

The
Harper
Anthology



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Student Writers



Laura Ashley	Girija Kalra
Robyn Beening	Lisa Kleya
Delana Borntreger	Diane P. Kostick
DeKole Branch	Matthew A. Lindsay
Justin Clack	Sheri A. Luzzi
Justin DeVault	Tina Malyj
Elliot De Vries	Kartik Markandan
Jenny Dolan	Christine Melange
YiFei Dong	Melissa Oakley
Jeanne Embrey	Dan Ophus
Tami Engert	Liam O'Shaughnessy
Ron Fishman	Mike Pyzyna
Mark Frystak	Liz Richards
Jenny Geheb	Debbie Schreiner
Karen Glos	David Selby
Kathleen Gneuchs	Charry A. Shouf
Pooja Goel	Sofya Tokman
Connie Gorsky	John Tolan
Joel Hengstler	Brianna Turcza
Erika Hertler	Jessica Wermuth
Noelle Hoeh	Kathy Wilmot
James Inman	

The
Harper Anthology
of Academic Writing

Issue XIII

2001

William Rainey Harper College

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Foreword

To put it ever so simply: A lot of academic writing gets done at Harper College. This probably is a generalization any student, instructor, or administrator associated with Harper might put forth as simply as I have in the previous sentence. Just as easily, too, we might accept such a generalization without really thinking about how much that “lot” is. Joe Sternberg, now retired after many years of teaching English here at Harper, offers some raw data related to this in his essay “Apples or Essays,” one of the Afterwords to this issue. He calculates that in his 30-year career at Harper, he has read 25,000 essays written by students in his freshman composition classes. My colleague’s essay caused me to do a little calculating of my own. Twenty-five thousand over 30 years—yes, that is a lot.

However: Consider that roughly 60 sections of English 101 are offered every semester at Harper, and that each section contains roughly 20 active students. Then, factor in that each student writes, on average, five essays per semester. The math is simple: $60 \times 20 \times 5 = 6,000$ English 101 essays per semester, distributed among the 50 or so full- and part-time instructors who teach English 101 here at Harper. Add to this the 60 or so sections of English 102 offered per semester, with an average of 20 active students writing an average of four essays per semester. That works out to another 4,800 essays of various types. Now, we are at 10,800 essays in one semester, written by students enrolled in Harper’s freshman composition classes. “A lot” of academic writing, indeed—and about numbers, I can speak with confidence only about the English department’s composition sections. As this issue of the *Harper Anthology* makes plain, students are asked to write—plentifully, even—in *other* departments and divisions, too.

Certainly, the amount of writing produced, read, and graded in departments across the campus at the very least doubles this amount to upwards of 20,000 essays,

term papers, research reports, responses, letters, and other addenda generated per semester by students who are furthering their educations. (And I apologize if I offend my colleagues outside the English department with this low estimate. We need to talk about this.) The publication roster in this year’s *Anthology* also includes papers submitted by students of History, Foreign Language, Humanities, Journalism, Speech, Chemistry, and Literature. This short list alone caused me to think a bit about all of the writing that is done by Harper students, before I ran across my colleague’s numerical ruminations. In particular, I thought about the History department. This year, for the first time that I can remember (and I have served on this committee for only four years), we have published five outstanding papers from the History department. Yet, for all of those classes, thousands more had to have been written. Thinking about these things—my own department, Joe’s recollections, and these limited glimpses I have gotten of “other” huge bodies of writing being generated in departments outside of English—gave me considerable pause to reflect. Yes, a lot of academic writing gets done at Harper College.

The amount of academic writing produced by Harper students is staggering enough, but another number, of the mental decisions involved in generating each piece of writing, is so large and abstract that it cannot be quantified. The clumsy phrase “little acts of getting it right” annoyingly insinuated itself into my mind as I performed the copy editing for this year’s published essays. I guess, in the mental doldrums that are summer for this college instructor, this phrase, completely absent of melody, was the best my “resting” mind could do. However, I estimate that I had to perform a few thousand “little acts of getting it right” for this year’s essays—inserting missing commas or apostrophes, correcting sentence errors, slightly rewording awkward phrases, or touching up works cited lists. This is not meant to demean the student writers—on the contrary, I commend them for all of the hundreds of thousands of “little acts” they had to perform to bring their papers up to the quality that the *Anthology* requires, and I thank them for having found the non-quantifiable “stuff” that makes

brilliant essays, even if they need an editor (and every author needs one).

As with past issues of the *Harper Anthology*, a wide range of subjects for writing appears within the pages. I must comment on some of these. The writers of the more reflective, personal essays in this collection write with imagination, feeling, vividness, and courage, and these writers also had underlying motives to educate their audiences. As I think about these essays, those by Lisa Kleya (on caring for her profoundly handicapped son), David Selby (on thinking of others even in the most personally demanding of situations), and Jessica Wermuth (on her long tolerance of an abusive relationship) stand out in my mind as particularly moving compositions and as possible models for a composition class, but more importantly, as essays that might have application in other curricula, possibly in Special Education or Psychology. Certainly, these three authors, and all others who have written in this vein, have written about their experiences in ways that would educate both general and specific audiences.

Many other selections in this collection have strong educational content. Indeed, if a theme can be found in this year's *Anthology*, it may be that this issue is dedicated to writers who were concerned with educating their audiences. The reader can learn, as I did while reading and editing these submissions, about the following subjects: the healthcare system in Germany (Laura Ashley); Chinese New Year traditions (YiFei Dong); Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (Ron Fishman); hunting (Mark Frystak); Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha movement (Pooja Goel); classical mythology (Joel Hengstler and Debbie Schreiner); autism (Karen Glos); the work of Mary McLeod Bethune in advancement for African-Americans (Noelle Hoeh); the Peruvian dictator Fujimori (Kartik Markandan); how it is to be a fire fighter (Mike Pyzyna); how to improve the memory (John Tolan); and about William Rainey Harper himself (Diane Kostick). I cannot mention every essay here, because of limited space, but rest assured: there are more that are as educational as these, and the many essays on literary topics will be enjoyable and useful for instructors and students of literature.

Beyond this, I must point out two essays that gave me great enjoyment, because of the fantastic imaginations

and unique voices the writers display. I'll say no more about these, except to advise you to read Jenny Dolan's "Twenty-First-Century Voice" on page 20, and Jenny Geheb's "I Am Buddha" on page 35. I will also add that faculty will very likely enjoy Joe Sternberg's and Peter Sherer's Afterwords to this collection; Professors Sternberg and Sherer reflect, at the ends of their careers, on the teaching of writing.

Personally, I thank my co-chair, Andrew Wilson, for his guidance and support during the production of this and past *Anthologies*, and also for his overall personable nature. Also, Andrew and I offer general thanks to the student writers who were motivated to write with such effectiveness, and we thank the instructors who helped make that writing possible through class assignments and encouraging feedback. We also thank those instructors for submitting essays to the *Anthology*, and we encourage others to do so in the future, to let Harper's students, faculty, and community be offered an even more diverse cross-section of the voluminous body of academic writing created and perfected by the students of Harper College.

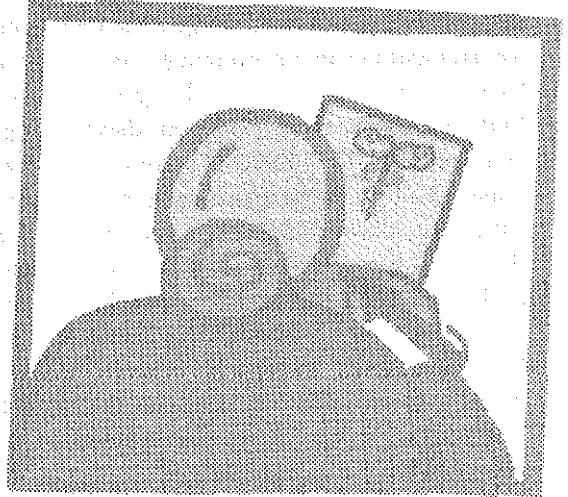
We also thank the members of this issue's selection committee—Paul Bellwoar, Becky Benton, Jack Dodds, Julie Fleenor, Barbara Hickey, Kurt Neumann, and Peter Sherer—for their help in narrowing the submissions to this collection; Matt Nelson, Peter Gart, and the entire Print Shop, for graphics and production assistance; Deanna Torres, for patiently typesetting and correcting our proofs; and students Ashley Hartigan and Amy Sun, for help with collation.

Finally, we thank the Dean of the Liberal Arts Division, Dr. Harley Chapman, for continued support of the *Harper Anthology* as a publication with direct educational benefit to the students (and faculty) of Harper College; and for their long service to the Harper *Anthology* from its beginnings, we also thank (again) our now-retired colleagues: Jack Dodds, Joe Sternberg, and Peter Sherer. Without the past and recent efforts of these four gentlemen, this publication would likely not exist.

Kris Piepenburg
Co-Chair, *Harper Anthology* Selection Committee

Gesundheitspflege in Deutschland

Health Care in Germany



Laura Ashley

Course: German 210

Instructor: Renate von Keudell

Assignment: Compare cultural differences between one aspect of American and German societies. Turn in two copies of your essay: one written in German and another written in English.

German Text

Deutschland ist im Respekt zur Gesundheitspflege einzigartig. Sie ist sehr eindeutig. Das System ist 118 Jahre alt und ist in Kraft seit Bismarckzeiten. Wir in den Vereinigten Staaten kämpfen immer mit den Qualitätskosten der Gesundheitspflege. In Deutschland stellen die Regierung und einige große Anstalten, private Bewilligungs- und freiwillige Organisationen Obacht zur Verfügung. Die allgemeinen Anstalten, die das Gesundheitspflegesystem laufen lassen, sind die Bundes- und einzelnen Landssysteme. Das Gesetz verfügt über die verantwortlichen Aufgaben über das System, daß erzieht werden muss. Die folgenden sind einige der Organisationen, die helfen; Gesundheitspflege den deutschen Bürgern zur Verfügung zu stellen:

Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Nationale Verbindung für Arbeiterwohlfahrt)

Die Deutsche Wohlfahrtsverbundung

Caritas

Der Deutsche Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband

Diakonisches Werk

Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland

Das Deutsche rote Kreuz

English Text

Germany is very unique with regard to healthcare. Its current system has been in effect since Bismarck was in power and is over 118 years old. We in the United States are always struggling with the cost of quality healthcare. In Germany, the government, several large institutions, private grants, volunteer organizations, and individual state funds provide this superior access to care. The public institutions that run the healthcare system are made up of the federal and individual state systems. The federal government is ultimately responsible for setting up and maintaining rules and regulations for the care plan. Each state must adhere to these rules and regulations.

Each state and municipality is responsible to inform the public about health matters, provide counseling, ensure work and food safety, report recent outbreaks of communicable disease, and offer the citizens a place to voice their concerns regarding health care.

It is only possible for Germany to provide this care for its citizens with the help of the following institutions: *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (National Association for Workers' Welfare), *Caritas*, the *Deutscher Paritätischer*

German Text

Deutschland hat über 1,340 gesetzlich Krankheitskapitalen, die das Gesundheits-Finanzierungssystem der Nation bilden. Es ist gesetzlich für jeden Bürger mit einem grossen Einkommen (ungefähr 70%) an diesem Program teil zu nehmen. Von der höheren Einkommenbevölkerung 30% wählen die Krankheitsversicherung, weil es finanziell vorteilhafter ist. Alle versicherten Bürger bezahlen die gleichen Beiträge. Der Beitragssatz ist ein Prozentsatz ihres Einkommens bis zur gesetzlichen Höhe. Für dieses bekommen sie die volle Benutzung unabhängig von ihrem Familienstand. Familien müssen nicht mehr als Einzelpersonen zahlen, ist es extrem vorteilhaft für deutsche Familien, in der Krankheitsversicherung zu sein, als mit einer privaten Versicherungsgesellschaft.

Die Beiträge zu der Krankheitsversicherung sind wie gesetzliche Abzüge in den Vereinigten Staaten. Das gesammelte Geld geht nicht zur Regierung, wie in den Vereinigten Staaten, es geht direkt zur Versicherung, wo dieser der Bürger zugehörig ist.

Es ist wichtig, zu wissen, daß diese Versicherung getrennt von der Regierung ist. Der Arbeitgeber ist verantwortlich diese vorgeschriebenen Beiträge der Versicherung zuzustellen. Für dieses müssen die Versicherungen den Bürger mit den neuesten und besten Krankenprogramme erteilen.

Pflichtmitgliedschaftsrichtlinien sind dieselben für alle deutschen Bürger sowie das Beitragssatz. Der Arbeitgeber und der Angestellte teilen die Kosten gleichmäßig. Der Angestellte wird nicht auf dem medizinischen Abzug besteuert, weil es nicht zum Gehalt gehört.

Krankengeld wird für Mutterschutz, Zahnarzt, Doktor, Rezept für Apotheken, Augen Doktor, Krankenhausaufenthalt, und Pflege nach dem Krankenhaus. Auch für Familienplanen, Krankenwagen Rechnung und manche Spas. Es kann sein, daß einige der Bürger eine kleine Summe bezahlen muss.

Einige Deutsche Bürger haben grössere Einkommen und wählen Privatversicherung. Meistens sind Einzelpersonen, damit sie Privatzimmer im Krankenhaus, ohne von einem Doktor überwiesen zu sein, bekommen.

Gesetzgebende Energien in den Gesundheitsstoffen werden durch die Bundesregierung- und Landregierungen geteilt und werden in der deutschen

English Text

Wohlfahrtsverband (German Non-Denominational Welfare Association), The German Red Cross, *Diakonisches Werk* (Service Agency of the Protestant Church in Germany), and *Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Welfare Office for Jews in Germany).

The Federal Government has set up the following Ministries to regulate certain portions of the health care system:

Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

Occupational

Social and war victims' medical care

Medical rehabilitation in the pension insurance system

Radiation protection pursuant to the X-Ray Ordinance and the protection of health in the workplace

Statutory pension, unemployment, and accident insurances

Social assistance

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Research in the universities that concentrate on holistic health and well being of the individual

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs,

Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth

Women and health

The Child and Youth Services Act

The Federal Act on Care for the Elderly

The Registered Homes Staff Ordinance

The ministries responsible for health matters in each state ensure the execution of the laws passed by the Federal Government, as well as passing their own laws with regard to administration, councils, and investments.

Germany has over 1,340 sickness funds that make up the nation's health insurance system. It is mandatory for every German citizen whose income is below a specified amount to enroll in the fund. The fund is very complete; some of Germany's wealthiest citizens choose to enroll in this fund instead of securing private insurance, or in most cases, as a supplement to their private insurance.

Each sickness fund is unique. All members of a particular fund pay the same contribution rate, which is a percentage of their income up to the designated cap amount. In return, they get the full benefits regardless of their family income. Families do not have to pay more than individuals, so it is extremely beneficial for German families to be in the sickness fund instead of with a private insurance carrier, regardless of their income.

German Text

Beschaffenheit umfaßt. Artikel 74 (das grundlegende Gesetz) umfaßt die wichtigsten Bereiche der Leistungsfähigkeit in bezug auf das Gesundheitssystem. Leitungsaufgaben sind die Verantwortlichkeit jedes Landes, außer Richtlinien und die Regelungen, die in der deutschen Beschaffenheit angegeben werden (Artikel 30 des grundlegenden Gesetzes). Bundesländer werden von den lokalen Städten, und Grafstaaten verglichen. Dieses ist wie in den Vereinigten Staaten. Um Gleichförmigkeit zu erzielen, verordnete die Regierung viele Gesetze, die verschiedene Versicherung des Gesundheitssystems umfassen. Das wichtigste dieser Gesetze ist die Gesetzgebung auf den gesetzlichen Gesundheitsvorschriften. Die Bundesregierung hat die folgenden Ministerien gegründet, um bestimmte Teile des Gesundheitssystems zu regeln:

Bundesministerium von Arbeits- und Sozialangelegenheiten Beruflich

Sozial- und der Kriegsofopfer medizinische Behandlung
 Medizinische Rehabilitation im
 Pensionversicherungssystem
 Strahlenschutz gemäß dem Roentgenstrahlbefehl und der
 Gesundheit an dem Arbeitsplatz
 Gesetzliche Pension, Arbeitslosigkeit und
 Unfallversicherung
 Sozial Unterstützung

Bundesministerium Ausbildung und von Forschung
 Forschung auf dem Gebiet der Gesundheit

Bundesministerium für Familienangelegenheiten, ältere Bürger, Frau und Jugend

Frau und Gesundheit
 Das Kind und die Jugendservice-Tat
 Die Bundestat auf Obacht für die älteren Personen
 Der eingetragene Ausgangsstabbehl
 Die Ministerien, die für Gesundheitsstoffe in
 jedem Land verantwortlich sind, stellen die Ausführung
 der Gesetze sicher, die durch die Bundesregierung verab-
 schiedet werden, sowie die überschreiten, Gesetze im
 Respekt zur Leitung, zu den Räten und zu dieser
 Beiträgen

Jedes Land und Stadtbezirk ist für Gesundheitsstoffe verantwortlich, Informationen über die Arbeitssicherheit, Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, über neue Ausbrüche einer ansteckenden Krankheit zu berichten, und Buergern einen Platz anzubieten zur Verfügung zu stellen, um ihre Interessen betreffend ihre Gesundheitspflege zu äußern.

English Text

The contributions to sickness funds are sort of like payroll taxes, but instead of the money going to the government, it goes directly to the particular fund you are involved in. It is important to remember that these funds are separate from the government. It is each sickness fund's responsibility to collect mandatory contributions from employers and workers to finance its operation. In return, the sickness fund must provide the members with the most advanced medical care and negotiate with care providers over rates.

Membership rules are the same for all German citizens. The employer and employee share the cost equally. The employee is not taxed on the medical deduction, nor is it considered part of his or her income.

Benefits include maternity care, dental care, physician visits, prescription drugs, hospital charges, eye doctors, glasses, rehabilitation, psychologists, psychiatrists, physical and occupational therapists, family planning, ambulance charges, and even certain health spas for the stressed. While most services are covered 100%, there is always the small exception that requires a small deductible or co-pay, depending on the service provided.

Some German citizens earn well over the statutory ceiling and opt for private insurance plans. These are mostly individuals who choose this option because it does provide certain benefits. Some of the benefits are private rooms in hospitals and the ability to see specialists without referral.

Every member of the social health care plan can now choose from a variety of health insurance funds in the place where they live and work. The choice option has only been available since 1995, and it guarantees all citizens (regardless of social standing, race, income, or gender) insured in the statutory health insurance system the same opportunities of choice. This choice is important as it allows for competition between the health insurance funds. This competition between plans benefits those enrolled in statutory health by providing better access to healthcare services with a decreased cost to the citizen.

"Healthcare Reform 2000" provided the German people with a health insurance system that agrees with the needs of the public and is an efficient as well as financially stable plan.

German Text

Jeder Bürger kann von einer Vielzahl des Krankenversicherungskapitals am Arbeitsplatz wählen. Diese sind seit 1995 bei allen Bürgern unabhängig Sozial oder Gehaltseinkommen die gleichen Gelegenheiten. Diese Wahl läßt Konkurrenz zwischen Krankenversicherungen zu.

Gesundheitspflegeverbesserung 2000

Gesundheitspflege wurde vor kurzem in Deutschland verbessert. Die Versicherungspläne werden zur finanziellen Zuverlässigkeit wiederhergestellt. Die Änderung versieht die Bürger mit einem Krankenversicherungssystem, das mit den Notwendigkeiten der Leute übereinstimmt, ist leistungsfähig, und finanziell beständig. Jeder Bürger hat das Recht zu hohe Qualitätsobacht und die korrekte Behandlung in einer fristgerechten Art und Weise. Medizinische Behandlung wird umstrukturiert, um den Notwendigkeiten der Einzelperson zu entsprechen. Eine persönliche Annäherung wird genommen. Doktoren haben die Zeit, mit jedem Patienten über ihre Krankheiten zu diskutieren. Gesundheitsförderung ist die Debatte. Es ist besser vorzubeugen ohne später mehr Probleme zu haben. Die Unterstützung in Selbsthilfegruppen hilft Stress am Arbeitsplatz.

Die Co-Zahlungen werden nicht erhöht. Deshalb bekommt niemand weniger Krankheitspflege oder Bedienung. Die Regierung hat ein Programm der Qualität eingeleitet. Dieses Programm macht sicher, daß das Geld nicht für andere Sachen benützt wird. Es wird sicher gemacht, daß jede DM direkt zum Versicherten Bürger geht.

Die Älteren und Kranken

Die Langzeitpflege-Versicherung: Die gesetzliche Krankenversicherung gibt Sozialhilfe, für längere Zeit im Altenheim, was sehr wichtig ist für 80 Millionen ältere Deutsche Bürger. Der Plan versichert, daß alle Einzelpersonen, die Krankenpflege benötigen, vom Staat geholfen werden. Alle Obachtgeber, die nicht beschäftigt werden, weil sie sich für die Älteren und Kranken interessieren, werden unter den alten Alterspension- und -unfallversicherungsplänen gedeckt. Dieses garantiert, daß die Älteren und Kranken nicht wegen der finanziellen Belastung verlassen werden, und daß diese Belastung nicht übermäßigen Familiedruck und nicht gesunde

English Text

Reform 2000

Each citizen has the right to high-quality care and to obtain the right treatment according to current medical standards from the right physician at the right time, with no runaround and "lost-in-the-loop" problems. Medical care will, as a result, be more tailored to suit the needs of patients. This is a holistic approach with special attention paid to the individual and his or her needs.

Health promotion will be a focus. It is better to be preventative in healthcare than to play catch up all the time. Self-help groups will be supported, as will services to help with stress issues in the home and workplace.

Co-payments will not be increased, and no one will experience a reduction in either benefits or services. Individual states will be responsible for ensuring that the healthcare funds are used appropriately. The government has instituted a quality assurance program that will monitor each insurance plan and make sure that the money is not being used frivolously. It is assured that each and every DM (Deutsch Mark) spent will go directly to healthcare and the members of the plan.

The Elderly and Disabled

The long-term care insurance: The statutory health insurance coverage provides the insureds with the necessary medical and nursing care as well as social protection in case of ill health irrespective of their age and income. It covers the risk of long-term nursing care needs. All caregivers who are not employed because they are caring for the elderly or disabled are sheltered by old age pension and accident insurances. This will guarantee that the elderly and disabled will not be abandoned because of financial strain.

Benefits of statutory long-term care insurance: If a person is deemed by a physician to be in need of long-term nursing care, he/she is immediately covered under the long-term care insurance regardless of financial situation. There are three levels involved in this program, depending on the individual's need: outpatient long-term care, inpatient long-term care, and rehabilitation care. Benefits established depend on the care level to which the patient is allocated.

If a person is in need of continuous home care, he/she has the choice to use his/her funds to pay the home care

German Text

lebende Bedingungen verursacht.

Nutzen der gestzlichen langen Zeitversicherung: Wenn eine Person von einem Doktor behandelt wird, lange Bezeichnungskrankenpflege zu benötigen, dann werden sie sofort unter der Langzeitpflege-Versicherung unabhängig davon finanzielle Situation gedeckt. Es gibt drei Stufen, das langfristige Programm mit einbezogen werden. Aus geduldiger lange Bezeichnungsobacht des Anstaltspatienten, Pflegeheimobacht, intensive Obacht, zu Hause Obacht. Der zugeordnete Nutzen hängt von der Stufe von Obacht ab, welche die Person benötigt. Wenn eine Person ununterbrochene Pflege benötigt, hat die Person dann die Wahl zum Benutzen seines Kapitals, um den Hauptobachtversorger zu zahlen, oder das Bargeld zum Geben dem Familienobachtgeber gezahlt zu werden. Von diesem System wird durch Qualitätsüberprüfung, um sicher zu sein-, daß niemand die älteren Personen übergeht und sie dann verläßt.

Andere Methoden für die älteren Personen: Tägliches Pflegeheim, Diakoneeschwestern im eigenen Heim. Es ist wichtig für die ältere Person, eine Richtung von Würde beizubehalten, und dieses wird erzielt, in dem man ihnen diese Wahlen anbietet.

Es ist klar, daß Deutschland die bestmögliche Obacht für seine Bürger zur Verfügung stellt. Die neue Verbesserung gewährt mehr Wahlen in der Gesundheitspflege, in der Konkurrenz von Dienstleistungen, die Qualität verbessert, und in der besseren Belegung der Versicherung. Es ist schade, daß wir nicht den gleichen Zugriff zur Gesundheitspflege für alle unsere Bürger haben.

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English Text

provider, or to take the allocation of money and give it to a family member to care for him/her. This system is checked to be sure that family members are not taking advantage of the elderly by abandoning them and spending the money. Other coverage for the elderly includes:

- Respite and day care programs
- Nursing home care
- Home visits by nurses and social workers

It is important for the elderly person to maintain a sense of dignity. This is why the elderly are given more choices in their care.

It is clear that Germany is providing the best possible care for its citizens. The new reforms allow more choices in healthcare, competition of services ensuring quality, and better allocation of funds. It is unfortunate that we in the United States do not have the same access to healthcare for children, the elderly, and ourselves.

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Evaluation: Laura demonstrates strong proficiency in written German and has developed considerable familiarity with current medical plans and government programs available in Germany. Laura will be an RN next May. A job well done!

Ruth

Robyn Beening
Course: English 101
Instructor: Helen Allen

Assignment:

Students were asked to write an essay about a significant person in their lives. They were asked to reveal character through description, anecdote, and dialogue.

We darted through the tidied household, my sister and I, toward the back bedroom, tossing our sneakers onto the green shag carpet worn from visitors over the years. The bedroom was fairly small, consisting of two twin beds, a nightstand, and a commode covered with glamorous sparkling jewelry. She had clip-on earrings (even the type you screw on that neither of us liked), long dangly earrings, bracelets, and the kind of necklaces you wrapped around your neck or tied in a knot. Every visit, we would stay in the bedroom, trying on her jewelry and perfumes. We would even slip our tiny feet into high-heeled shoes to greet our great-grandmother, Nana.

"My little Robyn," she'd call me, bending down for a great big hug and kiss. Nana always wore such beautiful dresses and shoes on her slender body. Every day, she put on her favorite fragrance, Chanel No. 5, which was especially strong, and curled her short gray hair. She'd always offer us butter pecan ice cream, and I'd accept even though it was my least favorite. She'd make us peanut butter sandwiches on buttered bread served with whole milk, yet we'd eat it because we loved her. She was the sweetest woman. Often I'd sit down to play at her tall upright piano, my feet dangling at the bench, and she'd quietly sit next to me, listening. Then, she would captivate my attention with a song, usually a piece by Chopin, and I'd watch her fingers cover the piano. She played such beautiful music, and she still is my inspiration to continue playing piano.

My mother and I would spend hours just sitting with her and Peepaw, my great-grandfather, where she'd tell us the story of how she met the love of her life. Nana had that precious smile she'd flash at Peepaw as though she were young and in love. Her light brown eyes always seemed to sparkle beneath her glasses as she looked at her beloved Kendall.

I wish I could say things were the same, ten years later, that I have spent lazy afternoons with Nana playing cards, baking cookies, watching soap operas, and making lunch. Time has taken a toll on her mind, and there was nothing to prevent it from happening.

It is difficult to visit her at times, in such a lonely place, the nursing home. Seeing the others proves how kind natured Nana has always been. Many of them become angry. Their flaws from the past become magni-

fied for me to see. I pass rooms to hear horrible screams of obscenities by the frightened. The disillusioned reach out to me, calling me their sons or daughters—someone to visit them. Others shun me out of their sight with disgust. The stench of soiled linens is overwhelming. Briskly I walk the halls searching for my Nana Ruth. I usually find her alone in her bedroom. Although she no longer remembers me, her personality is kind and loving as always.

She has the innocence of a baby, my Nana. Peacefully she sits in her wheelchair, rubbing her hands together as though she were applying lotion. Her hand moves to her frail left thigh, rubbing back and forth, and I wonder if she is in pain. The once curled hair lies straight upon her head, but she is beautiful as ever. Her eyes focus on something. I am not sure what she sees, but I ponder a way to win her attention and her eyes.

“NANA! Do you remember who I am? What’s my name?” I say quite loudly and cheerfully, knowing the Alzheimer’s won’t let her remember. She closes her eyes again. “It’s Robyn. Remember? Your little Robyn,” I say, trying to hold her shortened attention span. “Hey, let’s dance! You know... I’m a ballerina. Won’t you dance with me?”

I don’t expect much response, but I am overjoyed that she looks at me. I bend down to put her hands in mine and we gently rock back and forth, humming a tune. She flashes her precious smile at me, minus a few teeth. When she grows tired, I sit back down to talk.

“NANA, do you remember how we always used to play piano together? I’m so grateful we have your piano. I play it all the time,” I mention to her.

“Yes, she’s a beautiful girl, yes,” Nana mumbles, somewhat preoccupied, her hand extended towards my face.

“Let’s play the piano Nana,” I say, once again taking her hands in mine. I begin to sing Chopin’s Nocturne in E-Flat, moving her hands up and down to “play” the piano.

“Yes, I like this,” she responds to me, briefly opening her eyes, her head moving in sync with the beat. I am absolutely delighted to see her happy. I plant a kiss just under her left cheekbone where her aged skin feels so soft to the touch.

Unexpectedly, she exclaims, “I love you!” This is the first time I have initiated such a response. I feel a warm tear forming in my eye because the Nana I’ve always remembered is beside me. I sense that a part of her remembers me, and our times together, somewhere in the back of her mind.

It saddens me to realize how different things are. As I have grown older, I have had questions for Nana, questions that will go unasked. I wonder how it was growing up ninety-nine years ago, what her parents were like, and her opinion of living through the twenties and the thirties. I am forever appreciative for our memories, but my inquisitive nature cannot help but ponder. I enjoy our time together, conversation or silence, and quickly it passes until I must leave her to rest. Politely I ask for a kiss on the cheek. She obliges. I stand up, slowly letting go of her fragile hand. Her figure holds my gaze until I leave the bedroom, hoping she knows of her importance to me and how much I love her.

Evaluation: Robyn’s essay is outstanding not only because of vivid description that recalls the significant person in her life, but also because her writing is evocative of place and atmosphere.

What Happens to Those Who Don't Know

Delana Borntreger

Course: Reading 099/English 100

Instructors: Christine Poziemski/Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

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

It was late one Thursday night, and Charlie and Vicki Conn were putting on their coats to attend a Department of Natural Resources conference. It was around 7 pm and nightfall had begun. As they stood at the door of our house, I tried to tell them not to go. I was told I was just overtired, and my brother Roy needed to get me to bed after they left. I began to scream and kick. My brother placed his hands around my waist as my arms reached further and further for my mother. She had almost gotten away, but in one moment I used everything I had and grabbed her jacket. I gripped my hand inside her pocket as the three of us struggled in the doorway. With one tug she moved through the door, but left in my hand was half her jacket. The door slammed and I began to cry, only no tears would fall. That night was the turning point for the rest of my life.

Early that day in school, I thought it would be an easy day due to an all-day class on sex ed, but as all of my friends gathered in one classroom, some in chairs and others on the floor, we listened to Mrs. Herd explain the reproductive system. More than half the day went by and I had learned more about sex than from any TV program I had ever seen. We took a short break to get snacks and returned. Mrs. Herd had proceeded with "Now we have learned the good things about sex; let's see what some bad things may be." I started to feel uncomfortable; I began to move around in my chair. Then she got very descriptive in words to explain molestation, rape, what the differences are, and how common they are. As she continued to speak, I could no longer hear her. Her voice got softer and softer and all I could hear was Roy's voice telling me to "stay still." I was no longer in the classroom, but could see Roy on top of me, my clothes on the floor with a sheet over me. I looked to my left to wipe a tear on my pillowcase and saw my Thursday printed underwear draped over the chair. My body was frozen, my arms to my side, and my legs spread apart. My mind was not there in the room; it was on a deserted island where dolphins played close to the shore and birds hummed a melody of songs. As I came back to reality, I realized that I was a victim.

I was lying on the nurse's table for years it seemed, and finally my mom had arrived to take me home. It was a long car ride home and our conversations were limited.

She asked me if I thought that I had caught the twenty-four hour bug. "So," she began to say, "what did you do today in school?" I said, "Nothing." Once we got home, I went straight to my room not knowing what to say or do. I crawled into my bed and pulled the covers over my head and drifted to sleep.

Later that night Vicki came to my room and asked me if I would like to sew. I said, "Sure." As I laid some material down on the table she began to ask me silly questions. "Is there something bothering you?"

"No, not really," I replied.

"Are you sure?" she said.

"It's something that you would never believe, and I have no clue how to tell you." Just then she got up off her chair and went to the craft closet and pulled out a yellow spiral notebook "If you cannot tell me, then please write it. It cannot be that bad for paper," she said. I grabbed the notebook and took it into my room and sat on my bed. I began with a sentence that told a shocking story: "I'm writing you from the scene of a crime." I kept on writing, telling detail after detail of the sexual abuse I had been involved in for six straight years, night after night. I soon realized that the notebook was filled with years of details of my past. I returned back to the family room and placed the notebook in front of my mother and walked back into my room. After a few moments I could hear her crying, and then a knock at my door. I was too ashamed to let her in and see my face. When I opened the door of my room and saw her, I knew my life would never be the same.

Evaluation: *Delana's powerful essay assaults the reader with its strong verbs and wrenching details. In life as well as in our learning community, Delana has used writing as a means of releasing her pent-up emotions and coping with her uncomfortable status as a victim.*

Saving Pecola

DeKole Branch

Course: Literature 223

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

Each student was asked to write a paper on one of the texts we had read during the semester. DeKole chose to focus her discussion on Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye.

The Bluest Eye captures and expresses the lack of self-love that exists in African-American families and their communities. The story takes place in the 1940s, during a time when the black population fought for equality and justice. In her tribute, Toni Morrison gives a prominent voice to those whose lives surrendered to the recycling spirit of isolation and the image of American beauty. Overall, the story focuses on the essences of African-American lifestyles, culture, and tradition, but the book's underlying message exposes both radical and rational explanations for the negative reproduction of the African-American population. The novel has several main characters, but for the sake of time and space, I plan to offer an insightful and positive analysis of the Breedlove family.

Cholly Breedlove was not the typical husband and father; in fact, his presence was detrimental and, in the end, life-denying. What kind of man would beat his wife, ignore his son, and rape his daughter? The events that produced Cholly Breedlove's animalistic behavior began when his mother and father abandoned him as an infant. "The lullaby of grief enveloped him, rocked him, and at last numbed him" (Morrison 139). A child should be covered

in the intimate and secure blankets of loving parents, but Cholly's perception of love was conditioned and poisoned by loneliness, embarrassment, and desertion.

It was a curse to be young, black, and male during a time when whites seemed to rule the world, and Cholly experienced a devastating confirmation as proof. An innocent walk in the woods with a young girl took a turn for the worse when they intimately engaged in sexual intercourse. Their private moment was interrupted by the smell of white men carrying flashlights. As the men watched, one said, "Come on, coon. Faster. You ain't doing nothing for her" (148). Cholly and Darlene were forced by the malicious men to continue, and that disheartening moment scarred Cholly's interpretation of sex, love, and women. "Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darlene. He hated her.... He almost wished he could do it—hard, long and painfully, he hated her so much" (148). This emotional event in Cholly's upbringing offers an understandable defense on his behalf and a mild explanation for his absent ideals and crippled expressions of love toward his family. We are all fragile creatures as young teens, and the events of our lives, whether joyous or destructive, often leave lasting imprints, coloring our futures, bringing ecstasy or ruin...depending. Cholly, because his first sexual exploration was sullied by racist voyeurs with flashlights, seemed unable thereafter to embrace the beauty of sex and its issue: loving, trusting children. Therefore, though Pecola herself was not yet in the picture, the seed of her heartbreaking fate was planted and watered the very instant those white men stumbled upon and then humiliated Cholly and Darlene.

After the death of his guardian aunt, fourteen-year-old Cholly curiously searched a new city to find his biological father and his only hope for completion. That optimism soon died when Cholly's long-lost father severely dismissed his existence. The man who gave Cholly life was the same man who resented his presence, and with no remorse. Cholly could have escaped the claws of his fate, but without a structured and loving environment, destiny controlled his explosive demise and sent him into the future where he met and married Pauline.

Pauline was a plain girl who enjoyed housekeeping. Metaphorically, she was the house and therefore could clean and rearrange herself into loveliness. She was held

captive by the ugliness of her crooked foot that dragged as a constant and hideous reminder of her unworthiness. Moreover, Pauline's family offered her the silence of separation, which left her feeling out of place. She never received encouragement or discouragement from them, and the loneliness separated her from beauty and her family. She wished for the presence of a faceless stranger who would accept and love her. Subconsciously, Pauline felt sorry for herself, and therefore, she was grateful for Cholly's willingness to love her.

They married and relocated up North, both leaving behind dreadful images of their pasts. As newlyweds, Cholly and Pauline lived happily together as they shared a separate bond. Cholly worked in steel mills, and Pauline worked on finding new ways to clean house. She constantly felt isolated in terms of her appearance as she searched to find ways to fit in with the customs of northern women. She never accepted her appearance or her internal beauty and, like Cholly, she was never conditioned to love herself. Therefore, she became solely reliant on the only man who ever showed her love, and Cholly—burdened by his wife's comprehensive dependence upon him—gradually began to detest Pauline, staying away from home (and staying as drunk as possible) as much as he could.

The fighting began as their wounded hearts collided and their love and marriage slowly deteriorated. Since Pauline compared her appearance to American white women, she became obsessed with her looks and even mirrored her hair, make-up, and clothes after the Hollywood starlets. She spent all of her spare time at the movie theatre where she intensely watched pretty and happy white women who always lived pretty and happy lives. "It was a simple pleasure, but she learned all there was to love and all there was to hate" (122). Pauline's idea of happiness was based on an image of white American beauty, and she easily learned to hate her unhappiness, which she felt was due to her blackness. In her favorite place of peace and contentment, Pauline established circumstantial evidence to support her ugliness when a front tooth fell from her mouth. "There I was...trying to look like Jean Harlow, and a front tooth gone. Everything went then. Look like I... settled down to just being ugly" (123). Nevertheless, Pauline continued to go to the shows, but she was never the same. She let herself go in

terms of her appearance and was now a mother. How could Pauline teach or give love to a child when she never learned to truly love herself? What kind of children would Pauline and Cholly Breedlove conceive?

Sammy came first, just like a salad before the main course. Pauline gave birth to him to gain the experience of childbirth. As time went on, Sammy grew to be angry, disrespectful, and ignored. He continuously rebelled against reality. "He was known, by the time he was fourteen, to have run away from home no less than twenty-seven times" (43). Sammy's father first ran away at the age of fourteen, and his story repeated itself in the life of Sammy, whom Morrison doesn't mention much because his life was already predetermined. Sammy probably learned how to repress his emotions and, like Cholly, he would soon grow up and away from common sense. Given that he was marked by the ugliness of his fate since his parents did not show signs of love and respect, Sammy would eventually mark his future children with the same sad cytoplasm of self-hatred. The male child of a broken family will reproduce other shattered victims of his sad, continuous cycle, and the only thing that can stop the cycle is nonexistence.

Pecola wished for blue eyes. She carried the torch of her mother's desire to be made beautiful. Pecola's appearance did not make her unpretty. Somehow, she belonged to her unattractiveness like a first name or a birth date. Perhaps her characteristics did not mirror those of her peers, but she was never told to believe in her unique features; instead, her face only reflected presumed imperfections. She was never offered any definitions of unconditional self-love, and she therefore put a price on external beauty that would cost her her life.

Pecola's mother was both irritating and confusing in the eyes of Pecola. She had two separate personalities. At home, Pecola lived with the woman who yelled and cursed her family, but once, she witnessed her mother at work, caring for a blue-eyed white girl with gentleness and safety. Somehow, Pecola did not expect to be held or encouraged. She did not long for prideful remarks, and the beatings she received for her clumsiness were the expected punishments for her supposedly repulsive image. The same dreadful images that haunted Pauline's past would kill Pecola.

The relationship between a mother and daughter is traditionally sacred, and the bond that is shared is unlike any other. A black woman has many responsibilities, and they are passed down through generations as survival codes. A black mother is the only one who will share and understand her daughter's emotions, fears, and dreams, but "love is no better than the lover" (Morrison 206). Unfortunately, the only sense of reality Pauline had died long before Pecola was born. Pauline did not comprehend the importance and language of unconditional love and therefore could not present it to Pecola.

Furthermore, all little girls depend on their fathers for security and protection. They look to their fathers for assurance and acceptance. Young females silently yearn for their fathers' love and pride and without these things, little girls will blindly search for any form of affection from a man. Pecola's innocence was also her undiscovered power to persevere, and Cholly stole the only gift that she'd ever received. In an inebriated and brutal act, he raped his daughter: "...the tenderness would not hold.... His soul seemed to slip down to his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made—a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon" (163). The sickness that blurred the sight of Mr. Breedlove sacrificed the life of his daughter, and his death would not justify as punishment for that ultimate act of betrayal. I simply cannot offer explanations in his defense, but somewhere in the depths of reality, this fictitious tale is someone's truth.

Pecola's strength surpassed her years. After being teased by her peers, despised by her mother, raped by her father and ridiculed by her brother, she finally lost her mind. What good was her mind with all the pain she had endured? In her fanatical state of existence, she had the Bluest Eyes. What could have saved Pecola that could not have saved them all? Self-Love! "Then Pecola asked a question that had never entered my mind.... '[H]ow do you get somebody to love you?'" (32).

Dearest Pecola(s),

The only way to get somebody to love you is to first love yourself. The only way to love yourself is to know yourself. The only way to know yourself is to trust who you are. The way to trust

who you are is to believe in yourself. The only way to believe in yourself is to set goals for yourself. The only way to set goals for yourself is to know and the only way to know is by feeling and the only way to feel is by thinking. The only way to think is by imagining and the only way to imagine is by picturing. The only way to picture is by seeing and the only way to open your eyes is to TRY. So Pecola, you must start at the bottom in order to get to the top, but if you follow these instructions, somebody very special will be waiting for you. Now remember:

Try to open your eyes and look at what you see, a picture slowly coalescing.

Imagine someone that you are sure to be.

Think about your feelings and know that they are true; now set down some goals.

And believe that they will come true. You know how to be yourself and I've loved you from the start, but you must first learn.

Learn to love yourself, and loving you ain't hard!

Lovingly yours,
Beauty

Pecola died even before she was born. With parents like Cholly and Pauline, she was destined to become mentally insane, but to place the entire blame on them would be unfair. History often repeats itself, especially within the Breedlove family. The fact that they are African-Americans is a painful reminder of how our natural beauty has been categorized, lost, and erased. The cycle of mental and physical abuse will unfortunately continue unless someone starts to love.

Works Cited

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Evaluation: *This is a heartfelt response, something I could always expect from DeKole. The letter (from Beauty) at the end makes this essay particularly special. This one was a genuine pleasure to read.*

The Imperfect Gift

Justin Clack

Course: English 101

Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:

Recreate an experience which taught you something important about yourself.

The sun fires its rays deep into the winter's midmorning. Light filters through a window and onto the floor. After having just talked for an hour to my Sunday school class about Jonah and the whale, my throat is raw. The effort of answering the children's constant barrage of questions has left me feeling exhausted and dejected.

The lesson went well. The eight- and nine-year-olds understood the plot, and more importantly they understood what Jonah must have felt like entombed in the belly of a whale and surrounded on all sides by wet, fetid fish flesh.

Today, that is how I think I feel, cut off from the world by this disgusting layer of flesh I call my body. I am seventeen years old, and I have a face covered with bright red pimples. When I look at my body, all I can see is a pair of long gangly arms, placed on a stunningly white torso, which is balanced precariously on twig-thin legs. My face looks far worse; my nose, chin and Adam's apple jut out in three hideous explosions of flesh, causing me to resemble a troll. I feel hopelessly cut off from all that is human and beautiful; I am an island in a sea of imperfection, with no isthmus to the mainland of humanity.

I walk out of my classroom and down the dank passage, which leads to the courtyard. Before entering the courtyard, I stop and lean against the smooth machine-crafted doorpost of the building's exit. A pool of light has formed on the cold linoleum floor that surrounds the door. My bag of worn Sunday school props slung loosely over my shoulder is getting heavy. I let the bag slide off; it then hits the ground with a muffled thump and splashes in the pool of sunlight. Directly in front of me stands an old iron table with a dimpled and worn surface. On top of the table there are opaque teacups and saucers which are ready to be used by the congregation after the service.

The Church service has just ended, and people are beginning to congregate in the courtyard. Helpers scurry between the table and the kitchen, carrying scalding hot pots of coffee and tea. As the helpers complete their final preparations, the crowd of people slowly migrates toward the table.

I notice a young boy, four years of age, approaching the table. I know him from the class I taught last year. He stops in front of the table, then pans his eyes over the cups and saucers, finally stopping at a beaten up old teapot. He lifts his eyes from the teapot to me and slowly, his tight, fresh face lights with a smile.

"Hi Justin," he bleats.

"Good morning," I reply.

The young boy walks around the table and stands in front of me. I am two and a half feet taller than he is, and looking down on him makes me feel like a giraffe. So I lower myself onto my haunches to make our conversation easier. I am curious to find out why he has approached me, but before I have a chance to ask, he hugs me. I squeeze back and smell the pungent mix of soap and play on his shirt.

"How are you?" I ask.

"Good," he replies.

I can't help but smile at how confident he is.

"What is that?" I ask, pointing to the miniature blue van with oversized tires and tinted windows.

