suitcases, one in each hand. Armed with my luggage and with a terrible stare that I hoped would keep people from trampling on me, I waded through the crowd, one step at a time. After fifteen minutes of maneuvering, I was out in the sun and in the polluted Mumbai air. I hired a taxi to Andheri.

I rolled up the taxi windows, shutting off the smoky air and the noise of the vehicles on the road. I had lived in Mumbai for four years when I was posted as a manager at the Andheri branch of The Global Bank. But three years ago, I had been transferred to my hometown, Barnala, in Punjab. I still remember the feeling I

had experienced when I had first come to Mumbai seven years ago. The skyscrapers, the sheer enormity of everything around me, and the fast life were some things I had never imagined when I was living in Barnala or in the other small towns and cities where I had been posted earlier. I was intrigued by the way the people of Mumbai conducted their lives as parts of a big machine, working to make the machine run smoothly. I always felt free in the Mumbai air, free from the parochialism of Barnala and its people. I felt comfortable in the thought that here I would get the opportunity to expand my worldview. I secretly hoped that the pace and sophistication of the city would rub onto me.

Life had been a long, hard journey for me from Barnala to Mumbai. For every gain that I had made, I had also incurred a loss. Somewhere, where I was initiated into the circle of life, my parents got left off at a tangent. I wondered if this psychological alienation from parents was peculiar to my life or if this happened to everybody.

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My father never talked to me about his thoughts or emotions. He talked only briefly about matters like my studies or the places where he was going on business. Only twice in my life had he allowed me to see into his heart; first, when I received my master's degree; and second, when I was promoted to a manager's position in the bank. I remember going to seek his blessings after receiving my degree. He hugged me for the first time and said, "I am so proud of you. You are my eldest son. I always expected you to excel in life, in everything you did. Go, go to the temple, *beta*, thank God and seek His blessings. I am happy. May you rise in life by leaps and bounds." His words had made my sense of achievement real. Years after, I felt that none of my brothers ever went to college because he never expected them to. I believed I was special for him.

My father had settled in Barnala after he was forced to flee from Pakistan at the time of India's partition. He dabbled in one business after another, never quite settling into anything. The whole family bore the brunt of his miscalculated ventures. As far as my consciousness can go back in time, all I am aware of is struggle. I

financed my education through school and college by taking up odd jobs: selling milk, selling sweets in a *hal-wai* shop, and teaching younger students. I read as much as I could. At college, I often got books of English literature and poetry as prizes for excellence in academics, and I read them end to end. My education created an unsurpassable gap between my father and me. I had made a transition, or so I thought, from the world I had inherited from him, to another one that was too complicated for him to understand. My new philosophy in life told me to do all that I could and after that leave him to himself in his world.

Five years ago, on a soggy August morning, my father died in a ventilator as silently as he had lived. My wife called me to give me the news, and the word "death" fell on me with a thud. That day, I had taken a flight back home to see him for the last time. On the way to the airport, the oppressive, humid Mumbai air weighed on me, as had the guilt of having left him alone. My father had never visited Mumbai. I wished he had. I never wanted to leave any loved one alone again. The day had brought me closer to God as had three other days before that day: the day my daughter Sakshi was born, the day my son Abhay was born, and the day I gave up my anger and became sober ever after.

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"Is this the building, sir?" the taxi driver asked me.  
"Yes, just by the gate," I said.

Bhatia, my friend of twenty-seven years, was waiting for me in his eighth-floor apartment. He greeted me with a hearty smile, the way he always did.

"It's so good to see you again," he said. "So, how are things?" How is *Bhabhi ji*? Your train got delayed?"

"Yes, everything is fine," I said.

"When is Abhay's fashion show?"

"Tomorrow," I said and thought of the twenty-four long hours that loomed large on me. "Tomorrow afternoon."

"Okay," Bhatia said. "I should be going to the office now, Neena leaves for work at half past seven in the morning. Shweta leaves for college around the same time. That's how Mumbai works," he sighed. "Everyone here has got a life of his own. Sometimes, I feel lost." This time the sigh was deeper. "Anyway, the breakfast

and the lunch are in the hot-case. I'll see you in the evening."

After the doorknob turned, I reached for the phone. I dialed the phone number for The National Institute of Fashion Studies. I had always been quick to add the words "the premiere fashion institute in India" after the name of the Institute, when describing Abhay's educational pursuits to friends and acquaintances. A feeble voice answered the phone, "I want to talk to Abhay Arora from the final year of fashion design."

After nine-ten minutes of silence, there was a voice on the other end. "Abhay, *beta*, how are you?" I said.

"Hey, Dad, I'm fine. I'm waiting for tomorrow, waiting for the fashion show and waiting to see you," Abhay replied.

"I'll be well in time, don't you worry. Tell me if you need anything. I'll bring that along," I said.

"No, Dad, nothing. Just be on time. How's mom doing? I wish she had come too. I was just giving final touches to the clothes and accessories. Minor details that need to be taken care of."

"Are you nervous, *beta*?" I tried to calm the ruffle in my voice.

"No, Dad, I'm just fine."

The conversation didn't seem to be getting anywhere. So, I hung up after making some small talk.

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Yesterday, while traveling in the train, I read E.B. White's essay "Once More to the Lake." It had been anthologized in the book *The Best American Essays of the Century*, which Abhay had given to me on my fifty-fifth birthday. He told me he had bought the book at a nominal price from the booksellers selling pirated books all along the pavements of Churchgate area in Mumbai. Every time I opened the book, I read the words he had written in his big, bold handwriting: "To my Dad, an avid reader, from whom I inherited my love for the written word." These words rang in my ears as I read White's essay. I felt that White's essay had no other purpose but to bring to the fore the storms that always rage beneath the surface of placid lakes. The truth of it all made me uneasy, very uneasy.

Abhay is everthing that I am not. He is young and is a fashion designer. He draws perfect-figured bodies;

adorns them with stylish, expensive, artistic-looking clothes; embellishes them with unusual accessories made of terracotta and wires. A couple of years ago, he came home for summer vacations with his eyebrow pierced. I received him at the station. I did not know what to say; I was fearful.

"What's this?" I pointed to his eyebrow ring.

"Nothing," he replied.

Six months ago, when he came home for Diwali, I brought up the topic of his future plans. I remember feeling like a gardener who had completed his duties. I had tended my plants with love and care and had given them all that I had. It was time to move on, for the plants were now sturdy and did not want to belong to the gardener anymore. They wanted to be let free into nature. Abhay had remarked casually, "I don't know, Dad, what I'm going to do. I want to experience the world. I don't think I want to settle down. Remaining unsettled is, perhaps, what I want to do." I was staring at my favorite tree in the garden, looking at its roots, how disjointed they were, with lumps of soil hanging in between, trying to hold the tree straight. It was a delicate balance, I thought.

I am spending the rest of the day today thinking about White's lake and about the narrator feeling "the chill of death." The only other thing that keeps me occupied today is the smell of the salt in the air. The sea is just a few miles away. But my heart longs for the languid lake. I'm filled with dread at the thought of foamy waves dashing against the shore. I do not want to leave familiar ground. With reluctant willingness, I have encased myself in a transparent shell where I think I'll be safe until I decide my course in life or something else decides it for me. I flail my arms every now and then when I think of the word "captivity," but I don't think that much. Strangely, the words "Every story has been told before" are constantly hammering my mind. I am searching for new mantras. I have been memorizing the opening lines of Vladimir Nabokov's essay "Perfect Past" from my gift: "The cradle rocks above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness." I fear that my old bones will give way under the burden of truth.

Tomorrow, I shall go to Abhay's fashion show, hiding these old bones under a fine suit. I will applaud heartily and proudly, when cadaverous models wearing clothes designed by him will sashay down the ramp to a rhythm set by futuristic music. He shall be initiated into the circle of life. He shall be standing at life's epicenter, vibrant with energy and enthusiasm. I shall be standing at the periphery watching him, reveling in his happiness, smiling his smiles. In the evening, I shall take him for a quiet walk by the seashore. We shall walk side by side, father and son. Like the foam floating on the sea-surface, memories etched in forgotten frames shall float in my consciousness. In my heart, I shall carry remnants of my past, mirrors to my future.

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Evaluation: *Surbhi has composed a complex, nuanced, semi-fictional essay that explores generational conflicts and connections with authority and grace.*

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# The Separation of Love and Sex

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Luke Welker

Course: English 101 (Composition)

Instructor: M. Glenn Taylor

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Assignment:

*After reading "In the Fifties" by Leonard Michaels and "Salvation" by Langston Hughes, students were to write a persuasive essay concerning the theme of innocence lost.*

"This makes me sick!" My grandmother slammed the Sunday paper down onto the kitchen table.

Half-heartedly looking up from my bowl of sugar cereal, I gave my grandmother an inquisitive gaze letting her know that she had my attention.

"Them people on the TV," she growled.

Her eyes refocused on the little television atop the refrigerator. I hadn't noticed, but it had been on the entire morning. I turned around in my chair to see a black man on the television.

"It's a sin!" She continued. "They're going to hell all of them because that is how God punishes sinners."

I chuckled a little under my breath. I knew my grandmother to be a pretentious woman and a bit self-righteous, but now she was casting even black people into the chasms of hell.

Looking back down at my cereal I murmured, "Grandma, being black isn't a sin."

"I know that!" She sharply lashed back at my comment.

I could feel her sharp hawk gaze fixed on the top of my head.

