

THE HARPER ANTHOLOGY



issue xii

Student Writers



Anonymous	Erin Mayo
Seung H. Baek	Alan E. Minarik
Eugene F. Beiswenger	Erin Mitmoen
Brad Bernau	Hiroko Morii
Jessica Bovino	Bobbie Nybo-Buchholz
Weiran Chen	Mark Olszewski
Mary Jane Clark	Ewa Pasterski
Judy Engeriser	Deborah A. Pickup
Megan Fincher	Paula Popowski
Tomoko Fukushima	Martinique Pozniak
Marie Harris	Amy Richter
Mollie Hawes	Paul Rollins
Doris Hohertz	Laura Schumann
Charley Juran	Ryan Sheehan
Michael Kenny	Penelope Skrzynski
Carole Kmiec	Richard Stanish
Radik Lapushin	Karen Starke
Jennifer LeBron	Julie Threlfall
Jennifer Lestor	Dawn Uza
Hope Marquardt	Stoyan Vassilev
Olga Matz	Robin Weber
Mary Jo Mayerck	Brooke Wexler

This issue is dedicated to Jack Dodds, founder of the *Anthology* and member of the *Anthology* Selection Committee since this publication's inception in 1989. Dr. Dodds will retire from Harper's English Department in the summer of 2001, after 25 years of outstanding service.

* * * * *

The following *Anthology* Committee members deserve my thanks for helping me put together this year's issue: Kris Piepenburg (Co-Chair), Kurt Neumann, Jack Dodds, Barbara Hickey, Peter Sherer, and Rich Johnson. (Kris Piepenburg and Kurt Neumann were especially helpful.) Thanks to Barb Weil of Harper's Chemistry Department for writing this issue's Afterword (see pp. 138 to 141). Thanks to Ashley Hartigan—the Liberal Arts Division's cheerful student aide—who spent several hours with me one winter afternoon/evening organizing and collating the submissions. Thanks to Lisa Larsen, the Liberal Arts Division's administrative assistant, who finds herself fielding lots of *Anthology*-related miscellany. And thanks to Harley Chapman, Dean of Harper's Liberal Arts Division, for his truly generous and perennial support of the *Anthology*. I am also grateful to Matt Nelson, from Harper's Marketing Services Center, for helping me so much and so wonderfully with the *Anthology's* cover design. And I am grateful to Peter Gart and the staff of Harper's Print Shop; they bring the *Anthology* to production and fruition.

Finally...thanks, as always, to Deanna Torres, the *Anthology's* typesetter, who does an exceptional job, year after year.

Andrew Wilson
Co-Chair, *Harper Anthology* Committee



Table of Contents

Andrew Wilson <i>Foreword</i>	Mollie Hawes <i>Eight Hours of Music, Illumination, Warmth, Technology, and Clean Air in One Room: Process and Cost</i> (Physical Science 101) 34
Anonymous <i>An Island No Longer</i> (English 101) 1	Doris Hohertz <i>A Lover's Poem</i> (German 205) 40
Seung H. Baek <i>The Greatest Passion</i> (English as a Second Language) 4	Charley Juran <i>Appearance Is Everything: John Cheever and "The Five-Forty-Eight"</i> (English 102) 41
Eugene F. Beiswenger <i>Paradise Missed: The False Epiphany of Johnny Hake in "The Housebreaker of Shady Hill"</i> (English 102) 5	Michael Kenny <i>WWW. Heltraisers. Com</i> (English 101) 46
Brad Bernau <i>Gas Rises, Gas Falls</i> (Chemistry 121) 10	Carole Kmiec <i>Links in a Chain</i> (English 101) 49
Jessica Bovino <i>El Sauce Viejo / The Old Willow</i> (Spanish 101) 11	Radik Lapushin <i>On the Border in Borders</i> (English 101) 52
Weiran Chen <i>Doing Business in China</i> (English as a Second Language) 12	Jennifer LeBron <i>A Cry for Help</i> (Reading 099/English 100) 54
Mary Jane Clark <i>Into the Mind of the Killer</i> (English 102) 13	Jennifer Lestor <i>The Best of Both Worlds: A Comparative Analysis of The English Patient</i> (Literature 110) 56
Judy Engeriser <i>Legitimate Hungers: Women in Literature Take-Home Exam</i> (Literature 224) 18	Hope Marquardt <i>Memories</i> (English 102) 60
Megan Fincher <i>Memento Mori</i> (English 101) 24	Olga Matz <i>The Decision</i> (English 101) 61
Tomoko Fukushima <i>My Hardest Year</i> (English as a Second Language) 27	Mary Jo Mayerck <i>Considering Children? Start Earlier, Finish Earlier!</i> (English 101) 62
Marie Harris <i>"Do You See What I'm Saying?"</i> (English 102) 29	

Table of Contents

- Erin Mayo
"To Make a Poet Black, and Bid Him Sing!"
(Literature 105) 65
- Alan E. Minarik
*Unstuck in Medium:
The Translation of Kurt Vonnegut
From Novel to Film*
(Literature 110) 68
- Erin Mitmoen
The Brother Who Almost Was
(Speech 101) 72
- Hiroko Morii
*Television News:
Only One Version of Reality*
(English 101) 74
- Bobbie Nybo-Buchholz
*Experiencing Myth:
A Storybook Account of
"The Yellow Wallpaper"*
(English 102) 76
- Mark Olszewski
The Hand Dealt from God
(English 100) 84
- Ewa Pasternski
A Growing Love
(English 101) 86
- Deborah A. Pickup
From a Child's View
(Literature 219) 88
- Paula Popowski
The Effect of Dams on Soils
(PST 110) 90
- Martinique Pozniak
*When Nature Beckons: Exploration of Conflict
in John Galsworthy's "The Japanese Quince"*
(English 102) 94
- Amy Richter
*Natural Abundance of Country Life
as Shown by Willa Cather's "Neighbour Rosicky"*
(English 102) 96
- Paul Rollins
*Economics as the Driving Force in History
as Seen by Karl Marx and Charles Beard*
(Humanities 105) 99
- Laura Schumann
Mind Your Q's and Peas
(English 101) 104
- Ryan Sheehan
No, Not This Poet.
(English 102) 106
- Penelope Skrzynski
Rock and Rot?
(English 101) 111
- Richard Stanish
A Museful Journey
(English 102) 113
- Karen Starke
*The Aeneid: Virgil's Commentary
On the History of Rome and Carthage*
(Literature 206) 116
- Julie Threlfall
*"I Know a Bank Where
the Wild Thyme Blows"*
(English 101) 122
- Dawn Uza
Time to Say Goodbye
(English 101) 125
- Stoyan Vassilev
Who Burst the Ball?
(Chemistry 121) 127
- Robin Weber
A Teacher's Lesson
(English 101) 129
- Brooke Wexler
Me and My Mom
(English 101) 131
- The Harper Anthology Selection Committee:
What Is Good Writing? 133
- Harper Students on Writing* 135
- Barbara Q. Weil
*Afterword: Science and Writing
or Writing and Science* 138
- Alternate Table of Contents* 142
-

A true story (maybe it happened and maybe it didn't happen, but most stories, finally, are true): I went to see an old man recently, on a Wednesday. He was—and still is, I presume—a carpenter, and I needed a new screen door for my porch. I gave him the dimensions and then, following an unexpected urge, I asked him, "What is writing?" I expected him not to hear me. Or, I expected him to hear but to pretend not to hear. I expected him to look askance at my irrelevant question. To my surprise, the old man didn't miss a beat. He said, "Writing...it's like wood. Sure. You could cut it up just about any way you like. You could turn a block of wood into a henhouse, or you could carve it into your new screen door, then dress it up with a rough coat of primer and a slick, buttery coat of burgundy paint. That's writing, too. Writing. You could take your letters—how many is it? twenty something?—and write this, write that, declare war or woo your sweetie. When you gonna want this door finished, boy?"

I told him to finish the door when he could. I was thinking about his answer to my question. He sort of cupped the back of my neck in a gesture of tenderness between new friends: "You come back Friday. Pay me then."

In my dreams, I sometimes meet dead people like Jackie Robinson and Carl Jung. I especially like meeting Carl Jung, and my Jung dream is always pretty much the same, with minor alterations from time to time. In my most recent Jung dream, I walked across a pillowy bed of reddish mud, but my boots never got dirty. Each step pulled cleanly away from the pulpy ground with a soft, sucking sound. I've come to love that sound, so I walked deliberately and passed through free-standing arches made of rough stone and shaped like cathedral windows, kind of pointy at the top. At last, there he was, in a stone cabin whose barn-like doors were flung wide open so that even a drunk elephant could stagger through, touch-

ing nothing but atmosphere. He was waiting for me in an Eastern lotus position, atop the same red-velvet cushion my childhood cat used to sleep on with one eye open, waiting for my mother to shoo him away. (Then my mother would swipe viciously at the orange fur he'd leave behind. The fur, I always noticed, never really moved. Each time, my mother beat the cushion as if it were an incorrigible child, all for naught, and in fact the fur was still there in my dream: faded now to a pale beige, but there nevertheless. But Mr. Jung didn't mind.) He said, "Sit down."

"What is writing?" (I surprised him in my most recent Jung dream by asking this question. This dream had been needing a change of pace; I had felt for some time that I should ask him something new.)

"Writing, Hmm. Certainly. Writing...well, letters and words are the bricks in the path toward the collective unconscious. Yes, that's writing: When we write, we reveal and discover. This is true whether or not we intend to reveal and discover. (What we consciously intend rarely matters; unconscious desire is everything and rules—or should I say *tyrannizes?*—all that one does.)" At this point, Mr. Jung stopped briefly to wink at me in the manner of a dead person who is merry and satisfied. He continued: "The best of us write and write and write ourselves to a spectacular discovery, to a place beyond our selfish, voracious bodies: a final frontier of camaraderie. You become you and more-than-you. I become me and more-than-me, blending perfectly—like good food and good wine—with the you who is more-than-you. If we write, we should write and write and write. The more we write, the farther along we journey in our search for common ground. In the act of writing, each of us is both one and a hundred and one. Each of us is manifold: each is good *and* evil, man *and* woman. The old wise man, Walt Whitman...he said, 'I am not contained between my hat and my boots.' Writing's that way. In writing, the writer is the writer and more-than-the-writer. He becomes an aggregate, unencumbered by boundaries, uncontained between his hat and his boots. Gaze above you: there he is in the most distant yellow star. There he is—look down and see!—at the molten center of the earth."

“So writing is good, then?” I asked, realizing that I would need about an hour to consider his reply.

“Writing is very good,” he said. He smiled. His smile was the same smile I had seen (while awake, of course) on the face of the old carpenter. He drew deeply, as if for air, on an ivory pipe, closing his eyes like a sleepy child.

I woke from my dream, well rested. I grew happy. I was having terrific luck with my “What is writing?” question: an ancient, spry wood-worker and a dead legend were remade as assistants in my bid to discover the secret soil of writing. Truly, I began to care enormously about knowing the essence of writing. But I was low on milk for cereal and coffee and decided on a mile-long walk to the market. It was early June, and the day had broken cool on my skin in a mist of air. It was hard to tell if the day would inch toward heat and humidity. I began my walk and soon passed a neighbor reading the newspaper, which he held up in the air with both hands. He was sitting in a green plastic chair positioned at the end of his driveway. For about eight months of every year, he did this each morning; he did not do this in November, December, January, and February (and he did not do it in March if the cold winds and snows were still coming). As I passed him, I glanced at the back page of the front section of his newspaper, the weather page, seeing in the upper-left corner a drawing of a full sun like a lodestar afire with orange center and yellow edge. That, presumably, meant a forecast of heat. Heat like a friend, I hoped. Heat like a thin coat of comfortably warm water.

I passed slowly, as if approaching Mr. Jung in the previous night’s dream, and studied the man’s thick-skinned brow of folds and lines like distant Ohio farmland seen from the window of a jumbo jet, and each time he flipped a page, his brow marked the effort by featuring a kind of V cutting through the horizontal furrows, the point reaching the tip of his nose. V: a beautiful letter, two lines splayed outward and upward from the same root like a storm-weary willow. It struck me suddenly that it was still perhaps early, very early; the market was probably not yet open. I could still hear the motorized hum of the night-time bugs beneath the mouth-sounds and wing-rushes of birds. And then, just as I began to adjust to my awareness of night unbecoming, the hum ceased and day took over, flooding my cheek with sun and sky and the wet-rock taste of sky. It would be hot, I

decided, but the day would glow like the faint-rose pages of early summer catalogs for women, and I had nothing to do anyway except sit on my porch and read and melt pleasantly like a softening peach.

“Sir,” I said simply to the man, “I am your neighbor.”

“Yes, yes,” he said. There was a glint in the man’s pupils which told me that he had been waiting for me for the balance of his lifetime. He neatly set the newspaper upon his lap. “Let me tell you what writing is.”

“Yes,” I said. I said again, “Yes.” I could scarcely believe my good fortune.

“Writing is milk,” he declared after a pause, with the conviction of a sentry.

“Writing is milk?”

“Writing is milk, spilled milk, a mother sow’s milk for her fourteen children, milk for your coffee, and just milk.”

“How is it that writing is milk?” His answer was unsatisfactory for me...too symbolic, maybe. Too milky? I was suddenly unhappy, and there was a supple globule of impatience pressing my trachea. I was intent on an archetypal brand of understanding in the ancient pattern of listen and receive; I did not understand this man’s early morning riddle.

There was a pause. Then, my neighbor’s voice became different, rich, even chocolaty. “Milk,” he said, “is fundamentally mammalian. Milk is good for the bones. I say again, then: writing is milk.” That was all he said. He nimbly reached his two hands down and gripped his right ankle as if it were a flag-pole he meant to ease from the ground. He lifted and drew his ankle in toward him and set it atop his left knee. He was smiling, barely. He retrieved the newspaper from his lap and shook out the sports section.

The day would be hot, I thought again, but not until later, not for another stretch of cool sunshine. It would be a good day, I decided, and moved on, hungrier than before and happy once more. I was fond of my neighbor again, my impatience waning just as quickly as it had surged. I never could maintain a grudge. The day would be hot, but like a friend, and later—perhaps by supper-time—there might be a light rain through a pinkish sky of clouds and the wild calls of geese. I didn’t care. I would have my milk, a fresh gallon to last me three days or more. I was walking, walking. I turned a corner and was gone.

An Island No Longer

Anonymous

Course: Honors English 101

Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay.

“AIDS is the result of your faulty morals,” she said. “You must have engaged in either promiscuous or deviant sex, and that deserves punishment.” My doctor’s words were forever burned into my psyche. I had just found out that I had the AIDS virus, and I was alone, afraid and full of despair. I was ignorant of the disease and its workings, but I knew that it infected others with fear and paranoia.

There were several bad doctors. One doctor thought that I needed oral sex, since he said, “I don’t exactly see anyone lining up for you, so you might as well feel good while you can.” Another doctor wanted me to come in an hour before his office opened and give him anal sex. “You just supply the condoms,” he said. I felt tainted by their suggestions. The self-inflicted isolation from other people affected me greatly. How could I possibly have sex with other people? I might accidentally infect them, dragging them down with me into this Hell.

My mother told us boys that she didn’t want to discover that any of her children were gay. How could I tell her that I had AIDS? So many people, including myself, thought that AIDS was mostly a “gay disease.” I had experimented with man-to-man sex and thought that I had earned the disease as a result of my curiosity. I thought, “I have AIDS; therefore, I must be gay.” At that time, everyone that I knew thought the same way. Could so many people be wrong? I had already lost my father’s love because my teenage rages went unforgiven. I couldn’t afford to lose my mother’s love; it was the only thing that anchored me.

Could my family or friends see how dirty I was, how sinful and decadent? Thinking that I might lose them, I wasn’t brave enough to test their relationships by asking for their support. I felt worthless. It seemed that everyone was either hating me or thinking that I was conveniently caged and easy to exploit.

After several weeks of lethargy and chronic illness, my bedridden muscles had atrophied to a critical point. I was numb and couldn’t move. I was paralyzed with the fear of dying, and death felt near and tangible. I felt betrayed; my body couldn’t perform. In this ebb and flow of consciousness, I struggled to remain awake, afraid of sleep.

The paramedics were called by my frightened uncle. I was hearing them only in fragments, as their voices were

vague and nearly incomprehensible. "All of the classic signs," one paramedic said. "His lungs are almost filled with fluid and he's hyperventilating. Hook up some oxygen!" the other one yelled. Cough! Gurgle! Wheeze! It was difficult to breathe; I was drowning in my own phlegm. Ironically, my near-death experience was the best thing that could have happened to me. I was finally taken to a place where they knew what was happening to me and didn't care what type of person I was; they just wanted me to get better.

I spent many weeks in the Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights and its satellite Continuing Care Center, rehabilitating from the complications caused from pneumonia, acute pain, and atrophied muscles. My portable intravenous machine, which I had named Matilda, accompanied me for nearly four weeks. We were inseparable. She didn't mind coming with me to my first physical therapy session. I had to sit on a large, red rubber ball and bounce. Matilda helped me to drink my meals, flushing me with carefully measured chemical nutrients. The blendered pizza was the most memorable meal. She wasn't embarrassed by my nudity when the nurses gave me sponge baths. My sweet sustainer was always compassionate and quietly supportive, all that you could ask for in a relationship. Since I have become well, she has moved on to the next critically ill person.

When I was at the Continuing Care Center, I stared at the white-washed ceilings, virtually immobile, and I was bored out of my mind. I had a lot of time to think about my situation and how I was going to react to it.

At first, I wanted to keep my illness a secret and not allow even my mother to come and see me. I would throw tantrums and yell at the visitors who came. I thought that if the visitors couldn't see me sick, then I wasn't infested with this wasting disease. I wasn't ill. No one saw me ill. They couldn't have seen me; therefore, I didn't have AIDS. This was all a mistake. The doctors couldn't see that I was well. The pills that I was popping into my mouth as if they were M&Ms were really just sugar pills. The doctors were trying to trick me into thinking that I was sick. They get their money from sick people. I grasped at any delusion that would enable me to think that I was well.

A cold, a sneeze, or even an airborne virus could have sent me spiraling back into unconsciousness. My immune system was that low. Everyone had to wear surgical masks and I thought it was funny. I couldn't concentrate on the seriousness of the situation and kept making jokes about the nursing staff, thinking that they all looked as if they were from the TV show M.A.S.H. I had given all of the nurses names that fitted appearances or their personalities. Radar, Major Hoolihan and Colonel Potter: these were TV stars who visited me regularly to give me medicine or to check up on me. I needed the levity to help me through the graveness of my situation. I believe that my humor has helped me to look at the positive aspects of things, enabling me to endure my pain and my sorrow. Because of this perspective, my illness doesn't seem that overwhelming.

My humor and positive perspective have helped me to heal. There were times when I felt overwhelmed by my pain, was numb and unable to respond to those around me. Those twilight times were morose and consuming. Since I had negatively focused on my illness, or ignored it altogether, I had little attention, or energy, for healing.

Now, I try to find beauty in everything, no matter how opaque the image might be. Every day is a new story; every place is a new adventure. I often find myself surrounded and enthralled by people, places and events so diverse in their flavor that I never become complacent in my wonder of them.

Through my senses, I've experienced some wondrous things. There's an evening hush that I cherish: when the sun sleeps under her earthly blanket, a cool fog playfully kisses my face, and the breeze caresses me and the trees goodnight. During that time, I sit by the quiet pond near my house and listen to a robin warble her love song. She sings on her stage for the entire world to hear, not caring what the world's opinion may be. My soul and her song are harmonized, complementing and understanding each other's intensities. She resonates out from the depths of her soul and I, from the raw emotional intensity, weep.

Hate and prejudice confuse me. It seems that they act like a dirty film, oozing over other people's eyes and obscuring life's pleasant possibilities. What I don't under-

stand is how people become so comfortable behind their smeared lenses that they appreciate neither the suffering nor the simple joy that persists around them. It is essential that I embrace my pain and develop my empathy. Empathy teaches me how similar I am to other people, helping me to recognize those same feelings in others.

There may be some people that feel my viewpoint is childish and unrealistic. These cynics might feel that I'm escaping, and not addressing, the painful reality that shadows my existence. Naïve, neurotic and nonsensical, that is what the realists might call me. I refuse to bow under the pressure of a cynical society because it thinks that it possesses the realistic point of view. Society seems to be so hurt from life's painful instructions that it's vigilant against any injury to itself and turns away from life's beautiful moments. How can you realize the beauty of a moment when you're too absorbed and distracted by the pain that you feel?

My hope is to find similar people (or those who know of others like me) and compare our experiences. That is why I chose to go back to school. Were there other people in the past that felt the same way that I do? How did they handle their situation? School has become therapy for me, enabling me to accept my illness. Philosophy, literature and history classes have taught me a lot and helped me to grow. By sharing my own observances, I want to give hope to others who might feel as I did: isolated, yet surrounded by an ocean of ignorance and stigma.

Evaluation: *This student's varied and moving account of his painful experience well illustrates the power of language to transform alarming, disturbing details of life into something of real beauty.*

The Greatest Passion

Seung H. Baek

Course: English as a Second Language (ESL 069)

Instructor: Ilona Sala

Assignment:

Write a briefessay about what makes a good teacher.

What makes a good teacher? Knowledge, experience and skills are important, but a teacher's passion for his or her students is essential. I've known a teacher who was born to be a teacher, and who gave all his heart to his pupils.

I met Jin, my English teacher, in the second year of high school. He was a man who was totally out of fashion. He wore only a couple of gray suits and some plain T-shirts, which made him look much older than he was. Every student guessed he had to do laundry every day because it seemed he didn't have clothes enough for a week. Moreover, he rode a bike for transportation, even if it was raining or snowing. Even his face was odd because his eyes couldn't focus on anything. Even if he was looking at me, I couldn't figure out what he was looking at. He once told me that eye surgery could make them focus right, but he would do it later. It was a mystery when he had to sell his car and house and delay the surgery, because he hardly spent money for himself; he just had one daughter, whom he had adopted. One month before our graduation, a newspaper article stunned all the students and teachers of my high school and solved the mystery about Jin. The story had begun when one of my classmates lost her parents in a car accident. After the accident, the government offered money, but not very much, so she worked hard to support her two little sisters. She almost quit school, but an anonymous person volunteered to support the three girls. My schoolmates and I often talked about the person, and we supposed the volunteer was rich or a relative of Jesus. According to the newspaper article, Jin was the supporter who had been paying for their rent and education for three years.

Now, I understood why he had to ride a bike in rain and snow, move into an old and small apartment, delay his eye surgery, and wear old clothes. I wept at my blindness. Whenever I saw him, I only saw that he was inelegant and his eyes were unfocused. Maybe his pure soul was so bright, it burned my eyes.

Evaluation: *I love Seung's portrayal of a man
who taught her an important lesson.
Her epiphany is heartwrenching.*

Paradise Missed: The False Epiphany of Johnny Hake in “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill”

Eugene F. Beiswenger
Course: English 102o
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:
*Write a literary research paper that
draws on at least seven critical sources.*

In 1958, author John Cheever released a collection of stories entitled *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill and Other Stories*. This collection chronicled much of the author's previously released short fiction from the 1950's and included several critically acclaimed works. The award-winning stories in this collection included “The Five-Forty-Eight,” which won the Benjamin Franklin Magazine award in 1955, and “The Country Husband,” which received the prestigious O. Henry Award in 1956. The title story, “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill,” has been largely ignored. Its only claim is the fact that Cheever received \$40,000 from MGM studios for the film rights (Meanor 15).

Critical response to “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill” has been somewhat mixed. While critic Eugene Chesnick points to the story's “technical ingenuity,” he criticizes the work for not exploring anything new in the form of the story (130). James E. O'Hara complains that “Cheever has sensed the comic possibilities of his material and has chosen to play it for laughs rather than explore it for ideas” (48). Cheever, on the other hand, had a certain fondness for the story. In the preface to his Pulitzer Prize-winning collection *The Stories of John Cheever*, he stated that his favorite stories were often composed out loud; he said: “I remember exclaiming: ‘My Name is Johnny Hake!’” (vii), in a reference to the opening line of “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill.” While most of the criticism has been generally positive, critics have passed the story off as a “tidy moral tale” (Coale 19) or, because of its apparent happy ending, listed Johnny Hake as one of “the ‘success stories’ among Cheever's characters”(Riley 48). A deeper analysis of this story and its protagonist may reveal that Cheever was telling something more than a simple moral tale.

On the surface, “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill” appears to be a simple story of sin and redemption. The protagonist, Johnny Hake, is living out the American Dream. He has a good job in the city, an idyllic life in the suburbs, a wife and four children. His circumstances take an abrupt turn for the worse when Johnny's boss, Gil Bucknam, slips into alcoholism and the owner of the company sends Johnny to fire him. Johnny goes to Gil Bucknam's home but takes pity on him and leaves. Gil Bucknam then goes on the wagon and subsequently fires Johnny. After he loses his job, Johnny tries to “strike out on [his] own” (Cheever 255) but is a complete failure. With bills coming due, he is forced to burglarize one of his neighbors, and as a result, is plunged into a moral dilemma. After being mired in guilt for having “broken all the unwritten laws that held the community together” (259), he comes to realize that “there were ways out of [his] trouble if [he] cared to make use of them” (268). He gets his old job back, returns the money that he has stolen, and his life appears to be perfect again.

Because the story is narrated by the protagonist, we are forced to view the events that have taken place through his eyes. From the outset, he tells the reader that this is

going to be a confession. In the first paragraph, Johnny says quite clearly that he is laying his soul bare, or as he puts it: he is, "so to speak, naked at the moment and talking into the dark" (253). While confessing his sins to the reader, Johnny describes attitudes and the real nature of his suburban existence by telling the reader about his relationships. There are three significant relationships that Johnny deals with in the story: his relationship to his neighbors, his relationship to his mother, and his relationship to his wife.

Several of Cheever's stories are set in the mythical town of Shady Hill, and much has been written about this view of suburbia. Critic Patrick Meanor interprets Cheever's suburbia in mythological terms. He describes Shady Hill as "both Eden and Hades" and notes that its inhabitants are torn between these two paradoxes (18). Cheever has suggested that suburbia reflects the aspirations of his own social class, which came of age after World War II (Coale 9), and he has also stated that his suburban towns were metaphors for confinement (Hershey 102). This ambiguous view of suburbia is all too evident in Johnny Hake's opinion of Shady Hill.

Johnny is fond of his suburban existence but feels inadequate compared to his neighbors. He defends his Shady Hill against critical "city planners, adventurers, and lyric poets" by saying that "if you work in the city and have children to raise, [he] can't think of a better place" (258). Unfortunately, this defense is not extended to his neighbors. He never says that *he* is rich but says that his "neighbors are rich" (258), and he speaks of them with a tone of resentment. In describing the Warburtons, the family from whom he steals nine hundred dollars, he says that they "are rich, but they don't mix; they may nor even care" (255). When describing Tom Maitland, another neighbor that he attempts to burglarize, he says that he is "at least a millionaire" but goes on to say that "his wife is the fattest woman in Shady Hill, and nobody much likes his children" (267). He describes Maitland's life as "a tower of matchsticks...[and] a breath could bring the whole thing down" (267). When his neighbors, the Toblers, are having a softball game and he is not invited, he complains: "Why wasn't I asked to play softball at the Toblers? Why should social aggrandizement —*climbing*, really—exclude a nice guy like me from a softball game?"

(264). These issues reveal much about Johnny's feelings of guilt for having committed this crime. It is also clear that climbing up the social ladder is a real issue with Johnny because of his humble beginnings and a childhood dominated by his mother.

Much of the narrative is dedicated to Johnny's contentious relationship with his mother. He is somewhat appreciative of what she has given him because "she sent [him] through college, arranged for [him] to spend [his] vacations in pleasant landscapes and fired [his] ambitions, such as they are" (256). But her kindness came at a price. He explains that "she never bought [him] an overcoat or a cheese sandwich when [he] was a kid without telling [him] that it came out of her principal" (255). While he feels sad for her because she "lives in a hotel in Cleveland" and imagines that she is "lonely and among strangers," the fact that she still has some "biting teeth left in her gums" indicates the pain that she is still able to inflict on him even though she is hundreds of miles away (256). He still, however, wants to reconcile his relationship with her. He has "often invited her to come and live with [them]" and sends her "flowers and presents, and [writes] her every week" (256). Because of his mother's opinion of Johnny's marriage, these overtures go unanswered or unappreciated. Johnny flat out tells the reader that his "mother hated Christina" (255). He continues by saying: "she bitterly opposed my marriage and our relations have been strained ever since" (256). While his mother still harbors resentment toward him and his marriage, he still makes these attempts at reconciliation because he would like to "think of her at three in the morning without guilt, and so she could be spared loneliness and neglect in her old age" (257). Johnny's mother is clearly a domineering woman, a force that Johnny has had to contend with his entire life. Her apron strings seemed to be "thrown across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans; they seemed to be looped, like vapor trails across the very drum of heaven" (256). While this image of womanhood is one of strength and dominance, it is in sharp contrast to the image of his wife that Johnny presents to the reader.

Johnny clearly adores his wife but does not consider her an equal partner. With an almost adolescent passion, he lists one of his pleasures as "looking into the front of Christina's dress as she bends over" (253). He describes

her as “a pretty woman in the prime of her life” and says that “she had sweetened much of [his] life” (255). This admiration has caused him to treat her like a China doll that will shatter under the slightest pressure. He hasn’t “painted anything like an adequate picture” (255) of their deteriorating financial condition. He argues that “the truth would make her cry and ruin her make-up. . . and she would sleep in the guest room”; besides, “her ignorance of financial necessity is complete” (255). In this relationship, Cheever is exposing a flaw, not only in his protagonist, but also a certain shallowness that exists in his suburban world of Shady Hill.

To paint a clearer picture of Johnny, his situation and suburbia in general, Cheever uses several symbols. The three most dominant symbols in the story are wealth and riches, water, and darkness and light.

For Johnny, money is a symbol that takes on an almost religious aspect. While most people are cautioned not to speak about religion or politics, Johnny’s “mother taught [him] never to speak about money when there was a shirtful, and [he has] always been very reluctant to speak about it when there was a scarcity” (255). When Johnny was afraid of financial ruin, money to him seemed more important than love: “I had yearned for some women. . . but it seemed to me that I had never yearned for anyone the way I yearned for money that night” (257). It was for this reason that stealing became a form of sacrilege. More than “adultery” or “drunkenness,” “it was only ‘steal’ and all its allied nouns, verbs and adverbs that had the power to tyrannize over [his] nervous system” (261). The way that Johnny saw it, “theft took precedence over all other sins in the [ten commandments] and was a sign of moral death” (261).

The most prevalent symbol in the story is water, especially in the form of rain. In the beginning of the story, when Johnny goes to Gil Bucknam’s home to tell him he’s fired, the rain appears to be an omen. The reader thinks that something bad is about to happen because “a storm was about to break” (254). In the same sentence, however, the image of the rain becomes more conciliatory: “Everything stood in a gentile half darkness so much like dawn that it seemed as if we should be sleeping and dreaming, and not bringing one another bad news”

(254). It is the rain that helps Johnny to defy the company owner’s wishes and refrain from firing Gil Bucknam.

The burglary scene is filled with water images. While committing the burglary, the life-giving and life-affirming moisture is leaving him. Johnny tells the reader: “All saliva was gone, the lubricants seemed to drain out of my heart, and whatever the juices were that kept my legs upright were going” (258). After Johnny has stolen nine hundred dollars from the Warburtons, water and images of rain appear to be tied to images of stability and comfort as he tries to deal with the reality that he is a thief. Johnny asks: “where were the trout streams of my youth, and other innocent pleasures? . . . the wet-leather smell of the loud waters and the keen woods after a smashing rain. . . all the brooks full. . . of trout, or sunken treasure” (258). The only images of moisture that are left to him are his tears.

The single most dominant image of water appears near the end of the story, when it is the rain that helps to bring Johnny’s apparent epiphany. Johnny has already stolen \$900 from the Warburtons, has failed in his attempt to burglarize the Maitlands and is on his way to the Pewters:

While I was walking toward the Pewters’, there was a harsh stirring in all the trees and gardens, like a draft on a bed of fire, and I wondered what it was until I felt the rain on my hands and face, and then I began to laugh. . . I wish I could say that kindly lion had set me straight, or an innocent child, or the strains of some distant music from some church, but it was no more than the rain on my head—the smell of it flying up to my nose—that showed me the extent of my freedom. . . There were ways out of my trouble if I cared to make use of them. I was not trapped. I was here on earth because I chose to be. And it was no skin off my elbow how I’d been given the gifts of life so long as I possessed them, and I possessed them then—the tie between the wet grass roots and the hair that grew out of my body, the thrill of my morality that I had known of summer nights, loving the children and looking down the front of Christina’s dress. (268)

It is this scene that has generated the most critical analysis. Meanor interprets that Johnny’s “epiphany takes place when he perceives momentarily that he is joined to nature and ‘naturally’ baptized by rain” (77). Chesnick says that he “is kept from further crime by being caught in a rainstorm and so having his love of life restored” (125). In similar fashion, Coale states that “when the rain

falls on him...he regains his lost sense of values...[and is] baptized by the rain and restored to his appreciation of and respect for both natural beauty and suburban decency" and uses this evidence to contend that this is "a tale of innocence lost and regained" (19). While this event could indeed represent a true epiphany, it still does not save Johnny from his difficult circumstances. This does not come about until the next day when Gil Bucknam calls to offer Johnny his old job back. It is this event and the meaning of the word "parablendeum" that could point to a slightly different interpretation.

One of the most enigmatic terms in the story is "parablendeum." At various times in the story, it is used as a noun, a proper noun, and an adjective. Cheever uses it as a noun when he says that Johnny "went to work right after the war for a parablendeum manufacturer" (253). He uses it as an adjective when Johnny, contemplating his financial woes, dreams of jewel-encrusted bread wrapped in "parablendeum Filmex" (256). Finally, although it is not capitalized, he uses it as a proper noun. After learning that he has been offered his old job back, Johnny says, "I was glad to come home to parablendeum" (268). Even more confusing is the fact that there is no word in the English language as "parablendeum." The only word that is similar enough to be considered is the Latin word "blendium." The word "blendium" is defined in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* as "a small sea fish" or a "blenny" (236). The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* reveals that a "blenny" is a small bottom-dwelling fish of intertidal and shallow waters. More importantly, it is of Greek origin from the word "blennos," meaning "slime," a reference to "the mucous coating of the scales" (241). So after all of the positive images of water, Cheever is returning Johnny to a career of bottom-feeding slime? This hardly appears to be the positive outcome or the happy ending that so many critics have referred to. Moving away from the symbol of water and on to the symbol of light may reveal that Cheever was trying to relate a different message with this story.

In an interview with John Hershey, Cheever spoke of his fondness for light. "Oh Sky! How I miss it in anyone's fiction, when there is no sky! I look through chapter after chapter, thinking, well there *may* be some sky...It seems to me that man's inclination toward light, toward bright-

ness, is very nearly botanical—and I mean spiritual light. One not only needs it, one struggles for it. It seems to me almost that one's total experience is the drive toward light. Or, in the case of the successful degenerate, the drive into an ultimate darkness, which presumably will result in light" (106). It is not insignificant that there are very few images of light in this story.

In spite of its apparent happy ending, "The Housebreaker of Shady Hill" is dominated by darkness. In the opening scene, Johnny tells us that he is "talking into the dark" (253). Before deciding to burglarize the Warburtons, he dreams of jewel-encrusted bread. This was a very vivid, very bright dream that had cheered him. When he wakes up, however, "it was a letdown to find [himself] in the dark bedroom" (256). While Johnny is in the throes of his moral dilemma, there is a clear absence of light. While on his way to burglarize the Warburtons, it is as dark as a night can be because, "the moon had set, and there were not many stars" (257). His moral death seems complete when he is raking left-over dead leaves of autumn and he laments, "what could be more contrite than cleaning the lawn of autumn's dark rubbish under the streaked, pale skies of spring?" (264). Later, in the same scene, he finds out that he has been excluded from the Toblers' softball party and complains, "why should I be left alone with my dead leaves in the twilight?" (264). Still feeling guilty about his sins, he tells the reader that he "did not sleep that night but sat in the dark thinking about [the people he burglarized] and Christina and [his] own sordid destiny, and how different Shady Hill looked at night than in the light of day" (267-268).

One would think that after the epiphany, the text would be bathed in light, but here again there are very few images of light. After the rain intervened, and he decided not to burglarize the Pewters, he says that he "went back to bed and had pleasant dreams" (268). These dreams, however, were not dreams of light. He dreamt of sailing in water that was "blue, saline, and dirty" (268). While this dream was clearly a comfort to him, Johnny was confused by its message. He wondered why in the dream, he "should seem to be only seventeen years old" (268). This was not the dream of a man approaching middle age who has seen the light; this was a dream of a young man, starting out in life and preparing to navigate

a sea of troubles. The dream was telling Johnny that this was his chance to start over. And what does he do with this message? Does he confront his mother as an adult and force her to deal with the reality of his marriage? Does he go to his wife as an equal and explain their difficult financial situation and the fact that the entire family must make some sacrifices? No, he misses this one chance at salvation because the next day he is given the opportunity to return to his old job and he “was glad to [go] home to parablendeum” (268). Johnny remarks that he “did not understand...how a world that seemed so dark could, in a few minutes, become so sweet.” It is only after this bit of luck that “the sidewalks seemed to shine” (268). But the light for Johnny still has not illuminated his soul. Like a man who is whistling through a graveyard in an attempt to deny his own mortality, the story ends with Johnny “whistling merrily in the dark” (269).

Clearly, Cheever is sending the reader several messages. He presents to the reader a story with an apparent happy ending that is dominated by images of darkness. He uses the images of water as a vehicle for salvation and then returns Johnny to the bottom-feeding slime of parablendeum. He describes his mythical community of Shady Hill as both Hades and Eden, a prison and a paradise. While it is clear that Cheever’s protagonist has not achieved complete redemption, it is also clear that he is not condemned, nor is his suburban existence. Shortly after the release of *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill and Other Stories*, Cheever was quoted as saying: “There is too much criticism of the middle-class way of life. Life can be as good and rich there as any place else. I am not out to be a social critic, however, nor a defender of suburbia” (Morace 91). Ultimately, it is the reader who must decide the moral fitness of Johnny Hake and his suburban existence. Through all of his pain and suffering, Johnny has learned a valuable, albeit incomplete, lesson about himself. He is flawed, but continues to struggle to improve himself. This struggle will most likely continue but, as Johnny himself puts it, “I guess that is what is meant by the pain and the sweetness of life” (253).

Works Cited

- Cheever, John. “The Housebreaker of Shady Hill.” *The Stories of John Cheever*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978. 253-69.
- Chesnick, Eugene. “The Domesticated Stroke of John Cheever.” *Critical Essays on John Cheever*. Ed. R.G. Collins. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982. 124-139.
- Coale, Samuel. *John Cheever: Modern Literature Monographs*. New York: Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977.
- Hershey, John. “Talk with John Cheever.” *Critical Essays on John Cheever*. Ed. R.G. Collins. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982. 100-106.
- Meanor, Patrick. *John Cheever Revisited*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.
- Morace, Robert A. “John Cheever.” *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Laurie Lanzen Harris & Sheila Fitzgerald. Vol 1. Detroit: Gale Research, 1988. 88-100.
- The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary On Historical Principles*, Vol 1. Ed. Lesley Brown. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.r
- O’Hara, James E. *John Cheever: A Study of Short Fiction*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989.
- Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Ed. P.G.W. Glare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Riley, Kathryn. “John Cheever and the Limitations of Fantasy.” *The CEA Critic* 45.3-4, 1983: 21-26. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Roger Matuz. Vol 64. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1991. 45-48.

Evaluation: *Through careful research and his own interesting analysis, Mr. Beiswenger exposes the ambiguities of this author’s writing and of postwar suburbia. This paper is particularly thought-provoking in its challenging of Cheever’s text. Mr. Beiswenger’s analysis may lead the reader to further and deeper questions that are not asked or answered by this paper, but I see that as a strength—if a person is exploring, thinking, and writing well, he or she will cause others to do the same.*

Gas Rises, Gas Falls

Brad Bernau

Course: Honors Chemistry 121

Instructor: Barbara Weil

Assignment:

*Write a short essay demonstrating
how the gas laws are related to your life.*

I would have never guessed that instead of stepping onto a jet airliner, I was, in essence, stepping onto what would turn out to be a roller coaster. Taking off from Miami International, compliments of American Airlines' Boeing 767 (which utilized the properties of the gas laws to get me home in two hours), I never thought things would not go smoothly. As we ascended into the atmosphere, the pressure due to the atmosphere obviously dropped, and as a telltale sign of the fact, my ears popped due to the increased pressure in my head attempting to diffuse to an area of lesser pressure, the cabin. The plane itself had to be made of some strong metals, because it had to hold in the artificially created pressure that was much higher than that outside the cabin.

Flying somewhere over Atlanta, we encountered a thunderstorm, which is simply an area in the atmosphere of lower pressures colliding with areas of higher pressures to form rain droplets and electrical disturbances. The turbulence began to get pretty rough, and the plane started to bank to the left. Suddenly, everything was quiet for a moment, and peoples' drinks began to float over them. Then, with a bang, everything hit the ceiling; drinks, flight attendants, thousand-pound carts, babies not buckled in, you name it. The amount of air in my lungs undoubtedly dropped to zero, and as a result of Boyle's Law, the pressure inside them dropped dramatically as well. As we learned later, the plane had flown through an updraft which caused it to rise 500 feet, then fall back again in less than a second.

Now while I am not enough of a physicist or a meteorologist to explain what caused the plane to behave the way it did, I can describe what effects the event had on the people inside, with regard to the gas laws. Because of the extreme event, everyone inside began to obviously breathe more heavily. Because of the increased amount of gas and the damaged cabin atmosphere controls, the pressure on the inside went up. Since the pressure went up, the temperature went up according to the combined gas law, which states that if the volume is held constant (the plane's cabin cannot change shape), and the pressure goes up, the amount of particles and average kinetic energy of those particles will also rise. That easily explains why it got a little hotter in the plane. Our physiological reactions may have had something to do with it as well. The can of Sprite that I had just received before the jolt remained unopened through the accident. Since I was not holding onto it, it also hit the ceiling and came down on my lap. Because of the increased kinetic energy experienced by the CO₂ gas molecules in the can of fixed volume, the temperature went up in the can, and by the combined gas law (Boyle's and Charles'), the pressure in the can increased dramatically. When I became coordinated enough to open the can, I did not think of this effect, and since I increased the volume of a gas with such a high pressure, the pressure decreased as its volume increased all over my lap. As we descended on Chicago, with ambulances waiting for those who were hurt, the pressure on the outside of the plane gradually increased because the air mass above the plane was greater. At the opening of the plane hatch, though, the atmospheric pressure still was a bit different than that of the cabin's. As the lower pressure inside the cabin rose to the higher pressure outside, the amount of gas inside the plane also increased with a rush of humid, June air. Although I did not realize it until now, my eventful flight was a lesson in the gas laws that present themselves every day of our lives.

Evaluation: *This essay is a well-written illustration of science as a part of our lives.*

El Sauce Viejo — The Old Willow

— Jessica Bovino —

Course: Spanish 101

Instructor: Ana Lucy Hernandez

Assignment:

Every semester I ask my students to try their hand at writing poetry. My goal is to have them not only appreciate poetry, but to realize that they can write even in a foreign language.

El Sauce Viejo

Sauce viejo,
Tus ramas tan delgadas y frágiles,
Tus hojas bonitas tan pequeñas.
El sol golpea tu cara tierna y la quema,
Y aun estás en pie, fuerte y alto.
Las heridas que quedan tal vez no curarán,
Y las cicatrices se mantienen en tu tronco.
Pero, al mirar las heridas,
Se ven las memorias como las sombras
En tus ramas.
Cada día que pasa, el sol brilla otra vez.
Las heridas dolerán, pero si miras
A el rayo de esperanza, y no el rayo de
La obscuridad,
Tus cicatrices desaparecerán poco a poco.

The Old Willow

Old willow,
Your branches so thin and fragile.
Your beautiful leaves so small,
The sun strikes your delicate face,
And burns it, yet you still stand
Strong and tall.
The wounds that are left
May never heal,
And the scars may remain.
But as you look at those scars,
You see memories like shadows
Through your branches.
Each day passes,
And the Sun shines again.
Those wounds will hurt,
But if you look to the ray of hope,
And not the ray of darkness,
Your scars will slowly disappear.

Evaluation: *Jessica Bovino's poem is a great example of a literary piece written in a language that is not the author's own. I am very proud of her.*

Doing Business in China

Weiran Chen

Course: English as a Second Language (ESL 069/074)

Instructor: Linda Dunne

Assignment:

Students were to compare two cultures — theirs and that of the United States.

Doing business in China is not as easy as most Americans think. Many American companies have founded representative offices or joint venture companies in China during the past ten years. Some of the American companies, including Motorola, McDonald's, HP and IBM, have achieved great success in China. However, some of the American companies did not do very well and are struggling in the Chinese market.

of the lack of success is due to
caused different cultural

The most obvious difference between Americans and Chinese is their personal characters, which determine their different ways of doing business. Most American people are open and direct. They start a business meeting by introducing the goal or agenda of the meeting, while Chinese start a meeting by talking about the weather or some interesting news that one can never find on the agenda. Americans talk all about the business issues during negotiation with their customers. Chinese may spend three weeks to get acquainted with the customers before the negotiation and discuss and sign the contract with the customers in only half an hour. Americans feel free to say "No," but Chinese would like to decline or show disagreement tactfully. During a negotiation, if the Chinese customers cannot make a decision right away, Americans always ask when they can make a decision. A Chinese salesman will never ask this kind of question, as they believe it will embarrass the customer. The differences make the Americans think Chinese are inefficient, dishonest, and unpredictable, while Chinese always think Americans are rude, impolite, and too aggressive.

Another difference between Chinese and Americans is their understanding of how to show respect. Americans

show their respect and friendliness by addressing each other by the first name, no matter who they are. They feel comfortable calling their boss "Bill" or "Jennifer." On the contrary, Chinese address each other by title and last name to show respect to each other. Only family members or old friends call each other by their nicknames. If an American businessman greets a Chinese customer by his first name, the customer may feel the American has no manners.

The most important difference that should be emphasized is the employers' and employees' expectations towards each other. Americans expect their subordinates to give them whatever suggestions and ideas that are good for the company. The manager will compare all the suggestions and make the final decision. Normally, the manager would require his or her subordinates to submit their business or strategy target at the beginning of the year and then give them some comments. On the contrary, Chinese always wait for the boss or the leader to give an order and then work on it. They will feel confused if the boss does not give them a very specific task. Chinese managers believe their mission is making orders and seeing that all subordinates do what they are requested. Chinese may have very good suggestions for the company, but they cannot feel free to talk to the boss because they may be a bit shy or not confident. Almost all of the American managers working in China complain about their Chinese subordinates lacking adequate initiative. I personally believe the reason is that Chinese employees just are not adjusted to the management style after studying and working in the traditional Chinese way for many years.

The differences indeed make a lot of Americans feel confused when they begin doing business with Chinese. I do not want to say who is better and who is worse. I only want to make both sides understand each other and pay enough attention to their differences, which may be vital to achieve a successful business and personal relationship. China is a country with a long history and a rich culture. Chinese believe doing business is some kind of cultural exchange; therefore, it is especially essential to understand and respect Chinese culture and history when doing business with Chinese.

Evaluation: I found Weiran's points of comparison fascinating and well chosen, and I would assign this essay to any American planning on doing business in China.

Into the Mind of the Killer

Mary Jane Clark
Course: English 102
Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:
Write a literary research paper.

Outline

Thesis: Meursault, the main character in Albert Camus's *The Stranger*, can be classified as a "criminaloid" who commits manslaughter. He kills not because he is a cold-blooded killer but because he is put in a bad situation at a bad time. On the other hand, Montresor, the narrator of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," could very well be called a cold-blooded killer. He can be classified as a "criminal by passion" who kills out of the desperate need to gain revenge against one who (in Montresor's opinion) did him a great wrong. Both Meursault's and Montresor's criminal behavior can be explained through criminological theories. For Meursault, the biological theory best explains why he killed a man. Montresor's criminal behavior can be best explained by the rational choice theory.

- I. An explanation of the exact crimes committed by Meursault and Montresor.
 - A. Homicide.
 1. Criminal homicide.
 - a. Murder.
 - b. Manslaughter.
 - c. Degrees of murder and manslaughter.
 2. Noncriminal homicide.

3. Criminal-victim relationship.
 - B. Homicides committed by Meursault and Montresor.
- II. Criminal types.
 - A. Lombroso's four classes of criminals.
 - B. Meursault's criminal type.
 - C. Montresor's criminal type.
- III. Criminological Theories.
 - A. Biological theory.
 - B. Psychology theory.
 - C. Rational choice theory.
 - D. The theories that support Meursault and Montresor.

The news media's portrayal of murder has glamorized homicide as a crime involving crazy, blood-thirsty killers, which is rarely the case. In addition, the media usually only gives us the cold, hard facts: who killed whom, where the victim was killed, and the possible motives for the killing. Rarely will the media give us something more, something that will allow us to see past the murder and see the murderer—the person. Through literature, however, we get the rare chance to see many details about the murderer that the media may never show us. We can learn about killers' backgrounds, see how they interact with different people, and perhaps know their thoughts. Literature allows us to see past the details of the murder and into the mind of the killer.

Two particular works of literature, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, and the "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe, allow us to do just that—see into the mind of a killer. In *The Stranger*, we are introduced to Meursault, a simple man who commits manslaughter. Not only do we get to see him commit homicide, but we get to experience his life and know him intimately. In "The Cask of Amontillado," we are actually inside the mind of Montresor, a cold-blooded killer, who recounts his story of a revengeful murder.