"It's my car," he replies and hands it to me.

I take the car from him and begin a mock appraisal. First, I hold it up to the sunlight and rotate it. Then, I turn to him and nod; next, I flick its wheels and watch them spin.

"Niiiiiice," I comment enthusiastically.

His shoulders arch back; he presses his chest forward in pride.

"I noticed it was your birthday today. Have you enjoyed it so far?" I ask him.

"Yes, my teacher gave me chocolate," he replies.

"What kind?" I ask.

"Um...chocolate," he replies again and opens his hand to reveal his treasured last piece.

"Kom bokkie,"¹ his mother's voice calls out in our general direction. He snaps to attention and walks towards her.

"Bye," he shouts over his shoulder as an afterthought.

"Cheers," I reply and reach for my bag.

I stand up and begin to leave.

"Wait!" I hear his little voice call out from behind me.

I turn around to see him looking up and smiling at me. He raises his short, plump little arm with his hand tightly balled into a fist. Slowly, one-by-one, he peels his sticky fingers back to reveal his last piece of chocolate.

He wants me to take the melted blob from his grubby hand and eat it. My stomach convulses at the thought of eating it. I also feel uncomfortable accepting the chocolate because it is his last piece.

He raises his arm higher with a slightly distressed expression and motions for me to accept. Not wanting to offend him, I ignore the violent internal protests, reach down, take the deformed rectangle, and eat it. It tastes salty from the sweat of his hand; I fight an impulse to screw my lips. Eventually, the taste of chocolate comes and I can smile.

"Ummmm, that's good; thank you," I lie.

His face lights with pride and joy; he smiles, showing all his teeth.

Then it hits me! It comes crashing through my petty existence like a freight train—I realize what it is I am looking at. I fight back tears. This small child with his small gift has opened the big gates of Heaven. Here beaming back at me is everything human and beautiful. It is not his appearance or his imperfect gift that strikes me but his heart and action of giving. It is not my appearance or performance but the spirit of my undertakings that count.

Evaluation: *Mr. Clack's humanity and sensitivity are clearly conveyed in this gentle but moving narrative. Fine pacing and clear voice are complemented by his gentle tone and precise language.*

¹Kom Bokkie is an Afrikaans term of endearment. Roughly translated, it means "come here.my young antelope." In Afrikaans, the expression conjures up images of a wholesome and natural being given by the creator and for whom the speaker has intense affection. It has a very guttural/Dutch pronunciation.

Similar Differences

Justin DeVault

Course: Literature 223/History 214

Instructors: Andrew Wilson and Tom DePalma

Assignment:

Each student was asked to write an essay on one or more of the texts we had studied during the term.

Justin (very characteristically) chose to analyze one of the course's most perplexing and unusual stories:

Jean Toomer's "Box Seat."

Throughout the semester of our joint class — African and Native-American History and Minority Literature in America — we have seen all the aspects of oppression; the reasons (not excuses), the processes involved, and the after-effects of oppression have all been vividly described in both the factual, historical documentation of John Hope Franklin, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, etc., as well as in the fictions of Ralph Ellison, Leslie Marmon Silko, Jean Toomer and others. Specifically, the heading of “current/post-oppression effects” is, by itself, multifaceted. The effects on real and fictional people generally fell into two categories: either the person experienced some type of metanoia, the causes of which could be numerous indeed, and he or she could be seen on a road more positive than his or her current situation, or the person’s history was cut short with little certainty of the future. Tayo, Leslie Marmon Silko’s main character in her novel *Ceremony*, is probably the best example of a fictional character improving his life; due to his acceptance of integrating white culture with his own, Tayo is able to release himself from the effects of having his culture unwillingly assimilated into white culture. As a contrast, however, Dan Moore and Muriel from Jean Toomer’s “Box Seat” do not find the path that Tayo finds and, therefore, do not find self-redemption. While Dan

and Muriel are different as characters, they both stunt their personal growth by denying acceptance; Dan denies integrating the cultural baggage that comes with living in the North, while Muriel denies herself the integration of the background that she will never lose (despite her efforts to white-wash her personal history) and the new-found life she (maybe) enjoys.

Jean Toomer’s “Box Seat” opens with:

Houses are shy girls whose eyes shine reticently upon the dusk body of the street. Upon the gleaming limbs and asphalt torso of a dreaming nigger. Shake your curled wool blossoms, nigger. Open your liver lips to the lean, white spring. Stir the root-life of a withered people. Call them from their houses, and teach them to dream. (1123)

As an introductory paragraph, this appears to give hope to the ending of a not-yet-read story. It is a calling toward salvation for a “withered” people who are atrophied by the constant pull and push of living in a new environment. Dan Moore, a currently unemployed black man from the South, cannot deal with the changes necessary in moving to the North. As Dan is walking to Muriel’s house, there are the first instances of his discomfort with the surroundings. As he walks,

The eyes of the houses faintly touch him as he passes them. Soft girl-eyes, they set him singing.... Come on, Dan Moore, come on. Dan sings. His voice is a little hoarse. It cracks. He strains to produce tones in keeping with the houses’ loveliness. Can’t be done. (1123)

This might be the only instance in which Dan attempts to find beauty in his new world. More likely, however, the houses are sirens that are trying to kill any traits of the South that are still within him. Dan cannot even learn to like his new place by being in tune with the feeling of the houses. Throughout the story, there are instances in which Dan feels that his surroundings are “prison-like.” When he gets to Muriel’s house and waits for her, her landlady, Mrs. Pribby, sits down in a chair, and “There is a sharp click as she fits into her chair and draws it to the table. The click is metallic like the sound of a bolt being shot into place” (1124). As he is waiting, Dan feels as if “The house contracts about him. It is a sharp-edged, massed, metallic house” (1124). Later,

when he is talking to Muriel, Dan notices “Muriel’s chair is close and stiff about her. The house, the rows of houses locked about her chair. Dan’s fingers and arms are fire to melt and bars to wrench and force and pry” (1126). If Dan were able to accept some of his new surroundings, he might not feel so constrained. Also, his inability to get used to his surroundings creates an uncrossable gap between Muriel and him. Dan feels that he still sees hints of the South within Muriel and makes himself her self-appointed savior. He states, “I was born in a cane-field. The hands of Jesus touched me. I am come to a sick world to heal it” (1123). As Dan goes to a wall and puts his ear against it, he feels, “The next world-savior is coming up that way. Coming up. A continent sinks down. The new-world Christ will need consummate skill to walk upon the waters where huge bubbles burst” (1124). Lastly, while in an argument with Muriel, Dan states, “My talking to you will make you aware of your power to do so. Say that you will love, that you will give yourself in love—” (1126). All these examples say, at least, that Dan believes the North and Muriel need a savior for redemption. The statements “The hands of Jesus touched me” and “my talking to you will make you aware of your power to do so” give the impression that Dan believes he is the savior of the North and Muriel. These two facts—believing that Muriel and the North have too little of Southern culture, and thinking that he can “save” Muriel—create a gap between a relationship that might be able to occur if Dan were more accepting of his surroundings. However, Dan is not the only character that is in denial; Muriel is so concerned with her status that she also has conflict with how she feels about Dan, and how the town would feel if he and she were together.

When Dan comes to meet Muriel at her house, she is in constant worry that Mrs. Pribby will hear or see them together. Mrs. Pribby is often in another room, reading a newspaper. When Dan gets on his knees in front of Muriel to tell her how he feels, she states, “Shhh. Dan, please get up. Please. Mrs. Pribby is right in the next room. She’ll hear you. She may come in. Don’t Dan. She’ll see you—” (1126). Mrs. Pribby symbolically represents the town; Muriel feels that if Mrs. Pribby sees them, then the whole town will as well. The newspapers that

Mrs. Pribby is constantly reading represent the news of Muriel and Dan getting out to the town and ruining Muriel’s reputation. Muriel, however, does not completely hate Dan; she has confused feelings about him that are a product of her nonacceptance. She thinks, “Shame about Dan. Something awfully good and fine about him. But he don’t fit in. In where? Me? Dan, I could love you if I tried. I don’t have to try. I do. . . a I wish you’d go. You irritate me. Dan, please go” (1125). These mixed feelings that Muriel has, Sandra Hollin Flowers believes, are due to the conflict within herself. In her essay “Solving the Critical Conundrum of Jean Toomer’s ‘Box Seat,’” Flowers states:

Ushered into a side-street house by the landlady, Mrs. Pribby, Dan pays court to Muriel, a teacher aspiring to a position among Washington’s black elite. Muriel, though, is distant and chiding. Ambivalently, she rejects Dan’s advances, reflecting that she could love him if Mrs. Pribby and the town would let her—that, indeed, she *does* love him but must not let him know. (302)

Muriel’s concern for her reputation also comes through in Jean Toomer’s way of positioning her with respect to other characters in the story. When Muriel and her friend, Bernice, are going to the theater, they give Dan the impression that he is not welcome. When he goes to leave, “He moves towards Muriel. Muriel steps backward up one step” (1127). Both literally and symbolically, Muriel moves up one step of her apartment stairs, and Toomer also conceptually reminds the reader through the action that Dan is one step lower than she on the steps of social stratification or acceptance. When Muriel and Bernice take their seats at the theater, it is also symbolic of their statuses. Flowers comments, “Muriel’s box seat is adjacent to the ‘right’ [that is, *correct*] aisle,’ though in the ‘lower,’ that is, *bottom* tier. Thus Muriel’s position on the most vulnerable rung of the middle-class ladder is subtly reiterated” (303). Muriel is desperately trying to gain a higher status and, as a result, will outwardly do anything she can to show this. While Muriel is waiting for the show to begin, she notices that Dan walks into the theater. This last scene most interestingly shows the dichotomy and similarities, or the juxtapositions and parallels, between Dan and Muriel.

When Dan first comes into the theater, his conflict with the townspeople already begins. As he goes to take his seat, he steps on the corns of a man's feet. Uncomfortable, "Dan fidgets, and disturbs his neighbors. His neighbors glare at him" (1129). Toomer's usage of the word "neighbor" is far from benign. The people sitting next to him are not just fellow theater occupants, but the people of the town; the theater is not just a theater, but is a representation of the town as well, for Dan feels the same there as in the neighborhood. For the last act of the night a dwarf, who had previously been fighting in a bloody boxing match with other dwarfs for the audience's delight, sings a song to Muriel. Dan feels sorry for Mr. Barry, the dwarf, and identifies with him; therefore, any response that Muriel gives to the dwarf may be transferred onto her feelings of Dan. Mr. Barry offers a rose to Muriel and she is scared to accept it, fearing what the onlookers would think: "Arms of the audience reach out, grab Muriel, and hold her there. Claps are steel fingers that manacle her wrists and move them forward to acceptance" (1131). Muriel is uncertain as to what she should do until Bernice states, "It's all right. Go on—take it" (which indicates that she has been accepted by the town), and "Muriel, tight in her revulsion, sees black, and daintily reaches for the offering" (1131). According to Sandra Flowers,

Dan and the dwarf are symbolically interchangeable, since neither is socially acceptable to "the house." Thus, Dan is aghast when, at the urging of "the house," Muriel accepts the bloodied rose, the proffering of which is the dwarf's final demeaning act. In accepting the rose, Muriel becomes an instrument of the dwarf's humiliation and, necessarily, of Dan's. (305)

What is important to notice here is not just the fact that Dan is now heartbroken by the fact that Muriel has accepted the role of humiliating the dwarf and, therefore, him, but also that it gives the reader the feeling that that was her last chance of coming to grips with her origins, which she hasn't. For Dan as well, there is little to show of him accepting the North. When Dan is about to fight a man from the audience in the alley, "The man stops. Takes off his hat and coat. Dan, having forgotten him,

keeps going on" (1132). This passage does not suggest, as it might seem, that Dan is forgetting about the conflict of his roots with the North. Dan is not so much forgetting as he is accepting of the differences between the townspeople and himself, which he probably thinks will never change.

Dan Moore and Muriel never reach any type of connection and never have any type of catharsis as well. By neither of them accepting the other's life presently, they are not able to accept each other's differences. If Dan and Muriel could have gotten past their own recalcitrance, they might have been able to share a relationship that would make them appreciate both the North and the South, thus integrating past and present experiences and gaining personal growth.

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- Toomer, Jean. "Box Seat." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie McKay. New York: Norton, 1997. 1123-32.

Evaluation: *This is a very strong, very well-written essay: beautifully organized and rationally argued. Mr. DeVault supports his points with highly relevant quotations from Toomer's story. This paper is a showcase of solid literary analysis.*

Right vs. Right

Elliot De Vries
Course: English 102
Instructor: Nancy L. Davis

Assignment:
Who is the tragic hero in Sophocles' play, Antigone?
Argue your position in a three-page essay.

In the world's literature, there is a group of characters whose members soar above all others in terms of their stature, persistence, and power; these are the tragic heroes. Despite this group's significance, the factors that unite its members are not always clear—and it is not always easy to tell whether a particular character belongs to the group or not. A perfect example of such uncertainty may be found in Sophocles' classic tragedy *Antigone*. Here, two characters vie for the position of tragic hero: Antigone and Creon. After a careful analysis of *Antigone*, it can be shown that neither character deserves the title "tragic hero," and that the play is best understood in other terms.

In order to develop this critique, it will do well first to examine the meaning of the term "tragic hero." The classical, and even today most common, meaning of the term was given by Aristotle in his *Poetics*: "a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is not brought about by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous" (76). In other words, Aristotle believes that the tragic hero should be a man of noble stature who is neither morally perfect nor a depraved miscreant. His terrible end is brought about by a "hamartia," which may mean either an error or a character defect (Kaufmann 61-2). Often, the tragic hero realizes his folly shortly before he meets his doom. These characteristics now considered, it is important to note that not all tragedies necessarily have a tragic hero. This is easily shown by the fact that there are many Greek tragedies which end positively—for example, Aeschylus' *Orestes* trilogy—while, as defined above, the tragic hero must bring about his own downfall.

Now that we have a standard against which to measure the characters, we can begin to weigh their characteristics. We will begin with Creon. Aristotle's first condition is that our character be neither perfect nor perfectly evil. Creon is certainly not perfect—he is cruel, suspicious, and often unfair. Creon's peculiar form of justice even causes the sentry to cry out, "Oh it's terrible when the one who does the judging judges things all wrong" (Sophocles 653). To his father, Haemon says, "The man in the street, you know, dreads your glance" (663). There may be a problem with the opposite side of this ques-

tion, though. Does Creon actually have good qualities as well as bad? Although the positions for which he argues usually have a little truth to them—and knowing part of the truth does not in any way imply a moral sense—he nonetheless seems a character without any scruples, one who merely exercises his “ruthless power to do whatever pleases [him]” (658). Furthermore, even as he works to uphold his law, which he is not entirely in the wrong to do, his primary means is threatening others with violence. When he speaks to the sentry about the crime which has been committed, instead of investigating conscientiously, he merely threatens the sentry with death if he cannot produce some other possible perpetrator. And if he does not enlist any of our moral sympathies to his side, he cannot be *any* sort of hero. Consequently, Creon fails our test.ⁱ

Antigone may suffer from the opposite problem. She seems to be too lacking in moral flaws in order to make an acceptable tragic heroine. The leader of the chorus describes her in these terms: “Like father like daughter, passionate, wild...she hasn’t learned to bend before adversity” (657). And yet, those qualities — passion, wildness — serve and support her cause, which is noble. When spoken of a crusader such as she, to most those words would seem to be high praise rather than a reproach. Her goodness is cemented in the minds of the people of Thebes as well, for they believe that “She deserves a glowing crown of gold” (663). Antigone brings about her own demise, but this is not the result of any tragic fault or hamartia; this is in truth a direct result of her moral action: burying her brother.

We have seen that neither Antigone nor Creon fits the mold of the traditional tragic hero very well. If there is no tragic hero, then in reading *Antigone* we have lost the idea that one of the characters represents good and the other evil. How then are we to interpret the play from the standpoint of the correctness of each of the two sides, if neither of the two is on the side of the tragic hero? The philosopher Hegel’s interpretation of tragedy may be just what is needed to do away with the confusion on this. Walter Kaufmann sums up his position in this way: “[Hegel] realized that at the center of the greatest tragedies of [...] Sophocles we find not a tragic hero but a tragic collision, and that the conflict is not between

good and evil but between one-sided positions, each of which embodies some good” (202). That is, though Antigone is plainly the more likeable of the two, Antigone and Creon are both partially right. It would be hard to find a more poetic idea than this: tragedy is what occurs when right collides with right.

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- Aristotle. *Aristotle’s Poetics*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961.
- Kaufmann, Walter. *Tragedy and Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Sophocles. *Antigone. Literature and the Writing Process*. 5th ed. Ed. Elizabeth McMahan, Susan X. Day, and Robert Funk. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999. i644-679.

Evaluation: *Elliot’s argument is original, insightful, and eloquent.*

Twenty-First-Century Voice:

Responses to 20th-Century American History and Literature

Jenny Dolan

Course: Literature 222/History 212
Instructors: Andrew Wilson and Tom DePalma

Assignment:

A few times during the semester, each student was asked to respond creatively to the texts and historical events we had studied. A student could write a letter to a literary or historical character, for example, or he/she could assume the voice of that character in a monologue.

Response One

A Letter to the
“Legendary Ball Turret Gunner” of World War II,
Eulogized by Poet Randall Jarrell in 1945

Dear Mr. Ball Turret Gunner,

I am entering to the first alpha stages of sleep. Parts of my brain (the nervous parts) are gradually tiptoeing back to their nest, and I am carefully balancing two questions on the two sides of my psyche. One: Why did I shut off the light when I have eighty more pages to read and two more worksheets to finish? Two: What if I had no desire to study anything, and I worked in a field for the rest of my life?

I am thinking of you now, mainly because I am also thinking about what my grandpa said tonight at dinner.

“Americans make such a hootenanny about death. What’s the big deal? You don’t see the Chinese or the Buddhist or the Spaniard runnin’ like a chicken with his head cut off every time, god forbid, he sees a sick person. In my day, you don’t tell people they’re sick. Doctors don’t even tell ’em. My mother, god rest her soul, thought she had the flu because her son couldn’t tell her the truth.”

There was a moment of silence, a respectful silence, not only for my grandmother but for all the great-grandmothers that were lied to. I spoke like a child.

“But aren’t you scared, Grandpa?”

“Of death? Hell no. What if George Washington was still walkin’ around here? Anything other than death is unnatural if you ask me.”

So lying in my bed tonight, entering the first stages of alpha sleep, I don’t feel sorry for you, Mr. Ball Turret Gunner; really I don’t because I know things that you don’t know. I see things that you couldn’t see. Maybe, given the right circumstances, you could’ve been somebody. Maybe you could’ve been mayor or a plumber or an accountant. But you were a ball turret gunner. It’s not important what you could’ve been or even what you were. What’s important is what you, and all the others like you, have already been.

Maybe the marks on your arms, maybe the black flak, are an ancestral grid of genetic greatness. Dinosaurs gnawed on chunks of your skin. The Cherokees drank your blood along the trail of tears. After hunting buffalo, you marveled at the wheel, and you hiked through the ice age to get to your cave woman so that you could procreate. You slept through the nomadic age and arrived centuries later in rags to wash dishes for the fifteen-year-old French princess. And while her servant dressed her and pinched folds of her skin into a laced bodice, you watched through a hole in the wall, and you thought about revenge. Maybe you were Ponce de Leon. You scouted territory, slashed weeds with your sword, and you beat your blood brothers to death with the back of your hand. Maybe you did bad things. Maybe you raped their wives and daughters in hundred-degree heat.

Maybe, after writing *Hamlet*, you took on a new name and bought chartered land in the New World. You smoked enough tobacco to satisfy all the James Deans. You were there when Hancock signed the constitution. Traces of your molecules dance rapidly in the wooden desk. Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin signed the slope of your back. Washington winning the battle at the base of your spine was the turning point of the Revolutionary War. You were asleep for the Civil War, and you awoke to find us here, in the century of skin and servitude. You were the ball turret gunner in the "good war," and when you died, they washed your body out of the turret with a hose, and away you floated, down into the Pacific Ocean, where you later began your own school of dolphins. Caught on a tuna net, you went home to create the television set. You were in Boston at the start of the integration movement and you smiled at the statue of Colonel Shaw. Some part of you is inside of my computer now the way that you have been inside some parts of men, not only the Americans.

Maybe I'll die in the twenty-first century, and you'll meet up with me in Scotland in a field of corn. But until then I'll play "Marco, Polo" with myself and go back to sleep. The point is that you inspired some of this because

your breath was so chilling and nonchalant. Almost feeling death on my neck now, I know that maybe some part of me was your cave woman. Some part of me was in the Philippines when soldiers accepted a cruel but inevitable fate. You are in the air now all the days that people die because all the days that people die they are wishing to have done or said something more.

So you see, Mr. Ball Turret Gunner, that you are neither capitalism nor communism, American nor Japanese, living nor dead. You are part of the perpetual pulse that I felt tonight as I re-read.

We all fall from our mother's sleep into various States, and we all die. Perhaps you were loosed from your dream of life, but you were never loosed from your dream of death for the dead dream of nothing more than living.

Response Two

A Letter to the Future, from the Point of View of an American Girl Coming of Age in the 1950s

Deari-----,

Armed with my pinstriped sweater and my painful ponytail, I'll tell you everything: I look the same every day. I never take my hair down.

Every day, I wander the halls of high school in slow motion. Every day around 10 a.m., I pass the big door at the front of the school on the way to my home economics class, and I slam my books down on the ground, and I rip the lock open with my bare hands, and I push through the big door, and they all follow me, even Him. And She, the big-busted freshman who belongs on the hull of a big ship, is stuck in home ec. Parading high in the air on their shoulders, we kiss, and my entire life, which is basically one long day, flashes before my eyes. I look back at my high school and smile at the trampled adults.

Trapped in the cage that is home economics, the teacher, whose slip is showing, smells like my grandma's house, like dead skin and raw meat. In a nasal voice of sincere urgency, she whispers as if she's at the country club

gossiping about the woman's daughter at the table next to her. "She and Him. She and Him. Him and She. It isn't right. A Mother should know what her daughter is doing. Someone should tell her. It's the right thing to do."

"A wife must always look her best," teacher says. I learned this at an early age.

I am four years old. My best friend is the laundry machine, whose cool, white metal seems to calm the bubbling cauldron of rage and desire that was already starting to boil inside my tiny, four-year-old stomach. She never knew it, but when I was supposed to be entranced by laundry, I'd crawl on my hands and knees to my mother's room, and even though the white carpet scratched my legs, I quietly studied her through a tiny hole in the doorknob. The lipstick always came last, almost like an epiphany. She made funny faces in the mirror, faces that I couldn't understand.

I am thirteen years old, and my parents "have commitments" at the country club. They leave my younger sister and me alone in the house for the first time. After plopping her down in the living room, in front of her only friend, I do the one thing that is forbidden. I enter my parents' bedroom, and I go exploring. I sit down in front of the mirror and grope each piece of gadgetry in my hand ceremoniously, twisting tops and tubes, opening clicking square boxes. After having secured my sister in the trance that is the television, I perform for the first time the ritual that I'd witnessed almost every day of my life. The lipstick always came last. I make funny faces in the mirror that I am beginning to understand. I am a woman, and many tubes of lipstick will disappear this year.

The walls of this house are so white, my mother is dying here. The walls of this whole community are so white, the children are already dead, but my mouth is zippered shut by the articles in *Seventeen*, by my father's indifference, and by my sister's across the grass. And then there's me. The funny thing is that I don't have any clothes on. I'm naked, and part of me wants to cry, but the other part of me can taste the red lipstick on my lips. I don't care. I run around like the hamster. And all the other cardboard houses fall down methodically. And they all salute me. And He is there. He smokes a cigarette,

and the smoke makes wonderful little vignettes like in a story book. A princess and a prince in bed. A white horse. A ballerina. He did things to me in the dream that he'd already done in real life. But I could never say it out loud, naturally.

Armed with my vast knowledge of sex and lipstick, I am the Anne Frank of this generation.

Response Three

To the Woman of the 1950s, from a Woman of the 21st Century

Dear-----,

Armed with glittering mascara and my vast knowledge of DOS systems, I see that nothing has changed. Maybe I'm supposed to be summarizing an important historical document, but I'm thinking of you instead. You are probably sixty-five now, and you have grandchildren of your own, and you own a house. Your husband died five years ago, and every Tuesday your daughter takes you to a Chinese buffet. But I'll never be like that. I'll never be anything other than what I am now. Did you ever feel like the dust of a million years is accumulating on your door step, and with the cleaning power of a thousand brooms, ten dust busters and one vacuum, you can't get rid of it?

Memories that aren't even mine anymore flood my basement. As time passes, my memories are lucid dreams.

In more time, lucid dreams are lies.

It's funny to me that I can't remember how many bowls of Crispix I ate two hours ago because I'm trying to be you on a carpeted floor; your cheek is cold, and through the ground you hear your own thoughts. Just knowing that you haven't kissed him yet, that you will kiss him soon, what joy to not know of something, to have no god-damned idea except to know that it's good.

But every morning there's more to sweep away. The more school, the more time spent summarizing cold war documents, the tripling of my resentment towards my father, the more frenzied note taking on *Death of a Salesman*....

My mind burrows in a place too far away when I go to sleep, and when my dog and I go out on the doorstep to fetch *Newsweek*, my feet get dirty on the cement.

Did I walk the Trail of Tears? Was I lynched for the saying 'thank you ma'am' to a white woman on the street? Did I evade the draft during the Vietnam War? My number was called? Did I get arrested and then get off for shooting Harvey Milk in San Francisco? Did I sit in a crowded coffee shop, in the background, and listen, I mean really listen, to the beat poets? Did I dream of cookie cutter houses and fighting a revolution against white walls?

How could I? How could I possibly understand?

I wasn't even born yet.

I was born in 1981.

I was born during the intermission.

Armed with the knowledge that I once dreamt of cookie cutter houses and white walls, I know that Anne Frank was born during the intermission.

Evaluation: *The amazing writing skills of this student — the great gift that she gave us by merely enrolling in our course and being herself — energized our respective drives to work each morning. If you, the reader, worry that this evaluation is over-wrought and on the border of sentimentality, that's only because you've never had Jenny in your classroom.*

Spring Festival

YiFei Dong

Course: English 101

Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:

Teach us about something which you know well.

Chinese legend tells of a peaceful village thousands of years ago that was ravaged by an evil monster during one winter's eve. The beast deliberately destroyed the thriving plantation and the planting implements. The beast took away the villagers' hope for an abundant harvest in the upcoming year since they would not have the tools needed to cultivate the land during spring season. Many villagers would not be able to endure starvation; hence, the village became the cemetery for many people. The following year the monster returned and again relentlessly attacked the village. To prevent this disaster from happening a third time, the villagers devised a plan to scare the monster away. The villagers hung red banners everywhere because they believed the color red would protect them against evil. They also used firecrackers, drums, and gongs as their weapons to create deafening noises that would scare away the monster. But the lion dance was their secret weapon that they could use to vanquish the fierce animal. The villagers were ready for a bloody

battle while they waited apprehensively for the appearance of the monster. The plan worked surprisingly well; the villagers captured the monster and regained their peaceful lifestyle. The celebration of the victory lasted several days during which the people visited each other, exchanged gifts, and gathered with their families. This was the first celebration of what later became known as the Chinese Spring Festival.

Today, the spring festival is the most ceremonious of all Chinese holidays. Although it's not a religious holiday, family members gather together to pray for prosperity in the upcoming year and celebrate the value of tradition through customs that recollect the ancient legend.

Unlike the holidays in the western culture, which are based on the Julian calendar, the spring festival is based on the lunar calendar. Therefore, the date of the spring festival changes annually although it usually takes place in January or February. The spring festival is also called the Lunar New Year's Eve because it falls on the last day of the last month of the lunar year.

Imagine you are staying in a local hotel room on the fifth floor with a spectacular view of the entire city on your vacation trip to China during the Chinese New Year's Eve holiday. If you open the window in the morning, a red sea immediately appears before your eyes. Red banners adorn every house and building; scraps of paper from the spent firecrackers cover the ground like snow. Everyone is so joyful and courteous that it seems as if a new chemical compound named "joy-oxide" has permeated the air. Looking at the street below, you see many children, each holding a red piece of paper. They are not just pieces of ordinary red paper; they are the red envelopes.

The red envelope is one of the many traditional customs that makes this holiday the most favorite for children. According to tradition, elders give children a red envelope with money tucked inside as symbol of good luck. The amount of money is usually an even number, as odd numbers are regarded as unlucky. Like American kids trick-or-treating for candies on Halloween, Chinese children go around the neighborhood and "trick-or-treat" for the red envelope, not the candies. Children do not need to dress up in any special costumes or wear any eerie masks. However, the magic words for the instant cash are "happy new year" instead of "trick-or-treat." It

seems like an easier and faster way to make money than playing the TV game show Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.

Around noontime, you are attracted to the window again by a banging noise from the crowd right below. You immediately recognize that some people in the crowd are playing drums and gongs. But in the center of the crowd, a colorful, fluffy object in the shape of a python is flickering and moving. Its movements correspond to the rhythm of the drums and gongs. This is the famous lion dance.

The lion is considered to be a good omen. The dignified lion dance is believed to repel demons and bestow civilians with courage and wisdom. Each lion has two dancers, one to maneuver the head, the other to control the back. The lion is wagging vividly; every fierce step, every brisk headshake, and every vigorous handspring is so intimidating and animated. It is as if a real lion were snarling among the crowd. Firecrackers, drums, and gongs generate a deafening sound to accompany the lion dance. While you are indulging in this scene of the lion dance, time has imperceptibly passed by.

By the late afternoon, neon lights on the street are unnoticeably turned on. Only a sparse amount of people are now strolling on the street below. All of a sudden, your olfactory sense is overwhelmed with a tangy smell of food coming from the apartment on the third floor. You realize it is already dinnertime.

The New Year's Eve's dinner is the most important event of all Chinese holidays because it contains the value of traditional ideas. For many Chinese families, the dinner is the only way to attract every member of the family to gather at a table. Having the dinner together means the family will remain united. Moreover, the food during the holiday holds symbolic meanings. Red dates bring the hope for prosperity, melon seeds for proliferation, and lotus seeds mean the family will prosper through time in the upcoming year. Oranges and tangerines symbolize wealth and good fortune. "Nian Gao," the New Year's cake, is always served. It is believed that the higher the cake rises, the better the year will be. When company stops by, an eight-sided "prosperity tray" is served. The tray is filled with goodies like red dates, melon seeds, cookies, and New Year cakes.

Typically, red meat is not served, and one is careful not to serve or eat from a chipped or cracked plate. Fish is one of the essential foods. The Chinese word for fish rhymes with the word for surplus. By eating half of a fish on New Year's Eve and saving the remainder for the next day, families can transfer their surplus luck to the new year.

After the dinner, you lie on your bed and gradually fall asleep. When you wake up, you are in a comfy sofa in a living room in *someone's* house. No, you are in your own house. You realize you had a dream, a fascinating trip to China. But just imagine visiting China during the spring festival, the most prosperous holiday, which celebrates the victory over a monster thousands of years ago, enhances the value of tradition, and unites a family. What are *you* waiting for?

Evaluation: *Here is a magical and charming essay about the Chinese Spring Festival, a victory over monsters.*

I Knew Him Well

Jeanne Embrey

Course: Speech 101

Instructor: Louise J. Perry

Assignment:

The assignment was to make use of expressive and figurative language in the writing of 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.

A baby boy entered our world in the usual way one cold and snowy Massachusetts morn in the year 1904. The new mother looked at her sweet baby, and his little eyes sparkled like lake water returning the shimmer of a beautiful sunrise. She named her son Theodor. Theodor proved to be a caring, creative, intelligent child and at 21, he graduated from Dartmouth College. He then traveled to England and attended one of the best universities in the world, Oxford University, with the intent of acquiring a doctorate in literature. However, serendipity intervened when Theodor met a girl named Helen Palmer. They fell deeply in love and were wed soon after.

With his new sweetheart, Theodor returned to the United States and began to focus on his other true love, writing. He got a job writing and illustrating for several top magazines and began his very successful career.

Now Theodor is not part of my family history; as a matter of fact, I never even met him. Yet, he has been a very important part in my life and the lives of my three children. Like many families, some of our closest moments were spent reading books together. At the end of nearly every day, we would gather together, either snuggled in their beds or in a comfortable chair, and read our favorite stories. Many of their favorites were adventures written by Theodor Geisel. Perhaps you know him by his pen name, Dr. Seuss.

As we read these wonderful books, we were transported into fantasy worlds with cats in hats, foxes in boxes, and turtles named Yertle. We imagined feasting on green eggs and ham with interesting folks like Sam I Am. And we read that a gold and blue chariot's something to meet, rumbling like thunder down Mulberry Street. Amidst the fun of these cherished moments, we were also taught a few of life's lessons. For instance, when the star-belly sneeches didn't invite plain-belly sneeches to parties on beaches, we learned not to be judgmental of others who are different. And, when we read of the kindness of whos in Whoville, and how it could make a Grinch's heart grow to three times its size, we learned that people who appear cold on the outside may have a warm heart on the inside, just waiting to grow, if we are kind to them.

Dr. Seuss was once quoted as saying, "I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, it's a way of looking at life through the

wrong end of a telescope” (Seuss 24). I agree with him whole-heartedly; this is a wonderful way of looking at life.

Anyone with kids, or anyone who has ever been a kid, knows the lines from their favorite books as they are read, reread, and read again. Many years ago, my grandmother gave a copy of *The Cat in the Hat* to my brother. Its pages are well-worn. Now, I don’t recall the first time my mom read it to my brothers and me, but I do remember many times sitting in her warm lap with her arms around us and I do remember her sweet voice as she began: “The sun did not shine. It was too wet to play. So we sat in the house all that cold, cold, wet day....”

The stories from Dr. Seuss brought my family closer together as his creative words came alive in our minds. He changed our lives in many ways. My children are now grown, but their love of language and imagination continues. My daughter Tricia is a high school English teacher, and my daughter Janna is in college with plans to teach as well, and my teenage son Matthew, like young Theodor, has a sparkle in his eye.

After a lifetime of sharing new ways to excite, explore, and experience the world, Theodor Seuss Geisel died quietly in 1991. I wonder if in his last moments he may have pondered his own earlier words:

How did it get so late so soon?

It’s night before it’s afternoon.

December is here before it’s June.

My goodness how the time has flown.

How did it get so late so soon?

Dr. Seuss, I never met him; Dr. Seuss, I knew him well.

Works Cited

Seuss, Dr. *Seuss-isms: Wise and Witty Prescriptions for Living from the Good Doctor*. London: Collins, 1999.

Evaluation: *The author has researched her subject well, and the speech has personal appeal because the writer has interwoven personal examples and memories with highlights from Geisel’s books.*

The Empty Box

Tami Engert
Course: English 101
Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write an argument in which you defend a claim. Use a variety of evidences. Use persuasive language, and negate your apponent. Avoid fallacy.

The scene is familiar. His attention is completely focused on the fixed object just ten feet away. Anyone who has witnessed a child watching TV knows the "look." The child goes into a trance, and his glazed-over eyes are open wide as he takes in all the TV has to offer him. He barely blinks.

The young TV viewer is almost always oblivious to everything else going on around him. A barking dog, ringing phone, or crying baby is no match for the 27" square of moving images. The show requires nothing more of the child than his time and attention. This is the problem. The child is left to "vegetate," since the TV program does all the work.

Dr. Milton Chen states that "American children watch an average of four hours of TV a day, 28 a week, 1,400 a year, and close to 18,000 by the time they graduate from high school" (105). This is an incredible amount of time that children are spending in front of the "boob tube." TV watching is the modern-day spectator sport, since it allows children to be inactive participants. For this reason, parents who allow their children to watch too much TV are denying children the skills to use their imaginations.

Imagination requires creativity and resourcefulness, neither of which can be equated with the use of a television. Whatever happened to the activities that children enjoyed before TV became so prevalent? Reading, writing, drawing, and talking have all taken a back seat to the TV. The TV has become an electronic baby-sitter for parents who are juggling their schedules. I myself have been guilty of telling my son to "go watch TV" if he is underfoot while I'm preparing dinner. I could have just as easily made him my "sous chef" and shared a few special moments with him. Or I could have given him some crayons and paper so that he might draw a picture or write a letter to distant relatives.

In a 1976 study conducted in Oakland, California, 81 percent of the participating children said they would like to spend more time with their parents. This study should speak loudly to all parents. Children may be enthralled with the television, but it is only in response to their parents' lack of involvement with them. Urie Bronfenbrenner has wisely put it this way:

The primary danger of the TV screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces as in the behavior it prevents—the talk, the games, the family activities and the arguments through which much of the child's learning takes place and his or her character is formed. (qtd. in Conner 323)

At a recent church service the pastor told of an incident. His son approached him and, in an exasperating tone, exclaimed, "I'm bored! There's nothing to do!" Well, all parents know such a complaint can be difficult to deal with. While many parents might be tempted to suggest that their child "go find something on TV," the pastor gave a simple yet eloquent response to his son. He said, "Son, if you're bored then you have a real problem on your hands. But I know you're smart, and I have faith that you will think of something to do." The son soon found a book that he became engrossed in. The father had provided his son with the perfect opportunity to use his imagination, and his son delivered.

In sharp contrast to the pastor's reaction, I recall a visit to my brother-in-law's house. While my husband and I were conversing with our hosts, our children were playing nicely with their cousins. As soon as the kids became a little rambunctious, my sister-in-law turned on a car-

toon as a way to curtail their activity. The change was immediate. All eyes became transfixed on the colorful action on the screen. The children were no longer interacting with each other, nor were they given the opportunity to think of an alternative activity. The room was now quiet, but my sister-in-law had just blown her resolve to reduce the use of TV in her home.

Laura E. Berk says, "Some experts argue that because television presents such complete data to the senses, in heavy doses it encourages reduced mental effort and shallow information processing" (603). In other words, when children watch TV, they fail to use their imaginations. "With rare exceptions, TV shows don't challenge children to come up with new ideas and don't encourage creativity" (Eisenberg, Murkhoff, and Hathaway 160). My friend's daughter, Becky, is a perfect example of a child who is a prisoner of the effects of TV. As a newborn, Becky began gazing at the television from her grandmother's lap. They would sit like that on the sofa for hours on end with no other stimulation for Becky. Becky is now eight years old, and she rarely partakes in any activity that requires her to use her imagination. She is constantly bored, and is content only when she is parked in front of the television set.

Many parents defend the use of television by claiming that it has educational value. There are a few educational programs on TV; however, the many, many action cartoons directed at children do not fall into this category. Children emulate these cartoon characters rather than creating their own.

Parents are the gatekeepers who control the quantity and quality of television that their children watch. Parents fail to realize that each moment they allow their kids to watch TV, the problem is compounded. If a child can't even imagine long enough to discover something new, how is he ever going to imagine himself as a lawyer, doctor, teacher, or astronaut? Parents must turn off the TV and become active in their children's lives. Give them a book and let them use their imaginations to paint a picture on the canvases of their minds. Help them explore nature, and a whole new world will open up to your children. Get them involved in the game of life—after all, life is not a spectator sport.

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- Berk, Laura E. *Childhood Development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.
- Chen, Milton. *The Smart Parent's Guide to KIDS' TV*. San Francisco: Byers, 1994.
- Conner, Melvin. *Childhood*. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.
- Eisenberg, Arlene, Heidi E. Murkhoff, and Sandee E. Hathaway. *What to Expect: The Toddler Years*. New York: Workman, 1994.

Evaluation: *Tami's argument is logical, pertinent, timely, and quite readable. It shows how serious academic writing can be clear and appealing to a broad audience.*

Life as I Know It

Ron Fishman
Course: English 101
Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:
*Define a term in a creative, stipulative way.
Use examples and a variety of definition patterns.*

It was a brisk fall day, and the leaves on the trees were a glorious shade of red. A young teenaged boy sat on a park bench, watching a group of kids play a friendly game of football. They jumped and piled on each other like meatballs on top of spaghetti. One could see in the young boy's eyes that, more than anything, he really wanted to play football. It was evident that not quite everyone there was having a fun time. The young boy had to watch all his friends from the sidelines. Per doctors' recommendations, he was unable to play full contact sports. I was this young boy. Because of a genetic disorder I had inherited, I could not participate in any activities by which I might be cut or bruised.

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome is a connective tissue disorder characterized by abnormalities of the skin, ligaments, and internal organs. There are many different types of this disorder. They vary in degrees of severity. This disease is hereditary, and depending on the type, can be fatal. I was born with Type 4 Ehlers-Danlos, which is one of the least severe forms. Thankfully, the only organ that is affected is my skin.

This syndrome is a disorder that has limited my activities throughout my life. It has left me severely scarred on both of my legs. It has left me cautious, concerned, and even self-conscious. This disorder made my childhood both eventful and uneventful. At times I felt as if I was a prisoner in my own home. During my junior high and high school days, I had to sit and watch the other kids play football and wrestle. I felt like the third-string football player on the sidelines, never being put in the game. I thought that if I were able to get out there and play, I could prove to myself and to the other students that I was just as healthy and normal as they were. One would think that after so many years of being sidelined, one would get used to it, but one doesn't. There were times when I just had to go out and be one of the guys.

Against the doctors' and my parents' wishes, I would occasionally venture out and get into some very serious trouble. One summer I was playing touch football with a few friends in a large field. The longer we played, the rougher the game got. I started running with the ball when all of a sudden I was roll-blocked from behind while trying to score a touchdown. I jumped up from

the ground, feeling that I had just completed the greatest accomplishment of my life. While brushing off the grass that had stuck to my shirt and pants, I noticed a two-inch gash in my right arm. My friends and I looked all around on the grass and noticed a small piece of glass. I wondered how this might have happened and then realized that my skin had been cut. I wound up being rushed to the emergency room to get the cut stitched up. When my doctor arrived, he asked me how this had happened. I told him we had been playing a friendly game of touch football. He then proceeded to sew me up. That particular cut took about fifteen stitches to close, partly because I had cut my muscle and part of a vein.

As I got older, I was more consciously careful as I played games. I would play until I felt things were getting out of hand; then I would quit and sit. During high school I found myself not being able to participate in full-contact sports such as wrestling and football. I would sit by the coach and watch everyone else play. However, I always found a way to get hurt. Once, in vocational school for a graphics class, I was wheeling about one hundred pounds of paper stacked on a cart; someone jumped onto the cart. The momentum pushed the cart into the back of my legs. The cart hit my leg like a grocery cart hits someone who is walking too slowly while shopping. I noticed, about fifteen minutes later, that I had a pain in my legs. I lifted up my pant legs and noticed that my socks were covered with blood. I was rushed to the hospital to get sewn up once again. These cuts were a little more serious. They required about one hundred and twenty-five stitches to close. I was off my feet for about three weeks.

Early last summer while doing some yard work, I was cleaning up some dirt and grass. I was trying to dump my wheelbarrow full of dirt and grass when I accidentally slipped on the damp grass and slid into the wheelbarrow. I hit my left knee against the wheelbarrow, and it stung a little. Back in the garage, I rubbed my knee. As I lifted my hand from my knee, I saw a little blood on my hand. I noticed that I had a nice-sized cut on my knee. I went inside to get a better look at the cut. I decided to butterfly this cut myself, since I was experienced at treating Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

My friends who cut themselves don't sustain wounds as deep or as large as the ones I have suffered. I have always wished that I didn't have this problem. It has inhibited me in so many ways throughout my life, but I have learned to live with it over the years. I try to be extremely careful. I truly hope that the children I bring into this world don't have to live with this disorder.

Evaluation: *Ron's essay interestingly and compellingly uses the narrator's personal experiences to help its definition of a physical condition that few of us are familiar with. This essay defines stipulatively.*

The Hunt

Mark Frystak

Course: English 101/Philosophy 115

Instructors: Andrew Wilson and Barbara Solheim

Assignment:

Each student was asked to write an essay that defines something: a term, an activity, etc. The student was to select a topic that was somehow related to what we had been studying in the Philosophy 115 ("Ethics") segment of the course. This response from Mark is an offspring of our study of environmental ethics.

Hunting. The word itself immediately stirs up in the mind various words, images, and even stereotypes about what it means. Cavemen, Bambi, and even that package of ground beef that is purchased at the grocery store all pop into the mind when the word "hunting" is mentioned. But what ninety-nine percent of people don't realize is that hunting involves a whole lot more than shooting an animal with a gun. It involves more than killing a "defenseless" creature. This may sound a little ridiculous, but a person doesn't even need a gun or weapon of any kind to be a hunter; that's only one way the word is interpreted. Hunting, in the true sense of the word, is what we do, and always have done, in order to survive and keep an equilibrium on this planet.

What is hunting? Sounds like sort of a foolish question, because everybody knows what hunting is. But for the sake of argument, hunting is "The chase or search for animals as a sport or to obtain food; make a search or quest." Unfortunately, however, the etymological defini-

tion of hunting does little for what the word really means. Of course, when a group of people put on camouflage gear, grab their shotguns, and go wait at a pond at four in the morning in the freezing cold for ducks and geese to come flying over, I suppose someone could say they are "searching for animals as a sport." But you cannot understand what hunting really is by looking it up in a dictionary; what you will find is only the physical action as defined by the staff of Webster's. For example, when my dad and I get up and go out to the pond on the few Sunday mornings we get a chance to, *one* of the things we are doing out there is searching for animals as a sport and to obtain food, but that doesn't always happen, and therefore, the shooting of ducks and geese plays a very small part in the whole reason we are there.