"He's gay, a fag," her old voice boomed. "It says right in the bible that man should not lay down with

man. I can't believe that they are letting them on my soaps now. Do these people have no shame?"

My grandmother complained for some time about gay people, and she was very adamant about her beliefs. It took me many years to realize that my grandmother was not just letting me know her opinion, but she was actually warning me against the evils of a homosexual lifestyle. She knew that I was gay. The old woman somehow knew about my secret, and her advice left me with a feeling of exposure and shame. That was the first time in my life that I no longer felt innocent, and from that time on I felt less and less like a person every day. When I began to lie about who I was, the innocent outlook on the world that I had grown accustomed to became a perverse and monstrous paradigm of what my life really was. Quickly I learned to manipulate people into believing me to be something I was not. My world-view had fallen apart. My grandmother made it apparent that God was rejecting me, so I rejected Him first. The spiritual abortion was a long and painful process that left me feeling slimy and unwanted. Now that I'm older and have accepted who I am, I talk a lot with my friends about what it was like being a gay child. I've found many agreements and similarities with my own personal story. Large portions of homosexual children are yanked out of childhood innocence at young ages, and I believe that homophobic society and typical parent teachings on love are at fault.

Children should not be made to lie, because it is unhealthy to the maturing and growing process. Expectations are placed on all children, but for gay children who are born into non-accepting families, the expectations are unfair and come at too high of a price. Children's home lives may become especially difficult if the parental love that they are receiving is coming with conditions attached. Unconditional love is one of the greatest gifts parents can give to children. Sadly, not every parent is willing to give their love without conditions attached. The essay "Salvation," by Langston Hughes, better illustrates my point on parental expectations. In the essay, Hughes writes, "So I decided that maybe to save further trouble, I'd better lie, too, and say that Jesus had come, and get up and be saved. So I got up." Putting children in a situation that requires them

to lie about their personality is a form of child abuse. Similarly, putting stipulations on love will have detrimental effects on children's confidence and well-being, just as other forms of child abuse do. It will also inevitably lead the child to lie as Hughes did. Lying causes a loss of self-respect, dignity, and a deep feeling of shame and insecurity.

The shame and indignity instilled in gay children at home is reflected in their inability to socialize and interact at school, as well. Abused and/or neglected children find it difficult to differentiate between people who will accept or reject them. School can be a very scary place for children who don't feel like they belong. Insecure children are often overly emotional. This causes any negative comment or action directed toward them to be emotionally devastating. Too often, insecure children can be found nervously sitting through every class, dreading the moment that someone directs a negative comment toward them. Thus, destroying children's confidence and security at home leads to depression and anxiety in all areas of socializing.

Where most people have religion to turn to in states of depression, gay children find religion just as untrustworthy as they find people. Religion is often rejected because most religions preach against homosexuality, and gay children feel a sense of mistrust and betrayal from these belief systems. Hughes helps to illustrate this: "But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everyone in the church, that I hadn't seen Jesus, and that now I didn't believe there was a Jesus anymore, since he didn't come to help me." Hughes rejects his faith, because when he really needed Jesus, Jesus didn't deliver. Children should not be expected to subscribe to a religion that preaches against their lifestyle. Doing so would only make them feel even more resentful toward themselves *and* religion.

Stripped of their innocence and thrown into a world that they feel hates them, gay teenagers are faced with more social and emotional problems. Growing up in American high schools, gay teens make one last socially detrimental transition. All too often, gay teens separate the concepts of love and sex. In healthy heterosexual relationships, generally both people love each other and find the other sexually attractive.

Homosexual teens have the same needs as heterosexuals, but the problem starts when they find these needs from two separate sources. It's not accepted for two people of the same gender to walk down the halls of high school holding hands. Gay people are not allowed to show any affection toward the person that they are having sex with, so they disassociate their emotions from sex. The separation of love and sex could help explain the reason why so many gay people, men especially, lack loyalties to their partners and tend to be overly promiscuous.

There is little hope for gay children to be recognized and respected at homes and in public schools in the near future. It is important that Americans start to instill a value of unconditional love in their children. More can be done to make all children welcome. Small things like incorporating gay literature into our schools and gay children characters on television shows could make a world of difference. These ideas and others like it are very controversial, because people are convinced that children can be turned gay. More studies should be done to prove that this is not the case. The public is too ignorant to realize the importance of making *all* children and adults feel equal, and until the detrimental effects of withholding love from your child are made apparent, teen suicides will continue to be a commonplace occurrence. Gay adults will also continue to suffer, realizing only too late that their childhood innocence was unfairly shattered, and that the root of their social and sexual problems comes from early childhood.

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Evaluation: *Luke effectively introduces his essay with a personal anecdote, using dialogue. He reflects on his experience, then quickly lets the reader know his stance with a strong, unique thesis statement. I also found Luke's connection between Hughes's experiences and those of a gay youth to be quite unique, and simultaneously quite powerful.*

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# A Long Road to Liberation

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Marta Werner

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Courses: History 212 (Recent American History)  
and Literature 222 (Recent American Literature)  
Instructors: Tom DePalma and Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

*We asked the students to write an essay that somehow brought the two courses together. Marta chose to discuss the way(s) in which "Her Kind," the well-known poem by American poet Anne Sexton, expresses bitter dissatisfaction with the gender politics of the years following World War II.*

The greatest effect World War II had on women was change. In wartime, change occurred not only in the global or national consciousness, but also in many of the females involved. The war brought about many different thoughts and ideas within the United States and ignited the birth of many new identities. During this period, women experienced gains in freedom and mobility as well as an independence that had been unknown up to that point. However, after the war was over, the days of autonomy for women were gone as they were forced to give up their jobs in the industry sector and return to their homes. In retrospect, it is significant to realize that women were treated as a reserve labor supply, and regardless of how competent they had proven themselves during the war, in its aftermath, they were not wanted in the male sphere of labor. In the following essay, I will describe the wartime and postwar experiences of women and illustrate how their struggle for

identity and the pressures on them to conform to prevailing social roles are revealed in Anne Sexton's poem "Her Kind."

When World War II began, the traditional prejudices about a woman's place in society were still prevalent in America. In the years preceding the war, national sentiment held that there were jobs appropriate for women, such as being a waitress, a telephone operator, a clerk, and most of all, a mother. Propaganda reinforced these notions by portraying women as white, happy, middle-class housewives who were dependent on men. The goal of such propaganda was to keep women out of work, especially from jobs reserved for men in the industry sector. Women were confined to lower-paying jobs in the service industries and domestic work at home, but the war years provided American women with an opportunity to break this discrimination.

During the American Revolution, Abigail Adams wrote a letter to her husband stating, "I desire you would remember the ladies," reminding him of how significant and crucial women's involvement in the War for American Independence was. Also, George Washington admitted that "without them [women] we couldn't have won the war." Both statements, even though made so far back in time, could not more precisely describe the momentous contribution women made during World War II. When the United States declared war, millions of men were drafted to fight, thus leaving their jobs unfilled. Likewise, entrance into war meant that industry would have to increase production drastically to provide soldiers with the necessary tools to defeat the enemy. Production was essential to victory, and women were essential to production.

Women accepted the challenge and responded to the acute wartime labor shortages. Between 1941 and 1945, over 6 million women entered the labor force, many of whom were married and had children (Moss 8). The success of women recruitment can be traced back to numerous propaganda efforts. As opposed to the prewar presentation, now females were seen as strong and competent. A popular wartime symbol of women working in war industries became Norman Rockwell's painting "Rosie the Riveter" (Moss 9). The purpose of such propaganda was to show that women were capable of

taking on work that was usually assigned to men. Another tactic used to draw women into the work force was the appeal to patriotism. Slogans such as "Do Your Part" were created to make women feel that they could serve their country and that they could contribute to the victory over Nazism by working on the home front.

Females who responded to the need for industry workers accepted occupations as crane operators, welders, riveters, lumberjacks, and iron workers (Moss 8). These women worked long hours under very poor conditions, but they were proud to be able to help out during the times of war. This was an opportunity for women to grow and learn, and many performed certain jobs better than men due to their increased motor skills, manual dexterity, and close attention to details (Moss 8). Women joined the labor force because of different reasons. Some always wanted to work, and others went to work because of economic need, but many of them came largely because of a strong desire to do something meaningful to help win the war. There was a sense of excitement and feeling that everyone was joining together against a common enemy. World War II became a symbol of pride and freedom for most women.

In the war's aftermath, millions of women working in previously male-dominated industries were fired. The principal cause for losing their wartime jobs was the fact that men were returning home from their military service. As the war came to an end, many employers had to dismiss workers because orders were not coming in and, thus, the need for labor declined. Returning soldiers now had the advantage of being hired before civilian workers, according to the Selective Security Act (Moss 71). These veterans had worked for the various companies many years more than the women who covered for them and were, therefore, entitled to their old jobs. Likewise, men who had not worked before the war were guaranteed occupation because these men had risked their lives and, thus, should be rewarded at least with the security of occupation.

In general, employment of women did not decline after the American victory over the Axis powers. Instead, it increased from 27 percent at war's end to 32 percent by 1950 (Moss 71). But the days of prosperity, when women held traditionally male work, were gone

and were replaced by prewar conditions. Women were forced out of high-paying industry work back into female occupations such as clerk, waitress, secretary, and housewife. Once again, the chief belief was that a woman's place was in the home "creating an island of love and security for her children and husband" (Moss 101). In the postwar years, propaganda was used to encourage females to return home. When such propaganda was ineffective, new strategies were adopted. Articles were written which blamed working mothers for the destruction of families, juvenile delinquency, and "latchkey children" (Moss 9), without ever acknowledging that these women were not trying to be "imitation men" (Moss 100), but rather wanted to contribute to a better standard of living with an additional income in a time when most Americans were longing for material security.