Meursault and Montresor are two men who can expand our ideas about murderers. But what do we really know about them? We only know what we can read about them in these stories—and what if we don't fully understand the story? Perhaps then we will never understand these men as murderers. It is a potential vicious

cycle. Surprisingly, the answer to this problem is simple: criminology.

Criminology tries to understand crime, criminals, and victims. This field includes the study of homicides, which includes murder. "At its simplest, criminology can be defined as the systematic study of the nature, extent, cause, and control of law-breaking behavior" (Lanier and Henry 2). Criminology defines crimes, classifies criminals, and explains criminal behavior through theories. By analyzing Meursault and Montresor through criminology, we will gain a greater depth of knowledge about these men, and as a result we will gain an overall better handle on the literature itself.

As we read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus and "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe, it is impossible for us not to wonder why the characters Meursault and Montresor commit the crimes they do. Through these two stories, one gets a glimpse of two murderers who are as different as the crimes they commit. Meursault can be classified as what criminology calls a "criminaloid" who commits manslaughter. He kills not because he is a cold-blooded killer, but because he is put in a bad situation at a bad time. Montresor, on the other hand, could very well be called a cold-blooded killer. He can be classified as a "criminal by passion" who kills out of the desperate need to gain revenge against one who he feels did him a great wrong. Both Meursault's and Montresor's criminal behavior can be explained through use of criminological theories. For Meursault, the biological theory best explains why he killed a man. Montresor's criminal behavior can best be explained by the rational choice theory.

It is futile to try and understand a criminal without understanding the crime; therefore, it is necessary to explain the exact crimes of Meursault and Montresor. Both Meursault and Montresor have committed a homicide, defined as "the killing of a human being," but the "circumstances of the homicide determine whether or not the taking of that life is criminal or innocent" (Roth 291). A criminal homicide can best be classified in two ways, murder or manslaughter.

Murder is a homicide committed with premeditation. A premeditated, or planned, homicide involves "rational planning and the relative weighing of costs and benefits" (Miethe 26). In other words, a premeditated homicide

has been well thought out. The murderer has planned out exactly how and where to commit the murder. He has thought about what the murder may cause him to lose and what he may gain. The person who commits murder kills, or intends to injure, another human being. Often, premeditated murder involves a motive. A person can also commit a murder if "engaged in a dangerous act and [if he shows] wanton disregard for human life" (Roth 291).

Manslaughter is a homicide in which a life is taken "without premeditation or malice aforethought" (Roth 291). A murder that is not premeditated is called an impulsive, or spontaneous, murder. Most violent crimes, including manslaughter, are "spontaneous, triggered by a trivial altercation or argument that quickly escalates" (Miethe 27). Manslaughter can be classified as voluntary or involuntary. These terms "demonstrate whether or not the killing was intended" (Roth 291). A human life taken during the "heat of passion" (Miethe 26) is considered a voluntary manslaughter. An involuntary manslaughter would be a life taken accidentally, since only physical harm is meant to occur to the victim.

Murder and manslaughter can both be classified by degrees. First-degree murders "are those committed with deliberation, premeditation, and malice aforethought" (Miethe 20). "In second-degree murders, the act is deliberate but not premeditated and the intent is only to do physical injury to the victim" (Miethe 20).

Noncriminal homicides involve a killing "under a lawful justification or excuse, such as self-defense slayings, accidental deaths, and the execution of a death sentence by authorized state agents" (Miethe 20).

Lastly, homicide can be defined by the relationship between the criminal and the victim. There are three types of these criminal-victim relationships. The first, the family criminal-victim relationship, involves a family member killing another family member. The second is the acquaintance criminal-victim relationship, which involves the killing of a friend or someone the criminal has seen before. Finally, the stranger criminal-victim relationship involves the killing of someone completely unknown to the criminal.

With all the different aspects of homicide defined, it should be clear that Meursault committed a spontaneous criminal manslaughter. The murder was not planned or

premeditated. "He did not return to the spring with the intention of killing the Arab[...]" (Amoia 42). The manslaughter appears to be voluntary, mainly because Meursault shot the gun at the Arab five times. Shooting someone five times shows an obvious attempt to end a life—not merely to injure someone. Since Meursault deliberately killed the Arab, he committed a first-degree manslaughter. Meursault had seen the Arab before, which makes the criminal-victim relationship one of an acquaintance.

On the other hand, Montresor committed a premeditated, criminal murder. In fact, the murder was so well planned that it went without a hitch. Montresor created a story about wine to lure his victim, Fortunato, into the cellar. He planned to tell his story to Fortunato on the night of a great carnival so no one would notice whether Fortunato was absent for the night. The carnival also gave Montresor a reason to give his servants the night off. Montresor even had an admitted motive for his crime: revenge. Due to his premeditation, Montresor's murder is considered first-degree. The criminal-victim relationship is one of an acquaintance, since Montresor and Fortunato knew each other.

Besides defining the crimes of Meursault and Montresor, criminology will take us a step further and actually allow us to define the criminal. Early nineteenth century criminologist Cesare Lombroso was one of the first criminologists to attempt this definition. "Lombroso is widely recognized as the most influential scholar to rely on scientific method to study crime and is often called the father of modern criminology" (Lanier and Henry 94). In *The Criminal Man*, published in 1876, Lombroso "viewed the great majority of criminals as born criminals" (Akers 37). He argued that born criminals could be distinguished by their physical characteristics. He claimed that murderers had strong jaws, glassy eyes, and other recognizable features. Later, Lombroso changed his view of the born criminal and "added more social, economic, and political factors in crime" (Akers 37). "By the fifth edition of his book, Lombroso recognized four main classes of criminals" (Lanier and Henry 94).

The first class, or type, of criminal Lombroso defined is the born criminal. He claimed the born criminal committed the most serious offenses and was the most "danger-

ous and incorrigible" (Lanier and Henry 94). Lombroso defined the second type as the criminal by passion. Criminals by passion "commit crime to correct the emotional pain of an injustice" (Lanier and Henry 95). The third type is the insane criminal, one "who could be an imbecile or have an affected brain and is unable to distinguish right from wrong" (Lanier and Henry 95). The fourth type is the occasional criminal, consisting of four subtypes. The first, the criminaloid, is considered to be a criminal who commits crime because he is influenced to do so. The second, known as the epileptoid, "suffers from epilepsy" (Lanier 95). The third, the habitual criminal, makes crime an occupation. The fourth, the pseudocriminal, "commits crime by accident" (Lanier and Henry 95).

According to Lombroso's theories, Meursault can be defined as the occasional criminal and its subtype criminaloid. Meursault would be considered the criminaloid because it appears he was influenced to kill the Arab by the sun. Throughout *The Stranger*, one is aware how highly affected he is by the sun. As he approaches the Arab on the beach, he is overwhelmed by the sun's strong rays.

The sun was the same as it had been the day I'd buried Maman, and like then, my forehead especially was me, all the veins in it throbbing under the It was this burning, which I couldn't stand anymore, that made me move forward. I knew that it was stupid, that I wouldn't get the sun off me by stepping forward. But I took a step, one step, forward. And this time, without getting up, the Arab drew his knife and held it up to me in the sun. The light shot off the steel and it was like a long flashing blade cutting at my forehead. At the same instant the sweat in my eyebrows dripped down over my eyelids all at once and covered them with a warm, thick film. My eyes were blinded behind the curtain of tears and salt. All I could feel were the cymbals of sunlight crashing on my forehead and, indistinctly, the dazzling spear flying up from the knife in front of me. (58-59)

At this time, Meursault shoots the Arab. Never once does he mention that he wants to shoot the Arab. He talks only about the sun. He cannot tolerate it burning his forehead or causing sweat to drip in his eyes. Meursault says the sun makes him step towards the Arab, even though he admits the action is stupid. Here it is obvious that the sun has a large influence on Meursault, putting

him in a position where he must shoot the Arab. In her book *Albert Camus*, Alba Amoia confirms the sun's strong influence: "The Arab's knife gleams in the sun like a long, fiery sword pointed at the forehead of Meursault, who confuses the piercing pain of the sun with the sharp blade of the knife. Not Meursault, but the sun alone, is guilty of the crime that Meursault seems to have committed in self defense" (46). If it was the sun that influenced Meursault to move towards the Arab and caused him to confuse the sun's rays with the knife, it is logical to conclude that it was the sun's influence that caused Meursault to kill. Therefore, Meursault can be defined as the criminal type criminaloid.

Montresor can be typed as a criminal by passion. He kills Fortunato to "correct the emotional pain of an injustice" (Lanier and Henry 95). Montresor feels he has been insulted by Fortunato. He says, "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge" (Poe 78). Montresor feels these insults were an injustice towards him, which caused him emotional pain and anger. To relieve this pain, Montresor plans to take the life of Fortunato. Since he actually goes through with the murder because of the injustice, Montresor is a criminal by passion.

In addition to defining criminals, we can also guess why they commit their crimes. For years, criminology has been creating theories to help explain criminal behavior. Among the ten current criminology theories, we will focus on the rational choice theory, the biological theory, and the psychological theory.

The rational choice theory was developed by two eighteenth-century social philosophers, Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham, who accidentally formulated the rational choice theory while concerning themselves with legal and penal reform. The basic idea of the rational choice theory is that "people are free to choose crime as one of a range of behavioral options" (Lanier and Henry 89). This theory assumes "that actions are taken and decisions are made by persons in the rational exercise of free will" (Akers 16). It also assumes that "individuals choose to obey or violate the law by a rational calculation of the risk of pain versus potential pleasure derived from an act" (Akers 16). Basically, the theory says people choose to

break the law if they believe the positives outweigh possible negatives in the process of doing so.

The biological theory had its origins in Lombroso's concept of the born criminal. This idea "of innate criminality became the dominant perspective on crime and triggered an onslaught of biological theorizing about crime" (Akers 37). The theory maintains that something in the "genetics, brain functioning, neurology, and biochemistry" (Akers 42) of particular human beings causes them to act criminally in certain situations. Mark Lanier and Stuart Henry agree "that humans have unique characteristics, or predispositions, that under certain conditions, or environments, lead some to commit criminal acts" (42).

The psychological theory says that people develop criminal ways of behavior and thinking through poor socialization by parents or guardians. Ronald Akers, an expert criminologist, states that criminal behavior is not "inherited or biologically predetermined. The causes are dysfunctional, abnormal emotional adjustment or deviant personality traits formed in early socialization and childhood development" (56). Basically, the theory proposes that criminal behavior is caused by psychological problems a person develops as a young child.

Meursault's criminal behavior can be best explained by the biological theory for crime. It has already been determined that the sun caused Meursault to kill the Arab. The choice was not one Meursault made, it was his reaction to the sun in that particular situation. He could not tolerate the Arab flashing his knife in combination with the sun's blinding reflection. Something about the situation caused Meursault to act criminally. He was just put in a bad situation at a bad time. Although this evidence best supports the biological theory, a case could be made that the psychological theory also supports Meursault's criminal behavior. Meursault did grow up without a father figure, and the relationship between Meursault and his mother was not the typical, loving relationship between a mother and a son. But we do not know enough about Meursault's childhood to prove he developed psychological problems as a child. Therefore, it is safest to say Meursault supports the biological theory.

Montresor supports the rational choice theory for criminal behavior. Montresor had free will to decide whether he wanted to kill Fortunato. Montresor's careful

planning shows him perfectly capable of rational thought. His rational thinking also shows careful planning so he would not be caught for the murder. He let the servants off for the night, disguised himself when retrieving Fortunato, and had all the details of his plan smoothly worked out. Since he made such careful plans not to get caught, Montresor had probably thought about “the risk of pain versus potential pleasure[...].” (Akers 53) he could derive from the murder. And, too, the pleasure he gained from killing Fortunato surely outweighed the pain he would have experienced had he been caught. All Montresor’s careful planning shows he supports the rational choice theory.

Literature dramatizing murder, such as *The Stranger* and “The Cask of Amontillado,” can teach us important lessons. The first is that we should not, as the media seems to assume we will, look upon all murderers as crazy, blood-thirsty killers. When we read *The Stranger*, and use criminology to help us better understand Meursault, and therefore the work as a whole, we can see that this “blood-thirsty killer” was really just a simple man who made a grave mistake. The media, however, would never allow us to come to this conclusion, because we would never be allowed such an in-depth look at the murderer’s life. Meanwhile, “The Cask of Amontillado” allows us to hear the story of a revengeful person who committed murder but never got caught, a story the media would never even have access to. Literature involving murderers and criminology combined offers us the opportunity to better understand murderers in a way not previously possible. And this understanding of character helps us to understand the whole work more fully.

Works Cited

- Akers, Ronald L. *Criminology Theories: Introduction and Evaluation*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1997.
- Amoia, Alba. *Albert Camus*. New York: Continuum, 1989.
- Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. Trans. Matthew Ward. New York: Knopf, 1988.
- Lanier, Mark M., and Stuart Henry. *Essential Criminology*. Boulder: Westview, 1998.
- Miethe, Terance D. *Crime Profiles: The Anatomy of Dangerous Persons, Places, and Situations*. Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1998.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. “The Cask of Amontillado.” *Fiction 100: An Anthology of Short Stories*. Ed. James H. Pickering. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.
- Roth, Martin. *The Writer’s Complete Crime Reference Book*. Cincinnati: Writer’s Digest, 1990.

Evaluation: Mary Jane Clark’s research project explores the relationship between the “real world” and art. And her application of criminological theory to Poe’s and Camus’ protagonists reveals what is at the heart of the best college research projects: logical, thorough, detailed critical thinking of the highest order.

Legitimate Hungers: Women in Literature Take-Home Exam

Judy Engeriser

Course: Honors Literature 224

Instructor: Juliann Fleenor

Assignment:

In this three-part exam, students were required to respond to literature and guest speakers featured during the course and then to synthesize their responses into a final essay.

Part 1

For each passage, identify the author and name of the work of which it is a part and explain the significance of the passage in itself and to the work as a whole.

Passage A

My grandmother, who had been an inexorable cultivator of land, sower of seeds and reaper of rich harvests until, literally until, her very last moment. When I was too small to be anything more than a hindrance in the family fields, I used to spend many productive hours working with my grandmother on the plot of land she called her garden. We hoed side by side strips of land defined by the row of maize plants each carried, I obstinately insisting I could keep pace with her, she weeding three strips to my one so I could. . . . She gave me history lessons as well. . . . Slowly, methodically, throughout the day the field would be cultivated, the episodes of my grandmother's own portion of history strung together from beginning to end.

Response A

Tsitsi Dangarembga, author of *Nervous Conditions*.

Tambu is remembering her grandmother as “an inexorable cultivator of land, sower of seeds and reaper of rich harvests” (17) in this excerpt from *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. Tambu's family can no longer afford to send her to school, so she asks her father for permission to grow her own maize. Tambu believes she can sell the maize at harvest to pay her school fees. Her father is amused by her suggestion, but with the intervention of her mother, Tambu is given some seed and a small plot of land. Working the land, Tambu “mumbled adoring, reverent prayers to [her] grandmother” (17). When a young child, Tambu spent “many productive hours working with [her] grandmother on the plot of land she called her garden” (17). While working the land together, her grandmother told Tambu how their ancestors struggled and suffered to raise the standard of life of the family. Writing about their time together from the perspective of adulthood, Tambu realizes her grandmother was not only cultivating the land, but also her young granddaughter. Her grandmother was sowing the belief that hard work would bring Tambu what she desired and valued. Tambu tells the reader that her desire to receive a good education and her willingness to work hard to achieve success are qualities of her character that were instilled in her by her grandmother when they worked together on the small plot of land. Thus, Tambu's grandmother has been the “reaper of rich harvests” (17), as her granddaughter has become an educated woman and the storyteller of this tale.

Passage B

When Nel, an only child, sat on the steps of her back porch surrounded by the high silence of her mother's incredibly orderly house, feeling the neatness pointing at her back, she studied the poplars and fell easily into a picture of herself lying on a flowered bed, tangled in her own hair, waiting for some fiery prince. He approached but never quite arrived. . . . Similarly, Sula, also an only child, but wedged into a household of throbbing disorder constantly awry with things, people, voices and the slamming of doors, spent hours in the attic behind a roll of linoleum galloping through her own mind on a gray-

and-white horse tasting sugar and smelling roses in full view of someone who shared both the taste and the speed.

Response B

Toni Morrison, author of *Sula*.

In *Sula*, by Toni Morrison, we meet Nel, who is an only child being raised by a single mother in a traditional home. Her best friend, Sula, is also an only child with a single mother; however, she is being raised in a very non-traditional household. The girls are both disconnected with their families and need to “use each other to grow on” (52). Their friendship strengthens their individual personalities. Although the girls are bonded together, even as children their dreams are very different. In a very common and traditional fantasy of young girls, Nel day-dreams about escaping her boring life with a “fiery prince” (51). Unfortunately, her dream comes true, when she later marries her *prince* and he leaves Nel to raise their children by herself. Thus, her day-dream of a prince who would “approach but never quite arrive” (51) became sadly prophetic. Sula’s dreams are very different. She is imagining escaping her boring life with adventure and excitement. Sula is not dreaming of giving herself to another person, but is willing to share an individual experience with anyone who has a similar vision. Sula’s day-dream also foretells her life as an adult woman as she *gallops* through her life without a personal connection to anyone. She uses men for sexual release without forming any emotional attachment. Sula goes so far as to have sex with Nel’s husband, without understanding the pain this act of betrayal brings to her best friend. The “household of throbbing disorder constantly awry with things, people, voices and the slamming of doors” (51) reflects the life of Sula. She is attempting to experience life as a completely free individual, but in doing so, Sula is unable to develop a satisfying emotional attachment with anyone.

Passage C

But “Paradise Lost” excited different and far deeper emotions. . . Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his

Creature. . . Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.

Response C

Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*.

The monster in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is delighted when he finds several books while gathering wood and food. He is able to understand the books because he has learned to read from the De Lacey family. It is Milton’s *Paradise Lost* that excites and moves the monster, as he sees himself through the analogy of Adam and Satan. He relates, “Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence” (129). Adam was created by God. Likewise, the monster was created by one person, not born from the union of a man and woman, so the monster sees Adam’s creation as similar to his own. Adam was “happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care” (129) of his maker. The monster also desires happiness and companionship. Unlike Adam, the monster is denied a partner by his creator and is left completely alone. Feeling rejected by Frankenstein, the monster turns against him and tells the reader that “[m]any times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition” (129). The monster views himself as a fallen angel because he is filled with bitterness and curses his creator (131). This sets the path of the monster’s life as he continues to kill Frankenstein’s loved ones and pursues him to his death. When Frankenstein dies, the monster ends his own life. The monster’s only reason to live was to pursue Frankenstein, and when he dies, the monster has no reason to continue living.

Passage D

Mitchell started back, half frightened, as, suddenly turning a corner, the white figure of a woman faced him in the darkness,—a woman, white, of giant proportions, crouching on the ground, her arms flung out in some wild gesture of warning.

Response D

Rebecca Harding Davis, author of “Life in the Iron Mills.”

Hugh Wolfe is the central character in the short story “Life in the Iron Mills,” by Rebecca Harding

Davis. Hugh is a laborer in the steel mills by profession but a sculpture artist by nature. During his free time in the mills, Hugh deals with his frustrations in life by sculpting korl, which is a by-product of steel making. During a tour of the steel mills by a group of men, one of the men, Mitchell, is startled by “the white figure of a woman fac[ing] him in the darkness” (31). The figure of the korl woman is so lifelike that, in the shadowy light, Mitchell thinks the sculpture is alive. Hugh’s voice is heard through his korl woman, as the sculpture expresses how hungry he is for something more from life. What Hugh is hungry for is not easily identified, but his fear of not receiving it is shown in the sculpture by the narrator’s description of the woman’s “arms flung out in some wild gesture of warning” (31). Hugh does not possess the words to adequately articulate what he desires or fears, but he is able to speak through his art. The visitor, Mitchell, however, “saw the soul of the thing, he knew” (33). Mitchell recognizes what Hugh is hungry for and tells the other men that the korl woman “asks questions of God and says, ‘I have a right to know’” (34). Mitchell, even more than the artist, understands for what the korl woman is hungering. When the men recognize the greatness of his artistry, Hugh begins to imagine he can escape the mill. All hope is lost, however, when the men do not have the courage to rescue this one man from the mill and his desperate life. Hugh is left behind with his korl woman to exist in the dreary steel mill. The korl woman’s warning is realized when Hugh ends his life. With his own moral consciousness, Hugh rejects the role he is forced to play in this world and also society’s version of the afterlife. He is confident and secure in his opinion that God’s justice will be greater than man’s.

Passage E

“I’ve got out at last,” said I, “in spite of you and Jane. And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!”

Response E

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

How would a woman react if her *voice* was taken away and she was cut off from all relationships by a family member who is supposedly her loving protector? We

are able to glimpse into the mind of a woman who has been effectively silenced while she is suffering from severe depression through the story “The Yellow Wallpaper,” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Gilman’s depiction is both riveting and horrifying as the narrator describes her descent into madness. The story details the experience of a depressed woman who is not allowed to express herself through her writing. Ironically, rather than supporting his wife with the comfort of friends and family, her physician-husband cuts her off from relationships that could help lift her mental state. While she spends endless days in her isolated room, the woman begins to connect to the yellow wallpaper. As she follows the pattern endlessly, a figure of a creeping woman begins to appear. At first, she does not want to look at the woman behind the paper, but she gradually watches her all day and night. Eventually, the yellow wallpaper shows “a great many women behind, and sometimes only one” (45), creeping by day outside the house and in the garden. The speaker descends further into madness as she begins to help the woman get out from behind the wallpaper. Working together, she tells us, “I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper” (47). The woman loses her sense of self, only breaking free from her exile when she becomes one of the *creeping women* in her disjointed world. Complete disassociation is shown when she speaks to her husband, saying, “in spite of you and Jane” (50). Jane is the speaker herself. Only by separating from herself and becoming a creeping woman can the speaker attain personal freedom.

Part 2

Instructions: During this semester, we have visited the *Mary Cassatt* exhibit at the Art Institute, heard from *Veronica Potter* on watercolors and prints, *Bonnie Peterson* on quilting, and *Emily Dickinson* herself (Dr. Barbara Hickey) on her life and writing. What links these events together with the course readings and discussions? Formulate a thesis which applies to each and write about a page.

Women historically have given voice to their ideas and beliefs through individual creative expression. This

semester, we have discussed women who speak very clearly through their creativity. In *Introduction: To the Other Side of Silence*, we learn “that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development, and that the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined” (18). The works of Mary Cassatt, Veronica Potter, Bonnie Peterson, and Emily Dickinson give evidence to support this statement. In many of Mary Cassatt’s paintings, we see her fascination with relationships. The spiritual connection between generations, especially of females, is a subject she addresses in many of her paintings. Although Cassatt did not have children, she speaks to the continuing circle of life and the relationships of women as an essential part of nature. We also see this connection with nature and relationships of women in the work of Veronica Potter. Her silk screen of a man, a woman, and a tree intertwined is an expression of our connection with each other and the earth. She describes herself as, “First a woman; then, an artist who does watercolors and also, an all around woman artist.” Potter clearly understands her development as a creative woman who is giving expression to her emotions and vision through her art. Another woman we have met gives voice to her impressions and opinions through fabric and design. Bonnie Peterson-Tucker describes herself as a “Quilt Artist.” Bonnie is a consummate example of a woman who is using the metaphor of voice through her piece, “Finding My Voice.” In this quilt we understand the process of self-expression for women is, in many cases, a difficult and lonely journey. Her voice is heard, not only through her issue-oriented quilts, but also through her landscapes where she is speaking about the nature that surrounds us. The natural world was also a frequent topic of Emily Dickinson’s. Her poetry reveals her fascination and love of nature by her use of words and the original images they create. In her writing, Dickinson gave voice to her ideas and opinions of this world and the possibility of the existence of a next world. All these women have drawn on their life experiences to construct their ideas and beliefs. They give a strong voice to their views and visions through their individual artistic endeavors.

Part 3

Instructions: Write an essay of three to five pages in answer to one of the following:

1. In “Life in the Iron Mills,” Hugh describes the korr woman as, “She be hungry.” In each of the five novels and short stories we have read this semester, hunger is used as a metaphor. Explain how that metaphor is used, citing specific examples from *Sulu*, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” *Nervous Conditions*, *Frankenstein*, and “Life in the Iron Mills.”

or

2. Referring the five works listed above, please discuss how the female characters’ behavior has been shaped by and has shaped the behavior of the men in their lives. Has the women’s behavior conversely affected that of the men, and would the events have been altered if the women had behaved differently?

It is a common human experience to desire what we do not have. Many times, while seeking an elusive something we imagine is missing from our lives, we believe that when we find it, we will be satisfied and happy. The novels and short stories we have read this semester have introduced people who have a legitimate *hunger* that needs to be fed. In all of these stories, we learn of the consequences when desires and yearnings are not realized.

The only character to receive what she was striving for is Tambu, in *Nervous Conditions*, by Tsitsi Dangarembga. Tambu had a hunger for knowledge and tells us, “[t]he needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate” (12). In the patriarchal Shona culture, her brother is the family member chosen to be educated when the family can afford the school fees of only one child. Tambu realizes she will not receive the opportunity to attend school, because her father “thought...that the things I read would fill my mind with impractical ideas, making me quite useless for the real tasks of feminine living” (34). Tambu is a determined girl and refuses to be “crushed by the weight of womanhood. I shall go to school again, [she] announced to [her] parents” (16). Refusing to accept the traditional role of a Shona

woman, Tambu obtains the money to pay her own school fees. When Tambu's brother dies, Babamukuru, who is the head of the family, decides to send her to the mission school to occupy her brother's place. Tambu relates, "I was triumphant, Babamukuru had approved of my direction" (57). She works hard at school and is accepted at the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart, earning one of the few places reserved for native girls. Tambu did accomplish her goal of receiving a superior education. Reflecting back, she relates, "It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion" (204). Tambu received more than the formal education she was longing for as a child. She also gained the knowledge to develop and express her unique voice.

Unlike Tambu, Sula, in Toni Morrison's novel by the same name, does not know what she is hungry for, or even that she is longing for an elusive something. In *Sula*, we are introduced to a woman who has never been capable of developing a continuing relationship with anyone. In *Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle*, Carol Gilligan addresses the importance of connection and relationships in the development of women. She states, "Woman's place in man's life cycle is to protect this recognition while the development litany intones the celebration of separation, autonomy, individuation and natural rights" (23). Sula did not have the role models she needed to develop satisfying emotional attachments with other people. She grew up in a chaotic household without any limits and did not have a loving or respectful relationship with her own mother or grandmother. Gilligan would say this failure to form a bond with any women in her childhood led to her failure to form relationships throughout her life. Sula's refusal to fill the traditional role of a black woman left her with few options to express her individuality because she was living in a racist society. When her friend Nel criticizes Sula's lifestyle, she replies, "You say I'm a woman and colored. Ain't that the same as being a man?" (142). In many ways Sula led her life, especially her sexual life, as society would expect a man to behave. Explaining why she had sex with Nel's husband, Sula says, "Well, there was this space in front of me, behind me, in my head. Some space. And Jude filled it up. That's all. He just filled up the space" (144). Sula is unable to define what she has

been trying to fill but does recognize a void in her life. While still a young woman, Sula is dying, and she tells Nel, "my lonely is *mine*. Now your lonely is somebody else's" (143). Sula was hungering to live her life as a free individual, not realizing she needed a personal connection with other people to be completely autonomous.

Likewise, longing to live life freely is Hugh Wolfe in Rebecca Harding Davis's short story, "Life in the Iron Mills." While toiling in the steel mills, an environment he hated, Hugh expresses his emotions by chipping and moulding figures" (24). Hugh does not possess the words to adequately articulate what he is experiencing, so he speaks through his art. When his korn woman is recognized by a group of men visiting the mill, Hugh is asked what he meant by his sculpture. He replies, "She be hungry" (33). Being misunderstood by the men, Hugh explains that he did not mean she was hungry for food but tells them, "I doinno.... Summat to make her live, I think" (33). Hugh is not sure what he, through his korn women, is hungry for, but he recognizes the unspoken longing as an essential ingredient of life. After the men leave the mill, Hugh has an insight into his hunger. "In his cloudy fancy he has pictured a Something like this. He has found it in this [man] Mitchell... a Man all-knowing, all-seeing, crowned by Nature" (40). In Mitchell, Hugh sees the man he could have been and the man he will never be allowed to become. Hugh now realizes that his life will never be any different and asks, "Is it my fault that I am no better?" (41). He rightfully questions the order of man and the role he is forced to play in this harsh world. Hugh makes the ultimate moral decision to end his own life because he knows his hunger will never be satisfied. Rejecting society's version of the afterlife, Hugh is confident and secure in his opinion that God's justice is not based on man's laws.

Also rejecting man-made laws is a self-proclaimed monster who lives by his own code in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The monster is hungering for acceptance and love but turns to anger and revenge when he is rejected by his creator. After reading Frankenstein's papers detailing his own horror at what he created, the monster cries, "Hateful day when I received life! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even *you* turned from me in disgust" (130). The monster rightfully feels

abandoned by the person who gave him life. Isolated and alone, he lives in the woods near the De Lacey family. Gathering courage, the monster reveals himself to the blind, old man who accepts him, saying, "it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature" (134). The monster finally hears a "voice of kindness directed towards [himself]" and believes the other family members will also accept him. However, when the family returns to the house, disaster strikes and the monster reveals, "Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me?" (135). Now realizing he will never be welcomed by any human, the monster relates, "I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast" (136). The monster travels back to the home of Frankenstein, and upon meeting him, demands a companion, saying, "I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me" (144). The monster pleads with Frankenstein to create a female so he can be happy with a companion who will accept him. Promising to never harm another human, the monster vows to be content in the wilderness with his companion. The monster believes his hunger for love and acceptance will be satisfied. However, fearing the havoc the two might create, Frankenstein will not produce another monster. Thus, being condemned to a lonely and isolated life, the monster turns to revenge, killing all of Frankenstein's loved ones and pursuing him until his death. Only when his creator is dead will the monster end his own life.

Another who feels isolated and alone is the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. We are able to glimpse into the mind of a woman who has been effectively silenced while she is suffering from severe depression. This woman is hungering for a voice through her writing and her relationships with others. Her husband and brother, who are both physicians, agree "there is really nothing the matter with [her] but temporary nervous depression" (29-30). They prescribe a program which does not include her work, to restore her to good health. Expected to follow the dictates of these well-meaning men without question, she tells us, "Personally, I disagree with their ideas.... I believe that congenial work, with excitement and

change, would do me good" (30). The work the narrator is speaking of is her writing. Even in her depression, the woman understands that creative self-expression is vital for all people. She becomes fearful of the very people who are feeding and caring for her, because she is alienated from all others and forced to abandon her creative outlet. Essential ingredients for the recovery of this woman are the ability to express her *voice* and to have a continuing relationship with her companions. The narrator describes her descent into madness as the only way to gain autonomy, because her hunger for personal freedom is not satisfied in sanity.

We have read the stories of five people who were *hungry* for something more in their lives. One young girl, Tambu, received more than what she was dreaming of by attaining the ability to reject what was being taught to her and basing her knowledge on her own experience. Believing she was experiencing life as she desired, Sula dies without ever knowing what she was hungering for because she is never able to connect with other people in a meaningful and lasting way. Hugh does attain self-knowledge; however, his truth is that his life will never improve, so tragically, he ends his own life. Also, never being able to improve his life, Frankenstein's monster ends his existence only when he can stand over his dead creator. Also unable to improve her existence, the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" slips into madness as an escape from her isolated life. In all of these stories, we are able to understand the longing for self-expression and the necessity of lasting relationships.

Evaluation: Judy has thoughtfully captured the essence of the need for integrity in the facets of women's lives—work, love, family, creativity—in her intelligent discussion of these works. I particularly relished her discussion of hunger as metaphor in these works and in the lives of both women and men, their hunger for attachment and wholeness not based on gender.

Memento Mori

Megan Finchern

Course: Honors English 101

Instructor: Martha Simonsent

Assignment:

Write a comparison essay.

The envelope arrived in the mail about a week later. It contained one picture and a brief note. My mom quickly threw it away, commenting, "That's so strange...ugh; that gives me the creeps!" The picture was from my great-aunt; it was a photo of my great-grandmother's casket. I wondered: Why would someone take a picture at a funeral? This incident once again came to mind when I was reading Robert Finch's essay, "Very Like a Whale." In Finch's essay, a whale, not a great-grandmother, is dead. Yet, in his essay he commented that "[the people who came to see the whale] placed children and sweethearts in front of the corpse and clicked cameras" (392). With this similarity, I came to notice many others between the death of Finch's whale and the death of my great-grandmother.

Great-grandma Sophia was an amazing woman. She lived to be 101 years old and never showed, or acted, her age. She was a lively lady who played the piano, sang in church, baked phenomenal cookies, and always had time for her grandkids and great-grandkids. Because of Sophia's many remarkable qualities, she became a pillar in the family. She was very strong, and after her husband died, she lived many years on her own. Grandma lived so many years that she gained vast quantities of knowledge from her experiences. She was cherished and marveled

over by the family. Elderly people as great as she were quite rare to find. Likewise, the whale in Finch's essay was a remarkable animal. It was "the second largest creature ever to live on earth," which made it an exciting being to view and study (393). The whale had also lived many years, and "on the whale's own hide seemed to be written its life history" (393). Whales themselves are pillars of the ocean. They are strong, stable creatures who have lived many, many years. Gentle and caring, they "form family groups, develop social structures and personal relationships, and express loyalty and affection toward one another" (393). On a very simple level, my great-grandmother and the whale of Finch's essay are quite alike. They are both strong, remarkable creatures that are rare to discover. But these points are quite obvious; by looking closer, I noticed specific, parallel incidents in the lives of Finch's whale and my grandmother.

My great-grandmother was a very hard woman. She stuck up for herself and gave her opinion of others whether they would like it or not. She was also quite bossy. My mom always jokes and says, "You're acting like Grandma Sophia!" whenever I turn into a know-it-all. But people admired Grandma for her strong will. She was born in the late 1800's when women were supposed to be "meek and mild." I can just imagine Sophia as the rebellious girl who was the first to speak her mind among men. She told me stories of how she often got in trouble for her fiery temper and wild spirit. She also loved and looked up to her father very much. She took him as her role model. I think that she was one of those girls who secretly wished she was a boy. Grandma Sophia was not a follower. She wasn't what everyone wanted her to be. Finch also has the attitude that animals don't have to "fit into society" to be accepted, just like my grandmother didn't "fit in." Finch says there is "a tendency these days to defend whales...by pointing out their similarities to human beings" but that this view is "wrong-headed and misleading" (393, 394). Finch feels that animals don't need to be like people to be accepted, just like Sophia didn't need to be like the common woman to be accepted. Finch says that "[this view] implies that whales and other creatures have value only insofar as they reflect man himself and conform to his ideas of beauty and achievement" (394). Because whales sing and play,

for instance, people feel they are better than animals who are very non-human. My grandmother also knew that women who cooked and sewed and were “proper ladies” were ideal. Yet, whales ate not humans and they shouldn’t have to act like it. My grandmother didn’t wish to conform to the standards of women either. She became a teacher, and even though she eventually married and had children, she stood out against the crowd and got a job in the early 1900’s. Even though the whale and my grandmother “fit” into society, they both went against the grain to be themselves.

My grandma got very sick and started the process of dying when she turned 100. Even though she couldn’t remember people or her own name anymore, someone decided to organize a family reunion/“Grandma is 100”r celebration. I’m still not sure how this was meant to work out. My great-grandma wasn’t there for half of the party, and people started to wonder where she was. When she was finally brought to the banquet hall in a wheelchair, I realized how serious her situation had become. She was no longer the lively, energetic grandmother I once knew. She was a shriveled old woman who looked like she was half dead. As she was rolled up to the doors, chaos occurred. Everyone seemed to rush toward Grandma to take pictures, talk, kiss, question, touch, or just stare at this ancient wonder. Grandma got confused and scared and started to cry. This motivated even more people to crush in and ogle her. Everywhere people were whispering about the way she looked and how she was acting. I was very upset and kept asking my mother why someone didn’t take her away. Eventually, her daughter did take her home. Some party.

In Robert Finch’s essay, “Very Like a Whale,” almost the exact incident occurs. When the whale washed up on the beach, people came from all over to see it. Finch says that he “watched electricians and oil truck drivers...clambering down to the beach. Women in high heels and pearls...stumbled through the loose sand...the normal human pattern was broken” (392). For some reason this decaying giant brought people all swarming to get a glimpse, just as my quickly aging grandmother brought swarms around her. Most people had never seen a whale up close before, and most people had never seen my grandma look so useless and eerie. People on the

beach commented about the whale “with metaphors, lashed similes...like our primitive ancestors, we still tend to make images to try to comprehend the unknown” (393). I remember hearing so many say my grandmother looked “like a ghost” or that she was “at death’s door” when she came to the celebration. I think the best summation of both events is when Finch describes the whale as an “extravagant *memento mori*” (394). I think my family also saw Grandma as a *memento mori*: a remembrance that we all must die. No matter what dies or is dying, death lures all because all are curious about death.

My great-grandmother was a highly religious person. She went to church almost every day and sang in the church choir. She was spunky, but also very introspective and thoughtful. Her funeral was just like her personality. The choir she belonged to sang heart-breaking hymns, yet the eulogies given were funny and upbeat. It was a perfect mix of my grandmother’s personality. Only her family and close friends were present, which formed a tight bond of sorrow and remembrance. It was a beautiful end-of-summer party at her burial. A calm feeling spread over everyone. As we tossed flowers into her grave, I could almost hear her singing with the angels. In total contrast, the “funeral” for the whale was cold and frightening. The whale beached and did not get to be in its home, the ocean, when it died. My grandmother, on the other hand, had her funeral in the church she belonged to. Unlike the quiet, peaceful tone at my grandmother’s funeral, the whale was “hack[ed] open...with carving knives...for samples to be shipped to Canada for analysis” (392). There wasn’t an intimate gathering, but “thousands of [people] streamed over the sand to gaze and look [at the whale]” (391). And bull-horns were the whale’s hymn; the whale had to “[sing] its own death in matchless, sirenian strains” (395). The whale was not given a suitable “funeral” like my great-grandmother. The whale was not respected, and that is unfortunate. The whale deserved respect, as my grandmother had, for it was just as great as she.

After my grandmother’s death, she was remembered and cherished by the family. A video was made about her and the family she loved. Pictures, songs, and family trees created a grand memorial for my grandmother on the special videotape. Once in a while, when I think about

Sophia, I take out the tape and watch it. It brings back many good memories and feelings of the love she gave everyone. Even subtle things are done in remembrance of Grandma. My mom bakes Sophia's famous "potato chip cookies" every Christmas, since Great-Grandma cannot do it any longer. When family members come out to visit, someone will always ask to go see Grandma's grave or at least drive past her old home. The memory of Grandma Sophia is kept alive within the family. But in Finch's essay, the memory of the whale quickly died. When Finch came back to the beach weeks later, he "marveled that such a magnitude of flesh could have been there one day and gone the next" (391). Nothing at all seemed to remain of the whale, since the "tide had smoothed and licked clean whatever vestiges had remained" (391). Flowers always remain at my grandmother's grave, and her spirit is honored by the constant vigil of her immediate family. Even the authorities didn't seem to want people around the whale when they "declared the whale carcass to be a 'health menace' and warned [the people] off the beach" (395). When my grandmother got very sick, someone always stayed with her. No one was ever asked to keep away from her. And the whale's death was a mystery, as "biologists concluded, 'We will never know why the whale died'" (395). Grandma's death was obviously from senility and old age. But the worst part was, the memory of the whale was a "memory of a deflated and stinking carcass and of bull-horns that blared" (395). My Grandmother is fondly in the family's memory, and she looked so heavenly and peaceful during her funeral. My personal memory is of a pale, beautiful woman and the sounds of her choir floating about her. The aftermaths of the death of the whale and the death of my grandmother were completely different.

It is strange how much appreciation I have for the whale described in Finch's essay, now that I have compared it to my great-grandmother. I think Finch is right when he says that humans appreciate animals more when they are so much like humans. And even though this is the wrong way to judge animals, it is incredible to compare a beast to a human being. Besides the obvious similarities my grandma and the whale share, many incidents corresponded in their lives. I feel that animals should be

respected just as much as humans. Or maybe animals should be respected more. For what have animals ever done to upset the earth's delicate balance as humans have? Animals have seen so much hardship and sorrow. I think that is why I compared Great-Grandma to an animal in this essay. She, too, lived through a century of changes and challenges. My Grandma is a whale: strong, gentle, and wise. And when my grandma and the whale died, they both made a strong impact on the lives of others. *Memento mori.*

Works Cited

- Finch, Robert. "Very Like a Whale." *Common Ground: A Naturalist's Cape Cod*. Rpt. in *The Norton Reader: Shorter Ninth Edition*. Ed. John Brereton, Joan Hartman, and Linda Peterson. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996. 391-395.

Evaluation: *A risky, unconventional topic: who would think to compare a beached whale to one's dying and dead grandmother? By using details drawn from the Finch essay and from her own memories, Megan provides a fresh, thoughtful, and moving comparison essay.*

My Hardest Year

Tomoko Fukushima

Course: English as a Second Language (ESL 069)

Instructor: Linda Dunne

Assignment:

The students were to have written a narrative essay with a predominant emotion.

I learned the meaning of satisfaction through my teaching experience. Even though it was the job I chose by myself, I sometimes found it difficult to get along with the students. In spite of its difficulty, however, the work gave me a feeling of satisfaction when I succeeded.

In Japan, English is a compulsory subject in high school, and students cannot get away from it until they leave school. Therefore, it is one of the hardest subjects for some students. Such students show no interest in class; they do not do their homework or prepare for the class. They stare at the clock above the blackboard in the classroom, thinking about their lunch or after school. That means the teachers in such classes have a hard time making the class successful.

In March of the first year I became a high school teacher, there was a teacher's meeting. None of my "seniors" wanted to be in charge of the class full of "low achievers," and they wanted me to take responsibility for the class. I told them I would do so, because I was the

youngest of all the teachers and could not refuse the request. They looked relieved when I accepted. I started worrying about the coming year. "What should I do for the students disliking English?" I asked myself. Because I had only one week to think, I could not find the clear answer on the first day of the class in April.

When entering the classroom with little hope on the first day of the class, I saw more than thirty students talking to each other, eating some snacks, and reading comics. The blackboard had not been erased, and there were not enough pieces of chalk there. I rallied my spirits, although I was disappointed. I called all the students' names, gave seats, and erased the blackboard. While doing so, I felt their eyes. "This is a good chance," I thought, "They want to know me. They are curious about me."

Because it was the first year of my teaching career, none of the students knew me at that time. Therefore, I told the students to ask me questions. They were surprised and excited because I started the class at once. It took me more than ten minutes to answer forty-three questions from each student. After that, I talked to them a little—about what I did after high school, why I became a teacher, and why it is important to study English in Japan. I asked them to do their best to help them. They listened to me quietly and eagerly. I felt they were very cute, even though other teachers called them "low achievers." I thought I had made a fine start of the course.

The second day of the class came. When I entered the classroom, the students quit what they had been doing immediately and took their seats. I was happy to see that, even though the blackboard had not yet been erased on that day. I started my class, reading a short story in the textbook. To teach them was really hard for me, for they had little knowledge of English even though they must have already studied it for five years. They were not able to answer my questions and unable to translate English sentences in the textbook into Japanese. They were, however, trying very hard to keep up with me during the class. Their attitude toward the class encouraged me a lot. And the course went on like that.

Things seemed to be going well. It, however, changed when the summer came. The hotter it became, the more

difficult it was for me to teach them. Because we had no air conditioner in the classroom, the students could not concentrate on the class. In addition, the textbook was too difficult for them to understand. For those reasons, they soon gave up what they had been doing in class. They started chatting, sleeping, or looking out of the window instead of reading the textbook.

Therefore, I opened all the windows in the classroom for ventilation and made a study guide to help the students. To make each guide for every class was hard for me, but the students were willing to use it. By using the guide, they realized how to prepare for the English class, what to do with their homework, and, moreover, they could attend the class with confidence because they were ready for the class.

When I started using the study guide, the mood of the class gradually changed for the better. First of all, the students became more positive. Until I gave them the guide, they had been afraid of being asked questions. They did not want to give me the wrong answers to my questions. They were, however, able to study before the class with the help of the guide. That made it easier for the students to catch up with the class. In the meantime, they were not afraid of asking me their own questions during the class. Secondly, they came to help each other. They were willing to solve tough questions together. When a student could not answer my question, the rest of the class helped her. When a student was sleeping during the class, her neighbors shook her awake gently. Finally, they became happy to be in the class. They had already taken their seats whenever I entered the room, instead of loitering. They had erased the blackboard and prepared enough pieces of chalk before the class began. I could not believe my eyes when I first found the clean blackboard and the chalk. And I thought that would happen only that time; however, it lasted until the end of the year. I did not expect those things at all when the class started in April. Therefore, I was very much moved by the series of events.

At the end of the year, I received a card from the class. Because they were seniors, they were leaving the school. In the card, they wrote, "We were very lucky to have you in our class this year. As you know, we disliked English. And we did not expect much of our English teacher at all

because we felt English teachers made fools of us. They went ahead with their own lectures, ignoring 'low achievers' like us. We were sad because we wanted to participate in class. The reason we could not catch up with the 'lecture' was we did not know what to do. So when you came in our class, we were not sure if we could trust your words, 'I will do my best.' To our surprise, you showed it to us by what you did. You remembered and called our names instead of just saying 'Next,' helped us with your study guide for each class, and, moreover, gave us confidence, as 'We can do it.' You are completely different from other English teachers. And it must have been hard for you to teach us because we were 'low achievers.' Now we are not 'low achievers' any longer. We know how to prepare for, cooperate with, and enjoy the class. Thank you very much for having us as your students for one year."

When I finished reading the letter, I found myself crying. I thought, "This is what I have been looking for. I became a teacher to feel like this." The letter eased my one-year tiredness and gave me satisfaction I had never experienced until then.

Evaluation: *Tomoko's narrative is superbly organized and supported with fascinating details. It serves as a testament to the challenges teachers face all over the world.*

“Do You See What I’m Saying?”

Marie Harris

Course: English 102

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

*Write a literary research paper drawing
on at least seven critical sources.*

The writer of short stories must deliver his or her message quickly. He or she must choose dialogue carefully and concisely; and a setting must be drawn in the mind of the reader, a setting that seems so familiar that the reader is able to envision the scene and its characters without them having been detailed by the author. Raymond Carver was a master at capsulizing his stories while capturing the mindset of middle-aged men, their frustrations, and for better or worse, how they cope with the unrealized of their youthful dreams. He writes of men who are vaguely aware that their personal relationships lack an intangible quality, which they are not quite able to discern. Born in 1938, Raymond Carver came of age in an era wherein males were conditioned to be strong and detached. That perspective was reflected in popular movies by the stoic characters portrayed by Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, etc., but Hollywood seldom portrayed the emotional toll that such an approach to life generates. Carver uses “flattened prose” that mirrors the “flatness of his character’s lives,” remarks Adam Mars-Jones (14). Carver’s characters are angry at their worst, and indifferent at their best, but Carver makes them ordinary and identifiable, which is why they are so fascinating.

In “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,” Mel and his wife, Terri, are at their home entertaining another couple with a few drinks before going out to eat. The conversation turns to the meaning of love, and it is demonstrated that each of them has given differing implications to the term “love,” but none of them are able to define it in words. Their communicative skills are wanting. In reviewing Carver’s work, critic James Atlas observed that “the characters have no wisdom to purvey....They talk past each other” (103). Carver writes, they were “all from somewhere else” (Carver, “Love” 170).

Terri tells of her former husband who committed suicide for his tormented version of love. Mel has been impressed with the demonstration of love and devotion he has seen in an elderly couple who are hospitalized following an auto accident. His awareness that such passion does not exist for him is frustrating. He is depressed in this, his second marriage, as well as in his profession as a cardiac surgeon. Yet, he is unable to take a good look at himself. He is raging inside, but he isn’t certain of the cause; he just feels the effect.

“Cathedral” is an insightful story of a middle-aged couple who has not appreciated any depth to their relationship. The wife was married once before to a man who did not place a high priority on their marriage, and although circumstances are not very different in the present union, she has surrendered. The husband, who tells the story, is unsatisfied in life, but he is apathetic; he has no inclination to examine his lifestyle in search of what might be lacking. He is the reluctant host of his wife’s friend, a blind man. The arrival of the visitor in his home proves to be a learning experience for the husband.

The main characters in these stories are men who are unable to see the truth of their lives; they fend off despair with alcohol and drugs. The narrator in “Cathedral” states that drinking is “one of their pastimes” (216) and he admits to “smoking dope” every night (222). In “Love,” Mel drinks too much and takes antidepressant medications (184). He battles many demons in his mind. He is well educated, having attended a seminary for several years, which he claims to have been “most important” in his life (170). Yet, he left that life to enter medical school; he was unsuccessfully seeking fulfillment even then. The American dream of guaranteed happiness

through work and effort is eluding him. In his youth, Mel sought spiritual awareness in the seminary but failed to find it, and now, a physician in his middle years, it escapes him still. This worthlessness of the search for happiness outside of one's self is disclosed as Carver brings the "spiritually bankrupt materialism into fresh credibility" (Gallagher 105).^d

Carver's main characters also display various attitudes toward the marriage relationship. In "Love," Mel tells his friends about the old couple he saw in the hospital. The two had been together many years, evidently having worked out the unavoidable difficulties of marriage. Beneath any routine troubles, they truly loved one another. The man's devotion was obvious. Not seeing her was worse than physical pain, and it can be assumed that the woman felt the same. The point of the anecdote is that what appears to be deep, abiding love and devotion exists somewhere. Mel knows he lacks that depth of feeling but doesn't know how to acquire it. From his experience, Mel believes love is transient, and the devotion and passion he observes will never be for him.