So, why are we there? For two reasons, and they are the same reasons that a father and son would play catch, and that someone would choose to go camping in Canada, completely cut off from civilization. When a father takes out his son to play catch in the backyard, his number one motive is not the desire for his son to play in the major leagues. He just wants to bond with his son, talk to him, and let him know he'll be there when he needs him. Hunting is the exact same thing, only the bond doesn't come from a good catch or throw, but rather from a secondary bond with the animal, through its death. By getting in touch with nature and all of God's creatures through hunting, getting in touch with each other is made easier. This is directly related to the second analogy of the camper. One of the hardest things to do in our current society of cell phones, computers, and other electronics is to realize that the only thing that really brings us closer together is something we all have in common: our earth and our mortality. What hunting offers to the hunter, as he looks into the eyes of the animal that gave its life so that he could live on, is the knowledge that we are all mortal beings, and someday, we too shall have our day. Much as the camper seeks to be closer to the earth, the hunter has the same goal, and it is achieved through the gift of life from an animal.

I believe it is safe to say that what hunting *is not* could be grounds for another essay entirely. The biggest thing that hunting most certainly is not is one word: murder. A hunter is not a murderer; his goal is not to find an

innocent animal and slaughter it in cold blood for the sheer pleasure of the kill. If anything, the hunter is more in touch with what life and death really involve, for he can actually look into the eyes of the animal and face the fact of what hunting is: man's survival on earth thanks to the gift of life from an animal. A good example was mentioned in the beginning, that you don't even need a gun or weapon to be a hunter. If you have ever walked into the grocery store and purchased anything from Oscar Mayer to a pork tenderloin, you are a hunter. If you have ever eaten a burger or steak at a big family gathering on a hot, sunny, Sunday afternoon, you are a hunter. It's just that you've chosen someone else to do the hunting for you. If you ask me, the better man is the one who actually faces the animal after it has sacrificed its life to benefit the man, as opposed to the one who picks up the meat at the supermarket.

Hunting is also not the display of disrespect or disregard for animals through killing them. Hunters don't go out and hunt animals because they don't care about them, or because they have hostility towards them. If hunters didn't care about animals, on Sunday, rather than get out of a warm bed at four in the morning, suit up in camo gear, and sit in the freezing cold in a duck blind, waiting for the birds to fly over, they would be more likely to drink beer, watch football, and sit in front of the T.V. all day. If hunters had hostility towards animals, and really hated them, they most definitely would not hunt them. Hunting animals takes a lot more preparation than pressing your finger down on the trigger. I'll use ducks and geese as an example. If you want to hunt ducks and geese, you have to find out where and what they like to eat, what kind of weather they migrate in, what temperature they prefer the air and water to be, how far they can see and hear, which duck and geese decoys look real and which look fake, which duck and geese calls work, how to use them, and at what time of day to use them, and what shades and patterns of camouflage blend in best with what environments. You must understand how they think and what they think. Now, would someone who just plain hates animals really go to all that trouble and preparation just to kill them?

We (hunters) realize how incredibly smart, beautiful, and unique the animals we hunt are, which is what creates the desire to hunt them in the first place. Most hunters, in addition to hunting animals, are also very enthusiastic about saving and protecting the earth, because they don't want to see all of God's creatures and the earth they live on destroyed by man's constant land development. Once the first kill is experienced, the hunter enters into a cycle that has existed since the dawn of time. In the beginning, cavemen had to hunt the very same ducks and geese we hunt today in order to survive; nowadays, we do not hunt for all the same reasons as the cavemen did. But only by going out and actually hunting animals do hunters witness the true beauty of animals that cannot be attained by buying processed, packaged meat in the blinding light of the grocery store. Hunters experience and understand the beauty of nature on a higher level than non-hunters do, and they do so through hunting itself.

All right, enough philosophies and opinions about hunting have been discussed. The date was sometime during the fall of 1998, and my dad and I were on my dad's friend's property in Belvidere, Illinois. My dad walked about fifty yards ahead of me, and we agreed that he would take the rowboat to the other side of the island, to see if he could scare up anything that would fly my way. Well, the ducks must have heard him before he got around the island, because the next thing I knew, he was shouting across the water, telling me to load up and get down. A flock of about ten ducks flew over the island, eight flying to the left of me, a good thirty or forty yards out of range. The other two flew to my right, directly over a huge patch of tall reeds that were growing in about two feet of water. As I stood up and looked down the barrel of my 12-gauge shotgun, I realized they were only about twenty-five yards away—in perfect range. With my left eye I saw my dad, rowing as fast as he could, trying to see what I was doing. Ironically, when I pulled the trigger, there was silence. With my right eye, as though in slow motion, I saw the head duck slowly floating towards the earth, free of movement, while the other duck flew quickly away. After about thirty minutes of searching in the marsh, my dad said he thought we should go home. I

The Hunt

then walked out to the exact spot where I had fired, closed my eyes, and replayed the image in my head. Opening my eyes, I walked toward the exact spot where — in my mind's eye — the duck *must* have met the earth, and there lay the beautiful blue-, brown-, and black-colored mallard duck. As I picked the duck up out of the water and looked at its eyes, I won't lie, the lump in my throat dropped way down to my stomach, and I felt like I would never be able to lift my boots from the muddy water. I was sad, but at the same time thankful, thankful that God had given me all that he had, including the gift of the knowledge of mortality. Holding the duck and looking into its eyes, something you would never be able to do if the duck were not dead, I realized that life's only worth living because we die. If we had the knowledge that we were immortal, why would anyone bother to take a tour of Europe, get married and have kids, or blow off work on Friday to take a once in a lifetime camping trip in the mountains? Everyone on the planet would adopt an "I'll do it later" attitude. What would be the point of doing *anything* in this life if we knew someday we would get another chance at it? Conversely, everything great in this world is worth doing because each of us may never get a second chance at it. People, myself included, get so caught up in their day-to-day routines that we forget where we all will end up one day. Every time I go hunting, I am reminded where I will end up; I am reminded not to forget that my life will have an end. That, in the best way I can think to put it, is what hunting means. And you can't look that up in a dictionary.

Evaluation: *This paper's bravery is rooted in its potentially unpopular stance. Mark tells the reader what hunting is, what it is not, and, again, what it is. His use of personal experience is effective; more than that, his use of personal experience puts a human, almost tender face on "the hunt," which too many perhaps dismiss swiftly as brutal.*

I Am Buddha

Jenny Geheb

Course: Humanities 105/History 105

Instructor: Molly Waite

Assignment:

Students were to write a position paper from the perspective of a great thinker in a trial setting, evaluating American politics and economics today.

They were to adopt the position of the person in order to explain his or her view toward a certain aspect of America today, such as taxes, welfare, civil rights, the military, etc.

Those students acting as the Supreme Court would pose questions on a variety of topics.

I am honored to be asked to serve in the capacity of Supreme Court judge for this trial of America. My name is Buddha, and although I have been dead many hundreds of years, one's spirit never dies. I entered the state known to Buddhists as parinirvana, or the final nirvana. Normally, I would leave the Americans to sort out the issues facing them on their own, but in this circumstance, I feel it right to share what knowledge I have. I believe in teaching, there must be no such thing as the "closed fist" of the teacher who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil. Secrecy is the mark of false doctrine. In line with this correct belief, I will attempt to impart some of the wisdom that is available for all of us. It will, however, be up to each one of you to cultivate the ideas that I leave behind. I would like very much for all of you to leave the prison of samsara and reach enlightenment. I understand that you will be discussing such issues as civil rights, capitalism, government, taxes, welfare, and the military. I have many eons of experience thinking about such things.

I do not expect you to understand all I say, for I have lived many hundreds of lifetimes to reach this state of enlightenment, which is how I came to be in nirvana. It is possible for everyone to reach enlightenment and possibly in a shorter time than you might imagine. In only seven days, enlightenment is attainable. Let me say that I speak from the lowest amongst you all and from the very depths of my heart hold all of you as superior to myself.

I wish to touch on the noble eightfold path, for it is within the path that you will find the answers to the questions that, incidentally, you already have the answers to. I have not been called here to impart my knowledge so much as I have been called to impartially judge and help you to discover that which you already know to be true. That which you know to be true is only useful to you and to your country if you as a society can stop from comprehending on a sensory plane, for sensory information is useless and often deceives.

Briefly stated, the noble eightfold path consists of the following: right views, right aims, right speech, right conduct, right living, self-control, right mindedness, and right meditation. If the eightfold path were followed, the

problems that you find yourselves facing today would be nonexistent. Just as enlightenment grows, so does darkness, and the darkness will continue to grow until such a time that you as a nation realize the importance of what lies within each one of you. If you do not go within, you always go without, and I see this as something that Americans lack in principle. Americans always seem to be looking to the next new fad or craze for happiness or attempting, most often unsuccessfully, to find happiness in the material.

Wealth is neither good nor bad, just as life itself is neither good nor bad. Everything depends upon what is done with the wealth. If one can keep the mindset that the goal of wealth is to create good and share with others and remember that the goal is to be liberated from craving and wanting, then wealth is a thing to be happy about. Contrarily, if the wealth is achieved by means of trickery and dishonesty, then it is not something to be proud of or to be desired. This moves one further from enlightenment and goes in direct violation of the eightfold path. It would seem to me that if Americans adopted this idea regarding wealth, there might not be so much poverty in this country. Not that poverty in and of itself is a terrible thing that cannot actually be beneficial on the path to enlightenment, but poverty is more of a hindrance to those who are withholding and hoarding their possessions and refusing to share them with those in need. Because we are all part of this wheel of life, we are not separated from one another. People should be able to live without enduring poverty. Why is there such indifference for the poor in America? Why don't people care for one another?

In the same way, people should also live without war. War is an atrocity created by people, and only the people have the power to eradicate this hatred from the world. War is in direct opposition to the noble eightfold path. A man cannot practice right living while engaging in war with another man. Right living entails the avoidance of injury to all other beings, including the food that we eat. If I were not willing to eat any animal because of my respect for all life, then I surely would not raise my hand against another of my brethren, and let's not forget about the principle of right conduct, which calls for honesty

and purity with regard to behavior. It is impossible for a man to go into war and not doubt the cause or harbor concern for the things that he holds dear. The world is apprehended by way of the mind and the world is acted on by way of the mind. And all things, good or bad, exist in the world by way of the mind. I pose the question to you as to what necessity there is in war. Why must there be such a thing as war?

Likewise, with the military. If war were to become non-existent, then there would be no need to have a military. All interests would be honorable, and if all men followed my path, there would be no fighting. The Earth is not nirvana, but neither is it torturous, any more than you choose to make it. What would happen if all the men and women in the military were to meditate on the idea of being at peace with all things rather than train on how to destroy all things?

The values, which you Americans hold dear, are many and stem from the system of capitalism by which you abide.

Capitalism is an interesting thing. It is a principle that necessitates the very things that you abhor in your society. Possessions are lead weights upon your spirit and until you are free of them, you will never achieve nirvana. It is only by the shedding of the superfluous matter in your life that you will truly achieve enlightenment. The capitalist system is based upon selfishness and greed. It withholds that which the impoverished need and grows the stores of those who need none. Real peace will arise spontaneously when your mind becomes free from attachments, when you know the objects of the world can never give you what you really want. Of what use will your material possessions be when you leave this earthly plane?

With regard to civil disobedience, I can only say that before civil disobedience, there is the disobedient man. Disobedient to what? Disobedient to the inner life of all things and to the right path. There is no such word as disobedience if the path to enlightenment is traveled in a good and honest manner. There is only light and eradication of darkness. In America today, I compare civil disobedience to a man beating his head against an impenetrable wall. You see, all comes from within, and

the fight that you perceive to be outside of yourselves is not really outside at all. The fight that you are seeking to fight is an inner fight, and nothing more.

Civil rights have been a looming issue in American society. What kind of society places men above other men for no other reason than a trivial and superficial matter like the color of skin? The senses are the most deceiving aspect of humanity as we know it, and yet we constantly rely on them to make all of our interpretations and decisions about the world. This is not the Buddhist way. I hope I may always be an object of enjoyment for all sentient beings according to their wish. I wish to be as dear to all sentient beings as their own life and hope that they will always be very dear to me. If Americans were to shift their beliefs and paradigms and think of their fellow man in this manner, the very term civil rights would become obsolete, for all men are civil and all men have rights.

At the risk of being redundant, the issues of taxes and welfare, which you are putting on trial, are mixed issues. The principle that the tax and welfare system is based upon is most excellent and has roots in the best interest of American citizens. I applaud that, but I do take issue with what the tax and welfare system has become. There is a common thread among all of the issues that are on trial, and that common thread is the lack of personal responsibility that you have in America. Would there be a need for taxes and welfare if every man were to abide by the principle of generosity and share with his neighbor as he has need? There is great abundance in America, yet there are people starving in your streets. I believe that Karl Marx, although misunderstood and misguided in many respects, was closest to the mark of the ideal society.

I see a nation progressing toward a most undesirable moral condition. I see a nation where a man feels justified walking by a fellow man on the street with no food and inadequate clothing. The man might have more than he can ever use, yet he is indifferent. America may have made great strides in the arena of civil rights, but my friends, there is still far to go. You must, if you want to turn this boat around, repair the moral condition of your country, and as I have said before, that must begin

with the individual. The individual must cultivate the desire to actualize him or herself, not for the interest of the nation, but for the interest of achieving enlightenment. The solution to all of the other problems will be a secondary benefit. They will vanish like stars in the light of a new day, and all will be right with the world.

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Evaluation: *As a member of the Supreme Court, Jenny Geheb convincingly expresses the Buddhist perspective in evaluating different realms of American society. This paper was an excellent preparation for the simulated trial held in class.*

Jack's Lessons

Karen Glos

Course: English 101

Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay in which you, using appropriate narrative and descriptive language, focus on an incident which helped you grow in some way.

After two months on the job and countless hours of observation, I considered myself an expert on children with autism. I was looking forward to my first session with Jack, an adorable five-year-old boy who was severely affected with the disorder. I just knew that I was the one who would finally rescue this boy from the isolated world of autism.

I peeked out into the reception area where Jack and his Mom were waiting. I had observed several of Jack's play sessions in the previous weeks and had fallen in love with him. Tall for his age, he was always dressed in the trendiest clothes, which hung off his thin frame. His hair was the color of lightly browned marshmallows and his eyes were green or blue, depending on the light and his inevitably changing moods. Jack was constantly in motion, his hands, like the wings of a hummingbird, flapping at his sides. Noises that were not quite words regularly slid from his mouth like drool. His eyes darted from place to place; they avoided only the eyes of the others in the room. In any other waiting room, these behaviors would appear odd and cause people to stare. But to the parents of children with autism, Jack's oddities

were as normal as the never-ending "why" of a three-year-old or the crying of a hungry baby.

It was time for our session. I entered the waiting room, bent down confidently, and offered up a whole-hearted "Hi, Jack!" to the boy. Jack responded by letting out an ear-piercing scream that sounded like the screech of tires on pavement before a crash. I shot an assuring look at his Mom and coaxed Jack into the treatment room.

As we entered the room, Jack ignored me completely, ran past the toy-lined shelves, and settled in the corner with his favorite felt pieces. Jack grabbed one, and like a dealer in Vegas who cannot let go of a card, he shook the piece back and forth at an incredible speed. He could have spent the rest of the day in that corner of the room, intrinsically motivated by the soothing repetitiveness of the felt flashing back and forth in front of his watchful eyes. However, my job as a therapist was to bring him out of his safe, trance-like state and into the unpredictable "real" world.

I approached him gently and sat down next to him. Playfully, I walked my fingers toward him on the floor. "Doot, doot, doot, doot, doo," I said in a singsong voice, and then reached out and grabbed his "security blanket." I placed it on top of my head and grinned. Annoyed, Jack reach up, snatched the piece off my head, and immediately became reabsorbed in it. I smiled to myself smugly—I had gotten Jack to interact with me. I repeated my tactic, this time hiding his treasure in my sleeve. Not noticing the look of anger that flashed across his face, I once again considered myself successful when he dug his hand inside my sleeve to retrieve his felt piece. This time he turned his back to me. His stiff body posture and the increased speed and pitch of his jargon should have been clear signals to me of his growing anxiety, but my smugness got in the way as I once again reached for the felt. Jack let out a shriek, jumped up, and darted toward the door.

Luckily, I made it to the door first and blocked Jack's way. He crumpled to the floor and thrashed about hysterically. Although I was shaken, I attempted to soothe him by speaking softly and rubbing his back. My behavior only angered Jack further, and he struck out at me. He kicked me in the leg and clawed at my arms. I tried

not to panic. I had seen this behavior before while observing other therapy sessions with other children. On these occasions I had been quiet good at diagnosing exactly what the therapists had done wrong, and I was sure that I could do better with Jack. I gave him a moment to calm down, but as soon as I opened my mouth he lunged for the door. His escape would have been assured had it not been for the door's safety knob. Jack whirled around and flew at me, his young face crimson with anger and frustration. His cries grew into screams as I gently fought him off. Thwarted in his attempt to get at me, he set about to destroy the room. Toys went flying from the shelves, and Jack booted them across the room. He pulled the colorful decorations off the windows and tore them to pieces. He made another attempt to burst through the door, and when it would not yield he began banging his head viciously against it. Horrified, I pulled him away and we fell to the floor. Jack reached up and scratched at me, his fingernails gouging my face and drawing blood. Finally, I grabbed him and pulled him down on my lap. Holding him in a bear hug with my legs wrapped around him, I gently rocked him back and forth. "It's okay, Jack. You're okay." I repeated these words over and over, trying to calm both of us. Gradually he relaxed into my arms, and his cries subsided into the occasional whimper. I held him the rest of the hour-long session, until I finally opened the door. He then escaped into the arms of his distraught-looking mother.

When I reflect on that trying session with Jack, I see my mistakes. As an overly confident therapist I had forgotten that I was dealing with a very fragile little boy. I had ignored the obvious signals he was sending out to me, and I had pushed him further than he would allow. I tried to do in one session what many doctors and experienced therapists had been working on for years.

I have seen Jack many times since our first session together. Although it has taken some time, we've developed a trusting relationship, and he seldom breaks down as he did that first awful day. I have taught him a few words, some ways to communicate, and routes to safety in a threatening world. From him I have learned so much more. He has taught me to respect the complexities of children with autism. If I am to lead a child into

my world, I must first follow him into his. And I have learned that the child, not I, will be the determiner of his readiness to learn. Now, before every session with every child, I take a quick look in the mirror. The faint scars on my face from Jack's fingers are reminders of the important lessons I've learned from Jack.

Evaluation: *Karen's essay is compelling in style, tone, and content. The speaker here presents herself as caring, intelligent, mature, and deserving of her reader's respect. This is undergraduate writing at its best.*

Shaped by Historical Moments:

The Women of *Trifles*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Glass Menagerie*

Kathleen K. Gneuchs
Course: English 102
Instructor: Julie Fleenor

Assignment:

Write a research paper which brings together three plays—
with a coherent thesis, documented sources, and an integrated,
thoughtful analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Thesis: By looking at the historical events in the country during the two decades 1910-1920 and 1940-1950, we can better understand the behavior and motivation of the women in the plays *Trifles*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Glass Menagerie*.

- I. Historical events between the years 1910-1920 that had an influence in the United States
 - A. World War I actively involved the United States
 - B. Women voiced their opinions
 1. The pacifist movement helped to solve disagreements through peaceful means
 2. Women's organizations were formed
- II. *Trifles*' relation to the historical period
 - A. The women in *Trifles* were isolated
 - B. The women's opinions were not heard
 - C. The women bonded together
- III. Historical events influencing the decade 1940-1950
 - A. Events taking place after World War II
 - B. World War II influenced women's education
 - C. World War II made an impact in the work force for women

- IV. Comparing *Death of a Salesman* to events of the decade
 - A. Women's roles were influenced in this generation
 - B. The influence of the events is shown in wife Linda
- V. The *Glass Menagerie* compared to the decade of 1940-1950
 - A. Amanda Wingfield plays a significant role in *The Glass Menagerie*
 - B. Laura Wingfield, as well as the role she plays in *The Glass Menagerie*, can be compared to the women during the decade of 1940-1950

Women bonded together with strong principles and values to shape the historical happenings that took place in the decade of 1910-1920. Women became involved during World War I in helping to bring an end to the war through peaceful negotiations. They were instrumental in forming organizations producing guidelines that helped strengthen our nation in years to come. At the same time during this period, men were dominant politically and economically. The women in *Trifles* reflect the women during this time and how men in their lives had an overriding power even though the women's views and opinions were valid and compassionate. The women's reactions to their lack of power bonded them together in helping one another out. During the decade of World War II, the years 1940-1950, women became much more present in the American workforce, especially in the field of education. These changes in the status of women are also shown in the plays *Death of a Salesman* and *The Glass Menagerie*. By looking at the historical events in the country, during these two decades, we can better understand the behavior and motivation of the women in the plays *Trifles*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Glass Menagerie*.

Much to the surprise of many Americans, World War I began in August of 1914 (Schneider 195). The sudden beginning was caused by a "single act," the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophie by a suspected Serbian. Along with several other basic causes, these murders ignited the war, which subsequently actively involved the United States ("World War I" 364).

However, not all Americans supported our participation in this war. Schneider says many Americans had long felt that war was outdated and there was no need to solve problems in such a barbaric way. They felt we

should solve our disagreements through more peaceful means. This was especially felt by women who were leaders in the pacifist movement (195).

This war was based on masculine values, and the feminine point of view opposed it. As Schneider indicates, many men claimed America had to go to war:

...Teddy Roosevelt compared the nation to the human body and war to an exercise necessary to its development. To escape emasculation and effeminacy...an affluent society must periodically engage in battle. And women pacifists said that womanly women representing humankind's higher nature must teach men peaceful ways to resolve their conflicts. (195)

Muscle and brawn persuaded men's thinking towards war, whereas women's attitudes were expressed through intellectual thought and kind deeds. It is also noted by Schneider that many pacifist organizations represented by both male and female had "as little use for women and their points of view, as [had] the militarists" (196). Women felt especially wronged by this division because "women are mothers, or potential mothers, [and] therefore have a more intimate sense of the value of human life" (Schneider 196). This is to say women had a more sincere regard for life. Ultimately, the masculine persuasion won, thereby encouraging the United States into active involvement in the war (196).

It was at this time, Schneider adds, that women rallied together, creating peace organizations and movements, thereby attempting to bring about peaceful negotiations and the end of the war. The American Union Against Militarism (AUAM), a group of social workers, was organized. Both sexes were members, but the groups were made up predominantly of women (196). Schneider says, defending civil liberties, "they became the most daringly effective wartime advocate of peace" (197). In safeguarding the rights of others, they became the most supportive towards peace. The Women's Peace Party (WPP) and Jane Addams met in January 1915 to talk about organizing a women's peace group. Women from eighty-six women's organizations joined together (197). According to Schneider, the women formed principles that were guidelines on which they could establish peace through diplomacy and universal cooperation:

...declaring for a conference of neutral nations to enable an early peace; limitation of armaments and nationalization of their manufacture, so that war would no longer bestow

windfall profits; democratic control of foreign policies; and universal suffrage. Most significant, they proposed an international organization and an international police force. (197)

They tried to limit weapon control, improve foreign relations, control the budget and give the universal right to vote. As a result of this formation, the League of Nations and the United Nations eventually became organized. By the end of WPP's first year, they had an enrollment of 25,000 members. According to Schneider, "they concentrated their most vigorous efforts on a campaign for American mediation and arbitration among the warring nations" (197). They focused intently on a series of activities designed for America to be the intermediary among the nations at war.

Men's influence is a dominant force as we see in the play *Trifles*, produced in 1916, during the middle of World War I, and written by Susan Glaspell. Glaspell (1882-1948) was raised in Davenport, Iowa and educated at Drake University. She began her career as a reporter in Des Moines and later made her home in Greenwich Village, New York. It was here that she started the Provincetown Players, in 1915, along with her husband George Cram Cook, who was a theatrical director. (Kennedy and Gioia 1199).

In this play, Susan Glaspell tells of the struggles women are faced with in a male-dominant society, where their voices are often ignored. The women in *Trifles* were not able to make a difference socially or politically, because they were alienated—their voices were not heard. But as women faced with a dilemma in helping to solve the mystery of John Wright's death and the protection of Minnie Foster, the accused, they bonded together just as the women throughout the nation bonded together.

The play shows the isolation, powerlessness, and lack of status of women. Depressed and kept quiet for years, Minnie shows due reason for wanting to murder her husband John. Pretty, talented, and once full of life, Minnie does a complete reversal after marrying John. According to Mrs. Hale, the neighboring farmer's wife, "Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby" (1204). John kept to himself, not talking much to anyone, especially his wife.

Dominated by her abusive husband, Minnie was robbed of her youth and vitality, with working hard on the farm and keeping house giving her little time for socializing. Because she was isolated, she bought a canary, which was a source of joy and companionship to her. John, most likely resenting the noise and her interest in the bird, killed it, the one thing that brought Minnie so much pleasure.

The play also demonstrates how women's voices were suppressed. We see this in the two women protagonists, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, when they are at the scene of the crime. Their emotions occasionally surface, as Judith Kay Russell states: "The condescending manner in which the men joke about the women's concern regarding Mrs. Wright's intention 'to quilt or just knot' the quilt evokes a defensive remark from Mrs. Hale" (88). This is an example of the women's angry reactions towards the men who regard them and their work as mere trifles and not anything more of significant value. The women find the clues and motive in the murder of John Wright, which the men fail to see. Because the women knew they wouldn't be heard, even though they knew the truth, they kept silent. Glaspell shows the nonvalidation the women receive by their husbands, which is a position men took during this time period. Women were better seen than heard. They were to be kept at home doing woman's work, taking care of household responsibilities and having babies—as Mr. Hale says, "women are used to worrying over trifles" (1202). Having any degree of intellectual input was not heard of at this time. They were to be kept silent. Because of this attitude, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters kept the information they found from their husbands. The women understand Minnie's situation and desperation. Throughout the time they spend trying to unravel the mystery, they find they also have much in common with Minnie. The women find themselves bonding together to help protect Minnie, even though they know she committed the crime. The women appear to express their own opinions and observations with one another, but not with the men. As women, they look out in defense of one another in spite of what they know. We see a feeling of togetherness between the women.

In looking back over time, taking each decade respectively, Hartmann says that it is clear there have been sig-

nificant changes and improvements that have led to the advancement of women in the post-World War II years. The 1940s produced changes that vividly set apart that decade from prior ones, forming models that would mold women's lives from that time on (Hartmann ix). It is clear the war made an impact on women's lives and the decisions they were to ultimately make for themselves. Most apparent, the Second World War changed the economic structure, making demands on men and women, and it altered the social and cultural order on a large scale. Changes in the position of women did not progress at the same rate as in other areas of importance in the restructuring of our country (Hartmann ix). Looking back over the years at the changes that lasted and those that were short lived, Hartmann says, "...it is possible to discern how women's lives were permanently reshaped by war and economic regeneration and to understand women's own initiatives in the progress of change" (ix). Hartmann says, "Economic and reproductive patterns, for example, took their postwar shape before women's educational patterns became fixed" (ix). Conditions that influenced our economy took precedence over educational growth, yet the war did influence women in the educational field.

What women couldn't make happen in the economic and political arena, they did by proving themselves academically. During the war, enrollment in high schools dropped for both sexes as jobs were more readily available and the need to work was high. However, a desire for both genders to complete their secondary education increased, but especially for girls during the decade of the 1940's. However, at this time, women's focus on marriage was primary before making their educational decisions. Primarily because of the economy's increasing need for office labor, girls in high school chose business courses that would prepare them for clerical jobs after graduation, rather than college preparatory courses (Hartmann 101-02). As the war escalated and men were called to combat, women were admitted to some of the major institutions, with increased degrees given in the fields of math, science, engineering, and medicine, where there was a growing need for physicians (104). Yet according to Hartmann, "most of women's wartime gain in education did not withstand the end of hostilities" (105). Even though women were making progress in educating themselves,

they still felt discriminated against by men. The GI Bill of Rights was passed, igniting an enormous growth in higher education. However, many college doors were closed to women due to the overcrowding as the men returned from war. Since the schools received federal assistance for every individual returning veteran, it is understandable why more male students were admitted (105-06). "The nation's efforts to compensate those who had risked their lives and sacrificed years in defending it had a profound impact on American higher education and upon the relative positions of men and women" (105). However, the GI Bill did introduce a new type of woman to college campuses: those who were married to men who were veterans (106). This new trend, according to Hartmann, "made the combination of marriage and education an accepted collegiate pattern in postwar America" (107). After the war, it was acceptable for married students to live on campus. This was a plus for women for it was a chance for some to continue and pursue their education, which otherwise would not have been possible. While there was a gradual increase in the amount of women enrolled in college, there was a much lower percentage than that of male college students. As peace was revisited, those women who had gained acceptance in established male fields lost pace. For example, in medicine, where women made strides during wartime, they lost the edge that they had previously achieved (107-09). In other words, according to Hartmann, "The war had permitted several hundred women who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to become doctors" (109). A similar drop in other fields—such as science, math, and engineering—was also experienced at the close of the war.

It is interesting to note that it wasn't just the demands of the postwar return of men on colleges that influenced women to not pursue these fields, nor was it the fact that they had to compete against men (110). There was a movement, Hartmann says, toward educating and equipping women "better for home and family life" (110). Women were supposed to be educated in areas pertaining to the home. According to Hartmann, "Educators were joined by psychologists who emphasized the difference between the sexes and warned that women's pursuit of intellectual and occupational achievements similar to those of men were not only doomed to failure, but were damaging to women, their families and society" (111).

Women's quest for knowledge and academic pursuits were programmed for failure. They said women needed courses and a curriculum that emphasized more of the home and family life (112). However, on the other side, says Hartmann, were those who expressed an uncertainty about this theory, insisting "that educating women for marriage and motherhood was to promote rigid, subservient behavior, to fashion women 'in terms of the needs and wishes of men and not in terms of their own fulfillment'" (112). In other words, there were those who felt women should be educated in terms of their own desires and not of men. Women who graduated from college in fields that were only female oriented became dissatisfied (114). According to Hartmann, "educators who sought to refashion women's education were responding to a growing contradiction between changing elements of women's behavior and traditional attitudes and practices. In spite of the controversy, more and more women were attending college, and they enjoyed greater economic opportunities than ever before" (116).

Another proof of women's strength and capabilities was made evident in the work force during and after World War II. Due to the need for increased labor, more married and older women were showing their worth while enjoying the benefits of paid employment. After the war, Hartmann says, "The wartime labor shortage softened employers' resistance to married women and older women and allowed them to prove their capabilities. In affording a taste of paid employment to women who would not otherwise have left their homes, it increased the propensity of married women to take jobs. While they continued to subordinate their paid employment to family needs and viewed work as a job rather than a career, women increasingly obliterated the lines which had defined a distinct and separate sphere" (95). More than half of the adult women in our country were involved in jobs where they received compensation, with the majority of these women being married, followed by single and older women. This continued on through the period following the war (Hartmann 77).

Hartmann says that although there have been organized studies as to why women entered the work force, all indications point to the financial obligations they were presented with, "being the sole support of themselves and dependents" (79). Past debts from the depression era, ever

increasing needs, and new job opportunities were reasons enough. Jobs also provided companionship with other women while their husbands were off at war. Jobs gave women a sense of self worth in learning new skills while, in turn, the women themselves were helping their nation and proving themselves capable of doing tasks which were otherwise never considered (79). However, problems did develop when women went to work. Married women with children were faced with social disapproval. Juvenile delinquency was on the upswing now that women were taken out of the home. The pressure of keeping up with the household duties along with their full time jobs was increasing (82).

After the war, many women wanting to keep their jobs because of economic reasons were willing to give them up so that returning veterans could have an opportunity (88-90). However, the lack of jobs for women did not continue indefinitely, and after 1947 women's employment opportunities were once again on the upswing.

The educational and economic conditions during the decade of 1940-1950 show the historical changes women had made since the 1910-1920 decade and provide the background for the plays *Death of a Salesman* and *The Glass Menagerie*, which were written during this period. We see emerging in this decade women showing their strength during hard times, taking care of the home and meeting financial obligations of their family, and we also see women with a growing interest in obtaining an education for themselves.

Arthur Miller was born October 17, 1915, in the Harlem section of Manhattan (Hogan 146). From a family of Jewish descent, Miller received his education at the University of Michigan in playwriting but worked as a steamfitter in World War II (Miller 1636). One of his most renowned works, written during the period of World War II, is *Death of a Salesman*, produced in 1949.

In *Death of a Salesman*, Linda, wife of Willy Loman, typifies the women of this generation. Although we know little about Linda's educational and work background, we do know of her strength of character and resiliency as she works through the adverse situations she is faced with while married to Willy. Women were the core of the home; much centered and depended on them: juggling many responsibilities within the home, tending to the children and even finding employment

that took them outside of the home. Many times they were physically exhausted with all that they had to do. Linda shows these characteristics in the play. Although she doesn't go to work, she is faced with problems within the family home. She is always trying to fix things, to make things better. She is the one who looks on the bright side. Robert Brustein describes Linda as

...the most compelling figure in Miller's family drama... a character who always seemed to me excessively saintly.... a half-smile masking her broken heart, she emerges no longer as patience on a monument, darning old stockings while her husband hands out new ones to his tootsies. She has become a pillar of outraged ferocity and tremendous emotional strength, reinforcing Willy... while sensing that something awful and unavoidable is on the way. (29-30)

This critic characterizes Linda as being the most forceful in the play, one who goes beyond the normal limits, who puts up with so much while always trying to uplift others as she disguises her own hurts and pains. Although she didn't have a career outside of the home, she had more than her share of work as she encouraged and tried to keep things in order with her husband and two boys.

In many cases, and especially during war-time, children and family have been dependent on the woman. Fortunately for Linda, she seems to be one of the privileged by not having a career outside of the home. Need is another story; she probably would have been willing to work when Willy was unable to support the family, but this is an era where men's egos were very threatened if women wanted to find work outside of the home. As in so many of the homes after the war, women enjoyed new luxuries to help ease their domestic load, and Linda was not an exception. Unfortunately, the Lomans didn't have the finances to purchase their conveniences outright so they met their obligations monthly.

Although Linda doesn't provide economic support, she is always supporting Willy. While overlooking disappointments from the past, she comes to terms with his cheating and style of living. Critic R.H. Gardner writes of "Linda's love and courage" (320). She should have been the central character in the play, for she was the rock always supporting and showing her loyalty to Willy. Even in the end, she is bewildered that no one shows up at Willy's funeral, because she has always believed in what Willy said, even when it came to the many friends he assumed he had.

The Glass Menagerie, written in the forties, is about women who have the fantasies of being supported by a man but live with the reality of taking care of themselves. Tennessee Williams was born on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi ("Tennessee Williams" 460). Thomas Lanier (his Christian name) received his college education at the University of Iowa, where he became inspired to become a playwright. He fashioned *The Glass Menagerie* after his own family, whose members resembled the Wingfields. Like Tom, Williams had a love for poetry, moviegoing, wandering cross country, and holding odd jobs. *The Glass Menagerie* was billed a success in its first production in 1945 and received a Drama Critics Circle Award (Williams 1710).

The Glass Menagerie is a memory play portraying recollections and events of the past. This is clearly seen in Amanda as she vividly recalls her popular youth, having been blessed with both "a pretty face and a graceful figure" (1715). As she always reminded her children, Amanda was fortunate to have been born into a family of well-to-do Southerners. "Gentleman callers," as she named the young men who courted her, were many. These young gentlemen were prominent, good conversationalists, and were successful in their careers. Amanda, raised during the early 1920s, spent her girlhood dreams planning and mapping out her future. As Amanda says to Jim, "I assumed that I would be married...and raise my family on a large piece of land with plenty of servants" (1743). Amanda based her future not on furthering her education or having a career but on who would be a successful marriage candidate and provider. Generally speaking, girls' thoughts during these times swayed in this general direction.

Because Amanda chose to marry, according to Williams, "a telephone man who fell in love with long distances," she did not choose to continue on with her own education but rather raise a family (1713). However, Amanda is most concerned as to the direction her children's education and career paths are leading. So much so that Amanda says, "My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!" (1725). Amanda does send Laura to business school on the chance she will learn the skills to make a good secretary. Amanda is concerned for Laura's future and does not want her to end up as a spinster.

To provide for Laura's schooling and other household expenses, which are subsidized by Tom, Amanda sells magazines. Amanda's husband leaving the family years earlier gave her the total responsibility of raising the family and the accompanying financial obligations. Amanda's husband was a merchant seaman during World War I before returning home for a career in the telephone business. Amanda is a product of her environment, like so many of the women during war times.

Amanda has great expectations for her children Laura and Tom. This is demonstrated in her conversation with Tom, in which she says, "you're full of natural endowments! Both of my children—they're unusual children!" (1726). Like all parents, she wants the best for her children. Amanda states, "We have to do all that we can to build ourselves up. In these trying times we live in, all we have to cling to is—each other." This is Amanda's attitude as she ponders the situations she finds her children in.

Laura, fragile in both physical strength and character, was left a cripple with one leg shorter than the other after suffering a childhood illness. Struggling with her image, due to this defect, she remains quiet, sensitive and very much an introvert. Tom says, "Laura is very different from other girls...she's terribly shy and lives in a world of her own and those things make her seem a little peculiar to people outside the house" (1734). Laura knows these things about herself and that is why she doesn't assert herself and make a change for her own good.

It appears Laura is destined to lean on others. Her lack of self-confidence gets in her way. Bert Cardullo describes Laura:

...she hardly qualifies as a Romantic superwoman, a majestic ego eager to transcend the "mereness" of mundane human existence. But she does represent the kind of person for whom the Romantics of the early nineteenth century felt increasing sympathy: the fragile, almost unearthly ego brutalized by life in the industrialized, depersonalized cities of the Western world. The physically as well as emotionally fragile Laura escapes...through art and music—through the beauty of her glass menagerie, the records she plays on her Victrola, and her visits to the museum, the zoo, and the movies. (161)

Laura is a character in the wrong century. In the 19th century, an audience would feel sympathy for Laura. However, in the generation after the war, she seems a

misfit, a pathetic figure who has allowed her affliction to dictate what direction her life is to take. Laura is content in escaping into her fantasy world. Amanda senses what is taking place within Laura. What Amanda wants for Laura are an education and a job, which she realizes are not going to happen. Amanda says to Tom, "We have to be making plans and provisions for her" (1728). This is where Amanda decides to call on Tom's aid to help in finding a husband for Laura. In the decade of 1940-1950, if all else fails, women still try to find their solution in marriage. Explaining this to Tom, Amanda adds, "as soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent," things will be fine (1728).

In the decade of 1910-1920, women were being dominated by men's attitudes. In the decade of 1940-1950, women were expecting men to be the strong ones; however, they were showing some strengths of their own. They were struggling to develop their own sense of identity. It is clear, when comparing the two decades, there was a change of status and roles for women. Women were beginning to infuse themselves into the mainstream of intellectual thinking and economic development, making significant contributions to their gender and society.

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Evaluation: Kathleen has successfully completed the assignment with a paper that is a pleasure to read.

Satyagraha —

The Nonviolent Movement

Pooja Goel

Course: English 101

Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Define an interesting term in a stipulative way.
Use a number of definition patterns. Include examples.

It was 1945. In the Central Market of Delhi, a group of men dressed in homespun cotton were standing around a heap of foreign-made goods. They were shouting, "Boycott the British products! Throw them in the pile!" The crowd, as well as the pile, grew bigger by the minute. Then one of the proesters lit a matchstick and threw it at the pile. The Central Market roared, "Jai Hind!" The police charged towards the group and hit them with sticks and guns — whatever they had in their hands. The police were beating the men as hard as they could, but none of the men hit the policemen back or even tried to run away. These men were confronting the police only with their courage and their cries. These followers of Mahatma Gandhi¹ were practicing Satyagraha.

In the heat of India's struggle for independence from British rule, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi gave India Satyagraha—a nonviolent movement that later led to India's freedom from centuries of British dominance. Satyagraha, advocating passive civil disobedience, taught people that there is a greater power in life than force. Satyagraha exercised a form of power dramatically different from that of violent revolutions. It was not the power of guns but the power of *ahimsa*—non-violent actions.

Gandhi evolved the word Satyagraha by joining two Sanskrit words, *satya* (truth) and *agraha* (holding firmly). He defined Satyagraha as the power "born of truth and love or non-violence." He presented Satyagraha as his method for attaining *swamj* (self-rule).

The concept of Satyagraha originated in South Africa. On August 22, 1906, the ruling government introduced the Asiatic Registration Act that stated that all Indians living in South Africa were required to give their fingerprints and identification marks in order to get a certificate of registration. Gandhi found this act discriminatory and humiliating. He organized a mass meeting of the Indians in South Africa. The meeting passed the famous fourth resolution calling for resistance to the Asiatic Registration Act through civil disobedience. This was the "advent of Satyagraha." Some referred to this new method of action as "passive resistance." But Satyagraha, unlike "passive resistance," did not allow harboring enmity and anger among resisters, even if they did no act of physical vio-

¹Gandhi's given name was Mohandas Karamchand. The people called him "the Mahatma," which means "Great Soul."

lence, Gandhi asserted, "Satyagraha is gentle. It never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice." Satyagraha appealed to Indians as it was based on one of the basic teachings of Hinduism, non-violence.

Satyagraha taught that every system of oppression rested on *maya*, the illusion created by the oppressor that he has the power to rule over the weak. This *maya* veils the underlying *satya*, the truth that the oppressor actually has no power of his own. All his power comes from the fear and ignorance of his victims. Satyagraha educated people of their power and unveiled the system. It taught Indians that their salvation lay in their own hands, and that they would achieve their freedom from the oppressor without guns. A Satyagrahi, a practitioner of Satyagraha, relied on powers of reasoning, suffering, and organized pressure, and an appeal to the opponent's head and heart.

On March 12, one of the most dramatic events in modern Indian history took place—the Salt Satyagraha. Mahatma Gandhi left his ashram with seventy-eight followers for the shores of Dandi, a small village on the coast of Gujrat in Western India. What started as just a handful of people increased with every step the Satyagrahis took. This march, covering over two hundred miles in twenty-four days, demonstrated opposition to the India Salt Act. Under this act, the system enforced a monopoly over the manufacture of salt. Gandhi resisted this monopoly by collecting natural salt from the shore of Dandi on April 6. This action led to his arrest on May 5, but the broader objective was met. The Dandi march had sparked a campaign of civil disobedience in order to attain independence from British rule.

Satyagraha was not limited to political objectives. Gandhi applied Satyagraha's power to much needed social reform in India. He stressed three major social reforms required for a combined effort toward independence of the entire nation: the abolition of untouchability; Hindu-Muslim unity; and Swadeshi. His campaign against untouchability was to create a common feeling among castes and untouchables; his struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity sought a harmony among the different religions prevailing in India; and Swadeshi, which crunched the market for British goods, required that all Indians wear khadi — homespun cotton cloth made using the traditional spinning wheel. His attempt to advance the use of

khadi helped unite urban educated Indians and the rural uneducated Indians.

Gandhi's Satyagraha was a well-calculated step towards national regeneration. The remedy of specific injustices was its immediate goal through which it aimed to realize its far more important objective—independence of India from British rule. It gave people both a better insight into the system and a sense of power. Soon a time came when the "awakened" masses saw through the ingenious mechanism of colonial rule and were no longer prepared to put up with it.

Evaluation: *This definition is informative and academic, as well as fresh, personal, and genuinely stipulative. The term, and the man with whom it is associated, are worthy topics for this assignment. The writing is forceful and literate.*

A Place to Go Back to

Connie Gorsky

Course: English 101

Instructor: Martha Simonsen

Assignment:

Write an essay in response to one of the professional essays we have studied. Explain the author's thinking and show how and why you agree or disagree with him. Include pertinent and vivid details and examples.

"I have seen, on a sunny day in mid winter, a few old brown wasps creep slowly over an abandoned wasp nest in a thicket. Numbed and forgetful and frost-blackened, the hum of the spring hive still resounded faintly in their sodden tissues" (Eiseley 50).

In "The Brown Wasps," Loren Eiseley ruminates about "place": "My life has been passed in the shade of a nonexistent tree" (51). The tree is a cottonwood sapling Eiseley and his father lovingly planted when Eiseley was a boy. The tree and the words of Eiseley's father were inseparable: "We'll plant a tree here, son, and we're not going to move any more. And when you're an old man you can sit under it and think how we planted it here, you and me, together" (55). The hope those words inspired in Eiseley was more deeply rooted than the tree, which was a symbol of that hope. His feelings are well defined when he writes: "The boy was passed from hand to hand, but the tree for some intangible reason had taken root in his mind. It was under its branches that he was sheltered; it was from this tree that his memories, which are my memories, led away into the world" (54). He had begun to take a closer look at all the life around him, how man and beast scramble to preserve a piece of this place that is his personal icon, proof of his validity; how fleeting the moments are that make us who we are. How can these things change when they are as much a part of me as my heart is a part of me? He is stricken with the realization of the importance of place through the observations he makes of the people and nature around him, the instinctual and the psychological drive for survival and preservation of our "place."

These observations trigger Eiseley's urgency to return to his beloved childhood home. Upon his return, Eiseley did not find his tree. The tree was gone; it had become as intangible as the past. At this point Eiseley felt somewhat incomplete. It was as if nothing of his past was real. I empathize with Eiseley's feelings about "place." I too have such a place that no longer stands in the tangible sense. My place is a time to go back to where I may find some of the answers to some of the questions I have about my life. My place stands in my memories as a time when life was simple and time was endless. It also stands for memories of love and love lost. It is there, that place, which marks the passage of time and the never-ending changes in my journey through life.