During the 1950s, women were torn between the traditional expectation of staying at home and the desire to work outside of the realm of domesticity. A study, conducted by Betty Friedan, showed that many women were depressed, unhappy, and dissatisfied with lives that were primarily focused on their families. Women were lacking adventures, excitement, and stimulation in their existence and felt like lifeless robots surrounded by monotony and dullness. Friedan referred to this identity crisis as a "problem which has no name" (Moss 221). She blamed the male-dominated society for the feelings of worthlessness and incompetence that many women suffered. Furthermore, the increase of alcoholism and drug abuse among women who fulfilled society's criteria of being a mother and a housewife showed that they were discontent with their social roles.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, women produced literature that reflects, contributes to, and comments on the struggle against the male-dominated culture. One of these women was Anne Sexton, who made the experience of being a female a central issue in her poetry. Often times, Sexton was referred to as a "confessional poet" because her poetry was highly personal and genuine. However, many people feared her honesty when she explored themes such as mental illness, suicide, and social roles for women and, therefore, they criticized her for being too subjective. One of Sexton's poems is "Her

Kind,” which illustrates the social dilemma that women faced during the 1950s. Moreover, it offers the reader an intimate view of women’s distress at having to satisfy the repressive roles that society exerted on them.

Outwardly, “Her Kind” is a simple poem consisting of three stanzas with the repeating refrain “I have been her kind” (75), indicating each stanza break. On the surface, the poem seems to be about a “lonely” and “misunderstood” witch, but at the same time, the poem exposes an honest critique of society for demanding the execution of these prescribed roles under all circumstances. This critique is revealed throughout the poem by Sexton’s application of a bitter and sharp tone. Through the use of the first-person point of view, Sexton allows the reader to establish an emotional connection with the speaker, which, in turn, enables him or her to identify with the female character in the poem.

In the first stanza, the poet uses a witch image as an analogy to highlight the immense pressures and sufferings that women had to endure during the 1950s. Sexton draws a direct parallel between the narrator and an accused witch who experienced physical pain inflicted by torture devices. Like Sylvia Plath, who applied Jews’ stories during World War II to portray her own personal experiences, Sexton employs the witch image to describe the tragic emotions that women underwent. Even though women after the war were not physically tortured, I would suggest that the poet believes that their psychic suffering is, nevertheless, similar or equal to the physical pain that alleged witches had to bear in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When Sexton refers to the witch as being “possessed,” she implies either that the witch is possessed by her husband (or society), who regards her as an object or his property, or she suggests that the witch is possessed by madness as a consequence of not knowing how to liberate herself from society’s demands. The reader knows that the witch “[has] gone out” of her house, being “braver at night” than during the day, but the reader does not really know where she is going. I would propose that she simply found the courage at night, when nobody can see her, to do what is not expected from her, namely, to leave the house. The speaker, furthermore, is described as “twelve-fingered,” literally indicating a physical aberration. However, I

believe that Sexton uses such a characterization to point out that women who deviated from the “normal” or expected standard were not tolerated by society and were regarded as abnormal. These women, as did witches in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, presented a threat to the male-dominated culture. In the 1950s, women, who desired more than the fulfillment of their assigned roles, were perceived as “out of mind” and as a hazard to society’s equilibrium. As a consequence, they were punished by being restricted to a very small area of the world—their house, where they became “lonely thing[s].”

Sexton concludes her first stanza with “A woman like that is not a woman, quite,” illustrating that in society’s view, she has not devoted herself to her prescribed role and, therefore, does not deserve to be seen as a true woman as the status quo would define the word. On the other hand, this line of the poem, in my opinion, can also be interpreted in another way. I would suggest that Sexton tries to point out that this kind of woman had not yet found the courage to liberate herself from society’s demands and, for that reason, she did not attain her personal potential as a female, which would result in finding her own identity. Whatever the poet’s intentions were, she identifies herself with the witch when she says “I have been her kind” and directs attention to the fact that the problem of being restricted to certain prescribed stereotypes was not a problem of an individual, but rather points out that it was shared by many women.

In contrast to the first stanza, the second one is more straightforward and lacks the ambiguity which is clearly present in the first stanza. Also, the bitter and sharp tone is missing that is created by adjectives such as “black” and “evil” and is exchanged for a softer mood, which mirrors the speaker’s resignation with the life that is completely engaged with her family, with scant regard for her own needs. In this stanza, the poet develops the persona of a mother and housewife and introduces the reader to the chores that such a woman was occupied with throughout her day. When Sexton says that the woman has “found the warm caves,” she illustrates society’s picture of what a home is supposed to be. In this case, the house is “warm,” filled with love,

and small like a “cave,” where interaction between family members is enhanced because of the small area in which the family lives. At the same time, however, I would suggest that Sexton also tries to demonstrate the emotions that a woman forced into the role of a mother and homemaker has toward her own house. Here, then, the “cave” represents a prison to which the woman is confined. She becomes an inmate, feeling cramped and restricted to a small area (or cell) without knowing when her sentence is going to be over and, as a result, she feels desperate and hopeless.

In the following three lines of the second stanza, the poet uses the device of enumeration to point out the “innumerable” responsibilities of a woman who sacrifices her own life for domesticity. She fills her house with “skillets, carvings, shelves, / closets, silks,” describing the immense duties that she has to accomplish and which are too “innumerable” to list. When Sexton states that the woman has “fixed the suppers for the worms and elves,” she implies that the speaker is torn between emotions of disgust (or hate) and love for her children. The “worms” represent animals, which are ugly, slimy, and which nobody wants to touch. “[E]lves,” on the other hand, are cute little creatures associated with pleasant feelings. Consequently, I believe that Sexton attempts to demonstrate that the mother does what is expected from her, namely love her children, but, at the same time, she also blames them for not allowing her to live her own life and, therefore, she “hates” them.

Moreover, the speaker is “whining” or complaining about her situation and is frustrated that she has to “[rearrange] the disaligned,” meaning that she is supposed to constantly keep her house and family neat and harmonious without having time for herself. This dilemma that many women faced during the postwar years is summarized when Sexton declares, “A woman like that is misunderstood.” From society’s perspective, women could only find fulfillment and happiness through domesticity and child rearing. However, these women were dissatisfied and were dreaming of more than just being nurturing, family-orientated mothers and housewives. On the surface, they might have been perfect females who obeyed their social roles and portrayed a

contented life, but deep down inside them, they longed for a change in their existence.

The third and last stanza unites the witch from the first stanza with the housewife from the second stanza through the word “still” and brings the poem into the present. Throughout this stanza, the witch and the housewife become one person and decide that the only way out of their misery is death. Both females “have ridden in [a] cart,” which literally represents the wagon in which the witch was brought to her execution, and, more deeply, it also stands for the long and painful life or journey that a woman in the 1950s had to endure. The “driver,” therefore, can be seen as the man who drove the witch toward her death, or the “driver” can be perceived as representing the American society of the postwar years. Sexton’s witch and mother waving their “nude arms at villages going by,” are saying their last goodbyes to the society which did not allow them to follow their own path and which did not tolerate their deviation from the expected norms. Hence, both women are “learning the last bright routes,” indicating that they are aware of the fact that their death is not far away; it is practically awaiting them at the end of the “bright routes.” However, Sexton does not allow her speaker to feel “ashamed to die” and portrays her as a “survivor” who found the courage to end her depressive life in order to escape the isolation that she felt when facing social expectations. Consequently, the woman is a survivor because, even though her life will physically end, psychologically, she will experience a kind of freedom that she could not achieve while being part of a community that oppressed her.

The next two lines, again, illustrate the connection between a woman of the 1950s and witch in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When the speaker announces that “flames still bite my thigh,” she refers to the repressive role that was exerted on her. Like flames or fire, this pressure burnt away her identity and created a feeling of anguish, despair, and hopelessness, comparable to the emotions that are felt when somebody is burnt alive. Another image of pain is produced when Sexton’s witch says that “my ribs crack where your wheels wind,” exploring her experience with a torture device. Both women have suffered unspeakable psychological and physical

torment and, for that reason, they are willing and are “not ashamed to die.” I would propose that Sexton is not trying to represent death as an act of cowardice, but as an act of courage. In this case, it would be too simple to suggest that the witch and the mother are choosing death because they are afraid to face the challenges of life. It seems more important to admit that both women have realized that in the societies in which they lived, they would never be truly free and, therefore, they must choose death as the only way out of their desolation.

In conclusion, Anne Sexton’s “Her Kind” is beyond praise, for she has succeeded admirably in capturing the experiences and feelings of women who were part of an oppressive society. The poem articulates with a biting and sharp honesty the dilemma of being a woman in postwar America and dramatically depicts society’s fault for creating the feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction within many females. This famous poem, therefore, deserves to be called a “feminist manifesto,” which paved the road for what is now considered feminist poetry.

#### Works Cited

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- Sexton, Anne. “Her Kind.” *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Robert DiYanni. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998. 539.