In contrast to Mel, the narrator in "Cathedral" cannot comprehend the depth of personal relationships; he is shallow and indifferent. He believes his marriage is adequate, but he has no high expectations of what marriage should be. It seems to him that marriage is more of a convenient social state rather than a personal commitment. He accepts the peaceful dullness of his life (even the nickname, "Bub," given him by the houseguest, reflects his drabness); he "make[s] do with booze and self-pity" (Kubal 104) in compensation for the lack of enthusiasm. Critic Meredith Marsh notes that "the occupants of Carver's houses are desperately alone, whether or not they are living with each other" (101). This is as sorely apparent in "Cathedral," where Bub and his wife live their lives disconnected from each other, as it is in "Love," where Mel and Terri are unable to find each other.

Carver's men are tormented and have limited visions of themselves. Ironically, Bub, our narrator in "Cathedral," doesn't see that he is more blind to his wife than Robert, the blind man, was to his deceased mate. Bub pays little attention to his wife and her interests; he doesn't "think much" of her poetry; nor does he try to understand (357). On the other hand, Mel recognizes that there is

something more, out of his reach. He is intellectually aware of it—indeed, he has witnessed it most recently in the old couple in the hospital. Mel is unable to express, much less analyze, the reasons for his feelings, so, in an attempt to communicate the unexplainable to his friends, he resorts to the phrase "Do you see what I'm saying?" (183). He is so "lacking in language that [he is] trapped in...inarticulateness" (May 78). Mel has more passion for life than does Bub, but it only serves to fill him with rage and frustration.

The women in these stories, while playing a secondary role, offer a similar female version of marital relationships and love. Bub's wife tolerates indifference in their marriage and has developed her own separate avenues of expression, through her poetry and the audio tapes, which she mails to Robert. She adopts her husband's apathy and looks elsewhere for fulfillment. She is "beaming" (214) when her friend comes to visit, enjoying their mutual interests, much to the consternation of her husband.

Terri has paired herself with Mel, who says he loves her but who cannot empathize with the word. Her first husband, Ed, physically abused her, but she believes he loved her, in his twisted way. She desperately needs to be loved, so she masochistically believed Ed's professions of love as he beat her (170). Carver pointedly describes her as "bone-thin" (170). She is so starving for the elusive "love" that she will accept a close approximation. She is blinded by the word "love." She has found life less violent with Mel than with her first husband, but she has again teamed herself with a man who abuses her, but in a more subtle fashion. Mel dominates her. An example of his authority is shown when he patronizes her in conversation and then tells her to "shut up" (177, 178).

Mel has a need for power in his life, and this need seems to be out of his control. He believes he has a "right" to power (170). He consciously exercises control in his posture and motions, which are "precise [and] very careful" (172). The effort at control becomes more difficult as his thoughts begin to turn more introspective, when his motions slow and he takes an unguarded pose at the kitchen table (185). He recognizes that he cannot always control events or outcomes — not in his profession, not in his personal life. Mel longs for the days when

knights were men who commanded power and wore armored suits to protect their exposed position (180). He feels victimized and vulnerable, as Carver reveals when Mel says, "Everyone is a vessel to someone" (181). Mel denounces his profession as merely a mechanical skill (181), but he believes it is too late to change careers now; he realizes a "dearth of alternatives" (Skenazy 49). Mel's façade of power covers his unprotected interior. The fraudulence contributes to his rage against his former wife—whom he would like to see die from bee-stings because she still controls him through his children—and his stifled rage against Terri, on whom he blames his unhappiness, when he feigns bees attacking her (184).

Carver's men are "on the cusp between oppressive normalcy and psychic despair...[and they] vaguely...sense [their] predicament" (Koepp 102). In "Cathedral," Bub doesn't rage; he takes the easy way out. Bub has been complacent. He is unhappy in his job, but he makes no move to change his circumstances (218). He is satisfied with the routine of his marriage but is uncomfortable with the feelings he sees demonstrated between his wife and her friend, yet he never spent the energy in investigating his own feelings. He is not seeking control of anything; he merely wants to get by as easily as possible.

He has become lifeless, but not beyond redemption. The hand upon hand in the drawing scene is reminiscent of the hands of the blind man enfolding the hands of his beloved wife as she died. It is a metaphorical scene of one human spirit guiding another through a transition.

In this way, Carver illustrates two versions of immature emotional states. Mel is harboring rage and frustration; Bub is merely apathetic. In fact, when being told of the love that the blind man, Robert, and his wife had for each other, Bub cannot understand how one person could be so open to another, much less when one of them is blind; ironically, he thinks they were "pathetic" (360). Openness to someone else invites vulnerability, and Bub always plays it safe. Mel, when seeing the love that the elderly couple had for each other, "feels and suffers" that he lacks the power to bring that depth into his own life (Houston 103).

Many American men may recognize themselves in Carver's stories—men who are devoid of introspective analysis, either because they have been unaware of their

inner selves, or because they have wished to avoid any discomfort that such analysis might evoke. "Carver's country is a place we all recognize...The country of arduous life" (Weber 105). There is an ordinariness to Carver's characters because there is something of us in them. His characters often have no last names and sometimes even no name at all (May 78). The narrator of "Cathedral" is given the nickname "Bub" by the houseguest, which indicates that the identity of the character can be assumed by anyone.

Carver's characters often disclose his own unrest, as Carver is quoted as having declared to his students: "You are not your characters, but your characters are you" (Stull 237). When he wrote "Love," Carver was approaching middle age and suffering through an emotional period in his personal life; the main character, Mel, reflects a mood of personal intensity. In comparison, "Cathedral" was written when the author was beginning to find peace within himself, and the narrator of that story offers the suggestion of hope.

Carver reveals himself in the unnamed narrator in "Cathedral," who hasn't a clue of how to relate to a handicapped man. As he awaits the blind man's arrival, he recounts feelings of anxiety and wariness of the man who knew his wife so well. In discussing this story after Carver's death, his friend, Tom Jenks, wrote "Ray began to tell of the night the blind man for whom [his wife] Tess had once worked came to visit. Tess told her side too — how Ray was uneasy...uncomfortable...and mildly jealous" (141).

There is an intimation of Carver in the Mel McGinnis character in "Love." Carver's friend, David Swanger, observed that in Ray's first marriage, "Maryann and Ray were sustained by [their] separate but overlapping visions...the domestic chaos took a terrible toll, [but] Ray was able to use it in his stories" (81).

Carver's stories are mostly conversations in austere settings; the characters are inarticulate, but their few words, along with their actions, speak volumes. The blind man's leading Bub's hand in drawing the picture portrays that language is not necessary in communication, despite the barren language of his characters. Language is dependent upon the attention of the listener, and Carver's characters find paying attention difficult in the face of their own dis-

tractions (Van der Weele 36). There is despair; however, the human spirit is indomitable. At the climax of "Cathedral," the narrator experiences a spiritual awakening, giving him, and the readers, a spark of promise.

Carver's widow, Tess Gallagher, speaks of her husband's writing: "He came of age in an America that still believed in the American Dream in which traditional values were assumed to prevail. In later works he would extend characterization and allow some glimmer of hope...but he felt no obligation to provide answers..." (104). Carver exposed the familiar inarticulateness of men in matters of the soul. The bleak despair of "Love" gives way to a tiny window of hope in "Cathedral." Robert, the man who cannot see, succeeds in reaching Bub and teaching him to see without his eyes, but, instead, with emotion and feeling, thereby inducing a spiritual epiphany. The perplexed Mel asks in "Love," "Do you see what I'm saying?" (183) as if his unarticulated thought could be visible to the stupefied group at his table. The narrator of "Cathedral" is also able to see without opening his eyes. He glimpses the challenge of exploring new territory in himself and is able to comprehend a level of greater understanding of faith and spirituality. The spires of the cathedrals reaching toward the heavens symbolize the need for humanity to strive for something more substantive and meaningful in our existence.

These characters possess the material goods necessary for life, but they do not possess the intangible quality that gives life significance. Carver describes the inner turmoil in the souls of his characters, and he thereby makes his characters so familiar; their struggles in relationships and the pursuit of the "American Dream" are common. None of us will ever resolve all the complexities of life, but there is always hope. Human spirits are connected: we are left with a sense that people can change and often do. Carver's life was cut short — he died at age 50, in 1988. The narrator in "Cathedral" offers the suggestion of hope in one of Carver's last works; had Carver lived to become more mellow with age and understanding, his stories may have become more suffused with this spiritual glow.

Works Cited

- Atlas, James. "Less is Less." *The Atlantic Monthly* 247.6 (1981): 96-98. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Gunton. Vol 22. Detroit: Gale, 1982. 102-103.
- Carver, Raymond. "Cathedral." *Cathedral: Stories by Raymond Carver*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1983. 209-228.
- — —. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love." *Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories*. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1985. 170-185.
- Gallagher, Tess. "The Ghosts of Dreams." Rpt. in *Remembering Ray: A Composite Biography of Raymond Carver*. Eds. William L. Stull and Maureen P. Carroll. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Capra Press, 1993.
- Houston, Robert. "A Stunning Inarticulateness." *The Nation* 233.1 (July 4, 1981): 23-25. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Gunton. Vol 22. Detroit: Gale, 1982. 103-104.
- Jenks, Tom. "Shameless." Rpt. in *Remembering Ray: A Composite Biography of Raymond Carver*. Eds. William L. Stull and Maureen P. Carroll. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Capra Press, 1993.
- Koepf, Michael. "The Collapse of Love: 'What We Talk About When We Talk About Love.'" *San Francisco Review of Books* May-June 1981: 16. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Gunton. Vol 22. Detroit: Gale, 1982. 102.
- Kubal, David. "Fiction Chronicle." *The Hudson Review* 34.3 (1981): 456-466. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Gunton. Vol 22. Detroit: Gale, 1982. 104.
- Mars-Jones, Adam. "Words for the Walking Wounded." *The Times Literary Supplement* 22 Jan. 1982: 76. Rpt. in *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Vottele. Vol 8. Detroit: Gale, 1991. 13-14.
- Marsh, Meredith. "The Mutability of the Heart." *The New Republic* 25 Apr. 1981: 38-40. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Gunton. Vol 22. Detroit: Gale, 1982. 101.
- May, Charles. "Raymond Carver." *Critical Survey of Short Fiction—Supplement*. Ed. Frank N. Magill. Pasadena, Calif.: Salem Press, 1987.

- Skenazy, Paul. "Life in Limbo: Ray Carver's Fiction." *Enclitic* 11.1 (Fall 1998): 77-83. Rpt. in *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Votteler. Vol 8. Detroit: Gale, 1991. 45-49.
- Stull, William. "Raymond Carver." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Eds. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Richard Layman. Detroit: Gale, 1985.
- Swanger, David. "No Blessed Calm." Rpt. in *Remembering Ray: A Composite Biography of Raymond Carver*. Eds. William L. Stull and Maureen P. Carroll. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Capra Press, 1993.
- Van der Weele, Michael. "Raymond Carver and the Language of Desire." *The Denver Quarterly* 22.1 (Summer 1987): 108-122. Rpt. in *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Votteler. Vol 8. Detroit: Gale, 1991. 36-41.
- Weber, Bruce. "Raymond Carver. A Chronicle of Blue Collar Despair." *New York Times* 24 June 1984, sec 6: 36-50. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Daniel Marowski. Vol 36. Detroit: Gale, 1986. 105.

Evaluation: *This paper is a skillful, seamless blending of many voices, and it shows an astute reader, writer, and researcher at work. The abundant critical sources do not overwhelm the paper, and the use of biographical material is particularly interesting.*

Eight Hours of Music, Illumination, Warmth, Technology, and Clean Air in One Room: Process and Cost

Mollie Hawes

Course: Physical Science 101

Instructor: Joseph Auer

Assignment:

*Study and analyze the level of electrical supply service for
your home. Provide circuit diagrams and chart tables.*

Researching my home's circuitry was an interesting task. It took a sizable amount of time and required a great deal of acrobatics simply to get to the appliances and fuse box to get the information I needed. I followed the step-by-step process outlined in the research assignment handout and found it helpful to keep me on time and chronicle each task, calculation, chart, and diagram as I went along.

I began with the dire task of getting the level of service supply for my house. I had an idea that it would be 100 A because of the approximate age of my house. I started by asking my father. He had no idea offhand. He checked some of his files and still came up with nothing. Next I went through some of the old receipts for bills and other mailings from Commonwealth Edison. Still, I found nothing to indicate our level of service supply. My next try was a 1-800 number listed on one of the most recent mailings. This was a tedious process of hitting redial and finally getting through to elevator music (as I was on hold). I finally gave up on this avenue and decided to try the website, also listed on the bill. This was where I finally got some results. I located various links within the page and finally selected "Residential." There, I was able to get an e-mail address, and I simply e-mailed Com-Ed, asking for the level of service supply to my house. I checked my e-mail faithfully for several days before I heard any word from Com-Ed. Strangely enough, instead of e-mailing a response, they called the house. They asked for my mother and gave her the information. (I had signed the e-mail "M. Hawes," as my mother's first initial is "M," and generally, in most businesses, one gets a faster reply if they are thought to be one of the heads of house. At this point, I knew that my level of service supply was, as I had estimated, 100 A.)

My next step was to draw a diagram of my fuse box. The fuse box in my house is located in the utility room, sort of next to and sort of behind our dryer. After climbing over what seemed like endless amounts of laundry baskets and tripping over my dog, I finally made it to the fuse box. I had the ingenuity to figure out how the fuse box opens (due to several blown fuse trips to recover our power), and the difficulty came after that. My father had written the key for which fuses controlled which room! This does not sound like any horrible emergency, but it can quickly become one if one is acquainted with my father. My father has the most terrible hand-writing of

anyone I know, or anyone who ever lived. He frequently cannot read his own writing and was even kidded by his mother that he should have been a doctor because of their stereotype of having poor penmanship. The other problem is, I am known to be almost the holder of the “Rosetta Stone” where my father’s writing is concerned, so if I cannot read it, seldom can anyone (my father even says that I surpass him in the translation of his writing, probably just to get me to type up some of his papers for him).

I had to locate which room was controlled by which fuse by leaving something on in each room and then turning off the fuses one by one. This whole process helped me to decide which room to use and also caused me to stumble many times in the dark, again tripping over one of my dogs. My dog gave me looks almost as strange as my mother did, as I was running around the house in dark rooms seeing which fuse tied to which room (and in some cases, which appliances in certain rooms did not go on the same fuse as the rest in that given room; two examples of appliances not being on the same fuse as the other items within the same room were my washer and dryer; also, the air conditioner—though in the kitchen—was controlled by a fuse that did *not* control the other kitchen appliances).

I decided to use my bedroom for purposes of this paper’s calculations because the outlets and appliances connected to the fuse were straightforward, yet plentiful. I almost used my screened-in porch for the calculations, but many of the appliances were very old and did not list values for current, voltage, or power or some of the information had been worn off over the years.

I determined that I had the following appliances that connected to that circuit: air purifier, black desktop light, stereo, electric blanket, extra-loud alarm clock with radio, normal alarm clock, floor lamp, wall lamp, printer, and computer. I checked to see what values were listed on the back or inside of the appliances that I was using. Some listed only two values, while one listed all three values. I did notice that the computer and printer were the only appliances to list current and voltage instead of electric power and voltage. I do not know what this could be attributed to, but it has made me curious as to whether computer equipment is more likely than other types of appliances to list the value of the current.

I also was surprised that the “extra loud” alarm clock with AM/FM radio used fewer Watts than did the normal one without the radio. I use a normal and extra-loud alarm on a daily basis, as I am a heavy sleeper. The extra-loud one has a radio or beeping noise that is loud enough to wake the entire household and can be altered in volume. One would think the loud alarm with more features would run on more electric power than the normal one, but not in this case. At first I thought the age of the items could account for this, but the extra-loud alarm is older and uses less Watts, and I was guessing the opposite. The best answer that I finally came up with is that 5W versus 4W is perhaps not representational of a major difference in electric power. It would be somewhat helpful to know why this difference is the opposite from what I expected, because this particular appliance is left on twenty-four hours a day.

I made out the following preliminary chart after checking to see what values were listed on each appliance:

Appliance	Power (P) listed in units of Watts (W)	Current (I) listed in units of Amperes (A)	Voltage (V) listed in units of Volts (V)
(1) Air Purifier	36	5.0	120
(2) Desk Light	60	?	120
(3) Stereo	32	?	120
(4) Electric Blanket	70	?	120
(5) Loud Alarm	4.0	?	120
(6) Normal Alarm	5.0	?	120
(7) Floor Light	60	?	120
(8) Wall Light	60	?	120
(9) Printer	?	0.4	120
(10) Computer	?	6.0	120

I then worked out the missing parameters so that the P, I, and V values could all be filled in (See Calculations, next page). Before making the calculations, I reviewed the notes and text-book—the relevant equations, the types of parameters, their abbreviations, and the units and abbreviations I would need. I entered the missing information into the chart.

Appliance	Power (P) listed in units of Watts (W)	Current (I) listed in units of Amperes (A)	Voltage (V) listed in units of Volts (V)
(1) Air Purifier	36	5.0	120
(2) Desk Light	60	0.5	120
(3) Stereo	32	0.3	120
(4) Electric Blanket	70	0.6	120
(5) Loud Alarm	4.0	0.0	120
(6) Normal Alarm	5.0	0.0	120
(7) Floor Light	60	0.5	120
(8) Wall Light	60	0.5	120
(9) Printer	48	0.4	120
(10) Computer	720	6.0	120

Next, I worked on the block and pure electrical circuit diagrams, using the text-book's examples to guide me, as suggested by the instructor. I then calculated the total power consumption for all devices, multiplied it by 8 hours and divided it by 1000 to make the value represent Kilowatt hours instead of Watts, as it previously had. I then multiplied the Kilowatt figure by the under 400 kWh figure (as I certainly did not use that many). I also added up the current figure to find that my house was indeed safe if I operated all ten of the above mentioned appliances at once. I do not honestly ever use more than a couple of items at a time and therefore have even less reason for concern.

I think one of the greatest influences this project has had on my perception of household circuitry is to make me curious as to what makes my bathroom fuse blow out when the fan and a hairdryer are run at the same moment. I have not yet experimented with this, but I intend to do so in the future. Next time, I believe I will invest in a good flashlight so that my dog does not get tripped on in the interest of science and curiosity!

Calculations

For all calculations, let:

I = current in units of Amperes (A)

P = electric power in units of Watts (W)

V = voltage in units of Volts (V)

Air Purifier

None needed

Black Desktop Light

Given:

$V = 120\text{ V}$ and $P = 60\text{ W}$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$I = 60\text{ W}/120\text{ V}$

$I = 0.5\text{ A}$

Stereo

Given:

$V = 120\text{ V}$ and $P = 32\text{ W}$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$I = 32\text{ W}/120\text{ V}$

$I = 0.3\text{ A}$

Electric Blanket

Given:

$V = 120\text{ V}$ and $P = 70\text{ W}$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$I = 70\text{ W}/120\text{ V}$

$I = 0.6\text{ A}$

Extra-Loud Alarm Clock with Radio

Given:

$V = 120\text{ V}$ and $P = 4.0\text{ W}$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$I = 4\text{ W}/120\text{ V}$

$I = 0.0\text{ A}$

(0.03 if rounded but not to the significant figure)

Normal Alarm Clock

Given:

$V = 120\text{ V}$ and $P = 5\text{ W}$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$I = 5\text{ W}/120\text{ V}$

$I = 0.0\text{ A}$

(0.04A if rounded, but not to significant figure)

Floor Lamp

Given:

$$V = 120 \text{ V and } P = 60 \text{ W}$$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$$I = 60\text{W}/120\text{V}$$

$$I = 0.5 \text{ A}$$

Wall Lamp

Given:

$$V = 120 \text{ V and } P = 60 \text{ W}$$

To Find:

I

Solution:

$$I = 60\text{W}/120\text{V}$$

$$I = 0.5 \text{ A}$$

Printer

Given:

$$V = 120 \text{ V and } I = 0.4\text{tA}$$

To Find:

P

Solution:

$$P = 0.4\text{A} \times 120\text{V}$$

$$P = 48\text{W}$$

Computer

Given:

$$V = 120 \text{ V and } I = 6.0 \text{ A}$$

To Find:

P

Solution:

$$P = 6.0\text{A} \times 120\text{V}$$

$$P = 720\text{W}$$

Total Power Consumption = 1,059 W or 1,060 W,
rounded to significant figures

$$1,059 \text{ W} \times 8\text{H} = 8,480 \text{ or } 8,500 \text{ rounded WH}$$

$$8,500/1,000 = 8.5 \text{ kWh}$$

8.5 kWh is less than 400 kWh; therefore, price is
\$0.10494

$$8.5 \text{ kWh} \times \$0.10494 = \$0.89 \text{ or } \$0.90 \text{ (rounded)}$$

Total Current = 13.3A (rounded, 13A)

Available = 100 A

Fuse Box, Block and Pure Electric Circuit Diagrams

1. Main	2. Main
3. Main	4. Main
5. Sump Pump	6. Kitchen
7. Utility Room	8. Dishwasher
9. Bedroom	10. Kitchen
11. Bedroom	12. Living Room
13. Furnace	14. Laundry Room
15. Air Cond	16. Fam Rm Plugs
17. Air Cond	18. Fam Rm Lights
19. Patio	20. Basement

Fig. 1. Fuse Box Diagram

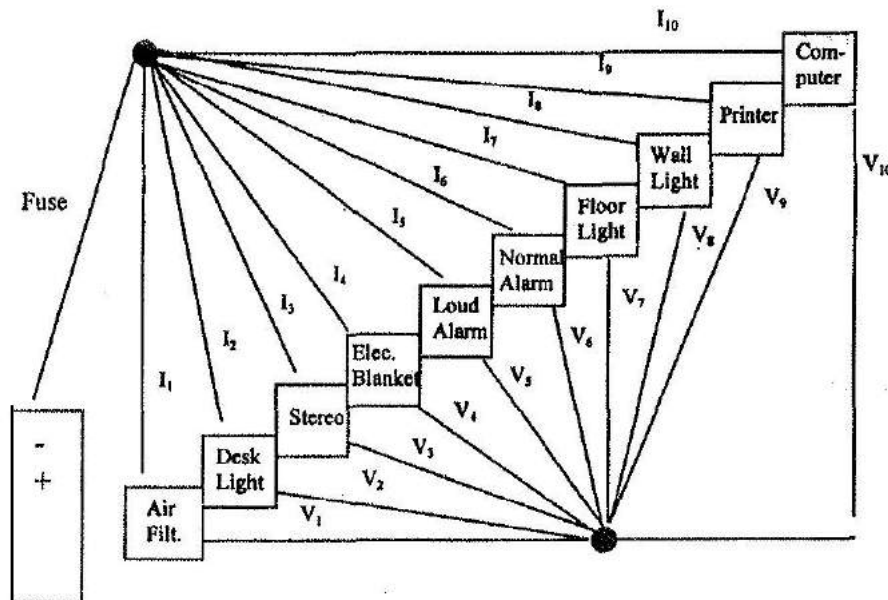


Fig. 2. Block Diagram

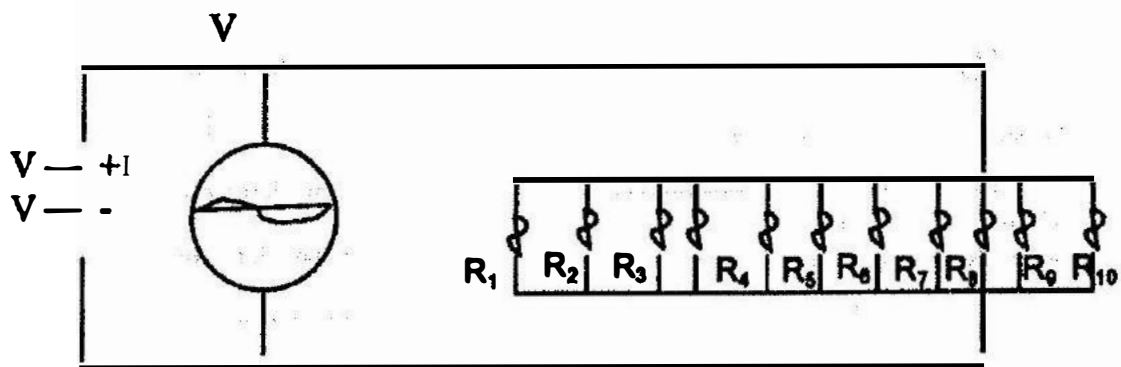


Fig. 3. Pure Electrical Circuit Diagram

Evaluation: *No evaluation provided.*

A Lover's Poem — Ein Liebesgedicht

Inspired by poetry read in German 205

Doris Hohertz

Course: German 205

Instructor: Renate von Keudell

Assignment:

Write an original poem about a special relationship between two people. Pay attention to rhythms and rhymes.

Evaluation: *Doris uses language efficiently in her poem.*

The sound values in German are good and make the original poem in German powerful.

The poem is metrically sound. The rhythms are regular and the rhymes are true. The poem evokes feelings both of pleasure and regret, suggesting both the joys and sorrows of young lovers.

A Lover's Poem

While I sat here alone
with nothing to do,
My mind became filled
with thoughts of you.
Thoughts of the good times
we shared together.
Things we have done
things we have left undone.
Memories of you
that will last forever.

Ein Liebesgedicht

Während ich alleine sitze
mit nichts zu tun
Mein Geist voll
von Gedanken von Dir.
Gedanken von schönen Zeiten,
die wir zusammen verbracht.
Sachen, die wir gemacht
Sachen, an die wir nicht gedacht.
Erinnerungen von Dir
bleiben auf Ewigkeit in mir.

Appearance Is Everything: John Cheever and “The Five-Forty-Eight”

Charley Juran
Course: English 102
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:
*Write a literary research paper that
draws on at least seven critical sources.*

Of himself, John Cheever has said, “I have been a storyteller since the beginning of my life, rearranging facts in order to make them more interesting and sometimes more significant. I have turned my eccentric old mother into a woman of wealth and position, and made my father a captain at sea” (qtd. in Simon 3). This was the motivation of Cheever’s writing. He took from what he saw and knew best, upper-middle-class Americans, and wrote story upon story exploring and explaining the pitfalls that held them. He looks into the souls of these men and women who, although they appear to have it all together (and as we see in Cheever’s own life, appearance is everything), are really quite troubled.

This holds true in Cheever’s “The Five-Forty-Eight.” This story of a middle-class American man deals with the actual soul of the person. It looks at common Cheever themes of humanity, redemption, relationships,

and appearance. Readers are able to see into the life of Mr. Blake and the aspects of his character that have made him the person that he is, and, at the same time, see how these qualities that have built him have become his weaknesses as well. This is a man who has spent his entire life building an image. He has conformed to society. He has carefully avoided all situations that would contradict his appearance of superiority. He hides from truth in the shadows of this mirage which he has created, and he has forgotten the things that make him human instead of just a high-standing mask.

The basis of “The Five-Forty-Eight” is the conflict between Mr. Blake and Miss Dent. This is the story of a man who, throughout his interactions with this woman, has no real understanding of her. Cheever has said that his writing is the only way he knows how to communicate with men and women about life (Simon 5). Linda Simon feels that this is mirrored in his stories where, “in Cheever’s world, men do not understand women.” They do not know how to talk or respond to them, and these men are baffled by the way women express emotion (4-5). This is true in the relationship between Blake and Dent; however, it is not just their inability to communicate that hinders these two beings. There is something deeper that affects each of them.

Patrick Meanor refers to Blake as “one of Cheever’s most revolting sociopaths,” and he sees the story as “a character study of Mr. Blake as a soulless automaton” (93). Many of Cheever’s best stories deal with characters who have major faults of morality and who, throughout the tale, have some experience that brings a moral uplift (Coale 50-51). The twist added to this in “The Five-Forty-Eight” is that, less than a story of change from wrong to right, it is a story of victimization and manipulation turned into cruelty and revenge (Meanor 92-93).

Blake’s crimes are many. It starts with the way he treats women. His inability to understand them, coupled with his seemingly natural corrupt tendencies, cause him to avoid confrontation with, prey on, and demean them. He is a poor husband. Blake does not approve of his wife associating with the neighbors. She is not there to live her own life but to be part of his. When his wife does not live up to his expectations, he punishes her. For not having dinner ready on time, he has no reservations

about not talking to her for two weeks. He not only crushes her in instances like these, but he also cheats on her. He treats these women no better. Since "most of the many women he had known had been picked for their lack of self-esteem" (119-120), Blake was free to treat them any way he wanted. He was able to use them without consequence. They would capitulate to his desires, and they would then shy away. This made it possible to avoid dealing with the women at a later time. If this wasn't enough, he would do whatever was needed, such as having Miss Dent fired, to break his ties.

Blake does not limit himself to treating women poorly. Dent says to him, "I know that you always prey on weak people" (129). He tries to always have the upper hand. Therefore, he judges those around him, his neighbors, strangers on a train, and everyone else, as lesser than he. It is probable that in his corporate life he does the same. He has no concern for others, and because he sees them as inferior to himself, has no qualms about stepping on them or using them for his gain.

The general disregard that Blake shows for humanity is what gets him into trouble. Miss Dent is hurt by the way Blake has treated her, but she does not focus on the incident between them. She sees that Blake's actions extend outside of their relationship. This is the way he is towards everyone. In fact, she responds not only to him but also to the way she has been treated by Blake-like persons throughout her entire life. She reacts to those who would not hire her, to those in the hospital who "only wanted to take away [her] self-respect" (127), and to everyone else who has rejected her or brushed her off.

Dent decides that things need to be made right. She feels that redemption needs to be made—for her sake and for the sake of mankind. When she confronts Blake in an attempt to straighten out her life, she tells him, "I've been thinking about devils. I mean if there are devils in the world, if there are people in the world who represent evil, is it our duty to exterminate them?... Oh, sometimes I think that I ought to kill you. Sometimes I think you're the only obstacle between me and my happiness. Sometimes..." (129). She does not decide to kill Blake for his evil deeds, but she does decide that something must be done to compensate for what has been done to her by Blake and the world. Her redemption for

the victims of Blake becomes a cruel vengeance as she finally causes Blake to fear for his life while, with a gun pointed at him, she forces him to lay subservient in the mud. "I'm better than you, I'm better than you" (133), Dent repeats to Mr. Blake. At this point, Miss Dent feels that she has completed her task. She has made Blake understand what it feels like to be trotted on. She leaves and washes her hands of him.

Several questions remain, however. First, does this have any real effect on Blake's life? We see that, once Dent leaves, he gets up, brushes off, and starts home as if nothing ever happened. Miss Dent's goals of stirring Blake to change are not reached. She does bring healing to herself, but this brings a second question. Is her redemption pure? Dent's desires are honest, but her methods are not. The enlightenment she seeks to bring is yielded by way of turning the tables. Does the vengeance she takes on Blake make her just as bad as him? She tells him, "I won't harm you, because I really don't want to harm you" (133). Her desire to not harm Blake is a large contrast from his indifference towards everyone. Also, she notes, "I can wash my hands of all of this, because you see there is some kindness some saneness in me that I can find again and use. I can wash my hands" (134). Miss Dent is redeemed in the fact that she can walk away. Blake walks away but had not been affected by the situation at all. Miss Dent's ability to walk away is beneficial only because she walks away a better and more complete person, having faced her challenges instead of avoiding them. She has power over Blake in this confrontation. She could have killed him if she had wanted. She does not, however. She lets him go, and that knowledge frees her. She may have lost some of her innocence, but she does not descend to the level of Blake.

One image that we can look at to mirror the theme of redemption is light. Throughout Cheever's story, lighting is paid special attention. Light is a symbol of purity as well as a revealer of truth. It is hard to hide in a room with no shadows. "The Five-Forty-Eight," however, has many shadows. The lighting through most of the story is dim at best. Mr. Blake even lives in a place called Shady Hill. These lighting conditions signify several things. They show the lack of morality, the lack of joy, and the abundance of hiding. The characters in this story are

either hidden from or hiding from the truth. They either have no human decency or have been shown none. They do not have joy.

The only true light that we see is distant and for others, or it is unfamiliar. When he and Dent leave the train, Blake sees the lights of houses in the distance. He knew these lights represented people who had returned home from work for dinner, love, and other warm and human activities. These are the exact qualities that Miss Dent had always assumed Blake had. Now, those around him are headed for those lights, but because of his actions, he is not, nor had he ever really been, able to do the same.

One other important instance of light occurs at the end of the story. As Miss Dent leaves Blake, and as we wonder exactly what will become of her, Mr. Blake turns to see her crossing a platform in the dim light. After her experience with Blake, she leaves the shadows of their encounter and the burden of their relationship. She heads for another life. She passes through the light. Although it is dim, it is not darkness. This shows that she may not be fully recovered from all that haunts her, but there is hope, and she is better from her encounter with Mr. Blake.

Light is not the only indicator of purity in "The Fifty-Four-Eight." George Hunt says of Cheever, "[he] has compassion for those characters who have little hope but at least are rich in memories" (88). He also notes that villainous characters, such as Blake, are often those that lack or have forgotten memories. These characters also lack self-awareness (88). This leads to a lack of awareness for others and a lack of compassion for the same.

We see the lack of memories in Mr. Blake's character in several places. He forgets several minor things throughout the story, such as when he forgets his coffee ring at the bar. One of the more telling struggles in Blake's memory occurs on the platform at the train station. Upon hearing water drip and seeing reflections of light in the puddles, Blake's mind sparks the sensation of shelter. However, this mental image is "so light and strange that it seemed to belong to a time of his life that he could not remember" (131). His inability to remember light and a representation of safety only furthers the lackings of his character. Most important is his inability

to remember Miss Dent's name upon seeing her outside of his office. He had shared something with this woman that, at least in her eyes, was important. He didn't even take the time to remember her name, though. A lack of memory begets a lack of humanity.

On the other hand, the only times that we see a glimpse of the humanity behind Blake comes from his memories. In the midst of the turmoil of his evening, with Miss Dent holding a gun on him on the train, Blake has several flashes of memories. One is a "sweet [memory] of gone summers and gone pleasures" (133). Still, this sweet memory makes his flesh crawl. Blake is not used to such human feelings. He has created a stone facade to protect him from good and bad. In addition to his summer memory, Blake has another flash of enlightenment when he is finally approached by Miss Dent; she startles him. This jolt into reality causes Blake to remember her name. The most notable occurrence, however, is his memory of war. As he sits with Miss Dent on the train, Mr. Blake realizes his own mortality. He thinks about what Dent's gun could do to him and that he is powerless against it. This feeling of vulnerability humanizes Blake, if only for a moment. As he comprehends his own frailty, Blake is reminded, in a rush, of the war—the "entrails, eyes, shattered bone, ordure, and other filth" (130). Blake is scared and insecure, two very human traits that bring about human memories.

On the other side of this is Miss Dent. She is full of memories—memories of Blake and others. She remembers all that has been done to her. These memories are what drive her. They propel her human desire to correct the wrongs that she sees and has experienced. They help her to understand herself, and therefore, understand others. In the end, however, we see "by her attitude, her looks, that she had forgotten him" (134). These memories have been replaced by hope. "She had completed what she had wanted to do" (134). She no longer needs her memories; she has another purpose.

Perhaps the most prevalent item in much of Cheever's writing is the idea of appearances. John Cheever knew that what is seen, whether it is true or not, is what people believe and know. His characters are often different from what they appear to be. To fully understand this, one would have to first understand Cheever's life.

John Cheever was born in 1912. His father was a shoe salesman in Massachusetts. They were average middle class Americans at the time. However, when the Depression hit, they lost most of their money. John's father fell deep into his already present problem of alcoholism, and his mother opened a small shop to support the family. They were barely able to stay in the lower-middle class. Through his childhood, John felt neglected and unloved. He was not proud of his family (Simon 3), and they were not proud of him, often reminding him that his conception was an accident (Donaldson 15).

Simon says that "of all Cheever's fictions, perhaps the most flighty and eccentric was the story he told about his own life" (1). Unhappy with his life, John, a storyteller from the beginning, created a world that satisfied his desires. He made his father into a factory owner. His fantasy world consisted of maids and sailboats and clubs. (Simon 1, 3) He told detailed stories of how life was in this world he had fabricated.

The Cheevers were able to scrape together enough money to send John to prep school. However, he eventually left. The story he told, and the subject of his first published story, said that he was intentionally expelled for smoking. However, it is more likely that his parents could no longer afford the school (Simon 2-3). From what John told, no one would have guessed at the true loneliness and self doubt he felt inside.

Cheever continued his storytelling games through most of his life. Even in adulthood, he seemed to have everything. On the surface, life was grand. He had a beautiful wife, children, and dogs. To Cheever, appearance was everything. Anything out of the ordinary, he dismissed with a feasible explanation. However, in the late 1970's, it was discovered that John Cheever had a serious drinking problem as well as a valium habit. Later, after his death, it was discovered that this was just the beginning of the list of problems in Cheever's life (Simon 2).

The characteristics of Cheever's life strongly carried over into his writing, although he had told many that "fiction is not crypto-autobiography" (qtd. in Simon 2). This started with the base of his characters, the upper-middle class. This was the lifestyle young John Cheever had fantasized about and the author had gained. Cheever called himself a spy in the middle class. He said that

since he was not born into a true class, he had chosen one (Simon 2). He must have been a wonderful sleuth. The majority of his stories were first published in *The New Yorker*, a publication for the sophisticated (Coale 1).

He knew his readers well. He knew the comfortable lives they lived, but he also knew that deep inside they had "an abiding fear that something was terribly, terribly wrong" (Simon 1). John Aldridge speculated that what Cheever understood about this fear was "what happens when a man making too much money awakens to the fact that there is nothing left to spend it on except some form of anesthesia against the knowledge that there is nothing left to spend it on" (qtd. in "John Cheever"—*Contemporary Authors* 92).

The truth that was beneath the surface of Cheever's characters was what he reached for. To Cheever, appearance was everything. To his middle-class characters, appearance was everything. When this appearance cracked, the truth of their persons was seen. Their faults and lives were revealed.

In the "Five-Forty-Eight," we can see a glimpse of this through Mr. Blake. His appearance means everything to him. He follows the sumptuary laws and disregards anyone who doesn't. He tries to put up a front that says, 'everything is fine.' His attempt works. If seen walking down the street, Mr. Blake would be taken for a proper and well-off business man. Miss Dent, upon first meeting Blake, assumes, as well, that he has a happy and wonderful life, consisting of "friendships, money, and a large loving family" (119). However, his life is not all well, and his home and family are not the least of his problems. This is not something to make a point of, he feels. After all, every man quarrels with his wife. He despises his neighbor because she has become privy to the details of his actions against his wife.

Miss Dent discovers that Blake's life is not all that she thought it was, and then she exposes some of the truths about him. She shows his true nature and opens up his human vulnerability for a moment. For this moment, the dream that he is living in comes crashing down. He has no real purpose. He begins to feel some signs of remorse as well as a fear for his life. The opening of Blake's soul is not a complete transformation, though. It closes almost more quickly than it opened. He does not

change, but instead, regroup his illusions. He gathers himself and replaces his hat on his head. This returns him to the image of normalcy. If he looks well, then life must be well.

Mr. Blake has built up a life for himself where he feels invincible. He abuses the people he comes in contact with, and he has no fear of consequences. He builds up a reputation for himself, especially in his own mind, and will not associate with anyone of lower standing: in the end, the same qualities that make Blake almost cause his death. His initial indifference to Miss Dent's feelings motivates her to build up the courage to come after him. He has no idea how to defuse the situation himself because he has not learned to deal with women on an intellectual level. On the train, he fears for his life, and though he is surrounded by neighbors, he has no one to call for. His previous actions have alienated him from them so much that they have no care for him. Also, he would not be willing to call out, as it would make him seem less in control.

"Oh, I'm better than you, I'm better than you," Miss Dent is able to proclaim near the end of this confrontation (133). She has broken through the surface of Blake and sees the truth inside of him. She discovers Blake to be "a cold, manipulative, egotistic figure....He is a man who is outwardly capable but inwardly empty. He understands with keen clarity the public behavior of people, but he has almost completely lost touch with the emotional needs that drive them" ("John Cheever"—*Instructor's Manual* 27). She realizes that Blake's true self is not as wonderful as he would have people believe. In the end, the only person who believes the facade is Blake himself. He is so far out of touch with reality that even a brush with death is waved off to become another forgotten memory.

John Cheever wrote of (and lived in) a world of presentation. This was a well-off world of money and prestige. Those wrapped up in it are content. Everything goes smoothly as long as the masquerades continue. However, when truth is revealed, whole worlds crumble. Though people, such as Blake, may believe their own lies, they are irrelevant if they do not hold up in the real world. In the end, Cheever shows, truth is revealed.

Blake cannot seal reality from Miss Dent. In Cheever's life, as well, the truth was revealed. In a biography of John Cheever, his daughter, Susan, wrote, after discovering the true turmoil that plagued her father, "I know my father better than I ever did while he was alive" (iv). In the end, appearances must make way for the truth.

Works Cited

- Cheever, John. "The Five-Forty-Eight." *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1958. 115-134.
- Cheever, Susan. *Home Before Dark*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984.
- Coale, Samuel. *John Cheever*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977.
- Donaldson, Scott. *John Cheever*. New York: Random House, 1988.
- Hunt, George W. *John Cheever: The Hobgoblin Company of Love*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983.
- "John Cheever." *Contemporary Authors*. Vol. 27. Ed. Hal May and James G. Lesniak. Detroit: Gale Research, 1989. 92-93.
- "John Cheever." *Instructor's Manual to Accompany Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. 6th ed. Ed. X.J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Dana Gioia. New York: Harper Collins Publishing, Inc., 1995. 27-29.
- Meanor, Patrick. "Ovid in Ossining." *John Cheever Revisited*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995. 92-94.
- Simon, Linda. "Triumph Over Chaos: A Profile of John Cheever." *World and I*, September 1998: 228 (6). *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Online. Infotrac. 24 March 1999.

Evaluation: *Even with a paucity of available sources on this topic, Mr. Juran offers a compelling look at this story, and at how issues in the author's life were mirrored within it. I especially value Mr. Juran's astute interpretive ability and his simple, clear, engaging style of writing.*

WWW.Hellraisers.Com

Michael Kenny

Course: English 101

Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:

Evaluate a specific subject. Be sure we have a good sense of your criteria and clearly understand your evidence.

As stated nearly 150 years ago, by the *Chicago Times*, "It's a newspaper's duty to print the news and raise hell" (*Bartlett's* 780). After many name changes, the *Chicago Times* newspaper ceased publication in the 1970s. One of its main competitors, however, the *Chicago Tribune*, has been printing and raising hell for over 150 years. Recently, the information superhighway has created a new way for the *Tribune* to raise hell and print news. At www.chicagotribune.com, the news is not printed ink; it's printed hypertext, right on your computer screen via the Internet. This technological advancement spawns a good question for young PC -owning *Tribune* readers; Internet *Chicago Tribune*, or printed edition *Chicago Tribune*? Quality of read, accessibility, ease of use, sensory appeal, accessibility to additional info, and affordability give us good leads for this investigation. Although switching to the Internet edition can mean the end of covers for the bottoms of bird cages, the Internet edition seems to deserve a close comparison to its older sister.

Quality of read

One of the most important reasons people choose one periodical over another is the quality of the read. In deciding whether to choose the printed *Tribune* or Internet edition, I found no difference at all in quality. They have the same writers and sources, with no significant differences in format. Neither edition holds an advantage in this department.

Advantage— Neither

Accessibility

If you're in a building with identical water fountains on either end, logically you would use the one that is closest. The same goes for the Internet and print editions of the *Tribune*. When I first asked myself which is easier to access, I immediately found myself in my computer room, logging on, listening to the static of the connection procedure, then the familiar "Welcome, you have mail." I then clicked on *my favorites*, found the *Chicago Tribune* amongst the sites in the list, clicked on it— Boom!—I was there: "Quayle is no longer running for president." I was impressed. The entire procedure was quick and efficient. At further review, however, I realized that if I had the print edition delivered, the *Tribune* would be waiting at my doorstep. In addition, what if I like to read the paper on the train—or at the bus stop? What if my mom is using the phone line? If I were in D Building, wouldn't it be more effective, instead of walking to a computer lab, to have the *Tribune* neatly folded away in my back pack? In fact, there are newspaper vendors on practically every major street and in many stores. After judicious analysis of these queries, I realized my original judgment was a farce, like Aristotle's hypothesis that a heavier object falls faster than a lighter one. Luckily, I didn't have to wait 2000 years for the truth to be revealed.

Advantage – Print Edition

Efficiency

Eureka, I have the easy-to-reach print edition in hand. I start to read an interesting story by the Associated Press on the Nuclear Test Band Treaty. The reading is going well, but I reach a point where it says in parentheses "(continued on page 4)." I give a long sigh and sloppily open the huge 35-by-17(1/2)-inch paper to page 4. It

takes me three attempts to fold the page in a neat manner. Then, I fold it again so that I may hold it comfortably over my knees. The article concludes after only three paragraphs. Then, I am burdened with the task of reopening the paper to the index on page 2, just so I can see where the commentary begins. Well, you know what happens next, a very big hassle, especially in public places! Although the print edition might be superior in accessibility, once you have it in your hands, it is a very different story.

Let me call your attention to my home PC experience. There I am, not caring that Quayle dropped out of the presidential race. I decide to see how the Bears did. I simply click on sports and bam, there are the day's headlines: "Bears suffer close loss to Raiders." It doesn't stop at headlines, though. Off to the side there are sub-categories for each sport, even a category for each sports writer. No hassle, no fuss. Everything is quick and efficient. On the main page, in addition to the regular categories of weather, national news, sports, etc., there is also an archives-and-related-articles option. Icing on the cake, in my opinion. I don't even want to get into the awesome organization of the classified section.

Advantage – Internet

Sensory Appeal

Being able to read a color-printed, full page of the weather is nice. I don't, however, believe this compares to the 32-bit, high-resolution, all-color graphics the Internet edition displays. Moreover, the Internet *Tribune* often includes real-time audio and video clips of current and past events such as destroyed bridges in Kosovo and narration by sportscasters.

Although an image of a boy yelling, "Extra!" as a well-dressed Englishman with a top-hat places a nickel in his hand, then grabs the smooth, well-folded, thick paper with black-glove-covered, aristocratic hand is a very traditional and prestigious image, that image of prestige and tradition does not compare to the awesome state-of-the-art technology the Internet edition offers.

Advantage – Internet

Accessibility to Additional Information

There comes a time in every reader's life when he or she has to say, "What? Where's the rest? I want more!" One big plus of the Internet edition is simply that the reader is wired into the Internet. For example, if any particular article or idea implied by an article catches my eye, I can easily use any search engine to find additional sites dealing with those topics. If I were reading the print edition, I would either have to go to the library or find a computer terminal to further dissect any particular subject. It makes sense—if I'm already on the information super-highway, all I have to do is change lanes to get somewhere else.

I first noticed just how efficient the Internet was in this regard when I was reading about welfare reform for my Political Science class. The article was enlightening, but I needed other info to complete my research. I used the default AOL browser and found over 1,000 sites dealing with welfare reform. This info in unison with the *archives* and *related articles* features made for an easy research segment of my project.

Archives? Related articles? Have you ever read an article which makes a reference to another article written perhaps a year ago? While using the Internet edition, the reader can use the archives or related-articles feature to look up past articles in a click of the mouse. For an in-depth or interested reader, searching the *Tribune's* database via the Internet is a lot more practical than wasting the valuable time needed to make a trip to the library.

Advantage – Internet

Affordability

Thus far, the Internet is winning the information, efficiency, and sensory appeal races, while the print edition edges out in the accessibility department. A quality-of-read difference is nonexistent, so we must turn to our most important judge for a ruling—affordability. I know the average Harper students are not into spending more than they have to for their news. The print edition averages out to only fifty cents a day, depending on whether or not they buy the Sunday edition. I will not go into explaining different pricing plans, because the price of the Internet edition is zero dollars a day. If students have access to the Internet, whether it is at school or home, the Internet *Tribune* is free. For all you mathematicians, that

is the equivalent to $0/5=0$. Being a student myself, I know that I'll take anything free I can get. The advantage for affordability definitely goes to the Internet *Tribune*.

Advantage – Internet

Overall Impression

Overall, I think the Internet edition outweighs the print edition in desirability. At the onset of my research, I held a strong conviction that the Internet *Tribune* was superior. That conviction has been diluted, by the print edition's accessibility, from conviction to mere opinion. Sadly for the print edition, the affordability, efficiency, sensory appeal, and access to information of the Internet heavily outweigh any advantages the print edition bears. Moreover, the Internet's free pricing plan clobbers the print edition in affordability, and affordability is the main ingredient in my decision-making recipe.

At the conclusion of my research, I walked over to my neighborhood convenience store, maneuvered directly to the wooden rack where the periodicals are displayed, and began crying uncontrollably. As my tears moisturized the beautiful cheap-ink print and pictures on the *Tribune's* front page, I told it, "I'm sorry, but things change sometimes. You're just not right for me anymore, but we can still be friends." OK, maybe I didn't cry, maybe I didn't even go to the store. I can, however, assure you that a long relationship between myself and the print edition *Chicago Tribune* has come to an end.

Works Cited

Bartlett's Familiar Quotations. Ed. Justin Kaplan. 16th ed. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1992. 780.

Evaluation: *A lively contemporary voice complements clear criteria and plentiful evidence in this essay explaining why Mike Kenny values the Internet edition of the Chicago Tribune.*

Links in a Chain

Carole Kmiec

Course: English 101

Instructor: Martha Simonsen

Assignment:

Write a comparison essay. Seek a meaningful connection between one of our readings and contemporary events.