Everybody has special places they wish they could hold onto forever. These are places in our hearts that take us back to a time when innocence meant life was good. We cannot physically go back, but our spirits can and will.

A big, old house in the country was such a setting. The house was said to be about one hundred years old at the time we were living in it. It was originally built as a mission that provided housing for the missionaries of The Divine Word. The Divine Word Seminary owned the property, and a lot of my family members were employed at the Seminary. At some point, the house was converted to a two-flat building maintaining upper and lower apartment units. It was rental property situated on a fairly large plot of land that had a gravel drive lined with huge, old oak trees. It had three apple trees, and grapes grew around an old log-and-post fence. Grandma and Grandpa lived in the apartment just downstairs from ours, where family and friends gathered regularly. This was more than just a house; this was a home, a place of security and comfort.

Our home was a centralized station in my family; that is because Grandma and Grandpa were there. They were the familial foundation, the mortar.

As children growing up in the house, we kept ourselves entertained quite well. The house had a lot of architectural character that provided a wellspring of possibilities to children with unrelenting imaginations. One room in Grandma's apartment had a closet that had bypassing doors that did not go down to the floor. The doors started about four feet up from the floor. It was a curious looking set of doors just hanging there, in the middle of the wall. This house was a natural for the game of "hide and go seek."

I remember the spooky old basement. It had a coal-burning furnace that I remember Dad or Grandpa shoveling coal into from a big mound of shiny black rocks stacked in a little room off to the side. And I still recall the thick smell of the coal. I can still hear the hissing as I felt the warmth of a cold winter's day from where I sat on the radiator in my bedroom or in Grandma's kitchen. Grandma always kept coats hanging high up on pipes in the basement. Any child with a burning imagination in a dark cellar would view those coats as something very large and sinister looming over them in the dark. No

matter how many times I saw them, they always gave my heart a jump-start.

There are so many things that may trigger memories of our pasts: things that are so inspirational they create a feeling of *deja vu*, a feeling of seeing or experiencing something before, a heightened sense of awareness.

Our olfactory senses are oh, so powerful. We had wonderful lilac shrubs in a variety of colors that Dad and Grandpa kept meticulously trimmed. And Mom would put cuttings in the bedroom that I shared with my sister. The fragrance was so pungent and sweet, it made my head ache. I cannot walk past a lilac shrub today without being transported back to that beautiful place. Grandpa was a nurseryman, and he kept fabulous gardens at home. He also raised birds, and he had an uncanny ability to whistle like the birds and imitate beautiful birdsongs. I too have a passion for gardening and sometimes, when I'm in the garden and the world is quiet, save for the birds, I sense a real connection with my dear departed Grandpa. I know he's there in my garden with me, smiling at me, and enjoying the legacy he left for me. Blossoms and Old Spice after-shave, these are the fragrances of Grandpa. Grandma was quite a cook and baker. I still smell her Streuselkuchen and her plum and pound cakes on the holidays. Mom always put Pfeffernusse cookies in our Christmas stockings. And the smell still takes me home for Christmas with my Mom and Grandma, making preparations. The fragrance of the perfume Mom used to wear can pull so hard at my heartstrings, I could just burst with grief after nearly eight years since her death. The aroma of coffee brewing on Sunday morning or the smell of a fine Sunday dinner in the making; these are provocative scents that strike a yearning in me to go back to my "place."

The day eventually arrived when my family moved out of the country house into our own house. And though we were moving to a house that Dad and Mom worked hard to get for us, it was a somber day. I can remember as we stood there on the gravel driveway, for what would be the last time, searching the faces of the people I loved. And in those faces I saw the same desolate melancholy that was tearing at my heart at that very moment. All eyes were tear filled. And somehow I knew I was experiencing the end of an era. A place in my heart told me,

life would never be the same. I felt a profound sense of loss. We all did; I knew that.

For many years to come, whenever I was in the area, I drove past that house. It was always a melancholy feeling, but the house was reassuring in its presence—until one day I heard news of its impending demolition. The land had been bought by commercial developers. Perhaps Eiseley says it best when he describes the desolation felt by the pigeons who kept returning to the demolished Philadelphia subway station. He states: “It was plain, however, that they retained a memory for an insubstantial structure now compounded of air and time” (54). I’ll never forget the sting in my heart the first time I saw the ravages of the developers. Gone were the huge oak trees that lined the gravel drive, and gone were the apple trees we climbed in, pretended in, and snacked on apples in.

It seemed like everything had just disappeared, or worse yet, like all of it had never existed in the first place. I sat numbly in my car, staring at the void where only the ghost of a great house now stood. I could not believe that such a place whose walls held the journals of so many lives, not just those of my family but also generations of lives that went before me, could be so easily reduced to rubble and air. Oh, the stories that house could tell of all the lives that passed through and were touched by this place. I suspect Eiseley had precisely those same feelings when he regarded his intangible tree, the tree that always made it safe to go back, the land on which it stood, and the people who made it his “place”; he writes: “That it is life that man wants, and man has a right to his place. But sometimes the place is lost in the years behind us. Or sometimes it is a thing of air, a kind of vaporous distortion above a heap of rubble. We cling to a time and place because without them man is lost, not only man but life” (51).

We are after all, who we were, who we are, and who we are to become. All the events in our lives are woven into our cells, like memory. The past is part of the future if we have taken with us lessons and memories that we can draw on and if we perhaps find some of the answers to some of the questions.

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Evaluation: *This is a wonderful model for beginning writers.*

Hermes and Odin: An Evolution of Gods and Cultures

Joel Hengstler

Course: Humanities 120
Instructor: Martha Simonsen

Assignment:

Write a research paper comparing some aspect of Greek mythology with that of another culture. Choose relevant and appropriate points of comparison.

What is it that a person values above all else? Often, our cultural values are reflected in the type of god or gods we worship. In modern times, the most popular version of God is a loving, caring father figure who takes care of his children. God is an entity we strive to be like. This attitude was no different hundreds, or even thousands of years ago. The Greeks and the Vikings both had gods which epitomized the most desirable qualities a person could have. Furthermore, these qualities changed as the respective society changed. In order to demonstrate this, two well-known gods shall be examined—Hermes, messenger god of the Greeks, and Odin, warrior god of the Norsemen—to show how these gods are, in fact, the same god, only viewed with slight differences from the perspective of each of the peoples' beliefs.

The People

Around the fifth, sixth, and seventh century BCE, the earth seemed to revolve around the ideas and values developed by the Mycenaean or Greek civilization. From Athens to Crete, through farming, war, science, and theater, the heritage and inventions that developed vaulted the Greeks into the position of being world rulers for a relatively long duration of history.

The Greeks valued poetry in art, in thought, and action. "They were also an extraordinarily articulate people, devoted to the structuring of art and utterance, contemptuous of immature and undisciplined self-expression" (Dover 133). Although war was a necessary evil for their civilization, it was not an all-consuming quest. In order to achieve a higher status within their community, or with the gods, other pursuits were of more importance. For example, "an athletic victory was thought to bring a winner closer to the gods" (Hall 224). Their values were centered on trying to achieve a peaceful life, in leisure rather than war, although, "most Greeks were poor and had to work for a living full time. Few were rich and members of a leisure class" (Cartledge xvii).

In contrast, about 1,400 years later, the world's focus was centered upon northern Europe, where the "barbarian" hordes were ravaging the civilized countries with a series of plundering raids. These were the renowned Vikings. These Norsemen were portrayed as pagan, sav-

age beasts who were masters of the sea and struck swiftly upon unsuspecting towns to steal away slaves and loot. This portrayal was not far from the truth either! "They ravaged and destroyed Christian Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.... They extorted massive blackmail of silver and gold" (Graham-Campbell 1).

For the Norsemen, theirs was obviously a conquest of wealth. "They were more concerned with profit than empty glory" (Graham-Campbell 15). Silver and gold were symbols of prestige, of freedom and victory. They served as ornamentation and as currency, yet they had the power to "enable a man to rise above his station as a freeman; for a slave, it could mean his liberty" (Graham-Campbell 36). Thus, the qualities most important to the Vikings were those that would help them to acquire such wealth of possessions. "Honor and daring, valor, strength, and agility, all these were qualities that Vikings prized and upheld" (Wernick 27).

Two distinct people, two widely different cultures, hundreds of years between existence, thousands of miles apart. It would be implausible to think that these two cultures had anything common between them at all. Yet a closer look into the religious values of the Greeks and the Vikings reveals that there existed a surprisingly similarity.

The sweeping tide of the Roman empire and the change to Christianity wiped out beliefs in the once revered mythological gods of old that once dominated the Greek view of the world. Far to the north, however, the polytheistic structure still reigned. By examining the similarities between these gods, we can demonstrate that the changes in societal values were reflected by the changes in the mythological gods themselves, despite the chronological and geographical difference between peoples.

The Gods

Hermes, or the Latin equivalent Mercury, is primarily known as being the messenger of the gods. Secondly, he is known as being a trickster, even from infancy. According to the Homeric Hymns, even his mother, Maia, realized what a mischievous god he would grow up to be: "Your father [Zeus] begot you to be a great nuisance to mortal men and the undying gods!" ("To Hermes" 34). To this end, he is known as being the god of thieves and burglars and therefore of wealth as well.

But Hermes has another interesting attribute as well. He was also associated with "movement across boundaries... so Hermes might be, amongst many possibilities, Hermes 'Of the Door Hinge' or Hermes 'Conveyor of Dead Souls'" (Buxton 321). In layman's terms, he was a god of crossroads, including the roads leading into death, so he was a courier of souls to the underworld. Yet, just because he was more of a messenger did not mean he had no strength about him as well. When his anger was roused, he had the ability to change people to stone, including "Argraulos, [who] was changed into a stone by Hermes because she tried to interfere with his love for Herse" (Robinson 96). Moreover, he is as often titled as being the "slayer of Argos" ("To Hermes" 67), a fearsome 100-eyed giant; even in the *Odyssey*, he is referred to as "giant-killer" (Homer 78). He is also father of Autolycus, who taught the great Heracles how to wrestle, so in a sense he is the father of hand to hand combat. Shepherding was yet another attribute within Hermes' domain, so he was also "regarded as protector of sacrificial animals" (Robinson 87). Being a skilled inventor as well, Hermes is finally "believed to be the inventor or originator of pastoral poetry" (Robinson 88). Though this list does not describe in complete detail the numerous attributes Hermes exhibited, it gives a solid picture to which we can compare Odin.

The Norse legend recognizes Odin as being a father to many gods, including Thor. Although Thor was a god of power and strength, Odin was known more as the god of warfare: "Among the Aesir [Norse gods] there were several gods of war, but Odin was foremost" (Munch 9). Secondly, he was known as a god of wealth, for as we discussed earlier, the pursuit of money for the Vikings almost always involved armed combat. Concerned about the coming end of the gods, known to the Norsemen as Ragnarok, Odin was an aid, letting a hero "be killed so that he can come to join Odin in Valholl [Valhalla]" (Page 36). It was believed that these fallen heroes would aid Odin and the Aesire at the last battle. Odin knew of this coming last battle because of his far-seeing wisdom. "His wisdom he derived from drinking from the foundation of Mimir, the guardian of the fountain of the lower world. Odin had only one eye, having exchanged the other one with Mimir" (Robinson 159).

Already, comparisons are beginning to emerge, but an even closer look into each god's character and an exploration of the history and translation of the names will shed further light on the remarkable similarities they share.

The Hermes and Odin Equation

To compare these deities, we shall first examine the shared attributes of trickery and wealth. As stated before, Hermes was the patron of thieves and of burglary, the acquisition of wealth. Odin mirrored this aspect as well. According to Snorri, a renowned author and/or translator of the Norse myths, "Odin found treasure in the earth for his followers and brought them wealth" (Davidson 62). Another shared quality was the guile and cunning each god possessed. Hermes demonstrated his intelligence by his theft of his brother Apollo's cattle by "turning their hoofprints aside" and "reversing their hoofs, so that their forefeet came after" ("To Hermes" 32), while Odin himself, as mentioned, drank from the well to gain that same mental cunning. While physically different, both gods assumed responsibility for the crossroads and highways their people traveled. Interestingly, as part of their attributes relating to travel,

both wore cloaks and wide-brimmed hats, although Odin was thought of usually as an old man and Mercury [Hermes] usually (though not invariably) as a divine youth. Both were regarded as guides to the underworld, helped their followers to gain treasure, and [were] featured as cunning thieves so that they both may be viewed as trickster figures. (Davidson 48)

Furthermore, one of Odin's many titles is "God of Cargoes" (Davidson 48). For the Greeks, most transportation was known by land through actual road highways; for the Norsemen, however, their highways were the seas, so it is fitting that Odin is known as having reign over this territory rather than literal dirt roads.

"As god of the wind, Odin rode through the air on his eight-footed horse, Sleipnir." Odin had the ways and means for extremely fast travel; so too, Hermes is often depicted as having "wings at his ankles, on his shoulders, and on his hat" (Kirkwood 55), showing that he too possessed the ability to ride the wind with tremendous speed. As mentioned before, Hermes' domain included that of poetry. Perhaps surprisingly, Odin acquired "the

mead, or gift of poetry, and poets in the Viking Age, therefore, looked to Odin as their patron" (Fell 37).

Finally, one of the most impressive connections between these gods is the history and translation between the names themselves. Odin is the Scandinavian name of the English and German "Woden," and Anglo-Saxons "saw Woden as the equivalent to the Roman god Mercury, for Woden translates Mercurium in a Latin/Anglo-Saxon dictionary from the eighth century" (Fell 36). Furthermore,

The link that the Anglo-Saxons made between Woden and Mercury is also found in the Old Icelandic version of the Bible. Where our version of Acts of the Apostles reads, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker," the Icelandic text says "they called Paul, Odin." (Fell 38)

Revelation of the Divine

The facts presented through the comparison of Hermes and Odin lead to the conclusion that, although perhaps not literally the same god, the characteristics of the later Odin derived from Hermes. What makes this comparison interesting is the relative position each god held within the respective culture. Hermes, with all his power, cunning, wit, and followers, was a mere messenger of the gods. He was the god of wealth and crossroads, but apparently, to the Greeks, wealth was of secondary importance. Zeus was the supreme god of the Greeks, he who was "the supreme master-god in the mythological hierarchy" (Robinson 71). The attributes of justice, strength, and divine wisdom that Zeus possessed were the most highly sought after by the Greeks. On the other hand, Hermes' personality was not the ideal model to follow, although his many other attributes made him important enough for him to be included among the dominant gods.

By the time the Vikings emerged upon the world scene, the Hermes-type figure had now translated into the new master-god of the mythological world. The strength in combat, once only moderately displayed by Hermes, was now a predominant feature in Odin. Hermes' cardinal traits of possessing wealth through guile or force, and of safe passage between destinations,

was clearly important enough to the Norsemen to make Odin their most important god in their heritage.

The needs and important aspects of a culture's lifestyle are communicated through the dominant god and/or gods of each society. For the Greeks, the god-like figure of travel and wealth was just one aspect of a person's everyday life. For the Vikings, travel and wealth was all there was. Such differences in societal needs reflect the evolution of this god's power, from the god's messenger to the Supreme Lord.

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Evaluation: Joel's choice of Hermes and Odin was at first surprising, given their diverse functions and attributes as Greek messenger god and Norse warrior god. But he presents a credible connection between these gods; he also demonstrates, through his research and analysis, keen insights into the Greek and Viking cultures.

POP! POP! POP!

Erika Hertler

Course: Chemistry 121
Instructor: Barbara Weil

Assignment:

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

When I was a little girl I used to love to wear my Winnie the Pooh pajamas and watch movies. Besides my blanket, there was one other essential item that I needed to truly enjoy the experience. This item was popcorn! After all, what is a movie without popcorn? Making the popcorn was always so much fun for me. I remember listening to the sounds of the kernels popping and staring with wide-eyed wonderment at the microwave as the Orville Redenbacher bag grew larger and larger. As a child, I couldn't understand how the kernels turned into the delicious treat I enjoyed so much. I just figured it was some sort of magic trick my microwave performed. As fascinating as that sounds, it simply isn't true.

So why does popcorn pop? Like all grains, popcorn contains water. About thirteen and a half to fourteen percent of each kernel is made up of water. When a popcorn kernel is heated above the boiling point of 212 degrees Fahrenheit, the movement of the water molecules increases. The water turns to steam. This steam creates pressure within the kernel so that the volume must increase. The kernel explodes and turns itself inside out, therefore the popping!

Now you might be asking yourself, if the water inside a piece of popcorn is what makes it pop, why don't other

grains pop as well? The answer rests in the differences between the outer coverings, called hulls, of popcorn and other grains. Unlike rice, wheat, and regular corn, popcorn has a non-porous hull that traps steam. The hulls of other grains are porous, so steam passes easily through them and no significant pressure is produced. These grains may parch, but they won't pop.

Even popcorn, with its unique hull, doesn't always pop. Popcorn requires two important properties to pop well. First of all, the amount of moisture in the kernel must be close to thirteen and a half percent. If the amount of moisture is too little, then enough steam won't build up to pop the kernel. Too much moisture and the kernels will pop into dense spheres, rather than light, fluffy popcorn. Second, the kernels cannot be damaged or cracked in any way. Even a small crack will allow steam to escape, keeping the necessary pressure from building. Popcorn kernels with the right amount of moisture and unblemished hulls pop into the tasty snack many people love.

Gases are everywhere, and we experience them each day. Sometimes we just don't realize it. So, the next time you sit down to watch a movie and you make a bag of popcorn, remember that there isn't a mystical magician inside your microwave, pulling the popcorn from a hat. Rather, it is simply the gas laws taking place in your very own microwave!

Evaluation: Choosing popcorn as a subject is a great idea, and I love this practical story involving chemistry.

From Pauper to Visionary: The Story of Mary McLeod Bethune

Noelle Hoeh

Course: Literature 223

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

Each student was asked to write an essay dealing with minority literature and/or history.

It has been said that behind every great man, there is a great woman. This statement could not be more true than when applied to Mary McLeod Bethune. While W.E.B. DuBois was indisputably the father of the Harlem Renaissance, it was Mary Bethune's work in education for blacks, her efforts in civil rights on a local and national level, and her work on the New Deal, that paved the way for this literary movement and kept it going.

When she first came into this world in hardship and poverty, it was hard to imagine that this baby girl named Mary would indeed become a great woman. Born Mary Jane McLeod in 1875, she was the fifteenth of seventeen children. But what immediately stood her out from the rest was that she was the first free-born child of her family. Her father and mother were born slaves, as were Mary's older siblings. Mary's family were hardworking people in the small town of Mayesville, South Carolina, but the conditions they lived in as cotton farmers showed no promise of a future for any of the McLeod children.

All of that changed when a teacher by the name of Emma Wilson was sent to the small town where Mary lived by the Trinity Presbyterian Church. Begging for pupils, she came to the McLeod farm to see if they could spare a child to go to school. Mary was working in the fields with her family, praying to God to get her out of that life. When her family chose her to be the one to go to school, Mary thought it was a gift from heaven.

Mary took that gift and ran with it. She was so thankful for her opportunity to gain an education that she did not mind the walk that was measured in miles to and from the small one-room school house every day. She became a model pupil and learned with a stunning voracity. In the evenings, she would come home and teach her family what she had learned. It was to be the start of her life-long career in education.

Mary thought of education as the stairway toward the goal of political and social equality. It became her life's work as she tried to form a better life for her family and her "people." She wrote in her will:

I leave you with a thirst for education. Knowledge is the prime need of the hour. More and more, Negroes are taking full advantage of hard-won opportunities for learning, and the educational level of the Negro population is at its highest point in history.... (Franklin and Moss 482)

After graduating from her one-room grade school, Mary received a scholarship to attend Scotia College in North Carolina. Although she was an average student, Mary stood out as a responsible and hardworking girl. She also stood out among her classmates as a born leader. In her biography of Mary Bethune, Rackham Holt writes "Mary was not only popular with her classmates, she was their acknowledged leader. If the girls wished to make some request of the faculty or protest some rules, she was automatically chosen to act as the intermediary" (36). When a student wanted a room change or there was a complaint in the dinner menu, Mary was the one they sent to the teachers.

Mary's original dream was to be a missionary in Africa. Because of this deep commitment to her beliefs, she received a scholarship and attended the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Upon graduation, she requested to be sent to Africa to fulfill her chosen dream. In what would later prove to be America's good fortune, Mary was disappointed to learn there were no available positions in Africa at the time. Instead, she embarked on her career as an advocate and educator in the United States.

Her first assignment as a teacher was in her home town of Mayesville. There she remained for a year until her transfer to Augusta, Georgia. In Augusta she worked under the direction of Lucy Croft Lancy, another dominant force in America who was "blazing a trail for Negro women teachers" (47). The school was located in a slum area of the city. It was here that Mary first tried in earnest

to tackle not only educational inadequacies but social as well.

Many children did not read and were not cared for. This was not necessarily from neglect, but from the long hours both parents needed to work in order to survive. Mary saw the problem at once and came to a solution. In her spare time, she and members of her class "set forth upon a project of rounding up these unreached urchins and inviting them to Sunday school" (47). She also spent her time finding clothing for the children to wear and bathing the children who were running wild. This was to give them a sense of "personal pride" (47) and dignity. This issue of pride and dignity was very important to Mary. In her last will and testament, Mary remarked, "I want Negroes to maintain their human dignity at all costs" (Franklin and Moss 482).

Mary invited the adults to join her Sunday school to learn to read. She also invited industrious members of the community to speak to show the young men how they could both keep a job and get an education. According to Holt, under her care and direction, Mary's Sunday school "gradually rose to an attendance of a thousand" (48). She continued this mix of community service and teaching throughout her stay in Augusta and into her next assignment in Sumter, Georgia. At the end of her stay in Georgia, Mary received what would become her most important assignment of all in Daytona, Florida. It was in Florida where Mary would endure her first criticisms and emerge as a prominent social leader.

In Florida, Mary began what would become Bethune-Cookman College. It was originally named the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls. Mary's dream of a school soon launched from a small house into a larger enterprise and moved to a new location known as "Hell's Hole." Through donations and the hard work of Mary and her students, the one time junk yard (Hell's Hole) emerged into a beautiful campus.

Mary always had a great love of the fine arts, especially singing. It was in Florida where she put that love to use. Mary had a beautiful voice and encouraged the girls in her school to sing as well. She formed a school choir and took the girls around to the hotels in the area in an effort to gain donations. It worked! Mary and her choir soon had a reputation in the area, and everyone loved to hear them perform. Mary found these performances an ideal setting

for raising funds for her school. This time may also have served as the first in her many attempts to foster good relations with the whites in the community. This non-threatening exposition of talent helped to show the community the value to be found in the black community as the girls sang their way into many hearts.

At the school the girls were given instruction in general housekeeping duties and what was considered at the time to be "white" customs. Because of this, she came under great criticism from other Negro leaders. During this time politically there was division as to how the Negro population should move forward. Some agreed with leaders such as Booker T. Washington while others thought Washington was too soft and quick to please the white community. These critics also criticized Mary Bethune for teaching the girls what could be considered Washington's values. In one instance, a local preacher stated that he would rather see his "daughter go to hell and be taught by Satan himself than by Mary McLeod Bethune" (75).

Washington believed that the people needed to pull themselves up and out of their situation through hard work. In his historical Atlanta Exposition address, Washington urged the American Negro to seek out positions "in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions" rather than "a seat in Congress or the state legislature" (Washington 514). Mary also had similar views in education.

She took what she considered to be the practical approach and taught her girls that there was no such thing as menial labor. Like Washington, she believed "most colored people were still wretchedly poor, and had to *earn* their education in the only fields open to them, and even for these they must be trained" (Holt 75). But unlike Washington, she also considered this lot as temporary, and she stressed the importance of "culture as a concomitant to a better way of living" (75). Therefore, how they conducted themselves and how they kept their surroundings were very important. The girls were also educated in the classics, and a few were taken with the choir on occasion to recite from such poets as Kipling and Dunbar as a way to show the community that they could learn as easily as whites.

Booker T. Washington also supported the idea of segregation when it came to the two races living side by side. He stated that the black community should combine "our

industrial, commercial, civil life with yours [whites] in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress" (Washington 515). Here is where an essential difference between Washington and Bethune is displayed most prominently.

Civil rights had not entered the Southern political arena as an issue yet, but this did not stop Mary from asserting her own beliefs. There was no segregation allowed at her school, in spite of its common practice and the laws governing it. As an example, if white visitors came to hear the school choir, they would find no separate seating arrangements. If they were to ask Mary, she would reply "There are no special seats. Come in, friends, and make yourself comfortable anywhere at all" (85). She would also not tolerate being addressed as anything other than "Mrs.," a title that was not given to Negro women at the time. As with everything else in life, she handled the prejudice she came against with the grace and manners of a true lady.

She never gave sharp criticism. Instead, she spoke and acted with firm but gentle direction. In a true testament to her poise and character, Mary Bethune was never held accountable for her flagrant disregard for Florida's strict segregation laws. Holt notes that because of Mary's attitude toward race, her school "had become a center for interracial culture, for interracial good will" (95).

This refusal to allow segregation proved that her ideas in the education of girls in domestic service was practical but very temporary. Mary foresaw a time many years from then when blacks and whites could live and work side by side without trouble. Although she would not live to see the culmination of this vision, she had the ability to start work in the right direction. This work in civil rights would also leak into many other fields than education.

One of the many factors that allowed for the emergence of Negro writers in the Harlem Renaissance was the white, public acceptance of them and what they could add to American culture on the national level. Mary's early efforts in the education of her "girls" and her attitudes toward education and race were the first bricks in the path toward that acceptance. Although she was still in Florida, these ideals would slowly begin to spread around the country, even up to New York as she and other Negro women continued their work in educational and social issues. I am

not saying that without Bethune there would not have been a Harlem Renaissance. What I am saying was that it took the efforts of many people, including Mary Bethune, to create awareness of blacks having a cultural identity for that movement to happen. However, it was when Mary Bethune found a friend and ally in the Roosevelts and began her work in the New Deal that her efforts became truly monumental for African-American culture.

In the 1930s, America was in the midst of the Great Depression. Millions of men found themselves without jobs or money. The African-American community was hit especially hard. In 1933 Franklin Roosevelt took office as president of The United States of America. As an effort to end the Depression, he introduced a system of relief measures called the New Deal. While many African-American leaders became critical of the New Deal and its policies, many blacks did receive help from one of the programs. Working behind the scenes for the black people was Mary Bethune.

For several years, Mary had been an advisor to several different presidents. Her greatest concern was the improvement of life for all blacks in this country. When Roosevelt came into office, she felt this was the way to the realization of that goal. She remarked:

With a President planning and working for the welfare of all people and the entire Nation— with no forgotten men and no forgotten races' — the opportunity had arrived for the definition of an all-embracing plan to promote the integration of the Negro into the national life and program under the guidance of the Federal Government. (qtd. in Holt 196)

Mary Bethune became involved in many aspects of the Roosevelt administration, but her relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt gave real power to her and members of the Black Cabinet in a way no other civil rights group had before. The "Black Cabinet" was a revolving group of influential African-American leaders who advised President Roosevelt on policies that affected Afro-Americans. Up until this point, Mrs. Roosevelt wasn't aware of the extent of the problems of blacks in America. Her relationship with Mary Bethune soon changed that. Harvard Sitkoff recognizes the importance of this relationship. He writes: "Her [Eleanor Roosevelt's] relationship with Walter White of the NAACP and Mary McLeod

¹Roosevelt gave a speech in which he stated "There shall be no forgotten men and no forgotten races."

Bethune, President of the National Council of Negro Women, began to resemble a crash course on the struggle of blacks against oppression" (60).

Mary first met Mrs. Roosevelt at a luncheon in New York that she hosted for leaders of the National Council of Women of the U.S.A., of which Mary was the only African-American member. Being the only colored woman there in a room that included several white Southern women, Mary was, at first, a bit apprehensive. It was Sara Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt's mother-in-law, who saved the day. With stunning grace, she took Mrs. Bethune's arm and led her straight to the seat next to Eleanor, giving Mary the seat of honor. It was to become the start of a friendship where "their deep and fundamental common purposes and generous hearts made for an enduring bond which was terminated only by the death of Mrs. Bethune" (Holt 178).

This relationship gave Mary a chance to bring her views on the black community directly to the White House. As their relationship progressed, the two women also came to rely upon each other in their work on civil rights. Holt writes that because their ideals were "so nearly as one...they were mutually helpful" (218). Quite often, Eleanor would ask Mary for background or information on matters pertaining to the African-American community, and Mary would seek out Eleanor whenever she needed prestige or authority on projects.

After Eleanor Roosevelt got her education from Mrs. Bethune, she became an advocate for the American Negro cause and "helped devise strategies that might gain Afro-Americans better opportunities in the New Deal" (Sitkoff 60). Eleanor Roosevelt opened up the White House to the Black Cabinet founded by Mary Bethune and other African-American leaders who felt they had not been heard before. Having had Mary Bethune help to open such large political doors for them, African-Americans were able to become an influential part of the political process and make great strides in seeking improvements for their lives. Some of these improvements were not only socioeconomic but cultural as well.

One of the improvements that related to the Harlem Renaissance was publicity. For the first time since the days of slavery, real attention was paid to African-Americans. The Black Cabinet was given "air space" on the radio and, too, "print space" in the nation's top newspapers; this

exposure opened the doors and eyes of America to the true state of affairs in the black community. One pair of eyes opened especially wide: Eleanor Roosevelt's. A crusader for the cause until the end, Mrs. Roosevelt started serious work on programs to benefit those "forgotten races." Not only did these programs have a financial boost for the young artists of the Renaissance, they had an emotional one as well; such high-level attention allowed for the movement to continue to develop with the support of mainstream white America.

Often, the radicals and revolutionaries seem to get the most historical press. We must remember that there are many people who work within the system and who do not get the press—but they also achieve results. Mary Bethune was one of those people. A great leader in civil rights and education, Mary also unwittingly became the "mother" of the Harlem Renaissance as her work crossed many boundaries in black and white America.

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Evaluation: *This is a highly informative and thorough paper that teaches its audience much about Bethune. Teachers are always grateful when students as dutiful and bright as Noelle pass through their courses.*



Fausto

James Inman

Course: Literature 115

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

As part of the final exam in this fiction class, students could choose to write a short story, using one of the first-person narrative strategies studied in class.

I didn't realize a body could hurt that much. Three and a half hours I had been racing through the Alps. The temperature at the start of the race was 91 degrees, and that was at eight o'clock!

It was 1949. The professional bicycle racing circuit in Europe was just starting to come back together after the interruption of WWII. I rode during the season for the team of Eduardo Bianchi, a crotchety old man who owned the best bicycle manufacturing company in all of Italy. He had signed me to a contract before the war, when I was just eighteen years old, a skinny delivery boy out of Novi Ligure. The ten thousand lire a month went a long way towards taking care of my mother and younger brother Serse, since my father had disappeared while fighting for the partisans during the war.

I was at the peak of my career in 1949. I had become the first rider to ever win the Giro d' Italia (Tour of Italy) and the Tour de France in the same year. These victories earned me a spot on the Italian National Team that would race for the World Championships in France. Even though I was the strongest rider on the circuit, I was not the captain of Team Italia. My greatest rival and easily the greatest rider of all time, Gino Bartali, was to be our leader. Gino had been the capo of the Bianchi squad when I first joined, but had soon left to start his own team. Our rivalry quickly began.

Like all young riders of the day, I had tremendous respect for Bartali, Alfredo Binda, Pietro Savarino, Giovanni Spiteri and the rest of the legends of Italian cycling that I had grown up with. I was fortunate to have my talent recognized and to be trained by one of the greatest coaches in the country. It had taken years of hard work, but I knew I belonged. I had the trophies, titles and scars to prove it.

The World Championship Road Race began that morning in the town of Carpentras in Southeastern France, right near the Italian border. The sentimental favorite was the French National Champion, Jean Robic. He was a very strong rider, especially in the mountains. During the Tour de France, he had beaten me on two of the toughest stages in the Alps. I still took the Yellow Jersey, the prize for the overall winner, but I knew that on any given day, it was an even bet between Robic and me as to who was the better climber.

It was unusually hot for September in the mountains. All the riders would be required to carry their own water and food for the 149 kilometer (93 mile) race that would finish just on the other side of Le Mont Ventoux. The race would go out at a fairly fast pace for the first 110 kilometers; then the real racing would take place on the long, hot climb to Le Mont Ventoux and on the hair-raising descent to the finish.

The heat really started to get to me about half way through the race. Since a childhood bout with malaria, I have always been sensitive to extreme temperatures. At the base of Ventoux, I was 40 seconds behind Bartali and Robic, who had broken away from the main pack right from the start of the race. I thought for sure that by staying in the peloton (main group) and letting other riders

break the wind for me, I would be able to conserve my strength for the big climb. The peloton was moving well, but we weren't catching the two escapees fast enough for my taste. I took off to bridge the gap before we got too far into the climb. It took a lot of work. I was at the limit of my endurance as I caught up to Bartali, who was right on the Frenchman's wheel. By riding in their slipstream, I was able to recover a little before the road turned upward toward the rocky summit of Ventoux. I had one full water bottle left and I figured that would be just enough to get me through to the finish. As I reached for the bottle to take a drink, I hit a small bump in the road and fumbled the bottle. In those days, water bottles were made of glass. The crash of the breaking bottle startled my two rivals as much as it broke my heart. With no more water, I was sure to suffer cramps or worse from dehydration, I had to keep pushing; I had not made it this far in my life by quitting at the first sign of adversity.

We climbed. There was a slight tailwind, which helped push us along, but it made the air seem still as we strained along up the 10-degree slope. Robic was looking to be the stronger of the two as we reached the midway point in the climb. Sure enough, he jumped and took off on a breakaway to try and shake us. I thought he had caught Gino not paying attention, but when I got up along side of him, I could see that Bartali was suffering.

"Come on Gino, we'll catch him; he can't keep up this pace!" I shouted.

"I'm all done in Fausto, you get him; that goat might be able to climb, but there is no way he can outrun you on the descent. Here, take this," he said as he handed me his last full water bottle.

I surged on upward in pursuit of Robic. Once, I looked over my shoulder to see Bartali at least 300 meters back and fading. As he saw me, he raised his fist and shouted, "Forza Italia" and then dropped his head to his handlebars and continued on up.

I didn't want to take a chance of choking while trying to get a drink at this time. I was breathing like a steam engine, and if I got any water down the wrong pipe, the resulting coughing fit would cost me valuable time. I knew of a plateau about a thousand meters shy of the mountain summit where I could settle down for a second, catch my wind and take a long needed drink. I

could see that I was closing on the Frenchman. If I could get on his wheel by the top, he wouldn't stand a chance as I would bolt past and race down the twisting pavement to the finish. The poor bastard had crashed on a treacherous downhill section in a small race in his hometown three months before, breaking his collarbone and rendering him overly cautious.

We reached the plateau and I took a desperate gulp from the water bottle. I swallowed it all before I caught the bitter, foul taste. It was like...almonds.

I doubt I took two more pedal strokes before I felt the constriction in my chest. It felt as if someone had fastened a belt around my lungs and was tightening it. We were approaching the summit as my vision started to go. I thought I was blacking out from dehydration. I don't remember anything else.

The inquest was inconclusive. The doctors said that they could find no trace of anything unusual in my bloodstream. The bottle had disappeared in the crash.

I was technically a quadriplegic. I kept to myself; I never told the press my suspicions. My grandson, Mario, takes care of me now. Even he doesn't know that I can lift my left arm up past the shoulder. I do my own "physical therapy" in private. I know that one day soon, Gino Bartali will come to visit. He always was a devout Catholic. He'll want to clear his soul before he goes to meet his god. My arm gets stronger by the day. I have a sharpened bicycle spoke hidden in the armrest of my wheelchair.

Evaluation: *This is an enjoyable read that features an engaging narrative voice, good pacing, economy of language, and a surprise ending that is entirely plausible.*

Women under the Microscope:

Louise Mallard in “The Story of an Hour”
and Elisa Allen in “The Chrysanthemums”

Girija Kalra

Course: English 102

Instructor: Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

Write a research paper comparing two short stories.

“Liberty is better husband than love to many of us.”

—Louisa May Alcott, 1868.

It is amazing to know that more than a century ago, women were not so different from what they are today, struggling against stereotypical positions in society. Then, however, women did not even have the opportunity to express their feelings. Even the writers, not only female writers but also male writers, were perceptive of this problem—which they expressed through their literary works. Two such examples are Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” and John Steinbeck’s “The Chrysanthemums.” There is a great similarity between the two stories. Both the main characters—Louise Mallard in “The Story of an Hour” and Elisa Allen in “The Chrysanthemums”—suffer from lack of freedom in their marriages, from not being equal with their husbands, from being manipulated and dependent on men. Louise has apparently given her entire life to assuring her husband’s happiness while forfeiting her own. This truth is also apparent in Elisa’s character. She has also given her life to her husband, Henry, who has little concern for her feelings or beliefs. Both these characters live very lonely lives, and both have a desire to find out who they really are and also what they are capable of becoming.

Although both the stories develop a similar theme of female self-assertion, through which the authors have expressed the idea of repression of women in a male-dominant society, it is “The Chrysanthemums” that works more effectively toward the theme.

Both the authors have established the setting of the stories as a moral ground for the theme. “The Story of an Hour” takes place in the late 1800s, a time when women were not even granted the right to vote. Marriage was considered a sacred institution, “an institution that traps women” (Toth 10). Also, the social situation at the time was such that marriage was not about a mutual love between two people: “Louise had loved [Henry]—sometimes. Often she had not” (Chopin 445). At that time, it was unheard of for women to assert their beliefs or to act upon their ideas. As a result, Louise was forced to take the role of an obedient wife in order to abide by the norms of the society. Even when she finds happiness from her husband’s death, she tries “to beat it back with her will” (445). She knows that she will be sorrowful, but she realizes how unhappy she was with her husband: “the face that had never looked save upon her” (445). Being a woman in a society run by men, she takes a while to bring out her subliminal feelings of freedom. But when she realizes that her husband is dead, “she begins to awaken to a new life” (Skaggs 130) that is first suggested to her by the view from her bedroom window “of tops of the trees...with new spring life. There were patches of blue sky...” (Chopin 445). For Louise it is a sign of hope emerging from a blue sky. It is easy to reach the same conclusion as Jennifer Hicks does that the author has made “the bedroom active as compared to other rooms” (263), to bring out the theme of the story.

Similarly, but more effectively, the setting of “The Chrysanthemums” works toward establishing the theme. The story takes place in the 1930s: many women’s movements had started, but most women were still repressed. The story opens with the description of Salinas Valley. As the story advances, it is the external landscape that unfolds and brings out the meaning to the story. The Salinas Valley has been shown closed off by the winter fog like a “closed pot” (Steinbeck 220). Similarly, Elisa’s body is closed off by her bulky male costumes and by her fenced garden, even though Stanley Renner believes that the fence is “Elisa’s own rather than imposed on her by her husband, men, or

society" (309). John H. Timmerman's view, that the fenced garden portrays Elisa as an individual who is repressed by the society and men around her (175-77), is more credible. Elisa working inside her fenced garden portrays her isolation from the outer world. She is a repressed woman in a male-dominant society. She is left in the home while her husband is out in the fields doing what is supposedly the important work. Her presence is necessary only to affirm Henry's success, not share it as she, working in her garden, "looks down across the yard, Henry talking to two men in business suits" (220). When Henry brings home the good news of the business deal, Elisa is expected to join him in the celebration. As Henry says, "I thought...we might go into Salinas for dinner...to celebrate" (221). Even though she is aware of her surroundings—as she suggests to the tinker that "[he'll] save time if [he goes] back to Salinas road and [picks] up the highway" (223)—she is still isolated from the society, as she is unaware of the woman who lives "down the road," for whom the tinker is getting the flowers. Steinbeck thus uses the exterior landscape to present the emotions of his character, for it is the wilting flowers lying on the roadside that make Elisa realize her insignificant existence and repression in a man's world. Thus, setting plays a more significant role in "The Chrysanthemums" than in Chopin's "The Story of an Hour."

The settings of the stories become apparent through the premeditated use of points of view by the authors. Each of the stories has a different point of view working toward the common theme. Chopin deliberately chose a limited omniscient point of view that allows for the expression of her theme. The description and the insight given to the character of Louise help the readers to understand her and her situation. As she finds happiness out of her husband's death, the narration shows her struggling with guilt—"she was striving it back with her will" (445)—and overcoming it: "...she opened and spread her arms out...in welcome" (445). Chopin's use of this point of view, as Hicks notices, removes the readers from the need to share in a widow's grief and allows them to remain onlookers as eager as Louise to know "what was approaching to possess her" (263-65). It is possible through this point of view to know the depth of her pain and to understand the reason for her happiness after her husband's supposed death. As the story

proceeds, this narration exposes Louise Mallard's emotions through setting, as her interpretation of the scenery around her begins to change—"storm of grief" changes to "new spring life" (445). All these visual things around her were viewed, due to limited-omniscient point of view, in a completely different light—more positively. Also because of this narration, Louise is viewed less harshly than if the scenario were revealed from any other point of view. This narration also signifies that Louise's death is really an ultimate freedom from her unhappy marriage—a marriage that has not allowed her to "live for herself" (445). She does not die from a heart disease, "a joy that kills" (446), as the doctors and the other characters of the story—unaware of her true sentiments—think, but she dies from the shock that shatters her dreams. Thus, without having access to Louise's mind, it is impossible to get to the theme of the story.

Even though Steinbeck uses an objective point of view, it works very effectively to bring out the theme of the story. The narrator does not go into the minds of the characters but describes the events from outside. The author does not "waste words...with explanation" (Beach, *American* 314), which makes it easier to understand the meaning of the story through the facts and actions and not from limited thoughts. It is through Elisa's actions that one is able to understand that the chrysanthemums were a part of her life. Her actions also give a picture of a strong and an energetic woman: "...her work with scissors was over-eager and over-powerful" (220-21). The conflict between Elisa and the men in the story—her husband and the tinker—has not been explained but portrayed through the richness of references and dialogues (Beach "Characters" 32). The conversation between the characters helps one to understand the feelings they have for each other. Elisa and Henry are incredibly different, which is apparent from the first conversation between them. Henry is depicted as one who values the pragmatic more than the artistic, which is clear from his suggestion to Elisa that her gift could be put to better use in his orchard. They also do not have an emotional attachment with each other, which becomes evident at the end of the story. Elisa cries secretly to see the discarded flowers on the roadside, "her face turned away from him," making sure that Henry does not see her "crying weakly—like an old woman" (227).

Even though the tinker is totally opposite to Elisa in physical appearance, he meets her inner needs, which even her husband cannot comprehend. As the tinker acknowledges that her flowers "look like a quick puff of colored smoke" (223), she reveals more of herself—"physically and psychologically" (Timmerman 174). She removes her hat and shakes her long hair, bringing out her repressed desires. The mere act of Elisa's kneeling before the tinker indicates the sexual frustration that she bears inside herself, resulting from the repression. Also, the act of the tinker discarding the flowers in the end brings an unfortunate realization to Elisa and thus portrays the theme of repression of women by society. Even though the narrator remains at a distance from the characters, the theme of the story is conveyed very effectively.

The point of view of both the stories makes it easier to understand the characters and their behaviors. Even though both characters are working within the same constraints, it is Elisa's situation that more completely expresses the theme of female repression. Louise Mallard is a product of her environment. Her life has been shaped and molded to conform to her husband's wishes in order to abide by the norms of the society. In the beginning of the story she is characterized by her married name, a wife who suffers from "heart trouble" (444). She is described as "young, with a fair calm face, whose lines bespoke repression" (445), which depicts her as "being old for her age" (Wilson 265). It is not until her husband's supposed death that she becomes "Louise," a woman aware of her desires, experiencing a spiritual freeing of the woman that was behind the man. Although Mrs. Mallard represents the women of her time, she is different: "she did not hear the story as many women have heard" (444). She cries at once "with sudden, wild abandonment" (444). As the "storm of grief" is over, she undergoes a sudden realization of complete happiness and total freedom. As she tries hard to repress these fresh, new feelings, she speaks the words "free, free, free" (445). These words help the readers to understand the repression she has been forced to withstand for many years. She did not love her husband very much; for her, love is an "unsolved mystery" that is nothing compared to the future of her self-discovery and freedom—"the strongest impulse of her being" (445). She recognizes that she has been liberated through her husband's misfortune—"there will be no

powerful will bending hers" (445)—and recalls, "it was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long" (446). She does not seem to have the strength or will to leave him on her own. This is why, at the end of the story, she suddenly has a heart attack to see her husband alive.