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Evaluation: *We (DePalma and Wilson) have taught together numerous times. This, truly, is among the very best papers to emerge from any of our linked classes, past and present. The essay beautifully weaves the two disciplines together. It showcases Marta’s broad understanding of history, especially the plight of American women in the post-World War II era, and it stands very tall as a perceptive literary rendering of a difficult poem. We love this essay for so many reasons: its clarity, its humanity, and much more.*

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# The Unmentionable Issue

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Stephanie Wolferman  
Course: History 212  
(Recent American History 1945-1980)  
Instructor: Tom DePalma

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Assignment:

*Who was the best of the first three postwar presidents? Your choices are Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. Your analyses must include thematic and specific depth.*

The job of the President of the United States is to lead the people of our nation through times of crisis and to lead us to the future. For every president in office, certain issues make their way from the background to the foreground. Civil rights was that issue after World War II and until the 1960s; it is still an issue present in our society. Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John Kennedy were the head of this nation during those critical times when civil rights were finally focused on, and each one handled the situation differently. During these decades of change, much headway was made in sensing that though African-Americans may have been set free after the Civil War, they were not equal. Truman started this path toward equality, but Kennedy took over where Truman left off and took it further. Kennedy's stance on civil rights toward the end of his term helped pass civil rights legislation through and made him the most successful. Kennedy's stance on civil rights created the most change and had the most impact. Though civil rights affected each presidency differently, Kennedy made the most progress in that area.

Truman is known as the first modern president to promote civil rights (Moss 73). Truman started on his path toward equality in December of 1946 with his Civil Rights Committee (Moss 73). This committee created several measures that would rid the country of unequal treatment to minorities (Moss 73). The committee offered several suggestions: desegregating the military and government agencies, abolishing the poll tax in the south (paying money in exchange to vote), creating a civil rights division in the Judicial Department, creating the Commission on Civil Rights, and keeping the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) a permanent fixture in the government (Moss 74). Truman did support this committee's findings, but the rest of Congress didn't respond to his vision (Moss 74). So, Truman bypassed Congress with his executive order, which desegregated the agencies of the government in February of 1948, and then he did the same to the armed forces in July of the same year (Moss 74). Desegregation of the armed forces did take time, especially in the army, but, by the Korean War, they were desegregated (Moss 74).

Truman's next big wave of civil rights legislation came during his campaign for reelection in 1948. The 1948 election wasn't a promising one for Truman; his party had given up on him and asked Eisenhower to run in his place, but when Ike refused, then Truman was allowed to go for reelection. It looked like a loss for Truman since his approval ratings were low and his own party was only "mild about Harry" (Moss 74). With no chance of winning in sight, Truman decided to have civil rights as his platform, since he wanted to go out telling the truth and not trying to please voters. Even though it caused his own party to break into three different directions, no one could stop Truman from proposing and introducing new civil rights bills into Congress (Moss 74). On February 2, 1948, Truman introduced his new civil rights bill to Congress, and it received little support (McCullough 586). The bill introduced provided voting rights for African Americans in the south, called for the desegregation of interstate transportation, and called for lynching to be tried as a federal crime. The bill was not well received and was proof to the nation that not only was Truman no longer

respected in the South, but he no longer claimed his seat in the oval office. Truman did have the last laugh, by being reelected anyway (McCullough 588). This bill never did get passed through Congress, but Truman kept trying. For instance, in 1952, Truman was in favor of desegregating schools, but it failed to find support on Capitol Hill. Although Truman had little success with civil rights, he did not tone down his views to please everyone; Truman took a stand for what he believed in. He may have had little success in getting his bills through, but he gave the issue importance and ensured to everyone that the government wasn't going to be silent. As David McCullough has stated, "[he did] more than any President since Lincoln to awaken American conscience to the issues of civil rights" (915). McCullough best sums up Truman's legacy and his impact on the issue of civil rights.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in 1952, he took a much different approach to civil rights than Truman: he ignored it. He was too weak on civil rights and often took his skill of consensus and used it to "deal with" civil rights. However, Ike did make a couple of steps toward equality, but neither attempt panned out. His first try at creating equality was in January 10, 1957, when Ike introduced the Brownell's Civil Rights Bill to the nation (Ambrose 406). This proposal had many parts to it, but Ike put a special emphasis on the right to vote for all people (Ambrose 406). It did pass through the House with no problems, but when it entered the Senate, it was destroyed (Ambrose 406-407). It failed, in part, because Ike admitted that he didn't understand what the other parts of the bill meant, which allowed southern senators to tweak it any way they wanted (Ambrose 407). Instead of the bill being a platform for the rights of African-Americans, it turned into "an amendment that would assure a jury trial to anyone cited for contempt of court in a civil rights case" (Ambrose 407). Basically, it would put a white man on trial for violating the rights of an African-American in front of a jury that was all white; it would ensure that no one would be convicted violating voting rights (Ambrose 407). The jury-trial amendment was adapted to the bill, and it was passed by both the House and Senate; but, in the bill passed, a change was made: a federal judge decided

whether the defendant should be tried by jury (Ambrose 41g-413). This passage was seen as only a minor victory since the penalties attached weren't harsh and weren't enforced; no one even knew it was signed by Ike on September 9, 1957 (Ambrose 413). It was a bill that made little difference in the lives of African-Americans, and it didn't change the way racism was handled.

Ike also had problems enforcing the desegregation of schools, particularly in Arkansas (Ambrose 414). On September 3, 1957, Orval Faubus, the governor of Arkansas, had ordered the Arkansas National Guard to prevent black students from entering Central High School in Little Rock (Ambrose 414). This incident showed Ike's stubbornness to get involved. He didn't believe that the Justice Department had a right to enforce the law, nor did he want to get in the middle of the race issue (Ambrose 414). Ike's initial response was to talk with Faubus and reason with him to let the children attend class, but Faubus used the opportunity to gather more press for his cause and, at the same time, still kept the entrance closed to the black students (Ambrose 414-416). Even when they took Faubus to court and ordered the troops to be withdrawn, the fear still existed that Faubus may withdraw the troops and replace them with a mob (Ambrose 417). The fear did come true; on September 23, 1957, the mob replaced the troops, and Ike had to act (Ambrose 418). Ike didn't do anything on the first day; the integration had lasted only three hours, with the black students being removed by police, who were acting in accordance with the mayor's order (Ambrose 418). Ike did manage to act on the next day, the 24<sup>th</sup>, by doing what he didn't want to do: sending in troops (Ambrose 418-419). He had to use force, since he failed to address civil rights in a forceful matter and to make it a priority; by ignoring the issue, he had created the need for force, which he was trying to avoid (Ambrose 419). He sent 500 of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division paratroopers to Little Rock, Arkansas, hours after noon, and even more arrived by nightfall; plus, he sent the Arkansas National Guard to the school, but they were under federal control (Ambrose, 419-420). Yet, he only called the troops to ensure that the law was followed, and not to impose segregation, which he made clear in his speech to the nation on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1957g

(Ambrose 420). But, to be fair, even though he sugarcoated the civil rights issue in his speech, he did integrate the school and proved that governors of the south couldn't push him around (Ambrose 421). However, Ike did take a misstep toward equality when he distanced himself from the desegregation issue and, in October, he said, "the courts had gone too far, too fast" (Ambrose 422). Ike seemed to try to make the issue of Little Rock go away by not talking about it, but civil rights was an issue that wouldn't fade from the headlines (Ambrose 422). The Little Rock incident didn't have a happy ending; the school was closed after being integrated for one year, which was what Ike feared might happen (Ambrose 423).

The problem with Ike and civil rights was his indecisiveness about the issue; he couldn't decide how to solve the problem, which led to decisions that had little impact (Ambrose 413). Since he couldn't decide where he stood on the issue, he couldn't make decisions that would improve conditions for African-Americans (Ambrose 413). Plus, which didn't look good for his image, he was on vacation while the crisis in Little Rock was occurring (Ambrose 416). Though it was his style to seem like a "part-time president," there is just something unnerving about him playing bridge and golf while the chaos was unfolding in Arkansas (Ambrose 417).

Though Ike wasn't good with issues of civil rights, I don't think he was elected for that purpose. I believe he was elected to end the Korean War and for his foreign policy. This doesn't excuse Ike for his confusion over civil rights, but it shows the mood the people were in. They replaced Truman, who was outspoken about civil rights, with Ike because, foreign policy aside, he wouldn't bring up civil rights. I don't think people were ready to deal with issues concerning civil rights, but this did not give Ike an excuse to ignore them. He was timid on the issue and resisted action until chaos erupted. He left the explosive issue of civil rights to whoever came after him, and that man happened to take the issue and create solutions to its problems.

John "Jack" Kennedy was elected to the presidency in 1960 (Moss 143). During his campaign toward the White House, he showed support for the lunch counter sits-ins, which foreshadowed his support of civil rights.