Outline

Thesis: Although James Baldwin's father and racist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith seemed like opposites, they actually had some general similarities. For both men, their lives revolved around a severe hatred, which affected everyone they came in contact with and ultimately ended their own lives.

- I. Both men harbored a severe hatred
 - A. Baldwin's father
 1. Description of where his hatred came from
 2. Description of his hatred
 - B. Smith
 1. Description of where his hatred came from
 2. Description of his hatred
- II. Both men's hatred impacted those around them
 - A. Baldwin's father
 1. Neighbors and parishioners
 2. Family members
 - B. Smith
 1. Before shooting spree
 2. After shooting spree
- III. Both men's hatred ended with death
 - A. Baldwin's father's paranoia
 - B. Smith's suicide

How could a minority, who experienced the injustices of racism his whole life, have anything in common with a violent white supremacist? Anger and hatred have a way of bringing some people closer together (in personality, at least) than they would ever want to acknowledge. Although James Baldwin's father, whom Baldwin described in "Notes of a Native Son," and racist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith seem like opposites, they actually have some general similarities. For both men, their lives revolved around an intense hatred, which affected everyone they came in contact with and ultimately ended their own lives.

Both James Baldwin's father and Benjamin Smith harbored a severe hatred in their hearts. For Baldwin's father, this hatred toward white people probably began when he was growing up in New Orleans. Baldwin said that his father "was of the first generation of free men," so prejudices were still strong, especially in the South (106). He eventually moved North to New York, but by the time his children were growing up, he had "already suffered many kinds of ruin" (107). His life had "bleak boundaries" around it simply because of the color of his skin (107). He distrusted all whites, even those who were kind to him and his family. He told all of his children that their white friends were not really their friends at all, and that "white people would do anything to keep a Negro down" (110). When one of Baldwin's white teachers wanted to take Baldwin to a play, Baldwin's father only agreed because he didn't dare refuse. And although this teacher, whom Baldwin described as "a very sweet and generous woman [who] went to a great deal of trouble to be of help to [them]," carried on a relationship with them for years, his father "never trusted her" (110).

In Benjamin Smith's case, it is hard to know when his hatred started or where it came from. He was anything but underprivileged, growing up in "affluent Wilmette" with a doctor for a father and a real estate agent for a mother (Warmbir and Kaplin 1, 9). Nevertheless, his extreme hatred of minorities was clear to those who knew him. He preferred the name "August" to his first name, Benjamin, which he believed sounded too Jewish: "he [even] used as an alias the name of the Nazi field marshal Erwin Rommel" (Skertic and Sadovi 1). He also had an anti-Jewish tattoo on his chest that said "Sabbath

Breaker,” which is favored by hate groups (Skertic and Pallasch 2). He had recently been a member of the World Church of the Creator, a white supremacist organization “urging whites to push blacks, Jews, and other ‘mud races’ off the face of the planet” (“Critics” 9). In November, “Smith...was named ‘Creator of the Month’ for his efforts to distribute racist literature” (“Critics” 9). He was so committed to spreading a message of white power that he was arrested more than once for passing out such information (Skertic and Sadovi 3). He failed his college courses because he refused to write about anything except his hatred for minorities. His hate-filled essays “focused on his beliefs and the teachings of the racist group he belonged to” (Warmbir and Kaplan 9). His yearbook entry from high school was appalling:

[It] carried the slogan “Sic Semper Tyrannis”—or “Thus Ever to Tyrants.” Those are said to be the words John Wilkes Booth spoke after shooting Abraham Lincoln and a phrase on a T-shirt worn by Timothy McVeigh the day he bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City. (Warmbir and Kaplan 9)

The severe hatred of both Baldwin’s father and Smith poured out onto those around them like hot lava. Baldwin’s father never felt able to express openly his strong feelings against whites, so his rage was usually projected toward neighbors, parishioners, and his family:

He treated almost everybody on our block with a most uncharitable asperity and neither they, nor, of course, their children were slow to reciprocate....He could be chilling in the pulpit and indescribably cruel in his personal life and he was certainly the most bitter man I have ever met. (107)

For example, he refused to help a relative who “was in trouble and near death,” simply because she had hung a picture of Louis Armstrong on the wall of his home and instructed him not to take it down (107). Incidentally, his hatred of Louis Armstrong may have come not only from the “evil” music that he played, but also from his huge success, which Baldwin’s father never saw in any part of his own life.

Baldwin’s father also repeatedly took his anger out on his children. Baldwin recalled how none of them was ever glad to see him come home because whether he was

trying to play with a young child, help an older child with homework, share a delicious watermelon with them, or simply make a joke about their poverty, his rage was always present, and it always “led to the most appalling scenes” (107). Baldwin mentioned that these scenes often involved “slapp[ing a] child in anger” (118). Even his “good” relationships revolved around quarrels:

Chief among the mourners was my aunt, who had quarreled with my father all his life; by which I do not mean to suggest that her mourning was insincere or that she had not loved him. I suppose that she was one of the few people in the world who had, and their incessant quarrel-ing proved precisely the strength of the tie that bound them. (118)

As a result, he had few friends, was in low demand as a minister, and had virtually no connection to his children; however, they were left with a “legacy” of consequences: conflicting thoughts and feelings, including their father’s hatred and rage, to sort through alone or risk passing on to yet another generation.

Benjamin Smith’s hatred also had a deep impact on those around him, although, unlike Baldwin’s father, Smith directed it mostly toward those he hated. He also did not get along well with people in his neighborhood. Some described him as “asocial” and said he was “someone who...scared them” (Skertic and Sadovi 3). He affected people in different ways when he passed out hate literature: some decided to follow the group that he belonged to, and others were offended. In Bloomington, Indiana, more than 500 students and city officials were moved to attend an anti-hate rally because of pamphlets passed out by Smith (St. Clair and Kutz 9). In addition to being arrested for distributing literature, he was also arrested for disorderly conduct and domestic battery, which showed he had an angry temper similar to that of Baldwin’s father: “An ex-girlfriend of Smith’s...told [newspapers] that they broke up in 1998 after he beat her.” She also described him as “violent” and was so scared of him that she filed a protection order with police (Skertic and Sadovi 3).

Unlike the quiet and prolonged dying of Baldwin’s father, however, Smith’s final effect on those around him was extremely violent, leaving two people dead, eight injured, and many others scared for their lives. These

people were attacked not for doing anything to Smith, but just for being alive. The ones who were injured are now trying to recover not just from physical wounds, but emotional ones as well. As for Ricky Byrdson, shot to death in front of his children, and Won-Joon Yoon, shot to death in front of the Korean church he attended, the lasting impact on them and their loved ones can hardly be imagined (Skertic and Pallasch 2, Warmbir and Kaplan 9). Smith's own family will also be affected for a lifetime. The day after the shootings, "the curtains [were] drawn. No one answered the door" (Warmbir and Kaplan 9).

In both Baldwin's father's case and that of Benjamin Smith, their hatred affected their own selves so much that it eventually killed them. Baldwin's father was "eaten up by his paranoia" (108). His suspicions of whites and neighbors began to apply to his family as well. Baldwin described him as being "locked up in his terrors; hating and fearing every living soul including his children who had betrayed him, too, by reaching toward the world which had despised him" (109). He left the world broken, feeble and ill, and "one-time friends...seem[ed] to suggest that they had known all along that something like this would happen" (118).

Benjamin Smith, on the other hand, chose to shoot himself three times while trying to escape police: in the chin, leg, and chest. When arrested, he was said to still be struggling with deputies, despite his wounds ("Racist" 9). He left the world young, hateful, and violent. As in the case of Baldwin's father, however, past friends seemed to predict his fate. An ex-girlfriend said, "I really think it's going to end...with him dead" (Skertic and Sadovi 3).

Elizabeth Sahr, who had a one-year relationship with Smith, also said, "This is his Independence Day from the government, from everything.... He is not going to stop until he's shot dead. He's not going to surrender. He's not going to give up until he leaves this world" (St. Clair and Kutz 9). Baldwin summed up this similarity perfectly when he wrote, "Hatred, which could destroy so much, never failed to destroy the man who hated and this was an immutable law" (123).

Baldwin's father and Benjamin Smith would have probably emphatically denied that they shared any common ground. And clearly, there are some distinct differences in how they handled their feelings. Yet, the rage that they both allowed to control their lives links them together in the unbreakable chain that has prevented the freedom of acceptance, justice, and peace since the beginning of time.

Works Cited

- Baldwin, James. "Notes of a Native Son." *Eight Modern Essayists*. Ed. William Smart. Sixth Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1995.
- "Critics Say Church a Dangerous Racist Group." *Daily Herald* 6 July 1999, sec. 1: 9.
- "Racist Shot Himself Twice During a Scuffle with Police." *Daily Herald* 6 July 1999, sec. 1: 9.
- Skertic, Mark, and Abdon M. Pallasch. "Alleged Gunman Kills Self Near Salem, Ill." *Chicago Sun Times* 5 July 1999, sec. 1: 1-2.
- Skertic, Mark, and Carlos Sadovi. "Ex-Wilmette Resident's Past Familiar to Police." *Chicago Sun Times* 5 July 1999, sec. 1: 1, 3.
- St. Clair, Stacy, and Karen Kutz. "Prediction Proved Chillingly Accurate." *Daily Herald* 5 July 1999, sec. 1: 9.
- Warmbir, Steve, and Allison Kaplan. "Authorities Seek Reasons for Racist Rampage." *Daily Herald* 6 July 1999, sec. 1: 1, 9.

*Evaluation: A tightly knit, creative comparison,
Carole's essay makes us ponder the power of hate.
Her supporting illustrations, well documented,
are numerous and convincing.*

On the Border in Borders

Radik Lapushin

Course: English 101

Instructor: Martha Simonsen

Assignment:

*Write about a favorite place, "a holy spot" like
E.B. White's in "Once More to the Lake."*

Do we really choose the places we love? Or maybe they choose us, peering at our faces, listening attentively to our voices, and reading the pages of our lives. They attract and seduce us; they tame us gradually day by day, step by step, until we are not able even to imagine ourselves without them. Then we can leave these places, but we are powerless to forget them because they become a part of us, and we ourselves become a part of them.

I keep in my memory my first date with one such special place. It was during my first days in this country. Everything was strange, unknown, and different from what I had been adjusted to before. I used to wake up in the early morning from the voices of the fussy geese, I used to walk down through the unaccustomedly empty streets, almost without pedestrians, and I used to feel a lack of air because of the horrible heat and the intolerable humidity. Besides that, I could hardly speak English and was not able to understand what people were telling me. In that condition, almost by accident, I opened the door of Borders, where I found myself surrounded by books and the long-expected freshness which, as I felt at that moment, came from those books. There were not many people. The quiet and pensive music penetrated me slowly from the second floor. I headed for the cozy café with the high ceiling that reminded me of the cupola of a cathedral. I ordered a cup of tea, and with the first gulps, I experienced the feeling of being at home.

Then, I tried to visit that place as often as I could. I did not have a car yet, but my relatives used to pick me up when they drove to the health club not far from Borders. They made fun of my attachment to an ordinary store. Chuckling, they invited me to join them, but I consistently preferred Borders. Why? Of course, I could study there and from childhood I had fallen in love with books and music. But there was something else I was not able to explain. It seemed to me that opening the door of that store, I was not a stranger anymore, that I had discovered my own place where nobody and nothing could threaten or disturb me, and where I was not so vulnerable and unprotected from reality.

I did not have much time there, but I was never in a hurry. I liked, for example, to take any book from a shelf, open it at random, and try to read. It was not simple for me because of my English, but I was not afraid of misun-

derstanding: I imagined myself capable of reading something *between* the lines if not *in* the lines. I remember the first English poem I read from the beginning to the end without stopping. It was the very dramatic poem by W. H. Auden, "Song for St. Cecilia's Day" (sec. 24), where the poet transforms his personal fear of losing his loved one into the objective form of the ballad. Reading it, I felt a special rapture thanks to just one rhyme which burned me from within:

O is it the parson they want, with white hair,
Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit. (222-23)

That double "is it" sounded for me so much like a cry of a wild bird suddenly penetrating the space of the store that I had to pull my head down, frightened of its touching me.

But from the very beginning, Borders was not for me just a place that had to do with books and music. It gave me a beautiful opportunity to observe people inside the store and the life outside. That is why I preferred the table near the window in the café, where I myself was "on the border" between the modern world of streets and the eternal world of culture. It seemed to me that centuries were looking at me from the bookshelves while people were filling up the store and the café. I really liked to observe them from my place. All of the time, I tried to imagine their lives and to read their pasts, their thoughts, and feelings in their smiles, gestures, or gait. Of course, I had time to catch just scraps of their words, only profiles of their faces. But that was enough for my imagination to be awakened. Once, for example, I saw an elderly man sitting at the table next to mine, holding a woman's hand gently. She was smiling, but she was sad at the same time. Such a combination of smile and sadness made her face especially attractive and expressive. Who were they? Maybe they were husband and wife. Lovers? Simply friends? I knew that I would never be able to learn the answer. But it seemed to me that their lives inexplicably had to do with my life. Besides that, I felt that if I had opened one of those books from the shelves around, I would have read their story.

In order to be honest, I need to confess that sometimes I hated my refuge, my dearest and loveliest place. The reason for that feeling was inside me. It appeared to me that I tried to hide from reality behind books and CDs, that I was just an incurable dreamer and contemplator who was not able to do what normal people did, and that I lived surrounded by phantoms and mirages, like that cry of the bird which I just "heard" once above the bookshelves. And those shelves seemed to me like a tremendous sandcastle that was about to fall down and cover me completely. "You should escape from here! You have to escape! You must!" I used to whisper to myself, but every time I found myself returning to that place.

And now I am here again at my favorite table near the window and it is my favorite time, the soft twilight when things lose their shapes and penetrate each other. Oh, how I like this play of the reflections when the bookshelves leave their usual places, reach the road, and stop in the middle of it. The fast-moving cars drive through the shelves staying invisible for them. They drive through the pages and lines, rhymes and characters, through the centuries and countries, religions and doctrines, through the fire, tears, prayers, and curses, through the permanent despair and irresistible hope. No book has fallen down! And who can answer where the border is between seeing and existing, between my imagination and reality, between ourselves and the places we choose?

Works Cited

- Auden, W. H. "Song for St. Cecilia's Day." *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. New York: Random House, 1945. 203-39.

Evaluation: The essay as structured meditation, the essay as lyric poem: the writer, a poet himself, engages us in his reflections through detailed description, honest confession, and evocative figurative language.

for

Jennifer LeBron

Course: Reading 099/English 100

Instructors: Chris Poziemski/Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

Write a personal narrative about the most important event in your life.

The single most important event that changed my life was the day my mother got married. I was about four years old and furiously disappointed in her, but it wasn't her fault that she had no clue. It was my fault for not telling her and it was my fault for keeping it a secret. How could she have not known? What could I have possibly done to deserve this? I had only lived four years, not long enough to comprehend what was happening to me. The only thing I know now is that the night my mother married my stepfather was the night that changed my life forever.

We had moved to San Francisco for her honeymoon, and because I was very young, my mother couldn't find anybody to babysit me. I ended up joining them for what I believed was supposed to be my mother's honeymoon, not mine. We moved into a small apartment just East, a couple of miles from the great San Francisco Bridge. My stepfather would always take me fishing on that bridge. He had told my mother that he wanted to spend quality time with me. I never did blame my mother for being so naive. She thought he was the most wonderful man she had ever met because he appeared to be the father I never had. He certainly was!

My mother was trapped into this huge love bubble, so

that nothing seemed to matter to her. I was happy for her, and I thought she deserved it. Don't get me wrong, I love her with all my heart. I know that my silent cries could not be heard, but every time I tried harder, nothing seemed to come out. Being away from home made me terribly homesick, and being with him didn't help any. I kept hearing his voice, over and over, "Don't you worry, everybody does this." I couldn't figure out what that meant for the longest time.

Every night I would lie in my bedroom staring into the ceiling of glow-in-the-dark stars. I remember vividly that each star would comfort me; I thought that they could see what no one else saw. Each day I prayed that those stars would send a message to heaven, and somebody would come to rescue me, perhaps an angel. Every time the door creaked and a large shadow appeared beside me, I would whisper to my friends, "Dear star, let this be over quickly." Silent cries erupted before me as the night began.

Guilt and shame rose up in me, when I only wished someone could hear me. I was in unbearable pain with the constant heat and pounding on my helpless body. Teddy bears began to fall off my bed, along with my soul. "Fly, little star," I would whisper, and "please little star, rescue me," in a faintly weak voice. Thank God for my new kitten, who would knock over my Legos, causing such a noise that would awake my mother. Day one was over, and so was I.

The sun began to rise and a new day was about to begin. My mother came into my bedroom with such enlightenment and thrilled to see me. She reached over to wake me, and suddenly I shook as if I was having a seizure. Mom would say, "Did you have a bad dream, sweetheart?" My only response was "Oh, I wish, Mother; by the way, I love you." It killed me to let go of her, knowing that she couldn't do anything unless I told her. Because it was pure and harmless, her warm embrace was the only thing I looked forward to every morning.

As days went by with countless nights of emotional torture, I didn't know if I was destined to live. Each day after school, I could see girls running around with smiles on their faces. I thought to myself, "How could they be so happy? Why can't I be happy?" Confusion was my everyday feeling, but it was hostility that was repressed.

I remember many times when I would lash out at my teachers for no reason. There were times when I felt like killing myself or someone. Being in this world seemed like such tragedy for me. I didn't want to be part of it. Nobody could figure out what was wrong with me. I always seemed to have problems at school. Teachers, or anybody who had authority, seemed to become my enemies.

People were beginning to wonder about me. I never told a soul. Nobody could reach out to me because I wouldn't let them. I figured they were all the same, just like my stepfather. Their power over me not only disturbed me but destroyed me.

When I finally figured out that this behavior was not normal, it was too late. My childhood had already been seized, along with my spirit. It could never be replaced or returned. I will never be the same again.

To this day, when I look back into time, I remember that the day my mother married my stepfather was the day that changed my life forever. Now that I am much older, I still get shaken up anytime a man touches me. I've learned to deal with it, but my spirit for life is dead. Forgiveness isn't in my vocabulary, but vengeance is.

Evaluation: Self-described as "hard of hearing"
Jennifer has written a powerful account of her
childhood. Her narrative, which chronicles her pain
and her "silent cries" for help, is poignant and memorable.

The Best of Both Worlds: A Comparative Analysis of *The English Patient*

Jennifer Lestore

Course: Literature and Film 110r

Instructor: Nancy L. Davis

Assignment:

*Write a comparative analysis
of a novel and its film adaptation.*

The name Michael Ondaatje may not have household status, but mention the words, “The English Patient,” and chances are good there will be instant recognition. According to Douglas Barbour, author of the 1993 book on Michael Ondaatje and his literary works, *The English Patient* has become “Ondaatje’s first bona fide bestseller” (206) and has made him an international name, at long last. Ondaatje, born in what is now Sri Lanka in 1943, immigrated to Canada from London, England in the early 1960’s. Known predominately for his works of poetry, it was not until the 1987 publication of his novel, *In the Skin of a Lion*, that the world sat up and took notice. Even so, it was primarily the literary world that recognized Ondaatje’s genius. With the publication of *The English Patient*, Ondaatje’s recognition is now much wider, and the adaptation of his book to film in 1996 has aided this. Set in World War II Italy, the story touches on the lives of four people who are impacted by the war and each other. As Barbour explains, it is a “richly and intricately woven tapestry of fragmented tales” (206) — translation: at first pass, it appears disjointed and confusing. He goes on to say, “although there is a kind of spy story hidden in the labyrinth of *The English Patient*, it is nearer the mark to say that the spy story is the labyrinth...” (210).

Ondaatje himself has a passion for history, viewing it as “a series of arcane stories about the past” (206), and he has “always been fascinated by movies” (4), even directing small documentaries from time to time. It seems natural, then, that an adaptation of *The English Patient* to film would be a logical progression. If we agree with Louis Giannetti’s assessment that a film title is symbolic and is “meant to embody the central concept behind a movie” (Giannetti 387), as well as his belief that a faithful movie adaptation will remain “as close to the spirit of the original as possible...preserv(ing) much of the novel’s plot structure, its major events, and most of the important characters” (388), the film version of *The English Patient* satisfies both.

The novel itself is 302 pages, one-third of which are stridently devoted to the history and story which belongs to the English patient; the remainder focuses elsewhere. The *book* is primarily a story of Hana, an Army nurse from Toronto, who cares for the English patient at the

end of World War II, and her love relationship with Kip, the sapper, a “military engineer who detected and disarmed mines” (Ondaatje 273). Lesser attention is given to the stories of the three other main characters — the English patient; Caravaggio, the thief; and Kip himself. The *film*, true to its title, alters this focus, making the English patient central, and relegating Hana, Kip, and Caravaggio into the background as supporting story lines. Winner of nine Academy Awards, including best picture, best supporting actress, best director, best cinematography, costume and sound (*World Almanac* 331), the adaptation of this work from novel to film attests to Giannetti’s comment that “cinematic form inevitably alters the content of the literary original” (Giannetti 389). Let us examine the faithfulness of this adaptation.

Like its movie counterpart, the title of the book leads one to believe that what follows is a story about a certain “English patient.” Thus, there is some intellectual dissonance while reading, when one realizes the main character of the book is Hana, not her patient. It is Hana’s thoughts, feelings, actions, and losses we repeatedly see and experience throughout the book. It is Hana for whom we are concerned. From the first sentence, “She stands up in the garden where she has been working” (3), to the last pages, where we read, “she, at even this age, thirty-four, has not found her own company” (301), Hana is omnipresent. But to cast aspersions on the book’s title for its apparent deception fails to give it due credit for the significance to Hana’s life. It is, after all, the English patient who sustains her and gives her a kind of hope — even as he lies *hopeless*. It is the English patient who becomes the focus of all Hana’s emotional, psychological and nursing efforts. It is the English patient who keeps *her* alive:

Coming out of what had happened to her during the war, she drew her own few rules to herself. She would not be ordered again or carry out duties for the greater good. She would care only for the burned patient. She would read to him and bathe him and give him his doses of morphine. (14)

The English patient, likewise, is impacted by the other characters: Hana cares for him; Kip shares with him; and Caravaggio wants to kill him. The thoughts, feelings, and actions of all the characters are commingled and jux-

tailed in such a way to give credence to this “tapestry of fragmented tales” (Barbour 206). In spite of this interconnection, there is very little actual “dialogue” in the book from the four main characters. Most of the time, the omniscient narrator speaks for them by verbalizing their thoughts, as in this example of the English patient:

“I fell burning into the desert. They found my body and made me a boat of sticks and dragged me across the desert...I flew down and the sand itself caught fire. They saw me stand up naked out of it. The leather helmet on my head in flames....The Bedouin knew about fire. They knew about planes that since 1939 had been falling out of the sky.” (5)

Or, the narrator advises the reader of the characters’ emotions, as in this example, relating to Hana:

Moments before sleep are when she feels most alive, leaping across fragments of the day, bringing each moment into the bed with her like a child with schoolbooks and pencils. (35)

Explanations of characters’ personalities are also provided, as in this example of Caravaggio:

He had been a thief who refused to work with men, because he did not trust them, who talked with men but who preferred talking to women and when he began talking to women was soon caught in the nets of relationship. (47)

Furthermore, like its movie counterpart, the primary motif of the book is loss—loss of innocence; loss of love; loss of life. Early in the reading we learn of Hana’s lost innocence as a result of the war: “One night when one of the patients died she ignored all rules and took the pair of tennis shoes he had with him in his pack and put them on” (50). The tennis shoes show up repeatedly throughout the book—one of Hana’s symbolic attempts to hold on to that childhood innocence, to bring sanity to what is insane around her. At one point she draws a hopscotch board on the wood floor of one of the rooms at the Villa San Girolamo, where she cares for the English patient, “her tennis shoes skidding on the numbers” (15); alone at the Villa with the English patient after the army has left, she got out of her “nurse’s uniform, unbundled the brown print frock...and wore that with her tennis shoes” (52); she presents a mock concert of the “Marseillaise,” as “she stood up, pulled her tennis shoes off and climbed onto the table” (269).

We learn of her lost loves (“I courted one man and he died” [85]), the loss of Kip, with whom she had fallen in love (“she is aware of the line of movement Kip’s body followed out of her life. Her mind repeats it” [282]), and the loss of her father, whom she loved even more:

Nurses too became shell-shocked from the dying around them. Or from something as small as a letter...The way Hana broke in Santa Clara when an official... gave her a letter that told her of the death of her father. (41)

There is the generic loss of life, invasive and overwhelming in war: “Hello Buddy, goodbye Buddy. Caring was brief. There was a contract only until death” (51); “Soldiers were coming in with just bits of their bodies, falling in love with me for an hour and then dying” (83); “I lost the child, I mean, I had to lose it. The father was already dead” (82). And the losses suffered by the English patient himself: Madox, his long-time friend and colleague, who “walked into a church in Somerset...and committed what he believed was a holy act [suicide]” (260); and Katherine, his illicit love—“Her glare was permanent. I will be the last image she sees” (259). Carravaggio has lost both his thumbs, and Kip ultimately loses Hana. Losses occur everywhere, for everyone. The way of war; the way of life; the way of the literary and cinematic productions.

The film presentation of the novel is a more chronological, succinct story line. True to form as a “faithful” adaptation, it captures the spirit of the book while retaining the plot, major events, and most important characters. The stage is set for the flashback format of the film by lines that appear early in the book: “There are stories the man recites quietly into the room which slip from level to level like a hawk” (4), and come from “that well of memory he kept plunging into during those months before he died” (4). A cinematic move toward the English patient’s journal, or a close-up shot of him lying in bed, cues viewers that more of this story is about to unfold in flashback form.

Only a few significant differences between book and movie are evident. The book tells us the English patient, whose name we eventually learn is Count Ladislav Almasy (pronounced All-mosh-e), is “fifteen years older than she” (i.e. Katherine, wife of one of the other men

on the desert expedition, who becomes his lover) (230); and the Caravaggio character is not a stranger to Hana, as it appears in the movie, but rather, someone who “had known her and her father in Toronto before the war” (40). The ways in which these characters are cast in the film version—Almasy and his lover as approximately the same age, and Caravaggio as a more sinister, unknown quantity—probably made for better box office receipts. Additionally, one component of the relationship between Almasy and Katherine that is not shown in the movie version is the *violence* between these two people. The book tells of:

A list of wounds. The various colours of the bruise... the plate...she broke across his head, the blood rising up into the straw hair. The fork that entered the back of his shoulder....He would meet her in public with bruises or a bandaged head and explain about the taxi jerking to a halt so that he had hit the open side window. (153, 154)

There is a scene in the movie in which Katherine hits Almasy, but it does not appear as violence, per se, nor does it give the impression that a pattern of violence is part of their relationship. Within the context of the resulting on-screen sexual passion, it looks only as intense desire gone awry. Additionally, the book speaks of the burned English patient as a “black body...beyond purple” (3), not white and looking as if several unsuccessful skin grafts had been made to him, as in the film.

These changes notwithstanding, the film follows the book closely. Scenes are out of sequence and slightly varied; that is, the dialogue taken from the book appears in a scene, but that scene is not necessarily identical to the time and place given it in the book. Most of the film dialogue is between Almasy and Katherine; most of the book dialogue is from Hana as she interacts with the other three main characters. The following snippets of conversation are examples that can be found, verbatim, in both book and film:

- (1) Almasy: “What do you hate most?”
Katherine: “A lie. And you?”
Almasy: “Ownership. When you leave me, forget me.” (152)

- (2) Almasy: "I just want you to know, I don't miss you yet."
 Katherine: "You will." (158)
- (3) Almasy: "Madox, what is the name of that hollow at the base of a woman's neck? At the front. Here."
 Madox: "Pull yourself together." (162)

The film also has the advantage of transition shots that take the viewer smoothly through the story. The book does not offer such easy transfer from chapter to chapter, nor even within some chapters, and leaves the reader to determine to what time and place the author has now moved. One such transition scene early in the film takes us from Hana giving blood in an Army tent hospital with all its tubes and bottles; → an Arabian medicine man in the desert, yoked with bottles of mysterious elixirs, clinking as he walks; → the tending of the English patient with desert medicines being placed on his burned face. Another extensive but smooth transition is the scene of the desert expedition rolling along, while Katherine, inside the cab with Almasy, sings "Jelly Roll Blues"; → an Arab facing the mountains and chanting to Allah at prayer time; → coming upon the lost mountain range for which the expedition was searching; → finding a cave in those mountains with markings of swimmers on the walls; → a shot of Katherine drawing with a brush. The shot at the very start of the film shows a brush drawing these same markings. We are led full circle, finally, to an understanding of what we initially saw. The flashback format makes transitions between scenes easy and believable.

The other cinematic techniques of the film—long and medium shots for exposition; close-up shots for emotional effect; and a great musical score which races from dramatic to sad and slow—all combine nicely to make this a memorable film faithfully adapted to its literary counterpart.

The best of both worlds, Michael Ondaatje's novel and Anthony Minghella's film intersect, combine, mingle, and highlight the losses of life. Both are award-winning productions, worthy of a reader's time and a moviegoer's ticket price.

Works Cited

- Barbour, Douglas. *Michael Ondaatje*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.
- Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 7th ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1996.
- Ondaatje, Michael. *The English Patient*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- World Almanac and Book of Facts 1998*. Mahwah, New Jersey: K-III Reference Corp.

Evaluation: *Jennifer captures the essence of both the novel and its film adaptation when she writes of ways each medium successfully and uniquely evokes the theme of loss.*

Memories

Hope Marquardt
Course: English 102
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:
Write in the voice of a literary character.

I believe I knew Miss Emily better than anyone. After all, I knew enough to finally purge every memory of what was really her, in the best way I knew how—forever. And when I unburden my soul of these haunting memories, maybe then she will finally have peace for herself. Anyone could confront her legacy a hundred times and still not come close to understanding her. Her life was a puzzle, solvable only by her alone.

I would hang on her every word when we would have a conversation. If I were so inclined, I could repeat our conversations to you, word for word. For when Miss Emily spoke, it was pure captivation. I should like to correct myself on the use of the term, “conversation.” I never really said much to Miss Emily. It wasn’t my place. But, I understood her, and she had no doubt of that. Therefore, when she felt inclined to tell me yet another wonderfully true secret, believe me, I heard it. You see, it’s very difficult to speak to someone who isn’t listening. Miss Emily knew that. Miss Emily lived by that.

I believe there comes a time in such a situation of one’s life when the only thing left to do is be. Simply be. That is what Miss Emily chose to do. When her life just couldn’t find that particular thing to make her really live, another part of her took over, and that is how she lived. She was the only self that was possible, and, if you ask me, I’d have to give her great credit for surviving while the battle went on.

On a particular day, I observed Miss Emily without her even knowing it. My chores waited until the following day. As the earliest morning sun began to spread across the tops of the trees, Miss Emily sat in the window seat, maybe looking. There was complete silence in the old house, with the exception of the distant rumble of the impending storm. She stayed there, in that position, for hours. It wasn’t until late afternoon that she removed herself from that spot. She went into a royal blue room, what used to be a sitting room, and began gingerly caressing the tiny, delicate pieces of china that had once been painted by her own hand. I’ll tell you, she did this for another several hours, and I know what she was thinking as she did this. It was after this time that I heard her call out to me. Since she didn’t know that I was observing her, I took a moment to respond, and when I did come to her, I know this was my opportunity to learn more about this lovely, lonely lady.

I believe that evening out conversation may have been a bit shorter than usual. I believe sometimes Miss Emily just couldn’t find the words. Or, maybe she just couldn’t speak them. Nonetheless, I braved myself to look directly to Miss Emily’s face, into her eyes. I was never so amazed in my life. I saw such an incredible amount of both pain and wisdom, and so many other things that can’t be explained. These things I saw in a split second before Miss Emily quickly turned away. She knew. And it would be alright, better than just alright. With a heavy sigh that seemed to expel maybe a tiny portion of her burden, I could see her drift into a kind of serenity as she ascended the stairs.

So, when I placed the beautifully bound book—her diary—into the hungry flames, I was sure this was the only thing to do. For no one could ever begin to understand the words inside. Those words turned into soft, billowing smoke, reaching toward the sky, reaching toward home.

Evaluation: Hope writes in the voice of Tobe, the live-in servant in Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily.” In Hope’s rendition, Tobe possesses a (surprisingly?) literate voice, and he also features an empathic view toward his deeply troubled employer (Emily). This is, in my opinion, a moving, creative, very well-written response that exhibits a deep familiarity with Faulkner’s story.

The Decision

Olga Matz

Course: English 101
Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay which focuses on an incident which helped you mature or change in some important way.

More than nine years have passed, but I remember the day very clearly. On that day, I finally realized and made up my mind that I had to do something with my life.

The morning of that May Day in Russia was typical. By lunchtime I ended up in downtown Moscow. The streets were crowded as usual, but the people did not bother me. I walked along, enjoying the sunny and warm weather, so perfect for the time of year. With fifteen minutes before my dentist's appointment, I looked forward to a cup of coffee. I walked into a tiny café on a street near Gorky Avenue. Brightly lit by the sun, it was a very ordinary place. The few tables, covered with immaculately clean tablecloths, were practically all taken. The waiter seated me at a small, already occupied, table for two. After sitting down, I ordered a cup of coffee, leaned back, and looked around. A man sitting in the other chair across from me was having his lunch. In his late forties, with thinning blond hair and bright blue eyes, he had a respectful appearance, was well dressed, and gave the impression of a well-mannered person. Suddenly, the man took a few deep gulps, lit himself a cigarette, and began staring strangely at me. I saw something in his face and his stare that my deeply rooted woman's instinct warned me about.

"Look who is here," he exclaimed with affection. I looked cautiously at him, but his eyes met mine bravely. For a moment, he paused. "Don't look at me, Jew," he

continued. "When our country's having its most difficult times, that's when you are happy. No Jew can be trusted. But we know what to do with all of you. Hitler did not finish his job." He was eager to talk, and he went forward to crack jokes about the Jews. There was an enormous expression of hostility and anger in his eyes, and, at the same time, an expression of excitement.

What an ugly picture I was watching. He reminded me too much of the horrors I had read in the books. At once I felt the color come to my cheeks. Filled with a sense of panic, I sat quietly and motionlessly for a moment. A sharp pain tore through my heart. My lips trembled. I had no tears, but I began to carefully avoid his eyes, because there was so much hate in them and so much pain in mine. My thoughts turned immediately to my mother and her stories about how she, as a child, had survived the pogroms in the Ukraine after the Revolution and, later, as a grown-up woman, the Holocaust during World War II. But forty members of her family were not that lucky, and Nazis buried them alive in June of 1941.

People around me seemed a little embarrassed, but nobody interrupted him. I felt humiliated and helpless. I was indeed in a hostile place without friends. I ran through the door, stood there for a couple of minutes, and then walked down to the corner and took the bus. Half an hour later, I was home. I felt a hysterical weakness. There was no justice for me in this country. Later that night I woke up, frightened, certain I had heard the man's voice again.

My entire life I had thought that Russia was the only place in the world to live. Russia had been my home, but that day I decided to leave the country of my birth, youth, and marriage—the country where I had conceived two children and buried two parents. One year later, I emigrated to the United State of America.

Evaluation: *Olga's poignant recollection of an incident which took place some years ago in a Moscow restaurant gives concrete reality to ideas and issues which are commonly discussed more abstractly. This essay is particularly remarkable since the writer, at the time of the incident, lived in Russia and knew very little English.*

Considering Children?

Start Earlier, Finish Earlier!

Mary Jo Mayerck
Course: English 101
Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:
*Persuade us to accept a claim about which
you have considerable conviction.*

The following scenes are based on actual conversations I have had with high school friends.

Flashback, ten years ago. The scene is a local bar:

"Hey, you guys made it! Found a babysitter this time, huh?"

*"Yeah, and none of the kids got sick at the last minute either—
what a miracle!"*

Present day. Girl's night out:

*"I wish my kids were old enough to drive themselves back and
forth to school and activities and friends' houses; I'm ready to put
the meter in my car and start charging for rides."*

*"It really does free up a lot of time. I have time now to do stuff
for myself, like taking classes at Harper, and even simple things
like actually reading a whole magazine at one sitting."*

The future, ten years from now. Telephone conversation:

*"You two just got back from a weekend away! Where are you
going this time? We'd join you but you know how it is to have
teenagers; for them to go anywhere with their parents would be
the ultimate in boredom, and we certainly can't leave them home
alone for a weekend!"*

"I remember those days. Hang in there, they'll be over soon!"

As this fictional dialogue suggests, the events of my life have followed quite a different course than that of my peers. While in young adulthood, I made one major decision that determined that alternate course: I decided to begin having children while I was still in my twenties. Over the years, there were many times when I questioned and even regretted that choice. But now when I weigh the pros and cons, I believe my decision was a good one. And I would suggest that all young couples consider the now radical idea of starting a family when they are in their twenties, rather than postponing this part of their lives until later.

Ten years ago, unlike most of my peers, I was changing diapers, chasing preschoolers, and going to T-ball games. My husband and I, in our twenties, were young and energetic enough to deal with the challenges of having young children around the house without exhausting ourselves or our fun-loving attitude. Many of my friends, who waited until their mid-to-late thirties to begin a family, now have toddlers and children in elementary school. They feel the physical demands of parenting young children much more than we did.

When kids reach the older child/preteen years, their worlds expand and so, too, the physical demands on parents expand. These are some of the busiest years of a child's life; I have survived endless baseball practices and games, music lessons, trips to the mall, homework assignments and school functions, all of which required one or both parents to be involved. Many of my peers are just now beginning to be swept up in the whirlwind of activities of this age group. They have little time or energy to indulge in any interests of their own and can only rarely break away for a dinner out with friends.

In my household, the children have advanced to their teenage years; they are constantly planning outings with their friends; they are newly licensed or soon-to-be licensed drivers; they are beginning to think of post-high school options. They need to be as closely monitored as younger children. But since the energy expended by parents is less physical and time consuming and more mental at this stage in a child's life, the parents are able to pursue other interests and continue their education at a stage in their own lives when they can truly appreciate that opportunity. Many in my age group did not take seriously the

chance to attend college after high school; we either dropped out or used the college years as a chance to further our social skills. Some who did earn a bachelor's or master's degree worked for a few years, and are now home raising young children. I was one of the few who had children while still in my twenties and now finally have another opportunity to continue my education. I bring to my studies life experience, appreciation, and attentiveness that were absent twenty years ago. Other advantages of this delayed educational fulfillment directly involve my kids: we help each other with homework; we cheer each other for good grades; we motivate each other to continue learning at any age.

Another beneficial consequence for couples who begin having children earlier is that the children will be more likely to have a longer and closer relationship with their grandparents. And if we look further into the future, these couples will be more likely to have the same relationship with their own grandchildren. In my own family, my parents (who had all five of their children before age 35) have been able to join us on family vacations and keep up with the kids in activities such as mountain climbing, biking, and canoeing. My three children have wonderful memories of those experiences with their grandparents. I hope to be able to do the same with my grandchildren; even if my oldest waits until age 30 to have children, I'll only be 51!

A more serious issue in favor of having children before age 35 involves the risk factors of pregnancy and childbirth, all clearly pointed out by The Johns Hopkins University in an electronic posting titled, "Pregnancy After 35." Women waiting until after 35 to become pregnant may have a difficult time conceiving since there is a general decrease in fertility beginning in the early thirties, and there is a higher risk of miscarriage than for women aged 20 to 35 years. During pregnancy, women over 35 have an increased risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes, placental and bleeding problems, and cardiovascular problems. When the time comes to deliver the baby, first-time mothers over age 30 typically have harder labor with more fetal distress and are more than twice as likely as younger women to deliver by cesarean section. And finally, pregnancies of older women have a much higher risk of producing babies with genetic disorders, most commonly Down Syndrome. The chance of having a

child with Down Syndrome increases steadily from one in 1,250 at age 25 to one in 106 at age 40. One-fourth of cases of Down Syndrome are attributed to the advanced age of the baby's father, making this a consideration for dads-to-be also. Obviously, these should be serious considerations for couples planning their families.

The most compelling argument against couples beginning their families before age thirty is the financial aspect. My husband and I sometimes struggle to and sometimes simply cannot provide our children with non-essential items they want. It may have been much more practical for both of us, after completing college, to devote our time and energy to earning as much money as we could to prepare financially for raising a family. I have to agree that it is much easier to save for a house and contribute to long-range savings plans when there are no expenses involving children to account for. But in my observations, some parents carry this thinking too far. Does a newborn baby really need a home with four bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths, and a three-car garage? Does a toddler really need designer duds and a pint-size electric-powered SUV? And do elementary school age children really need all the latest state-of-the-art video games and birthday parties at the arcade with fifty of their closest friends? I think it might be good for kids these days to experience a world with financial limits; it would temper their exposure to the negative influences of advanced technology, encourage more imaginative and physically active play, and force them to take a look at the most natural things in the world around them.

I have experienced one other negative effect from my choice to have children earlier than have my high school friends. Because our lives were progressing on such different paths, there were times over the years, especially when we were in our twenties, when I felt we could not relate to each other; my peers and I were essentially living on two separate planets. But we remained friends, and now they understand what I was doing and I understand what they are going through. The mutual recognition of parental pitfalls makes for some interesting and amusing discussion on our occasional, much-needed, kid-free outings.

The decision to commit to a relationship and have children is, of course, one that requires much thought and planning. To enter into a marriage and begin a family too soon could be disastrous for a young adult; for committed

Considering Children? Start Earlier, Finish Earlier!

couples, delaying this stage of life could also produce unfavorable consequences. I believe that for parents and children alike, the personal, developmental, familial, and physical benefits of having children before age 35 outweigh the economic challenges and minor social frustrations. I would recommend that young people give this idea serious consideration when planning their future.

Works Cited

"Pregnancy After 35." February 1997. The Johns Hopkins University. 11 May 1999.
<<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH>>

Evaluation: *This essay swims upstream against the contemporary current; it is marked by economical, varied sentences, plain words, and a clear voice.*

“To Make a Poet Black, and Bid Him Sing!”

An Analysis of Countee Cullen’s Poem “Yet Do I Marvel”

Erin Mayoi

Course: Literature 105r
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

Write a good paper that fully addresses a poem.

Countee Cullen was a brilliant poet of the Harlem Renaissance, a remarkable period of creativity for black writers, poets, and artists. During the Harlem Renaissance, many blacks suffered at the hands of racism and injustice. In 1920, fifty-three black Americans were lynched; on June 1, 1921, a race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma ended the lives of twenty-one African-Americans; and on January 26, 1922, an anti-lynching bill was killed by a filibuster in the U.S. Senate (Franklin and Moss 352, 355). During this time, many African-American artists used their mediums to communicate the pain of their people. Cullen was successful as a black poet in a field that was dominated by whites. Cullen strictly followed traditional standards of English verse to prove that an African-American poet could accomplish what white writers had in the past, and the pain that he communicated through the written word helped to move a nation a little closer to equity.

Unlike the case with other poets of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Langston Hughes, blues and jazz did not heavily influence Cullen’s poetry. Even though

Cullen did not want to be labeled as a race-interested writer, however, racial undertones *are* found throughout his poetry. Cullen himself complained, “I find that I am actuated by a strong sense of race consciousness. This grows upon me, I find, as I grow older, and although I struggle against it, it colors my writing, I fear, in spite of everything I do” (qtd. in Gates 1303). “Yet I Do I Marvel” is a symbiotic union of Cullen’s strict adherence to form and his race consciousness.

“Yet Do I Marvel” is a Shakespearean sonnet with a fixed meter and rhyme scheme. No doubt Cullen chose that format for his poem to prove that African-Americans were capable of authoring disciplined literature with a great deal of accuracy. Cullen’s success in literature is demonstrated through the many awards he received in his lifetime, such as the Harmon Foundation Literary Award in 1927 and the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1928. Even though Cullen’s career suffered after a divorce from a two-month marriage to Nina Yolande DuBois, daughter of W. E. B. DuBois, he remained one of the most celebrated African-American poets.

The tone in “Yet Do I Marvel” suggests sarcasm on the part of Cullen. Cullen begins the poem with “I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind” (405). There is an obvious sarcasm here, partly because the second-to-last and last lines question, “Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: / To make a poet black, and bid him sing!” (406). Cullen is saying toward the end of the poem that he questions or wonders why a God who is supposed to be “well-meaning, kind” would allow for such pain and anguish to exist. Cullen is questioning and demanding an answer from God concerning his own struggles as an African-American trying to survive in a white-dominated society.

In the second and third lines, Cullen continues his quest for answers to the plight of African-Americans. Cullen questions God as to why “The little buried mole continues blind” (405). The mole is a symbol of the African-American society and Cullen himself in their struggle to find answers. African-Americans wander through the world, sometimes underground like the mole in Cullen’s poem, because they are forced to live in their own “inferior” world. The white society has given the “moles” very little room to wander and very few tools with which to dig their way out. The white-dominated

society has taken sight from the "moles" because it wants to ensure that they never do find their way out. To "see" is to "know"; Cullen, then, might be equating sight with knowledge and thereby referencing the fact that whites—through segregation and separate schools—wish to keep blacks as blind and as ignorant as moles, to deny them the chance to develop their intellects and rise through society's ranks. Throughout the poem, Cullen addresses God personally and demands answers to his many questions.

Cullen uses Greek mythology to better define his perception of African-Americans' struggle within society. Cullen demands that God "Make plain the reason tortured Tantalus / Is baited by the fickle fruit" (405). Tantalus, a figure in Greek mythology, was punished after death by being set in front of a pool of water that retreated when he stooped to drink and trees whose branches pulled away whenever he reached for their fruit. Cullen also references Sisyphus (another Greek mythological character), whose punishment was to roll a boulder uphill that forever rolled back upon him, prompting him to commence rolling it upward again and again, without end. Both mythological figures are symbols of African-American suffering. Both Sisyphus and Tantalus endure a kind of meaningless suffering that has no end and no justified purpose. Cullen knows that there exists no justification for why his people suffer (for color, of course, is only "skin deep" and therefore does not provide adequate grounds for persecution), and he places the blame for such senselessness on God.

Cullen describes the journey of blacks as "struggl[ing] up a never-ending stair" (405). In Cullen's career, he was continuously climbing and perhaps felt that he never reached a destination. Cullen may be saying here that blacks are forced to climb without stopping to take a breath or without turning around, so that the world does not perceive a sign of weakness. In other words, it is a necessity for them to climb always and never give up in order to survive in the world and within their own minds. In the poem "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes, Cullen's contemporary, Hughes' character preaches, "I'se been a climbing on / ...rAnd sometimes going in the dark / .rSo boy, don't you turn back / Don't you set down on those steps / 'Cause you'll find it's kinder hard" (Hughes 1255). Despite the difference in

style, Hughes and Cullen are speaking the same language in these poems.

Langston Hughes, in "Mother to Son," is sending a message to the African-American community, a message of hope in the midst of despair, endurance in the face of brutality and fatigue. He is telling his people to keep climbing the stair and overcome the obstacles that stand in the way. The narrator in the poem embarks on a journey similar to one of the mole. She travels "sometimes going in the dark" (Hughes 1255). Like the mole, she must go on in the dark in search of her freedom from oppression and hate. She realizes that if she stops, the world may sense her weakness and destroy her. In order to survive, she must continue to climb without setting down on the hard steps, just as the mole must continue to wander blindly through the world.

Cullen, though, appears somewhat less optimistic about the fruits of hope and endurance. While Hughes' sagacious female narrator preaches perseverance to her weary son, Cullen's narrator cannot locate the same brand of spirit and is forced to question the benevolence of God, over and over. Cullen attempts to answer some of his own questions by saying, "Inscrutable His ways are, and immune / To catechism by a mind too strewn / With petty cares to slightly understand" (405-406). He implies that God is deliberate in his ways and completely incapable of understanding or being understood. Cullen is again questioning God's agenda and motivation for ignoring the cries of his black children. Cullen wonders how a God who elevates himself to a level where he can no longer see the ways of the world could possibly understand or sympathize with his pain.

Cullen's childhood may have laid the roots for his disdain for religion and his failure to see religion as a provider of answers for African-Americans. Cullen described his upbringing by a pastor of the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem as "reconciling a Christian upbringing with a pagan inclination" (Gates 1303). Perhaps Cullen did not see his foster parents' lives improve due to their religious beliefs; in Cullen's eyes, his foster parents perhaps remained victimized by a cruel and "inscrutable" world. In any case, Cullen wonders "What awful brain compels His awful hand" (406). Here, Cullen conjures up an image of God painting the

world or writing history, and since racism has existed since the birth of mankind, its origins must (in Cullen's view) lie with God's creation of the world. Cullen suggests that perhaps God is not inherently good, but too concerned with "petty cares" and selfish motives that he has failed to recognize the chaotic and evil ways of the world.

In his questioning of God, Cullen may have been alienating himself from the black community, which was often intensely spiritual and religious. He may have been trying to wake his black audience from their fantasy world in which God is too often an invisible panacea, an answer who never answers. Perhaps Cullen believes that blacks are taking false comfort and relying on a God who does not have the answers and who may not even care about their problems. Cullen could have believed that it would take such sacrilegious language to get the attention of his black audience.

In Cullen's famous last lines, he preaches a message on a lower, very personal and conversational level: "Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: / To make a poet black, and bid him sing!" (406). Cullen is in a way denouncing God and his race at the same time. Obviously, Cullen recognizes that if he were white, he would be readily accepted by the white-dominated literary world. He would not have to struggle, and he could freely stray from his rigid writing structure. He would not need to prove himself as an accomplished African-American author but just as an accomplished author. Cullen had wanted to break free from racially conscious writing and to distance himself from poets such as Langston Hughes. However, it was impossible for Cullen to remove who he was from what he wrote. So, Cullen was left with no one to blame, and he wanted God to answer a question that burned within him: "why give me this gift then make me black so that my message falls upon deaf ears?"