Like Louise, Elisa has also been forced to conform to her role in society, the role of a caring housewife. Elisa is presented as a strong woman of thirty-five who possesses a masculine strength. Talking about the characterization in the story, Mordecai Marcus suggests that Elisa is an extraordinary portrait of a woman whose strength seems both masculine and feminine" (58). This is indicated through her physical appearance: "her figure looked blocked and heavy...her face mature and handsome" (220). Although she is portrayed as a strong woman, she is limited to the confines of her garden. She bears inside her a desire to escape from the limited domesticity of her ranch life to a world of wider experience. Such feelings have been developed inside her due to the "routines of a pragmatic husband who fails to understand her" (Timmerman 176). Right from the beginning, she is shown struggling against the practicality of her husband. When Henry compliments Elisa on her chrysanthemums, he praises their size rather than their beauty and suggests to Elisa that "her gift could be put to better use in his orchard" (221). She is a woman bored by her husband, bored by the isolated life on the farm and among other things wants to be admired as a woman (McMahan 453-54). She struggles through the same feelings toward the end of the story when she devotes her entire attention to heightening her femininity. Henry, being unable to understand his wife's emotions, compliments her as "strong enough to break a calf over [her] knee" (226). She also has an artistic ability to work with her flowers. She is more emotionally attached to her garden than she is to her husband. She compensates for her unfulfilled longings and disappointments in her life through her garden.

Elisa undergoes a series of transformations in the story. As the story progresses, it reveals her to greater depths. At first she does not show any interest in the tinker. Her "eyes hardened with resistance" (223) when he asks for some work. However, as he shows his interest in her chrysanthemums, her "irritation and resistance melted

from her face" (223). As he asks to take her flowers for a lady, she becomes very active and energetic: "her eyes shone...she ran excitedly" (224). So far, she is portrayed more with a masculine touch. Nevertheless, as the tinker speaks and praises her flowers, "her actions become more feminine" (Sweet 211). Her encounter with the tinker makes it clear that she is a sexually frustrated woman. The tinker brings in her the self-satisfaction and confidence of being a woman, and she begins to awaken to a new life (Thomas 50-51). Unconsciously, she removes the masculine work gloves, straightens her hair-do, and begins to get sexually attracted to him as her "breasts swelled passionately...her voice grew husky... her hands went out towards his legs" (224-25). Her repression becomes more prominent when the tinker leaves as she whispers "that's a bright direction. There's a glowing there" (226). The tinker meets her inner needs, which not even her husband could comprehend. Her final revelation comes when she finds that the tinker has discarded her flowers and has kept the pot. A feeling of revenge arises in her, and so the idea of attending the prize-fights, which she never liked before, appeals to her. At this point, she realizes her isolation and her insignificance in the world. The mere chance she gets to make a difference brings an unfortunate realization of her insignificance in a repressive society. Therefore, she cries in the end "like an old woman" (227)—an old woman for whom the idea of romance seems a thing of a past. Elisa, who is torn in one direction by the pragmatic husband and from the other by the manipulative tinker, is definitely much more potent than Louise in bringing out the theme of female entrapment.

Both these stories recognize the disparity between the true needs and desires of women and those of society forced upon them. Both the women are trapped between society's definition of masculine and feminine and are struggling against the limitations of the feminine. However, the struggle is more apparent in the life of Elisa Allen than in that of Louise Mallard. Unlike Louise, for whom the revelation brings happiness, Elisa's final edification brings sorrow. Whereas Louise gets an ultimate freedom from her unhappy marriage and a repressive society through death, Elisa lives to face the isolation and remains a pitiable victim within the narrow possibilities open to women in a man's world. Writing about Chopin's "The

Story of an Hour," Emily Toth suggests that a story in which an unhappy wife is suddenly widowed, becomes rich, and lives happily ever after would have been "much too radical and far too threatening in the 1890s" (10). It is easier for one to think that with the passage of time the woman's position might have improved, but Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums," published in 1938, shows that even after forty years, the women's situation had not changed much. The intense imagery and meaningful expression of the stories reflect the society's effect on women and raise a provocative question—which roles are acceptable for women to assume in society?

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Evaluation: *Girija's analytical research paper comparing and contrasting Louise Mallard and Elisa Allen is by no means a dry, laboratory exercise. Instead, she experiments with sophisticated sentence construction and evocative diction, and she proves what women are capable of becoming—writers extraordinaire.*

Insurmountable

Lisa Kleya

Course: English 101
Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:

*Recreate an experience which taught you
something important.*

I am the single mother of a son with multiple handicaps, and I have been raising him all on my own. This lifestyle I have most willingly chosen has afforded me the right to teach you the meaning of inner strength.

For the past fourteen years I have devoted my days to providing my son, Mitch, with his daily necessities of life. I spoon-feed his roughly pureed meals into his mouth, which is gaped open most of the time due to his limited muscle strength, while I hope that each bite will gently pass through his throat without causing an episode of choking. Every spoonful is an adventure into the unknown because Mitch is the only one who decides whether the food will be chewed to smaller pieces or swallowed whole.

As I carry him to the bathroom for his bath, his body weight feels more than twice his actual seventy-five pounds because of his cerebral palsy. With every step I take, my precious load becomes heavier to carry, and the whole process becomes a balancing act as I try to stabilize my footing toward the directions of his involuntary body movements.

Each time I change his diaper throughout the day, I fasten and refasten the tapes, making sure they are not too tight across his abdomen, so as not to cause constriction with every breath he takes. I realign the elastic leg openings to confirm that they are not pinching the tender flesh of his inner thighs.

Grabbing his flailing arms, I gingerly ease them through the openings of his shirtsleeves, being careful not to bend his wrists beyond their tension marker. I slide each foot through a leg opening of his pants and grasp both ankles and place them over my left shoulder. This position enables me to pull his pants up his atrophied legs and over the bulky diaper to his petite waist.

Because Mitch is non-ambulatory, I carry him one of two ways. Either his legs are wrapped around my waist with my arms supporting his back and head, or I place him in front of me but facing away from me, with my arms underneath his armpits, my hands securely clasped together across his chest, and my knees bent to allow his bottom to rest on the tops of my thighs. I stagger to the vehicle to lift him up into the seat, always aware of the possibility of bumping his head somewhere along the vehicle's doorway. (Nine times out of ten this does

occur.) On the days that necessitate the use of his more adapted wheelchair, I physically lift the eighty-five pound contraption into the bed of my pickup truck without the aid of ramps—here's where the tops of my thighs come in handy again. I have to take every precaution maneuvering the wheelchair so that the oxygen tank will not be accidentally bumped.

Mitch travels with an oxygen tank in the event of a prolonged seizure. At times, a seizure may last for over an hour, and he may stop breathing. The medication used to alleviate the seizure causes cessation of breathing, and administering the oxygen aids in resuming his breathing. After providing the medical attention he requires for a seizure, I lay down behind him and “spoon” his spastic body, lightly stroking the length of his body and speaking to him in my calmest of voices, hoping that I will catch him in a moment of consciousness and soothe him with the mother's touch and voice I think he knows. He cannot assure me that he senses these efforts, because he cannot communicate to me—the severity of his mental retardation prevents him from expressing this.

Mitch is also non-verbal, which enters me into an arena full of questions that may never be solved. Responding to his cries, I exhaust all possibilities to find an answer to his plea for my help. There are times I never find out what is causing his apparent discomfort. Gazing into his translucent eyes many times throughout the day, I repeatedly ask, “What are you thinking Mitch...at this very moment, what is travelling through your sweet little head?” Although he is non-verbal, he has his own way of communicating—through his self-abuse. He acts out his frustration by hitting the sides of his head with both of his hands. He wears protective mitts on his hands to prevent bruising on both his head and hands.

I have not slept a night through in fourteen years. Because Mitch is not fully cognitively aware of his environment, he has no knowledge of the difference between day and night. The repetitive thumping he creates with his hands in the protective mitts as they meet both sides of his head interrupts my sleep nightly. I clamber out of bed, knowing it won't be the only time during the night I do this, and shuffle my feet to his room to reposition him into his comfort zone. Flopping back into my bed, I

drift off to semi-sleep to the sound of repetitive thumping that is only heard in my head.

Perhaps Mitch was given to me because I was thought to be the right person for the job, or maybe so I could educate you by writing about my experience. So often, the special people in our lives tell me they could never do what I do. There are days that I find it very overwhelming, wondering why everyday tasks sometimes have to feel like a challenge and take longer to get done. Just recently, I have realized that this is okay to admit, and doing so does not mean that I'm a bad mother, but human. I am grateful for what I have learned from him. My son has taught me to persevere, to endure, to fight with bravery and courage, and to smile at strangers when they stare.

There is an old adage that states, “You Can't Miss Something You've Never Had.” This motto is certainly not hanging on a wall in my home. I have come to terms with realizing that my son will never participate in T-Ball or ride his bicycle to the end of the street or take first place in the spelling bee, but I miss those things for him.

I also miss something I will never have—hearing my son say, “I Love You, Mom.”

Evaluation: *Sometimes personal and deeply felt topics are difficult to write about free of sentimentality, but Ms. Kleya—with understatement, humility, and power—writes movingly about her son.*

William Rainey Harper:

A Man of Vision

Diane P. Kostick

Course: Journalism 130

Instructor: Becky Benton

Assignment:

Write a feature story about some aspect of Harper College.

Harper College is the embodiment of the spirit of a man who enriched all facets of education: teaching, learning, research, and publication. Harper Community College was named to honor William Rainey Harper because he *fathered* the community college concept, opened learning to a variety of students, and revolutionized the role of colleges.

In a questionnaire to students and staff at Harper College, respondents were asked what they knew about William Rainey Harper; for many, the man for whom the college was named is an enigma. Respondent Mark Morgan said, "I don't know much about this man, I'm sorry to say." This, sadly, was a frequent response; it seems great men quickly fade into anonymity.

William Rainey Harper's ancestors came to America from Belfast, Northern Ireland. They were Presbyterians who were part of the migration of souls from Scotland, seeking religious refuge in Ireland. Robert and Janet Harper arrived in the New World around 1795 and settled among the Scotch-Irish people who lived north of the village of New Concord, Ohio.

Their son, Samuel, Harper's father, began a dairy farm which he maintained throughout his life. He lost his heart to Ellen Elizabeth of nearby Cambridge and they married. The couple had five children: four sons and one daughter. William, their eldest son, was born on July 26, 1856. A precocious child, he could read by three. His parents taught him at home, and when Harper entered school, he was well ahead of his classmates academically. His parents said that William was often so absorbed in his studies that "nothing could draw him away."

Harper was a sickly child, having suffered an attack of scarlet fever so severe that doctors gave him up for dead, not once, but twice. However, Harper grew into a sturdy adolescent and developed two passions: music and books. When he was only ten, he was admitted to the freshman class of Muskingum College and graduated in 1870, at fourteen. His professors agreed, "he was unusually quick in his mental processes."

After college, Harper took postgraduate courses at Yale. "Languages were particularly easy for him," said one of his peers. He received his PhD a month before his nineteenth birthday.

On November 18, 1875, he married Ella Paul, daughter of the president of Muskingum College. They moved to Macon, Tennessee, a small community near Memphis. Harper began his teaching career, staying one year before moving on to Denison University in Granville, Ohio. Boundless energy and a capacity for hard work characterized this year. His reputation as a gifted teacher flourished, as did his students. One former student wrote in his journal, "Under Harper, brilliant boys shot forward phenomenally; dull ones made good progress."

At twenty-two he was invited to Chicago by President G. W. Northrup of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, to teach Hebrew. His work began on January 1, 1879. He and his wife occupied a suite of rooms in the seminary building. His salary was \$1,000—less than he had been making at Granville, but he couldn't resist teaching what he longed to teach. "He had an inner calling to teach. His comments were clear, concise, and helpful. They were calculated to inspire and encourage students," said a Baptist Union seminary student.

President Northrup said, on meeting Harper, "I found the young man portly and only five feet seven inches tall.

He was wearing thick spectacles, was youthful in looks, and so astonishingly mature in mind that I forgot he was so young."

Harper was an exacting teacher, requiring students to do the very best they could. Yet, he demanded even more of himself. The Baptist Union years saw the maturation of his educational ideals. He launched correspondence classes, summer school courses, and acquired a reputation for being an educational leader. He began publishing articles at this time, too. He wrote study guides, established a printing business, and taught hundreds of students across the country via his correspondence courses.

And, it was during this period that Harper caught the attention of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, one of America's richest men and the tycoon behind Standard Oil. Rockefeller was a patron of the seminary and vice president of its Board of Trustees. The two men first met during the last week of April 1886. Rockefeller felt comfortable with worldly theologians, people determined to find an honored place in both this life and the next. He was absolutely enthralled by Harper, the student of sacred literature who yearned to build an academic kingdom. At their initial meeting, Rockefeller set about wooing Harper to teach at Yale.

After being courted, Harper finally transferred to New Haven, Connecticut. On weekends he taught Bible classes at Vassar and stayed with the college president, Dr. James M. Taylor. Rockefeller often visited the Taylors. During Sunday breakfasts, Rockefeller and Harper developed a close friendship. "Harper exuded optimism and captivated those with whom he came in contact with his visionary ideas," said Taylor. Impressed with Harper, Rockefeller invited him to New York and cleared his calendar for a full day. The men talked over breakfast, lunch, dinner, and during a leisurely stroll in Central Park.

During this meeting Rockefeller discussed with Harper his plans to establish Baptist universities in key cities around the country. Rockefeller told him that he wanted Harper to go to Chicago to fill a glaring void there. Harper journeyed from his small Ohio birthplace to what Rudyard Kipling called the "splendid chaos" of Chicago, one of nineteenth-century America's booming cities. Chicago seemed the perfect site for a major college, since

it had tripled in size in two decades and ranked second in America. The visit went so well that Rockefeller gave Harper a standing invitation to come talk with him at any time, an honor enjoyed by few people.

On June 1, 1890, Harper was named a trustee of the proposed University of Chicago with the district intention of making him president of the institution. Harper dreamed of making the Chicago campus a vast university consisting of several schools for teaching as well as for divisions for research, development of ideas and theories, and publication of books and papers. Rockefeller liked Harper's concept, but envisioned of the Chicago site as a slow growing plant; conversely, Harper hoped it would blossom overnight. To reach his goals, Harper raided Ivy League facilities for professors and on October 1, 1892, the U of C unceremoniously opened its doors to a day of classes, a chapel service, and a faculty meeting. It welcomed over 750 students, a feat other schools took years to accomplish. The population of the school was diverse. It included men and women and undergraduates and graduates, as well as people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Harper fashioned a vision by which he sought to make all who would participate in his extended community "one in spirit."

Once the University was launched, President Harper did not rest. Never satisfied, he advanced on a hundred fronts. His goals included the creation of a junior college, a night school, a correspondence school, extension courses for adults, a university press, a special division of laboratories, and museums.

He believed a university should benefit the surrounding city, so he dispatched sociologists to engage in studying the nearby community. Hull House and other institutions like it were the first to be researched. Rockefeller did not support all these innovations, and at times, he withheld funds or vetoed Harper's proposals entirely, yet, he so admired Harper that he often changed his mind, canceling vetoes and supplying funds for Harper's on-going innovations.

Early in 1905, Harper, now forty-eight and in the prime of his life, called his friends Dr. Goodspeed and Major Rust and told them to meet him at his house; there was something he wanted to tell them. "I have asked you to come today," he said, "to tell you that I

have received a death sentence from my physicians. They have discovered that my trouble is cancer." The news stung his associates and college community. Upon hearing the news, Rockefeller wrote his friend:

You are constantly in my thoughts. The feelings which I have always cherished for you are intensified at this time... With highest esteem and tenderest affection... Your friend,

John D. Rockefeller.

Harper was hospitalized on February 19, 1905 and wrote to his now old and feeble father, "I can assure you that all that I have been able to accomplish is due to your patient consideration and training in my early days. No son certainly owes his father a greater debt of gratitude than I owe to you."

William Rainey Harper died on January 10, 1906 at his home. He was fifty years old and in the fifteenth year of his presidency at the University of Chicago. After prayers at his home, a group of his closest associates carried his casket across campus through long lines of students to Haskell Oriental Museum where it lay in state with a student guard of honor until noon on Sunday. At the services, a speech written by University of Illinois President Edmund J. James was read. It said, "There has not been a man in the world in the last decade, who has been more widely known as an educator, as a creator, as a prophet, as a poet...."

In the fall of 1967, Harper Community College welcomed its first students. Its first classes were night classes held at Elk Grove Village High School. Two years later, classes began at the current Harper Campus site. The architects, Board of Trustees, and other officials planned for it to be a village-like atmosphere in a park-like setting.

William Rainey Harper would be honored by his namesake, which has served Palatine and its surrounding communities for over thirty years. He is a man who will be remembered for his pioneering spirit. In the courtyard near the library, beneath a bronze bust of Harper, a plaque reads:

William Rainey Harper was a scholar, teacher, writer, and first president of the University of Chicago. He devoted his life to the pursuit of excellence in education. He is recognized as a foremost American educator and the father of the two-year college concept.

However, William Rainey Harper remains an enigma—an enigma who deserves to be recognized by students and educators as a man who had a dream and was able to implement it during his lifetime. His ideals are still being carried out at Harper Community College by the hundreds of people who come day and night to continue their education, and to fill up the huge parking lots.

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Evaluation: *This pertinent, informative piece displays in-depth research and skillful writing.*

Laughter in the Three-Martini Night

Matthew A. Lindsay

Course: Speech 101

Instructor: Louise J. Perry

Assignment:

The assignment was to make use of expressive and figurative language in the writing of 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.

My uncle was an alcoholic, and he wasn't the greatest father to his four children. He didn't have a prestigious job; he worked as a dry cleaner down on Cicero Ave. He lived most of his life alone. He was prone to borrow some money every now and then. You know, alcohol tends to be an expensive habit. He didn't come around much, albeit the mysterious phone call in the middle of the night, when he would show you his true grit and swear off the filthy bottle. "I'll never do it again!" he'd say. "I'll never touch it *for life*. This is *it*. No more for me," he'd swear. And he'd swear the oath again and again, many a three-martini night. Well...those three-martini nightmares turned fatal, and my uncle Eli died. Heart failure: November 15, 2000.

It was because of his alcoholism, I suppose, that at his funeral, where friends and family were asked to climb the pulpit to tell everyone what Eli meant to us, barely a soul cried and no one spoke without negativity. Even the poor preacher spoke unkindly. He, like everybody else, missed the point. I think we all missed it, especially while Eli was still alive.

What I remember most about my uncle was his ability to make us laugh. He *always* made us laugh. He was able to make the most solemn, bitter note sing with joy. I remember spending time with Uncle Eli, just after my father abandoned us without warning. I was about 14 then, and I couldn't stop crying. Uncle Eli just looked at my face real hard, as if he was looking for something, inspecting my cheeks and neck. My tears slowed down. I was wondering, "Why is he looking at me so strange?" Finally, I choked up my tears and asked. He then told me, as he rubbed the little peach fuzz on my chin that I had been trying so earnestly to grow, "You're just like your old man." I still didn't get what he was talking about. He told me my father, even at 33, couldn't grow a full beard, and how he would try to grow one side real long to comb over to the other side of his face. He said my father looked so ridiculous that it looked more like a chin strap than a beard! During winter, the wind would blow the long strands off his face to dangle in the wind. These funny stories spun on and on, forcing my tears to come down from laughter instead of grief. He used his humor as a way to explain why my daddy had left us, in a way that no one else could've. Sometimes, I think he saved my life.

He was the kind of man who seemed to be there for you when your chips were so low that you needed that good laugh—when you needed that break from reality. He actually suspended reality somehow—he was always like that. I think he understood this because he lived in that three-martini night, where the lights were always dim, and the barkeeper always kept the tab, and there was nothing left in it all but a good hearty laugh.

I'll never forget our Thanksgivings down South in the heart of Mississippi, where Uncle Eli transformed into "The Great Deer Hunter." We always used Thanksgiving as an excuse for a family reunion. And, as with most families who don't get to see each other for long periods of time, there always comes that unwanted note of silence deep in the evening's bottom—a time when we've sort of run out of things to say to each other, and kind of get on each other's nerves. Well, at least with *my* crazy family this happens. The mood is so strange that the air becomes uncomfortable; this is when Uncle Eli would shine.

He would swirl his drink around and look at everybody with this amused look. His eyes would twinkle like a child seeing something for the very first time. Then he would start off, "Ashley, I just remember that deer I missed last year." That's when someone shouted, "Which deer is this? You *never* catch any deer!" "But this one was special now. Let me tell ya what happened." He then told us that he had stood in the same position for 10 hours, without moving. Finally, a huge 14-point buck strutted out, right in front of him. He was just about to pull the trigger, a cat's breath away, when he heard a loud noise behind him. A large bear had snuck up on him! This scared him so that he, *and the deer*, ran away. His sister, who was at the edge of her seat, asked incredulously, "Are you serious?" "Naw, I was just lyin'!" he laughs with a grin on his face as wide as it could be. Thus the evening wore on, Uncle Eli making us laugh until we couldn't take it anymore. We spun round and round, mad with laughter to the night's very end.

I miss my uncle, and his death still floats somewhere deep in the back of my mind. The more I think of him, big cheek muscles and brilliant smile, the more I realize how he affected us so—the more that I miss him so. I went leafing through my journal and came across an

entry that made me see Eli more clearly. I saw the distance between us shortened, and him to be more a part of me than I thought before. Here is that entry:

What if I told you that I wanted to be sober, that I wanted less of what I had and more of what I wanted. That the path ahead is too twisted for me to cross. That I wanted to recreate the track I've created for myself... make some changes... that the three-martini night closes in on us like criminals. Like a cell. Like a guilty conscience. Your eyes, smiles, and laughter light up my many cold nights.

I think Eli would have understood that. He would've sighed and said with a chuckle, "Yeah...I've felt that myself a time or two." I know that he loved our smiles and laughter. He knew that we needed them as much as he did. And it's a shame that we missed it—that we missed his mad logic. He undermined our sadness with laughter.

So thank you, Uncle Eli.

Evaluation: *The speaker has conveyed a quality of the man often overlooked — and an idea, an image of how important laughter is to life. The piece is funny, humble, touching, and simply terrific—a eulogy in the traditional sense of the word.*

Cup of Sorrow

Sheri A. Luzzi

Course: English 102

Instructor: Nancy L. Davis

Assignment:

Write a literary research paper.

Thesis: Julian is a tortured young man who blames his mother for his failures. A closer look into Julian's troubled mind, however, reveals that his indignation is not the result of the presence of an imperfect mother; rather it is the cry of someone who is unable to reconcile his true identity with reality. It takes an act of grace in the form of violent aggression to shake Julian from his ivory tower of intellectual superiority to see himself for who he really is.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Successful and unsuccessful navigation to self-identity
 - B. Julian Chestny's troubled self-identity
- II. The Chestny heritage
 - A. Mrs. Chestny's aristocratic manners
 - B. Mrs. Chestny's hypocritical religious beliefs
 - C. Mrs. Chestny's refusal to relinquish aristocratic qualities
- III. Julian's reaction to his heritage
 - A. Secretly relishes it
 - B. Secret desire causes conflict
- IV. Mrs. Chestny's role in Julian's conflict
 - A. As the target of Julian's angst
 - B. Possible cause of Julian's angst
 - C. Julian's dependence on his mother
 - D. Julian's refusal to mature
- V. Julian's intellectual mask
 - A. His view of the unenlightened
 - B. His desire to escape the unenlightened
 - C. His escape from reality and himself

- VI. Psychological reasons for Julian's behavior
 - A. Mother as authority figure
 - B. Anger at society
 - C. Mothers as the target of children's angst against society
- VII. Julian's desire to teach mother a lesson
 - A. Failed attempt
 - B. Black woman as vessel of punishment
 - C. Julian's calloused response to mother's attack
 - D. Julian's response destroys mother
- VIII. Julian's lesson learned
 - A. Julian's intellect fails him
 - B. Attack forces his convergence
 - C. His epiphany
 - D. Acceptance of grace
- IX. Conclusion
 - A. Julian's bitterness causes dependence
 - B. An act of grace forces choice to mature

Most young people struggle to emerge from beneath their parents' shadow while fashioning ways of expressing their own identities. In the normal course of events, sometimes after a few tumultuous years, they cast off the cocoon of parental guidance and begin to navigate their own passages through life. But some are caught like green branches between the rocks that obstruct the water of a rushing river. Feeling somehow victimized, they remain immobilized behind masks of pride carefully crafted to hide their fear. Looking for a scapegoat to bear their sins, they lash out at those closest to them.

Julian Chestny, the protagonist in Flannery O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge," is a tortured young man who blames his mother for his failures. A closer look into Julian's troubled mind, however, reveals that his indignation is not the result of the presence of an imperfect mother; rather, it is the cry of someone who is unable to reconcile his true identity with reality. It takes an act of grace in the form of violent aggression to shake Julian from his ivory tower of intellectual superiority to see himself for who he really is.

Julian is among the first generation of an aristocratic Southern family to live without benefit of wealth or standing in a newly integrated South. He is desperately struggling to come to terms with his identity under the formidable shadow of a mother who is defined by the old South and what he considers its outdated mannerisms. He is the great-grandson of a slave owner and for-

mer governor of the southern state in which he and his mother live, and he is the grandson of a wealthy landowner and a grandmother who was a Godhigh. Mrs. Chestny has lost her wealth and aristocratic position she occupied in the old South. She is reduced to living a life of simple means in a world she defines as a "mess" (O'Connor 407). What enables her to be civil in the integrated society she despises is her unwavering belief in the manners and cultures of her upbringing (Bloom 47). Her "ardent faith in the primacy of manners" is, according to author Harold Bloom, a major schism in Julian's relationship with her (47). She tells Julian, "I can be gracious to anybody. I know who I am," to which Julian replies, "they don't give a damn for your graciousness. Knowing who you are is good for one generation only" (407).

Contributing to their fractured relationship is Mrs. Chestny's habit of mouthing "self-righteous moral platitudes" indicating her probable perception of herself as a "good Christian" (Walters 127). Mrs. Chestny's behavior likely stems from the predominant belief in the old South that Christianity is a birthright and not something someone consciously chooses as a personal act of faith. His mother's vagrant display of hypocritical Christianity may be why Julian appears to have "lost his faith" (407). In addition to preaching a homespun version of morality, Mrs. Chestny feels compelled to consistently oversimplify difficult issues, making her appear ignorant to Julian. He responds to such hypocrisy by cultivating his intellect and ignoring his spirit. Through the character of Julian, O'Connor illustrates her belief that there are certain things in this world that cannot be explained outside of God and "where God is present to men and faith is never 'mastered by human intelligence'" (True 272). Julian's indifference to spiritual matters while worshipping intellect will eventually cause him to come precariously close to the precipice of self-destruction.

Mrs. Chestny's perception of religion is repugnant to Julian, but what offends Julian most is his mother's persistence in behaving like an aristocrat when in reality she is just a simple woman of simple means (Grimshaw 59). "They argue about true culture, which for Julian is only in the mind, [but] for his mother it is in the heart" (Grimshaw 59). Refusing to relinquish her aristocratic

identity, Mrs. Chestny insists "if you know who you are you can go anywhere" even if it is only to the local Y to mix with people who are not her kind (407). His mother's sense of identity is lost on Julian, who believes himself to be "more broadminded than his mother" (Martin 13). Julian sanctimoniously believes that his mother, who lived the life he only "dreams" of (408), couldn't possibly appreciate it like he could.

Julian claims he detests his mother's heritage, but secretly he relishes it. He uses it to fabricate an identity within his own reality. "Though outwardly he scoffs at her claims of aristocratic connections, inwardly he treasures the knowledge of his own superior heritage" (Walters 128). Julian feels conflicted when he envisions the mansion because it always remains "in his mind as his mother had known it" (408). He believes his mother is out of touch with reality and unenlightened, but fails to recognize his own phantom retreat into his mother's past (Desmond 3).

Julian wants desperately to distinguish himself from everything in the South which he finds morally, intellectually, and aesthetically repugnant: its racism, its nostalgia for the glorious past; its (to him) petty concern with manners; its barren intellectual life; its insufferably banal social intercourse. (Bloom 46)

His retreat from the world is to no other than the mansion his mother grew up in (Walters 128). But the image of the irreclaimable plantation provokes such conflict for Julian that he never speaks about it "without contempt or...[thinks] of it without longing" (O'Connor 408). He is unconfined within his own imagination, yet he envisions the mansion not as an enlightened individual might, but with slaves living in it (408). Certainly it would be difficult for a progressive like Julian to admit that he is no different than his mother or his forefathers who saw nothing wrong with owning slaves. In this way he betrays himself. "He uses liberalism simply as a means of revenge against a past he both falsely idealized and nostalgically admires," and like his mother, he lives in his own reality (Denham 2).

Unable to express his contempt for the society he feels alienated from, Julian takes aim at his mother. She is a constant reminder that his desired reality is nothing more than a dream. Perhaps this is why Julian contemp-

uously refers to his mother as a child whenever he is upset with her. Like a jealous sibling, he offends her by reminding her of what she can no longer have.

Julian is one of certain other O'Connor characters who are "caught in 'late adolescent' impotence so acute that they can direct their hostility only against their protective, and often times patronizing and controlling mothers" (Bloom 46-7). Julian doesn't realize that "what he thinks he detests, he also loves and longs for" and "what Julian believes he is totally free of, he is, in fact, fearfully dependent upon," which is his mother (Bloom 47). As "one of O'Connor's ignorant intellectuals" who is educated but can't make a living, Julian is dependent on his mother to take care of him, but he is blind to his own "intellectual arrogance and savagery" and doesn't see his total reliance on his mother (Baumgaertner 108). He doesn't understand that his mother has sacrificed everything to ensure his success, yet he ends up selling typewriters for a living (Denham 2). Mrs. Chestny struggled to give Julian all the advantages she believed he should have as a Chestny, and yet Julian "could not forgive her that she had enjoyed the struggle and that she thought *she* had won" (411). Instead of being grateful for his mother's sacrifices on his behalf, Julian "bites the hand that feeds him," blaming her for "making a mess of things" in the first place (411). He mistakenly believes he has been martyred on her behalf and insists that he alone was responsible for raising himself out of their dismal circumstances (McFarland 2). But "his is a martyrdom without spiritual content" (Baumgaertner 108). It exists only in his mind.

Julian's behavior is that of a child who expects his mother to service his needs without having to give anything in return. His reliance on her is based on his refusal to grow up. Julian wants to be taken care of. His mother's heritage represents a prefabricated, supposedly secure existence that he feels robbed of, thus leaving him to forge his own way in society, but he knows that he will never be able to make a living (406) so he acts like a spoiled child, transferring his resentment to his mother, who has become his caretaker. Absconded like a bird high in his perch, Julian views his mother from a position of moral and intellectual superiority, smugly believing he can "see her with absolute clarity" (411).

Julian not only resents his mother, but anyone he regards as his intellectual inferior. "Playing the intellectual sophisticate, he sees his task as instructing the unenlightened, especially his mother, in the ways of true culture which he believes is always defined in terms of the mind" (Denham 2). However, Julian's intellectualism is "shallowness and pretension" (Denham 3). He smugly ordains himself above his surroundings while evading his racial duplicity by avoiding people or using them as pawns in his infantile game to annoy his mother (O'Connor 412). To her credit, Mrs. Chestny at least tries to live within her surroundings even though she is uncomfortable with the people who inhabit them. In contrast, Julian favors living "three miles" from the nearest neighbor. He isn't really offended by his mother's racial prejudice because he isn't capable of feeling compassion for people (Denham 3). He doesn't much like people nor does he have much regard for their mental capacity. He spends most of his time within the inner sanctum of his mind. It is "the only place where he felt free of the general idiocy of his fellows" (411). It is easy for Julian to measure himself against the shortcomings of others because he never risks emotional failure himself. Instead, he withdraws into a "kind of mental bubble" whenever he is uncomfortable with his surroundings (41a). In this sanctuary, he is safe from "any kind of penetration from without" (411) and is able to single-handedly judge "the intellectual bankruptcy of the rest of mankind" (Browning 103).

However, Julian's flight from humanity is futile because his intellectualism is simply the way in which he escapes the reality of himself (McDermott 3). In a letter to author John F. Desmond on December 1963, Flannery O'Connor wrote that her characters retreat into "abstract intellectualism" and isolation to avoid growth and union with others (Desmond 2). The result is a person who isolates himself from all he detests until he has only himself (McDermott 2). Jill Baumgaertner relates Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's supposition that if we isolate ourselves, we lose ourselves, and to find ourselves we must move toward one another. According to de Chardin, it is our "originality" and not our "individuality" that defines who we are, and in order to find ourselves, we must unite with others (qtd. in Baumgaertner 110). Due to his immaturity, Julian doesn't trust or

understand his uniqueness as an individual. Instead of expressing himself within a society he doesn't like, he loses himself as an individual apart from society. He hides behind a mask of indifference and intellectualism in the safety of his own reality.

Unfortunately for Julian, his reality is not impenetrable. His dependence on his mother is a piercing reminder that he is not who he envisions himself to be. Consequently, Mrs. Chestny, by default, bears the brunt of her son's utter contempt for mankind. Author Dorothy Walters suggests a person's angst against society begins initially when he is a baby dependent upon his authoritarian mother. The mother is the first in society to tell the child what he can or can't do. When the child grows up and can no longer tolerate society's rules, he retaliates. He now wants the mother punished for how he believes society has failed him. But Walters points out that because children are so closely linked with their parents, an attack on the mother is not only an attack against society, but also an attack against the self. A child's desire to injure his mother is evidence of "deeply buried hostilities." The child either harms the parent or harms himself through "spiritual withdrawal" (Walters 143-44). Julian contemplates harming his mother, thinking he could "with pleasure have slapped her [his mother] as he would have slapped a particularly obnoxious child in his charge" (414). As it turns out, Julian doesn't physically harm his mother, but he does cause her great emotional trauma that indirectly leads to her death.

Throughout the story, Julian imagines ways he can teach his mother a lesson through what she would consider unacceptable interaction with African-Americans (414). All the delusive scenarios are concocted to provoke his mother to anger. Julian acts out the behavior of young progressives who "seek to expiate the sins of the parents by openly accepting [what Mrs. Chestny believes are] their inferiors" (Walter 128). When a well-dressed, obviously professional, black man takes a seat across from Julian, Julian purposefully gets up and sits down next to him not so much to declare allegiance to the black race as to "declare war" on his mother (McDermott 5). But Julian's attempt to engage the black man in an intellectual conversation "about art or politics or any subject that would be above the comprehension of those

around them" is met with indifference and finally annoyance (412-13). That particular opportunity to enlighten his mother fails. However, when a rancorous black woman and her young boy board the bus, Julian smiles at the situation that is rife with possibilities to teach his mother a lesson. Unbeknownst to Julian, the outcome will shock him to the core.

Julian wants to see his mother punished but is unable to execute this except through verbal attacks on her or inept interactions with people of the black race. When the black woman boards the bus, Julian notices she is wearing the same hat as his mother. His reaction is like that of a mischievous child who has just hatched an impish scheme. He revels in the irony of the situation and flashes his mother a smile that bespeaks: "Your punishment exactly fits your pettiness. This should teach you a permanent lesson" (416).

The black woman reminds Julian of his mother, but the woman bears similarities to Julian as well. The woman "personifies the insidious gradations of his angry mind" (McDermott 3). As "a symbol of his violent imagination" (McDermott 3), she actually does what Julian only thinks about. Whereas Julian is only capable of punishing his mother through "passive indifference," the black woman punishes her offensive patronage by assaulting her (McDermott 3). Unexpectedly, Julian's neurotic fantasy with his mother lying desperately ill (416) becomes a reality, and he gleefully seizes the opportunity to knock his mother once and for all from her aristocratic pedestal.

Nothing illustrates Julian's callous insouciance more than the way he treats his elderly mother, who has just suffered a violent attack. Incredibly, as his elderly mother sits wounded and disoriented on the sidewalk, Julian insolently launches into a bitter diatribe ordering his mother to face the reality of a "new world" and telling her to "buck up.... It won't kill you" (419). Her physical well-being is of no concern to Julian as his thoughts selfishly play back to the "house that had been lost for him" (419). It's the moment he has been waiting for, when he exacts retribution on his mother and the society he believes has failed him.

The son Mrs. Chestny raised so sacrificially has become a total stranger to her. Instead of giving her the comfort

she so desperately searches his face for in her final moments on earth, Julian completes the violent attack she suffered only moments before. Author McDermott contends it isn't the attack on Mrs. Chestny that kills her. Rather, he says, she died from looking into her son's face and seeing nothing (4). The "nothing" that she sees as her eyes "rake" her son's soul is "the equivalent of the total absence of goodness in Julian's now vacuous spirit" (McDermott 2). Pride killed his humanity and his ability to feel compassion. Julian resembles Satan more than God, pouring salt in his mother's physical wounds with angry taunts instead of words of mercy, admonishing her like a child and saying, "I hope this teaches you a lesson" (O'Connor 419). However, it is Julian who is about to learn a lesson of tragic proportions.

A rush of sorrow engulfs Julian as the gravity of the situation suddenly dawns on him. He is beside himself with anguish as his mother crumples on the sidewalk and falls "at her side crying 'Mamma, Mamma!'" (420). But he is like a child unable to offer his mother any consolation, in need of consolation himself. Everything he has believed in and relied on as a source of identity fails him in this moment of greatest need. "Julian's perverse intellectualism suddenly pales before the stark reality of his mother's death" and his belief that "he had cut himself emotionally free from her and could see her with complete objectivity" is nothing but a sham (Denham 3). Julian now recognizes his dependence on his mother.

He has been sheltered from convergence with the world by his mother, who has been willing to deflect his pathos and foster the belief that he will eventually become something. Mrs. Chestny's attribution of Julian's dour attitude to his immaturity and inexperience only serves to contribute to his dependence on her. Absolved of accountability, Julian is free to hide behind the masks of pride and intellectualism in order to remain detached from society. O'Connor believed people resist convergence and that it takes a tragedy to force them out of isolation and into the light of their true identity (Desmond 2). The tragedy that forces Julian's convergence is his mother's death. Some critics speculate that Mrs. Chestny doesn't die at the end of the story, but if that were true, then the point of the story would be lost. Julian gets his wish to see his mother punished, but it is Julian who "enters the world of guilt and sorrow" (Denham 4).

Mrs. Chestny experiences her own convergence as she struggles to find solace in a familiar face. Not finding it in her son, she must resort to memories of the "Negro" nurse of her childhood. The fact that she has to summon a memory from as far back as her childhood suggests that she has led somewhat of an isolated life herself. But it is Julian, not his mother, who has shirked the responsibility of forging survival for the self. "His perversion of her [his mother's] real values and his own prideful isolation have fostered a moral adolescence in which he has no mature spiritual identity" (Denham 4). When his mother dies, Julian must face his own true self. "He must face the void alone" (Denham 4).

Julian reaches a crisis point as he loses the one person on earth he depends on. He experiences an epiphany of life-altering proportions that will force him to connect with the rest of humanity, to rise and converge. O'Connor referred to the one thing that stops people from rising as sin (McFarland 2). Julian had led a life of one or all of the following: "entrenched pride; willful sin; deliberate rejection of God; or possibility all three!" (Martin 120). He is "the personification of pride" as evidenced by his treatment of his mother. Julian's pride has been "so consuming" that he hasn't even been aware of how it has been changing him. The tragic violence against his mother brusquely opens his eyes to his true self, and that is what traumatizes him (McDermott 2). Julian's pride has caused him to lose his faith, but his moment of greatest sorrow is about to become his moment of greatest grace.

Many of O'Connor's stories concern God's love and man's ability to save his soul as he receives the love as a gift of grace. Before the tragic loss of his mother, Julian had difficulty accepting Christianity and the principle of divine grace as a result of his modern, rationalistic intellect (Drake 273). After his mother's death, Julian becomes one of O'Connor's characters who "are clearly in acceptance of grace after having lived insensitive to it" (Martin 133). Part of God's love is helping man to recognize his love (84). Mrs. Chestny's death forces Julian to confront "his betrayals and denials of love" (McFarland 3). At the end of the story, Julian is seen running toward the lights, but "the tide of darkness seemed to sweep him back to her, postponing from moment to moment his

entry into the world of guilt and sorrow" (420). The lights might be seen as the salvation of Christ. The "guilt and sorrow" indicate the inevitable struggle Julian will face as he struggles to live less selfishly and more transparently, sharing the sufferings of Christ.

Julian's excessive pride causes him to lose all touch with reality and subsequently destroys his spirit (McDermott 2). Too proud to admit he is bitter at having lost his heritage, Julian hides behind a mask of intellectual superiority in order to isolate himself from human connections. The consequence is total dependence on his mother, causing him further bitterness and ultimately circumventing his entrance to adulthood and his convergence with humanity. The violence he witnesses is a result of his unwillingness to accept his true identity within "the corporate unity" (Desmond 68-9). The death of Julian's mother is the "terrible means by which he can grow towards maturity" (Denham 5-6). It is, for Julian, a moment of grace. It is the moment he "crosses over into maturity and knowledge" (Martin 132). It is the moment he finally breaks loose from the tethers of deception and makes the choice to be a victor and not a victim—to become the captain of his own soul in the sea of humanity. Exactly how Julian navigates that sea remains a mystery to the reader except to know that he will, by choosing grace, inevitably partake of the cup of sorrow that accompanies the circle of love.

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Evaluation: *Sheri's* exploration of the theme of convergence in O'Connor's complex story demands our respect for its maturity, thoroughness, and clarity.

Read!

Read!

Read!

Tina Malyj

Course: Literature 219

Instructor: Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

*Interview a child about his or her reading habits,
and then write a synthesis of the interview.*

Vito is a precocious eleven-year old boy who comes from a well-to-do family. Interestingly, he is not at all pretentious or spoiled by his parents' wealth. He is, however, a serious, studious, humble, and respecting kid who thoroughly enjoys math and science. Our interview took place at his home on Monday, July 17, 2000, at approximately 4:00 p.m. His answer to my initial question—"What kind of material do you like to read?"—conveyed his genuine affection for science. "I like books about outer space. They really fascinate me. I also like science fiction, fiction, and nonfiction books, too. My mom buys them for me or I check them out from the local library. In fact, I just started reading a book called *A Can of Worms*. It's about aliens. It's cool. I can't wait to finish it." His tone possessed an intense excitement and passion indicating that reading was indeed a big part of his life. His eyes seemed to have a certain spark, also confirming his love for reading, but a tour of his book collection seemed to be the true indicator that he was no ordinary kid. At this moment, I knew I was in for quite an experience.

Vito allocates approximately one to two hours to leisure reading per day. When he is in school, it is more. "During the school year, we read in class for a half hour every day plus whatever is assigned for homework. I love reading, so I can handle the big load, but sometimes I get frustrated with really boring books." Vito openly admitted he would rather self-select his own books in school. "They're just as interesting, and fun to read. I can select the books I like during the library block at school or my mom takes me to the public library. I usually take out four or five books." The opportunity to choose his own books appeared to have real value to him.

Since the Harry Potter books seem to permeate all the popular bookstores today, as well as the media, I was curious to see whether he was a fan of J. K. Rowling. "I don't like the Harry Potter books, but I read a lot of other interesting books, like books about NASA and the space shuttle. My uncle works for NASA and sends me books about space. Right now, my best friend is reading the new Harry Potter book and just because it's a thick book, he thinks he's a better reader than me...that is NOT the case at A-L-L! I read at least three whole chapter books a month!" Vito's character seemed to have a competitive edge that crystallized his academic proclivi-

ties. The average student would not take such an adamant position on an academic topic, but there was nothing average about Vito. He incessantly insisted that he was a better reader than his best friend (Spenser), especially considering he didn't watch as much television. "I would rather play outside than watch TV."

It was difficult to get a single answer from Vito when I asked what his favorite book was. I modified the question a bit, and in lieu of "favorite" I asked what book "sticks out" the most. His reply was quite pleasing: *Behind Rebel Lines*. "It's about a lady who disguises herself as a spy during the Civil War. It was a great book that really affected me." His reading palate even extended to historical fiction, a genre that most kids dislike. Needless to say, I was quite impressed. With every response, my eyes grew wider and wider, and somehow I felt I was no longer talking to an eleven year old.

Vito is not much of a newspaper reader, although he did admit to reading the comics section every now and then, which was a subtle indication that indeed he was still a kid at heart. When asked why he didn't read other sections of the newspaper, he had this to say: "There's too much stuff and it's organized in a ridiculous way. Plus, the letters are small and it makes reading unappealing." His argument is a plausible one. Newspapers are overwhelming in content, organized horribly, and printed with the tiniest font available. Clearly, the response he elicited was analytical as well as honest, signifying his level of intelligence.

Fairy tales seem to pervade Vito's life. More specifically, his parents take him and his sister to Disney World twice a year (in late December and over the summer). They have all the Disney movies on VHS as well as DVD, and he has seen them all more than once, thanks to his younger sister, Victoriann. He knew all the Disney characters' names and attributes. Plus, his family collects the expensive Disney artwork, which wallpapers their family room. Naturally, he was well versed with all of the Disney fairy tales, which I found thoroughly satisfying. He also recalled some other fairy tales from his primary school days, which his family did not possess. "My seven-year-old sister appreciates fairy tales more than I do, but when I was younger, I used to love watching the *Lion King* and *Pinocchio*. I think my taste buds have matured."

After a thorough investigation of the attitudes and behaviors that shaped Vito's reading habits, it was easy to surmise that although Vito was still young, his maturity and intelligence shared a direct relationship with his love for reading. Undoubtedly, reading was an integral part of his life, both in and outside of school. Vito interpreted reading as a tool to learn more about the things he didn't understand as well as the things he appreciated. He also saw a connection between academic success and one's professional career. When asked what his thoughts were regarding the importance of reading, he enthusiastically responded with this: "Reading helps me in so many ways. I know it helps me understand math and science, which I am pretty good at already, but it also helps me with the things I don't know much about. I am also able to help my sister with her homework, which is satisfying. And sometimes I even help my parents with computer-related stuff or tedious instructions. That's really neat, when you know something your parents don't. Actually, I attribute all my knowledge to the art of reading. And since I have aspirations to be a lawyer, I know that I will have to READ! READ! READ!"