He expressed his support by saying, "It is in the American tradition to stand up for one's rights—even if the new way is sitting down" (Kennedy qtd. in Sitkoff 81). His comment showed his support for civil rights and gave him an edge over Nixon, who did support civil rights but chose to ignore the topic. Kennedy also showed his commitment to civil rights with the infamous two phone calls. The minute Martin Luther King, Jr. arrived in Georgia, he was arrested for violating his probation on a traffic violation that had occurred before he came to Georgia (Perret 265). Then, on that violation, he was placed in jail and put on a labor chain gang for four months (Perret 265). After hearing of this unjustified arrest from his brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, Kennedy called Mrs. King and reassured her that he would do everything he could to help (Perret 266). Mrs. King was worried that her husband would be killed, so Kennedy worked with his brother, Bobby, to get him out (Moss 147). Then, after Kennedy called Mrs. King, Bobby called the judge in Georgia and basically blackmailed him. If the Georgia judge wouldn't overturn his decision, funds to the state would be stopped, and Bobby would prosecute him for unjustified jailing, since if Jack was elected, Bobby would be Attorney General. The threat worked, and Martin Luther King, Jr. was released from jail, and many believe these phone calls won Kennedy the black vote in the North. When Geoffrey Perret mentioned the two phone calls in his book, *Jack: A Life Like No Other*, he said, "This was the one important moment when he acted entirely out of what he was as a human being and not out of what he thought would serve him as a politician" (Perret 266). Though both presidential candidates thought the jailing was unjustified, only Kennedy spoke out, which was something he would have to learn to do during his presidency. Kennedy becoming president in 1960 signaled a change in civil rights.

However, Jack really didn't do anything in the first years of his presidency to help with civil rights (DePalma 4). He started off trying to keep his distance from the issue, in part, to ensure his good standing with those in the South (DePalma 4). His opinion slowly changed in 1961, when the whole country finally saw the tragedy that was occurring in the South.

The first sign that civil rights were becoming more of an important issue was in 1961, with the Freedom Riders. In 1961, CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) decided to protest the laws that allowed segregation on interstate bus routes, by going into the south with whites and blacks sitting wherever they wanted. Their first stop in South Carolina was where the first problems appeared, with the beating of John Lewis when he tried to use a white-only washroom. Things became even worse when the bus arrived in Anniston, Alabama; when the bus arrived, the lobby was full of men with weapons. When the bus pulled in, violence erupted, with the crowd attacking the bus. Even when the bus peeled out of the terminal, the crowd followed it. Violence reached its peak when a tire, punctured at the terminal, forced the bus to pull over, and the crowd pounced on the bus. When Kennedy, along with the rest of the country, saw these hateful images on television, something changed, but even though Kennedy was upset, he wasn't the first to act: Bobby was. Bobby got on the phones to Montgomery, Alabama, and tried to arrange local officers to patrol the lobby and ensure that no violence would occur; he also arranged for members of the FBI and Justice Department to go to Montgomery to observe what was going on down there. Yet, Bobby's efforts were useless since the police allowed the crowd to attack the bus and its passengers for 10 minutes before enforcing the law. Then, after the Montgomery incident, Kennedy decided that these beatings had to come to an end, so he arranged for a peaceful arrest in Mississippi, which was the next stop on the route. Though the incident ended in arrest, it did stop the segregation of interstate bus travel. This incident was handled with Bobby at the helm, but it did show the Kennedy administration's commitment to equality.

At the same time the Freedom Riders were in Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. was there as well, at the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, where he got a death threat and Bobby heard about it. After talking to Kennedy, Bobby convinced him to send 500 federal marshals to protect King. The marshals were able to disperse the crowd and were a symbol of Kennedy's growing commitment.

Then, in 1962, Kennedy really stepped up his support for civil rights. Mostly, up to this point, Bobby handled civil rights efforts, with Jack's support, but at the University of Mississippi, Kennedy followed his brother's lead. In 1962, James Meredith wanted to enroll at the University of Mississippi, an all-white college, but he was not allowed to attend (Moss 167). Knowing that he was qualified to go to the college and was being discriminated against, Meredith went to the Supreme Court and got a court order from Hugo Black that forced the school to admit him (Moss 167). Even with a court order, Meredith couldn't enter; he had Governor Ross Barnett standing up to the court order and refusing to allow Meredith to attend school (Moss 167). There was even a mob there keeping Meredith from entering the school, so Kennedy decided to act (Moss 167). "Kennedy sent army troops and federalized the state National Guard" in order to keep Meredith safe (DePalma 6). Once Meredith was admitted into the school, violence exploded amongst the crowd. As the crowd was lighting anything they saw on fire and being controlled with tear gas, Kennedy talked to the country on television. This immediate response showed to the country that he thought civil rights was an important topic and that he was making a commitment to make things just.

The biggest event in civil rights under Kennedy happened in 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama. Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) decided to march for equality in the South's most segregated city (Moss 167). What happened next shocked the country and brought out Kennedy's best speech concerning civil rights (DePalma 6). When the demonstrators arrived, they were not allowed to march since they weren't allowed a permit and they were broken up in cruel ways (Moss 167). Protesters were hit with billy clubs and were attacked with German Shepherds. After 3 weeks of protesting, children were brought in to help with the march, and it became very ugly: dogs were used on the children, just like everyone else, and they too were shot at with high-power hoses; this scene was too much for Kennedy (Perret 367-8). Looking at the photographs, all Kennedy could muster was, "It makes me sick"; this

scene changed Kennedy's approach to civil rights (Perret 368).

On June 11, 1963, Kennedy showed his commitment to the issue of civil rights by addressing the nation and being the first president to do so (Moss 168). In his speech, he addressed the need for freedom, the need for change, and that "this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free" (Kennedy qtd. in Sitkoff, 146). In that powerful speech, he stressed the need for change, and he provided that a week later (Moss 169). After the speech, he "proposed the most comprehensive civil rights bill in American history" (Moss 169). The bill called for voting rights for all African-Americans and desegregation of all public places; it also allowed money to be held from states that still didn't recognize discrimination, allowed desegregation of schools to be started by the Attorney General, and called for help concerning the economic situations that faced African-Americans (DePalma 6). Though he proved that the nation was ready for change, he still had problems getting the bill through Congress; it was stuck in committee in the House (Perret 389). Kennedy never got to see the bill that the house would introduce to the floor; he first had to go to Texas and meet his fate of death (Perret 390).

Though his brother or the environment he was in may have influenced Kennedy, he did eventually support civil rights. It doesn't matter where one starts off at, it matters where one arrives; at the end of his life, Kennedy full-heartedly supported civil rights. By giving his speech on civil rights, he showed that he no longer cared about votes, but about making things right. Even though he never got to see his vision of a free world, his bill was eventually passed in 1964 and went far beyond what he could have ever imagined (Moss 180). Even though his death was a tragedy, without it, who knows if Congress would have been compelled to vote for it and keep Kennedy's dream alive? The combination of the people around him (like his brother and Martin Luther King, Jr.) and the times during which he was president influenced Kennedy to become a great champion of civil rights.

The end of World War II to the 1960s was a time of healing and growing as a nation. The nation had three great presidents—Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy—

to lead the way. Each had his own strengths and weaknesses as president. Eisenhower was clearly too weak on the civil rights issue, since he could never commit on which way he wanted to combat the problem. Truman started us on the path toward equality, but could only get things passed through executive orders; he could never get Congress to come together and agree upon legislation. Kennedy, although he wasn't too comfortable at first, did lead the way to ending discrimination and was the best at it. Through his death, legislation was passed to ensure equality for all. And, through his life, he worked on protecting those who tried to get rid of inequalities in the South and aroused hope in countless

Each president had his own way of working with rights, and Kennedy's way had the most success. And us all, "Would [you] then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?" (DePalma 6) and many Americans agreed that their patience had ran out.

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Evaluation: *Stephanie's insightful interpretation of JFK's presidency is written with great confidence and clarity. By putting civil rights at the center of the essay, Stephanie reveals the depth of her maturity as a student of history. This could easily be submitted for a 400-level course!*

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# A Renaissance of a Different Kind: Approaches to and Controversies in Art Restoration

Kristin Zelazko

Course: English 201 (Advanced Composition)

Instructor: Kurt Neumann

Assignment:

*Students were asked to write four essays  
on a single topic: a topic proposal,  
a definition essay, and two argument essays.*

## Part I: Approaches to Art Restoration

As we enter the twenty-first century, many priceless works of art are revealing signs of aging. Some are crumbling, others are decaying, and more are simply losing their once aesthetic appeal. With so many pieces of art in such condition, we must decide how to conserve some pieces and which pieces require restoration. Art conservation includes the aspect of art restoration. The restoration of art is a controversial issue with many negative associations, needing a foundation for people to agree on. In the most simple of terms, art restoration is a process of returning a work of art to its original state. Within this definition, however, *art*, *conservation*, and *restoration* are vague terms that require explanation.

*Art* is a broad term that encompasses not only painting, drawing, and sculpture, but architecture, literature, poetry, film, music. Indeed, Andy Warhol declared that everything was art, even a can of Campbell's tomato soup. Art is more than the *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary* definition of "an esthetically pleasing and meaningful arrangement of elements, as words, sounds, colors, shapes." Art need not be pleasing to the senses. If it were as such, we could not include the works of Pablo Picasso or those of Frida Kahlo, both of whom did not necessarily choose visually attractive subjects or colors. Art exists in many forms; moreover, it need not be tangible or permanent. It may not have been handmade, manmade, or skillfully done; and it certainly need not be serious, intelligent, or even unique. The definition of art is different for everyone; therefore, as Warhol preferred to believe, everything can be art.

In the case of restoration, however, Warhol's definition is too broad for us. We must concentrate on the tangible forms of art that are deteriorating and require attention. These tangible pieces of art include paintings, sculptures, buildings, monuments, and temples. Often, these works of art have a significant historical value; in general, they are over a century old, frequently reaching into the hundreds of years. They commonly are the works of deceased, well-known artists, such as Rembrandt and Leonardo de Vinci. Sometimes they are representative of an era, as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling represents the

Italian Renaissance; other times, they are representative of a culture, as the Sphinx represents the ancient Egyptians. For these reasons, such work of art are priceless, making them historic and cultural aspects of humanity.