Cullen obviously was blessed with the special gift of a brilliant and sensitive voice, but as a black man he was given limited means with which to speak to the world. Cullen is trying to reach an audience that is by and large not interested in listening. Cullen is trying to prove his worth as an author and to raise awareness of racism and hate at the same time. The very people that he is trying to speak to, the members of white society, are unable to receive his gift and message without it being clouded by

his color. Likewise, his message to the African-American community to question God may also be ignored due to the fact that the majority of African-Americans at the time were deeply, perhaps unconsciously, religious. In his life, Cullen was unable to find answers to the questions that he posed in "Yet Do I Marvel," as is evidenced by the fury of the Civil Rights-related incidents of the fifties and sixties. Cullen's poem provides queries, not conclusions; his words live on today as we ask questions, seek solutions, endure.

Works Cited

- Cullen, Countee. "Yet Do I Marvel." *Poetry: An Introduction*. Ed. Michael Meyer. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford Books, 1998. 405-06.
- Franklin, John Hope, and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. *From Slavery to Freedom*. 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr., and Nellie McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*. New York: Norton, 1997. 1303-05.
- Hughes, Langston. "Mother to Son." *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates and Nellie McKay. New York: Norton, 1997. 1254-55.

Evaluation: *Excellent essay!*

Erin is a wonderful student, as this paper shows. I like Erin's frank writing style; I especially appreciate her willingness to weave a little history into her analysis of Cullen's poem. Her paper might please a theologian, a historian, and an English teacher seeking a wise discussion of literature.

Unstuck in Medium: The Translation of Kurt Vonnegut From Novel to Film

Alan E. Minarik

Course: Literature 110

Instructor: Nancy L. Davis

Assignment:

*Write a comparative analysis of a
novel and its film adaptation.*

Translating works of literature to film is always a daunting challenge. The complexity of the written work often creates hurdles that filmmakers have to be very careful about leaping, and few authors' works contain more complex ideas than those of Kurt Vonnegut. Although the notion of making movies from his novels has been approached many times, only a select few have actually made it to the screen. Of those few, the most prominent are *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Mother Night*. These works, two of Vonnegut's most powerful, also became the most interesting film interpretations made from his writings. However, the translations meet varying degrees of success. Whereas *Mother Night*, a more straightforward novel to begin with, is fairly successfully recreated on film, *Slaughterhouse Five* often falls short when trying to match the grandeur of the original story.

Slaughterhouse Five is a novel of many ideas, most of which were only loosely captured in the film. One that was more successfully brought out both in the book and the movie is this, put into words in the novel by the aliens from Tralfamadore: "[O]ne thing Earthlings might learn to do, if they tried hard enough: Ignore the awful times, and concentrate on the good ones" (*Slaughter* 112). This is an idea we see represented time and again by the actions of Billy Pilgrim; after all, it was to him that the Tralfamadoreans expressed the idea. Whatever moments Billy finds himself in when unstuck in time, it never seems to stay in his mind very long as an unpleasant situation. Rather, he loses himself in an almost mindless daze through the hard parts and begins to assert his marginal personality only when things start getting more peaceful. Although it might be believed that he acts this way out of ignorance, it seems more likely that he is living, by choice, a notion that the Tralfamadoreans—ironically, choiceless beings themselves—introduced to him.

The notion of free will plays into *Slaughterhouse Five*, as does the inevitability of time and fate. Although the two are occasionally played at odds with each other, there are also many moments where they are shown to complement each other vividly. An example of this latter concept can be seen in the charter plane crash of which Billy Pilgrim is the sole survivor. Billy, having come unstuck in time, "knew it was going to crash, but he didn't want to make a fool of himself by saying so" (146).

Had he not chosen inaction, the “inevitable” plane crash might have been avoided.

Or it might not have. For, as we see in the movie, the exact opposite choice is made; Billy, knowing the future, attempts to prevent it—he darts about insisting the plane is going to crash in twenty-five minutes. In the unalterable way of fate, though, the crash still occurs, and Billy is still left as the sole survivor. Based in part on this example, we can see that the film is not only an interpretation of Vonnegut’s novel, but also a companion piece. Where one story zigs, the other zags, only to wind up at the same place eventually. In the book, Roland Weary and Paul Lazzaro meet on a boxcar as prisoners of war; in the movie, they have already met when a dazed and wandering Billy joins them. In one, Edgar Derby finds a teapot in the wreckage of Dresden; in the other, it’s a statuette. In the book, Billy dies in Chicago; in the movie, he dies in Philadelphia. Regardless, Weary still dies in Lazzaro’s arms, and Lazzaro swears revenge on Billy; Derby still gets executed for theft; Lazzaro still pulls the trigger that takes Billy’s life. And so on.

This game of point and counterpoint doesn’t necessarily provide greater understanding, though. Showing a scene from the book in a different context, or no context at all, leaves the viewer with a different interpretation of events than the reader has. “How much is too much” then becomes the question at hand. The movie plays fast and loose with the timeline of a story that is already playing fast and loose with itself. Events which Vonnegut reserves for the end of his novel are thrust in a seemingly haphazard manner within the first half-hour of the movie. Other events, which Vonnegut uses to show greater insight into who Billy Pilgrim is, are only loosely translated and left without proper explanation. For example, the notion of “sink or swim”—which Billy is confronted with at a young age in his swimming lesson—is barely brushed upon in the movie; his jump to his swimming lesson is still included, but its relevance to his life is hidden almost to the point of obscurity. The book, by contrast, makes it much more clear that this is an event which shaped Billy’s life; it taught him that the risk with extreme choices lies with people possibly choosing the wrong way.

Slaughterhouse Five, in both its novel and movie forms,

is not so much a story as it is a mosaic, a patchwork quilt of pieces and scenes from Billy Pilgrim’s life that makes most sense when looked at as a whole. The story begins well after it has already started, and the ending comes in around the middle. And although the film does occasionally present the connections logically and believably, it more often misses the tangents that Vonnegut uses to thread this quilt together.

It could be said that *Mother Night*, in its novel form, follows a similar theme of tangential storytelling: another example of a piecemeal story, this time told not as the life of someone unstuck in time, but as the confessions of a man looking back from the end of his life. Just as in *Slaughterhouse Five*, the story often jumps from being in New York 1963 one paragraph to Germany 1945 the next. But whereas the movie of *Slaughterhouse Five* struggles to fit in some of the nonlinear connections Vonnegut has made, the movie of *Mother Night* takes the much easier approach: it ignores them. The story is, instead, restructured to be told progressively, with each moment following both logically and temporally from the one before. This way, the filmmakers can set their focus on more clearly relating Vonnegut’s moral from *Mother Night*, specifically: “We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be” (*Mothers*).

To a certain extent, every sympathetic character in *Mother Night* is pretending to be someone else; each wears a mask that hides a different self underneath. The most transparent of these masks is Howard W. Campbell, Jr.’s. Acting as the narrator of this story, Campbell makes sure that, although we do see what his mask is, we also see the person he believes he is—the person he so *wants* to be. Try as he might, though, he can’t escape this story’s moral; through his broadcasts, because he so thoroughly acted the part of a Nazi, he became just as much—if not more so—Howard W. Campbell, Jr., propagandist for Nazi Germany as he was Howard W. Campbell, Jr., American spy.

Indeed, Campbell is reminded often—both by others and himself—that he presented to others the strongest representation of Hitler’s agenda. His father-in-law tells him, when they meet towards the end of the war, that “almost all the ideas that I hold now, that make me

unashamed ... as a Nazi, came not from Hitler, not from Goebbels, not from Himmler—but from you” (81). To his own culpability, Campbell adds that an anti-Semitic prayer offered by the defrocked Father Keeley was “a paraphrase of a satiric poem I had composed and delivered,” and that another man’s claims about the Pope being Jewish and the Vatican being held in mortgage by the Jews were variants on his own inventions (64).

Yet, despite all these obvious signs of actions, Campbell still lies to himself about his true nature. This self-deluding nature is one that Vonnegut comments on in his introduction to the book: “To say that he was a playwright is to offer an even harsher warning to the reader, for no one is a better liar than a man who has warped lives and passions onto something as grotesquely artificial as a stage” (ix). The lies he tells himself, though, may not be as convincing as he had hoped; he is, in fact, described as “the only man ... who has a bad conscience about what he did in the war. Everybody else ... is sure a good man could not have acted in any other way” (24). From this it is obvious that he is coming to terms with who he actually is, and he realizes that he must be held accountable for his actions. This is why, when he finally receives word from Frank Wirtanen—the spy who enlisted his aid in the first place—of his willingness to tell the whole truth about Campbell’s role in the war, Campbell decides to “hang Howard W. Campbell, Jr., for crimes against himself” (192). The possibility of his freedom is no longer palatable to him; he has finally come to realize that he must pay for his actions.

Campbell’s self-deluding mask is melted away slowly in the novel; piece by piece, bits of it are removed throughout the course of the novel until he is left with nothing but himself at the end. This is an idea that is will mirrored in the movie. But whereas in the book we find this happening through the words that Vonnegut has chosen, on the screen we see it happening through the masterful performance of Nick Nolte. In the beginning, Nolte presents Campbell as a man sure of himself, strong in the sense of his own righteousness and goodness. Once he has taken on the challenge presented to him by Wirtanen, Campbell is seen as smug, amused by himself and the convincing performance he has made. This is a man whose mask is fully in place—the blinders

are on, and he can see nothing more than what he wants to see.

All this changes when he is presented with the news of his wife’s death. Suddenly, cracks start appearing in his façade; the first consequences of his actions have hit home. It is through these cracks that the first hint of who he really sees himself as slip out. In a brilliant moment which did not appear in the book, Campbell slips while reading of his wife’s death at the hands of “enemy fire,” wondering why the Germans—his secret enemies, but his mask’s allies—would want his Helga dead. It is the bewildered soldier who delivered the message that reminds Campbell that it was by *enemy* fire, meaning the Russians, that she died. And with that reminder, the now-shattered mask is affixed back into place.

Once the damage has been done, however, Campbell can never return to the comfortable lie he had lived in before. He becomes a hollow shell following through on the momentum his act has created. When confronted with the hanged bodies of various war criminals, he observes to himself merely that they look peaceful; when he is given his freedom at the end of the war, he responds with apathy as to what becomes of him. His life becomes so empty that even when the true nature of his companions—George Kraft/Iona Potapove and Helga/Resi Noth—are revealed, he responds with only the briefest hint of passion before he returns to the automation that has become his life. Only now, having lost those last two strands of humanity, Campbell is now a true machine, living as little as possible. When he breaks down and stands motionless in the middle of the sidewalk, Nolte’s performance shows convincingly that he truly has no sense of where or why he should be. It is only a passing police officer’s comment that he should go home that gets him moving at all.

And this, in turn, brings the story to its end, and by that back to the beginning of the movie. Now clear is the road Campbell took to become the apathetic, listless prisoner of Israel. So, too, it is obvious why Campbell took to pursuing his memoirs as thoroughly and enthusiastically as he did; he was in the process of re-evaluating his life, to see if he could figure out, at last, who he truly was. It is through that re-evaluation and eventual enlightenment that he shows us he realizes who he has

become. Thus, the movie successfully brings us to the same ending as the book, providing strong justification visually for what Vonnegut created textually.

Kurt Vonnegut is a man who has left his readers with much to think about through the many years he has been writing. But of all the messages he has had to share, *Mother Night* and *Slaughterhouse Five* bring about the most powerful: Who are we really, where are we going in life, and do we really have any say in it? And in the end, despite the occasional flaws and lapses in translation, the movies based on his works leave the audience thinking about the same things. Vonnegut himself once described the movie *Slaughterhouse Five* as the best possible adaptation of his novel; he provided similar praise to *Mother Night*. One thing is sure, though; whether reading the books, watching the movies, or doing both, there is a little more to think about after they're over.

I am a part of the part that at first was all, part of the darkness that gave birth to light, that supercilious light which now disputes with Mother Night her ancient rank and space, and yet cannot succeed; no matter how it struggles, it sticks to matter and can't get free. Light flows from substance, makes it beautiful; solids can check its path, so I hope it won't be long till light and the world's stuff are destroyed together.

— Goethe, *Faust*

Poo-tee-weet?

Works Cited

- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Mother Night*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1966.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*. New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1969.

Evaluation: *Alan has written a sophisticated essay about two challenging novels and their film adaptations. His deft analysis illustrates a keen understanding of the thematic and technical implications of each medium.*

The Brother Who Almost Was

Erin Mitmoene

Course: Speech 101

Instructor: Ms. Louise J. Perry

Assignment:

*The assignment was to write a eulogy,
a speech in praise of an individual,
an animal, an object, a concept, an institution,
a place, an activity, a time, or a period of life.*

He had a name everyone made fun of. From the moment that his name was chosen, arguments arose. His cousin Karen and I used to yell into his mother's stomach the names we wanted him to have: Adam, Seth, Michael, or Jeff. But the fact of the matter was, he was stuck with this name because his grandfather had had twenty-seven other grandkids born before him, and none with his name. Well, his grandfather's life was quickly running out of time, so it only seemed right to name him Elmer.

It was a miracle that he was even conceived. His mom has advanced endometriosis, and that makes it next to impossible for her to get pregnant. She had always wanted to have another child, but after years of trying with nothing to show for it, she all but gave up. It was at that moment in time when he decided to show up.

I remember fondly the day she told me she was pregnant. We were sitting on the living room couch on a bright and airy January morning, when she turned to me with tears in her eyes and let me in on the secret of the child growing inside her. She told me how she had already been to the doctor the day before and that he was in fact real and no longer another one of our hopeful dreams. We both cried then for him. We sobbed tears of happiness at his possible arrival.

And he was to bring with him all the possibilities of a family for his mom and his daddy, John. John had had two other children before him, but had never had a child of his own who loved him like a father needed, all because his kids lived hundreds of miles away and rarely spoke to him or let him into their lives. Elmer was going to be the child who would play ball with him, who would share birthdays with him, and who would love him. Just imagine, Little Elmer in his blue and white T-ball uniform stepping up to the plate with his bat. He gets ready to swing, but he misses the ball. We all cheer from the stands and he turns to us and gives us a quirky smile that only a little kid can give. He has to turn back to the game now, but before he does he sends a little wave our way. He was so very important to John, and John already loved him.

He meant so much to mom, too. He was a bond between her and her husband. They had been married for five years when she became pregnant with him. She so wanted to bring another child into this world with the man whom she really loved. Her first marriage was anything but a storybook romance, and it did not last. She had three kids with a man she could not live with. Little Elmer was a chance for her and her new husband to do something together through a bond of love. He was their creation and he was their shared dream. But soon that dream was to be shattered. He was not to be.

At first, the pregnancy was going well. Mom started 'eating for two' and though she was very excited, she was radiating a sort of calmness everywhere she went. The whole family was overjoyed, but you could see it more in mom than anyone.

I went with mom to the first ultrasound. Together we listened to his heartbeat. Strong and fast, it beat like a

miniature drum. We saw his head and his tiny body, but we did not know then if he was to be a boy or a girl. But that did not matter. Everyone loved him anyway.

The doctor could tell how excited I was to be able to see him, so she printed me up my own set of ultrasound pictures. I put one in my wallet that very day and have carried it with me forever since. I showed it to my sisters, my friends, and my co-workers. Who was to know that this was going to be the only time I'd ever get to see him?

Everything was normal at that first ultrasound. He was right on schedule and he was healthy. We had a family dinner for him that night to celebrate the good news. But maybe it was that we all got too cocky, or maybe it was that we had all hoped too much, because things were never as good after that. Mom began spotting, but every time she went to the doctor's, things looked normal. The doctor told us that mom had nothing to worry about. Elmer was still healthy, and he was a boy. But by May, the fourth month, something was wrong. Mom became sick. She lay in bed with a fever, and we all huddled around her. Things did not feel right to her. It had been a few days since she felt him move. I kept telling her to go to the hospital, but she would not listen to me. Finally, that coming Sunday night, she went. She and John packed up the car and left, promising us that they would call when they heard anything. They never called.

The next morning my parents woke me up at 6:30 and told me he was dead. He had died a few days before, and that's why mom had been ill. They told me he was the size of a hand. They told me his little feet looked like my mother's. They told me he already had his father's ears. They told me he had a tiny pug nose and no hair. They told me he was beautiful. I just looked at them. What could I have said? I sat there in shock, and then they left. Tears began welling up in my eyes. I could no longer keep them inside. I cried quietly until I was sleeping again.

Why? Why did he have to die? In him was all our hopes and our dreams. In him was the deepest of our loves. In him was the little boy we were supposed to have and share. Just imagine all the stories and games and laughter we would have shared. Imagine all the tickling and cartoons and baths he would have had. Imagine all the times we would have tucked him into bed. All of

these moments are lost to us in reality, but they will live on as artificial memories inside of us all.

John began putting together a baby book for Elmer. In it are the pictures of the ultrasound, the hospital bracelet they made mom wear, the little shell they used when he was baptized, the cards and little messages people sent to us after he died, and Elmer. Everything we had of him was in that book. It is all our memories bound together.

We had a memorial service for him in a few days. John did Elmer's eulogy then. It was a hard thing seeing him cry. Everyone there broke down and cried then. We loved him, and he was taken from us. But he affected all of our lives for the better, even in the short amount of time that he touched them. I dedicate this eulogy to him, my brother who almost was.

Evaluation: *What makes this writing outstanding? The writer's ability to use vivid, moving language to touch our emotions. The writer stirs within each of us images of what could have been... a lifetime of possibilities for "The Brother Who Almost Was."*

Television News: Only One Version of Reality

Hiroko Morii

Course: English 101

Instructor: Kurt Neumann

Assignment:

Write an essay in which you present an argument regarding some aspect of the effect that media have on today's society.

Today, television news, especially thirty-minute-long prime-time news, is indispensable to our lives. If we turn on the television set and tune the channel to CNN headline news or one of three big network stations, we can learn about all the significant events of the day within thirty minutes. We might think we don't need other news sources, such as newspapers, anymore. However, it is dangerous to rely on television news blindly. Although it shows us the events in the world with a lot of moving images in an orderly manner, the facts it shows us are not the entire facts, but just fragments or parts of them that people involved in the television news industry (hereinafter referred to as "news people") choose for us, the viewers. Unfortunately, we often overlook this important fact.

There seem to be two causes for our oversight. One is that news degrades our ability to think. We unconsciously stop thinking while watching newscasts: we have no time to think about each news story because we are forced to make a hurried, superficial tour of the world to catch up with the stories that change rapidly. News people usually cram in as many news stories as they can to inform us of all significant events in the world within the

limited span of time. Therefore, as Neil Postman mentioned in his essay "The News," all stories are "unconnected to each other or to any sense of a history unfolding" (80). We store those stories in our memory banks so that we can analyze, connect, classify, and evaluate them later. Only through this process can we realize that news stories show us just a part of the facts. However, we rarely have enough time to go through the process; consequently, there is slight chance of our realizing the truth held in the news.

The other cause is our impression that news always shows us truth. For this unconscious trust in news, we easily believe all broadcast stories are the entire facts. However, the truth is that what is broadcast is what news people want to show us. All news stories coming from all over the world are screened, and only the stories that those people think appeal to or interest viewers most are picked up. We watch only the news "produced" by news people. Although they know they must eliminate prejudice and selfish motives in this "producing" process, it is very difficult to give them up completely. Even if they can achieve this, what aspect of a piece of news is chosen might vary in different situations. When a big event occurs, it is usual that several reports, each of which focuses on the different aspects of the event, are sent to news stations from the spot. However, news people must decide which report they adopt because the time for broadcasting is limited. As Av Westin, the executive producer of ABC News in 1980s, says in his *Newswatch*, "television news operates on the basis of elimination rather than inclusion" (62). Then how do they choose the most appropriate report (or reports)? In other words, how are news stories produced?

Let us suppose that a chemical plant exploded, and the explosion killed and injured a lot of workers. One report might feature the burning plant, and the other might show the scene of rescued workers who are hugging their families tightly. If the explosion is the only big event of the day, the former report would be chosen because the roaring flame and thick clouds of black smoke are a good spectacle. However, if all other news stories are depressing, gloomy ones, the latter might be chosen. No viewer likes continuous tension. They unconsciously want alternation of tension and relaxation. News people always

keep this in mind when they choose reports. Consequently, viewers see news stories that have been produced based on fragmentary reports. They would never see the eliminated reports, although they show other aspects of the events.

Let me give you another example of news production. The shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, shook the whole country. In the news about this massacre, an injured boy who was asking for help while leaning out over broken windows, parents and their children who were hugging each other tightly, and parents who were looking for their children half-crazily appeared on the television screen again and again. However, dead bodies never appeared on the screen. Probably, the news people thought such a scene would appeal to viewers too much: they might have been afraid that it would let viewers feel strong loathing and would arouse their antagonism. Among the reports that were left out of the broadcasts, there also might be an image of the surrounding neighborhood, which would help us know the scene of the crime was the normal, peaceful suburbs. It is true that such an image appeals to viewers quite less than do the dramatic scenes which were actually shown in the news.

In addition, we, the viewers, must know that news people who should take a neutral position might choose reports out of selfish motives regardless of whether they realize it or not: they might choose reports which lead us to the conclusion favorable to them. Think back to a series of news reports covering NATO air strikes. You must have seen attacks by bombers, soldiers caught by Serb troops, or Albanian refugees driven out of their homes in Kosovo on the television screen many times. However, have you seen Serbs who were frightened by NATO attacks or NATO-destroyed buildings as many times as you saw those scenes? Maybe not. It is natural that news people, as American citizens, don't want to think NATO air forces threaten or kill unarmed Serb citizens, and thus they unconsciously eliminate or shorten the images of Serb people suffering from NATO attacks. However, viewers who watch the news stories chosen with this unconscious prejudice might judge whether NATO's military action is right or wrong from only those stories.

When we express our opinions about serious affairs,

we usually search our memory banks for news stories helpful to us. The most dangerous thing is that we believe we form fair judgments, considering all aspects of events, although we saw just some specifically selected aspects. This misunderstanding itself is not so dangerous as long as it is limited to individual opinion. However, when the individual opinions are put together and become public opinion, this wrong impression can be a menace to our society because the public opinion has force that moves not only our country but also the entire world. In addition, who can be sure that the movers and shakers of our economy or politics never err in their judgment in the critical situation where the judgment would decide the fate of our country? We must realize that news shows are just a part of each event in the world. As Westin himself admits that "if you rely only on the television newscast, you are woefully ignorant" (58) and says "[newspapers, news radio broadcasts, news-magazines, books on current affairs] must be relied on if one is to be truly informed" (57-8). Otherwise, before long, we would come to be governed by the news, without being aware of it.

Works Cited

- Westin, Av. *Newswatch: How TV Decides the News*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Postman, Neil. "The News." *Conscientious Objections: Stirring up Trouble about Language, Technology, and Education*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.

Evaluation: *Hiroko's argument about the production of television news – the "production" of reality, really – is both perceptive and interesting to read.*

Experiencing Myth: A Storybook Account of "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Bobbie Nybo-Buchholz

Course: English 102/Psychology 225

Instructors: Andrew Wilson and Charlie Johnston

Assignment:

The students were asked to approach a piece of literature from a psychological perspective.

This student analyzed Gilman's famous story from the perspective of Rollo May, one of the personality development theorists we'd studied during the term.

There once lived a beautiful young woman named Cinderella. She was kind, gentle, thin, and wonderfully cooperative. Along came a handsome prince with a good build. He was charming, strong, brave, and wise and fell in love with Cinderella immediately. He married her, and they walked off into the horizon, dwelled in a castle, and...

Almost from infancy, we listen to these stories and their themes. No doubt, such stories are lovely; however, they also perpetuate a problem. During childhood, when we are developing the majority of our perceptions about the world, the fairytale tends to become internalized. The theme expands into a subjective reality of what life holds for us and is carried into adulthood. I believe this occurs in each one of us to one degree or another — in boys, girls, men, and women. Although we may think we know better (at least we say we do), the unconscious mind seeks the storybook plot in real life — a mythical existence. Although myth is a necessary construct for the

human experience, some myths can brew enormous disappointment, frustration, and failure through the creation of expectations that can never be authentically realized. Severe consequences may ensue as our fantasy existence begins to crumble. An extreme, yet very possible, outcome of this phenomenon is nervous breakdown — it was referred to as hysteria at the turn of the century and goes by various aliases as we enter the new millennium, e.g., anorexia, bulimia, alcoholism, drug addiction, among others. Through an examination of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" in parity with the well-known fairytale "Cinderella," we shall discover that the fundamental cause for such psychological disorders is a byproduct of our acceptance of some form of myth as a foundation for life. Life set forth by parameters of such myths is unnatural for human experience.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is a fictional account of a woman driven to the boundaries of insanity by the mysticism and usurping powers of the social system that permeated the lives of men and women during the Victorian era. As Elaine Hedges declares, it "is one of the rare pieces of literature we have by a nineteenth-century woman which directly confronts the sexual politics of the male-female husband-wife relationship" (qtd. in Erskine & Richards 9). The story "is part fantasy and part autobiography, a vivid account of ...[Gilman's] illness and treatment by the physician S. Weir Mitchell..." (Charters & Charters 229). Shortly after her first and only child was born, "Charlotte became increasingly despondent. Her husband was convinced that what she needed was more rest and greater willpower to bring her out of her depression, and he convinced his wife to put herself in the hands of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, the most famous American neurologist of the day, who specialized in women's nervous disorders. He prescribed the standard rest cure for her and this was, as she put it, "Why...[she] wrote the 'Yellow Wallpaper'" (qtd. in Wilson 1). At this point, you might be thinking that we could all use a little extra rest. Perhaps we would even relish in spending a few days in bed, but bear in mind that the diversion of television had not yet come, and Weir Mitchell "forbade...[Charlotte] any activity, especially writing, the thing she most wanted to do" (Charters & Charters 229).

In my analogy, the narrator of Gilman's story is Cinderella. She has been socialized to be a loving, submissive wife. John, her physician husband, is Prince Charming, who has been socialized to always know best. The setting is late nineteenth-century middle-class America. Seemingly, Cinderella is suffering from what we now call postpartum depression. She enjoys writing but Prince Charming forbids it. Prince Charming has prescribed the "rest cure." Consequently, Cinderella secretly journalizes her personal experiences, seeking to alleviate her loneliness and a haunting sense of hopelessness. Our story unfolds via Cinderella's journal entries in first-person narrative. The journal represents her contemplative perceptions that she in fact would prefer to express to Prince Charming. The prince has taken her away to "ancestral halls.... A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate... a haunted house..." in order to enact his remedy (Gilman 230). This passage implies something handed down from previous generations. Obviously, one "inheritance" is that man is woman's protector due to the fact that he is physically stronger than woman is. However, Prince Charming has taken his role to mean that he is also her moral guardian. In this sense he becomes woman's immediate suppressor. In addition, because Cinderella has inherited the state of womanhood—having a lower place in existence than that of man — she can only politely express her issues to the prince, if at all. Moreover, Cinderella can only fractionally conceptualize what the issues are during the birth of our story. Her early journal dialogue states the following:

...[Charming] is a physician, and *perhaps*— (I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind) —*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster. (230)

We might assume that here Cinderella is saying that she may not be getting well because Prince Charming is a physician. But that doesn't make sense, unless of course he is a quack or diabolical doctor. I believe she is referring to her absence of self-expression. She is lonely. She really needs human companionship and support, to be talking and interacting with people as well as continuing her writing. Cinderella continues her journal entry with the following:

You see, he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression — a slight hysterical tendency— what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing. . . . [I] am absolutely forbidden to "work" until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for awhile in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal — having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that my condition, if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus — but... [Charming] says the very worst thing I can do is think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad. (230)

It is interesting to note that Cinderella does have a good sense of what is best for her "condition," but she diminishes herself repeatedly by accepting Charming's version rather than her own. In the preceding passage, Cinderella asks herself "what is one to do?" three different times in one form or another. She knows what is appropriate for her well-being, yet she doubts herself consistently, yielding to the prince's wishes— her superior. As woman, she is required to presume that man knows better than she does. Thus, she denies her identity and assumes that she is supposed to be powerless, which in turn perpetuates her helplessness. When she thinks about her "condition," she feels bad. That is because the moment she becomes cognizant of her limited choices, she is simultaneously overwhelmed by an elusive and frightening sense that woman's battle within the context of the "civilized world" she was born into — without active voice — is much too overbearing in every sense of her existence. Hence, she drives these thoughts out of consciousness as quickly as possible, attempting to reduce her anxiety. However, her anxiety increases instead, and an inner void grows while she has little hope for outlet. Renowned psychologist, Rollo May (1909-1994), said that no one can

escape the effects of anxiety, but he differentiates between two types: "To grow and to change one's values means to experience constructive or normal anxiety" (Feist & Feist 530). In this sense, anxiety is a natural phenomenon of the human experience, which May called normal anxiety, and defined it as that "which is proportionate to the threat, does not involve repression, and can be confronted constructively on the conscious level" (Feist & Feist 530). He defined neurotic anxiety as "a reaction which is disproportionate to the threat, involves repression and other forms of intrapsychic conflict, and is managed by various kinds of blocking-off of activity and awareness" (Feist & Feist 530). Dr. Charming believes Cinderella is experiencing neurotic anxiety and he is correct, although he is not aware he is the catalyst for her neurotic anxiety.

Cinderella's mental state declines steadily because Prince Charming's prescription is a great deal worse than her illness is. He has tried to take from her the essential ingredient that keeps her sane — her self-expression. In her journal, she jots down this thought: "I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little, it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me. But I find I get pretty tired when I try. It's so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work" (233). I am convinced Cinderella becomes tired because she is very sad about the relationship she shares with Charming. Moreover, because Prince Charming lacks empathy for Cinderella and because her obligation is to conform to her husband's wishes, she must sneak and hide her writings. "There comes... [Charming], and I must put this away—he hates to have me write a word" (232). Cinderella is experiencing severe conflict. She cannot bear the pain of holding in her thoughts about the grim predicament of her existence, but at the same time she is experiencing guilt for not performing her duty in obeying her husband. Like anxiety, guilt is a natural phenomenon for all human beings. Yet, Cinderella's dilemma, has "forced [her] to turn inward; ...[she] becomes obsessed with...the problem of identity, namely 'even-if-I-know-who-I-am I-have-no-significance, I am unable to influence others'" (May 14). In the myth, what little voice she may have is only in the form of requests. She can demand nothing. Cinderella's perception of herself is based on the myth — her belief system — in which she

thinks she must act out a role of inferiority. When we believe we are inferior, comparing ourselves to "something or someone" in invalidation of self, we tend to believe our voice is unheard or unnoticed — believing that we don't make a difference in the world around us. Of course this is nonsense. We all make a difference. A simple remark affects another remark and that another and that another. Yet, we often buy into this nonsense, going through our lives as though we are invisible, having no real effect on others or believing that it doesn't make any difference if we *do* affect others. Wrong! All humanity is connected. But Cinderella has bought into this myth and has turned the "energy" inward and thinks her negative feelings about Charming must be her own fault. Irrational guilt perpetuates resentment, anger, and even violence, and these in turn perpetuate more guilt. If Charming would have demonstrated constructive care for Cinderella, her state of mind probably would have been much different. Cinderella needs authentic validation of herself as a human being.

Instead, Charming confines her to a large upstairs room. "It was a nursery first," she writes, "and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge, for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls" (Gilman 231). These are symbols of restraint, as is the "gate at the head of the stairs" — devices that assert bondage (232). The term little children is indicative of the way Charming treats Cinderella, and therefore how she subjectively feels about herself — helpless and dependent. In fact, in a number of instances, Prince Charming calls Cinderella by what seems to be endearing names, yet they have an undermining quality about them: a quality that appears to make Cinderella feel childish. In one case, Charming says "What is it, little girl? ...Don't go walking about like that — you'll get cold" (236). Yet, Cinderella says he "is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.r...[He] takes all care from me and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more" (231). Cinderella claims that Charming is careful and loving because she wants to believe he loves and cares about her; however, at some level of consciousness she knows Charming is not demonstrating either, but she is repressing the idea. So, instead, her denied feelings are turned inward and thus she blames herself for not feeling

authentically appreciative of him. Does Charming care? On the surface it appears so, but he is really very patronizing towards Cinderella. What seems to be care is cleverly disguised behind an appearance of affection, as affirmed in the following passage:

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the end of the stairs, and so on.

"You know this place is doing you good," he said, "and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental." (232)

The difficulty here has little to do with the changing of the wallpaper. Nor is the real problem that Charming, before the story's present tense, had apparently made a promise: a promise on which he never makes good. Breaking his commitment may be acceptable to Cinderella if he doesn't make a habit of it. The real problem concerns "how" Charming breaks his promise, disguised behind the appearance of caring about Cinderella's welfare: first, Charming essentially tells Cinderella that *she's* being ridiculous; second, he says it's for *her* good; third, he makes *her* feel as though *she's* greedy and relentless in her requests; fourth, he tells her that *she's* improving (probably as a result of the wallpaper); and fifth, Charming finally tells Cinderella *his* reason for not changing the paper, which is what he should have done in the first place. Four times, Charming blames Cinderella for his own inability to take responsibility for himself. His tactics hurt and undermine Cinderella's confidence, feeling of worth, and sense of overall well-being — the woman he loves. She is reminded of her inferior standing in his eyes, therefore feels worthless and that she must be responsible for the problem. Aaagh! Charming is actually demonstrating his power and his ignorance of the qualities of love. There are four qualities of love: sex (lust, our biological libido), Eros (the drive of love toward higher forms of relationships), Philia (friendship or brotherly love), and Agape (a selfless love, devoted to the welfare of the other). "Every human experience of authentic love is a

blending, in varying proportions, of the four" (May 38). Eros, Philia, and Agape, as well as sex, must be combined simultaneously in order to love authentically and to be loved authentically. Charming's love is inauthentic because he does not demonstrate any of this regard for Cinderella whatsoever. Accordingly, he has not looked at the situation from her point of view. Thus, Cinderella wells up with repressed feelings of anger and resentment, which to Charming is just more neurotic anxiety. However, Cinderella's anxiety is actually quite proportionate to the threat she is experiencing, yet her anxiety still falls within the category of neurotic anxiety because she is still repressing and blocking off her awareness. Another point is that Cinderella is further diminished by Charming because she knows, although she is repressed, that there is something else wrong with this picture: "he must really think I'm stupid." What other reason would Prince Charming have for acting such a way? For Cinderella, there would be no other reason. However, what she hasn't discovered is that Charming is feeling vulnerable too. He fears that human authenticity is synonymous with failure, and hence he is restricted from acknowledging that he could be wrong about anything—from admitting this "humanness" to himself or to anyone else. Pathetically, it is likely that he isn't aware of it; nor is he aware of its crippling effects on his own life or on Cinderella's. Such phenomena permeate our lives — a condition that undermines the quality of all relationships and the quality of one's own human experience.

Responding in desperation to this scenario, Cinderella begs, "Then do let us go down stairs." Quickly realizing the error of her ways, she rephrases her articulation, "There are such pretty rooms there" (Gilman 232). Lack of obedience is forbidden in this myth, so she must change the quality of her speech to force politeness. "Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain" (232). Again, Prince Charming is patronizing in his response. But, both Cinderella and Charming are being dishonest with one another, and each is trying to have his or her own way. However, they differ in their motives. Cinderella's status is deficient of power, whereas Charming's status has a great deal of power. May holds

that "the freedom of each of us is in proportion to the degree with which we confront and live in relation to our destiny" (qtd. in Feist & Feist 538), and that "freedom and responsibility are always balanced... so that people cannot have one without the other" (547). Then, with power, one acquires freedom. But that freedom always comes with a price — responsibility. Accordingly, Cinderella cannot take responsibility for her own health because she does not have freedom in the myth in which she exists. Her motives are to get well and to have Charming care about her well-being; however, she is also motivated by cultural myth to relinquish her liberty. By allowing herself to be entirely in the hands of Charming, she is bankrupt of freedom and responsibility. She needs voice in her treatment, an expression of her person-hood, which in turn would allow her a sense of freedom and therefore responsibility in getting well. Indeed, the human experience demands the individual's self-expression. Likewise, it is necessary for each of us to be authentically heard in order to feel validated in the human experience. The reason Cinderella hates the wallpaper is largely because Charming uses it to invalidate her. It therefore makes her feel even more ill because it is representative of her relationship with Charming. Had Charming acted in such a way that Cinderella felt validated, she might have treasured the wallpaper. In contrast to Cinderella's impetus, Charming's job is to take charge in the myth. However, in this case he doesn't want to be bothered now, so his real motive is to get out of his responsibility, which again is directly proportionate to his freedom. He treats Cinderella like a child in order to get a quick fix for his own problem of not carrying out his responsibility. His method may succeed this time, but in the long run it will create more labor, both during the current relationship and even more if the relationship completely breaks down, in which case there is a great deal of pain and suffering for both parties. That is work! Much is lost in Charming's method. Sooner or later, in one way or another, all human beings are faced with responsibility for their actions. It's a given. There is no such thing as freedom without responsibility. Authentic participation in the moment usually produces communion with others and ordinarily avoids such difficulties.

Yet, it seems that we must first learn to be authentic with one's self before we can be authentic with others. May uses the German term "Dasein" for what I have been calling authenticity. Dasein is "the basic unity of person and environment...[It] literally means to exist in the world and is generally written being-in-the-world" (Feist & Feist 525-526). Dasein has three modes: *Umwelt*, our relationship with the environment around us; *Mitwelt*, our relations with people; and *Eigenwelt*, one's relationship with him/herself. Those that have no sense of being-in-the-world feel isolated and suffer from anxiety and despair. Healthy people exist in all three worlds of Dasein simultaneously. They relate to one another as people and not as things and they always respect the Dasein of the other person. Living in the world of being provides an awareness of ourselves as living, emerging beings. The down side of this awareness is that it ushers us into the dread of not being— nothingness.

When we do not courageously confront our nonbeing through contemplation of our death, nonbeing will manifest itself in a variety of other forms, including addiction to alcohol or other drugs, promiscuous sexual activity, and other compulsive behaviors. Our non-being can also be expressed by a blind conformity to society's expectations and by a generalized *hosunty* that pervades our relations with others....The fear of ... nonbeing often provokes us to live life defensively and to receive less from life than if we would confront the issue of nonexistence. [We] are afraid of nonbeing and so we shrivel up our being. (May 202)

We flee from making active choices ... choices based on consideration of who we are and what we want. We may try to avoid the dread of non-being by *dimming* our self-awareness and denying our *individuality*, but such choices leave us with feelings of despair and emptiness. Thus, we escape the dread of nonbeing at the expense of a constricted existence. A healthier alternative is to face the inevitability of ...[nonbeing] and to realize that nonbeing is an inseparable part of being. (Feist & Feist 527-529)

Boo! Sound scary? In case you haven't already determined this for yourself, this is the process that gives your life to you. It's an incredible phenomenon, but I must

admit it takes a bit of courage to get started. Nevertheless, it's wonderful to discover that Chicken Little really was wrong about the sky falling. Really, the sky will really still be up where it belongs! In any case, this process allows us to see life's precious qualities and we tend to live life much more fully, urgently, and certainly much more peacefully. Meanwhile, our two fairytale characters are strangled in a myth that doesn't allow this authentic being.

An important detail regarding love is that Cinderella and Prince Charming (I'm referring to the mythic archetypes in this instance, not to Gilman's narrator and her husband/doctor) weren't required to sustain their love because the fairytale didn't include intentionality and the dialog of care and will. They simply walked off into the horizon and lived happily ever after (so they say, but I'm certain this was an inauthentic ending). In order to sustain love, it would be necessary to rewrite the myth's script to include these essential ingredients — a new myth that utilizes these qualities authentically to create and recreate a fresh, healthy relationship. Intentionality is “[the] structure that gives meaning to our experience and allows us to make decisions about the future” (Feist & Feist 532). “[O]ur imaginative participation in the coming day's possibilities...” (May 224). “Care is a state in which something does *matter*,” and it is the source of love and the source of will (289). Love is the “delight in the presence of the other person and an affirming of his [or her] value and development as much as one's own” (206). Love and will “are not united by automatic biological growth but must be part of our conscious development” (283). “*Will is the capacity to organize one's self so that movement in a certain direction or toward a certain goal may take place*” (218; emphasis mine), whereas “*[wish] is the imaginative playing with the possibility of some act or state occurring*” (218; emphasis mine). These essential ingredients for authentic love are superficial for Cinderella and Charming. Consequently, Cinderella lies in bed and with nothing better to do than stare at the walls and contemplate.

This wallpaper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so — I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design. (Gilman 234)

The formless figure is Cinderella. She has begun to see herself as she is — appearing to be put on some sort of pedestal but merely haunting the vague scenes behind the depravity of the outside pattern. This isn't how it's supposed to be; she ponders and reminisces that she once had dreams of her own. “I never saw such a garden — large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them. There were greenhouses, but they are all broken now. There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co-heirs. . .” (231). Lost in this inherited myth, she wonders: What is my life? Who am I? Cinderella's growth has long been stunted by the front design of patriarchal myth, a myth in which she can never be an authentic human being — not in that senseless imagination. Her role is to “skulk about,” acquiring all humanness only through her prince— invisible without him. The following verse from Gilman's “Through This,” published in 1893, sums it up:

I rise with the world. I live. I can help. Here close at hand lie the sweet home duties through which my life shall touch others! Through this man made happier and stronger by my living; through these rosy babies sleeping here in the growing light; through this small, sweet, well-ordered home, whose restful influence shall touch all comers; through me too, perhaps— there's the baker, I must get up, or this bright purpose fades. (Gilman 53)

Cinderella continues to study her life and eventually realizes, “There's sister on the stairs” (Gilman 234). She may not be the only woman experiencing this dilemma, and somewhat later she speaks of it again: “Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over. . . . And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern — it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads” (239). There may be others but Cinderella feels alone. She is unsupported by her husband, unsupported by the social culture, and unsupported by other women.

On a larger level, she is mindful of the widespread commonality in the man-woman/male-female relationship. Perhaps her dilemma is a dilemma for all women, she ponders, and if so, possibly as much a puzzle for men. Certainly she is not alone in these circumstances.

On closer examination of the wallpaper, Cinderella begins to unravel the entangled intricacies of our patriarchal culture and its erosion on humanity. It's a subtle phenomenon and confusing too. It's quite annoying and seems pointless overall — it's destructive, monstrous, devious, and so complex. "The color is repellent, almost revolting... [A] smouldering unclean yellow..." like that of an underlying code of oppression — a rotting malignancy spewing forth from the injury of the patriarchal myth (231).

The wallpaper drowns Cinderella in a mysterious set of convoluted contradictions. She scrutinizes its inharmonious schema, but it is overwhelming and ever so senseless. Eventually, the figure obscured behind the outside pattern becomes clearer and clearer to Cinderella. "By moonlight the pattern of the wallpaper becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be" (237). The revolting implications of the figure(s) locked behind the paper begin to haunt the ancestral mansion in which Cinderella and Prince Charming are held prisoner. A yellow smell from the wallpaper creeps all over the house, permeating every room with its cunning character of degradation. "Such a peculiar odor, too.... It's not bad — at first— and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met" (238-239). She recognizes that the myth creeps into every area of life — squeezing life in its strangling reduction of human effort.

And the woman creeps through the house, in the house, out of the house, in the garden, and "on that long road under the trees" (239). Eventually it becomes evident to Cinderella that the figure creeping through and behind the wallpaper is herself — the self that she has been denying. Her "imaginative power and habit of story-making" gives way (233). She extends her individuality into the wallpaper in an urgent attempt for escape from the mythical design unraveled — a journey into freedom with all of its responsibility, an escape from her mythical bondage. "As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got

up and ran to help her. I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper" (240). In order to survive the ramifications of her discovery, she frantically searches for escape from barriers. Recognizing she will experience severe and threatening opposition to her humanity from and in the world of patriarchy, she pulls large sheets of paper from the walls in symbolic effort of tearing down the design of her confined and restricted life. Cinderella locks the door and throws the key out through the bars on the window. She is not going back to non-being — not if she has say in the matter!

Alas! Charming, our hero, has come to rescue Cinderella (clippety clop, clippety clop).

Why there's ... [Charming] at the door!

It is no use young man, you can't open it! (241)

An interesting role reversal has occurred. Cinderella is now calling Charming a childlike name.

How he does call and pound!

Now he's calling... for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"[Charming] dear!" said I in the gentlest voice. "The key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments. (241)

She is acting just as Charming has because her revelations have made her angry and resentful. She feels duped by Charming and by the fairytale itself. She is raving mad.

Then he said, very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!" And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and...[Cindy]. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (241-242)

The prince has come too late. He must now face the dark side of the demonic.

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time! (242)

Since fainting is normally characteristic of the weaker sex, perhaps Charming might see the limitations of the patriarchal myth now. May puts it this way: "If I cannot affect or touch anybody, I can at least shock you into some feeling, force you into some passion through wounds and pain; I shall at least make sure we both feel something, and I shall force you to see me and know that I also am here" (May 31). Cinderella wants to shock Charming, and apparently she is successful. Moreover, Cinderella is not going to allow Charming to stop her anymore. She continues her crawl at the edges of the yellow-papered room, proceeding to act out the part she has played in the patriarchal myth — a demonstration of the manner in which she has been regarded as a perversion of humanity. Wrapped around this inferior beast (literally!) is a rope dangling at its waist: "But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope..." (Gilman 241). She is apprehended, tied to the myth; she can find liberty only in the boundless reaches of madness. For the moment, Charming is unconscious and she, Cinderella, is positioned "over him" ("I had to creep over him every time"), but the patriarch will soon wake from his "womanly" unconsciousness, and the wheels of patriarchy will revolve once again.

Do we dare break down our myths that aren't working anymore, and can we create new ones that cherish the human experience?

Works Cited

- Charters, Ann, and Samuel Charters. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Literature and Its Writers: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Ed. Ann Charters and Samuel Charters. Boston: Bedford, 1997. 229-30.
- Erskine, Thomas, and Connie L. Richards, eds. "*The Yellow Wallpaper*," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (a Critical Casebook). New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993.
- Feist, Jess, and Gregory J. Feist. *Theories of Personality*. Fourth Edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 1998.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "Through This." "*The Yellow Wallpaper*," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Ed. Thomas L. Erskine and Connie L. Richards. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1993. 53-56.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." *Literature and Its Writers: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Ed. Ann Charters and Samuel Charters. Boston: Bedford, 1997. 230-42.
- May, Rollo. *Love and Will*. New York: A Delta Book, 1969.
- Page, Monte M. *Introduction to Theories in Personality, Supplemental Class Notes and Reading Assignments*. Fourth Edition. Orlando: Hartcourt Brace, 1998.
- Wilson, Andrew. "Class notes regarding the life of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." English 102 handout. Palatine: Harper College, fall semester, 1999. 1-1.

Evaluation: *At last! Here's a literary research paper that possesses both intelligence and personality, that features penetrating analysis and a rapier wit! This paper is remarkable. We'd dare anyone to disagree.*

The Hand Dealt from God

Mark Olszewski

Course: English 100

Instructor: Beth-Ann Bryant-Richards

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay.

“It’s getting pretty late, Barry. We should get some sleep if we want to wake up early in the morning and go fishing,” I said, battling to keep my eyes open. Everyone, that is about nine other people, was already dreaming. “After this hand. All right?” he replied. Five hundred rummy was a ritual when my buddies and I stayed on a house boat up in Lake of the Woods, Ontario, with the Gatnotos family. This house boat was the biggest, ugliest looking pale blue box you’ve ever seen. On the other hand it got us from place to place and was extremely comfortable in the interior. As I put my cigarette out in the overflowing, Denny’s-looking ashtray, I discarded my last card and tallied up my points. “I’m going to bed Bearcat. Goodnight,” I mumbled as I was yawning. “Yeah, goodnight,” Barry said as he was turning off the lights and heading towards his bunk.

Lying in my bed, or should I say what looked like a three-foot couch, I was gazing out the window towards the Southern sky hoping to see a UFO or a shooting star, and I *did* see something strange. Lights were flashing dimly like an extremely slow strobe light with a 25 watt light bulb. I thought I had too much of what they called coffee, or maybe I was having an acid flashback since it was three in the morning. These flashes wouldn’t stop. “What the Hell? It couldn’t be,” I whispered to myself as I threw the white sheet off me and walked cautiously to Barry’s bed. I knew what was going on right when I stepped out of bed. “Hey Bear. You see that?” I asked softly, hoping not to wake anyone. “Yeah. Let’s go on top of the boat and chill for awhile,” he whispered back, knowing if we woke anyone we’d get yelled at since we had to wake up early to go fishing.

We climbed up the rusted, painted-over step ladder to the top of the house boat where we stood in silence with our eyes fixed upon the heavens. Gazing toward the Northern horizons, we noticed that great white and light-blue lights were dancing around the star-lit sky feverishly. I sparked up a Marlboro Red and the smoke lingered in slow motion, adding to this divine event. I offered Barry a smoke, and he accepted it as if it were communion under the holiest church on Earth.

Two soldiers we were, absorbing the radiant lights from above, receiving energy that cleansed our souls from the war back home. On top of the boat house we

were surrounded by majestic pine trees in that inlet of miles—and I mean miles—of rolling, crystal-clear still water. The water acted as a dark mirror reflecting the light show from above. It seemed as if we were trapped in a silent portrait with the cries of a loon here and there to remind us that we weren't dreaming: millions and millions of stars shining down on us as if God had created too many holes on a dark sheet of paper.

The great white flame in the sky rose and faded and then shone brightly again as if someone was turning a gas knob from high to low and back to high again. As I lay down on the dew-stricken boat, my skin shivered from the cold bite of the damp surface. The shivers also came from the beauty of the Northern Lights as if they knew my deepest secrets, my inner-most fears and my dreams and goals in life. If only William Woodsworth or William Blake were there to create a poem for the world to witness and feel what I felt in that hour under the light show from God.