Evaluation: *Tina's narration and assessment of her interview with Vito conveys "an intense excitement and passion" on her part as well as his. Students less creative tend to write a dull report. Tina, however, infuses her writing with a certain spark that makes others want to read, read, read!*

Fujimori: The Scheming Dictator

Kartik Markandan

Course: History 121

Instructor: David T. Richmond

Assignment:

Research and write a paper on a current event in Latin America. Provide historical background and U.S. involvement (if any) and propose a solution.

Peru has had its fair share of dictators and political corruption in its history. Alberto Fujimori, the Peruvian president, was certainly not an exception to this notorious legacy. Fujimori, who was elected to the highest office under the Peruvian democratic system, has done everything to reject the system that he used so effectively to gain political power. Through corruption and force Fujimori was able to mold Peru to his own liking while projecting to the outside world that he was an ardent supporter of democracy. However, after a recent involvement in a bribery scandal which was telecast all over Peru, Fujimori was forced to resign. His true face had been exposed and all the public saw, all too clearly, who Fujimori really was—a dictator. This essay will examine Fujimori's regime from his election in 1990 to October 2000. It will show that although Fujimori improved Peru's economy and made Peru safer, he was actually a power-hungry autocrat because he used his presidential post to keep himself in power through subversive tactics and force.

Fujimori was born on July 28, 1938 in Lima, Peru (CNN: Newsmaker Profiles, 1). He was the son of Japanese immigrants who worked in the fields of Peru. After completing an undergraduate degree in Agricultural Engineering in Peru, Fujimori earned his master's degree in Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, in 1969. Fujimori then returned to Peru, and in 1990 he founded "Change 90," a political party, and ran for president (CNN: Newsmaker Profiles, 1). Fujimori forced a stunning runoff election between himself, the underdog, and Vargas Llosa, a world-renowned Peruvian writer (CNN: Newsmaker Profiles, 1-4).

Fujimori won the runoff election by building on the momentum he had gained in the first round (Como 26). Peruvians bought into Fujimori's motto: "Work, Honesty, and Technology" (Contreras 36); many felt that Peru needed a radical change, and Fujimori was considered an outsider: "Fujimori won due to his Japanese ethnic origin, because indigenous and mixed-race voters saw him as more similar to themselves than the rest of the candidates, all of whom were of European descent and had European manners" (Sermano, qtd. in InterPress Service English News 1). Fujimori, through his charisma and rhetoric, was able to convince Peruvians that he was their savior.

Peru was indeed in a dire need of a savior. The economy had hit rock bottom; Peru was facing hyper-inflation. The inflation rate had risen from 1,722% in 1988 to 7,650% in 1990 (Rockabrun 1). The government was bankrupt; there was no road construction and there were no foreign investments, and Peru faced a huge national deficit (Yalowitz, Knight, and Mabry 1; Rochabrun 1). Added to this, the Shining Path guerrillas—Maoist sympathizers—daily waged war with the Peruvian police; they planted bombs in cars and carried out planned assassinations (Rochabrun 1-8). The Shining Path also controlled half of the agricultural lands in Peru, which they used to produce coca leaves (Yalowitz, Knight, and Mabry 1).

During his regime, Fujimori made several social and economic reforms that led to a higher standard of living for many Peruvians. Fujimori brought down inflation to 3.7% (Tamayo, "Fujimori's Legacy.i." 3): "By stabilizing prices, Fujimori helped ease people's anxieties and made living in poverty more tolerable. People knew that they

could count on their resources, however meager, having the same value tomorrow as they had today, and maybe even a little more" (Rochabrun 4). Fujimori built 3,000 new schools, many of these in poor rural areas of Peru, and thus reduced illiteracy from 14% in 1990 to 5.66% in 1999. He built 12,000 miles of highway, reduced the infant mortality rate by 40%, and distributed food to poor peasants (Tamayo, "Fujimori's Legacy..." 1-4).

Fujimori also made Peru safer. In 1992, he captured Abimael Guzman, the leader of the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas, and forced the militant group to surrender. In 1997, Fujimori captured the Tupac Amaru rebels after a hostage situation in the Japanese embassy (Arana-Ward 2). By cutting off terrorist activities, Fujimori was able to attract foreign investors. He was also able to cut down two-thirds of the coca plantations and he increased the amount of illegal drugs seized from 6,234 kg to 92,505 kg (Tamayo, "Fujimori's Legacy..." 3). His anti-drug policies earned him international popularity, and it allowed the U.S. to back him.

While it may seem to an outsider that Fujimori was actually purging away the dark elements that possessed Peru, in reality what he did was introduce an evil far greater than the ones he cleansed. Fujimori twisted existing Peruvian laws and introduced new laws to establish an authoritarian regime. He allied himself with the military to ensure that no one would dare challenge his authority. He bullied congress through force and bribery into complying with his laws and policies. In order to thoroughly examine the various facets of this oppressive regime in detail, we have to look at the partnership between Fujimori and the notorious Vlademiro Montesinos, Fujimori's right hand man.

Fujimori's association with Montesinos began during his election campaign in 1990. An investigation into his past by Peruvian officials revealed that Fujimori had committed several tax frauds (Gorriti 9). The attorney general's office was collecting evidence to formally press criminal charges against Fujimori, and thus end his chances of becoming a president. However, Fujimori, through mutual friends, managed to affiliate himself with Montesinos, an agent of the SIN (National Intelligence Service) and a former soldier who had previously served a one-year jail sentence for "desertion of command"

(Gorriti 6). Montesinos shortly cleared Fujimori of all misdeeds by altering his files and by changing the testimony of potential witnesses (Gorriti 9).

Fujimori kept his end of the bargain by making Montesinos the head of the SIN. Montesinos then went to work on the military. Any generals who Fujimori or Montesinos viewed as being uncooperative (with their agenda) were replaced by those who were compliant. Montesinos employed many of his friends and family members in high-ranking positions. He used SIN's services to tap into Fujimori's potential opponents' phones, and he taped congressmen in compromising positions. In essence, Montesinos, with the strong backing of Fujimori, eradicated anyone who was seen as a potential threat to Fujimori (Gorriti 10-18).

Fujimori allowed the military and the police to exercise a lot of power in order to combat terrorist groups and at the same time to forge an alliance with them. However, the officers abused their authority; human right groups have alleged, to this day, that the military tortured, executed, and jailed thousands of innocent civilians (Tamayo, "Fujimori's Legacy..." 2). The U.S. State department and the Amnesty International and Human Rights watch groups have openly criticized the horrible conditions in Peruvian prisons (PBS Newsmaker 3). Several reports have alleged that the military and the police may have played a significant role in the disappearance of a number of civilians (Gorriti 12). Fujimori, however, has openly rejected or ignored many of these allegations. Fujimori was not interested in providing justice to the thousands of innocent Peruvians who lost their lives in the anti-guerrilla campaign. He was more interested in keeping himself in power through close ties with the military, and thus he did not want to punish any of the officers.

With the aid of his military, on April 5, 1992, Fujimori discarded the veil of democracy by dissolving the congress and officially declaring himself the dictator of Peru. The "autogolpe—a self-coup" (Lane, Larmer, and Mabry 1) was the result of the congress not following Fujimori's orders. Fujimori felt that the power to govern the nation should run through him, not through a body of elected officials. Fujimori, clearly, was not impressed with the democratic process and tried to abdi-

cate it in favor of his autocratic regime. Fujimori sought to curb the freedom of the press by arresting journalists and foreign correspondents. As Rochabrun points out, "The coup confirmed one of the most notable characteristics of Fujimori's administration: its disdain for legal formalities. Fujimori systematically alters the rules of the game whenever he deems necessary—either by creating new laws and applying them retroactively or by modifying old ones to suit his purpose" (Rochabrun 3).

The "autogolpe" (Lane, Larmer, and Mabry 1) was actually scheduled for a later date. However, the congress had plans to investigate anti-guerrilla activities of the SIN. The congress was particularly focused on an incident which took place a few days prior to the coup. In this incident, fifteen people were killed at a barbeque party, including an eight-year old, because the SIN felt that two or three members of the party were Shining Path sympathizers. Eyewitnesses to this horrific event claimed that the killers used silencer-equipped "H&K submachine gun[s]" (Gorriti 14); also, the car numbers noted down corresponded to Santiago Fujimori, the president's brother, and to other SIN vehicles. An outraged congress was ready to move toward a direct inquisition when Fujimori disbanded them and placed them under the surveillance of the military (Gorriti 14).

Fujimori allowed the congress to assemble in November 1992, after his party won the congress. Then, with the aid of the congress, Fujimori established a new constitution to make his dictatorship legal. This constitution allowed the president to have emergency powers. The president had the right to disband congress and the right to veto or create new laws. The new constitution also allowed the president to run for reelection (Keen and Haynes 421-422).

After relatively little opposition, Fujimori was elected to a second term in 1995. He continued to work for himself. Fujimori sought to discredit anyone who was gaining popularity, including his own supporters: "Get too famous, Fujimori is likely to turn his back on you" (Arana-Ward 3). Fujimori, slowly, through coercion and force, brought the media under his sway. Articles that sought to discredit Fujimori's rule or those that put him under a bad light were often censored (WOLA 1). The SIN also appointed partisan journalists who basically

concurred with Fujimori's policies. Tabloids were rampant with rumors about opposition candidates and their lifestyle. They alleged that many of the opposition candidates were friends of terrorists, or were having sex scandals, and that some of them were homosexuals ("The Andean..a" 1).

Fujimori violated the freedom of the press. Reporters and television stations that had criticized Fujimori and his men were often punished severely. For example, Baruch Ivcher, a television station owner, was stripped of his citizenship for broadcasting stories that undermined Fujimori's rule ("The Andean..a" 1). Fujimori also had no respect for the judicial process: when three judges ruled that he could not seek a third term, Fujimori fired all of them (Tamayo, "Fujimori's Legacy..a" 3). He then replaced them with his own pawns. Fujimori felt that judges were replaceable; however, he was an indispensable commodity.

Fujimori stood for a third term in March of 2000. He openly defied the constitution that he had created in 1992, which allowed only two terms. However, in the elections, Fujimori was only able to garner 49.87% of the votes; he needed to obtain 50% of the votes to win the elections and avoid a runoff election ("The Question-Marks..a" 1). Furthermore, there were several question marks that hung over the elections. It seemed that some computers counted more votes than there were voters, and six computers were suspected of altering votes. The opposition party alleged that Fujimori had rigged the elections, and they wanted a runoff election immediately ("The Question-Marks..." 1-2).

Fujimori, however, sought to postpone, if not do away with, the runoff election. He felt that he could accomplish this by gaining the allegiance of some of the congressional members. So, through Montesinos, Fujimori tried to buy off many of the congressmen. However, Montesinos was caught on tape bribing a congressman. The video showed Montesinos giving a reported sum of \$15,000 (Tamayo, "Peru's Political..a" 2), and he was heard saying, "We already have a majority, but I don't want a simple majority. I want a majority of 70-75 [seats]" (Hays 2). Now that Fujimori was exposed to the Peruvian public and to the international community for the man that he truly was, he had no choice but to resign from his post.

Recent reports from Peru indicate that Fujimori has officially left Peru and that he has moved to Japan. Peru is now a rudderless ship; there is no interim president—no one is running the nation. The people of Peru have once again lost. I believe that the U.S. government should send representatives to Peru in order to monitor the current situation so that it does not exacerbate into something worse. The U.S. government should also try to ease Peru's transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic system.

When it is all said and done, historians will look at Fujimori, not as the savior of Peru, but as a dictator who plunged his nation into a state of political instability. Although one could argue that Fujimori reduced hyperinflation and dismantled the two leading guerrilla groups, at the same time one has to consider the tremendous damage that Fujimori has done to the entire political system of Peru. Fujimori cut down the voice of the people and replaced it with his own. He rewrote the constitution because he felt that he did not have enough power. He manipulated the media and the people who trusted him. He blatantly supported the military and the SIN officers after they had killed a number of innocent civilians. Fujimori, in the end, will be remembered by Peruvians and by the international community as a self-serving dictator who left Peru in the same condition, if not in worse condition, than it was in when he began.

Note to Our Readers

While Mr. Markandan's essay contains numerous parenthetical author and/or page references (in the MLA style), it does not, as one can see, feature a comprehensive Works Cited (bibliographic) list here, at the essay's conclusion. Somewhere in the wide gulf of time between the initial addition of Mr. Markandan's essay to our submission pile and our process of editing the pages of this publication, we observed that Mr. Markandan's original Works Cited list was missing. Of course we contacted Mr. Markandan, who dutifully, worriedly attempted to fashion a new Works Cited list. But since most of the secondary sources for his Fujimori essay were internet sites that are, by now, defunct (or altered, rendering the information difficult to obtain), Mr. Markandan was not able to reclaim or reconstruct his bibliography.

Had we followed a purely professional instinct, we would have been compelled to refrain from publishing this paper. Because this paper is otherwise so outstanding, however, and because we prefer to follow an instinct that is three quarters professionalism and one quarter humanity, we have opted to proceed with the publication of Mr. Markandan's essay despite its missing bibliography. It's an informative, well-crafted essay that deserves an audience.

— The Editors

Evaluation: This essay shows excellent use of multiple sources to provide a strong summary of events, good use of evidence to support a thesis, and an original analysis of the events.

The Victimization of Women in *Cracking India*

Christine Melange

Course: Literature 208

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

Write an analytical paper about an important thread running through either of the two Indian novels we have read this semester.

During the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, people of different religions, mainly Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, were at odds as to which land should belong to whom. As a result of this, many people were hurt, killed, and otherwise victimized. In her novel *Cracking India*, Bapsi Sidhwa uses the voice of a young polio-stricken Parsee girl living in Lahore to show that it was the women of India who faced the greatest victimization before, during, and after the Partition. Most of the women Lenny knew, including herself, were victims of the men around them; they were objects to be possessed.

Lenny, whose character represents the new nation of Pakistan, is, like the country, struggling for identity. Being a Parsee, she has somewhat of an outsider's view of the conflict between the other religions. Throughout the Parsee history in India, they have been a small minority, so no one really bothered them. Lenny's relationship with her cousin is quite strange. At some times, they seem to be best friends—Cousin was the only one to really acknowledge her eighth birthday. But at other times, Cousin is a disturbing sexual aggressor, often grabbing Lenny's breasts (after she's begun to develop) despite her protests. At one point in the novel, he even convinced her to lick his penis. When she refused to go any further, he masturbated in front of her until she cried. Cousin's sexual victimization of Lenny is clear, and it is also clear that he knows he's doing it. At one point, Lenny asked him what rape was, and he replied, with a queer look, "I'll show you someday" (278).

A recurring image throughout the novel is the zoo lion, of which Lenny is terrified. Like many of the men in her life, the lion is aggressive and animalistic. At an earlier stage, when Lenny's Ayah, or live-in babysitter, takes her to the zoo, she suddenly realizes she's been rolled (in her pram) in front of the lion's cage while Ayah talks to the zoo attendant. Lenny sees the lion as "the ferocious beast of [her] nightmares, looking toothless and innocent...lying in wait to spring, fully denured, into [her] dreams" (19). Many of the men she discusses, such as Cousin, Ice-Candy Man, and Dr. Manek Mody, come to parallel the beast. Lenny's fear of being eaten by the lion symbolizes her fear of being possessed by a man.

Lenny also has a strange relationship with Dr. Manek Mody, who is her godmother's brother-in-law. Mody

hangs around Godmother's house a lot, and it is strongly suggested that the two have a sexual relationship. One night, both Manek Mody and Lenny sleep at Godmother's house, and the doctor tells Lenny to "hurry up and go to sleep." When Lenny asks him why, he replies, "Because I want to pounce on your Roda Aunty and eat her up. I'm hungry" (173). This is a clear parallel to the zoo lion, as both represent male sexual hunger and ferocity; the male hunger to possess women, possessing them so much that they're actually ingested. The more Lenny begs him to stop, the more he torments her. Later, he tells Lenny she has "an unfortunate pair of eyes" and suggests that men will not want her when she gets older. (180)

Lenny's ayah, or nanny, is arguably the most sexual woman in the novel; she seems to exude sex, and even the young Lenny knows it. According to Lenny, "Ayah's presence galvanizes men to mad spirits in the noon heat" (41). Men notice her everywhere she goes, and "as if her looks were not stunning enough, she has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colorful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses" (13). She had a power to bring men together. Often, she would sit and discuss issues with many men, being the only woman in the group. Unfortunately, her friendliness drove some suitors to extreme jealousy that eventually led to murder. Ayah had admirers of many different faiths, her favorite being Masseur, whose "knowing fingers" brought her great pleasure. Even in Lenny's presence, he massaged Ayah under her sari until she grew "still and languid" and emitted "a fragile, piteous sound of pleasure" (28). Lenny later discovered his dead body on the street.

The most persistent of Ayah's admirers was Ice-Candy-Man, who was jealous of Masseur and was probably the man who killed him. So persistent was he, he arranged for Ayah's kidnapping. She was stolen from Lenny's house by a band of men, and when Ice-Candy-Man got her, he forced her into prostitution and eventually forced her to marry him. The act of prostitution made Ayah's sexuality a commodity and humiliated her immensely. It's hard to imagine her sense of shame, considering that in many Indian families, if a woman is prostituted or raped, her family will not take her back—they may even

kill her. As a prostitute, many of Ayah's former admirers went to her for paid sex acts, humiliating her further. They hadn't loved her; they'd only wanted to possess her. Being forced into prostitution took away her identity, and further than this, Ice-Candy-Man changed her name and made her wear different clothing; he possessed her completely; he'd become the lion.

Near the end of the novel, the Ayah that Lenny had known was gone. But Godmother was strong; she defeated the lion. She helped to get Ayah out of Ice-Candy-Man's home and into the women's shelter that Lenny's mother and electric-aunt were running next to Lenny's home. Lenny knew Ayah was there, and she called out her name relentlessly. But weak and humiliated, Ayah wouldn't come out. Lenny called her so much that the other "fallen women" in the yard of the rescue home began to call her as well. Eventually, she did come out and looked at Lenny "out of glazed and unfeeling eyes for a moment, as if we [were] strangers, and [went] in again" (285). Ice-Candy-Man went to the women's camp every day at dawn and stayed for hours crying for Ayah and throwing flowers over the wall of the camp and over the garden wall of Lenny's home. Lenny woke up one morning and didn't smell Ice-Candy-Man's flowers. She later found out that Ayah had gone back to her family in Amritsar and Ice-Candy-Man followed her to cry for her there. The lion had become a mouse.

After Ayah's kidnapping, a new caretaker, named Hamida, comes to look after Lenny and her brother, Adi. A Muslim woman, she observes purdah and wears a chuddar to cover her head in public. Like many women living in Muslim villages at the time, she was raped and kidnapped by Sikhs who raided her village. Feeling that his woman had been "tainted," her husband did not want her back. Lenny felt sorry for Hamida's circumstances, thinking them "monstrously unfair" (227). Rape is one of the ultimate forms of dishonor, both to the woman it happens to and to her family. It's also supreme domination over a person—the rapist holds everything personal about the victim in his hands—he *owns* her.

Sikhs had also raided Lenny's friend Ranna's village. Having thought he was dead, the Sikhs left Ranna unconscious under a pile of dead bodies of people he knew. Upon awakening, he carefully explored his village,

finding the Sikhs in the mosque with the women. Thinking it strange and wrong that they were in a sacred place in mixed company, he looked in to find the women being raped and murdered by the raiders. When one woman cried, a Sikh responded with, "Stop whimpering, you bitch, or I'll bugger you again'.... Other men laughed. There was much movement. Stifled exclamations and moans. A woman screamed, and swore in Punjabi. There was a loud cracking noise and the rattle of breath from the lungs. Then a moment of horrible stillness" (214-15). The large-scale abuse of women was so accepted by the raiders that they just laughed off the pain and humiliation of the women they tortured. Raping them in their place of worship shows the utmost contempt for the women, their men, their religion, and their very way of life. Interestingly, all male Sikhs take the surname Singh, which literally means "lion."

A friend of Lenny's, Papoo, was the young daughter of Lenny's family's Hindu sweeper, Moti and his wife, Muccho. Interestingly, Papoo's mother wasn't visibly dominated by her husband, but Muccho intimidated and abused her daughter. Early in the novel, Ayah found Papoo, beaten by her mother, and Lenny and her mother came into the room in which she was lying "absolutely still. She look[ed] unbearably ill: shrunken, her small features barely defined, showing milky crescents under her lids" (21). As a result of this episode of abuse at the hand of her mother, Papoo spent two weeks in the hospital. Later, when she was ten or eleven years old, Papoo was married off to a creepy man in his forties. Knowing her daughter would not want to marry him, Muccho dtugged Papoo, and she slept through her wedding. It seems that the wedding was just a transaction—property exchanging hands. The girl had no idea what was going on. During the ceremony, Lenny even noticed the husband ogling the other young girls in the room. She knew that the power and domination over Papoo was transferring from her mother to her husband, and the very thought of it going to *that* man frightened her. At the sight of Papoo's new husband, whom Lenny called an "elderly dwarf" because of his creepy looks and mannerisms, she was "unable to remove [her] eyes from his, imagining the shock, and the grotesque possibilities awaiting Papoo" (199).

Like Muccho, Godmother is not controlled by a man. But, in a way, she has to deny her womanhood to get power. She always ties her hair back tightly, and "she wears only white khaddar saris and white khaddar blouses beneath which is her coarse bandage-tight bodice. In all the years [Lenny] never saw the natural shape of her breasts" (13). She also takes on the typically male aggressive role with her youngest sister, who is basically treated as Godmother's slave, although she does play the female sexual role with Dr. Manek Mody, the husband of her younger and Slavesister's older sister. Dr. Mody seems to spend the night with her quite often, and Lenny picks up on the sexual tension between them. Godmother also has power over men, such as Ice-Candy-Man, whom she is able to reduce to tears. Having great influence in her community, she "can move mountains from the paths of those she befriends and erect mountainous barriers where she deems it necessary" (223). Using this power of influence, she is able to help Ayah leave Ice-Candy-Man's grip and return to her family. Godmother's relationship with Lenny is one of intense love for one another. Their relationship is so close because Godmother "is childless" (13). The bond that ties them together is "more satisfying than the ties between men and women" (13). With Lenny, Godmother takes on the female nurturing role that Lenny's mother does not.

An odd character, Lenny's mother is usually not at home. After speculation as to where her mother is, Lenny concludes that she and her sister, Electric-aunt, are the ones burning Lahore, since Ayah had told her about an ever-growing stash of petrol cans kept by them. Later, Lenny finds out that her mother and aunt were not burning the city, but using the petrol to help friends cross the India-Pakistan border. They were also running a camp for women who had been kidnapped and rejected by their families next door to their home. In fact, that camp is where Lenny's new ayah, Hamida, comes from. After hearing all that Mother had done for the female victims of the Partition, one would think her an independent woman—I was sort of visualizing Mother and Electric-aunt as a kind of Thelma and Louise. Later, it is discovered that Father is cheating on Mother. After hearing a loud argument about the affair, Lenny surprises Mother while she is bathing and sees that she has bruises

on her body. These are undoubtedly the work of the “terrifying thumps” Lenny had heard during the heated argument, the marks of ownership (224). So, even though she was helping women from all over India gain their independence, she herself was being controlled by her husband.

Most of the women in the novel *Cracking India* are dominated by their men—or other, raiding men. Strangely, those who aren’t controlled by men control other women. Godmother does this with Slavesister, and Muccho does this with Papoo. The control of one person over another is more than just control—it is ownership. Men do many things to show their ownership of women—they beat them, rape them, and otherwise abuse them. I feel that one of the possible reasons for this control is the men’s lack of control over themselves. Their country is breaking apart, people are migrating by the millions, people are dying, and there is nothing they can do about it. They need to control something, and the women are always there, easy targets, and in some cases already taking abuse from their men.

Works Cited

Sidhwa, Bapsi. *Cracking India: A Novel*. Minneapolis: Milkweed, 1991.

Evaluation: *With much well-blended textual evidence, Christine presents a revealing analysis of a powerful undercurrent contributing to the tension permeating this novel.*

I Can't Thank You Enough

Melissa Oakley

Course: English 101

Instructor: Hanley E. Kanar

Assignment:

Describe an incident or a time in your life that changed the way you thought about everything that followed.

It was a numbingly cold winter afternoon in January. My mother, sister, and I were all sitting at the dinner table chatting over this and that. My mother, all the while, seemed depressingly distant. In one split moment, the way I saw everything would change. "I have something to talk to you two about." At that moment I could see the pain in her big, dark, round brown eyes. I knew the words she would speak next would be dramatic. "I have breast cancer," she said. I could tell how relieved she was to get it off her chest. In this one situation, I learned more about my mother than I could ever believe possible. Being by her side during this time was the most important deed I have ever performed in my entire life. I was taught how vital health, family, and life are to the human race in general, and to myself as well.

At one point in my life I thought my mother was this fragile creature. Besides this quality, she was optimistic, friendly, and caring. She was always so health-conscious. She watched her diet, exercised, and never smoked, drank, or did any other drugs. She always tried to push her healthy habits upon my sister and I. At the time, I never realized the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and in some peculiar way, I didn't want to. I was young, slim, and fun. It seemed health was an issue I would confront much later in life. When I saw this terrifying cancer descend on this wonderful individual in my life, I felt stupid and helpless all at once. How could this be real? How could someone develop something so toxic and deadly to the body when she had always been so careful? I didn't understand at all.

There have been many incidents of disease and cancer in my family. On my father's side, there are diabetes and various types of cancers. On my mother's side, there have also been diabetes and many different kinds of cancers. It is a scary thought to know that I am susceptible to all these illnesses. My father, most recently, was diagnosed with a ruptured colon. He is currently in the hospital, and he will be out of a job for four months. He has to completely change his life around in order to prevent this event from happening again in the future. He cannot drink alcohol, smoke, or eat the foods he wants to eat. This experience, as well as my mother's cancer, has changed me very much, too. (But the consequences of that particular tragedy could take up an entirely different essay.)

Most of my grandparents are deceased. All of them have died from reasons other than natural causes. All of them at one point in time were devastatingly ill. I now only have one grandparent, and he is currently in a nursing home. He is in pretty bad shape. My grandpa has Parkinson's disease and cancer in his spleen. It is sad to see him sick like he is and depressing to know that one day, too, I could be in that same situation. It also frustrates me to believe that no matter how well you take care of your body, it is still possible to get a disease or cancer.

As time progressed, I realized that this sickness was not a picky one. Breast cancer is a widespread illness all over the world. My standards of diet and exercise had to be changed if I wanted to live a healthier lifestyle. People in general, especially women, must make sure to check themselves frequently for symptoms of diseases and cancers. This holds true even at the age of eighteen. Health is something so valuable, yet most young men and women take this for granted. There are many difficult steps for me toward healthy living. I hate exercise, and I smoke cigarettes. Also, it is still very hard for me to be cautious of my health when the majority of my friends and family don't exercise and smoke a lot as well. Hopefully, as time progresses, I will find the willpower within myself to conquer my unhealthy habits altogether.

Another major realization I made along the way, while dealing with this horrible experience, is the importance of family. During this time span, I felt like the second mother to the family. While my mom was in the hospital, I had to try to keep the peace within my household. I tried to make sure my sister did not get into trouble. My father and I were fighting constantly, but at the end of the day we knew it was all because we missed "our mommy." My father, sister, and I visited her everyday. I remember how hard it was for me to not cry in front of her. Everyone told me to be strong and not show her the anguish it caused me to see her in this tremendous pain. She was heavily put under with morphine to keep the pain tolerable. My mom seemed like she was in a different world. She was pale, and there was no sign of color in her dry lips. Her eyes were glossy, and the pupils were dilated. They opened and shut frequently, as if it were a struggle to keep them open.

I helped her move around to get the circulation going about a day after the "big" surgery. She had a mastectomy done. Her entire left breast and the lymph nodes underneath her arm were removed. It was another hard task to get her to eat. She told me that it hurt her to swallow whole foods, so I brought her her beloved Slim Fast so she would receive all her important vitamins. I can clearly remember stroking her hair as she fell asleep. This is quite ironic, because she used to do the same for me when I was much younger. I truly felt like a second mother to my immediate family while my mom was going through her cancer.

The whole family was by her side those first couple of days. It definitely brought us all closer together. It felt so good to know I wasn't alone in this situation. It also made me happy to see everybody because it made me realize how much support and love our family had for my mom. A couple of years ago, I never spent enough time with my family. I was so worried about pleasing all my friends. This experience surely revealed my ignorance and selfishness.

The day my mother was released from the hospital was a day of immense joy. I truly felt the worst was over in my heart and soul. I felt, heard, smelled, and tasted life all around me. I realized that this once fragile human being was, in reality, a strong, willful, and intelligent heroine. I tried to help around the house the best I could. I cooked a few meals and cleaned up a little. After a few more months went by, she had her second major surgery done. This time she had an implant put in place of the breast she had lost. Her third and last surgery consisted of the nipple of the implant to be inserted. There were many check-ups during this time span, especially because there were a few malfunctions in the progress. First, the device that was put in her chest to expand the skin around it started leaking. The doctors fixed this, but after the implant was put in, that too leaked. It was amazing to me that a complication so rare to women receiving implants happened to my mother twice. No matter what the situation, my mother always showed her good faith. At times I could see she was not happy with the way her chest looked. Imagine the emotional difficulty a woman must go through, beside the physical,

during a sickness like breast cancer. It is hard enough as it is to be healthy and not judge your physical characteristics. We live in a society today where men think breasts are vital to the desirability of a woman.

Before and after this surgery, my mother spent time educating herself about breast cancer. She was deeply involved in knowing more about this sickness and what it did to the body. She seemed spiritually moved by this whole event, and it shocked me. One day, as she was reading one of her books, she glanced at me watching her. With a loving and grateful tone she said to me, "Thank you." I wanted to feel good and proud about those words, but I felt guilty instead. I ran to her and hugged her as tight as I could, never wanting to let go. I told her how I should have spent more time with her before she had cancer. I poured out my heart, revealing how I had lived so unhealthily and that my bad habits had continued. I told her about how I wanted to help out more around the house, especially while she was still recovering. Most importantly, I told her I needed to be there for her, like she always was and still is for me. I repented for all the terrible pain I had caused her throughout my childhood. I explained all this and still felt full of shame. Then, my mother told me her views on the ups and downs of life. She said she couldn't be more proud of me than she was now. She loved me regardless of my past and always would forever more. My mom showed me the true essence of unconditional love.

I see life from a new perspective now. I hear life in her voice, feel it in her hands, her hugs, her kisses, and her prayers. My mother is a survivor. Even though there are people on this Earth who don't believe in God, one can start believing by seeing with their own eyes the gift my mother has. I feel with my heart that she was given a heavenly gift of teaching and sharing her love of life with others. Life is a special and complicated thing. It is the core of everything alive. It can bring you to be, and it can rob you of everything sacred. When you least expect something tremendous from life, something awesome can strike you. Some say, "Life is like a box of chocolates." This cliché may be silly but, honestly, I think that statement holds true for almost anyone. You really don't know what surprises life has in store for you.

It has been a couple months since this life changing experience. I still wonder why bad things like cancer happen to good people. Sometimes, I believe God gives people sicknesses to teach others how much these sick people mean to them. Maybe He does it because it can teach that sick person the true meaning of struggle, sacrifice, suffering, and pain. Sometimes people need to go through a life-changing experience to realize how precious life really is. Sometimes, I cannot believe in God at all because it seems a good God would not let good people be punished. I think people make it out to seem that if people eat all the right foods and exercise enough, they will be "cancer-free." This is one of the biggest fallacies of all. My mother is living proof of that. There is no guarantee to live forever. Nothing can prevent a non-transmissible disease or cancer. Nothing can prevent death. I believe that if people choose a healthy lifestyle, they should do so to feel good day by day. That is all we as humans can do; we can diet and exercise to feel good about the bodies we possess. If people start to realize that sickness can come at any time, regardless of their habits; then our society can learn to better accept illness and death.

All of the aspects of life I have acknowledged in my essay are true and dear to me. I still need to grow and change for the better, learning about these aspects more and more day by day. Breast cancer may be just another illness you may see on television, learn about in health class, or read in an essay, but above all, believe this: it can happen to anyone. It can change your life forever, and everyone else's around you as well! Respect your body, respect your family, and please respect life! No matter what the reason may be for all of us to be put here on this planet, it is truly remarkable to be *alive*.

I would like to dedicate this essay to my mother. Mom, I can't thank you enough.

Evaluation: This topic turned out to be particularly meaningful for many students. In Melissa's case, she was changed by the jarring news of her mother's cancer, and through the act of writing about it and being able to share her thoughts with her mother, she was changed again. This is one of the great gifts of writing.

Auntie vs. Ts'eh

Dan Ophus

Course: Literature 223

Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:

Each student was required to write an essay on one or more of the texts we had encountered during the term.

Dan chose Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony as his subject.

For many war veterans, life after the war is one lived with great fear, pain, and distress. The many life-changing scenes they witness along with the physical struggles they encounter during the war leave them with an unsettling feeling within themselves. Although some soldiers can cope with the pain after the war, others need something extra to help them along the way. After World War II, Leslie Marmon Silko's character, Tayo (from *Ceremony*), has become very sick. He has fallen victim to what the American doctors may call post-traumatic stress disorder. This may be true to some degree, but more importantly to this young Laguna man, Tayo has cursed the endless rain while at war in the Philippines, and, consequently, he cursed Mother Nature, his God. This act, which is seen as dishonorable in a Laguna culture, is the main reason for Tayo's sickness both mentally and physically, and it is quite evident that he is going to need help and attention soon to prevent him from being lost from his native culture forever. During this journey to recovery, Tayo encounters two very important women who will greatly affect his struggle to reunite with his culture and ultimately heal him physically. Tayo's Auntie and Ts'eh Montano are two characters in *Ceremony* who are extremely different. Their differences include the general way in which they view nature and society, as well as the contrasting ways in which they treat Tayo and view his recovery.

The first and most obvious difference between Auntie and Ts'eh is evident in how they view nature and society.

Auntie is a Laguna Indian who has wandered away from the traditional Laguna culture. She has lost her pride in her heritage and has almost completely converted to the white man's way of life. The Laguna traditions, particularly the importance of Mother Nature and the oneness with the land, have almost completely disappeared in her frame of importance. One instance in which this is true is with her change in religion. Auntie believes that Tayo being home from the war provides her with another struggle "which proved that, above all else, she was a Christian woman" (Silko 30). Typically, if someone converts to Christianity, it is not a negative change; however, as this quote shows, Auntie has chosen to convert hoping to find public approval. She has not decided to become a Christian out of the inspiration she has found in Jesus Christ. In fact, she has made a change that has caused her to be less like Christ because all she wants is the approval of the public, whereas Jesus was someone who followed his beliefs despite great scrutiny from the public. The result of this change for Auntie is a warped idea of what Christianity really is, as well as an increasing distance between her and her Laguna culture. On the opposite end of Auntie is Ts'eh. Ts'eh is also an Indian woman; however, she has kept true to her Indian traditions and has a respect for nature above all the aspects of the white man's culture. Through the way that Silko merely describes Ts'eh's surroundings, this difference is clear. When Ts'eh is described as wearing a "hand-woven blanket" or when her home is portrayed with phrases such as "narrow pine door," "smell of dried apricots and juniper wood burning," and "smell of clay and mountain sage," the imagery used depicts a woman who is emotionally connected in some way with nature (178). Ts'eh's words also show a woman who cares about nature and the Indian beliefs. She is quoted in *Ceremony* telling Tayo, "The sky is clear. You can see the stars tonight" (178). It is extremely unlikely that Auntie would be heard commenting on the beauty of starlight. This difference is one that foreshadows other conflicting aspects of Auntie and Ts'eh's characters.

Throughout most of the story, Tayo is either sick or recovering from his sickness. Auntie and Ts'eh treat Tayo much differently with regard to his sickness and journey to recovery. Right as he returns home to Laguna, Auntie begins her poor treatment of Tayo. She sees Tayo as an

outcast of the family as well as a burden on her hands. Auntie often makes reference to the fact that Tayo is a half-breed and how the townspeople will gossip as a result. She also does not want to take care of Tayo not because she loves him but, instead, because she sees him as all she has left. This causes Auntie to treat Tayo as if he were her "cross." When Tayo would on occasion ask for Auntie's help, she often "did not come" and when she does give Tayo her attention, he knows she is not pleased, as evidenced by her "face tight with anger" (31). Not only does Auntie treat Tayo poorly, she acts as a barrier to his recovery. When the issue arises about sending for a medicine man to tend to Tayo, Auntie strongly opposes, worrying that "someone will say it's not right" (33). She is so worried about her reputation that she would rather not try to do what is best for her own family if it might damage her image. The irony in Auntie's disagreement about sending Tayo to Betonie is that he is a medicine man who has integrated the best of the white culture with the Laguna culture. If Auntie is worried about what others might think, she should realize that Betonie is closer in his ways to the world she loves than many of the other Laguna medicine men. Betonie's integration of the two cultures proves helpful to Tayo because Tayo is a half-breed needing a ceremony that integrates a little white culture into his (Tayo's) Native-American background. Thus, Auntie's condemnation of him could have been detrimental to Tayo's healing. In addition to her disapproval of Betonie, the simple fact that Auntie has a constant negative attitude and views Tayo as her chore also causes a barrier in Tayo's recovery. It is very hard for Tayo to get better, just as it would be for any human, because his "caretaker" does not support, love, and wish the best for him.

Although Auntie does not wish it so, Tayo does eventually see Betonie. Here, Tayo is put through a traditional Laguna ceremony and is told to look for four signs to ensure his healing. They are a mountain, a woman, a star formation, and the spotted cattle. After his stay with Betonie, Tayo is well on his way to recovery, but without encountering Ts'eh, he arguably never would have become completely healed. Right from the first time the two meet, Ts'eh is very hospitable to Tayo, offering him food and a place to sit and rest as well as offering him some water to feed his horses. Ts'eh never disrespects Tayo's half-breed

background, but rather accepts Tayo for who he is. She has a very positive impact on Tayo's life, and, as Betonie predicted, she is the woman whom Tayo is supposed to encounter. Tayo's encounter with Ts'eh results in the other predictions coming true as well. He encounters a mountain on his journey before he meets Ts'eh. She is the one who catches his cattle later in the novel, and he sees the predicted star formation after he has sex with her. The fulfillment of these predictions is an integral part in Tayo's healing process. When Tayo and Ts'eh have sex, there is strong evidence of Tayo's healing as well. Throughout this scene, Silko uses much nature imagery showing that Tayo is becoming re-united with nature and thus, closer to unifying with his Laguna beliefs and culture. While the sex takes place, the sensory images surrounding the scene are described as "ripples in still water," "damp and cold like the ground after the snow has melted," and "ponderosa pine on the rimrock above" (181), and he has a new feeling inside of him when it is all over. "Being alive was all right then: he had not breathed like that for a long time" (181).

To some Western readers, this point of the book, featuring the sex between two people who barely know one another, might be seen as a drawback to a healing process whose purpose is to purify and unite an individual with his culture. However, in Tayo's case, this sexual encounter is essential. In the Laguna culture, all things that are natural or of nature are viewed as a necessity or a positive contribution to one's soul. In fact, when Tayo describes to his family all he has encountered in his healing process, they ask him "the color of her eyes" (257). In a typical white man's culture, such an act of random sex with a stranger might be seen as an impure act of debauchery, whereas the Laguna culture wants to know the specific details of the beautiful event that has taken place. This importance of natural occurrences furthers the evidence of Ts'eh's influence on Tayo's healing.

Ts'eh's influence on Tayo is once again evident after his healing process is completed. On his journey back home, Tayo encounters Emo, Leroy, and Pinkie torturing Harley. These men know that Tayo is nearby and want him to come save Harley so they can hurt him next. Although Tayo feels bad for Harley and wishes he could help, he does not. By fighting back and hurting Emo, Tayo would

have been moving backwards in his healing process. War and fighting, which is against the Laguna belief, is what has caused Tayo to become ill, and he knows he must hold back his sorrow for Harley's murder. Instead of resorting to violence, Tayo thinks of Ts'eh. He "gather[s] the seeds for her and plant[s] them with great care in places near sandy hills" (254). Tayo turns his back on destruction and accepts Ts'eh's sense of creation by planting the seeds for her, showing his gratitude to the person who helped him whenever she could. To emphasize Ts'eh's importance in unifying Tayo with nature, Silko uses words and phrases such as "rainwater," "emergence of tiny fingers, roots, and leaves," and "strong and translucent as the stars" when describing this planting process (254). The most important aspect of this whole scene is that, by rejecting the violence and fostering creation by planting the seeds, Tayo is now fully healed.

With all the overwhelming evidence showing how important Ts'eh is in Tayo's healing process, it is essential to realize that Silko intended Ts'eh to be seen as a woman whose physical presence is indeed there; however, she is also a supernatural, god-like character, which is the reason she is so effective in healing Tayo. The first four lines Silko writes in *Ceremony* are "Ts'its'tsi'hako, Thought Woman, is sitting in her room and whatever she thinks about appears" (1). Although it is difficult to see the connections of these four lines to her character, it is important to note that the first two letters (Ts) are common to Ts'eh and this woman, and, since these interjections are linked to the supernatural Laguna beliefs, there is a connection implying Ts'eh to be something more than just human. Further evidence of this occurs as Tayo reflects upon Ts'eh, stating that "she had always loved him, she never left him; she had always been there" (255). The observation that Ts'eh, a stranger at one point, "had always been there" connects her character as being god-like and even a physical manifestation of nature itself. Nature, then, might have been angry with Tayo for having cursed her while at war, but like an unhappy parent, nature has "never left him."

Although it is obvious that Ts'eh and Auntie are extremely different characters, it should be noted that Auntie is not a completely terrible character, but rather a victim of the white man's world. Auntie is someone who is not pure in anything she believes. She is not a pure Laguna because she has converted to the white ways, but

at the same time she is not a pure Christian either. She is hypocritical to the Christian God because of her discrimination against Tayo for being a half-breed, as well as her less than desirable treatment of him when he returns from World War II. Her actions do not place her in a category of Christian or Laguna, and this lack of purity in either culture causes her to need a ceremony just like Tayo does. Aside from being a victim, Auntie is a character who holds a few good qualities. First of all, she does "keep him (Tayo) and take care of him all the months he would lie in a bed too weak to walk" (29). If she were a completely evil character, she would not have even done this. After Tayo is healed, Auntie shows more glimpses of goodness. Auntie now "talked to him (Tayo) the way she had talked to Robert and old Grandma all those years" (259). She is starting to see Tayo as an equal, which is a positive attribute. Auntie also shows the quality of protection when she reminds Tayo of the times she would warn Tayo not to hang around with the rowdy boys, proving that she does not want him to get hurt.

By the end of Silko's novel, *Ceremony*, it is evident that many people have a deep impact on Tayo's healing process. Among them is Auntie, who has some positive attributes in Tayo's life, but, because she too is a victim of the white world, her confusion takes over. She ultimately treats Tayo poorly. Ts'eh, on the other hand, is a supernatural character who makes countless positive contributions to Tayo's recovery and proves herself to be the focal point who could arguably have saved Tayo's life.

Works Cited

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Evaluation: *This essay makes it very clear that the writer fully understands Ceremony (which isn't really the easiest book to understand). Dan's paper has all of the requisite characteristics of a solid essay: organization, good writing (good grammar and style), and, again, a deep familiarity with the subject. Also, the writer makes excellent use of relevant quotes from Silko's novel to support his argument.*

Who Let the Dogs Out?

Liam O'Shaughnessy

Course: English 101

Instructor: Tony Laouras

Assignment:

Write an argumentation paper and support the opinion with details and valid reasoning.

After a busy brisk Sunday afternoon gathering leaves in the garden, tired and aching, I slumped with heavy legs into the soft warm couch. With one last exhausted stretch, I reached for the television remote and clicked the 'on' button. Having just arrived in America, I was new to the pleasures of the "Sunday Afternoon Football Game" as well as to the game itself. I was simply captivated by the ferocity and aggression that unfolded before me, and I could only watch in awe as the finely tuned athletes repeatedly ran head-down-head-first into one another. After one particularly violent, back-shattering collision, the crowd roared and the commentator excitedly announced:

"Wow, Chuck, this boy is having a great season; this is his fourth sack of the year, and having been picked late in the draft he really has shown his critics to be wrong."

"Yes Randy, you're right; after graduating from Northwestern, he really has made a huge impact on this Buccaneer team."

Being the novice spectator that I was, I was left completely in the dark as to what exactly this meant, although it certainly sounded impressive (I knew at least that I wouldn't like to be "sacked"; it looked painful). While I watched the triumphant athlete strut around

like a retarded chicken, it suddenly dawned on me: "Northwestern, he graduated from Northwestern." All of a sudden, I found myself feeling somewhat puny and inadequate; not only was this strapping young man an incredible athlete, he was a scholar as well—remarkable! As the game continued, one can only imagine my amazement as each "player profile" flashed onto the screen to reveal that every player on the field had graduated from college! By the end of the game, I must confess that my attention had wandered slightly from the action that was on the monitor. Instead, I sat jealous and impressed by the notion that so many fine athletes could find the time to become star football players and complete academic majors. Our old friend Chuck, however, interrupted my envious daydream:

"Well folks, I'm down here in the Bucs' changing rooms enjoying the celebrations, and I've managed to corner the star of the game. So Dwain, what do you think was the turning point?"