*Conservation* is the protection of something, whether rainforest, historical structure, or work of art. In the context of art, conservationists often preserve works that are in danger of becoming extinct, meaning they may collapse or deteriorate. Such works of art include the Sphinx or Stonehenge. Conservation is different for every work of art, depending on the condition of the piece and the best way to preserve it. For example, the deterioration of the Sphinx still remains a mystery to conservators, who worry for its condition after it lost part of its right shoulder in 1988. According to Neville Agnew, Scientific Program Director of the Getty Conservation Institute, the Sphinx is simply revealing “the effects of four and a half thousand years of deterioration” (Hochfield 31). His solution to prevent further deterioration is to create a shelter for the Sphinx. To conserve this famous monument, he suggests placing it within doors, or building a transparent shelter for nights and rough weather. Another conservation practice is to simply limit access to a famous structure, preventing humans from trampling or breathing, which creates condensation, on a piece of art. Visitors of Stonehenge must follow a path that circles the monument; they may no longer meander about the site. While *Mona Lisa* is in no danger of crumbling to pieces, its infamy requires its own protection from the elements. The Japanese presented the painting with a Triplex glass box on its visit to Japan in 1965. The box is nearly bulletproof and maintains a constant temperature of 68 degrees. Because da Vinci painted *Mona Lisa* on poplar, the climate control is crucial in preventing warping or cracking of the wood panel. The conservation of the Leaning Tower of Piza, however, is more uncertain, and a committee is still debating how best to conserve this famous work of architecture, which has been leaning toward destruction since its completion. In her article, “Mortal Monuments,” Sylvia Hochfield states that “The choice, say many who are concerned with preservation, is often between diluting the experience of visitors...or

accepting the eventual destruction of the original” (31). Conservation is not always concerned with what is most aesthetically pleasing but with what is the best way to conserve our heritage.

*Restoration* is more extreme division of art conservation. The process of restoration is different for every work of art, but in general, restoration is a process of returning a work of art to its original condition. Its purpose, like conservation, is to conserve our cultural heritage. It is not a remodeling process meant to improve upon the original work. If a work of art should undergo a restoration process, however, its appearance would indeed change. For example, the restoration process for da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* would require a simple removal of varnishes that past restorers have added throughout the centuries. In the most successful of restorations, the work will appear as the artist had originally intended and created. Other times, this result is not feasible. For example, so many restorers have worked on Michaelangelo’s Sistine Ceiling over the past few centuries that modern restorers needed to decide how much previous restoration they should keep as part of the ceiling’s history. The modern restorers removed trapped dirt, old varnish, and some poor over-painting. They kept a hand that the artist Domenico Carnevali painted after a section of plaster with the left hand of God had fallen in the mid-sixteenth century, as well as eighteenth-century clamps that held weakened plaster. The ceiling is not the same as the original, but it certainly has a long history. The temples of Angkor in Cambodia are a different sort of example. The jungle has so grown upon the temples that it has created what conservation architect John Sanday describes as ““a wonderful blend of nature and architecture”” (qtd. in Hochfield 29). The solution is to reconstruct the already collapsed buildings and clear only some of the jungle. The Cambodian government must decide how much of the jungle to clear. The temples will not return to their initial state but will be in better condition than they are currently after restoration.

The decision on which works of art need restoration frequently falls into the hands of museum committees or national governments. They must decide how badly a work of art requires restoration. There is no question

that art that has collapsed or is in danger of collapsing must undergo restoration. Other works of art are open to discussion. For example, *Mona Lisa* is quite unclean, and most would agree a cleaning would only make the painting more beautiful. Restoration is not always a guaranteed process; there are always risks involved, but the result is often successful, as with the restoration of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Art conservators have many different methods of protecting art, depending on the work of art and its condition. Restoration is one such extreme method, in which a work of art undergoes a process meant to return it as close as possible to its original state. This often involves cleaning or rebuilding. Art is an important feature of our cultural and historic heritage, and art conservation is concerned with preserving that heritage through whatever means necessary.

## Part II: Controversies in Art Restoration

When the Louvre determined to restore Veronese's *Wedding at Cana*, the museum allowed the painting to remain on the wall, permitting viewers to observe the restoration process. The painting, unfortunately, suffered many mishaps during its reconstruction, including a fall from a temporary scaffold, during which it acquired several tears. The painting also endured a bit of rainfall due to leaks in the gallery's glass roof ("Too Hot to Handle" 36). These incidents left some wondering on whether the painting was in better condition before or after restoration. Incidents such as these have initiated doubt among artists, art historians, and the public on the safety and effectiveness of art restoration. While we cannot forget the mistakes of these incidents, we must also remember the successful restorations, such as that of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, which have truly benefited the art world. Art restoration, especially in the past few decades, has become more popular with new technology, but with it comes massive publicity, with accusations of scandal, heated debates, and lawsuits from both sides. Each side has its own arguments when regarding the conversation of art.

The basic argument against art restoration is to "not fix something that is not broken." James Beck, Columbia

University professor, Renaissance specialist, and prime crusader for the group Artwatch International, is not opposed to art restoration entirely. Wanting to conserve artwork, he encourages such a process for paintings that are in poor condition and in dire need of repair. He states, "there are undoubtedly instances when thorough restoration is necessary and even desirable, as when pictures have suffered from flood or other natural disasters... vandalism and war... simple humidity or inattention" (Beck, qtd. in "Reversibility, Fact or Fiction?" 6). When a visitor to the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh left an imprint of bright red lipstick on Warhol's *Bathtub*, for instance, art restorers came to the rescue, without debate. Otherwise, the painting would have remained in permanent storage (Ohlson 1). When it comes to paintings such as *Mona Lisa*, however, Beck wants restorers to leave it alone. The painting is merely dirty, Beck maintains, not reason enough to touch such a priceless masterpiece (Danto 35). Beck's arguments rest on fears of incompetence and change, but he has halted numerous restoration projects, including the Uffizi's plans to restore da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* in February 2002.

One of Beck's arguments is against the entire process of restoration, of which he is skeptical. He fears that museums leap into projects without fully researching the effects that restoration will have on a work of art, leading to experimentation on the original work. He reasonably exclaims that the works of da Vinci and other revered artists are far too precious to experiment on. He demands thorough investigation before any work begins on any form of art, preventing what he describes as "a medical doctor doing an operation and not knowing the blood type" (qtd. in "Beck's Crusade" 1). Beck also criticizes the process of reversibility, a common restoration process in which the restorer, during the final stage of restoration, adds a layer of varnish to protect the original and then retouches with water-soluble paints. Reversibility means to assure the public that if a restorer makes any questionable alterations to the original painting during the process, he has the ability to remove it. Beck disputes whether the process is truly reversible. During the first step of restoration, the cleaning process, a restorer removes certain material such as dirt or old varnishes. If he or she errs in judgement during this

stage, then the matter removed cannot simply be put back from whence it came, which in turn negates the idea of reversibility. Beck adds that watercolors tend to lighten over decades, which would lead to another intricate restoration after a generation or so. He questions whether anyone would want to fund such a project repeatedly (“Reversibility, Fact or Fiction?” 4).

In general, Beck simply dislikes the idea of restoration when he believes it to be unnecessary. He states that we think we know better today than those who have preceded us, that we believe we have better methods for restoring art. This conceit leads many museums to initiate restorations on artwork that is aging, but not in desperate need of restoration. The purpose of such restoration is what Beck terms “readability” in his article, “Readability and Restoration.” The museums want their pieces to be more readable to everyone, not just the art historians, therefore attracting more tourists. His equivalent of readability is “dumbing down”; such as when an editor condenses *Hamlet* into a compact booklet of easy-to-read pages producing a copy of *Cliff’s Notes*. He criticizes the results of the Sistine Chapel restoration, declaring, “To be sure critics and artists have found that the imagery appears to be too much like highly readable Walt Disney illustrations” (Beck qtd. in “Readability and Restoration” 1).

Another problem with restoration, Beck protests, is the loss of authenticity. With paintings, the restorer must work on the original work of art. The original is unique, and if reactions to the restoration are negative, no backup copy remains. When the Louvre began a series of test restorations on da Vinci’s *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* in 1991, the museum had to halt all work because of intense opposition, which generated bad publicity. Leading the opposition was painter and art historian Jacques Franck, who has studied da Vinci’s technique for over twenty years. While he agreed that the painting was in bad condition, he feared that restoration would ruin it. He explained that da Vinci’s distinctive technique is unstable for restoration. When painting, Franck explained, da Vinci used very little pigment, some binder, and a lot of solvent. Once he completed his work, he covered it with a layer of varnish that stabilized such a delicate medium.

Franck’s concern was that da Vinci’s pigments have seeped into the varnish, and to remove it may mean removing some of da Vinci’s original work (“Too Hot to Handle” 36-37). In addition, Beck argues that because someone else has come to work on the piece during restoration, the painting loses some of its legitimacy. Since its restoration, da Vinci’s *Last Supper* is no longer simply a da Vinci painting because others have worked on it. They have cleaned it and retouched it with their own brushstrokes. At the end of the process, Beck argues, only twenty percent remains of da Vinci’s original work (“Readability and Restoration” 2).