One of very few times I've experienced a natural high was that night when Barry and I saw the Northern Lights a year ago. I can look back at that moment when I'm fed up with life, and then I feel a sense of serenity. If I had gone to bed earlier that evening, I would have never witnessed that beauty and the sense of being in the arms of God, who was embracing me as if he knew my pain and worries. The only thing that was missing that night was the music of Pink Floyd jamming away to "Time" or "Wish You Were Here."

Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day
 You fritter and waste the hours in an off-hand way
 Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town
 Waiting for someone or something to show you the way....

— from Pink Floyd's "Time"
 (on the album entitled *Dark Side of the Moon*),
 lyrics by Roger Waters

Evaluation: *Mark's paper is descriptive and poignant.
 It's an outstanding English 100 essay.*

A Growing Love

Ewa J. Pasterski
Course: English 101
Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:
Write a personal experience essay.

It was November 7, 1981, the day of my father’s funeral. It rained, but I do not remember getting wet. We walked slowly, almost in slow motion, into the colorless church in the middle of nowhere. I did not hear a sound. No one was smiling. People’s mouths moved, but the words were inaudible. All birds had escaped somewhere. The clock seemed to keep pace with the rain. I walked, but my feet did not touch the muddy ground. I was numb. Being only twelve, I was too young to comprehend it, yet, old enough that I would never forget. My real understanding came years later: my father’s presence had a large impact on me, and his philosophy of life still lingers deep inside me.

Even though so many years have gone by, the memory of my father is still alive, like a timeless story. I keep in my mind the picture of his incredible eyes and beloved face. Some say he looked like a movie star: tall, firm, and handsome. My father always kept his hair the same way: short with the bangs combed back, like Humphrey Bogart in “Casablanca.” He was a strong, muscular man, but what I remember most was his gentle touch.

My memory of my time with my father is full of discoveries and excursions and lifetime experiences that can only occur between a father and a daughter. It was he who showed me for the first time the beauty of my native town of Cracow and its unforgettable views, such as Vavel Castle. From the opposite side of the river he showed me its monumental architecture from hundreds of years ago, like a perfect beauty from a fairy tale story. At the base of the castle’s foundation, the Vistula River, like a gentle snake, writhed around it to protect the heart of the town from the enemy’s forces. I also remember the unforgettable walks down the old, narrow streets in Cracow filled with the history of people and events from hundreds of years ago. Walking down these streets, I always search for our previous tracks lost somewhere in the past, like unwritten stories. He was teaching me how to perceive, feel, and remember. Fascinated by history, he showed me how to discover and see things invisible to others. His words were like the sound of music. Once he asked, almost whispering in my ear, “Do you feel the power of past generations?” I did not even know how to answer.

There are many little things that I still remember about him. On frosty Sundays, he liked to take me for a hot cup of tea in the cafe at the corner. This picture comes back to me every time I pass that place. A few times, I glanced inside but there was nobody sitting in his chair. Also, I remember the unforgettable sentence he used to say to me: “There is something inside each of us, a dreaming passion that we have to look for and find before we die.” He was this way, deep and introspective. Moreover, I remember the kisses that he gave me every night before I slept. Only after he had gone did I realize that it was nearly impossible to sleep without them. Nonetheless, I deeply enjoyed all the moments we shared, such as drinking ice-cold water straight from a mountain spring, picking wild flowers from a little wood-glade, or watching bright stars hung up on a cloudless sky.

There was something special about the way he talked and looked at me that made me feel his love. I could run to him with all my problems and fears; he was not just like a parent but like a friend as well. It was a special kind of connection between the two of us, I would say, a secret relationship between a father and a daughter built on respect, love, and understanding. Even though I had to share his attention with my twin sister, I was always the first who got a little smile from him, and the first who found a free space on his lap. But it was also I who on dark, rainy evenings waited for him with my nose stuck to the cold glass of the window. And he knew it. I was hungry for more, much more time exclusively offered to me. My father worked all day long; he was always gone before I woke; and he came back when the sun was down. So it was impossible for me to see him as often as I wanted to. Sometimes, I admit to myself, I did not try to know him better. I did not expect that days with my father might be limited, irretrievably cut off like a wonderful dream gone when I woke.

The first day of his sickness was cloudy and cold. It seemed to me that the skies agreed with the circumstance. The doctor's voice tore my ears: "A stroke has paralyzed him. He will live, but he will not walk again." His words were like a nightmare; it seemed to me as if someone had cut off the wings of a bird to prevent it from flying. All that I saw at this moment was a vision of the two of us walking down the street and the feeling that those days were over. I grasped his hands firmly, and for the first time I realized how much I loved him. I would pay any price to keep him alive, but on the other hand, I was not sure what he was wishing for. His unhappiness was painful for me.

A few weeks later, exactly when night changes to day, my father died. When he was ready to go, the window of the small hospital room opened rapidly as if someone had come to take him away, far away from me and forever. First of all, I did not believe what had happened, or I did not want to believe. We had so many things to do together and so many plans for the future. Afterwards, I had nothing left, only a painful, empty hole in my heart. Finally, I came to know my life would never be the same.

I do not know exactly when or how, but as I live my life little by little I come to realize the influence my father has had on me. At some point, I faced the reality that it

was impossible to see those gentle eyes again. His death was as if someone had torn the roof off the house and left me unprotected from the rain. Not only did I lose my father, but also I lost my friend. I realized that our secret relationship was founded on his sheltering protection over me. I lost those strong, safe arms that I used to run to, and I lost those eyes where I could find all the answers. Now that I am an adult, I miss those days even more. I sometimes think how my life might be now with him, but I can only imagine. One day I came to know that even though he is not next to me anymore, my love and admiration toward him are still growing.

Evaluation: *Ewa Pasterski has written a moving account of a daughter's loving memory of her father. She has a poet's eye for the emotional content of descriptive images and a poet's ear for varied yet rhythmic sentences.*

From a Child's View

Deborah A. Pickup

Course: Literature 219 (Children's Literature)

Instructor: Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

Write an essay supporting or refuting Alison Lurie's thesis in her essay "Vulgar, Coarse, and Grotesque" — "Most of the lasting works of juvenile literature are thoroughly subversive in one way or another."

Are most of the classic literary works written for children subversive in one way or another? Alison Lurie, author and professor of children's literature at Cornell University, believes they are. In her essay "Vulgar, Coarse, and Grotesque," she writes about how classics such as Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* convey feelings not approved of by adults, condone making fun of held beliefs and moral figures, and "view social pretenses with clear-eyed directness." She believes children choose books, not because of the awards that adults give them, but because they like the books that "mock the existing order." Lurie claims they are not interested in books that are virtuous or where the "basic institutions of society hold firm." They like to choose books with characters who are "rebels" or "defiers of convention," who rise above the status quo and triumph. Lurie's belief that children develop crude opinions and attitudes from most of the classic works, I believe, is absurd. Her condescending analysis of these classics is expressed from an adult perspective that is politically and socially motivated, from her point of view. I do not believe children read

these literary classics and scrutinize them as she has in her essay. Children choose these "subversive" literary classics to be entertained by characters they desire to emulate, to temporarily escape the authority of the adults who guide them, and to experience the pleasure they receive from reading these books.

Even a child who has a good conception of right and wrong or knows how much parents will tolerate wonders what it would be like to push the limit and be successful. Pippi Longstocking is a good example of a "rebel" character whose life seems appealing to children. She is left to fend for herself because of an absent father, and she does a sufficient job taking care of not only herself, but her friends too. Her imagination and her creativity produce adventures beyond a child's wildest dreams. The qualities Pippi possesses are desirable to most children as they are growing up and looking for acceptance. Imagine being able to make good decisions on your own, being self-sufficient, and being loved by everyone who comes in contact with you.

Dorothy, from *The Wizard of Oz*, is another character with appealing qualities. She is a meek, young girl from Kansas, yet she is able to survive in the unpredictable land of Oz. She takes care of not only herself, but the "misfits" she encounters on her journey to the Emerald City. She is the one who makes the sound judgments and decisions that guide them through the chaos and confusion of this strange land. She exposes the Wizard for the fraud that he is, and she successfully obtains everything desired for herself and the "misfits" traveling with her.

Although Pippi and Dorothy appear to "have it all together" when alone and faced with a crisis, eventually they return to the "arms" of the adults in their lives. When children read about the adventures of these two characters, they recognize that the "ideal world they exist in is only temporary." In the end, the comfort and security of the adults in their lives become both a necessity and a reality.

A temporary escape from the adult-managed world is another reason children may choose to read "subversive" literary works. Every day, children live under the guidance and rules of the adults in their lives, whether they are parents, teachers, or the next-door neighbors. What

would it be like to be Peter Pan, never growing up and living a life free of restrictions and boundaries? Peter, along with the “lost boys,” defies the adults he comes in contact with, such as Captain Hook. Imagine a world with no rules or adult supervision, where one could be playing, eating, and sleeping whenever desired.

Jane and Michael Banks from *Mary Poppins* are another example of the “putdown of parental authority” children may yearn to experience. Their parents are so involved with their own trivial problems that they become incompetent, leaving Jane and Michael to set out on their own adventures with their “magical nanny.” These adventures are so unusual and exciting that the children develop an apathetic attitude toward the needs of their helpless parents.

At the end of both works, *Peter Pan* and *Mary Poppins*, the characters seek the adult love and supervision they wished to escape from earlier. Peter, never knowing his mother, longs for someone to love and care for him, as Wendy’s mother has cared for her. Jane and Michael just want their parents to love, care, and pay attention to them, instead of worrying about the silly problems that preoccupy their lives. In the end, children realize it is nice to be loved, wanted, and comforted by a mother and /or a father, when they are tired of taking the responsibility of caring for themselves.

The enjoyment of reading about “subversive” characters is another reason children find these literary works so appealing. Reading about mischievous, exciting adventures and situations that characters get themselves involved in is pleasurable to children of all ages. Every child laughs at the constant mishaps of Peter Rabbit. After a countless number of escapades involving Mr. McGregor, where Peter narrowly escapes, he ends up safe at home, tucked into his comfortable bed by his mother, after drinking a “punishing dose” of chamomile tea.

Walt Disney’s version of *Pinocchio* is another character who provides comic relief. This story about a “wooden boy” who innocently gets himself into all kinds of trouble certainly provides for delightful entertainment. His disobedience, like Peter Rabbit’s, is what gets him into the predicaments he encounters. His wise friend, Jiminy Cricket, always is there to bring out his virtues and steer him in the right direction.

In the end, Peter Rabbit and Pinocchio relish the comfort and satisfaction of being part of a family filled with love. Their adventurous mishaps are lessons to children who may think there are not consequences to misbehavior. While teaching children lessons and values, those stories also provide a pleasurable entertaining experience for the reader (or viewer).

Whatever the reason may be that children choose to read “subversive” literary classics, it is certainly not because they seek a political or social message. Nor do they want to develop “opinions and attitudes” toward adults that may lead to “disobedience and exploration that are more fun than good behavior.” Children enjoy these works because they find delight in characters that help them escape the status quo, or for the mere pleasure of being entertained. Alison Lurie is reading and analyzing these works from an adult point of view. She needs to put aside the knowledge she has acquired as an author and professor of children’s literature. Let children continue to read a variety of literature, subversive or not, and formulate their own conclusions. When all is said and done, it is the adults in society, not subversive literature, who will lead the world’s children. The morals and values adults teach to children will be the guiding factor in the way children perceive, learn from, and become the future adults in society.

Evaluation: *Debbi's final exam is the first work written for Children's Literature to be published in The Harper Anthology. Her lucid and convincing essay is the culmination of her extraordinary contribution to our class. It is, in short, a classic.*

The Effect of Dams on Soils

Paula Popowski

Course: Plant Science Technology 110 (Soil Science)d
Instructor: Chet Ryndak

Assignment:

Investigate a problem/issue related to soil science.

When I began doing research for this paper, I assumed that the biggest problem caused by dams was soil erosion along riverbanks. But that is only the beginning—the first domino in a chain of events that can completely destroy a river and its valley. Damming means that a “lake” will spread; people lose their homes, their farms, even entire towns. The water’s edge is the most important place for wildlife; more than half of American bird species nest near waterways. Grizzlies, raccoons, otters, and many other animals depend on rivers for food. A dam can disrupt the habits and travel patterns of fish and other wildlife for fifty miles or more. The loss of salmon in the Northwest is a graphic example. The water level of a reservoir rises and falls greatly, preventing development of a normal and varied lake edge vegetation, which contributes to soil erosion. Floodplain forests need water and alluvial soil that is washed in. Silver maple, cypress, cottonwood, and cedar thrive in the floodplain.

The river is the center of the land it inhabits. From the high country down, everything drains to the river. When this tie is broken by a dam, consequences are felt throughout the watershed.

* * * * *

The land and river are ecologically linked in a watershed. Water shapes the land, and the river is a product of the land. All the rivers flowing into one main river are part of its drainage system. Mountains and landforms determine the routes of rivers, and the rivers further shape the land. Rain and run-off cause streams to swell, but most valleys have floodplains for the overflow where silt settles. Floodplains are temporary storage reservoirs, lowering downstream floods, and they may be up to sixty miles wide along a big river like the Mississippi. They make especially good farmland due to the silt deposits from seasonal floods. Soil added to the floodplain comes from upstream, washed loose with sheet erosion from places without plants such as strip mines or plowed fields. Other soil comes from riverbanks where the current cuts on the outside of bends. The floodplain is really part of the river. Damming a river controls the seasonal floods, but the farmland is no longer replenished with silt and thus becomes less fertile.

During spring floods a river runs with great power. It tears boulders loose, splitting them and knocking the rough edges off. Slowly, the river wears down boulders to smaller and smaller pieces. The heavier pieces are deposited first along the river’s channel, while the lighter pieces and soil from the surrounding land are carried further. The river continues to drop the heavier pieces and carries the lighter (sand, silt, and clay) to the ocean. There it is deposited in a wide, triangular area—a delta—in order from heaviest to lightest: sand first, then silt, then clay furthest out in the delta. The Mississippi River deposits over 700 million tons of sediment per year into the Gulf of Mexico, and the delta grows another 300 feet into the gulf. Sediments along the Louisiana coast are estimated to be piled nearly six miles deep.

The oceans are fed and fertilized by rivers. Silt and organic material carried to the sea by streams are the food of plankton, which produce up to 80% of the world’s oxygen. When a large portion of this silt is held back by dams, the consequences are not to be taken lightly.

* * * * *

Dams have two main functions: first, to store water to compensate for fluctuations in river flow (or for when there is a demand for water and energy), and second, to raise the levels of water upstream to allow dams to generate electricity. They are also often for prestige, a national symbol of development. This is particularly true in third-world countries—big dam building has fallen out of favor somewhat in the U.S. (Or, maybe we have already dammed nearly every place possible—there are over 2.5 million dams in this country.)

When a dam is built and a reservoir created, the waters upstream become slack and silt-laden. The fluctuating water levels of a reservoir not only prohibit growth of lakeside vegetation, but they also strand or flood fish and other wildlife. The current stops and fish are prevented from swimming upstream without unusual and unnatural (and generally ineffective) measures such as 'fish ladders.' Outflowing water from a reservoir comes from great depths, so it is cold year round. The water may also be chemically unusual, containing great quantities of bacteria and dead algae. The cold temperature and chemical imbalances adversely affect the variety and abundance of life downstream.

A dam has a limited lifetime because it acts as a trap for sediment brought downstream by the river. The trapped silt settles to the bottom of the reservoir and builds up over a period of time. Government hydrologists say that Lake Powell will be full of silt in 300 years or less, and many think it will be a brown quagmire in less than a century. Silt accumulating on the floor of a reservoir suffocates anything that may have survived the initial flooding.

The following chart illustrates the siltation problem.

COUNTRY	RESERVOIR	ANNUAL	TIME TO FILL
		SILTATION RATE (TONS)	WITH SILT (YEARS)
Egypt	Aswan High Dam	153,000,000	100
Pakistan	Mangla	4,100,000	75
Tanzania	Mtumbulu	21,780	30
Philippines	Ambukiao	6,380	32
Tanzania	Kisongo	3,740	15

Someday soon these reservoirs will be 'dry' dams—mud flats with a river winding through, then spilling over the dam.

The silt that the Nile River carried to the sea before the Aswan High Dam was built was fertilizer for the floodplains. Today 98% remains behind the dam, causing a tremendous drop in soil depth and productivity; now farmers are dependent on chemical fertilizers. Little silt reaches the delta, allowing coastal erosion of up to 40 meters per year and seepage of sea water that makes the land salty. Lack of sediment nutrients reaching the Mediterranean has reduced sardine catches off the coast.

Before the Glen Canyon dam was built, the Colorado River carried a heavy silt along the riverbank. This filled any gullies that had formed during storms. But as the dam holds the silt and stifles the floods, the beaches are shrinking and the riverbanks are eroding, threatening cultural sites of the Anasazi Indians.

In California, dams trap sediment destined for coastal beaches. Mud floods supplied beaches with 75-95% of their sediment. Beaches are becoming unnaturally narrow, and the ocean waves now eat the bases of bluffs, causing them to tumble into the beach (and wreaking havoc with the coastal real estate market). If any trapped sediment is cleared out from reservoirs, it is generally used for fill on inland building lots, and not returned to the beach where it was destined to be.

The unnatural concentration of suspended silt in a dammed river can clog the gills of fish and mussels. Silt buries riffles composed of clean, small stones, destroying a key habitat for many types of aquatic organisms. It can also be a delivery vehicle for toxic chemicals. The silt and sediment that is a natural and important part of a river ecosystem is turned into a major source of pollution by a dam.

* * * * *

While dams can provide clean hydroelectric power, there are other alternatives that are not so costly to the environment; among them are energy conservation and solar power. Dams can also control flooding, but floodplain management—reserving lowlands for uses such as farming and parks that do not incur heavy damage—can be cheaper than building dams to catch floodwater. Besides, flood control generally does not keep up with new floodplain development.

Many dams have outlived their usefulness or have been washed out or destroyed, and dam removal is looking more like a viable option. The cost of dam removal is generally three to five times less than repair. The natural water temperature and oxygen levels are restored. In the case of an overflow dam, the structure is gradually notched and sediment is exposed slowly so that it becomes more stable. Revegetation of an impoundment generally occurs within one growing season, and erosion will be slowed as native ground cover regrows. The presence of vegetation is an important factor in reducing the danger of floods.

During the drawdown of a dam on the Prairie Dells River in Wisconsin an incredible amount of sediment was released, according to Stephanie Lindloff of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. The sediment was tested for toxicity, and sediment traps were built. The excess sediment was given to farmers.

The gates at the Ward Dam in Merrill, Wisconsin were fully opened on September 3rd of this year. It was the last of four dams on the Prairie River, and today the river is seeking its own course for the first time in 100 years. The removal benefits warm, cool, and cold water fisheries and will restore about 40 acres of wetland—prime wildlife habitat. This drawdown has exposed more than 80% of the 113-acre impoundment and will allow revegetation of the area before the dam is physically removed. As the dam structure is removed, the river will be restored to its original character—a sight unseen for over 90 years.

* * * * *

Not so long ago, rivers were what they were and people adjusted their lives to fit; they got off the floodplain when the water came up. It's not so simple anymore, but there are changes being made. Dam removal can restore a river and floodplain ecosystem, benefiting all life along its course. Native plants and animals that depend on the river for reproduction and migration would return. Annual floods would deposit nutrients, flush out backwater channels, and replenish wetlands. And we would have a wild river, full of life, the way it was intended to be.

* * * * *

CLOSE TO HOME

As I began working on this paper, I remembered an issue that came up last summer regarding some property we have on the Rock River in Edgerton, Wisconsin. It was the formation of a Lake District to prevent the removal of Indianford Dam, about a mile downstream from our property. The removal of Indianford Dam would reduce the water level of Lake Koshkonong (several miles upstream from us) to “the detriment of property values, aesthetics, and viability for recreational use.” We sent in our approval to form the Lake District without giving it more than a passing thought—the lake is a great place to cruise around in a pontoon boat on a summer day.

Now I wonder. Lake Koshkonong is no more than six or seven feet deep on a good day. The bottom is very silty, and in spite of all I hear about game fish stocking, the best fishing is for carp. I spoke to Stephanie Lindloff, the Small Dams Program Coordinator at the River Alliance of Wisconsin. Because of the size of Lake Koshkonong this is a hot issue. (Lake Koshkonong is the third largest inland lake in Wisconsin.) The lake *was* a marsh, and to a marsh it would return. According to Stephanie, it rivaled the Horicon Marsh for beauty and wildlife habitat. Since it actually is an impoundment, I thought it would gradually fill with silt, but Stephanie said that it was a silty area before the dam, and that problem seems to be taking care of itself.

So, what's to be gained (and lost) from the removal of Indianford Dam? Personally, we would lose access to a large 'lake.' (I'll never look at it again without thinking “impoundment.”) But we would gain quiet and peaceful summer afternoons, with no huge motor boats zooming by. We would have a different kind of recreation—canoeing to the marsh instead of cruising the lake. Maybe even a little rafting, instead of water skiing. We would gain cleaner water, certainly, and river edge habitat to explore that has largely been washed away and replaced with riprap and retaining walls. And we would gain the joy of just watching as the river returns to its natural state.

I'm sure these opinions won't increase my popularity in the Rock-Koshkonong Lake Improvement District, or even at first in my own family. But as Mark Twain said, “Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs one step at a time.”

Works Consulted

- Canby, T. "Water, Our Most Precious Natural Resource."
National Geographic Aug. 1980.
- Dean, Cornelia. *Against the Tide*. New York: Columbia
University Press, 1999.
- Harden, Blaine. *A River Lost*. New York: Norton, 1996.
- Middleton, Nick. *Atlas of Environmental Issues*.
Ilex Publishers, 1989.
- Palmer, Tim. *Endangered Rivers and the Conservation
Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press,
1986.
- Pringle, Laurence. *This is a River*. New York: Macmillan,
1972.
- . *Wild River*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott.
- Sauvain, Philip. *Rivers and Valleys*. Minneapolis:
Carolrhoda Book, 1995.
- Sterling, John. "Life Stealing Glen Ganyon Dam."
Patagonia Catalog (Fall, 1999).
- Wilcove, David S. *The Condor's Shadow*. New York:
W. H. Freeman, 1999.

Internet Sources

- International Rivers Network at www.irn.org
River Alliance of Wisconsin at www.wisconsinrivers.org

Interviews

- Lindloff, Stephanie. River Alliance of Wisconsin
(phone#: [608] 257-2424).

Evaluation: *Ms. Popowski has written an
exceptionally interesting and entertaining paper.
It is filled with facts, yet it does not lose your interest.*

When Nature Beckons: Exploration of Conflict in John Galsworthy's "The Japanese Quince"

Martiniqve Pozniak
Course: English 102
Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:
Analyze conflict in "The Japanese Quince."

In his short story "The Japanese Quince," John Galsworthy seems to be exploring the conflict between two forces: the domain of the "mind" as exemplified here by the upper social class, and the domain of the "heart" as exemplified here by Nature. Specifically, on one fine spring morning in the Square Gardens, Galsworthy sets in motion a push-pull dance between emotionally inhibited Mr. Nilson and Mr. Tandram, and the emotion-evoking elements of Nature: the blackbird and the Japanese quince tree.

Mr. Nilson lives in the world of the mind. His existence is defined by numbers. For instance, he assesses the morning "perfect" (73) only upon checking the number of degrees of outside temperature on "the thermometer...[which stands] at sixty" (73). His morning, prayer-like thoughts are about numbers when he engages in "medi-

tations on the price of stocks" (73). The sound that announces to him the daily routines is the voice of a cuckoo bird counting hours. When "the cuckoo clock... [strikes] eight" (73), Mr. Nilson knows, because of his regimented lifestyle, that he has exactly "half an hour to breakfast" (73). Furthermore, he gives his emotions a numbered locality, instead of a name, when he unexpectedly experiences "a feeling of emptiness just under his fifth rib" (73). Emotions are not as familiar to Mr. Nilson as are order, numbers, and money.

Money is the fruit of Mr. Nilson's success as a businessman. He is "well known in the City" (73), the financial district of London. As such, he lives in the affluence of the upper social class. His surroundings are full of expensive items such as "an ivory backed handglass" (73) to reflect his face and "the scrolled iron steps" (73) to take him to the Gardens.

Mr. Nilson's conflicted dance with Nature begins when she invades his being with scented spring air through an open window. The domain of the heart intercepts the domain of the mind, and Mr. Nilson is pulled away from his numbers. He starts feeling an unfamiliar, uncomfortably "peculiar sweetish sensation in the back of his throat" (73), a "queer feeling" (73) which he does not embrace or welcome. On the contrary, he is disturbed and concerned for his health. He is so emotionally inhibited that he interprets the emerging response to spring as a sign of illness (73). He tries to retreat into the familiar routine of reading the morning paper, but Nature will not be dismissed. The strange feeling continues and must be acted on: "Mr. Nilson...scarcely takes it [the newspaper] in his hand when he again... [becomes] aware of that queer feeling" (73). He instinctively seeks relief outside: "Somewhat concerned, he... [goes] to the French window and... [descends] the scrolled iron steps into the fresh air" (73). Nature surrounds him with her sounds and scents, but Mr. Nilson pays no heed. He pushes Nature aside and concentrates on a deliberate, therapeutic walk around the Gardens (73). He is firmly anchored to his cerebral existence: "The morning paper clasped behind him" (73) and "the scrolled iron steps" (73) around the circular path.

At this point, Nature forces Mr. Nilson to notice her. She pulls on his heart by using a blackbird, whose loud

song directs Mr. Nilson to the heart of the little Japanese quince tree: "He... [is] on the point of resuming his promenade, when a blackbird close by... [bursts] into song, and looking up, Mr. Nilson... [sees] at a distance of perhaps five yards a little tree, in the heart of whose branches the bird... [is] perched" (73). Seeing and smelling the tree, Mr. Nilson accepts Nature's invitation to a dance. For a moment, he abandons inhibitions, suspends analysis and allows himself to smile. He smiles because when faced with beauty one cannot help but smile: the tree "[is] covered with young blossoms, pink and white, and little bright green leaves both round and spikey; and on all this blossom and these leaves the sunlight... [glistens]. Mr. Nilson... [smiles], the little tree... [is] so alive and pretty!" (74). Mr. Nilson is caught up in the emotion of this moment, and as his thoughts begin to form they are almost euphoric. Perhaps he is on the brink of defining his emotions which Nature evokes. Perhaps he is on the brink of discovering something about his life when he formulates the unfinished thought: "'Morning like this!' he... [thinks]; 'and here I am the only person in the Square who has the — to come out andt—!'" (74). This thought is the gist of the conflict between Mr. Nilson and Nature. He has a chance here at self-discovery, but unfortunately the mind pushes the heart away again. The thought remains incomplete because, just at this moment, just as Nature uses the blackbird to draw Mr. Nilson to the quince, the domain of the mind intensifies the conflict by using Mr. Tandram.

Mr. Tandram is a mirror image of Mr. Nilson. Everything that applies to Mr. Nilson also applies to Mr. Tandram: the way he looks, his social status, his response to the quince (73, 74). As such, he is equated here with Mr. Nilson in the conflict with Nature. Therefore, Mr. Tandram's sudden presence by the quince tree is a sobering factor which pushes Mr. Nilson back to the domain of the mind. As caught up as he is in the beauty of the tree, now he feels "caught out" (74). He remembers social properties. The numbers come back: he remembers that Mr. Tandram is his next door neighbor of *five* years (74). Because they are so alike, each sees the other's open emotionality as foolish: "Mr. Nilson... [drops] his eyes. It... [strikes] him suddenly that Mr. Tandram...

[looks] a little foolish," and "a shade... [passes] over Mr. Tandram's face, as if he, too, suddenly... [notices] something about Mr. Nilson" (74). So, Mr. Nilson pushes emotions away, pushes Nature away. Nature tries one last time; as Mr. Nilson looks on, the quince and the blackbird, in tandem, call his attention to themselves: "With the slanting spring sunlight darting and quivering into it, the Japanese quince... [seems] more living than a tree. The blackbird... [returns] to it...chatting out his heart" (75). The echo of the original emotion stirs around Mr. Nilson's heart, but just then Mr. Tandram's cough returns him to the inside of the house and the domain of the 'mind': "Unaccountably upset, Mr. Nilson... [turns] abruptly into the house, and... [opens] his morning paper" (75). The dance is over.

On the surface, the conflict between repressed emotions and spontaneous emotional expression is won by the former. However, the fact that Mr. Nilson is still feeling the achy sensation which upsets him suggests that the next time Nature beckons him to a dance of emotions, he just may join in.

Works Cited

- Galsworthy, John. "The Japanese Quince." *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*. Ed. Thomas R. Arp. 7th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt, 1998. 73-75.

Evaluation: *Precision and balance mark
this insightful, finely wrought essay.*

Natural Abundance of Country Life

as Shown by Willa Cather's
"Neighbour Rosicky"

Amy Richter

Course: English 102

Instructor: Elizabeth Turner

Assignment:

*Compose and revise an interpretive essay
on Willa Cather's "Neighbour Rosicky"*

Anton Rosicky believes the country is the best place to raise a happy family, because of its natural abundance. Though the fairy-tale city life of Castle Garden, New York satisfies Rosicky for 5 years or so, the fantasy fades as his desire for real fulfillment in a more bucolic setting increases. "That was why he drank too much; to get a temporary illusion of freedom and wide horizons" (87). Rosicky realizes that although city life is appealing, it leaves an empty feeling in the end. Both country and city settings described in "Neighbour Rosicky" by Willa Cather illustrate the benefits of country living.

Rosicky's love for the land began at a young age, when he was sent to live with his grandparents following the death of his mother. "He stayed with them until he was twelve, and formed those ties with the earth and the farm animals and growing things which are never made at all unless they are made early" (88). Rosicky's childhood marks the start of a lifelong companionship between him and the open land.

The city, on the other hand, is disconnected because of its abundance of cement. While sitting in the park in New York City, Rosicky observes "so much stone and asphalt with nothing going on, so many empty windows" (88). He doesn't like this intense feeling of emptiness and realizes that the problem with big cities is that they "cemented you away from any contact with the ground" (88). Rosicky finds the isolation of the city to be exhausting, because the cement denies him contact with the nourishing land. Rosicky desires to move away from the city and get back to the country where his roots are.

Rosicky's decision to head west and "buy his liberty" (89) occurs on a significant holiday, Independence Day. Although he can't afford one of the finer farms in High Prairie, he does purchase property and he enjoys the fact that he owns any land at all. This is an important accomplishment for Rosicky because he becomes the first person in the family to own land. For Rosicky, "To be a landless man was to be a wage-earner, a slave, all your life; to have nothing, to be nothing" (93). Rosicky fears that Rudolph will give up the farming gamble and sacrifice his freedom for guaranteed money made slaving at a factory job in the city. Rosicky compares these blank buildings to "empty jails" (88), which represent the lack of freedom associated with city life. Rosicky wants his

son to understand that in the country, “what you had was your own. You didn’t have to choose between bosses and strikers, and go wrong either way” (104). As Rosicky’s health deteriorates, his concerns for his family’s welfare increase. He wants not only freedom for himself, but for his family as well. It’s comforting for Rosicky to know that his family will be together on the land long after he’s gone.

Rosicky’s heart may be failing, but he’s not in the ground yet. In the meantime, Rosicky is encouraged by Doctor Burleigh to spend some quality time with his family. Dr. Ed advises, “My Lord, Rosicky, you are one of the few men I know who has a family he can get some comfort out of; happy dispositions, never quarrel among themselves, and they treat you right” (74). Rosicky feels blessed to have such a wonderful family as he recalls the types of families which inhabit the city. He remembers angry families arguing amongst themselves in dirty, overcrowded kitchens. Rosicky believes that “the worst things he has come upon in his journey through the world were human,—depraved and poisonous specimens of life” (104). He doesn’t think his children are prepared to understand the harshness and cruelty of human beings existing in the city. Rosicky is not naive to the fact that mean people live in the country as well. He feels the advantage to living in the country is that such neighbors can be avoided by separation of the land. But in the city, “all the foulness and misery and brutality of your neighbors was part of your life” (104). There is no escaping the company of unwanted dishonesty.

The city also represents poverty and hunger for Rosicky. Rosicky remembers a special Christmas in London, which he can’t forget. Christmas is thought to be a joyous occasion, the season of giving. Rosicky describes an entirely different scenario. “All de windows is full of good t’ings to eat, an’ all de pushcarts in de streets is full, an’ you smell ’em all de time, an’ you ain’t got no money,—not a damn bit” (99). He understands that although the city is a great place to live if you’re rich, it’s not an easy environment for the poor and hungry to survive in.

Rosicky counts his blessings for the opportunity to cultivate crops with which to feed and nourish his family. After all these years in the country, Rosicky “had

never had to take a cent from anyone in bitter need, — never had to look at the face of a woman become like a wolf’s from struggle and famine” (105). Rosicky knows that planting seasons are not consistent and stresses the importance of adaptation to the uncertain. Regardless of the success of each year’s crops, the Rosicky family celebrates life together. The family picnic is an important event showing the strong bond between his family. Rosicky recalls a Fourth of July that was so hot, the intensity of the heat ruined the entire crop of corn. He did not let this catastrophe ruin him like it did his neighbors. Rosicky says, “An’ we enjoyed ourselves that year, poor as we was, an’ our neighbours wasn’t a bit better off for bein’ miserable. Some of ’em grieved till they got poor digestions and couldn’t relish what they did have” (98).

To Rosicky, happiness doesn’t come from having money, but rather from enjoyment of his loving family. Neighbors wonder why Rosicky doesn’t get ahead in life. “Maybe...people as generous and warm-hearted and affectionate as the Rosickys never got ahead much; maybe you couldn’t enjoy your life and put it into the bank, too” (79). Rosicky doesn’t agree with following his neighbors’ lifestyles of skimping and saving. When the creamery agent comes over to persuade the Rosickys to sell, Mary retorts, “I’d rather put some colour into my children’s faces than put money in the bank” (84). The influence of money is not a temptation for Rosicky because the satisfaction of being part of a family gives him all the wealth he desires.

Part of being in a successful family includes struggling together through the best and worst of times. The drought brings hard times to the country, which is a concern for Rudolph. Rosicky replies, “You don’t know what hard times is. You don’t owe anybody, you got plenty to eat an’ keep warm, an’ plenty water to keep clean. When you got them, you can’t have it very hard” (96). The country offers feelings of comfort and companionship to Rosicky and his family. Rosicky hopes his son Rudolph will not give up after one bad season of crops, but instead continue to work freely and live off the land.

The planting season is symbolic of reproduction, the cycle of continuous life and death. Rosicky appreciates the beauty of snow falling over the open pastures and the

nice graveyard which lies nearby. "It was a nice graveyard, Rosicky reflected, sort of snug and homelike, not cramped and mournful,—a big sweep all around it" (81). Rosicky is awfully fond of his farm and isn't anxious to leave it, but in the event of his death, he won't have to go far at all. "The snow, falling over his barnyard and the graveyard, seemed to draw things together like. And they were all old neighbours in the graveyard, most of them friends" (81). The country graveyard is much more comforting than cemeteries found in the city. He thinks of city cemeteries as "arranged and lonely" (110) and considers them to be "cities of the dead...of the forgotten" (111). These city cemeteries are not open and free like the little graveyard at the edge of Rosicky's farm.

And so, the time comes for Rosicky to return to his roots, the country, for the final time. The condition of Rosicky's heart deteriorates, and a heart attack is inevitable. Even though Rosicky is dying, he celebrates the miraculous news of a future grandchild to be born to his son Rudolph and his wife, Polly. Doctor Burleigh, a lifelong friend of Anton, comes back to the country to visit the Rosicky family. As he drives past the graveyard, he notices the beauty the country graveyard beholds. The Doctor reflects, "Nothing could be more undearthlike than this place; nothing could be more right for a man who had helped to do the work of great cities and had always longed for the open country and had got to it at last. Rosicky's life seemed to him complete and beautiful" (111). Though Rosicky's physical body is buried in the ground, his spirit freely lives through his family's enjoyment of the country's natural abundance, thus enduring the infinite cycle of life.

Works Cited

- Cather, Willa. "Neighbour Rosicky." *Willa Cather: Five Stories*. Mattituck, New York: Amereon House, 1930. 72-111.

Evaluation: *Amy's essay is a graceful interpretation of Cather's short novel; it relies on evidence and sound reasoning. It's an exceptional essay.*

Economics as the Driving Force in History

as Seen by Karl Marx
and Charles Beard

Paul Rollins

Course: Humanities 105

Instructor: Tryg Thoreson

Assignment:

*Compose a 5- to 10-page class project using at least
four primary and secondary sources.*

It has been a fascinating sixteen weeks participating in this program of readings from great books. I have been exposed to the best thinkers of the Western and Oriental world, written critiques of their work and listened to the thoughtful opinions of my colleagues as they did the same. A whole new view has been opened to me for which I am appreciative. But I never thought I'd see a connection between the American Constitution and Karl Marx!

From a certain point of view, however, the connection should be obvious. Marx was a historian, self-taught, but a historian nonetheless. He was obsessed with world history, but paid scant attention to the role of great men or the impact of events as they unfolded in history. Rather, he thought it was economics that fueled the march of time. Charles Beard was a historian. His concern was not a worldwide one; his focus was on the beginnings of the United States as a nation. His viewpoint, however, was that of an economist. It was his thesis that it was eco-

nomics that fueled the events leading to the American Revolution and provided the basis for the ratification of the Constitution. Early on, he states "the new government was accepted with reluctance only because a dread of dismemberment of the union overcame hostility to the proposed fundamental law" (Beard 395). If we accept the premise of both authors that economics drives history, then a connection between Marx and the Constitution becomes somewhat plainer.

Charles Beard has always been somewhat of a historian-provocateur, a role which began with his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* and continued on through his last work in which he made the claim, since authenticated, that Franklin D. Roosevelt forced Japan to war. It is interesting to note that Americans are the most profit-oriented people on earth, yet they become unnerved when an economic motive is implied to their patriotism. Such was the wrath that Beard faced when in 1913 he implied that property and class had more to do with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution than did patriotism. A strong case can be made for the economic motive.

In today's academic climate the idea that economics played a role in the drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution is accepted fact. When Charles A. Beard proposed his thesis in 1913, such was not the case. It brought a firestorm of reaction. No less than a former president of the United States, William Howard Taft, vitriolically attacked Beard's writing, calling it "muck raking" (Brown 7).

Each of the colonies was ruled by an aristocratic class. If there is much doubt, a check of the credentials of the signers of the Declaration of Independence should allay all question. John Hancock, he of the bold signature, was easily the richest man in New England (Fischer 176). George Washington, though not a signer of either the Declaration or Constitution, was the richest man in the country at the time he became president and purportedly has been the wealthiest U.S. president ever (Smith 8). So it should be evident the ruling faction had at least a passing interest in seeing to it that their economic welfare was taken into consideration. Note should be taken of the fact that "our fortunes" were pledged to each other by the signers as they attested to the Declaration.

Though the use of slogans and incendiary pamphlets warmed the blood of the populace before and during the Revolution, it is certain that economic sanctions invoked by the English government stirred the ire of the ruling elite. The long forgotten Proclamation of 1763 cut off the land beyond the Alleghenies from use by the colonists along the Atlantic coast. That had little effect upon the laborer or blacksmith in Providence or Philadelphia. It was of major import, however, if one were a tobacco plantation owner in Albemarle County, Virginia (Brinkley 105). The Proclamation cut off the possibility of expansion westward when their cash crop, tobacco, exhausted the fertility of existing plantations (108). Is it just a coincidence that the House of Burgesses, consisting of wealthy planters, was a hot bed of opposition to the English crown?

The Stamp Act and the Tea Act were inconveniences to the general populace. But their main thrust was to hinder and encumber the enterprises of the lawyers and merchants of the colonies. Is it possible that this class incited the more easily led street rabble to riots in the streets of Boston, to dump perfectly good tea in the fetid waters of that city's harbor? By putting the patina of patriotism on such violence, the ruling class — the bourgeoisie, as Marx would later call them — might have been masking their own motives to cast off the yoke of a far away British government which interfered with a colonial spirit of entrepreneurship, which was becoming accustomed to its own manner of doing business.

The Revolution eventually came to a conclusion. Now a new assemblage, much similar in composition to the one that drew up the Declaration of Independence, met behind closed doors to develop a document of government. The process of ratification of that Constitution, it can be said, moved much along the line of economic advantage. The states with the most debt, which would eventually be wiped away by a "Federal" government, were the first to ratify (Nash and Jeffrey 242). Those fearing they would be saddled with the debt of the more profligate states, or those small states fearing they would be overwhelmed by the larger states, took two and a half years to ratify. Though it may be argued it was insistence by some states that a "Bill of Rights" be inserted, it is obvious that it was consideration of the rights of property

and unencumbered trade between the new states that carried the day for ratification (242).

With a novel nation to run, the first administration faced a not unfamiliar problem: how to pay for what was needed. Washington took only a minor role here, believing his place to be above the tumult. The brilliant, but acerbic, Alexander Hamilton entered the fray, and in the first two years of the Washington's administration, he proposed a series of proposals, the first of which, "Report on the Public Credit," provided the solution to several vexing problems. By a series of ingenious machinations, he satisfied all debtors, both foreign and domestic, and at the same time devised a method for providing revenue for the new government on an ongoing basis (Brinkley 170). He accomplished this by assuring the monied interests, particularly in the Northeast, that their rights to property would be assured and their future interests in trade and commerce would be expedited. He did this in an atmosphere devoid of political factionalism.

That vacuum was soon to be broken.

A group, the most notable member of which was Thomas Jefferson, began to dispute the initiatives Hamilton was taking. Jefferson took his stance on the very practical grounds that the excise tax placed on imported goods by Hamilton to protect Northern manufacturers increased the cost of those goods disproportionately for settlers in the frontier, which at that time was primarily the South. Also, the "Whiskey Tax" singled out for taxation the yeoman farmer Jefferson saw as the long-range engine upon which the future of the country would rest. Interestingly enough, ten years later Jefferson himself as president had recourse to the same Eastern coffers that Hamilton had appealed to when he made the Louisiana Purchase. And what was a driving force for that purchase? A significant reason, if not the major one, was to ensure the port of New Orleans remained in U.S. hands so that Western farmers could bring product to market through the Mississippi River network (200).

It has been said, "History is not the past, but an interpretation of the past" (Beard 393). Such is the foregoing and such is the view of Charles Beard on the factors behind the events of the first two decades of U.S. history. It is true that men such as Washington, Madison, Hamilton, Burr, Jefferson and Adams had a part to play.

It is true that events such as the impressment of seamen, the French Revolution and the refusal of the British to leave parts of the Northwest Territories had roles to play. But it is safe to say that economics, the supposed crass search for and protection of wealth, had at least as important a role to play in that panoramic period of history as any other factor (Rogers 130).

Beard himself, writing much later, in the 1935 edition of his *Economic Interpretation*, acknowledged the conflict his work had stirred when it was first published. In his introduction to that edition, he states, "I did not call it 'the' economic interpretation, or the only interpretation open to thought" (Beard, 1935 ed., p. 8).

Reading Beard required a knowledge of American history to appreciate the nuances of his economics arguments. Such background knowledge was not needed when reading Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto. In other manuscripts Marx's writing may be dreary and confounding. In the Manifesto, Marx is as direct and simple as he can get. I must admit my surprise in finding Marx so easy to approach, at least in this essay, and I was also amazed at how many of his economic forecasts have indeed been fulfilled, although without many of the dire results he predicted.

It would be rewarding to cite certain passages from Marx and try to find an analogy in modern day economic activity.

As this essay is being written, the World Trade Organization is meeting in Seattle, Washington. Over the past few days, newspaper headlines and prime-time television have been awash with stories of the anarchy in the streets, all to prevent the meeting of the extra-national W.T.O. It gets difficult to accurately describe what the World Trade Organization is, but it might be defined as:

Independent but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, become lumped together in one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one customs tariff. (Marx 216)

If such has been the description you would accept, you would be using the very words Marx used in describing a bourgeoisie stratagem to centralize means of production. Different, however, from the mob Marx predicted, this

group of protesters came not primarily from the proletariat, but rather from special interest groups of the bourgeoisie. Among the dissenters would be members of Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, the Save the Whales Organization, French Farmers Against McDonald's, and others of similar ilk.

Marx would have been comfortable to see a contingent representing organized labor, if only in a rather restrained way. On the other hand, the small cadre of hooligans that caused the type of uproar Marx would have appreciated were ultimately shackled and detracted only marginally from the convocation. All these disparate interests could come together only in a healthy bourgeoisie atmosphere. When your belly is empty, you can't get too concerned about whales. If, on the other hand, one has excesses of both time and money, there is no end to causes a person can champion. Marx was prescient in seeing the growth of organizations such as the W.T.O. He missed the point, however, of how satisfied a community could become through the fruits of bourgeoisie production. This mob's purpose was not to completely overthrow the order of things, just to have its own viewpoint examined.

In another passage, Marx predicts "the conversation of the physician...the priest...into its (the bourgeoisie's) paid wage laborer" (215). In recent years, we have seen at least attempts to accomplish this conversion. In the United Kingdom, "socialized medicine" has been a fact for more than four decades, with a rather successful track record. In recent years Canada has adopted a practice similar to the U.K. but with far more modest results to date.

Here in the United States we're much involved in the discussions of what will be the future of "fee for services" medical care. Doctors here have fought aggressively the socialization of medicine by the government. In league with the then newly elected Republican congress, the AMA and its adherents were able to at least temporarily blunt the thrust of government into the supposed sacrosanct relationship of physician and patient. On the other hand, a decision has not been reached in the battle between "the fee for service" system and the structured fee system symbolized by the HMO. One might make of this a true class struggle. The doctor wants to maintain a

secure place in the existing bourgeoisie structure. The patient who can afford to pay the fee, or who can afford to make the private insurance payments which allow him to do so, wants no governmental intrusion and has little concern that there are millions who are unable to pay the fees or afford the insurance. On the other hand, in contemporary U.S. society, it is the employer who generally pays the greater part of health insurance costs. Those employers have seen health insurance costs experience double-digit inflation each year of the nineties. They are saying if health care is to be continued or expanded, it has to be done under the aegis of an agency such as an HMO that, using economies of scale, determines the options of the physician. The outcome of this classic battle of the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat is far from over. It is doubtful the issue will be settled completely in the new administration, whichever party it is.

The role of the priest I mention only parenthetically. In the late forties and early fifties in France much in the thrall of a Communist — or at least Socialist — government, an attempt was made to develop a role for “worker priests.” This was an idea whose time has never come. After a vigorous Vatican defense, and after a change in government, the idea was discarded.

In my view, the point is not so much that Marx was wrong in the outcome. It is instead that the man could, from a viewpoint a century ahead, predict that both doctors and priests would be the subject of changing economic tides.

Early on, Marx makes reference to a social phenomenon he sees occurring as a result of the bourgeoisie seizing control of the throttle of production. His comments about “constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation” (215) certainly fit very aptly the conditions experienced by U.S. labor in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Examples of this situation abound, but one in particular will make my case. In October of 1996, Quaker Oats Company bought Snapple Corporation, the manufacturer of a well-known soft drink. Since Quaker Oats is a Chicago-based company, the advantages of that marriage were duly noted here. Sales and profits would grow, and the Snapple employees would enjoy the benefits of being associated

with a company offering greater work benefits. That Christmas, I was on Long Island, New York, the home of Snapple. Imagine my surprise upon opening *Newsday* on December 23 to learn that Quaker Oats was laying off 1,600 Snapple employees immediately so as to recoup the funds they had spent to buy Snapple in the first place. Those Snapple employees could be pardoned if they approached that holiday season with a feeling of “everlasting uncertainty and agitation” (215).

These are just a few samples of how Marx correctly predicted social changes brought about by changing economic conditions and changes in the means of production. If Marx was so all seeing in those instances, why are his overall theories in such disrepute today?

The simple answer is that circumstances changed. Why? In Europe in the years following Marx's writing, that continent began to slip into the morass he had predicted for it. Other things must have taken place to forestall the social upheaval he foretold.

Marx makes specific mention of countries in which he sees Communists coming in league with revolutionary elements to overthrow the existing social order. As a matter of fact, none of those countries mentioned came under a Communist banner in the nineteenth century, although there were times of severe social unrest. The one country he doesn't mention—Russia—is the one that eventually does pick up the Red standard (231).

One theory that has been advanced concerns the flood tide of European emigration to the United States that reached its zenith in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. That proletariat class, which Marx had looked to for fomenting the civil unrest needed to bring about the revolution, was no longer in Europe—it was passing through Ellis Island. In each of these years of those two decades, the number of immigrants to the U.S. exceeded one million people. Regardless of the mean state in which they might live in their new homeland, they considered themselves to be infinitely better off than they would have been in the old country. On the other hand, these newcomers were not content to maintain a status quo. They adapted quickly to the system of opportunity presented to them, brought over others of their families left behind, and quickly began to force their way into the bourgeoisie class of the U.S.

Marx, midway in his Manifesto, makes a statement that is startling in its simplicity when he says, “[T]he laborer lives merely to increase capital and is allowed to live only in so far as the interests of the ruling class require it” (225). If that set of circumstances did exist, and if such circumstances had been allowed to continue, undoubtedly the revolution so desired by Marx would have resulted.

Somewhere, however, within itself, capitalism found the means to curb its most egregious faults. Governments eventually saw the wisdom in curbing the hours laborers could work, setting the minimum conditions for child labor and establishing safe working conditions for the workplace environment (Nash and Jeffrey 603). At the same time government was discovering its role in safeguarding the health and welfare of its working citizens, the leaders of industry were discovering they could sell more of what they manufactured if they paid their employees more than a bare subsistence wage. Obviously, Henry Ford would have to be considered in the first rank of these enlightened capitalists.