"Oh yeah, woo, oh yeah, you know I'm da boss. I thankagod, my family, yeah, you my dogs; thankayou Lord. Peace."

"There you have it folks, straight from the horse's mouth. Dwain Johnson, ladies and gentlemen."

I had no idea as to what was just said, and my respect for Northwestern was rapidly diminishing. How could a graduate of the university be unable to string a coherent sentence together? My questions were answered in the coming weeks. I was informed that our friend Dwain had been playing football since he was a small child; that he had been a star player on every school team that he had attended; that he had been given a full scholarship to one of the most prestigious universities in America and that his grade point average had miraculously improved from 1.0 to 3.5 in the weeks before his acceptance. On hearing these facts, I exclaimed, "That's disgusting; that scholarship should have been given to someone who deserved it, someone who earned it, not some pumped up jock."

"No," replied my informant. "It's football, dude, and this is America, and if you do well at sports you will do well in life."

This theory took me by surprise; the notion of a "sports scholarship" was as alien to me as "cheese in a

tube," but on further investigation, I found that this was a prize that many American children are encouraged to strive for. It strikes me as profound that sports and physical fitness are promoted over English and mathematics, that an illiterate quarterback can be singled out as an icon, and that a striving academic is stereotyped as a "dweeby nerd."

I fear, however, that this practice of rewarding sporting achievement over academia is having a direct effect on the priority of high school curriculums. This, I feel, should be of major concern to all inhabitants of this democratic society, as a democracy relies on the informed opinion of its inhabitants to succeed. The brain is like a "muscle," too, and unless one is encouraged to exercise it from an early age, the habit of "flexing" it will never be learned. The lack of aesthetic studies in American high schools today is producing an uncreative subculture within its masses. In order to reverse this phenomenon, studies that spark the individual's creative thought process must widely be promoted in schools.

It appears to me that a lot of students in American high schools are simply "going through the motions" of education, and that they are not actually being educated. In this capitalist society, educational attainment is becoming increasingly linked to occupational status. In order to achieve the desired occupational status, a student must achieve academic qualifications, and the choice of a student's subjects are governed by the criteria of his desired qualification. Once a predetermined amount of hours have been spent studying a subject, a pupil is faced with a multiple-choice test (for which he will get points for writing his name and the correct date), and on completion of said test, the student is given a pass for the subject and he moves onto his next required subject. The system is a well-oiled machine, which year after year pumps out millions of graduates. In most cases, however, information is learned in order to achieve the desired result on the tests, but then promptly forgotten once the test has been completed to "make room" for the facts that are required to be retained for the successful completion of the new subject, and so the process continues. Most college professors will admit that each year they receive hordes of high school graduates wanting to achieve degrees, but when classes begin and the

students are quizzed on basic grammar or arithmetic, they are unable to answer satisfactorily. Consequently, the first semester is wasted because teachers have to "reinforce" the basic rules of academia that have supposedly already been taught. On top of this, subjects taught at the high school level are controlled by separate departments (the English department, the science department, etc.), and the result is that a student's knowledge is fragmented and compartmentalized into academic subjects; therefore, little connection or synchronism is made between the separate fields of data. When students start college level subjects, they are unable to relate them to any other subjects that they have previously taken. They have never been expected to think freely in the past, and consequently, much valuable time is wasted encouraging them to do so. One is left thinking that if only the time had previously been spent evoking and stirring a passion within a child, once he reached college he would already have the thirst and desire for knowledge that freshman professors dream of. If a child's creative thought process had been triggered, he would have already started to discover and ponder some of the questions that life poses. In his quest for answers, he would have been forced to draw upon his already learned knowledge and thus he would discover a correlation between the subjects he has already studied. He would then be able to appreciate his education as lessons in life as a whole, as opposed to separate masses of useless information.

Creativity, a prerogative of man, can be seen as the humble human counterpart of God's creation. Whereas theologians and religious people believe that God's creation comes *ex nibilo*, from spatial and temporal nothingness, human creativity uses what is already existing and available and changes it in unpredictable ways. As educator John Dewey put it, "Creativity by its very nature promotes an interest in knowledge, which in turn produces a well-balanced, motivated individual who can think critically about the world around him." The creative process, however, goes beyond the usual means of dealing with the environment or with oneself. It brings about what is considered (by some people at least, and perhaps by all) a desirable enlargement of the human experience. People like B.F. Skinner have characterized man as conditioned, programmed by the environment in

rigid, almost inescapable ways. Skinner should be appreciated for having shown the extent to which man can be affected in this manner, but I think that contrary to Skinner's position, we must stress man's ability to escape this fate. Creativity is one of the major means by which the human being liberates himself from the fetters not only of his conditioned response, but also of his usual choices. The intellectual evolution of mankind is dependent on creativity; without this trait fueling its progression, the cogs of discovery would grind to a halt: if a Shakespeare hadn't blessed the earth with his many plays, the visage of English Literature would not be the same rich tapestry that it is today; without a Picasso, the world would possibly be blind to ideas of the abstract, and without a Newton, what would be the face of physics as we know it? Creativity has shaped the cultures and societies that we live in today, and today's creativity will mold the culture and societies of tomorrow.

The creative thought process is not something that everyone naturally discovers; instead, it is an ability that must be encouraged and nurtured in order to develop. In rare cases, an individual with natural creative genius is born, and that person can thrive without any foreign stimuli: for example, it is reported that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had the ability to write entire overtures without so much as picking up an instrument or putting pen to paper. When questioned about his talent, he replied that it was "a gift I have my Divine Maker to thank for." As rare as these cases may be, they demonstrate the power of creativity to the unbeliever. The possibilities of creativity, however, are present in everyone and are only limited by oneself: "Creativity does not depend on inherited talent or in upbringing; it is the function of the ego of every human being." We are all capable of creativity; in most cases, we just need a "key" to unlock our thought process. Exposure to other people's creativity is by far the best way to trigger the creative thought process; this has been evident throughout history and has subsequently characterized the mentor/protégé relationship we know today. Early examples of this can be seen in the accounts of the Bible. Jesus' creativity attracted followers, and thus the disciples were formed. The disciples were inspired by the teachings of Jesus and consequently not only went on to

spread Christ's word, but to form and teach their own opinions based on what they had learned. Once an interest in creativity has developed, it becomes the glue which bonds together the information that we proceed to learn and will lead us from one field of innovation to another. For example, not only was D. H. Lawrence an acclaimed writer, but by his late forties he had also become a successful painter; and Leonardo da Vinci explored what seems like every field of interest possible, from astronomy to fine arts to oceanography to the concept of flight.

In today's society of sitcoms and "glam mags," a child is presented with little opportunity to come into contact with true works of inspirational creativity; his only chance of finding these stimuli is through the schooling system. Providing strong courses in the aesthetic studies will lay a firm foundation for creativity to grow. The physical arts will provide a visual inspiration and will entice the observers to create images of their own. Music provides a vehicle for children to express their feelings audibly when they cannot find the words to say them, and theatrical arts will build the confidence for them to say the words when they finally discover them. I feel, however, that the most important tool for us is literature. The history of our written word is rich and thorough, and scholars have repeatedly pondered the same life-impacting questions throughout time. The nature of human beings changes little from one century to the next, and subsequently, there is a wealth of literature whose authors throughout time have strived to come to terms with the many feelings, thoughts, and emotions that accompany the "human" experience. When introduced to these writings, the youthful arrogance that most teenagers possess is humbled and the realization that there is so much to learn becomes apparent; what is more, the written word provides an exact account of the writer's thoughts, which allows the reader to relate to the information that is being shared: we can feel Poe's despair, fear Dante's terror, and laugh at Chaucer's crudeness. More important, however, is the interest that these subjects will invoke. They create a passion for knowledge and expression, and once a child has something to say, he will look for ways to say it; looking for a medium will educate, and education eventually breeds rationalization. The development of the creative thought process at an

early stage in a person's life will not only prepare a child for the adult world, it will bridge the gap that has appeared between traditional academic subjects. The creative work may make us laugh when we are confronted with something new which is witty and comical; it may offer us aesthetic pleasure when we are in the presence of works of art; it may give us a feeling of transcendence, as in the field of philosophy and religion; or it may provide the qualities of usefulness, understanding and predictability, as scientific innovations do. There is a saying that one can give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, but one can teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime; if one encourages a person's creativity, he will "create" for a lifetime.

Creative work thus may be seen to have a dual role: at the same time as it enlarges the universe by adding or uncovering new dimensions, it also enriches and expands man, who will be able to experience these new dimensions inwardly. A new painting, poem, scientific achievement, or philosophical understanding increases the number of islands of the visible in the ocean of the unknown. These new islands eventually form those thick archipelagos that are man's various cultures.

One may ask me as to why I, a British citizen, would be concerned with the educational standards of the U.S.A. The fact remains that my (and everybody else's) fate is in the hands of the United States of America, the most powerful nation on earth. The youth in today's high schools will be the leaders of tomorrow's free democratic world. I would feel a lot better knowing that the leaders of this superpower have been elected by a rational and intelligent nation, and that their actions within the global arena will be a reflection of the educated people who entrusted them with power. Even with his Northwestern degree, I would hate to think that one day Dwain and his "dogs" could be the people who are seated with their fingers poised on the buttons that could destroy civilization as we know it.

Evaluation: *Liam's expression is fresh, and his points are well developed and supported.*

Life as a Fire Fighter

Mike Pyszyna

Course: English 100

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

*Write a profile of ("a behind the scenes look at")
a person, place, or event, for which you
have detailed, intimate knowledge.*

Capture the essence of this person, place, or event.

In October of 1983, my father joined the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District. I was three at the time, and from that moment on, I knew that I wanted to be a fire fighter. When I got a little older, around the age of 12, my father began to take me on calls and let me spend the night at the firehouse, so I could get a good feel for what this job is all about.

Five years later, when I was seventeen, the fire chief, whom I have known since I was three, approached my father. He told my father, "I have known Mike for 14 years now and I have an opportunity for him." My dad looked at him and said, "What are you talking about?" The chief replied, "Well, we are having a recruit class and I was curious if Mike would be interested." Without even thinking, my father replied, "What do you think! He's wanted to do this his whole life!" Later that night, my father called me up and told me what had happened. I was absolutely ecstatic about the news. For the next couple of months, I trained and tested my life away to become a fire fighter. And it all came together on the night of December 15, 1998, when I was sworn in as a

fire fighter in the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District.

It's 5 a.m. I wake up to the sound of Eric and Kathy's morning show on 101.9 fm. I take a shower, pack up my bedding and my clothes, and head off to work. I show up at work at 6 am, and I start the morning coffee while the other members on duty show up for another day of work. We sit around for a couple of hours, talking about the past week and what had happened. Doug, a tall slender man with blonde hair and blue eyes, lights up a cigarette and walks in with a box of candy. I turn to him and ask, "What is that for?" He replies, "My daughter's dance class is having a fund raiser for dance and tap class. They look really cute doing it, and they really enjoy it." I reply, "Well that's really cool that they found something that they like."

7 a.m. rolls around, which is the time that I begin my vehicle check. It is a fairly long process. I have to check all of the fluids, which include oil, power steering fluid, windshield wiper fluid, etc. I then check all of the six air-packs on the vehicle, and I then proceed to check every compartment to make sure every piece of equipment is working and in its proper place. After the entire vehicle has been checked out, I pull it outside to check the pump, lights, and sirens. When everything is working properly, I pull it back into the station and give it a good wash.

8:46 a.m. We get a call into Mt. Prospect for a fire alarm at an elementary school. We respond, and it turns out to be a false alarm, and we return. When we return, I finish washing my vehicle. Doug walks up to me and says, "Let's go." I reply, "Where are we going?" He then informs me that we have to go to Rocky Vander's, which is a local hangout where we are having our annual burn camp fund raiser. "We have to go over there to get our picture with the fire engine taken so it can be put in the *Daily Herald*."

It is now 9:30. This is the time when the ambulance crew goes to buy supplies for lunch and dinner. Today's menu consists of Italian sausage with red sauce and mozzarella cheese for lunch. For dinner, we are having rotini with meat sauce and garlic bread. While the ambulance crew is out shopping, the squad crew, which includes me, begins house duties. House duties, which are the

most hateful part of my day, consist of emptying the garbage, cleaning the bathrooms, and mopping all of the floors, among other things.

10:36 a.m. We get dispatched to 801 N. Elmhurst Rd. for a 1050 (car accident). We arrive on the scene and find an elderly lady who ran into the side of a pickup truck. We help the lady into the ambulance to check her out. Meanwhile, I am told to check on the gentleman she had hit. As it turns out, both patients are okay and refuse transport. We are released from the scene and return back to the station.

11:00 a.m. Northbrook Fire Department arrives for a drill. This is an unusual drill, because an Arkansas fire department had just purchased Northbrook's old engine. The Arkansas fire department wanted to test the pump, especially the draft capabilities. We are one of the very few departments in the area that knows how to draft. So we go out with them and drill, and everything is checked out well.

After we return to the firehouse, lunch is ready. At lunch we begin to discuss the next drill for the day, which is going to take place after lunch. We have to test all of the hoses on our tanker for leaks and damage. Doug begins, "This is so wrong. I mean, it's Columbus Day and we actually have to work." I then come up with an idea. "Doug, the recruits have to drill tonight, so why don't I call up my dad and see if he has anything planned. If not, they can do it." Bob, an older paramedic, blurts out, "That's a great idea; call him up!" I then call my dad, who likes the idea and agrees to it.

After lunch, which usually ends at 1:00 p.m., it is time for our afternoon nap. It would have been an excellent nap except for the fact that we get dispatched to an apartment for a lock out. This particular call is aggravating because the lady claims that there are no doors or windows open in her apartment. So after an hour or so, I walk to the back and find that her back door is wide open. After this, we then return to the station and continue our nap.

The nap lasts for a couple of hours. We awaken at 4:00 p.m. for another call, for a diabetic patient feeling ill. We arrive at the scene and find the patient on the floor in diabetic shock. This person has a condition we call hyperglycemia. This condition means that the pancreas is not

putting out enough insulin. Therefore, the person goes into shock and usually ends up to be okay. Luckily, today, this person is fine but is still transported to the hospital for precautionary measures.

6:00 p.m. comes around, and that signals time for dinner. The cook today is not at his best. The noodles are very stiff, and the sauce is disgusting. This is also the reason why I am very hungry right now, typing this paper.

The recruits start to show up, which means that it is 7:00 p.m. and it is time for class to start. In this class, we test over 1,000 feet of hose, which takes us until 10:30 p.m. After drill, I hop into the shower to relax and get cleaned up. After that, it is down time for the rest of my shift, during which we are able to do whatever we please. In my case, I do some homework and then I go and watch the football game with the rest of the crew.

It is midnight and that is the time I go to bed. I am off of shift at 6 a.m., but who knows what lies ahead of me in the night? We can run calls all night, or we could sleep all night. Or, we can be awakened at 3 a.m. for a structure fire and not come back until 8. This particular day, we are lucky and sleep the entire night.

I have wanted to be a fire fighter my entire life. Since I became one two years ago, it has been the best time of my life. I know that my choice to do what I do is very risky; however, that is half of the fun. Everyone I ever talk to says, "Aren't you scared that you could die?" I reply, "Yes, but the way I look at it is everyone has a time when they are called upon to go. No one knows when his or her number is up; however, if my time has to come while I'm on duty saving a life, at least I did what I always wanted to do."

Evaluation: *Mike takes us behind the scenes, in an even, clear voice. This is good expository writing, and the "day in the life" structure was a good choice for the material.*

Striving to Be the Best

Liz Richards

Course: English 100

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

Identify an area or behavioral pattern of your life that has caused you difficulty for some time—or a long struggle that you have been involved in, and that you have overcome (or are in the process of overcoming). Write an essay that “tracks” the development of the struggle from its beginning.

The bright stars stand still and calm as the shooting stars go flying past them. I take a deep breath when I see the shooting stars. Every time I breathe, my back presses deeper into the grass. Those shooting stars are more beautiful than just the normal stars glowing above us. As the bright light follows the shooting stars, it starts to remind me of my mother always following me, making sure that I am the best. I just giggle those memories away, even though I am always thinking about them.

I am sitting in the high school gym with the rest of my Poms squad, waiting for our coach. After I lead my team in stretches, my coach comes in with a wad of paper.

“Alright girls, we are voting on our captain and co-captain today. Think long and hard on who you want to be running our squad for the whole year. She will be your captain and leader, the one you must obey and look up to,” my coach announces, while interrupting my counting for our split holds.

My stomach is really nervous. I can feel the blood rushing through my veins. This is a huge moment for me. I know that if I don’t get nominated for captain, my mom will be really disappointed in me. I carefully look up at the ceiling and softly pray to god for this position.

“I am handing out little pieces of paper. On the top line, put who you want your captain to be and on the bottom line, put your co-captain. Try not to vote for yourself. Be honest to your team,” coach says.

She keeps looking at me. Maybe she thinks I am voting for myself. I am not going to do that. I will always be honest to my team. My hands are shaking as I write out my choice for the captain. I take a deep breath and turn in my little pink piece of paper. My coach is going to a table to count up all the votes.

“Alright, let’s practice the dance while she is counting the votes,” I say to the girls.

While we are practicing our new homecoming dance, my mind is still with my mom. Hopefully, my mom won’t be too disappointed in me. Out of nowhere, the music fades off.

“Enough practice for now. Let’s make a big circle and I will tell you who are our team captain and co-captain for our ’99-2000 pom squad.”

My mind is in a huge blur. This is my senior year, and my mom will kill me if I don't get nominated for this. She's going to think I ditch practice or am not good enough.

"Our co-captain is Robyn Makela. Finally, our team captain is—"

My stomach is giving off this horrible pain that is shooting up through my back all the way up to my head. I just want to scream and cut this tension.

"Liz Richards," coach screams!

I feel my heart drop into my lap. Tight hugs squeeze around me. Everyone is congratulating me on my position. After practice, I hesitate to go straight home. I have to tell my mom sooner or later, so I might as well do it now. I push the door open in front of me to see my mom standing on the stairs waiting for me.

"So?" she questions.

"So what?" I answer.

"Any good news?"

"Oh, yeah. I'm captain."

My mom runs at me like I did something amazing. Like I was some kind of hero. She gives me a hug and a kiss and tells me that she is very proud of me. She's so proud because I made her look good. Her daughter is the captain of the high school poms squad. It's a true honor.

"Not every girl in the world is as lucky as you. You know that, right, Princess?" she says to me after almost making me sick to my stomach.

"Yeah mom, sure. I'm going to bed. Night!"

I walk in my room, closing the door behind me. Hopefully, I won't be seeing her the rest of the night.

It's freshman year. Yeah, I am a freshman, but I am not considered one when it comes to gymnastics. I am on the varsity team with all the senior girls. I am sitting in my mom's car outside of the gym, just listening to her lecture me about my big meet tonight.

"Now, Elizabeth, I am serious when I tell you never to give up. Remember to always bow to the judges when you finish all your routines. Are you competing in all around tonight?"

"Yes mom. I know to bow to the judges. I have only been doing this for eight years. I think I am doing all around unless coach switches it on me."

"Why would she do that? You're the best they've got."

"Alright mom. I have to stretch, and we have been sitting outside the gym for 15 minutes," I reply, while rolling my eyes with annoyance.

"I will be there at 7:30 when it starts. Remember, push for the 10!"

I get out of the car, feeling the cold air hit my face. The chill is tensing up my muscles, and I feel my nerves freezing as well. I hate how she always puts this pressure on me. Now, if I don't get that 10, I am going to hear her all night. Or, maybe she won't even talk to me because she will be disappointed. That's a good idea: don't get that 10, and I won't have to talk to her the rest of the night.

"Liz, you are second in the rotation. We are going to bars, then floor, to beam, and finally, we are finishing up at the vault. You are our all-around competitor. Good luck!" Coach Williams says.

I hate the bars. They are too easy. It's now my turn, and I am putting chalk all over my grips so that the sweat from my hands doesn't make my grip slippery. After my level 9 performance, I bow to the judges and give my team a finishing smile. I glance over to my mom right after I see my score of 8.3. She gives me a smile and nods her head. She seems pretty proud of me, but I know that she is thinking I can do better. The floor is my favorite area. Tumbling is my speciality. I hear the soft piano music as I follow along with my dance and tumbling routine. My stomach is getting nervous for some reason. I never get nervous on the floor. I just keep thinking about my mom. I can just feel her eyes peering at me. The music stops as I end my final tumbling pass. I once again bow to the judge and jog off the floor. I take another small glance over to my mom. She is not paying attention to me. She is whispering something to my dad about another gymnast on the bars. Now, her eyes seem to be on the judge—9.5. I hear the sounds of the crowd and my team's screaming is blocked out by my mother's reaction. She stands up and claps with the rest of the crowd. The beam goes by pretty fast because my routine is only 2 minutes long. I don't do too great on that event. I finish with an 8.3—nothing too special, but not horrible. Well, should I do my best on the vault and get that 10? Or should I just go out there and finish up this meet?

The loudspeakers roar through the whole gym. "Our final jumper is Liz Richards. A freshmen on the varsity team for Wheeling High School." I am staring straight at the vault. I stretch out my legs and take a deep breath. I am running as fast as I can. I hit the vault and do my double back flip. I land the stunt with no bobble at all. I take another deep breath and bow to the judge. We take two jumps when it comes to vault. Again, I stand in front of the vault and take a deep breath. I do the same stunt and land this one again. After my last and final bow, I give the judge a huge smile in relief. After a couple minutes of waiting for my score, the judge finally holds it up. The big black numbers of 10 flash before my eyes. The arms of everyone holding me and jumping up and down take my breath away. I look toward my mother's direction. Before I know it, she is hugging and kissing me as well.

"Good Job, my baby! You did it! You did it!" she screams.

My meet is finally over and I am heading home. I throw my hair up into a ponytail, and I grab my gymnastics bag. My mom is meeting me in the back by the double doors. Her car is waiting for me. I see the smoke coming from her muffler.

"I told you that you could do it. Aren't you so proud?"

Yes, of course I am proud of myself. I am very proud, but I am also so stressed. The whole time I was worrying about getting that perfect score just to please my mother.

"Yeah, I am very proud, mom. Now, let's get home. I have an English paper to write."

"You don't want to go out for ice cream to celebrate, honey?"

"No, Mom, sorry. Dad is probably waiting at home for me."

I get home and hear all the congratulating from the rest of the family. I am off to bed. I am lying in my bed right now just thinking about my 10. Thank god I tried my absolute hardest for that 10. Or did I make so much effort just to please my own mother?

It's December 1, 1999. I just found out that I am going to be home schooled due to the car accident I was in on Thanksgiving. I was hit by a drunk driver and had

to have surgery on my leg. From the condition I am in, I am unable to attend school. This definitely causes a problem for me. I am going away to college next year and without being in school, this is going to kill my college life.

"You have to be home schooled, Liz. That means that you are going to have to stay home for school next year," my mom screams as she stomps up the stairs.

"You never know that Mother. If I do my best getting my work done with my tutor, then I will be able to go to ISU," I scream right back at her.

My mom always wanted to go to ISU when she was my age. She never got to, so she is making me go there. I want to go away to school, but ISU isn't my first choice. My mom is making me fill out this stupid application and send it in as soon as tomorrow. No later. I won't have any problem getting in there because I have very good grades, but now that I am going to be out of school, it's only causing me a problem.

"Elizabeth, can't you get up in the morning and make it to class? Try walking on your leg and take extra medication with you to school. If you get a headache, go to the nurse and lie down. Can you do that?" My mom asks.

She has no idea what she is talking about. I am in so much pain. If I could, I would make this pain go away.

"Mom, don't you understand? I do not want to be home schooled. I am just as upset as you are."

She asks, "Do you want to be staying home for school next year when all of your friends are away at college without you?"

"Mother, what do you think? Do you think I want to stay home and live here my whole life? Think about it," I reply.

Now, she is in a horrible mood. She doesn't understand that this is not my own fault. I get up from the kitchen chair and limp to my bedroom.

"I hate it here! Why would I want to be here any longer?" I scream from the top of the staircase.

My alarm is extremely loud, blasting the new Blink 182 song. It's 6 o'clock in the morning and I am now getting up for school. I hit my alarm clock, remembering that I can't go back to school. My stupid tutor is coming at 11:00 a.m.

"Liz, you still should get up and do some extra work. Maybe that way, you can let ISU know that you are still working very hard even though you are not in school," my mom says while bursting in my room the second I hit my alarm clock.

I yell back, "Mom, go away. It's 6:00 in the morning. Why are you awake?"

"Honey, if you don't get up, you are showing me that you do not care about going away next year," she puts in her last word as she slowly closes my door.

I am burying my face into my pillow and stopping myself from screaming. Well, I am awake and I might as well get up. I don't want to disappoint my mother now, do I?

"I am awake now! Are you happy?" I scream at her with anger.

It's 6:00 in the morning and I am awake because she feels it's the "right" thing to do. She thinks that I am doing homework, but instead I am watching Jenny Jones on channel 9. Whenever she comes in to check on me, I mute the TV and bust out my homework. I don't even have any homework; I am doing this work for nothing. To me, it's nothing. To my mother, it's the way of life.

The door bell just rang, and my mom is talking to some strange lady. I quickly look at the clock and notice that it is 11:03. It's my school tutor. I feel stupid. I cannot even go to school. The school sent me a tutor to teach me right at home. This is not fun.

"Hi, my name is Jenna Lowy. We are going to be working everyday from 11:00 until 1:00. Sound good to you?"

Oh sure, just wonderful. Hello lady, do you think I want to have you in my house boring me for 2 hours everyday?

"Oh sure. No problem. What kind of stuff are we going to do?" I kindly ask.

"Different things everyday. Today we are going to do math. Everyday is going to be a different subject. If we end the lesson early, you are done for the day," she answers even more politely.

I keep watching the clock, and it doesn't seem to be going any faster. Every minute feels like an hour. Wow, finally it's 1:00. Go home, lady! "Alright Liz, we are through for the day. I will be here at 11:00 tomorrow. It

was very nice meeting you. You are a very smart young lady. Take care sweet heart." She looks at me with her sweet brown eyes as my mom shuts the door behind her.

"Did you like her, hon?" my mom asks, being nosy as usual.

"Yeah, I guess. I mean, she's nice."

Mrs. Lowy did tell me that I am going to be held back here next year. There is no possible way that I am going to be able to go to ISU next year. My mom doesn't know this yet because I told Mrs. Lowy that I would tell her.

My heart keeps punching my inner chest. Something in my head keeps telling me to tell my mom the bad news. It's about 7 o'clock and I am on the phone with my friend Melissa. I tell her the bad news after she updates me on all the school gossip. I can't concentrate on anything, but how I should tell my mom that I am going to be going to Harper next year?

"Hey Melissa, I got to go, sweets. I will call you tomorrow. Just stop over for lunch. Bring some people here to see me," I say, wanting to hang up with her.

She says, "Alright babe, take care. I will bring you presents tomorrow. Have fun with Mrs. Whatever Her Name Is. Bye bye!"

I slowly limp into my mom's room to catch her on the phone as well.

I say softly, "Mom, when you are off, can I tell you something?" I am not sure if I want to tell her so fast. Hopefully, she didn't hear me. I turn around and am about to grab for the door handle.

"What is it, honey?"

My mom just hung up the phone and had to hear me mumble something. "Well, I am going to Harper next year." I had to come right out and say it. I didn't want to drag on with a phony conversation and finally chicken out.

Standing up and making her eyes so wide they are popping out of her head, she says, "What? How do you know that it is final?"

"Mom, settle down. You knew this was coming. I talked to Mrs. Lowy today and she said that there is no way that I am going to make it to ISU next year. It is not because I am stupid or anything; it's because I am missing 3 months of school." I close my eyes, wishing when I open them back up again this would all disappear.

“Great. Just wonderful. Now you cannot go to ISU next year and we will wait another year until you go away,” she says, mad as ever.

“I am going to bed. Good night.” I get up off her bed right before she opens her mouth again.

“Me too. Tell your father to lock up and turn off all the lights. Remind him that I am in a horrible mood and not to talk to me tonight.” She doesn’t even say good night like she usually does.

I slam the door to my bedroom, making the pictures on my wall fall down. I get into my bed and cry myself to sleep. It’s 2:00 am and my thoughts are just bothering me. My mom didn’t give me a kiss good night or even wish me sweet dreams. I am staring at the fan in the center of my ceiling. Maybe if I turn on the fan, the wind will blow my problems away.

I get up from the damp grass, and my head feels extremely dizzy. I lay back down, thinking maybe I sat up too fast. The cool breeze blows across my body, making my hair blow in my face. As I brush the hair from my face, I see another shooting star. This star is big and bright. The light behind it is very dull. It is not as bright or long as they usually are. My life is now very big and bright. I don’t have my mother living her life in me. I slowly get up and walk towards my house. I take one last glance at the sky. It makes me smile. The big sky is the world around me, but I am only that tiny star. I have a whole life ahead of me; I am not letting my mother run it for me.

Evaluation: *I especially enjoy this essay’s structure — past events framed within a present moment. Liz skillfully converts events from her past into present realities for the reader, through careful use of dialogue, description, and the present tense.*

Once, Twice, Three Times a Virgin

Debbie Schreiner

Course: Humanities 120

Instructor: Martha Simonsen

Assignment:

*Write a critical research paper
on a topic in mythology.*

Throughout classical mythology, promiscuity is rampant. Zeus is married to Hera, but he has affairs with many goddesses and mortal women. Aphrodite is married to Hephaestus, but she has affairs with Ares, Anchises, and Hermes. Aphrodite, goddess of love, is the main cause of the promiscuity because she can make humans and gods fall in love. However, in the "Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite," the poet reveals that Aphrodite's power is useless on the three virgin goddesses: Hestia, Artemis, and Athena. The poet writes, "Their hearts Aphrodite can neither sway nor beguile" (*Homeric Hymns* 46). Their immunity to Aphrodite's power partially explains why they are virgins, but their backgrounds and domains reveal other reasons for their virginity. Even though they are virgins, the goddesses still have desires and are pursued by others. The goddesses do not have husbands because "a virgin was a woman who belonged to herself, not to any man" (Whitmont 136). They are better off without men in their lives because "goddesses who have their own well-defined meaning and function will not tolerate husbands beside them. They are much too independent to be subordinate to a man" (Kerenyi 34). The goddesses have specific domains and for different reasons they choose to remain virgins.

Hestia is the goddess of the hearth/home and domestic life, and she is the eldest child of Chronus and Rhea. Because she was the "personification of the pure core of the home, the hearth, she was required to be a virgin" (Dexter 163). The Vestal Virgins who followed Vesta, the Roman form of Hestia, were also required to remain virgins (Dexter 163). In appearance, Hestia is mature and dignified. "Once can best visualize Hestia as stately but not formidable, pretty but not beautiful, sweet-faced but distant. Her manner would be modest and gentle" (Bell 240). This sweet, humanized description makes her virginity plausible. She, however, takes on a different form when she "was seen only in the fire of the hearth, living in the center of every home, an honored guest and helpful to her hosts" (Monaghan 155). This description makes the goddess seem like a dehumanized spirit rather than a human. By having the form of a spirit that lives in the fire in every home, she seems unattainable. Because she cannot be reached, it is easy to believe that she remains a virgin. Therefore, Hestia's virginity is supported because it is difficult to comprehend a spirit living in a fire having a sexual relationship. The fact that Hestia exists in every home also supports her virginity because it seems hard for a goddess to have a relationship with someone when she exists in many places. Her domain being the hearth or home, a very motherly place, affects her virginity. "Hestia never had a consort, for no god could share her strictly matriarchal province, the Prytaneum or public hearth of every town" (Walker 300). By dwelling in a place that was solely for women, Hestia secured her virginity. Downing gives another interesting reason for Hestia's virginity. She writes, "Though Hestia can love generously and impartially, and in Rome as Vesta she is a prototype of the good mother, she seems (perhaps in consequence of the early loss of her own mother) to be deeply suspicious of close personal attachments" (Downing 134). Hestia was separated from her mother because her father, Chronus, swallowed her after she was born. It is possible that Hestia felt betrayed because her mother allowed Chronus to swallow all of their children except for Zeus. A suspicion of close personal attachments would be a reason for Hestia to remain a virgin.

Even though no god could share the hearth with Hestia, this does not mean that gods did not pursue her. Her brother Poseidon and her nephew Apollo both sought after the goddess. Even her relatives could not respect her decision to remain a virgin. They “both wanted to marry her or at least have sexual intercourse with her, but she swore by the head of Zeus to remain forever a virgin” (Bell 240). She could have given in to their advances, but instead she denied them and took an oath to remain a virgin for the rest of her life. Hestia’s virginity was also threatened by Priapus. “He was a minor deity particularly associated with gardens, both as sponsor of fertility and as a scarecrow. He is commonly a figure of fun, associated with somewhat obscene humor” (Kirkwood 80). He “tried to rape her at a festival,” but luckily she escaped his attempt (Bell 240). The “Homeric Hymn to Hestia” seems to allude to a relationship between Hestia and Hermes. The poet writes, “Gold-wanded messenger of the blessed immortals,/Giver of good things, be gracious and come to my aid,/Joining with Hestia, goddess revered and dear./Dwell here in this noble house with love in your hearts for each other” (*Homeric Hymns* 78). This quote does not directly state that they had a relationship, but it is odd that Hestia and Hermes are mentioned as having love for each other. They seem too different to make a relationship work because Hermes is constantly traveling while Hestia is solely sedentary. Perhaps the quote simply refers to a friendship love. In any event, Hestia denied the sexual advances of the gods and she followed her oath to remain a virgin. She was so dedicated to her job as goddess of the hearth that she did not need a companion.

The second virgin goddess is Artemis, goddess of the hunt, fertility, and protector of the young. She is also called a chaste virgin. However, “she was virgin by virtue of being independent, and her chastity was secondary” (Dexter 162). This statement shows that the word “virgin” has varying connotations. Artemis is the daughter of Leto and Zeus. Leto was “a mother whom Artemis seems to have mothered from almost the moment of her own birth” (Downing 133). In some versions, Artemis assisted with the birth of Apollo, which took nine days. Witnessing the birth of Apollo and the pain her mother went through for many days possibly had an effect on

her decision to be a virgin. To avoid the pain of pregnancy, Artemis remained a virgin. Leto may have also affected Artemis’s virginity in another way. Artemis and Apollo “protect Leto from rape by Tityus and Python and from Niobe’s insulting boasts. (Artemis’s own near-compulsive virginity can, at one level, be understood as response to her mother’s often threatened sexual vulnerability)” (Downing 176). Because her mother’s sexuality was so vulnerable, maybe Artemis decided to be a strong woman who protected her virginity.

Artemis is youthful and graceful, and she wears a short tunic and high boots. She is athletic and participates in hunting, which is a sport usually associated with men. Her ability to exist in a male domain shows that she does not need a male companion and that she can be independent. But even though she is in this male domain, she is “closely associated with the feminine being and is connected to menstruation, conception, parturition, nursing, menopause, and death” (Downing 174). Her arrows could only kill women, and her brother’s arrows could only kill men. Because she is so connected to the feminine experience, it seems appropriate that she would stress her own virginity (Downing 174). Artemis required that her nymph followers were virgins, and by remaining a virgin herself, she led them by example. She made remaining a virgin seem important to her followers because she made the rule and she obeyed it.

According to Karl Kerényi, two additional reasons for Artemis’s virginity are her untamable wildness, which represents a specific age of maidenhood, and her close relationship to a male, her twin brother, Apollo (Kerényi 35). Many studies have revealed that twins share a special closeness, and the god and goddess definitely have this bond.

Downing believes that “In Artemis, passion and virginity are strangely intertwined” (Downing 173). However, she does not allow her passion for living to include sexual involvement. Although Artemis was a goddess of the hunt, Artemis of Ephesus was quite different. She was a fertility goddess in Asia Minor. She “was worshiped as a mother goddess, and represented as a many-breasted symbol of fertility” (Kirkwood 18). This aspect may have been part of Artemis as protector of the young, but it could have been lost in Greek and Roman

stories (Kirkwood 18). As goddess of the hunt, Artemis is very independent; she can survive on her own.

Although Artemis was a virgin goddess, she was still pursued by gods and mortals. "Alpheius the river-god pursued her, but she eluded him by covering herself and her nymphs with mud so he could not distinguish them" (Bell 72). Her idea to deceive Alpheius reveals her intelligence. Her virginity was also threatened when the giant Otus pursued her, but she managed to refuse his advances (Bell 72). Even though these gods pursue Artemis, she is not interested. "Artemis represents female being in its own essence, without respect for male being in fact or fantasy, longing or refusal" (Downing 175). The goddess simply takes interest in herself. When Orion, the giant, misunderstood the terms of their friendship and made sexual advances, Artemis rejected his advances (Downing 177). Acteon, a hunter, accidentally came upon Artemis bathing with her nymphs, and she turned him into a stag and had his hounds rip him to pieces. "One account said he was in love with Artemis and suggested that he deliberately spied on her" (Bell 72). An Arcadian hunter, Buphagus, pursued Artemis and was also killed (Bell 72). Men who pursued Artemis usually wound up dead. "Artemis's virginity means this insistence on inviolability, on separateness, on in-her-self-ness" (Downing 174). She killed Acteon and Buphagus because she felt violated. Because Artemis was depicted on many fifth century vases, holding a torch in each hand, she "was connected with the moon, in which her enticing, romantic, and remote qualities are reflected" (Otto 85). She often appears as the goddess of the moon in later times (Otto 85). Selene, the moon goddess, loved Endymion. He was the King of Elis who was "enchanted into eternal sleep by the Moon-goddess Selene" (Walker 280). If Artemis sometimes appeared as the moon goddess, and her romantic quality was reflected in the moon goddess, then possibly it was she, not Selene, who had the affair with Endymion. In addition to gods and men pursuing Artemis, she also had a female lover, Britomartis, the "Cretan divinity of hunters and fisherman" (Bell 72). Bell feels "It is probably safe to assume they were lovers in the total sense" (Bell 72). Even if Artemis had a relationship with a woman, she still remained a virgin in the sense that she was not dependent on a man.

Athena, goddess of wisdom and craftsmanship and protector of heroes and cities, was also a virgin goddess. "She ruled the implements of domestic crafts: the spindle, the pot, and the loom" (Monaghan 42). Athena "is a devoted and dependable friend, protectress of the generation of young children on whom the future of the polis depends, but she carefully protects herself from sexual passion" (Downing 134). Her main focus was to inspire the heroes and help keep women in their places (Wilshire 61). She seemed to concentrate on her main focus because she protected many heroes such as Odysseus and Heracles. She helped keep women in the home because she created the loom, which became work for women. Athena's personality probably helped her remain a virgin. She had "the unconquerable determination of the masculinely oriented battle Goddess along with the closest male relationship to the father" (Kerenyi 35). The story of her birth is very interesting. Zeus swallowed his wife Metis when she was pregnant with Athena. The "Homeric Hymn to Athene" described her birth: "Zeus wise in counsel/Himself gave birth to the goddess from out of his own august head./She came forth accoutered for warfare, in glistening gold" (77). Even though being born from her father's head caused Athena to have a close relationship with him, "her emergence full-grown from Zeus's head may represent her independence from him" (Downing 115). Her birth causes her to have a close relationship with her father, but at the same time be independent. Athena was born full-grown and wearing armor. She was not a helpless baby. Athena is associated with warfare, so she wears armor and carries a spear and shield. She also has a very masculine appearance. Athena, however, "was worshiped in both aspects: as Parthenos, in the sense of a chaste, almost masculine maiden, and as a mother" (Kerenyi 24). The Athene Meter of Elis, a cult location in Greece, brought about conception, which supports her worship as a mother (Kerenyi 24). The birth of Athena reveals that even at birth she is an independent goddess.

Despite the fact that she was a virgin goddess, like Hestia and Artemis, Athena was still pursued by gods and others. A different tradition "called Athena the daughter of Pallas, a winged giant of Attica. He tried to rape her, and she killed him" (Bell 84). Another pursuer

of Athena was Hephaestus. He tried to rape her, and his semen fell on her leg. Athena wiped it off, and the semen fell on Gaia and impregnated her with the half-serpent child Erichthonius (Bell 85). Athena played an indirect part in the birth of Erichthonius. She is almost his secondary mother. At Phratria and Apaturia, feasts for young boys in Athens, Hephaestus was revered because he was a marriage candidate for Pallas Athene (Kerenyi 27). At another festival, the Chalkeia, Hephaestus and Athene were celebrated together. Because the secret of the festival was not revealed, stories were told that "Athene was given to Hephaistos and placed in a chamber for him, or that he followed her and embraced her" (Kerenyi 79). Even though these stories vary, they all describe Athena and Hephaestus having some involvement with each other. These stories, however, do not prove that Athena lost her virginity.

Downing writes, "Athene is not a virgin in order to be alone but in order to be with others without entanglement" (Downing 119). As protector of heroes, Athena also had some close relationships with mortal men. She helped the heroes because "her virginity allows her to move comfortably and unthreatened in the world of men, her girdle securely knotted like a warrior's" (Downing 175). The girdle prevents "sexual attraction from disrupting heterosexual companionship" (Downing 175). In *The Odyssey*, she aided Odysseus on his journey home. Because she cared for Odysseus so much, she also helped his son Telemachus. When King Nestor talked to Telemachus about Odysseus, he said, "I've never seen the immortals show so much affection as Pallas openly showed him, standing by your father" (Homer 114). King Nestor's statement shows that Athena's dedication to helping Odysseus was even obvious to others. For Athena, "It is in her nature to associate with men, to think of them always, always to be near them, in order to reveal herself to them in moments of life which differ from the erotic not by shy aloofness but by the strength and clarity of energetic action" (Otto 54). Many times in *The Odyssey*, she inspires Telemachus and Odysseus to take action.

All three of the virgin goddesses were immune to Aphrodite's power. However, they could not keep her power from affecting others. Because they could not,

both gods and mortals pursued them. The goddesses retained their virginity and denied their pursuers' sexual advances. As the goddess of the hearth, Hestia took an oath to remain a virgin, and she kept it. Artemis, goddess of the hunt, may have had a female lover, but she never lost her virgin status because she did not give herself to a man. Athena remained a virgin because she only befriended men. With most of the gods and goddesses having extramarital affairs, it's comforting to see the three virgin goddesses reject the temptation of gorgeous gods in order to maintain their virginity.

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Evaluation: *Lively and provocative subject matter, solid supporting evidence, and a critical mind—these add up to an outstanding research paper, and an enjoyable read!*

Adding Value

David Selby

Course: English 101

Instructor: Peter Sherer

Assignment:

Write a personal experience essay which focuses on an incident which helped you grow in some way. Style your essay via effective narrative and descriptive language.

Plans had been made with Felix, his brother Hal, and I to ascend the mountain in Hal's big truck. Felix discovered a large stand of madrone trees, the favorite firewood in southern Oregon. This tree grows very tall and slender, seldom getting more than twenty inches in diameter. It is a peculiar looking tree with red flake bark, if any bark at all, a smooth white color, and few branches except at the very top. We hoped to bring home such a load on this huge truck so that Felix, his mother, sister, and brother Hal would have firewood for the winter. My wife failed to understand why I needed to be involved since we still had firewood left over from the previous year. I tried explaining to her the way things are between friends. She reminded me that she was seven months pregnant and could use some help around the house. I gave her a condescending rebuke and left without kissing her goodbye. Felix drove off before I had a chance to go back with an apology. I struggled with the way I was to her. Did I add any value to her, or her day, with my derogatory demeanor?

We arrived on the mountain. I was riding with Felix; his daughter and her cousin rode with Hal. Since we had the smaller truck, we arrived much earlier than Hal. This gave us time to cut down several trees before the others pulled up. This was the most beautiful place that I had ever seen. The trees were tall and perfect. The air was so thin that a short climb on foot would leave one even as young as I short of breath. The air was cool enough for us to do this heavy work. The scent of men working seemed inappropriate in this virgin place.

When Hal arrived, he wrapped a large logging chain around one of the trees and began to tow it into a clearing. Rather than backing up to release the chain from the tree, Hal made his first cut just past the chain. Then, all hell broke loose! The truck started to move. Only the fallen tree had been holding the truck on the hill.

Someone said, "Jump."

Someone screamed, "Jump! Jump off the damn truck!"

Time seemed to stand still; even amidst the screams there was an eerie silence. I couldn't help but wonder about the language someone was using in front of these young girls. Looking up, I realized that they were screaming at the girls.

By now, the truck was moving fast. It was moving so

fast that the girls were afraid to jump down from it. I saw the fear in their eyes. I could see the screams on their young faces but I could not hear them. I stood and watched as everyone stood in shock. Hal was closer than I. However, he seemed content to scream obscenities at the girls and the rig. I was the only one young enough to run after the girls and the truck. I do not know where the speed and endurance came from. Eventually, I reached the truck.

I could see the running board of the truck. It looked slippery. I saw the grab-bar, but I could not reach it. That bar would make the difference. Even if I had slipped on the running board, that bar would give me possession of the truck.

I don't know how, but suddenly I jumped, and that handle was mine. I had one foot on the running board and another foot on the air-brake. The truck began to slow down. Looking up to see how much of the road was in front of me, I began to bend the steering wheel for leverage to the air-breaks because there was no more road. Finally, the truck stopped. Then the bottom fell out! The edge we stopped on gave way from the weight. I was only half way inside the truck as it rolled down the hill.