Despite Beck’s protests, however, art restorations are occurring more frequently today. Restoration is not such a shady process as Beck or Franck would have the public believe. When Martin Kemp, British Academy Wolfson Professor at the University of Saint Andrews, and a da Vinci expert, viewed *St. Anne’s* test cleanings, he remarked that the “blues were certainly not livid or shocking but rather what one would expect. The test cleaning showed considerable potential for relatively straightforward cleaning,” (qtd. in “Too Hot to Handle” 37). It is simply good habit to keep artwork in the best condition possible, even if it means restoring it. Art historian Jessica Douglas recommends that an owner should clean his painting five years after it is completed and at least every generation afterwards (2). At this rate, many masterpieces are far behind. Most have never undergone any sort of cleaning process. To wait for a work of art to decline in condition before cleaning it seems an absurd idea. We should restore art when it is safe and easy to do so, as well as when it is in poor condition. Restoration is not a “dumbing down” process: removing dirt does not mean removing the intellectual aspects of artwork. Many art historians believe paintings should appear as true to the original as possible. For years, historians described the Sistine Chapel as a dismal representation of the Bible. The chapel’s restoration proved these historians wrong, revealing the brilliant colors of Michelangelo’s preference (Douglas 1). Restoration has the ability to create a more accurate version of the artist’s original work.

Many opinions exist regarding the safety or restoration, which makes determining the correct one an

impossible task. Beck and his allies have reason for concern: works of art are a priceless representation of humanity; no one should experiment on them. These priceless representations, however, should be as true to life as possible. They should appear as the artist had intended them to appear. To achieve this, museums should initiate safe, well-prepared restorations. Risks are always involved, and mistakes do occur, but we should not hesitate to restore pieces of art, or they may become larger problems in the future.

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Evaluation: *Kristin chose an important and interesting topic, art restoration, defined relevant terms regarding the topic, and provided a concise examination of the primary arguments related to the topic. Kristin's sense of the issues is keen, and her prose is sophisticated and lively.*

# Harper Students (and Faculty) on Writing

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**Paul S. Bellwoar** (Adjunct Faculty, English)

Good writing moves a reader to forget who he/she is for a while, and it is this temporary suspension of self that allows one to breathe another condition and share in the infinity of the human experience. So often this is why I feel revitalized after an especially remarkable read. The writer has given me the gift of himself/herself and an opportunity to cease being me for a moment.

**Charles W. Brown** (Assistant Professor, Philosophy)

When I wrote papers in undergraduate college, one of my professors encouraged us to be "clear, complete, and concise." I would list these three characteristics among the many qualities one could enumerate about good writing. I do not care to read a work in which the author is not clear regarding what he or she wants to say, or fails to address the issue sufficiently, or rambles on ad infinitum, trying to do in twenty pages what could have been done in ten. In addition to these qualities, I believe that good writing will have good effects in one's life: it causes one to think more critically; it may stir one to constructive action; it may calm one's ravaged nerves.

**Barbara Butler** (Professor, English)

In Mark Twain's words, "Eschew surplusage."

**Bryan Clodfelter** (Student)

Writing makes me think: it forces me to delve deeper into the work and discover exciting facts and background that I couldn't have imagined before. When I write, I cement my often vague ideas and feelings and work out the answers to my questions. When I learn, I try to share it in my work. It's fun that way—I get to pass my knowledge along to anyone who wants to grow.

**Tricia Elliott** (Student)

Writing is the highest form of self-expression. There is a desire within each of us to express ourselves, and writing is a great outlet for this expression. From a journal to a business memo to a school paper to a novel, all of us write and express ourselves. Our thoughts, analyses, perceptions, understandings, joys, fears, and insights all come out when we choose writing as a form of self-expression. This is why I write.

**Kristina M. Giovanni** (Student)

The most intriguing phenomenon of literary expression is that there is an infinite number of ways with which to impress the simplest phrase.

**Heather Jefferies** (Student)

Writing is one of those things in life that you cannot escape. Some of us write because we have to and others because we like to. To me, writing has always been a way to express myself in ways spoken words could never accomplish. Even if no one else was to ever see my words, it felt good to let them out. For me, writing is a time for just my thoughts and me. In those moments, nothing else exists.

**Julia Kang (Student)**

“Before and After” was not an easy essay to write. It is about a troubled time in my life, and sometimes it was emotionally draining just to get the words down on paper. This essay required the resuscitation of memories I had hoped were long dead, but I am glad that I have written this essay. In the process of writing, I have learned a great deal more about myself, and the human ability to heal. It is my hope that all those who read my essay will be able to empathize and finish the essay with a sense of peace in their own hearts. For those who are in the midst of trials, it is my hope that my essay will give them the strength they need to overcome. I was able to overcome my obstacles and I want to tell them that they can too. For those who have experienced and overcome many tribulations, I would like them to read my essay with a wise, knowing look in their eyes that can only come from shared experience. No matter where you are in life, whether you are young or old, a teacher or a student, a male or a female, it is my greatest wish that my story be shared and enjoyed by many.

**Judy Kaplow (Instructor, Humanities)**

In all writing, something—an idea, an image, a memory, opinion, concept—gets moved from one mind to another. Good writing gets that job done with a minimum of fuss. Very good writing hands to us as a present the something, which turns out to be surprisingly useful or fun or interesting. But when it’s great writing, the something comes to us as an extraordinarily courageous and generous gift—a key to the strongbox where the writer keeps his or her self, and the truths of a life stored there. Such a gift can only be wrapped and moved with anxious care. That is writing.

**Sheri A. Luzzi (Student)**

Writing about real people in non-fiction settings is, to me, almost a sacred privilege. My subjects are allowing me access to their feelings, thoughts, and life experiences. Only when the truth is firmly fixed as a priority in my mind do I feel free to indulge myself in crafting a story that is accurate and, hopefully, inspiring.

**Kevin Merkelz (Student)**

Even though I have never been overly enthusiastic about English and writing, it was always the subject in school that I didn’t mind quite as much as the others. I think the reason that English was always the subject that I didn’t mind so much was due to the relative freedom that is inherent in all forms of writing. Unlike math, where the answer to the assignment is set in stone and is always the same, regardless of how many students attempt the problem, writing allows much more creative freedom. Even though there are certain guidelines and parameters set by the professor or teacher, what I choose to fill inside those guidelines are my own thoughts; they are my own answers, as opposed to an answer that has already been predetermined. That, I feel, is why writing has always been a subject that I have enjoyed.

**Kurt Neumann (Assistant Professor, English)**

Good writing is linear, logical, and orderly; or the other way around: digressive, analogical, allusive. It is highly crafted, like ourselves, and therefore vulnerable. It is seldom profound, often interesting, and always individual. It is personal, social, ideological, and political. Sometimes it is practical and sometimes it exists for its own sake. And the best writing, for my taste, is salted with a little irony and humor.

**Kris Piepenburg** (Instructor, English)

All writing begins with reading—whether reading of physical or mental reality or another text. Good writers “have their feelers out” before and as they write, to soak up the details and depth of experience, whether lived or read. For whatever world a writer recreates and brings me to—whether involving technical concepts, a topical issue, a historic moment, a state of mind, a literary work, or a meaningful memory—I want to hear about that world through a focused, frank, unaffected, and unpretentious voice, and I want to get a full sense of that world, to be able to move around in it as in a “virtual reality.” When a writer has strong sensitivity to actual reality and brings meaningful detail from it into his or her writing, the virtual reality becomes as rich and deep as the actual.

**Catherine Restovich** (Assistant Professor, English)

Good writing is...good writing. Let's talk about great writing. Great writing, like any other endeavor we consciously and passionately pursue in our lives, is a magical blend of the tangible and the intangible. In the tangible realm, we study mechanics and invest countless hours in learning and relearning the rules that a language calls us to adhere to. In the intangible realm, we listen to, and write from, that indefinable pulse that can not be ignored because it is, simply, who we are. Great writing is great writing when pure fundamentals meet pure energy. Good writing, then, is like confidently sinking a free-throw in overtime after shooting one thousand free-throws a day the previous summer. Great writing is like driving to the basket as the clock slowly ticks down—“5”—she drives to the right—“4”—she dribbles behind her back—“3”—she drives to the left—“2”—she pivots, swinging back to the right—“1”—she fades a hook shot over her opponent's reach—Swish—“Buzzer sounds.”

**Andrew Wilson** (Associate Professor, English)

A piece of writing might describe a chair. A piece of good writing might have a man in that chair. A piece of super writing might show that man fidgeting—sitting, standing, sitting again; speaking, laughing, crying, moaning, babbling incoherently, drooling, or all of these. Super writing would tell the reader how that man's shirt clashed with the fabric of that chair, and how that fabric shooshed as the scratchy wool of the man's shirtsleeve brushed across it, bringing cigarette to mouth. Super writing would describe not only a chair and not only a man, but also the state of that man's hair, and how he smelled, and the peculiar timbre of his voice. In other words, in my view, super writing features illustrative details—not exactly to the point of saturation or exhaustion, but I'd eat an overcooked chicken before I'd eat a raw one.

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# The William Prufrock Furniture Company

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by Julie Fleenor

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*Writing is easy; all you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your head.*

Gene Fowler

The title of this “Afterword” is “The William Prufrock Furniture Company.” I will explain the title later.

Writers frequently are asked where they get their ideas. Two ways to find ideas is to read other writers and keep a journal.