There are others, however, who shared this enlightened view. Consider what the relative usefulness of the telephone, electric light, and radio would have been had their use been confined to a few of the wealthiest bourgeoisie.

Marx’s writings created shock waves throughout the world. His railings against property, religion, education, and agriculture threatened the crowned heads of state through Europe and even the Papacy. The writings of Beard shook the patriotism of many Americans earlier in this century. The feeling of many was that economics as an entity was a subject unworthy to be considered as a driving force for history. The fact of the matter is that economics, no different than great men, significant events, and cataclysmic weather, can claim a significant role in the way the days of Man play out.

Works Cited

- Beard, Charles Austin. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. 15th ed. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935.
- Beard, Charles Austin. “An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.” *Searching for Great Ideas*. Eds. Thomas Klein, Bruce Edwards, Thomas Wymer. 2nd ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publications, 1998. 393-401.
- Brinkley, Alan. *American History*. 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.
- Brown, Robert Elden. *A Critical Analysis of an Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*. New York: Norton Library, 1965.
- Fischer, David Hackett. *Paul Revere’s Ride*. New York: 1994.
- Marx, Karl. “The Communist Manifesto.” *A World of Ideas*. Ed. Lee A. Jacobus. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford, 1998. 209-233.
- Nash, Gary B., and Julie Roy Jeffrey. *The American People*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.
- Rogers, Michael. “An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.” *Library Journal*. vol. 124 (Nov. 1998): 130.
- Smith, Richard Norton. “George Washington.” *Booknotes: Life Stories*. Ed. Brian Lamb. New York: Times Books, 1999.

Evaluation: *The thoroughness of Paul’s presentation, together with its somewhat surprising insights and connections, makes this a first-rate project.*

Mind Your Q's and Peas

Laura Schumann
Course: English 101
Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write an argument whose claim is focused. Make both logical and emotional appeals. Use a variety of evidences.

If you've ever shared a meal with a slob, you have probably seen someone who talks with his mouth full of food, shovels food in his mouth, or doesn't know how to use a napkin. Are these "slobs" just callous folks who could care less? Surely, after sharing an eating experience with a "mealtime misfit," one, if only subconsciously, tends to remember and calculate disrespect for that person.

More than likely, the offender is unaware of his faux pas. My guess is that his early family meal experiences did not include Mom and Dad sitting relaxed and poised at a well appointed, candlelit table as Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" played softly in the background. My guess is that, indeed, such a person rarely shared a meal with his parents.

A 1995 national survey found that "Less than one third of American families eat dinner together most nights" (Doherty 22). And this trend is on the rise. Without parents to model appropriate mealtime behavior, children may struggle socially as adolescents and as adults. The bottom line is that members of families that do not eat together risk social dysfunction.

How did the ritual of sharing meals disappear from family life? Well, parents have conflicting schedules; kids have after school activities. Dinner is an afterthought. In my household, my spouse and I eat late, after the kids are in bed. For awhile, I saw the time that the kids were occupied at the table with their meal as a chance for me to "catch up." I would handle a phone call, sort mail, or straighten the house—always ignoring the opportunity to simply sit down and be with my children.

On the subject of children's meals, etiquette expert Ann Marie Sabbath says, "Mom's at the board room table, not in the kitchen. If they are lucky they get Lean Cuisine" (qtd. in Adams 75). And Ms. Sabbath would be in a different profession if not for the fallout from fast food families. She runs seminars that teach everyday table manners to employees of business firms. Employees themselves are requesting job training that focuses on "issues of social interaction" (75). Children need to be regularly exposed to role models in order to develop the social skills they need to become well-functioning adults, and at-home family dinners provide a strong foundation for these skills.

Personal social gatherings almost always include a meal. We dine out with friends, celebrate family events, gather during holidays, and relax at summer barbecues. Rules of conduct certainly apply during these "meal centered" occasions. I was annoyed by some near-teenage family members during a recent holiday party at my home. I left my dining room for just a moment to retrieve a serving utensil, and returned to find that my niece and nephew had begun to butcher my dessert with a table knife; indeed, they were about to start a fist fight over who would get the first piece! I had to referee the dessert course. I feel sure that their lack of exposure to proper role models during ordinary meals contributed to this inappropriate behavior. As this particular incident occurred, the children's parents were off watching television in another room.

Parents need to expose their children to conventional social graces (or good manners). What better place than the family dinner (or breakfast, or lunch) table? Children who grow up eating alone in front of the television are not going to get this education, even if it is covered on Barney. "To learn the social graces, kids need role models

and rules” (Shannon 87). Frank T. Vitro says, “From a practical standpoint, the which-fork-to-use kind of manners are important” (qtd. in Shannon 87). While young children need not be concerned with more than one choice of fork, they should be encouraged to actually use a fork. The use of this utensil, sometimes paired with a knife, is often neglected when family meals are rare. Many children I know follow diets which consist of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, pizza, hamburgers, french fries...and so on; these convenience foods do not require any utensils! If not for the beloved breakfast cereal which *requires* a spoon when served with milk, many children appear as monkeys as they display their eating skills.

While I was pregnant with my first child, a friend warned me that I, as she, would eventually find myself feeding my child dinner while driving home in the car—straight from the drive-thru window! It’s several years later, and I’ve noticed that when this particular friend’s daughter eats at my home she can’t sit still in a chair. She’s an eating acrobat. I should, perhaps, attach seat belts to my kitchen chairs.

Exposure to dining situations, such as restaurants and parties which require different rules of conduct, is necessary if a child is to mature socially. Insufficiently armed with social know-how, a child becomes an adult who may be socially uncomfortable, or even offensive. I remember feeling embarrassed for a nice fellow who had taken me out for pizza some years ago. When the waitress presented him with the check, he just stared at it for a considerable length of time, not sure exactly what to do with it. Eventually he left the table to question the waitress as to whether or not her tip was included in the total. When I realized the dilemma I came to his aid. My parents had taught me how to behave in a restaurant, and I could rely on many previous dining-out experiences with my father.

Social skills are necessary for success in many careers. A salesperson friend of mine is very successful in her field, and this success is largely due to her well-mannered charm while entertaining clients over lunch. Her close-knit family ate dinner together most nights during her childhood. In contrast, a friend who didn’t have regular family meals heard it rumored in her office that she was

passed over for a promotion because of her behavior at a business lunch. While dining out with her supervisor, she had helped herself to the salad bar, and finished her meal before her supervisor’s sandwich arrived. Unfortunately, she had no idea interaction can lead to loss of income or employment. Parents need to set examples early.

And parents can set examples by demonstrating basic etiquette during mealtime. A parent should put a napkin on the lap and use it, sit at the table properly, and not speak with a mouth full of food. The time to learn social graces is during regular family meals. And parents who do not share regular meals with their children should consider the valuable social skills these children are being deprived of—skills that can mean a more productive, pleasing life. Meals don’t need to be fancy, and take-out is sometimes the best choice after a busy day. But eat together, turn off the television, ignore the phone, and then see what happens. Your children might even teach you something.

Works Cited

- Adams, Michael. “Charm Schools: Your Salespeople are Tough, Taut, Competitive. But a Few Lessons in Etiquette May Help Them Sell Even Better.” *Sales and Marketing Management* 148 (April 1996): 72-75.
- Doherty, William J. *The International Family*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1997.
- Shannon, Salley. “Growing Up Polite: To Learn the Social Graces, Kids Need Role Models and Rules.” *Parents Magazine* 70 (June 1995): 87-89.

Evaluation: *Laura’s short argument is clear, direct, logical, and helpful in its plan, design, and presentation of appropriate evidence. Its claim is focused, fresh, and pertinent to current discussions about the family. I use it as a model for other student writers.*

No. Not This Poet.

Ryan Sheehan

Course: English 102

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

*Write a literary research paper
drawing on at least seven critical sources.*

Philip Levine was born in Detroit, Michigan, on January 10, 1928. It could also be said that his poetry was born in Detroit. Philip Levine's poetry tends to focus on the subject matter of the lower-class blue-collar worker, and this can be most definitely attributed to his early years. One critic has pointed out that his youth and early adulthood typified the experiences of most lower and middle income people in Detroit; working in assembly plants, experiencing first-hand the long workdays and poor conditions, inspired Levine to vow to use poetry to give a "voice to the voiceless" ("Philip Levine" 270). That voice can be seen in almost all of Levine's poems, and that is what makes up his style. In the poem "Every Blessed Day," the voice of an average man is given the podium as Levine describes the harsh routine the man goes through before work. However, Levine is not looking for sympathy from us, but the understanding that this man, these people, are all a different breed. Levine writes about the hardship of reality in the everyday world — the everyday world of lower and middle class people who work long, hard hours, all for that paycheck that gets them by.

Critic Michael Paul Novak has said that "[Levine's] work expresses admiration for those who suffer but do not give in, those who fight against prejudice and pain" (1989). This can be seen in poems such as "Animals Are Passing From Our Lives," where Levine uses pigs going to slaughter as metaphors for men fighting back against hardship and taking control. Throughout his work as a poet, Philip Levine continues to break "down those barriers which prevent him from entering areas of otherwise lost or unapprehended experience requisite to poetry he wants to write" (Mills 254). These "barriers" can be seen clearly in many of Levine's poems, such as "Coming Close," where the reader is put into the place of a manager or corporate officer and put to work with a woman at a factory. This gestures toward a "feel what I felt" or "feel what they feel" type of poem written from the personal experience of Levine himself. In "Coming Home from the Post Office" this comes across through his memories of a bus ride home from a Sunday night shift at a sorting plant.

Philip Levine's poetry, giving a voice to the voiceless, puts into perspective the lives of the lower-class blue-collar Americans: The Americans who work Sundays and take no breaks and the Americans who are constantly fighting to break barriers, whether they are of prejudice or communication. Levine writes for those who do not give up, no matter how poor or oppressed — those who keep waking up, and keep polishing, and keep working overtime, so they can make it.

Stephen Spender has stated, "Philip Levine has... an utter scrupulousness of observation. His poems are personal, love poems, poems of horror, poems about the experiencing of America, which instead of simply representing the objects and the scene, concentrate on the physical body experiencing these things.tl"(287). This idea can be seen in the poem "Coming Close," where Philip Levine starts off by describing a woman at work: "She has been/standing before a polishing wheel/for over three hours, and she lacks/twenty minutes before she can take/a lunch break. Is she a woman?" Or is she a machine? In the next section of the poem, Levine describes the woman as a machine-like worker. He says, "Consider the arms as they press/the long brass tube against the buffer,/they are striated along the triceps,/the three heads of which clearly show." This description

gives the reader the picture of a machine straining to do its job, but then he introduces human qualities into the mixture. Levine writes of “beads/of sweat [running] from under the red/kerchief across the brow.” Then, Levine suggests that there is more to this worker than muscles and sweat. He explains that, “You must come closer/to find out, you must hang your tie/and jacket in one of the lockers/in favor of a black smock.”

Levine puts “you,” the reader, in the position of a tie and jacket wearing, corporate-type manager who couldn’t possibly understand the common worker. According to Levine, “you” have to get into the situation of the woman, you have to become the worker to know what she feels. “You must/be prepared to spend shift after shift/hauling off the metal trays of stock,/bowing first,” thus bringing yourself lower, down to her level. You have your “knees bent for a purchase,/ [you lift] with a gasp,” from exertion while lifting the heavy tray. Only then can you understand. Only then will she acknowledge your presence as you gasp from labor.

This gasp, according to Levine, is the “first word/of tenderness between the two of you.” This gasp is where “you” reach a certain level of understanding. However, it is only a small word, if it is even that, and it is only the beginning to ever understanding this woman. “You must feed her,/as they say in the language of the place,” Levine writes, but there is no fine cuisine here, only the “trays of dull/unpolished tubes.” After this, Levine explains that “if by some luck the power were cut,/ [and] the wheel slowed to a stop,” it would cause the woman to stop her machine-like labor. She would stop doing the labor she had been doing for so long and she would ask “Why? Not the old why/of why must I spend five nights a week?/Just ‘Why?’” In this section of the poem, Levine does not tell us exactly what the woman asks, only what she doesn’t ask. As readers try to find the answer to a question they don’t understand, they become confused. To show that he knows the reader’s confusion, Levine writes, “Even if by some magic/you knew, you wouldn’t dare speak/for fear of her laughter,” which once again tells “you” that it is impossible for you to understand her and even if you think you know, you are wrong. For she is in a different world, far from you and all the tie and jacket wearing managers in your class, and “as she placest

the five/tapered fingers of her filthy hand/on the arm of your white shirt [she marks]/you for your own, now and forever.”

Can all barriers be broken down to nothing? Or is Levine saying that in order for an understanding between you and the worker, you must not only step into her shoes but you must live her whole life from start to finish? Regardless of whether or not all barriers have an end, Levine still tries to find them.

One way in which he does this is by using his unique poetry. According to Robert Hosmer, “What matters to [Levine] is simplicity—simplicity of rhythm of speech and of sentiment. The product of working class Detroit during the Depression, himself the veteran of factory work, Levine determined early on that he would ‘write poetry for people for whom there is no poetry... [those who] lived and worked beside me” (220).

Levine shows good use of this vow in “Every Blessed Day,” where he writes of a worker’s thoughts as he gets up and goes to work. The reader is given the feeling of a monotonous and cold routine that the man has to relive each day. Levine writes of the worker’s thoughts as he remembers places his father talked about, but these aren’t just any places. These places are places of spectacular beauty that are far different from the gray world in which the man lives.

In the first line of the poem, Levine describes the man’s routine as he awakens, “First with a glass of water/tasting of iron and then/with more and colder water/over this he gasps himself/awake.” This gives the reader the thoughts of harsh reality where the plumbing is bad and the water is always freezing, or maybe the water has to be colder, in order for the man to wake up for the thousandth time. Levine then describes the man’s surroundings: “He hears the cheep/of winter birds searching for crumbs of garbage/and knows exactly how much light/and how much darkness is there/before dawn.” He has obviously done this before. In fact, he probably wakes up every day in the same manner, at the same time.

In the next section of the poem, Levine describes the man’s walk to the bus stop. His thoughts wander as he closes “the door behind him/[and] he thinks of places he has never seen but heard/about.” The man is transport-

ing his state of mind elsewhere, perhaps to dull the reality of his life. He thinks of the "great desert/his father said was like/no sea he had ever crossed." Levine goes on: "and though his life was then/a prison, he has come to live/for these suspended moments." These daydreams were all the man, and possibly his father, had to look forward to in the slow grind of the workday. They used the times when their minds wandered from the norm to get by. Then Levine, as if to waken us from this dream, brings the man back to reality when while "Waiting at the corner he feels/the cold at his back and stamps/himself awake again." In many of Levine's poems, including this one, he shows "man's common attachments with earth, his relationship with objects, the hard painful climates in which most lives are lived" (Mills 261). The feelings brought on by the "water tasting of iron" and the "winter birds searching for garbage" are all "evoked through a skilled interweaving of images" (Mills 261).

Levine then shows us how cold it really is as he describes the man as being "seven miles/from the frozen, narrow river." Then, the man gets on the bus, and "even before he looks he knows/the faces," for they are the same every day and "some/[are] going to work and some [are] coming back/,but each [is] sealed in its hunger for a different life, a lost life." This man is not alone; others feel his yearning for a life where suspended moments are brought down into their reach. "Where he's going or who he is/he doesn't ask himself, he/doesn't know and doesn't know/it matters," writes Levine. The man does not think about what his future will be like, or what his life will hold, he only thinks of the "shades of red and blue in [the desert's] merging shadows." Then the man "gets off/at the familiar corner, crosses/the empty parking lots/toward Chevy Gear & Axle #3." He is now at work and in only a few minutes "he will hold/his time card above a clock,/and he can drop it in/and hear the moment crunching/down, or he cannot, for/either way the day will last/forever." Whether or not he goes to work, the day will drag on and he might as well get paid to be miserable: "So he lets it fall./If he feels the elusive calm/his father spoke of and searched/for all his short life, there's/no way of telling." Then Levine puts a twist on the poem: "for now [the man is]/laughing among them, older men/and kids. He's saying, "Damn,/we've

got it made." Once the man gets to work, his feelings change because now he is among others like him. He is no longer alone with only his "moments." Now, he is "lighting up or chewing/with the others," and they have forgotten their morning routines and their memories of the "red and blue desert" and are now in a world that is theirs only, "thousands of miles/from their forgotten homes, each/and every one his father's son."

The ideas in this poem are not difficult to retrieve. The poem is an example of what Hosmer has stated about Levine's poetry: "it can be read and understood without elaborate preparation, without cumbersome textual apparatus, without scholarly 'explanation'" (220).

As Peter Stitt has explained, "Philip Levine has always written a poetry that is generally both personal and sincere, a poetry based on the facts, feelings, and experiences of his own life" (218). He uses the struggles and hardships he has endured and overcome to give readers a unique picture of the barriers between people of all kinds. Thus, in "Coming Home from the Post Office," Philip Levine uses his memory of an encounter with holy women to portray the barriers between the "people of God" and the "followers of the time clock." In the poem, Levine describes the way some people try to change everyone, to save them, and how some people's lives just can't be changed.

The memory of a bus ride home from the sorting plant begins with Levine's description of women coming home "from an evening with God." Levine describes their faces as, "glowing with faith,/and the hard sweat of their faith." The women are coming home from church in the evening after a day of serving God. They are upbeat, yet tired from hard work. In the next six lines, Levine lays out the scene.

The women are on the bus and they are singing, possibly hymns or church songs, either alone, or with each other. Every time the bus would stop, one of the women would carefully get off, and the "sisters would shout/news of the good days ahead/and the joys of handmaidenship." In the next section of poem, Levine personalizes the poem by introducing a memory of one such night where he had subtle contacts with one of the sisters.

"I remember an evening in April/when I passed in and out of/sleep," writes Levine. On his way home from

work (the post office), he remembers a woman who “stood/above [him] stared into [his] eyes/as though searching for a sign,” of God in him. Unlike her, he had been at work all day, working on the Sabbath, as opposed to the churchwoman, who had been serving God all day. Drowsy from his day at the post office, he nods off, and dreams of “cards” and “letters,” each of which were “bearing/a particular name and some/burden of grief or tidings/of loss.” This is a negative vision of working for a post office, perhaps. Levine goes on to say, “Names like my own/passed moment by moment/into the gray sacks that slumped/open mouthed.” Everyday at the post office, Levine processed thousands of letters and never stopped to think that these letters bearing darkness were from and to people just like him.

In the next part of the poem, Levine describes the woman as being “On strong legs” standing “easily.” “Her pale eyes/held mine easily,” writes Levine. He goes on to elaborate that “each time/[he] wakened,” he “wakened/not into the colorless light/from overhead but into/the twin mysteries of a life/in God.” He awoke staring into the twin mysteries, thereyes, of a servant, one with a life devoted to God. This life was mysterious from the point of view of Levine, who worked on Sunday serving slumped mailbags full of grief. He then drifts back into sleep with thoughts of the life of God in his head: “When I fell back/into my light sleep I saw/a great clear river running/between the houses I knew.” This can be thought of as a vision of pure happiness. He saw “Those [he]/loved climbing a high hill/toward a new sun.” This dream contains no mailbags or grief; this is a dream of a life in God. A dream is all that it is, though, for in the next section of the poem, the bus driver at his stop awakens Levine, who steps “lightly into the world,/ [his] shoulders hunched, [his] collar/turned up against the hour,” and “The new spring winds groaned/around [him], the distant light/of no new star marked [him] home.” Even after the dream of a life in God, and the encounter with the woman, his life is unchanged. It is cold, dark, and undirected as before. No miracles will mark this life, only the hardships of getting by.

“By now the virtues of Philip Levine’s poetry are well known: his poems are deeply humane” states critic David St. John, and “they are eloquently persuasive in their

convictions, both personal and political; and they are fiercely concerned with their accessibility to unacademic readers” (272). This fierce concern drives Levine in “Animals Are Passing From Our Lives,” which makes the reader think of a political satire such as George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, in which he uses animals to portray the players in the Russian Revolution. However, in “Animals Are Passing from Our Lives,” Levine uses a more hidden problem. In the first section of the poem, Levine gives us a blunt description of a pig, in its own words: “It’s wonderful how I jog/on four honed-down ivory toes.” This is possibly an older pig due to the worn down toes and obviously a large one, too, because “[its] massive buttocks [are] slipping/like oiled parts with each light step.” This description of a greasy pig then makes a turn as the hog thinks about the upcoming slaughter. “I’m to market,” the pig thinks. “I can smell/the sour grooved block, I can smell/ the blade that opens the hole/and the pudgy white fingers/that shake out the intestines/like a hankie.”

Levine’s grotesque description of rubber glove toting meat cutters, in the eyes of the meat to be cut, makes the reader almost fearful for the poor hog. As the pig moves along in the line, closer to its own end, it goes to recall its dreams in which the “snouts drool on the marble,/suffering children, suffering flies,/suffering the consumers/who won’t meet their steady eyes.” This gives the reader a closer look at the suffering of the pig. Children constantly are annoying them at farms or even petting zoos and the word “suffering” paints a picture of children dressing them up in pig clothing or taunting and torturing them. Suffering flies is nothing new to pigs, but at the slaughter after the hogs have met their maker, they can no longer swat the flies away and the suffering, as if they could feel, is worse. The snouts suffer the consumers who use the pork everyday and never think twice, but this pig feels that if the consumers had to look into the eyes of the pig, the story may be different.

As the slaughter continues, the pig starts to become angry, for obvious reasons, and begins to defy its own end. “The boy/who drives me along believes/that at any moment I’ll fall,” the pig utters, “Or that I’ll turn like a beast/cleverly to hook his teeth/with my teeth.” The misunderstanding between the boy and the pig is revealed when the pig declares “No. Not this pig.” The pig, up

until the end, stands up to its death, going out with "honor," but after the smoke has cleared, the pig will end up as someone's side of bacon. In the poem, the boy thinks that the pig will fight back, but this pig is different. This pig doesn't fight back; it gives up, and because it gives up, it has no chance of surviving. The title "Animals Are Passing from Our Lives" gives the reader a sad feeling, almost like someone passing away. Philip Levine is showing us the sad reality of life. People are giving up and going out without a fight, according to Levine. With this poem, he shows us that going out without a fight (with honor) is not the way to go. We need to fight back against the everyday problems of life, and it is better to go out trying than to willingly be someone's breakfast.

According to Ralph Mills, "A firm grip on existence itself takes priority for Levine... though with it necessarily comes an acceptance of pain and the admission that failure, defeat, and imperfection—but not surrender!—are unavoidable in men's affairs" (252). Philip Levine's writing is not only poetry, but a tool, a tool used to decode the thoughts and feelings of a people who do not speak out. Philip Levine's poetry, giving a voice to the voiceless, puts into perspective the lives of the lower-class blue-collar American in a way that it can be understood by all. He writes for the Americans who work Sundays and take no breaks and the Americans who are constantly fighting to break barriers, whether they are from prejudice or communication. Levine writes for those who do not give up, no matter how poor, or oppressed—those who keep waking up, and keep polishing, and keep working overtime, so they can make it.

Works Cited

- Hosmer, Robert. "What We See and Feel and Are." *Poetry Criticism*. Ed. Laura Wisner-Broyles. Vol. 22. Detroit: Gale Research, 1999. 220-21.
- Levine, Philip. *Not This Pig*. Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. 1968.
- Levine, Philip. *What Work Is*. New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1994.
- Mills, Ralph J. *Cry of the Human*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press. 1975.
- Novak, Michael Paul. "Philip Levine." *Critical Survey of Poetry*. Ed. Frank N. Magill. Rev. ed. Pasadena, California: Salem Press, 1992. 1988-1995.
- "Philip Levine." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Daniel G. Marowski and Jean C. Stine. Vol. 33. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985. 270.
- Spender, Stephen. "Can Poetry be Reviewed?" *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Carolyn Riley. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975. 287.
- St. John, David. "Raised Voices in the Choir: A Review of 1981 Poetry Selections." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Daniel G. Marowski and Jean C. Stine. Vol. 33. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985. 272-73.
- Stitt, Peter. "The Sincere, the Mythic, the Playful: Forms of Voice in Current Poetry." *Poetry Criticism*. Ed. Laura Wisner-Broyles. Vol. 22. Detroit: Gale Research, 1999. 218-19.

Evaluation: Ryan nicely synthesizes his analysis of Philip Levine's poems with the scant critical material available to present a clear and accurate view of a major theme running through this poet's work. The detailed presentations of Ryan's readings of these poems make this paper especially enjoyable.

Rock and Rot?

Penelope Skrzynski
Course: English 101
Instructor: Tryg Thoreson

Assignment:
*Write a response to Allan Bloom's condemnation of
rock music in "Is Rock Music Rotting Our Kids' Minds?"*

"Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company; gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers." Is this scathing commentary on the deplorable behavior of young people from today's newspaper headlines? Or perhaps from a modern government study? No, Socrates wrote this denunciation of young people's behavior in the fifth century BC.

Every generation despairs of its youth; every generation finds something to blame. In the fifties parents were appalled by Elvis Presley's hips. Such suggestive behavior in public was quite extreme by the mores of the time. Today young people offend their elders with wild hairstyles, body piercing and the explicitly sexual lyrics and

violent images of "gangsta rap." Allan Bloom blames rock and roll music for ruining young people's imaginations.

Bloom claims that *all* young people listen obsessively *only* to rock music. Such sweeping generalizations hardly prove his point. First, not all young people listen to rock music; my little brother, as just one example, prefers classical music and New Age jazz. I myself enjoy the more lively of classical pieces, with a good mix of rock, New Age jazz and almost anything by Weird Al Yankovic. Second, "rock and roll" is a rather large, general category, ranging from the sweet ballads of Peter, Paul and Mary through the vibrant social commentary of Billy Joel and Elton John to the heavy metal of Kiss. There isn't a single song that identically impacts all listeners; and not all rock music is the same.

Dr. Frank Palumbo, of the American Academy of Pediatrics, when testifying on the social impact of music violence before a Senate subcommittee, stated that "To date, no studies have documented a cause-and-effect relationship between sexually explicit or violent lyrics and adverse behavioral effects, i.e., I'll listen to a song about killing someone and therefore I go out and kill." Children are not potatoes, mashed into mindlessness by music of any kind. As Frank Zappa once said, "There are more love songs than anything else. If songs could make you do something we'd all love one another." The foundation of Bloom's position is weak and insubstantial, leaving his ranting faltering in the breeze.

Any field of endeavor has a wide range of accomplishments; anything can be done to excess or used for inspiration. Out of all the music produced, a good amount is crude. But then, out of everything produced, much will be crude, whether it's writing or cars or paintings or whatever. Music inspires! Sometimes what it inspires is disgust or apathy; this is true of any type of music, from classical to jazz to, yes, rock and roll. As a child, I attended a cousin's classical piano concert. One piece he played began with just one note being played over and over; I wanted to run from the room! Despite that, there is plenty of classical music that I like. Likewise, rock and roll songs range from exhilarating to dull, from inspiring to disgusting.

"The history of a people is found in its songs," states opera critic George Jellinek, host of radio's "The Vocal

Scene." Our history is rarely pretty and pristine; our music reflects the abundant variety of life experiences. Bloom, however, presents that all rock music dooms imagination. Not mine! When I draw, dance or sing, rock music is a frequent companion. Artistic expression resides in the soul; the powerful beat of rock and roll music can push feelings out of the buried depths. This doesn't require the sexual ecstasy on which Bloom seems fixated.

And why does Bloom think only beautiful people with beautiful bodies can express beauty and nobility? Few people fit society's standards of beauty in any age. Even today's super-models are not as beautiful as they appear in print; air-brushing repairs many a flaw, and models must spend hours of every day working on their appearance. How does this express nobility? This offensive concept shows me that Bloom's mind is as closed as he claims modern youths' minds to be.

I agree that a liberal education enriches a person's life. I whole-heartedly disagree that rock music will or even can deprive all our young people of their imaginations.

Works Consulted

Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.

Evaluation: *Penelope effectively combines memorable supporting material with a vivid, articulate style.*

A Museful Journey

Richard N. Stanish
Course: English 102
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:
Write a detailed analysis of a poem.

In the short poem, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” Robert Frost writes literally about a moment of abeyance during a horse-drawn ride within a wintery landscape. In a deeper context, Frost symbolically enlightens willful readers as he cajoles them to take their own imaginative journey and affirm the existence of life’s perpetual peregrination and contemplation of self. Whether by design, or by the very nature of his tranquil subject matter, Frost ingeniously uses symbolism to create awareness of a human condition that individual readers will perhaps interpret as a brief, emotional epiphany, as a deliberation along the path of personal spirituality, or as a cogitational conflict at an intersection on the road to fulfill one’s self-identity. Frost confirms an eternal reality of life itself, that the common thread of passage and introspection is woven through us all. Frost allegorically shows us how the course of life includes moments of cessation adjacent the corridor to our final destination, which can be both wonderfully comforting and potentially frightening.

In the first section of the poem, Frost plainly describes stopping by woods to watch them fill up with snow. However, the author initially reveals the possibility that the woods have a more prominent meaning to the narrator of the poem. In the first line, the narrator says, “Whose woods these are I think I know,” implying that the narrator has familiarity with the woods, and that he also knows the owner of the woods. In the second, third, and fourth lines, Frost establishes that the narrator knows the owner of the woods by saying, *He* will not see me stopping by *his* woods: *his* house is in the village. The narrator informs the reader that the owner is somewhere beyond the woods—at a destination among a cosmos of people. In this first stanza, Frost prepares a premise for the understone of the poem by suggesting that readers see the forest for the trees. Interestingly, mother nature’s woods share the same duality as Frost’s woods. They can be beautiful and peaceful and mysterious and frightening at the same time. In one critical analysis, Malcolm Cowley states that “The woods play a curious part in Frost’s poems; they seem to be his symbol for the uncharted country within ourselves, full of possible beauty, but also full of horror” (43). When viewed figuratively, Frost’s woods appear to be a symbolic zone of

limbo preceding a route to a final destination, or maybe an area within the subconscious self that represents a moment of reflection at an intersection in an individual's life cycle.

As a reference point between the passage of life to death, Frost's woods could also be a place like purgatory, or limbo, on the way to a place of God. To strengthen this concept, Frost uses the pronouns "he" and "his" as possible references to God or to the narrator himself. Equally supportive is the falling snow, which is often thought of as serene. Watching snowfall almost seems to suspend time itself, much like personal reflection or day-dreaming. Frost's masterful introduction of symbolic items such as the woods, personal pronoun references, and the snow all exemplify allegoric representations comprising the inner self—or spiritual inner space. Throughout the rest of the poem, it becomes more obvious that the dualistic concept evident in Frost's literal woods lends itself perfectly to a figurative representation of the inner depths of subconscious reflection and the unsettling dark area between positive and negative, or even life and death itself.

In the second stanza, Frost gives the reader further indication about the meaning of his poem when he has the narrator say that his horse "must think it queer/To stop without a farmhouse near." Beginning with this first line, Frost's dialogue informs the reader about the narrator's perplexity with stopping in the middle of no-man's-land on the way to a destination. The fact that the narrator *thinks* that his horse *thinks* it is unusual to stop is evidence of his own belief. If readers presume that Frost's poem represents a conflict of self, then the horse may represent the part of self that is the motivational force which drives us to our destination. Frost uses this section of the poem to predicate his concept about the contemplation of self, or the contemplation about traveling through the cycle of life to death. The author cleverly paints images of a farmhouse, the woods, a frozen lake, and the "darkest evening of the year" to create a landscape which figuratively presents the individual self in its entirety. The narrator's mention of a farmhouse presents it as if it were an oasis or safe haven. Of course, a farm would be a haven for the horse who resides there, but it's more likely a place of destiny that completes the self-

identification or self-representation of the narrator. A farmhouse is usually a human habitation that is an oasis of humanity in an expanse of unpopulated, undeveloped, open country. If the woods in Frost's poems are symbolic of "the uncharted country within ourselves," as Cowley suggests, then the farmhouse in the second stanza could be said to represent the outer, conscious part of our individual, human self. The farmhouse may even symbolize an individual being himself instead of being like others, which would be represented by being part of "the village." If this is the case, it makes sense that the frozen lake symbolizes the individual part of self that equates to the depths of our past experiences which accumulate like water in a lake. Our past experiences, representing the gray areas of subconscious decision, and the outer self we project ourselves to be, comprise the wholeness of self. Similar to the frozen lake, each individual's past is locked like ice, and frozen in time, and it is part of the inner depths of the darkest area within his subconscious self. Frost's point in the second stanza illuminates the fact that even though most of us live amongst other people, we are by ourselves in our own world, and we are alone in our own darkness to make decisions.

Frost starts the third stanza of the poem by reaffirming the narrator's curious moment of pause, and he highlights the condition of self-awareness through an instant of the narrator's awakening. It is the section of the poem where Frost provides evidence of separation between the conscious self and the subconscious self. In the first line, the narrator recalls, "He gives his harness bells a shake/To ask if there is some mistake." The narrator hears the sound of the harness bells, which represent *his voices* from the part of his conscious world. This is the part of him that wants him to move onward, or as *he* would have it, to fulfill his destiny. In contrast, the author opposes the sound of bells with only "the sweep/Of easy wind and downy flake." Again, Frost brilliantly polarizes a feeling of calmness and restfulness against the background of awareness and restless reality. This polarization also resembles the inner part of consciousness versus the outer, spirituality of the soul versus the nonspiritual ("soul searching"), or quite feasibly, death pitted against life. The comparison Frost provokes with his prose in the third stanza easily parallels the con-

trariety of the human condition. There are definite boundaries that exist within the separation of self, within the spirit of our souls, and within life and death. If the horse is the narrator's motivational force, then Frost's application of the pronoun "He" in the first line of the third stanza surely could be perceived as a covert reference to the narrator's ego, or God. If it is God, surely God wants us to fulfill our destiny He has given us. However, it's not conclusive whether Frost is simply making a statement about the condition of human ponderance of self, of spirituality, or of life and death. Frost's proposition leaves readers with the realization that they are alone in their own imaginative journey to decide for themselves.

In the final section of the poem, Frost completes the ponderance of the narrator. The narrator recognizes where he is at and where he must go. The narrator says the woods are "lovely, dark, and deep," but he decides that he cannot stay there. He has other things to accomplish. He has "promises to keep," and he has a long way to go before he can be content with a rest. When Frost concludes his poem, he drives home the wholeness of his message by stating the reality of human consequence with his words, "And miles to go before I sleep." This statement epitomizes the essence of human existence which encompasses the development of self, the evolution of spirituality, and the time-traveled process of life through death. It's unknown whether Frost is stating that the solitude of the inner self is "lovely, dark, and deep," or if he is referring to the final completeness of death by associating the conclusion of his poem with sleep. Sleep, of course, can be viewed as the finality of life, or it can also be seen as the area of subconscious reality where life is recharged through restful dreams. It does not matter though, because Frost's symbolism in this poem is what the reader makes of it. And as we know, what individuals make of circumstances in their lives is the truism of life's reality for everyone. Life is what you make of it, and every individual's travel through life is full of pauses, examination, and continuation.

In conclusion, Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" has intrinsic qualities that are applicable to the rawest elements of human existence. Some might say that Frost's poem is about contemplation of suicide. Whether the poem is about reflection involving self, spirituality, or life and life after death, with his literal and figurative explanation of passage and introspection, Frost weaves a tale that forms the basic fabric of existence.

Works Cited

- Cowley, Malcolm. "The Case Against Mr. Frost." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962. 36-45.
- Frost, Robert. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. Ed. Edward Connery Lathem. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. 224-25.

Evaluation: *I enjoyed this paper for its depth of thought, represented not only through its mature diction and logic, but through the writer's careful consideration of various interpretations of this poem and development of a synthesis that accounts for all of them. The activity of a careful and considerate interpretive mind is evident throughout this paper.*

The Aeneid: Virgil's Commentary on the History of Rome and Carthage

Karen Starke

Course: Literature 206

Instructor: Richard Johnson

Assignment:

*Write an original literary research paper
using at least three outside sources.*

"A glance a stern showed luckless Dido's walls
glowing with flame. What set a fire so vast
could not be seen—but passion wronged means pain
intense, and woman's fury has a power
men know: grim augury for Trojan hearts." (*Aeneid* 5.3-7)

Aeneas must have had mixed emotions as he looked back on Carthage. Virgil also must have had mixed emotions as he sat down to chronicle the story of Rome. Virgil was a poet, not a soldier, yet this mission was to glorify a history of foreign and civil wars. Virgil spent years working on his epic, and then requested that it be destroyed at his death. There are conflicting views of his characters as well: Dido is either the tragic victim or the cause of her own ruin; Aeneas is either an epic hero or a luckless buffoon.

As Virgil begins writing his epic, Rome is embarking on a Golden Age of peace under the leadership of Augustus. Although *The Aeneid* may be interpreted as a propaganda piece that espouses the founding of Rome

and the divine ancestry of Augustus, *The Aeneid* may also be seen as a testament to Virgil's lack of faith in the continuation of the Augustan peace. By first examining Aeneas, then Dido, and finally the war between Carthage and Rome, it will become clear that Virgil uses these two characters to personify the war between Carthage and Rome, giving his audience insight into the hearts of the soldiers bound by duty, as well as insight into the hearts of the conquered.

Aeneas

"Virgil does not go in much for character sketches, but usually lets one deduce the traits of his people from the adjectives with which he describes them and the words he puts in their mouths, and of course their actions" (Michels 400). However, it is evident that Virgil is very deliberate in his characterization of Aeneas. Virgil chooses to portray Aeneas as a lost soul and not the traditional hero one would expect in a heroic epic. He is often bewildered by the interference of the gods. He tends to follow along without taking charge of his fate. He is not associated with a traditional definition of wisdom. His wisdom takes the form of his obedience to the advice and prodding of the gods, oracles, ghosts and occasionally the advice of another human being. Critics often think of him as a brave, persistent person, but Virgil rarely defines him as such. Aeneas is a straightforward kind of person and his only deceitful act takes place when he gets the fleet ready to leave Carthage without telling Dido.

It is impossible to look at Aeneas without looking at the influence of his family. His mother, Venus, is the ancestral mother of the Romans. She has grand ambitions for her son, and he is affected by these ambitions. There is no openly expressed affection between Venus and Aeneas as, for example, there is between Thetis and Achilles. It appears that Venus' maternal affection has been displaced by her ambition. There is little sentimental attachment between the two, which is consistent with Roman customs. Parents were more likely to celebrate once their child had reached adulthood, due to the high incidence of mortality among children of the day. Venus follows the Roman custom of giving first priority to her son's rights even after she marries another, when she uses her charms to persuade Vulcan to forge arms for Aeneas. In some ways, she is a typical Roman mother.

It is Venus who first prepares Aeneas to meet Dido. She appears to him disguised as a young girl and tells Aeneas the history of Dido. She creates the image of a woman who has experienced great tragedies in her life, yet has turned these tragedies to triumph. For Aeneas, there is an inescapable attraction to Dido's achievement when compared to the elusiveness of his own destiny. It is worth noting that even as Aeneas feels deceived by his mother's disguise, he is still easily drawn into her plans. He cries,

"What? Your son? Again so heartless to mock him—
you, too—with empty shows? Why was your hand
not laid in mine? Why could we not speak true?"
(*Aeneid* 1.407-409)

Aeneas then turns to Carthage, protected by a mist with which Venus has enshrouded him so that he will not be deterred from meeting Dido.

Aeneas is the personification of all things Roman. Most of all, he represents the Roman sense of duty. From the moment he takes his father, Anchises, on his shoulders during the escape from Troy's demise, Aeneas takes on the duty of finding a new home for his people. Aeneas is burdened with his past, wishing he had died at Troy with his comrades, just as he is burdened with carrying his father on his shoulders. He musters the strength to found a new Troy from his loving memories of the old Troy. He preserves the image and heroic glory of Troy, just as he saves its gods, but there will always be a lost quality about Aeneas because for him, Troy will always remain fallen. The family unit of Anchises, Aeneas, and Ascanius embodies the past, present, and future. For Aeneas, Anchises is a living symbol of his past, and he guides Aeneas to his re-commitment to his destiny. It is Anchises in Hades who says to his son:

"Now you shall see the glory that awaits
the children of Troy and their Italian sons—
all souls of splendor, who shall bear our name.
Hear their story, and learn your destiny."
(*Aeneid* 6.765-769)

If Anchises is his past, Ascanius is the future. When Aeneas meets Dido and ascertains that the Trojans will be welcome in Carthage, his first thought is for his son, much as all his actions are for Ascanius' future. Mercury is able to play on Aeneas' emotions and push him towards his destiny by using Ascanius. Mercury rebukes

Aeneas:

If nothing of promised glory moves your heart,
and for your own renown you'll spend not toil,
what of your son? He's growing! Your heir, Iulus:
what of his hopes? A kingdom—Italy—Rome:
these are his due! (*Aeneid* 4.272-276)

Reminded of his duty to Ascanius' future, Aeneas sets in motion the events that cause Carthage's ruin. Aeneas is always a victim of his fate. His ultimate destiny is always something beyond himself and his personal desires—establishing a place in the world for his son, founding the empire of Rome.

Aeneas is an unlikely hero. He is not a bold, courageous individual such as one would expect in an epic written to praise the achievements of an empire. Virgil seems to express his own ambivalence to the task of glorifying Roman history by creating a founding father who is flawed. He is easily deceived, easily persuaded, and in general, is a less-than-admirable hero. He uses his duty as an excuse not to take responsibility for his affair with Dido. He is afraid of the woman, and goes behind her back to prepare to leave Carthage. Without his ultimate mission, a man with conflicting emotions would remain, and there would not be much to recommend Aeneas to the Roman reader. One wonders if Virgil felt that without driving ambition, there would be nothing to recommend Rome to future generations.

Virgil must devise a means of discussing these reasons behind the enmity between Carthage and Rome. Aeneas must be able to display emotion to be able to enter into the relationship with Dido that eventually symbolizes the relationship between Rome and Carthage. Yet is Aeneas truly capable of emotion? He is devoted to his family. He genuinely grieves the loss of his wife Creusa and he seems to hold a strong sense of devotion to his followers. He rarely experiences joy and when he does, it is usually only in the transitory sense. He finds a short-lived joy with Dido, but this is not fated to last. He accepts her gifts and settles in to help her build her city until Mercury reminds him of his duty.

There is a certain ambiguity in Aeneas. His speech does not always match his innermost feelings, as when urging his men on to Italy after being separated at sea by the storm that Juno had Aeolus start: "He forced a smile and kept his sorrows hidden" (*Aeneid* 1.209). Regarding

Dido, there is evidence, especially when he sees her in the underworld, that he has some feelings for her. It appears that he is not so much moved by passion for her as by his compassion for her grief over her dead husband. He suffers because the gods do not allow him to stay and stand by her in her time of need. He must seek out his destiny. Even though it would be easy to label him emotionally bereft, he really is not a cold person. He would not suffer if he were truly indifferent. Virgil must create a viable human being for the reader to care about Aeneas' mission.

As *The Aeneid* continues, Aeneas exchanges his human past for the impersonal future that is Rome. He is no longer concerned with his own reputation or his own glory. He left personal ambitions behind him with the fall of Troy. He must live for tomorrow—with the death of Anchises his past no longer exists, and he is not fated to live in the present. Aeneas suffers from historical fate—destined to be the future of his people—and, as such, can never belong completely to the moment. When he does get caught up, a god is sent to remind him of his duty. When he rejects Dido due to pressure from Mercury, he sacrifices himself and his future with her partially out of fear from the appearance of the god before him, but mostly as an act of faith in the destiny of his people. He is spurred on by his mission to establish a place in the world for his gods, people, and son. It is odd, then, that he does not seem concerned with the distant future. In Hades, Aeneas learns from Anchises of the glory of his descendants in Rome. He does not use this information to motivate his people. In the end, Aeneas achieves his destiny but there is a terrible cost. He loses every human attachment except his attachment to Ascanius, which is his attachment to the future. The story of Aeneas is the story of the making of an empire, not the homage to an emperor that some critics claim it to be.

Dido

The reader is first drawn to Dido, as Aeneas is drawn to Dido, by Venus' description of her. She is a fugitive from her homeland, chased away by the evils of her monstrous brother. This brother has murdered her husband, and she has overcome the odds to lead her people to this land. She is referred to as "Dido the beautiful," and her regal bearing is extolled. She is judicious. She is

compassionate. She is everything a queen should be and nothing that a Roman reader would expect a Carthaginian queen to be. She is faithful to her dead husband. She has eschewed the advances of many men to maintain her oath of fidelity. Dido is "strangely Roman before her time in her fidelity and fortitude" (Porter and Burden 16). She also has a duty to her followers, but her heart is her main motivation in her relationships.

Dido is easily persuaded by what she wants to hear. In her conversation with her sister Anna, she tells of her attraction to Aeneas and of her intention to follow her vows. Her sister makes her aware of her duty to her people and shows her that Aeneas can further the progress of her city:

"I'm sure the gods have blessed the Trojan's course,
and Juno favored the wind that blew their ships.
Oh, what a city you'll see, what kingdoms rise,
with such a man! Allied with Trojan arms
Carthage will rise her glory to the sky." (*Aeneid* 4.45-40)

Dido is easily convinced that her sister is right and offers sacrifices and prayers to the gods to assuage her conscience as she decides to break her vows to her husband so as to fulfill her duty to her people.

Dido is inflamed by Aeneas' account of the fall of Troy. Her psychological fall parallels that of the fall of Troy specifically and ancient civilization in general. It is to her credit that she, a beautiful, single, competent woman, has withstood the pressures of so many suitors. Her hesitation to enter into a relationship with Aeneas is natural—she is, after all, still grieving the loss of her husband and Aeneas is a stranger. He is destined to become her downfall as Sinon, the stranger in Troy who unlocks the Trojan horse, is the downfall of Troy.

Dido is a pious worshipper of the gods but she has no idea of how Venus and Juno are manipulating her—especially when Venus has Cupid take Ascanius' place. Dido takes the child in her lap because he reminds her of his father. Venus uses Cupid to win Dido's affections for Aeneas because she fears that Juno's wrath will somehow come between Aeneas and his destiny. Juno has already done everything she possibly could to deter Aeneas and his men from reaching Italy. The gods even manipulate Dido's marriage to Aeneas. Without the intervention of Venus and Juno, the marriage would never have taken place. They act as two maternal figures arranging a

match between their children. Juno offers peace and the Tyrian people as a dowry. Venus accepts this bargain even though she perceives this offer as Juno's desire to forestall the founding of Rome. Venus' plans for her son are nothing less than Roman domination through his line. Dido would not have given in to passion and defiled her vow of fidelity to Sychaeus were it not for the gods' interference. Even in death, it is Juno who determines Dido's release from torment:

"Then Juno in pity for her lingering pain
and laggard death, sent Iris down from heaven
to free her struggling soul from limbs entwined.
(For not at her earned and fated hour she died,
but in a flash of fury, before her days;
Prosperina had not yet cut the lock
from her head, nor sentenced her to life below.)
But Iris flew down, dewy and golden-winged,
trailing against the sun a thousand colors.
She stopped over Dido's head: 'This sacred lock
I carry to Dis, and from the flesh I free you.'
With that she cut the wisp, at once all warmth
dispersed, and life retreated to the winds."
(*Aeneid* 4.693-705)

Even as Juno releases Dido, the reader must remember that she is the cause of the torment.

Dido cannot see her place as it relates to Aeneas' mission clearly enough to modify her actions. Aeneas is destined to find success in his sacrifice of self, but Dido finds failure because she is unable to surrender herself to his destiny. Her madness hinges on the fact that she has violated her duty and she suffers from a guilty conscience. Her identity is wrapped up in her duty just as Aeneas' identity is wrapped up in his duty. When Aeneas leaves her, he destroys her. She lashes out, ranting and raging at Aeneas, because she has been deceived into choosing a path that should have brought her and her people glory but that has left her with nothing, not even a child by Aeneas to comfort her and to build her own empire on.

Romans had severe consequences for those who had broken their vows to the gods. They would have felt no sympathy for Dido once she broke her vow never to marry again. In their view, Dido was the aggressor in the marriage, which would have been seen as intolerable. The final madness and death that she succumbs to provides a justifiable end, just as the historical burning of Carthage was a justifiable end to the transgressions of the Carthaginians.

Dido is much more straightforward than Aeneas. Virgil's conflicting emotions regarding Roman history are present in Aeneas. Dido is meant to cast doubt on the Roman history of conflict with Carthage, and to fulfill this role, she must be written as a character that evokes the reader's sympathy.

Rome and Carthage: Virgil's Motivation

"Carthage was Rome's ancient enemy with whom she had fought three exhausting wars, ending in the total destruction of Carthage" (Guinagh xix). The contest for world dominion between Carthage and Rome is a basic theme throughout *The Aeneid*: specifically, Books One through Four, the Dido episodes, foreshadow the Punic Wars, and Books Nine through Twelve anticipate the Roman Civil Wars. After the Punic Wars and the urging of Cato to destroy Carthage, "Rome had a bad conscience about Carthage, so it is interesting that just as Virgil was embarking on the great pages of Dido's love for Aeneas, there were moves afoot in Rome to refound the city which Scipio had ploughed with salt" (Porter and Burden 16).

Historical change and uncertainty were part of Virgil's world as decades of civil war came to an end and the Augustan peace was on shaky ground. Virgil had to confront this historical change and the conflicts that contributed to this change if his true purpose in writing *The Aeneid* was to provide an alternative view of the creation of the Roman Empire. Virgil detested war and used his epic not as the propaganda poem that it was commissioned to be, but rather as a forum for voicing his ambivalence towards a history of violent conquests. Throughout *The Aeneid*, Rome's past achievements are recited, but Virgil insists on revealing the price that must be paid for these achievements. There is not only the human cost, but all heroic qualities—freedom, love, loyalty—are lost to the great impersonal Roman State. "Virgil's reaction to brutality of war and to the heroic code was no doubt the hypersensitive reaction of a man who had lived through and detested war: who had seen the cruel harm done on countless occasions by men believing they were dying nobly when they were throwing their lives away to no purpose" (Quinn 77).

Virgil viewed his purpose in writing *The Aeneid* as an attempt to cast aspersions on Roman history. Virgil

wanted Romans to view themselves through new eyes, seeing their own virtues in their enemies, and their enemies' faults in themselves. He strives to create compassion for the burning city of Carthage. He does this by creating sympathy for the Carthaginian Dido while portraying Aeneas as being finally corrupted by war to the point that he is worse than his enemies are. Dido deliberately comes across as the heroine, while Aeneas plays the cad. Her speeches ring true with passion whereas Aeneas' words are nothing more than sorry excuses. Using the drama between the two, Virgil persuades the reader that there are two sides to his story.

Hatred of Carthage was still a patriotic mainstay of Roman thought long after Carthage had been destroyed. Romans held several stereotypes for Carthaginians. They believed them to be faithless to their word, barbaric, and they believed that they had no religious scruples. To Romans, Carthage represented the worst traits of both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean world. They thought that Carthaginians were a people who lacked culture and that they were effeminate tricksters.

Dido becomes a sympathetic character to all who read her, whether Roman or not, because she is introduced as a confident, competent woman of regal bearing. The descriptions and impressions that Virgil offers regarding the cultural progress in Carthage would have been startling to a Roman reader. It would be extremely unsettling for Romans to read that Aeneas found hope for his people at the hands of the Carthaginians. Dido appears non-Punic. She is the complete opposite of Roman stereotypes for Carthaginians: "At every turn, Virgil offers his Roman audience a woman who fails to fulfill their prejudices" (Starks 260). Virgil further quells the impulse to label Dido a crafty Carthaginian by casting Venus and Juno as the tricksters. By allowing Aeneas to be an ineffectual character, Virgil creates sympathy for Dido. Dido's passionate accusation of the faithless Aeneas actually directs the reader's sympathies to her and casts the stereotypes that the Romans held for her people back on Aeneas. He becomes the faithless one.

The only occasion when Dido conforms to the Punic stereotype is when she breaks her vow to remain faithful to her dead husband; however, she becomes her own judge, jury, and executioner of that act of infidelity, leaving the reader with a profound impression of her integrity. Even her lapse into violent and even abhorrent thoughts of retribution is forgiven because of the sympathy generated for this extraordinary woman:

"Why couldn't I hack his flesh, tear it, and strew the sea with it? Slaughter his people and his son—serve up Ascanius at his father's table?" (*Aeneid* 4.600-602)

In a final act of desperation, Dido offers her final curse:

"This is my final prayer, poured with my blood.
And you, my Tyrians, hate his race, his kind,
all and always. On my remains bestow
this office: no love, no peace between our peoples!"
(*Aeneid* 4.621-635)

War is inevitable because of the ultimate duty of the Roman Aeneas. Dido's long preparation for and final act of suicide is symbolic of the final destruction of Carthage.

Final Thoughts

There is an air of hopelessness about *The Aeneid* that is in direct contrast to what a propaganda piece extolling the virtues of an empire should be. Virgil is a master at creating a work that on the surface chronicles the history of a glorious empire, but underneath conveys an attitude that is at odds with what that history represents. Virgil's greatest success lies in his ability to create sympathy for an enemy and force his reader to reconsider their views of war and conflict. By giving the historical conflict of Rome and Carthage the human faces of Aeneas and Dido, he asks his Roman audience to remove their patriotic blinders and re-evaluate the part that the creation of a Roman Empire has played in history. To the generations that follow Virgil, his gift is *The Aeneid*, a lens through which to view all subsequent empires.

Works Consulted

- Bono, BarbaratJ. "The Dido Episode." *Modern Critical Interpretations: Virgil's The Aeneid*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
- Clausen, Wendell. "An Interpretation of *The Aeneid*." *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Steele Commager. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Greene, Thomas. "The Descent From Heaven: Virgil." *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Guinagh, Kevin. Introduction. *The Aeneid of Virgil*. Trans. Kevin Guinagh. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.
- Hunt, J. William. "Labyrinthine Ways." *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Johnson, W. R. "Depths and Surfaces." *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
- Johnson, W. R. "The Worlds Virgil Lived In." *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Laird, Andrew. "Approaching Characterization in Virgil." *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Ed. Charles Martindale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Leach, Eleanor Winsor. "Venus, Thetis, and the Social Construction of Maternal Behavior." *The Classical Journal*, vol. 92 (April/May 1997): 347-71.
- Michels, Agnes Kirsopp. "The Many Faces of Aeneas." *The Classical Journal*, vol. 92 (April/May 1997): 399-416.
- Parry, Adam. "The Two Voices of Virgil's 'Aeneid.'" *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Porter, Peter and Michael Burden. "A Woman Scorn'd— Responses to the Dido Myth." *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4995 (1998): 16.
- Poschl, Viktor. "Aeneas." *Modern Critical Interpretations: Virgil's The Aeneid*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
- Poschl, Viktor. "Basic Themes." *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Steele Commager. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Quinn, Kenneth. "Did Virgil Fail?" *Modern Critical Views: Virgil*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.
- Starks, John H. "Fides Aeneia: The Transference of Punic Stereotypes in *The Aeneid*." *The Classical Journal*, vol. 94 (February/March 1999): 255-283.
- Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Frank O. Copley. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965.
- Virgil. *The Aeneid of Virgil*. Trans. Kevin Guinagh. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.
- Zetzel, James E. "Rome and Its Traditions." *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Ed. Charles Martindale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Evaluation: *Ms. Starke's paper is the fine product of solid literary analysis, keen historical insight, and sound research. Her well-organized essay makes her subject matter come alive for the reader, leading him from the ramparts of Carthage to the cow-paths of early Rome.*

"I Know a Bank Where the Wild Thyme Blows"¹

Julie Threlfall
Course: English 101
Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:
Write an informal report.

The advertisement read: "Country living without restrictions. Horses, cows, goats, chickens, pigs, etc. are all welcome! Nine plus acres could be turned into the peaceable kingdom. Fruit trees, grapes, garden spots, mountain views are all here. An old house that could be restored and many outbuildings are on the property." Intrigued, my husband and I decided to see this promised jewel for ourselves. The moment we stepped out of the car, we understood why the Cherokee people two centuries before us had believed this place to be sacred; we immediately felt its spirit of power and peace surrounding us. We had come home.

Dun Clunaigh, Gaelic for "Hilltop Meadow," is the name we have chosen for our "peaceable kingdom." It lies between Lake Adger and Lake Lure and is cradled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Movie-goers enjoyed close-up views of the landscape in *Last of the Mohicans*, filmed nearby. Chimney Rock, a landmark chimney of molten rock, rises 2,200 feet above Lake Lure, 7 miles to the north.

Adjoining 17,000 acres of state game lands, the property is neighbor to a thriving population of white-tailed deer, black bear, fox, coyote and red wolf. Rabbits scamper and raccoons waddle through the brush; quail, pheasant and grouse nest in lush thickets. Opossum live in the trees, and beaver and otter disport in the nearby streams and ponds. Deer live in their beds in the woods and tarry in our apple orchard. Cardinals and Carolina Bluebirds dart to and fro or sit on the branches of the pine trees and fill the air with their duel of song and whistle. Hawks quietly circle, and if you keep a sharp eye out, you occasionally will spot an eagle.

Our western view is a panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Cherokee called these mountains "the blue wall," dividing their domain from that of the neighboring Catawba tribe. Weathered by eons of rain and wind, the mountains are a gracefully undulating chain rising out of a thick mist rolling up from the hollows. An aura of timeless continuity settles your spirit and creates peace of mind.

The land is rich, brown soil. Thirty-seven inches of deep, sandy clay loam lead to the subsoil of Saprolite—a loose, nutritive residual of the bedrock that lies below and forms the land's foundation. Assisted by the temper-

¹This line is from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: act 2, scene 1, line 249.

ate climate, this fertile ground will produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as hardy pastures of alfalfa, tall fescue and orchardgrass, legumes and several types of clover. Remains of apple and peach orchards, wild thyme and ginseng, untended vineyards, unrestrained riotous roses and wild strawberries attest to the bounty once harvested from this land, and hint at the possibility for its future.

The mild, warm atmosphere that engulfs the property and extends its growing season is the result of an inversion of air influenced by the Gulf Stream off North Carolina's East Coast and the mountain range to the property's west. This phenomenon is the Isothermal Belt, and moderation is the key word in describing its weather. Summers are long. Temperatures range from seventy-six to eighty-eight degrees from May through September, and lows in January average about forty-two degrees. The temperate autumns and springs are uncommonly beautiful in our foothills, providing vibrant displays of color in autumn and an abundance of wildflowers at winter's end. The early springtime is a glorious burst of the rhododendron, mountain laurel, and azalea that furnish cover for newly born creatures who make their homes in the dense undergrowth. However, the isothermal warmth and the fertile soil are not enough; Dun Clunaigh requires love and care to reclaim its former richness.

The land's previous owners cut and sold acres of trees, and left branches and stumps strewn across the pasture to give silent testimony to the grove that once shaded the stable. They slashed and burned, leaving charred remains and scorched patches scattered across the land, like the remains of valiant warriors in the aftermath of battle. They ran goats in the rich pasture: goats that stripped the bark from the few remaining trees and severely damaged the trampled grasses and clover. The former owners did not rotate the goats' pastures, nor did they care for the one being used. Trash, boards with rusted nails, and innumerable empty beer cans—remains of marathon parties—littered the floor of the property's historic cabin.

After living there for three years, they listed the property for sale; the land's potential for abundance survived because it had been in excellent condition when they bought it. It had been part of the estate of a man who

also had felt its spirit of peace and power. He had lived there for over fifty years in the 120-year-old cabin built when the Cherokee inhabited the mountains and lakeshores. The cabin still stands on our ridge overlooking the ridge called Wildcat Spur. Our discovery of a cache of Victrola records, buried under the litter and debris in the cabin, invoked the ghost of the man who spent wintry evenings indoors, whittling in a rocking chair by his hearth, and enjoying the crackling of the fire, the chirping of the crickets, and the smooth tenor of Enrico Caruso.

The old man continually supplemented the natural richness of the soil with bounty from his large compost pile. The site is still fenced and waiting beyond the stable. Also still standing is the spacious chicken coop where he housed his brood. He raised pigs the way hill people did years ago by allowing them to feast on the forage of the forest, on the walnuts, hickory nuts, and acorns from his trees. In the fall he slaughtered the fattened pigs and smoked the meat in his smokehouse with wood from the old hickory or apple trees that no longer produce fruit. He sold the excess eggs, fruit and crops. Out of this acreage, he carved an independence.

These are the echoes of Dun Clunaigh's past and the promises for its future. New blight-resistant, Asian-American crossbred chestnut trees now stand proxy for long-dead native trees, victims of the 1950's outbreak of the Chestnut Blight. Added paper-shell pecan and Carpathian walnut trees will grow between the old English walnut tree and the new chestnut trees: the beginning of a moderate nut grove. The old apple and peach trees revived a bit after this year's care and pruning. Next year's new trees will carry on the orchard's cycle, and include the antique apple varieties of Sheepnose, Sops of Wine, Snow Apple, and Roxbury Russet, augmented with Sungold apricots, Burre Bosc pears, and White Champion peaches. The site of the woody remains of Concord grape vines will boast new vines of sweet Reliance Red clusters. A colony of bees will be busy in their new home at the orchard's perimeter. Newly sown sweet clover, alfalfa and fescue grass will take root in a small pasture, now cleared of its debris, in preparation for horses who will make the hilltop meadow their home.

By acquiring five adjacent and wooded acres, we provided Dun Clunaigh with a small, private forest. Soon we will remove the stumps from the old, large pasture, and build a new smokehouse. A spring-fed pond will shimmer in what is now a low, muddy spot at the bottom of the ridge, and will provide refreshment to the creatures of the neighboring game lands. The compost pile will again nourish a berry patch and kitchen garden: strawberries, blueberries and black raspberries; Blue Lake green beans; zucchini and acorn squash; English peas; healthful, red Moreton tomatoes; Sweet Symphony bi-colored corn; small, orange Spookie pumpkins for rich, spicy pies. Sage, ginseng, rosemary, lavender, thyme, chives and chamomile will flourish in the herb garden.

Dun Clunaigh was once the bountiful home of a man who loved his land, and lived in comfortable compatibility with the sacred spirit of life whispering in the breeze—the spirit whose voice is still audible in the wind that rustles the leaves and keens through the glens. The aura of timelessness lingers in the morning's smoky blue mists that rise from the hollows. Shadows of Cherokee braves and their families seem to flicker on the shores of Lake Adger and Lake Lure, and the clear midsummer night sky glows with a thick glory of stars. If you listen carefully in the twilight, you can hear the echoing strains of a Victrola and an old man's sigh of contentment.

Evaluation: Julie Threlfall well illustrates that informal writing can be just as vivid and "creative" as any novel or short story. And her varied, well-focused, emphatic sentences provide lesson upon lesson in how to write effectively.

Time to Say Goodbye

Dawn Uza

Course: English 101 (Honors)

Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay.

My mom and I drive to my aunt and uncle's house. The air in the car tingles with nervous electricity. Out the window I stare, glad, for once, to be listening to my mom's light rock station. With Air Supply and Carpenters songs playing, I worry about not associating any of my usual tunes with this day. The drive is short, but I wish it had been longer. Can one ever have enough time to prepare to visit someone about to die?

Sudden: that is the way of death with which I have been familiar. I found myself, in previous experiences, wishing I had more time: time to say what I had learned and loved about that person; time to say a thank you; time to say a goodbye. Time is what I wished for. Now I have that time, but am left confused, overwhelmed, and afraid. What will I say? How will I say it? Will I be able to look at him, the life of every party, the great teller of jokes, the epitome of a gentleman, and hide the way my heart is breaking?

I wipe moist palms on faded jeans as we approach their front door. The trees, tall and unconcerned, do not bow their heads with grief. Their aloofness is offensive. I take in a deep breath, and my aunt welcomes us at the door. She says that Wil, her husband, is resting. Her smile is triggered as she tries to be strong for us. Necessity masquerades the despair that must be inside her. *I can't imagine watching your husband deteriorate by the hour.* The three of us speak for a short while in the front room. She and my mom smoke. Perhaps my aunt is mercifully giving us a moment to prepare. My attention turns to their courtyard, and I get lost in my thoughts, wondering if we will be having snow this Christmas. I snap out of my irrelevant daydream. What a stupid thing to think about now, while the man who could light up a room with his smile and make a woman of any age giggle like a little girl, succumbs to cancer. My ears tune into the conversation.

"If he stops breathing," my aunt explains, "they cannot resuscitate him. His bones will all break." They put out their cigarettes and we go to see Wil.

She leads us down the hallway. My pace is slowing. The air in front of me pushes me back. The air behind me pushes me forward. All the air becomes too thick to breathe. The hallway is longer than I ever remember it being. I trip over my trepidation.

"Honey," my aunt says, "you have visitors!"

The wrinkles that circle their eyes look like ripples of a pebble dropping in water. I sit on the edge of their bed, beside his hospital bed. The metal rails remind me of a zoo cage, separating the beautiful creature from the world he once knew. At first I do not touch him. As children, after all, we are taught not to reach into the cages.

I kiss the top of his hairless head and gently squeeze his hand. I compliment him on the lovely shape of his head. The conversation floats, each word dangling, disconnected. I make sure to monitor my comments. Remember to be cheerful. Don't ask *how are you?* We speak of school. I am reminded of what he told me when I, unsure of my choice, decided to return to college. He had leaned in close to me, put his hand squeezing my shoulder, and said, "You know what one of the saddest days of my life was?" He leaned closer, and with a lowered voice said, "It was the day I graduated from college!" He had then leaned back, with a beaming smile and twinkled blue eyes, and patted me on the back. He started to laugh and I then knew that I was making the right decision. How could anyone doubt eyes that sparkled so confidently? We speak of travel. I admire his worldliness, his having been places, such as Italy and France, which I dream of going to. He encourages me to pursue my goal of studying abroad, suggesting Denmark. We speak of this and that. *Do I sound as stupid as I feel?* I am so large and so small; so powerful, so weak. Sadness and happiness fight for the space inside me like territorial beasts. I am intelligent and wise, yet so naive to the ways of...of what? Of God? Of the world? I ponder life, death, and everything in between. Oh, and remember to smile.

I feel the relief of death in the room. If I sit here long enough, will it consume me, too? My aunt smiles at Wil and jokes as she helps him move his legs. He laughs. I cherish that sound, heard so frequently, accompanied by his jovial smile. Never before have I met anyone so sincerely interested in everyone, always making each person feel important, powerful, and beautiful. With the dedication of an aching athlete running the last mile of a marathon, my aunt lifts some water for him to sip. Perhaps she, like the runner, has been conditioned for this in some unspoken training. A moment later his eyes close. *Is he dead?*

I am not breathing.

My emotions revolve like merry-go-round horses. Wil's eyes open slightly and he says he needs to rest. It breathe again. It is time for us to go. Wil looks at me, looks *into* me. I quiver at his penetration, but welcome his unspoken wisdom. His eyes are bloodshot, but gentler than red...more like magenta. Wil always knows exactly what to say and when to say it, something I wish I could do now. I numbly rise. I cannot say *goodbye*. I cannot say *thank you*. I cannot say *I love you*. I cannot create words to mirror all that races inside me. Come late spring I cannot pick the last wildflower in the meadow. So, I smile and say, "I'll see you soon."

Evaluation: *Dawn's narrative dramatizes the power of small but telling details to reveal feelings and insights. In its spare economy, it also illustrates how good writing makes every word count.*

Who Burst the Ball?

Stoyan Vassilev

Course: Chemistry 121
Instructor: Barbara Weil

Assignment:

Write a short essay demonstrating how gas laws are related to your life.

When I was nine, my mind was possessed by the mania of becoming a soccer player: I trained painstakingly, I jogged every morning, and my room was covered by posters of soccer idols. But this obsession did not last very long—it was unexpectedly defeated by one painful, yet memorable, “accident.”

My uncle had just come back from Germany. I still remember his luminous face telling me: “And here is what I’ve got for the future soccer genius.” He had bought me a leather soccer ball with the words *FC Bayern* on it. It was the most remarkable present that I had been given, and by having a piece of shiny “Western” property, I was the subject of envy, which, at that age, was flattering.

One morning my uncle and I decided to finally test the “priceless” present. Three months after receiving the gift, I was firmly determined to stop cherishing, contemplating, and stroking it. We pumped up the ball, and in order not to ruin the pleasure of the first kick, we gave it “a few more pumps.” Uncle Dobri knew some wonderful excellent-for-the-purpose meadow up in the mountain.

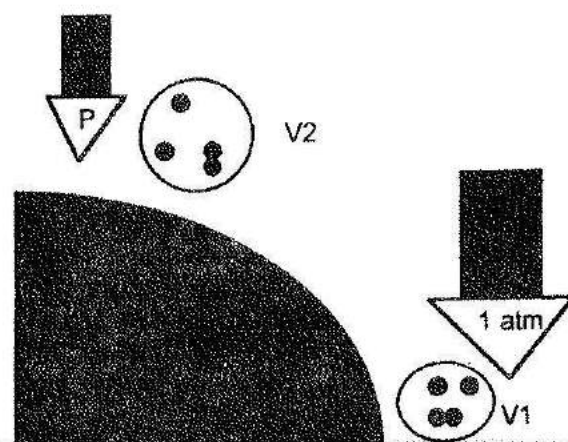
We babbled and laughed while we climbed. When I saw the meadow in its autumn finery, I realized that my

uncle was not mistaken: it really was a place where, as I imagined, years later the journalists would take pictures saying “This is where Stoyan Vassilev made his first serious step in soccer.”

I gently put the ball on the grassland. I made two steps backwards. I swiftly approached it and kicked it as “masterfully” as I could. But instead of seeing the ball make an “extraterrestrial” parabola, I heard it burst loudly and saw it landing one meter before me. Tears and disappointment put an end to my soccer career.

Who burst the ball? My uncle thought it was some defect. My aunt suggested that everything from the West is flawed anyway, so she knew it would burst. My brother was teasing me for my abilities saying that “even if the ball were from Mars, it would have burst at your feet.”

In eighth grade we learned about something called *atmospheric pressure* and its change depending on the altitude. But not until my college years did I learn what must have happened. First, atmospheric pressure is exerted by the weight of the gases in our atmosphere. As we go up a mountain, the amount and therefore the weight of the gases decrease. The atmospheric pressure at a higher altitude is *lower*, assuming that temperature and amount do not change. But since the external pressure decreases, according to Boyle’s Law $V = \text{const} / P$, the volume should *increase*.

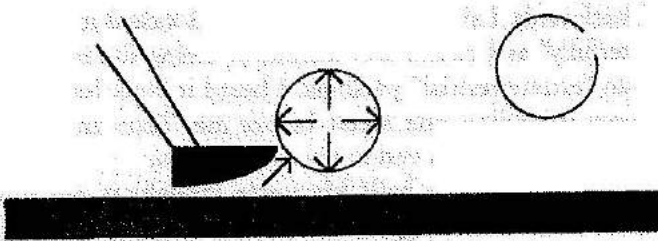


$$P < 1 \text{ atm}$$

$$V_2 = V_1 \times 1 \text{ atm} / P$$

Who Burst the Ball?

The ball had some capacity: V_{maximum} . Applying less external pressure or more internal pressure would lead to a burst. I suppose the volume of the ball before I took the tragic kick was a little less than V_{max} . But my masterful kick led to the following:



The internal pressure was evenly spread. By applying the force of my foot on a small area, I increased the external pressure at that particular place. This interaction triggered an immediate increase of *the internal pressure applied on the rest of the ball's surface*. The pressure exerted was above the threshold pressure corresponding to V_{max} , and the ball consequently burst.

After all, who burst the ball?

The quality of the ball? My enthusiasm? Or Mrs. Weil and her gas laws?

Evaluation: *This essay is a good example of a gas law's connection to life experience. It demonstrates science as a part of our lives.*

A Teacher's Lesson

Robin Weber

Course: English 101

Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay which focuses on an incident which helped you mature or change in some important way.

As an adult, I find death perplexing and complicated. When I consider the reaction a child has, I find it even more mystifying and think back to the death of my sister and my emotions at that time. Looking back, I am grateful that an adult was able to offer me empathy and support, although it came from an unlikely source.

I was ten years old when my mother gave birth to the eleventh child in our family. The baby, Pauline, lived only three days. Her death touched all of us in different ways, but as a ten-year-old child, I was sensitive only to my own emotions and needs. I had never been aware of death, and my first-time experience was brutal.

I returned to school the day after Pauline's funeral. I walked slowly, hoping to avoid any questions about her, and even more importantly, attempting not to cry in front of anyone. As I entered the school, I could hear my friends laughing and joking. I was angry with them, wondering how they could be happy when there was something wrong in my world. I waited until they went into the classroom. When I entered, everyone was seated. My teacher, Mrs. Mecklenberg, smiled at me and motioned me to my desk. I sat down and class began. There was nothing unusual about this day.

Mrs. Mecklenberg and I shared some history. Although she was a good teacher and had never done anything to warrant my dislike, in my juvenile mind, she deserved it. I attended a four-room school in a very small town. Mrs. Mecklenberg had been my first and second grade teacher. When I was promoted to third grade, I anxiously looked forward to a new teacher. I was bitterly disappointed when Mrs. Mecklenberg moved to the third and fourth grades with me. I complained to my mother that no one should have the same teacher four years in a row, but to no avail.

During reading class one day Mrs. Mecklenberg proudly told my classmates that she and I were related. I was mortified. My classmates began their merciless teasing, and I was known as the "teacher's pet." I ran home to complain to my mother, who explained that we were not actually related (my aunt had married Mrs. Mecklenberg's brother); that explanation did little to halt the relentless teasing. As only a third grader can, I had a firm and irrational dislike for my teacher that I carried well into the fourth grade.

On this day, however, Mrs. Mecklenberg was the least of my problems. We were busy that morning. I was able to concentrate on arithmetic and geography. When my stomach began to growl, I realized it was almost noon. We were told to put our books away and get our lunches. We ate quickly and quietly, anxious to get outside for recess. I plotted a way to get to the tetherball before the boys; the girls could finally get a chance to play!

I finished my baloney sandwich and chocolate milk before anyone else. I walked quickly to the garbage can beside the teacher's desk and tossed my garbage. As I raced to the door, Mrs. Mecklenberg called, "Robin, you need to stay in and make up your spelling test." I turned toward her with tears burning in my eyes, my dislike for her more intense than ever. I didn't want my friends to see me crying. In addition, I certainly did not want to take a test. I sat and watched as my friends ran out to the playground, some of them promising to wait for me. I took out a piece of paper and waited for the test to begin.

As Mrs. Mecklenberg dictated the words, I felt increasingly miserable. I thought back only a week before when I had celebrated my tenth birthday with my classmates. Mrs. Mecklenberg had teased me, saying how lucky I was to be getting a new brother or sister for my birthday. Now, I sat mournfully at my desk, that celebration far behind me. The new sister had been born and died; I had never seen her.

As hard as I tried to stop them, the tears began to fall, plopping onto my test, dimpling the paper and distorting my penciling. The blue lines became blurred and wavy. I felt a hand on top of my head. I turned to see Mrs. Mecklenberg close behind me. "It's very sad, isn't it?" she whispered. I nodded my head, unable to answer. "You know she's in heaven, don't you?" I nodded again; now the tears gushed from my eyes. "Just remember, she'll be a little angel that will always watch over you." She patted my hand, took my spelling paper, and gently patted my back while I sobbed over the little sister I had lost.

Before recess ended, Mrs. Mecklenberg took my hand and walked with me to the washroom. She wet a paper towel with cold water and pressed it against my face and eyes. "You stay here until you're ready," she said.

As she left, I had time to think about what had happened. A woman, whom I had disliked for silly, ten-year-old reasons, had treated me with such compassion and understanding. She had known that I would break down at some point; she had saved me from the embarrassment of this happening in front of my friends. She had given me a strong lesson on empathy and sensitivity. I found myself involuntarily maturing and viewing her as someone more than just my teacher.

Evaluation: Robin's speaker looks to her childhood for an incident that taught her about care and accurate empathy. Robin reminds us that good people begin to be good people as they do serious learning in childhood.

Me and My Mom

Brooke Wexler
 Course: English 101
 Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:
*Teach us what something is.
 Choose a topic with which you are intimate.*

Since she contracted this disease, my mind and emotions have gone through many stages. Sure, for a while, I felt sorry for myself. How come the other kids had a mother who could take them shopping and then later that evening coach their soccer team? How come other kids had a mother who could cook a full-course dinner and still have the energy to take them out for ice cream? How come I had a mom who had to get chronic emphysema? The answer to that last question is because I had a mom who smoked.

But lasting only a short while, that self-pity stage I went through progressed to anger, sadness, and then admiration. I watched my mom suffer day and night from the severe reduction in oxygen to the lungs that is a result of emphysema, leaving her to lead a life that revolves around force-fed oxygen twenty-four hours a day, expensive medicine intake that consumes more than five hours a day, and immobility.

I soon became furious with my mom for not being able to take care of me anymore, and I downright refused to help her get settled again in her home after her near-death experience in the hospital when she first was diagnosed with chronic emphysema. I remember when we had to set up the large oxygen machine in our hallway and how it continually made that “hum, hum, hum” noise, mocking me, making sure I knew it was here to stay. I would not unravel the thirty-foot clear tube for my mother that would connect to the control panel of the machine and lead into her nose, supplying her with the oxygen she needed. Instead, I watched her try to do the simple task while sweat dripped off her forehead and her breath panted hard. After the machine was set up, I had to forever watch my step, for the cord would be stretched across the house, leading to whichever room my mom was resting in. If I tugged on the cord it could do two things: pull uncomfortably out of my mother’s nose or pull out of the machine, in which case it would yell a high pitch scream: “beep, beep, beep.” I did both of them once, on purpose, to spite her.

I also did not want to help my mom prepare her daily medications, which consisted of albuteral, theophillon, dyazide, furosemide, and bactrim. The most time-consuming task was preparing the nebulizer, the machine that clears out the lungs as if giving them a good scrub. A

small machine that is run by electricity, the nebulizer is the most crucial in easing the discomfort, making the emphysema patient feel a little less winded and a little more strong, temporarily, of course, since there is no cure for emphysema. But to me, this treatment took away from my time, since I had to prepare the salt water and albuteral combination that gets inhaled for forty minutes every four hours. This loud machine made my telephone calls inaudible, and if I needed to ask my mom a question I couldn't because she couldn't pull the inhaler tube out of her mouth. I felt that while other kids had the luxury of being taken care of, I no longer was. I missed her and the attention and care she used to give me.

But instead of dwelling on my anger, I began to realize the seriousness and helplessness of this disease, so I stopped being hurtful towards my mother because she was sick and couldn't take care of me the way she used to, and gave her (and still do to this day) all my love and attention as I took on a new role as my mother's sole caregiver, listening to her needs and finally feeling the empathy towards her that I lacked for many months.

My mother says the hardest part about her disease is the immobility. She cannot perform simple tasks anymore, like laundry, running to grab the phone before the answering machine picks up, or baking a cake for someone's birthday. For her, walking from room to room is equivalent to a healthy person running a twenty-mile marathon. The day we sold her car since she could not drive it any longer, she told me that she felt like a prisoner in her own home. And she is. I often think, as I am out doing our family grocery shopping or my weekly cleaning of the home, how much my mom would love to be doing these activities that most people consider a chore. But instead, she is sitting in her chair in the kitchen, either doing her medicine or watching the television set. My heart breaking in two, I would sometimes hear her cry in her sleep, and wonder what she was dreaming of.

Around a crowd she becomes quiet. People often stare at my mom, as she holds in her wheelchair the small, portable oxygen tank she needs on those rare occasions when she leaves the home. Feeling like an outsider, she creeps inward, into herself, and does not make any eye contact with others. I get so angry with those people

who stare at her. Don't they realize how that makes her feel? Can't they give a warm smile instead of a curious eye-brow-raise?

But despite all her tremendous hardships, her physical and mental suffering, my mom is an extraordinarily strong person. I often come home from work or school to find her singing to a musical on Channel 11. "Whatcha doing, Mama?" I ask. "Oh, Brookie, I just love this song. Isn't it great!" She has tremendously high spirits, despite her condition, and still finds joy in things, even though there is so much she cannot do. She will spend hours just listening to my day and gives me the most loving and caring advice. Sometimes, when she has a little bit of energy, I will wake up to a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice waiting for me on the kitchen table. And after all that we have been through, I realize that my mom is a fighter, that she has not given up, and although she can no longer physically take care of me, mentally, she is my biggest support, giving me all the attention and love I need. My heart aches for her as she leads the rest of her life in pain, but that same heart rejoices in knowing that she will always have me by her side to watch over her and I will always have her by mine to do the same.

Evaluation: Plain, powerful honesty informs this essay, which reveals how a caring child copes with her mother's chronic emphysema.

What Is
Good Writing?
The
Anthology
Judges
Give Their
Standards

Jack Dodds

Whenever I read I look for details, details, details appropriate to the writer's purpose or the occasion: descriptive details, fresh facts or figures, supporting instances, insightful observation or explanation. Good writing is dense with information. Good writing is also alive with voices: the writer's voice (persona), dialogue, quotation, and allusion. Good writing always talks to me.

Barbara Hickey

In Mark Twain's words, "Eschew surplusage."

Richard Johnson

Like bees, good writing should be methodical, meticulous, and prolific; like bees, good writing stings like hell.

Kurt Neumann

Last week we received a call from the editor of the *Harper Anthology* asking for a statement on what makes good writing. It is presumably our responsibility to comply with such a request and almost certainly our pleasure.

Surely the editor knows what good writing is. It 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, much like a telephone call from the editor of a prestigious anthology asking for a definition of good writing.

Kris Piepenburg

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.

Peter Sherer

Writing that focuses and boldly goes where it promises to go alerts and engages me. I like writing that is intelligent, consistent in its logic, and concrete in its detail. I like examples and I want to hear an honest voice which speaks to me in sentences which are fresh, crafted, varied, economical, and musical.

Andrew Wilson

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.

Harper Students on Writing

Anonymous

Writing inspires delusions, escorting us to imaginary places where we cannot be, or informing us of events that we weren't able to experience ourselves. The toll for this grand journey is taxing upon the writer, requiring blood, sweat and tears of him or her. True writers have a burning desire to tell their stories not for personal gain, but to share hope when there is none, and dreams when it seems that life is futile and meaningless. Writers cannot do it alone. The motto "All good writers need good editors" is true. Without these thankless squires and the support that they give, precise writing cannot be achieved, nor our dreams be accurately viewed, by our readers.

Mary Jane Clark

Before I begin a new paper, I have a brainstorming session where I write down any questions, words, or ideas that relate to my proposed topic. This really helps me generate a new, fresh perspective on the topic and gives me great focus on where to take the paper.

Judy Engeriserr

Through the process of writing I am able to connect and express my ideas, thoughts and emotions. Finding my voice has both surprised and delighted me and has given me much satisfaction.

Marie Harris

Writing is a personal challenge. It provides a method by which I am able to think more deeply, and it requires me to analyze my ideas logically and coherently. The discipline of writing and editing my work can be exhausting, but the completion of a composition provides clarification and better understanding of my own thoughts. English 102 has broadened my mind and shown me how to strive for refinement.

Doris Hohertz

When a child loses a parent, there are immediate tears of not understanding and the fear of the unknown. If a poem is written for a very specific purpose, yet others read it and relate it to their own lives, one has created something unique.

Radik Lapushin

Writing is a process of breathing on a cold winter day on a frosty window while discovering that the face you exhaled is the face of a stranger.

Hiroko Morii

I enjoy working out ideas most when I write essays. If no idea occurs to me, I stop thinking and do household chores, which is the most effective way to hit upon new ideas. I love writing.

Paul Rollins

Do you enjoy doing something because you are successful at doing it or are you successful because you enjoy it? Personally, I enjoy writing because it enables me to frame an idea logically, then present it in a more interesting and clear manner than I could orally.

Ryan Sheehan

A student can learn all of the grammar and spelling in a thousand textbooks and still not be a writer. He can practice his handwriting or typing skills to the point of perfection, but will not be able to put his mind on paper. He can memorize the plays of Shakespeare, or the stories of Hemingway and still not understand what the true feeling of being a writer is. A student must learn how to engulf him or herself into the text, and to make the words put on paper mean more than just another assignment. Once a student can write the heart instead of the hands, then and only then, can he know the true meaning of being a writer. I dedicate my entry in this anthology to Mr. Kris Piepenburg for helping me to realize the true essence of writing.

Richard Stanish

In its most basic sense, writing presents the trace remains of documenting human life. On a deeper level, writing is an extension of an intrinsic quality within our human selves which embodies an expressive moment of our existence. It does not matter whether we obtain the proficiency level of an intellectual genius who masters grammatical excellence while expressing perceptive ability during in-depth critical analysis, or whether we simply write the letter "A" with the natural fascination of a child writing his first letter. It is a part of us, and it is our method of communicating our thoughts, just as it was for our ancient ancestors who left their remnant marks on the walls of caves existing in an ancestral past. The essence of writing is inherently natural for us all.

I find that I enjoy writing mostly when it becomes part of a natural process, while other times I find writing to be laborious at best and extremely tenuous, stressful, and frustrating at its deepest level. When I can just let it flow, as when I am pouring passion into a personal letter, a poem, or a short story, I become who I am. I am enraptured by the sense of utter control, the wonderful feeling of sureness, and a feeling of completeness that captures the spirit of being human while expressing oneself as such.

Julie Threlfall

Writing is so many things: balm, teaching, learning, story-telling. Sometimes writing is frustrating; sometimes writing is wonderful. Writing can stop time or make it interminable. Writing can make me laugh or it can make me cry, and it has frequently done both! Mostly writing is an immersion of truth, for when we write with our innermost selves, we automatically seek our own hearts.

DawntUza

Writing is all about words. Sometimes you are able to use and arrange them yourself, sometimes someone else can do it better. All semester, this poem has echoed within me. It is by Pablo Neruda, a Chilean poet, and translated by Alastair Reid.

The Word

The word
was born in the blood,
grew in the dark body, beating,
and took flight through the lips and the mouth.

Farther away and nearer
still; still it came
from dead feathers and from wandering races,
from lands which had turned to stone,
lands weary of their poor tribes,
for when grief took to the roads
the people set out and arrived
and married new land and water
to grow their words again.
And so this is the inheritance;
this is the wavelength which connects us
with dead men and the dawning
of new beginnings not yet come to light.

Still the atmosphere quivers
with the first word uttered
dressed up
in terror and sighing.
It emerged
from the darkness
and until now there is no thunder
that ever rumbles with the iron voice
of that word,
the first
word uttered—
perhaps it was only a ripple, a single drop,
and yet its great cataract falls and falls.

Later on, the word filled with meaning.
Always with child, it filled up with lives.
Everything was births and sounds—
affirmation, clarity, strength,

negation, destruction, death—
the verb took over all the power
and blended existence with essence
in the electricity of its grace.

Human word, syllable, flank
of extending light and solid silverwork,
heredity goblet which receives
the communications of the blood—
here is where silence came together with
the wholeness of the human word,
and, for human beings, not to speak is to die—
language extendseven to the hair,
the mouth speaks without the lips moving,
all of a sudden, the eyes are words.

I take the word and pass it through my senses
as though it were no more than a human shape;
its arrangements awe me and I find my way
through each resonance of the spoken word—
I utter and I am and, speechless, I approach
across the edge of words silence itself.

I drink to the word, raising
a word or a shining cup;
in it I drink
the pure wine of language
or inexhaustible water,
maternal source of words,
and cup and water and wine
give rise to my song
because the verb is the source
and vivid life—it is blood,
blood which expresses its substance
and so ordains its own unwinding.
Words give glass quality to glass, blood to blood,
and life to itself.

Afterword

Science and Writing or Writing and Science

by Barbara Q. Weil

Note on the Author

Barbara Weil is an Assistant Professor in Harper's Chemistry Department. Harper has benefited from Professor Weil's devoted service for eight years.

The editor of this publication has gone "outside the box" this year by inviting a chemist to write the closing article. I am honored and challenged by the invitation. People in the sciences are stereotyped as poor writers. On the other hand, there is the misconception that those in the literary field know little about science. In the following document I have attempted to provide some evidence that these precepts are inaccurate, along with some personal thoughts. Join me on a science and writing or, if you prefer, writing and science exploration.

The order of the words, Science and Writing or Writing and Science, is used to distinguish between two styles. Science and writing refers to writing done by scientists to communicate specific detailed technical information. Writing and science corresponds to literary work that incorporates scientific information or concepts. This paper will attempt to present the view that writing is to a scientist what science is to a writer. These disciplines are intertwined and knowledge of both is essential to life-learners.

Effective communication of ideas, information, emotions, or broad sweeping concepts through writing is a developed skill, not a science. There are definite guidelines associated with all types of writing and these are learned through practice. Ernest Hemingway wrote, "We are apprentices of a craft where no one becomes a master." This statement relates to both literary and scientific writing. Virginia Tech Department of Mechanical Engineering hosts a website—HYPERLINK <http://www.me.vt.edu/writing>—which presents specific guidelines for scientific writing. The Introduction states,

Scientific writing is not a science; rather, it is a craft. The game of golf provides a good analogy to the way you should view your writing. Think of your technical problems as your drives and iron shots. In your drives and iron shots, you want loft, accuracy, and distance. Now, think of your writing problems the same as you would a putt. Notice that the clubs, swings, and mental approach of driving differ dramatically from those of putting. The same is true for the differences between technical problems and the process of documenting those problems.

Writing for any purpose has certain constraints such as style, format, and audience. Once the subject matter being communicated is understood, these constraints need to be considered. Two major points of focus are the audience being addressed and why the audience is reading the document. The famous Chicago architect, Louis Henri Sullivan, coined the phrase, "form follows function." This holds equally true for writing, for the purpose of the manuscript is what dictates the form used. Function, form, and audience are common factors of all types of writing and certainly relate to the collection of papers in this anthology. Students demonstrated effective writing skills, showed an understanding of the subject matter, and selected a form based on the function of the assignment in an outstanding manner. Congratulations to all of them for a job well done.

Having established a foundation for writing, let us now look at some types of scientific writing. Formal reports are used when addressing professionals specializing in the subject matter. Many professional journals such as Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Journal of Biological Systems (JBS), Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management

(JEAPM), International Journal of Artificial Intelligence Tools (IJAIT), and Mathematical Models and Methods in Applied Science (M3AS) relate specific information to specialists in the field. Scientists also write patents, technical memos, abstracts, laboratory notebooks, rulings by the EPA, and grant proposals, just to mention a few. The depth of the information and language used is directly related to the function of the document and the audience. According to Mark Twain, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and lightning-bug." Consider the following example of scientific writing: First, bring one liter of water to a state where it has undergone partially a phase transition in which the vapor pressure of the steam that is formed is equal to the pressure of the atmosphere. Then add 1.0 g of the mixture of chemicals known as camillea tea. The important ingredient in this mixture is 3,7-dihydro-1,3,7-trimethyl-1H-purine-2, 6-dione. Allow the mixture to stir for 5 minutes. Finally, filter the undissolved solids and collect the liquid.

The ability to understand what is being described in this procedure is related to how science literate the reader is. The language is scientific and explicit, as is most technical writing. This procedure could be made easier to understand for a larger audience if it were stated that tea is being brewed.

One of the masters of writing was Albert Einstein, 1879-1955. Charles Percy Snow, in his book *Variety of Men*, wrote,

Einstein, twenty-six years old, only three years away from crude privation, still a patent examiner, published in the *Annalen der Physik* in 1905 five papers on entirely different subjects. Three of them were among the greatest in the history of physics. One, very simple, gave the quantum explanation of the photoelectric effect—it was this work for which, sixteen years later, he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Another dealt with the phenomenon of Brownian motion, the apparently erratic movement of tiny particles suspended in a liquid: Einstein showed that these movements satisfied a clear statistical law. This was like a conjuring trick, easy when explained: before it, decent scientists could still doubt the concrete existence of atoms and molecules: this paper was as near direct proof of their concreteness as a theoretician could give. The third paper was the

special theory of relativity, which quietly amalgamated space, time and matter into one fundamental unity. This last paper contains no references and quotes no authority. All of them are written in a style unlike any other theoretical physicist's. They contain very little mathematics. There is a good deal of verbal commentary. The conclusions, the bizarre conclusions, emerge as though with the greatest of ease: the reasoning is unbreakable. It looks as though he had reached the conclusions by pure thought, unaided, without listening to the opinions of others. To a surprisingly large extent, that is precisely what he had done. It is pretty safe to say that, so long as physics lasts, no one will again hack out three major breakthroughs in one year.

Einstein's writings were not all formal. The Einstein Paper Project by Boston University is attempting to assemble a 25-volume series of Einstein's correspondence, published, and unpublished writings. The Princeton University Press has recently published *The Quotable Einstein*, a book of over 600 quotes; examples include:

**Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour.*

**Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. THAT's relativity.*

**Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.*

**Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.*

**If A is a success in life, then A equals x plus y plus z. Work is x; y is play; and z is keeping your mouth shut.*

One of Einstein's most influential writings was the letter he wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on August 2, 1939.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:

In the course of the last four months it has been made probable that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it's conceivable — though much less certain — that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may be constructed.

The complete letter can be found in its original form by searching the Internet for Einstein's Letter to FDR. In this letter, Einstein went away from the highly technical style of his professional manuscripts and used "everyday" language to communicate critically important technical information to the President. Clearly he understood his audience. This letter set the stage for the Manhattan Project, the massive national program that led to the development of the atomic bomb.

Many noted scientists have distinguished themselves in their writings targeted to the general public. Richard Dawkins wrote in his book, *The Selfish Gene*, "I have long felt that biology ought to seem as exciting as a mystery story, for a mystery story is exactly what biology is." Linus Pauling, 1901-1994, is probably best known as an advocate of Vitamin C as a preventive of the common cold. He won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1954 and for peace in 1962; his interest and knowledge ranged from medicine to nuclear physics and were reflected in his books such as: *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*, *General Chemistry*, *How to Live a Longer Life*, and *Introduction to Quantum Mechanics*. Corey Powell, writer for *Scientific American*, wrote that Carl Sagan was one of the most creative researchers and articulate spokesmen of the science world. He also recognized Sagan's researchers and articulate spokesmen of the science world. He also recognized Sagan's ability to reach a vast audience in his statement, "But perhaps Sagan's greatest skill was his ability to communicate with individuals here on Earth. Through a series of books, magazine articles and television shows, he reached beyond the scientific community to convey the excitement of his research to the lay public." Carl Sagan won the Pulitzer Prize in 1978 for *The Dragons of Eden*. Another Sagan book, *Cosmos*, was on the New York best seller list for 70 weeks, 15 of which it was #1.

In 1994, Carl Sagan received the HYPERLINK "/home.html" Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) Award and stated the following in his keynote address: "Science is still one of my chief joys. The popularization of science that Isaac Asimov did so well—the communication not just of the findings but of the methods of science—seems to me as natural as breathing. After all, when you're in love, you want to tell the world. The idea that scientists shouldn't talk about their science to the public seems to me bizarre."

Scientists are not the only communicators of scientific information. Journalists find themselves in the position of having to report scientific news to the public. Doctors and pharmacists discuss medication and medical procedures with patients. Literary writers incorporate scientific concepts into their novels. Jonathan Harr's novel *A Civil Action* integrates law and science in a true story about an environmental contamination lawsuit. In 1888, Thomas Herringshaw, in the book *Prominent Men and Women of the Day*, states, "The best known works of Jules Verne are unique in the combination of scientific information with incidents, many of them of an astounding character, constituting a well-constructed story. The deft and original quality in Verne's works has given them an amazing popularity." Jules Verne, 1828-1905, was a futurist, and his best known novels *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *Around the World in 80 Days* are still being enjoyed today. Michael Crichton, creator of the series "ER," was born in Chicago and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1969. The same year, his best seller *The Andromeda Strain* was published. In all eleven of his novels, he integrates specialist subjects such as primatology, neurobiology, biophysics, genetics, international economics, and history. Crichton's diverse areas of interest are demonstrated in his book titles: *Electronic Life*, *Jurassic Park*, *Five Patients*, and *Timeline*, to mention a few.

In today's world, science literacy is an essential component of an educated society. The news is full of science that is reported to the public daily—DNA testing; gene therapy; gasoline additives to decrease air pollution,

resulting in an increase in gas prices; insecticides; irradiation of foods; ozone; global warming; nutrition; the list is endless. Knowledge of science is fundamental for both the writers of this information and the audience that reads it.

The ordering of the words “science and writing” or “writing and science” is not the real issue. The point is that scientists need to develop the craft of writing not only to communicate specific knowledge to fellow scientists but also to communicate with politicians, doctors, lawyers, and the general public. Writers need knowledge of science to add interest, breadth, and depth to their literary works. Whichever direction one comes from, the key objective is effective communication. T.S. Eliot stated of his poems, “I now have the equivalent in words for much of what I have felt.” Georgia O’Keeffe described her painting as the “equivalents” of her ideas. Einstein wrote that after he had solved his problems visually, “conventional words and symbols had to be sought for laboriously.” Be it writer, artist, or scientist, there is a need to develop a method to express thoughts and ideas in a way that touches others. Eliot, O’Keeffe, and Einstein took these skills to a high level and were able to reach a broad audience. It is the same for all of us who wish to communicate in a written, spoken, or artistic manner.

Alternate Table of Contents

Chemistry

Brad Bernau
Stoyan Vassilev

English

Anonymous
Eugene F. Beiswenger
Mary Jane Clark
Megan Fincher
Marie Harris
Charley Juran
Michael Kenny
Carole Kmiec
Radik Lapushin
Jennifer LeBron
Hope Marquardt
Olga Matz
Mary Jo Mayerck
Hiroko Morii
Bobbie Nybo-Buchholz
Ewa Pasterski
Martinique Pozniak
Amy Richter
Laura Schumann
Penelope Skrzyński
Richard Stanish
Julie Threlfall
Dawn Uza
Robin Weber
Brooke Wexler

English as a Second Language

Seung H. Baek
Weiran Chen
Tomoko Fukushima

Foreign Languages

Jessica Bovino
(Spanish)
Dotis Hohertz
(German)

Humanities

Paul Rollins

Literature

Judy Engeriser
Jennifer Lestor
Erin Mayo
Alan E. Minarik
Deborah A. Pickup
Karen Starke

Physical Science

Mollie Hawes

Plant Science Technology

Paula Popowski

Psychology

Bobbie Nybo-Buchholz

Reading

Jennifer LeBron

Speech

Erin Mitmoen

Joseph Auer

Beth-Ann Bryant-Richards

Nancy L. Davis

Jack Dodds

Linda Dunne

Juliann Fleenor

Ana Lucy Hernandez

Barbara Hickey

Richard Johnson

Charlie Johnston

Kurt Neumann

Louise Perry

Kris Piepenburg

Chris Poziemski

Chet Ryndak

Ilona Sala

Peter Sherer

Martha Simonsen

Joe Sternberg

Trygve Thoreson

Elizabeth Turner

Renate von Keudell

Barbara Weil

Andrew Wilson



Contributing Faculty

an·thol·o·gy (an thol' e je), n.
pl. -gies. 1. a book or other
collection of selected writings,
often in the same literary form,
of the same period, or on the
same subject.



2. any collection of selected
works, as songs, paintings, etc.
[1630-40]; <L anthologia <GK:
collection of poems, lit.,
gathering of flowers.
See ANTHO-, -LOGY] -
an·tho·log·i·cal (an' the loj' i
kel), adj.