When I have taught creative writing or talked to my students about their poetry or fiction, I have heard the disturbing comment that, “I don’t read. It takes times away from my writing.” That’s a serious mistake. First, a writer needs to know the best of what has been written (and sometimes the not-so-best). Writers have to read to know how what they are writing fits into the tradition of writing poetry, drama, or fiction. Writers love words, sometimes feeling the texture and color of words.

Writers read other writers because writers write to other writers. Writers are in constant dialogue with writers, dead and alive, who have written or who are writing. They read short stories or poems, thinking they would write them differently. Sometimes they do just that. Writers have other writers prowling around in their heads, and they enter private, sometimes life-long, conversations with them. Writers have a shelf of favorite works to which they return time and again. Good books are best reread.

Again, I would like to remind you of my title, “The William Prufrock Furniture Company.” I will return to it later.

Some writers record their ideas on 3 x 5, 4 x 6, or 5 x 7-inch index cards. John Gregory Dunn, the husband of essayist and fiction writer Joan Didion, and Raymond Carver, the husband of poet Tess Gallagher, both have written that they used index cards to record their ideas. Writers can move the cards around, putting them in one order and then another. Many writers use fragments of paper, used and then discarded. However, one writer, Russell Banks, has written that he does not write down ideas. Instead, he keeps “pushing them down” on the theory that if it is a good idea, it will keep popping up again, and when it pops up again, it will be more developed.

Instead of using index cards, many writers keep bound notebooks or journals. In a journal, writers jot down ideas, lines from poetry, whatever they want. Out of these jottings or musings can come short stories. Let me illustrate by explaining how three of my own short stories were created. And then let me tell you about one I am working on now.

First, I put newspaper clippings in my journal. It was from a newspaper article that I got the idea for a short story, “Purple Prose.” The story was of a young woman who died after being pushed off a subway platform in New York City. I also talked to some of my friends who were members of a writing group. We speculated on why this would have happened. Each of us came up with our own answer. My answer became the short story.

Second, I put stories I hear from my family in the journal. In my published short story, “Ski,” I used an anecdote told to me by an uncle. A man he worked with at a steel mill had told him that after the death of the second man’s mother, the man had gone to her house and slept in his mother’s bed, comforted by the smell of his mother. That became part of my short story, transformed, of course, with the help of a writing group I belonged to at the time. I placed the woman in what used to be called a shotgun house in an area of my home town called Dogpatch, the name for a neighborhood immediately around the mill. Then I brought a gun into the story. My writing group reminded me that I had to use a gun when one is brought into a story. I don’t remember naming the shotgun house, although I did describe it, and I never mentioned Dogpatch, although it is there in the story and in fact shapes the entire story.

Third, I record fragments of dialogue I overhear. In a

## The William Prufrock Furniture Company

third published story, "House Burning," I incorporated fragments of a conversation I heard on a bus trip to my parked car near O'Hare Airport. The conversation was between three people, who seemed important to each other but didn't seem related. I wrote the story to clarify for myself what that relationship might be. I also wove the accidental burning of a neighbor's house into that story. It was with this piece that I began to write fiction by taking fragments from my journal and weaving them into the tapestry of a short story—a technique I learned from reading and studying short fiction by film director John Sayles.

Fourth, writers record their dreams (and the dreams of others) in a journal. A dream journal is invaluable to a writer. That's because dreams are a portal to parts of the mind not accessible otherwise. These dreams can be the writer's or those of a friend or family member. For example, I usually speak on the phone with my parents every day. Recently, my mother told me that an old friend of hers had pancreatic cancer. Then my mother related her vivid dream of a man in black bending over her, asking her if she was all right. My mother also frequently dreams of her own mother. A fragment of one of my mother's dreams is her searching for a baby. This is an entry in my journal. Also in it is an entry concerning a tree commonly called the tree of heaven. An arborist recently told me that we should destroy all the trees of heaven on our property, since the tree of heaven crowds out and kills other trees. I am intrigued by the tree of heaven and its destructive behavior. And these fragments, the tree of heaven and my mother's vivid dreams, will perhaps end up in a short story, transformed, of course.

It is time to explain the Prufrock Furniture Company. I am a collector of St. Louis World's Fair memorabilia. Recently, I came across a pamphlet for the William Prufrock Furniture Company of St. Louis, which apparently sold furniture, ugly furniture, at the 1904 fair. Many of us know the poem by T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Looking at the photographs of that awful furniture in the pamphlet, I thought of that poem, remembering that Eliot was a St. Louis resident—a relative was president of Washington

University. In 1904, Eliot would have been 16 years old. Washington University was the driving force behind that fair, and the 1904 Olympics held during the fair were held on its campus. I have never seen any journals of T.S. Eliot. But I am sure that the name Prufrock stayed with Eliot and eventually found its way into the poetry of the young Eliot. The name combines the ugly furniture made and sold by the Prufrock Furniture Company and what Eliot perceived was the ugly poetry of the late 19th Century. And J. Alfred Prufrock with his morning coat and repressed sexuality was created. It is J. Alfred Prufrock who catches us by the sleeve and murmurs, "Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table ..." ("The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *Poetry*, 1915). And I have some idea of what kind of furniture was in this room: "In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo." Seven years after publishing those lines, Eliot would publish "The Wasteland": "These fragments I have shored against my ruins ..." ("The Waste Land," 1922), transforming "Ozymandius," the poem by Percy Shelley.

*"There's nothing to writing. All you do is  
... open a vein."*

*Red Smith*

When you can't think of what to write, remember your journal and the William Prufrock Furniture Company.

And your dreams. Never forget your dreams.

*To write is to write is to write is to write is to  
write is to write is to write is to write.*

*Gertrude Stein*

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Julie Fleenor is a recently retired Harper College faculty member and fiction writer.

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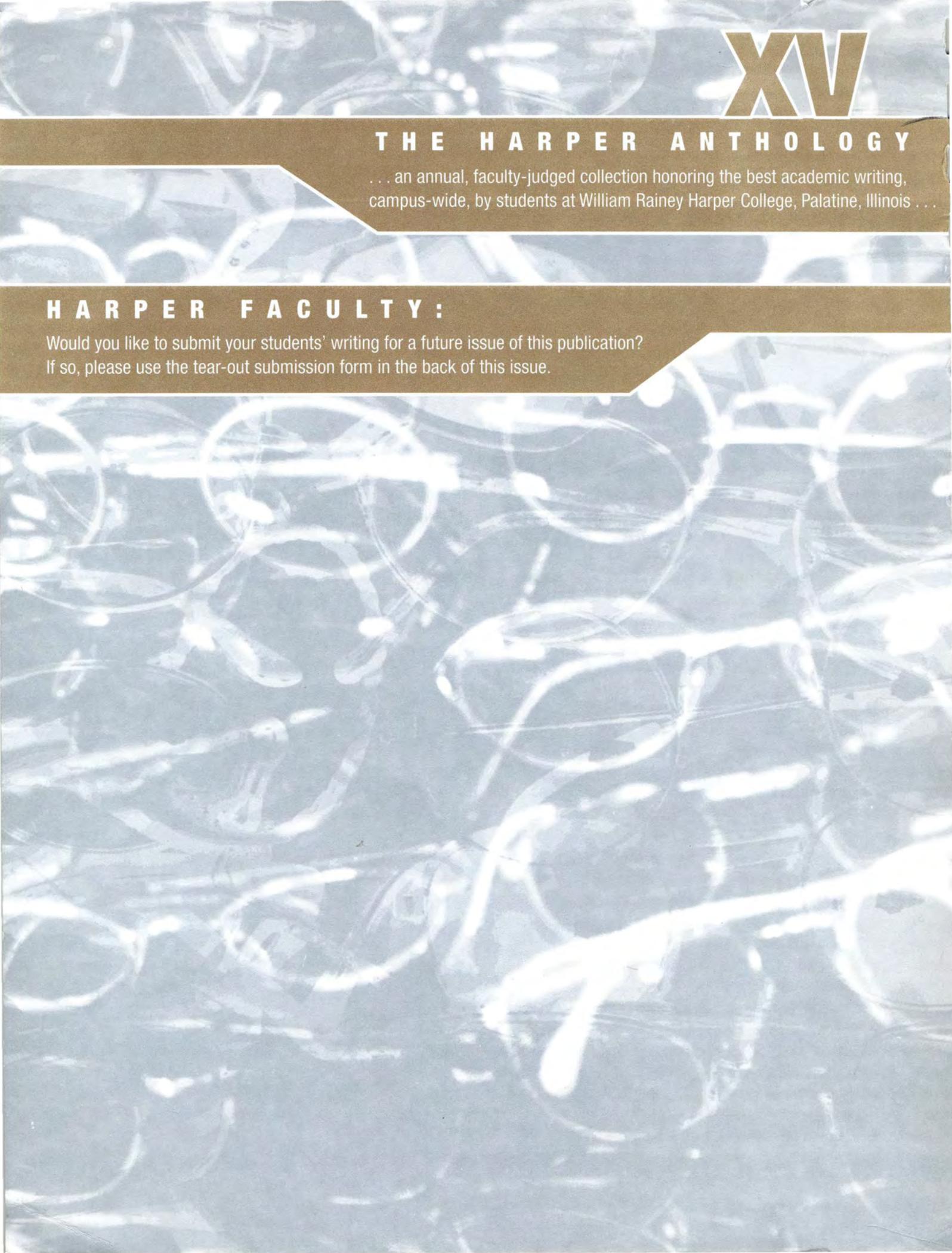


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