Looking out from under the truck, I heard a scream; it came from one of the girls running down the hill toward me. Moments later, the other girl appeared. Somehow they had escaped from the back of the truck. Joy and pride filled my chest, which was now pinned under several tons.

Sometime later, Hal arrived. Using his hands like shovels, he dug a trench and freed me from my prison. I could tell by the look on Hal's face that things were not going to be okay. As I took inventory of my injuries, I found a sleeve with a loose weight at the end. Borrowing a belt from Hal and looping it to my own, I reattached that weight to my shoulder and tucked the bottom into my shirt.

By now, Hal was a wreck. His nerves had turned to jelly, and he was just about useless. Helping him to his feet, I walked with him back up to the road. Several times, he would stop to cry. I was losing patience with him, but I knew a belittling comment from me would send him over the edge, not the same edge that I had just

crossed, but an edge within himself. "We will make it Hal. Thanks for your help Hal. We need to get back up that hill, and you can do it, Hal." We made it up the hill.

Sometime later, an ambulance arrived. The attendant working on me was very young, too young to have the skills I was hoping for. She was very cute, not pretty, but attractive enough. She had short hair, no waist, but curves a guy would remember. I couldn't help feeling for her. She was not ready for an incident such as this. Her first task was to start me on fluids. She knew that I had lost a lot of blood. With needle in hand, she could not stop shaking enough to get it done. I remember feeling for her. If this did not turn out well, would she blame herself? Would she have to live with this failing moment the rest of her life? I began speaking to her, thanking her for being there. I remember mentioning that her smile was making all this a little less painful. That fib brought a brief smile and a little courage. With needle in hand, she grabbed her left wrist to steady herself. I'm not sure why, but I held her right arm. We formed a pyramid of strength with her two arms and my one. I helped her by speaking continually and gently to her. She was able to start the fluids.

My words seemed to give confidence to people. The same value-adding comments may have saved my life. Between every action and reaction there is a space. Within that space we have the freedom to choose. I hope that I will always choose kindness.

Evaluation: *This account is a poignant one. Dave's narrator sends a message about character and right behavior as he acts selflessly even as his own life is threatened. I like the essay's simple, direct, and economical style.*

The Silent Isle of "The Lady of Shalott"

Charry A. Shouf

Course: Literature 105
Instructor: Barbara Hickey

Assignment:

Write an original analysis of a poem.

"Willows whiten, aspens quiver, / Little breezes dusk and shiver" (10-11). Musically, "The Lady of Shalott" begins with the sounds and imagery of fields of barley and rye stretching up in abundance around the fields of Camelot, with the surrounding willow and aspen trees rustling in the wind. There is a melodious intoxication stirred in the wind. Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem drips with sweet sounds and lovely descriptions of the land surrounding Camelot and the Lady of Shalott. The diction is so light and well chosen that the words of the poem fall from the tongue with delicious elegance and soft rhythm. Repetition of lines such as "The island of Shalott" (9) and "The Lady of Shalott" as the end lines of many of the stanzas sheds light on the immortality of the legend of this sweet lady and her beauty. The words *the Lady of Shalott* are whispered on the wind of Camelot and echo through legend to the present. The Lady's tragically short maidenhood allows the irony and sorrow over her plight to be remembered in this airy song. Through the use of musical language and symbolic imagery, each of the four parts of the poem brings to light different stages of the lady of Shalott's life and the chain of events following her first glance upon Lancelot.

The Lady of Shalott resides in a tower near Camelot. She is a legend even while she lives as a recluse, eternally weaving the images and scenes she sees in a magical mirror. Everything about the Lady is mystical and lovely:

Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott." (30-36)

Even without the words of her song, Tennyson describes the Lady singing with such diction and rhyme that the poem itself resembles a song. No one sees the Lady of Shalott, but the men outside her towers recognize her presence in Shalott and call her a fairy, praising her sweet voice in the morning. Part One, comprised of lines one through thirty-six, describes the countryside and the grey rowers and crops that surround Shalott and lead down to Camelot, as is read in lines ten and eleven: "Willows whiten, aspens quiver, / Little breezes dusk and shiver." Even the Lady of Shalott's seclusion is described as something of beauty: "There she weaves by night and day / A magic web with colours gay" (37-38). Other men cannot see her, but she can see everything around her through her mirror. The Lady weaves the scenes and people she sees by the river that flows on to Camelot. She is contented in that way of life.

Part Two describes how the Lady is at peace in her tower, weaving. She does not envy the other girls she sees going about their business in the open air. Witnessing nature and the beauty of Camelot second-hand pleases the Lady as she weaves. She remains at peace so long as she has not fallen in love. She has not seen Lancelot. The last stanza in Part Two marks the transition of a new tone into the poem. Now, the speaker relates the changes imminent in the Lady with the imagery of funerals and mournful music. Lines sixty-seven and sixty-eight are in direct contrast to lines thirteen and fourteen in Part One, which speak about the river running down to Camelot. "A funeral, with plumes and lights / And music, went to Camelot" (67-68). There is a change in the scenery. The celestial state of the Lady is cast down into reality. There are death and sadness in Camelot, in contrast to the lovely countryside spoken of early on in the poem. The Lady of Shalott

abandons her way of life, saying, "I am half sick of shadows" (71). The curse spoken about in lines forty-two through forty-four begins to creep out of its shadows. The Lady falls in love.

In Part Three, the archaic terminology brings light to a dramatic change in the Lady and in the poem. No longer does the poem focus just on the Lady of Shalott. The poem turns to gallant, mighty, and almost unearthly descriptions of Lancelot, his armor, and even his voice. The curse is Lancelot. Dated words and phrases such as "A bow-shot from her" (73), "brazen" (76), "baldrick" (87), and "shone" (92) describe the gallant Sir Lancelot. The "b" sounds of these medieval terms strengthen the image of Lancelot. He grows robust and beautiful in the eyes of the Lady and the reader. In her mirror, the Lady of Shalott sees images of Lancelot with a "dazzling" sun behind him causing his armor to shimmer. Having but seen Lancelot once, the Lady of Shalott leaves her grey towers in search of this knight in Camelot.

The weather turns stormy in Part Four, foreboding the Lady's danger and the curse in leaving the castle. However, the speaker could be commenting on more than just the Lady's danger being part of the threat. For the Lady, the curse could be more than Lancelot or even leaving the towers of Shalott. Tennyson could also be commenting that impulsive love can lead to a person's later unhappiness or even death. The poem begins to read much faster in this final section with harsh "d" sounds: "And down the river's dim expanse... / Did she look to Camelot" (127-31). The Lady of Shalott drowns or falls victim to the curse in another manner as she floats down in a boat bearing her name to Camelot. However, this maid was immersed in passion and idealism before her death. She turned from safety and a place of constancy (and really divinity, being able to see all that went around her) to pursue a man, a god in her mind, embodying more beauty than even the fair city of Camelot. Part Four ends with sorrow. Lancelot looks well upon the now still Lady of Shalott, calls her lovely, and asks grace to be on her as she has passed away. The Lady slips in and out of existence, one with Camelot, and as the embodiment of purity and sweet beauty and hopefulness.

The tragic irony of the maiden's death upon her first venture outside of her towered home creates the legendary

heartbreak surrounding Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott." Each of the four sections carries the speaker's lyric description of the Lady as she passes her time weaving until she sees Lancelot. The knight is seen in the backdrop of a providential light with his armor and shield glistening in the sun:

A red-crossed knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott. (78-81)

Indeed, it seems fated that the Lady of Shalott, mystically withdrawn from society, is lured outside of her grey towers to seek Lancelot with all his beauty and glory. The speaker shows that falling in love impulsively or even just leaving her castle is the curse that causes the Lady of Shalott to die. The Lady of Shalott loses her life in search of a new one in Camelot from her cloistered home of Shalott. Lancelot's fair speech upon finding her dead embodies the emblem of his shield. "He said, 'She has a lovely face; / God in his mercy lend her grace, / The Lady of Shallot'" (169-71). As the poem so ends, Lancelot shall forever be kneeling before the sweet Lady of Shalott, eternally asleep at her first meeting before the knight of Camelot—the tragedy flowing down from Camelot.

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Evaluation: *Cherry writes a lucid and sophisticated analysis of Tennyson's poem "The Lady of Shalott." Like the poem, Cherry's lyrical essay "drips with sweet sounds and lovely descriptions."*

The Serpent

Sofya Tokman

Course: Literature 115
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment:
*Write a response to
Toni Morrison's novel Beloved.*

What is guilt? It is the ache in your chest that does not let you breathe. It is the ceaseless array of thoughts that cloud your mind like a thunderstorm clouds the sky. It is the unending flow of explanations that escape your lips before your clouded mind can stop them; one after another, they keep slipping away from you until the sound of your own voice is nauseating. After all, how many times can you say, "I am sorry" to soothe the ache in your chest, to clear your mind, and to finally stop the word "sorry" from constituting your entire vocabulary. Guilt can be the motivation behind your every move, your every word, and your every thought. It is this very emotion that plagues the existence of Sethe in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. In this tale of enslavement and human suffering, guilt is treated like a serpent that feeds off of its prey, destroying the life of its victim with its poisonous venom.

Although guilt can drive a person out of her mind, take over her life, and become a way of life, without it our world would have no conscience, and we would lose our humanity. It is necessary for humankind to have remorse over actions that are brutal, violent, or merely rude; it keeps this world from becoming a breeding ground for ceaseless crime, violence, and pain. If there

were no guilt, punishment would mean nothing. A person can be sent to jail, but if he feels no remorse, the term he will serve will fail to change him. Individuals with no trace of guilt in their hearts leave prison only to rob again, kill again, and destroy civilized life. On the other hand, logic would dictate that those who feel this nagging, unbearable emotion would avoid heightening its fervor by committing further crimes. However, although guilt can serve as a deterrent against committing inexcusable acts, it does not discriminate between those individuals who sin out of hatred and cruelty and those who act out of love and devotion.

Sethe murdered her daughter. She slit the throat of a child, a human being, as if it were merely that of a farm animal. Sethe played God, toyed with nature, and destroyed life. Without a second thought she stopped the beating of a human heart, plucking the helpless child from earthly existence, throwing her own soul into hell's abyss. This woman, tortured by the infamous institution of slavery, committed the ultimate sin, an act so unthinkable that it stops every reasonable parent dead in her tracks. Sethe had the will to murder her own daughter without a second thought, just like Abraham raised a knife to slit the neck of his miracle child Isaac without even the slightest tremor of his hand. Because of her deed, Sethe is condemned for eternity while Abraham has been hailed to be the Father of Faith by the Christian nation. Where is the fairness?

The question still remains, however. Does a mother, or anyone for that matter, have the right to take a life, be it out of love or cruelty? Should this murderer be spared of the very emotion whose punishment is worse than any sentence in jail? Most would agree that any mother who murders her helpless innocent child deserves a punishment worse than death, a life of torture and suffering. Some would say that through her act, Sethe robbed her daughter of the choice of whether to live or to die; thus Sethe deserves to have guilt eat away at the core of her being. After all, this woman was not God, and had no right to take the destiny of another human being into her own hands.

The answer to the question of Sethe's rights lies in the meaning of the word "sacrifice." The Webster's Dictionary defines this word as a "forfeiture of something highly

valued for the sake of something considered to have a greater value or claim." If this definition stands true, then an assumption can be made that Sethe sacrificed her own soul in order to prevent the physical and emotional victimization of her daughter. She did not know that slavery was gasping its last breaths of air in 1856; all that she was aware of was the fact that the master who viewed her children and her as animals was about to dig his claws into their backs and yank freedom from under their feet. Sethe had been raped by the master's nephews; they tore at her womanhood while she was pregnant and suckled her milk as if she were a barnyard animal. How could any mother knowingly put her precious children back in such an environment? Sethe could not, and did not. She would not send her children out as "sheep amidst the wolves."

Sethe's spirit is haunted by the murder of her daughter, which she committed to save the child from the jaws of the institution that left Sethe's back scarred and mutilated. Despite the fact that Sethe seems to genuinely believe that the horrendous act she committed was the right choice to make, she still feels the ache in her chest and hears the sound of her own voice screaming "murderer." Year after year, she listens to her own tortured voice, to the bitter tantrums of the dead child that haunts her home, and to the whispers that follow her like her own shadow. Regardless of whether the act that Sethe committed was right or wrong, she is still made miserable by the occurrence. She spared her daughter a life of pain and horror, but still guilt haunts her, the ghost of her child haunts her, the legacy of her deed haunts her, while her children leave her.

When the realization crept upon Sethe that the strange young woman who showed up on her doorstep one day was the daughter that she murdered eighteen years ago, the guilt that she felt throughout these years was now not only a silent torture, but a flowing sea of explanations, excuses, and apologies whose ceaseless whines filled the room. The silent battle that the life-battered woman fought for years escalated into a full-fledged war filled with deadly wails and piercing screams. The words that escaped Sethe's lips drained her of her energy, her strength, and even her physique; it was almost as if her words ate away at her skeleton, leaving her a shapeless, helpless pile of flesh. She became old, tired, and weak in

weeks, not years. The guilt no longer filled only her mind; it now took its toll on her body. Beloved hungrily devoured Sethe both body and soul, feeding on the guilt that exhausted Sethe, growing fat and happy at the cost of her mother's life.

Beloved is not only a representation of enslaved women in Morrison's novel, but she is also the depiction of guilt, selfish like a two-year-old and seductive like a beautiful temptress. The emotion that Sethe felt throughout the years had manifested itself in a young, beautiful woman who made Sethe's chest ache with her presence, clouded Sethe's mind with her statements, and made Sethe regurgitate excuse after excuse, draining the older woman's mind and body.

Much like guilt, Beloved was stubborn and selfish; every apology whispered, muttered, screamed, or wailed by Sethe disintegrated into thin air, Beloved refusing to let the words penetrate her mind. Much like a young child possessively holds on to her toys, Beloved held on to Sethe, who in actuality could be just as easily maneuvered and manipulated as a doll. Every word that was muttered by Beloved's beautiful lips sliced at Sethe's soul like a butcher knife through soft flesh. This knife slit her already broken heart in half, stabbed away at her sanity, and stripped her body of its flesh, leaving just skin and bone. The guilt that manifested itself in Sethe's dead daughter isolated the woman, leaving her lonely, distraught, and restless.

Fortunately, like all creations living or not, guilt weakens with age. Like an old man made powerless by the elements of earthly existence, the chokehold of guilt weakens despite the resistance put forth by the hands of this vengeful monster. Memories that plague the minds of guilt's victims lose clarity over time. With every passing year, the human mind heals the wounds created by this emotion. Toni Morrison, well aware of guilt's eventual fall from power, illustrates its demise through Sethe's seeming acceptance that she is her own "best thing," not Beloved. Thus, the butcher knife that is guilt rusts with age, dulls over time, and loses its ability to slice the softest piece of flesh, maybe even that of Sethe.

Beloved does not present guilt to be a positive emotion that keeps us from committing hurtful acts and strengthens our will to stay on the right path, but as a negative

A New Brain

John Tolan

Course: English 101

Instructor: Jack Dodds

Assignment:

Write an informal, "New Journalism"-style report on a topic of interest to Harper College readers.

"Fovea Capitis, Fovea Capitis, Fovea Capitis." I repeated these words over and over, sometimes with my eyes closed, trying to brand them into my memory. I chanted the words. I even sang them in an operatic style voice. I paced back and forth, reciting the words in cadence with each step.

Earlier that day I had mentioned to Duncan, a friend of mine, that I was taking a class in physical anthropology, and that I had a test coming up, a test I was quite concerned about. I took out the text and showed him all the parts of the bones I was trying to memorize. I mentioned the "Fovea Capitis," that little hole in the femur, and he glanced at it without much interest.

Duncan and I work for an airline, and we were flying together all month. The next day Duncan asked me if I had gotten much studying done. "Quite a bit," I said. "Let me see. On the femur, you have the lateral and medial condyles; you also have the patellar articular surface and uh, a thing." I drew a blank.

"Could it be the Fovea Capitis?" Duncan asked.

"Yes," I remarked, surprised. "Did you know this from another class you've taken?"

"No, remember, you showed it to me yesterday."

"What's this? I must have gone over that term a hundred times, and you heard it once and remembered it. How did you do that?"

Duncan's expression told me that he was about to reveal a great secret, but first he wanted to bask a moment in his intellectual triumph. "All right," he said, "but are you willing to change your brain?"

Willing to change my brain? No, not really, I thought, but to satisfy Duncan, sure, why not? "Yes, Duncan, I am

willing to change my brain. Do you have another handy?"

"You know what I mean. You don't actually change your brain, but you change the way you learn, especially learning new words and most especially words on a list." He then proceeded to share his great secret. "When I heard the term, my mind broke it down into individual words, different words I am more familiar with. This is a habit I developed five years ago, when I first started college, and it has stayed with me. For the term Fovea Capitis, I took my career, a first officer for an airline, and that became FO. We travel; that was the VIA. And we fly with a captain, that I related to Capitis, and thus: Fovea Capitis. The spelling isn't always correct, but it's all you need to remind you of your word. If I didn't use memory aids, I don't think I would have done nearly as well in college."

I mentioned that I had heard of such aids before and have even used them without realizing it. "Duncan, do you know what this memory tool you're using is called?" I asked.

"Oh yeah, they're called mnemonics, and some teachers don't like 'em. They think we're not learning or something, but I think they're wrong. Just look at how smart I am."

I think Duncan was making a joke, but then again maybe not. I decided to look into mnemonics, and even though it sounds like it would be a good name for a sixties soul group, there could be something to it. Who knows—it might help me on that test I have coming up.

The memory aid books and internet pages I researched each seemed to have a different definition for mnemonics. Some authors leave it out of their text yet teach the techniques as if they were the inventors. Webster defines mnemonics as, "Pertaining to, aiding or intended to aid the memory." That definition is of course correct; however, the term typically refers to rather unusual, artificial memory aids.

The word "mnemonic" is derived from Mnemosyne, the name of the ancient Greek goddess of memory. That fact I found interesting. I realize that ancient Greeks had gods for just about everything, but I was surprised they had one for the memory. I was not able to find a picture of her, but I bet she was beautiful.

The earliest use of mnemonics dates to 500 BCE. Greek and Roman orators used it to remember long speeches. What they did to remember these long speeches is amaz-

ing. They would visualize a familiar place (usually parts or rooms of a building) and mentally place their speech fragments in many different areas in this building. As they made their speeches, they would visualize this place in their mind, going from one room or place to another, picking up their speech fragments as they went along. This is how they remembered their oration. It seems to me the Aztecs used a similar mnemonic device. Since they did not have a written language, they used runners to communicate from one village to another. Chewing coca leaves for energy, men would run from one settlement to another. They carried a rope with many knots in it. Each knot stood for a memorized message to be delivered. If the message was not delivered correctly, the next message delivered could be "You have permission to tear my heart out and feed it to the people."

Today, mnemonics consists of many different techniques. Probably the simplest and most common method is the "first letter association." An example would be remembering the four great eras of time by using the phrase "Can Men Pick Peppers."

C - Cenozoic

M - Mesozoic

P - Paleozoic

P - Pre-Cambrian

Simple, but effective. But did I learn anything by memorizing, "can men pick peppers?" Let's try another one. Imagine a new boat owner who cannot think of a name for his boat. Finally, he comes up with, "Pan Cap Iv." The words are meaningless, but if a person remembers the story, one should be able to come up with the eight parts of speech.

P - Pronoun

A - Adjective

N - Noun

C - Conjunction

A - Adverb

P - Preposition

I - Interjection

V - Verb

Okay. Enough with the lists. They take up plenty of page space, and I don't have space to waste. Did I learn anything by learning these funny sounding phrases? Will any of these help me with my upcoming exam? It never

astounds me to hear students recite strange sounding utterances before an exam, trying to relate a word they don't understand to a word they do. Take Duncan's example on the "Fovea Capitis"—he knew he didn't know the meaning of the term, but the words he invented within the word had a message. How hard could that be to remember? I asked the smart one if he could remember anything else about the Fovea Capitis.

"Oh yes," he replied. "It's the little hole on the ball joint of the femur."

"How could you have known that?"

"Well, let's just say remembering the word helped me remember the place; however, it doesn't work all the time."

I discovered that there are many different types of mnemonic devices, from simple rhymes to complicated link and peg systems. In the link system a person relates one item to be remembered to the next by making up a story for each item and then linking the stories together, one after the other, until the list is complete. Then, the person visualizes the story in his or her mind's eye, with visualization as the key in recalling the items to be remembered.

Some people (and some psychology textbooks) have dismissed mnemonics with the idea that it is effective for certain kinds of rote memory tasks, and that many learning tasks involve understanding more than memorized facts. The implication is that mnemonics is not worth learning because it does not help with understanding.

So what? Mnemonics is not intended for such tasks as reasoning, understanding, and problem solving. It was intended to aid learning and memory. Should we discard something if it does not do what it was not intended to do as effectively as it does what it *is* intended to do? I know that I will use mnemonics when a need for it arises. If it can help me remember a term such as Fovea Capitis instantly, rather than through much repetition and time, then that's okay with me.

Oh, just one thing. I showed up for the exam knowing my little fovea. Guess what! It was not even on the test!

Evaluation: *John has written a witty, conversational report that is as fun to read as it is informative. His is proof that report writing does not have to be uncreative or dull.*

Transcendentalism: Man and Nature

Brianna Turcza
Course: English 101
Instructor: Joe Sternberg

Assignment:
Teach us about a topic which you have researched.

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer” (Reef 69). Thoreau provided with this quote the underlying philosophy of transcendentalism. Transcendentalism was the philosophical and literary movement of the individual and nature that flourished in New England from about 1836 to 1860. It originated among reactionaries, who were reacting against “the orthodoxy of Calvinism and the rationalism of the Unitarian Church” (“Transcendentalism” 2774). Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson eloquently expressed their transcendental beliefs through their writing. Their work influenced not only American society but also the beliefs and culture of the rest of the world. The important and influential transcendentalist movement was based on the divinity of man and nature, the importance of human intuition, and the need for individualism.

First of all, transcendentalism began as a back-to-nature movement. In 1836 Ralph Waldo Emerson published his essay called “Nature.” It was in this work that he first set forth the principles of transcendentalism. He expressed a firm belief in the unity of man and nature. In addition, Emerson began his series of “Essays” by saying, “There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the

same...” (Tanner 3). In other words, Emerson believed that everything has one divine soul, called the “Over-soul.” Both man and nature were believed to be one with God. Transcendentalists urged people to spend time in nature away from their busy lives in order to get in touch with themselves and the “Over-soul.” In fact, Henry David Thoreau, another leading writer of transcendentalism, practiced what he told others to do. In his book entitled *Walden*, Thoreau recalled his experiment in near-solitary living at Walden Pond. He hoped to learn the true meaning of life and to get in touch with himself. While at Walden Pond, he searched for his identity by living in close harmony with nature and by relying on his own instincts. In turn, transcendentalism grew out of the writings of Emerson and Thoreau and into a worldwide movement.

Next, human intuition, according to the transcendentalists, is the highest form of knowledge. Transcendentalists believed that each person has “an inborn idea of what is true and good” (Reef 30). People are reminded of this knowledge by their inner voices. Children and adults who live simple lives are often able to hear their consciences. However, many people seem to lose touch with this inner voice. For this reason, transcendentalists advocated that each individual go back to nature. In a lecture called “The Transcendentalist,” Emerson said that transcendentalists “perceive that the senses are not final, and say, the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell” (Yannella 9). In other words, transcendentalists depended upon genuine intuition as opposed to superficial sensationalism. Technological and material progress is insignificant when compared to the human spirit and intuition. Transcendentalists also believed that every individual is obligated to live up to his or her potential. Thoreau insisted that people’s intuition would lead them to fulfill this potential. In “Economy,” the first chapter of *Walden*, Thoreau stated, “In the long run, men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high” (Thoreau 9). According to author Donald Yannella, “These young radicals relied heavily on spontaneous, intuitive insight as the principal and superior means Man might use in reaching toward the ultimates—truth, goodness, and beauty” (16).

Finally, transcendentalism optimistically stressed individualism, which included self-reliance and rejection of authority. Calling for independence from cultural leadership, Emerson began the search for self-reliance with "The American Scholar," his oration at Harvard in 1837. In a different lecture at Harvard, he said that one's own soul is the source of redemption. Also a supreme individualist, Henry David Thoreau articulated "the search for identity which has long characterized American culture," according to biographer William Howarth (210). The ideas of self-reliance and the rejection of authority in American society are apparent in Thoreau's essay called "Civil Disobedience." In his essay, Thoreau expressed his concern with the government and the loss of individual rights, saying, "That government is best which governs not at all" and that "Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient" (Thoreau 385). In addition, Thoreau advocated civil disobedience "as a means for the individual to protest those actions of his government that he considers unjust" (Thoreau 398). The civil disobedience philosophy affected not only the United States but also the rest of the world. For example, it impacted the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King in the United States, the British Labour movement, and the passive resistance movement led by Gandhi in India. Although not everyone followed this theory of self-reliance, transcendentalism provided a model that many people seemed to follow.

Therefore, transcendentalism was a major movement that impacted people's beliefs and actions. Although it thrived in the middle of the 19th century, transcendentalism influenced numerous leaders of the 20th century, as well. Following the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, people practiced these men's transcendentalist philosophies. American society along with the rest of the world began to recognize the importance of nature, intuition, and self-reliance. In the end, transcendentalism, the philosophical and literary back-to-nature movement, has had an overwhelming affect not only on Emerson and Thoreau's era but also on the modern world.

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Evaluation: Ms. Turcza has selected a complex topic, but her logical organization and clear economical sentences result in an essay that is easy to follow and instructive.

Violent Love

Jessica Wermuth

Course: English 100

Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment:

Identify an area or behavioral pattern in your life that has caused you difficulty for some time—or a long struggle that you have been involved in and that you have overcome (or are in the process of overcoming). Write an autobiographical essay that “tracks” the development of this behavior or struggle from its beginning until its end.

During my sophomore year of high school I sat next to this guy, Todd, who I thought was great. He and I talked and joked around in class, but nothing serious happened that year. I bumped into Todd a few times over the summer and started to develop a small thing for him, but I thought nothing of it because he was a year older than I was, and I thought I would never see him when the school year started anyway. Summer flew by like it normally did; school was starting in a few days, and I still had Todd slightly on my mind.

School started, and for the first four periods, I had yet to see him. I walked into my fifth-hour psychology class, which was for juniors and seniors, and there he was, sitting in the second-to-last row, with an empty seat next to him. He saw me walk in and waved over to me to come sit next to him. I sat down and started to look around the room. “How was your summer?” he asked me. “Good,” I told him. With a smile on his face, he said, “I was hoping we would have a class together this year. Math was so much fun last year.” I looked at him and

laughed while responding, “Me too.” Everyday when we had class, we would talk about teachers, friends, and our weekend plans.

As the days went by, Homecoming was coming closer and closer. Three weeks before the dance, Todd was talking to one of our mutual friends, Sarah, and told her that he wanted to ask me, but he wasn’t sure if I was going with someone. I had planned to go with one of my friends and Sarah knew that, but she knew I liked him and told him to go for it. When Todd asked me, I went and told my friend, with whom I was supposed to go. My friend totally understood about it and told me to have fun. He ended up going with my friend Michelle.

Todd thought we should go out over the weekend so I could meet everyone who would be in our group. We went out and had a great weekend and started to become a serious couple after that. Homecoming was great. We danced the whole night, and our whole group partied afterwards. The first two months of our relationship seemed perfect; we were together every chance we could get. We communicated so well it felt like we knew each other for years. However, like all good things, this came to an end.

It mostly started with the little things. He didn’t approve when I went out by myself, with any of my friends, or soon, any of my family. It started to seem like I was a possession of his that had to be kept away from the public. It didn’t seem to bother me at first. To be honest, it was one of my first serious relationships, and I thought that was how it was supposed to be. My parents started to notice how he treated me and tried to tell me something was not right, but I refused to listen. He looked so sweet and innocent. There was no way he could ever be this way.

I tell Todd that I won’t be able to see him tonight because my friend, Maria, is having an all girls’ night for her birthday. “Why can’t I come,” he whines. “It’s because you’re seeing someone else.” “No,” I tell him, “there is no one else. It’s just you; it’s always been just you.” He looks at me with his eyes all squinted. “That’s right,” he says, “who would want a worthless person like you anyway? You’re lucky you’re with me,” he says, “because no one else would want to be with you. I’ll pick

you up from Nicole's house at around eight, so we can still do something. Be ready; I'm not coming to the door." I look up at him and shrug my shoulders; I hate fighting with him and listening to him talk down to me. That's just the type of person I am; however, I hate having to confront him, so instead, I keep my mouth shut and keep it in. After about an hour at my friend's house, I look up at the clock and start to get a pain in my stomach. I only have fifteen minutes left of freedom. He shows up early, and a long, loud horn interrupts the party. I run to get my shoes; I wasn't watching, and I can only imagine what he will say to me. "Hi," I say to him as I get in the car and close the door. He grabs my arm and starts to yell, "So who were you with? I told you to be watching. I hate having to be around your friends. Do you understand that, or are you too stupid to understand that, too?" I look at him and start to whimper. He rolls his eyes and shoves me against the door. "I can't look at you right now," he says in a disgusted voice. "I'm taking you home so I can go to a party at Nick's house." I start to cry. "I'm so sorry," I cry. "Please take me with you." I start to beg him, but it's not working. "If I can't come with you, then can you drop me off at Nicole's?" I ask. "No," he says, "I don't want you to see anyone tonight. I'm calling you later and you better be home or else." I look at him and put my head down. We stop at a red light, and he grabs for my purse. "What are you doing?" I squeak out. "Give me your license, your set of car keys, and your pager," he yells. He waits a little bit and yells the same sentence even louder. I cry again and hand them over. He throws the keys on the floor of the back seat then pulls me over and gives me a hug. I hold on to him tight and close my eyes, letting the tears roll off my cheeks and on to his shoulder. We pull up to my house, and he gives me a kiss good-bye. "You working tomorrow?" he asks as he pulls me in for a hug. I can feel the pain on my shoulder from hitting the door. "No," I say. "Great," he answers. "I'll call you when I go on break at work, but if you're not home, I'll find another girl to see."

Two weeks after that incident, I am grocery shopping with my mom. I am pretty excited about it because I haven't seen her in days. Whenever I am not in school or

at work, I have to be with Todd or be at home waiting for his call. My friends have started to dwindle down because I'm not "allowed" to hang out with them. Just like my friends, my mom has been starting to notice that something isn't right about my relationship. When we are shopping, she asks how things have been going. "Everything's great," I tell her. "Really," she says, trying to believe me. "Where did all the bruises on your arm come from?" "As dumb as it sounds," I start, "I fell out of bed." "What time do you have to be home for Todd's phone call?" she asks. "I don't know," I reply. On our way to the check out, my mom spots some really pretty roses and grabs them. Five minutes after that, Todd calls. "Just in time," my mom whispers. He tells me that he will pick up a movie on his way home from work, and we can stay in and watch it tonight because it's a Sunday.

He shows up around 6:30. "So which boyfriend did you get the flowers from, you little whore," he snips at me. "Actually, I went grocery shopping with my mom and she bought them for herself," I reply. "Whatever, liar," he says as he gives me a stare that could pierce the wall. My mom walks in with the grocery receipt with the flowers highlighted on it; she had overheard the whole thing. "The flowers are on there," she says as she throws the receipt at his feet. He picks it up and studies it like a book while questioning me about what else we bought today. "Let's watch TV," he says. "I don't feel like watching a movie with you any more." I smile and say O.K. while taking his hand and leading him to the couch. Twenty minutes go past, and he is still flipping through the channels. I reach over and grab the controller. "That's it," he says playfully and throws himself at me. The two of us go to the floor with a thump and start to wrestle for the controller. Just as soon as I finally snatch it away from him, he picks me up and drops me to the ground, shoulder first. I fall and start to cry from the pain and the fact that I can't move my arm. "You're such a faker," he yells. My dad starts to run down the stairs to see what has happened. "She's such a baby," he says as he looks at my father and kicks me in the side. My dad gives him the look of death, and Todd makes an excuse for having to leave. "Daddy," I whimper, "I'm hurt and I can't move." He looks at me and shakes his head. "When will you learn? What will it take for you to realize he is

not right for you?" he asks as I look up at him. He lifts me up and takes me to the treatment center. I leave two hours later, with a dislocated shoulder and three x-rays.

Four months after that was my favorite aunt's Birthday. I wasn't allowed to go because I had to stay home and wait for Todd's phone call. If I missed it, who knows what could happen, plus he already yelled and slapped me because I made the suggestion of going there and then seeing him. He made me feel selfish for putting my family ahead of him. Just like usual, I apologized for being so "stupid."

It took me two months after that to realize that maybe my parents were right, but it was hard to get rid of him. We had so much time together and even though we fought, I loved being with him. I couldn't imagine myself without him, and plus, I was beginning to believe that if we broke up, I would never find anybody else, just like he always told me. All of my friends except for Danielle were angry with me for blowing them off all the time.

Danielle and I are out for dinner, while Todd is at work. He has a short shift, so I don't have to worry about him calling until a lot later, and I will be home by then. Unfortunately, he's home a lot earlier than I thought, and he is waiting down my street with his headlights turned off. When Danielle pulls into my driveway, he takes off speeding and pulls in right behind her. "Who do you think you are," he yells while getting out of his car. "I can't stay here and listen to this," Danielle says. "I'll see you later Jess." "So who were you with?" he questions. "You were looking at it," I reply. "Right," he screams, as he opens his trunk. "You're so stupid. I can't believe you expect me to believe your lies. I know she's just your cover," he keeps going on while he pulls out a hunting knife and a big stuffed dog out of his trunk. "Sometimes you just make me want to," he starts and then trails off as he takes the knife and throws it into the dog's stomach and slides the knife down. Bits of stuffing start to fall out as he gives me a devilish look. "You are the worst person that I have ever met," he complains as he pulls the knife out and examines it. I swallow hard, still speechless as to what's going on. "Let's go some

place; we have to talk," he says. He walks around to the passenger side of the car and opens the door for me to get in. "Thank you," I say with a shaky voice. I get half way in the car and he slams the door on me. "OUCH!" I yell. "That's uncalled for." He nods and gives me a smile. We sit in my driveway and talk. He tells me how I make him feel, and I cry and apologize; there is nothing I can really say to him. We sit and talk for an hour, talking about what we should do to make our relationship better again. When we finally decide on something, I decide I need a break and have to go to bed. He pulls me close to say good night and gives me a tight hug. As he pulls away, he whispers in my ear, "If you ever pull that again I will hunt you down and then gut you like a deer. I love you." I look at him with fright in my eyes, and he knows he has me right where he wants me—in total fear. He pulls away and throws the dog on my front lawn. Not knowing what to do, I run upstairs to my room and cry myself to sleep. My mom comes to check on me in the middle of the night because she had heard screaming outside; she wants to make sure I am O.K. She asks what happened, and I tell her nothing. I don't want anyone to know what was said and done.

The summer is coming to an end. I am starting back up at high school, for my senior year, in two weeks; he is starting at Harper in one week. To say good-bye to the summer, our friend throws a party on one of our last free weekends. My friend Colin, whom I haven't seen in years, is at the party, so I end up talking to him for a while. Todd was spending a lot of time with his friend Tiffany, so I figured it would be all right. "Be ready to go; we're leaving in five minutes," he comes over to warn me. It is about 2:30 in the morning as Todd and I are on our way home from the party. Over the soft playing song of "Free Falling," by Tom Petty, shots of anger ring out. "I can't believe you talked to some guy at that party," he says with rage. "I've known him since third grade," I tell Todd. "Why do you do that?" he asks. "Someone needs to teach you a lesson," he says, as he grabs my arm and squeezes his fingers into my skin. "Stop, that really hurts," I yell. He pulls over to the shoulder. We're about ten minutes from my house. "Get out!" he yells, with his eyes glaring at me, sharp as daggers. I stare at him in

disbelief. "Are you kidding me?" I ask him. "Do you know what time it is?" "Open the door," he says as he grabs my arm even tighter. I reach my arm over and open the door, while at the same time he starts to push. I give up and get out. Standing outside the door, I stare at him in amazement, waiting for him to tell me to get back in so we could talk. That didn't happen, however; he shouts, "This is to teach you a lesson for talking to others," and then he grabs the door and slams it in my face. While he continues to speed down the Elgin O'Hare Expressway, I dig through my purse for my cell phone, and I call my parents to pick me up on the side of the road. My sister answers the phone sleepily. I explain everything that happened in between sobs. She is there in 20 minutes.

After we got home that night, my sister called the Elk Grove Police Department and filed a complaint on him because I was only seventeen at the time. I had to talk to the police lady, who deals with abuse, and she wanted me to press charges on him for hitting me and leaving me stranded. I talked to her for 35 minutes, and that's all it took to make me realize that I shouldn't have to put up with him.

Three days after our incident on the expressway, I saw him just so I could get my things back. He threw them at me and turned to walk away. I stayed in the doorway to watch him go, when all of a sudden he turned around and swung at my eye. He got me pretty well. That's when it finally hit me, that it was finally over. He paged me up to four months after we broke up, and up to this day, I still see him sitting down our street every once in a while. I used to see him all the time at school, but for some reason, he's not there any more.

I shouldn't have put up with Todd's abuse for so long, but I was afraid of what could happen to me. I also believed for some reason that he would change. I realize I'm strong for dealing with it, but I'm even stronger for getting out. It was a lot harder to get out of an abusive relationship than anyone could imagine. It took a long time to get my relationships back to where they were with my family and friends. I regret not listening to my father and friends when they told me to get out.

When I look back, staying in that relationship was not worth all the pain and aggravation. It's not worth it for anyone. There were so many warning signs that this was a dangerous person, but I ignored them. I kept thinking that people were overreacting. Nothing could be wrong with him; he looked too sweet and innocent. For some reason I blamed myself, at one time, for his rage. Then, I started to make excuses for him, which was the worst thing I could have done. Finally, I have realized it's not my fault. No one should ever have to go through this. No one should ever stray so far off the path of self-love, and so near to the path of ignorance, of self-hatred, of love without love.

Evaluation: *In composing this essay, Jessica puts us there, through careful recasting of past events in the present tense, into some difficult emotional terrain. This writer has courage and purpose; she does not flinch from the details of the truth, and her truths have the power to enlighten others. This is autobiographical writing of the highest power.*

The Patriot

Kathy Wilmot

Course: History 111

Instructor: Tom DePalma

Assignment:

Write a critical review of the film, The Patriot. Evaluate the film's veracity based on what you have learned about the American Revolution.

The Patriot is a film that, with uncharacteristic accuracy, depicts the events that occurred during the American Revolution. This film challenges Michael Kammen's view that pop culture "derevolutionizes" the war by presenting it as "neat and tidy." It manages to continuously expose the viewer to the brutality and ugliness that defines any war, and it effectively conveys the vast range of emotions experienced by the Loyalists, Patriots, and British Army.

The film's main focus is on a character named Benjamin Martin, who is based on the actual revolutionary war hero, Francis Marion. Both Martin and Marion were farmers who fought in the French and Indian war, adopting the "guerrilla warfare" tactics of the Indians they were fighting against. They were brave men and great motivators. Both men had headquarters in the swamps. In the film, Martin is referred to as the "Ghost," while Marion's nickname was the "Swamp Fox." Both names are reflective of their ability to attack and disappear at will by utilizing their familiarity of the terrain upon which they were fighting. This gave them the upper hand by exploiting the British soldiers' lack of knowledge of the swamps and forests of South Carolina.

In the film, Benjamin Martin's introduction to the war begins with a letter inviting him to attend an assembly in Charlestown, whose purpose is to settle the issue of whether South Carolina will levy money to support the war effort. Like many cities of the time, Charlestown is in chaos, with demonstrators in the streets burning dummies in effigy and rousing the crowds with comments such as "Death to King George," "Send him a message he will never forget," and "Hang them all." The assembly itself attests to the reality of the Colonists' division of loyalties. The Patriots refer to King George as a tyrant and support liberation from England. The Loyalists do not want to unite with the other colonies, as they consider that to be treason against the King. Representative of the emotional conflict many Colonists undoubtedly experienced in the early stages of the war, Benjamin Martin's character is angry about taxation without representation and believes the Colonies should govern themselves, but not at the cost of a war with England. He knows the war will be fought "amongst us, in our own backyard," and indeed he is correct. He realizes the war will claim innocent lives and, as a single parent, feels a strong commit-

ment to protect his family. He is also reluctant to participate in another war, because he is still fighting the demons haunting him due to his conduct in the French and Indian War.

Also present at the assembly is Martin's oldest son, Gabriel. Gabriel's character symbolizes the nature of a true Patriot. He believes his father is hiding behind his family, using them as an excuse not to fight. Like the impassioned Patriots of the time (and most probably influenced by the knowledge that his friends were already serving), Gabriel is willing to join the Continental Army and fight for the cause of Liberty. He sees his service as a duty and although he is afraid of dying, he is willing to give his life for the cause. The scene where he serves with the Continentals reflects the reality of war in the loss of close friends, the courage it takes to stand 50 feet from your enemy and look him straight in the eye, the primitive nature of medical facilities, and the dedication needed to endure the harshness of winter without adequate clothing or supplies.

After refusing to vote for the levy at the assembly, Benjamin tends to his farm for the next few years. Gabriel comes stumbling in one night because he was wounded while carrying dispatches. That is also the night the war finally reaches Martin's own backyard, just as he predicted. When morning comes, Martin has established a temporary "hospital" where he is taking care of both wounded Patriots and Redcoats. This is the set-up for the introduction of a character named Tavington. Tavington is based on the real-life Colonel Banastre Trelton, a tyrant infamous for his cruelty and the taking of the lives of innocent women and children. In the manner of the notorious Trelton, Tavington immediately displays his blatant disregard for following the "rules of war." In a matter of a few minutes, Tavington has captured Gabriel as a spy, shot Martin's son Thomas in the back as he was trying to rescue Gabriel, and ordered his men to kill all the Continental wounded and burn Martin's house and barn.

Although these were fictional accounts in the film, they do reflect the true nature of the atrocities committed during the Revolution, such as the destroying of plantations and the death of innocents. Soldiers were being killed while retreating or after surrendering. There is an

actual incident in which the Virginia regulars surrendered and the Dragoons riding amongst them killed 200 men anyway. Some of the British officers themselves probably struggled against the brutal tactics used by their fellow officers. To most of them, war was something that should be fought in a "gentlemanly" manner. This is indicated in a scene where Cornwallis chastises Tavington by saying "the conduct of officers is the measure of a gentleman" and "the manner in which you serve me, reflects upon me."

The most effective scene in the film comes after the dramatic assault on Martin's home and family. To avenge his son Thomas' death and rescue his son Gabriel, Martin runs into his burning house, grabs his weapons and his two young sons and goes after the British soldiers. Martin uses many of the skills he learned in the French and Indian war during this scene. He sets his weapons in strategic positions, taking advantage of the "higher ground" and the element of surprise. After initial engagement of the enemy, Martin becomes involved in very bloody hand-to-hand combat, as the Indians would have. He also releases his fury due to the death of his son, by repeatedly chopping at a British soldier with his tomahawk long after the soldier is dead and he himself is covered in blood. This effectively shows the emotional toll this war had on those who suffered due to needless violent acts committed against the innocent.

The scene also portrays how children were exposed to weaponry at a very young age. Both of his sons know how to shoot, having been taught by their father that to "aim small" is to "miss small," meaning shoot for the part of the body with the most area, namely the chest. His sons also know how to pick out the British officers from the rest and are told to "start with the officers and work your way down." Officers were targeted first in war because, as Cornwallis says in a conversation with Martin, "Officers need to be in command to lead and restrain their men." If a combatant took the officers out first, the men would become disorganized, giving the other side an advantage, and that was another part of Martin's strategy.

Even after the death of Thomas, Martin is still not committed to joining the cause. He argues with Gabriel, stating, "Your place is here now." When Gabriel decides

to continue on with the fight, Martin feels he is losing his family and joins the effort in order to protect his son. His friend, Colonel Harry Bursell, asks Martin to head up the militia. Martin agrees and begins recruiting men to serve with him.

The recruiting process reveals how the issue of race affected the Revolution. In accordance with the times, slaves did not have the right to make their own decisions. This is confirmed in the film by showing a slave owner committing his slave, Occam, to serve in his stead without asking Occam's permission. Both armies played on the slaves' hatred of bondage, by attempting to recruit them via flyers and word-of-mouth during the war. One flyer Occam was perusing indicated slaves could have their freedom in exchange for one year's service with the Patriots and they would even be paid a sum of 5 shillings per month. In the film, Occam is subjected to comments such as "Why don't you read [the flyer] to us?" "No muskets to slaves" and "What the hell will you do with freedom?" The idea of freedom and equality to a slave who had been in bondage his whole life must have been intoxicating, and many did enlist. However, even though they served, most would never receive the freedom promised by the government.

After the recruiting process, the task looming before the militia was to keep Cornwallis busy in the South, destroying his supply lines, so he would not be able to head north toward New York and a decisive victory. The film accurately depicts the diversity of the militia by representing them as common men from all walks of life, from farmers to shopkeepers to clergymen. Although their disadvantage lay in the fact that they were independent and untrained, they were united in their knowledge of the territory, their hatred for the British, and they were, as Martin indicates, "excellent marksmen." At the time, the Continental regulars were being decimated because they were marching in columns over open fields and engaging in head-to-head confrontations with the most powerful military force in the world—a force that had perfected that way of fighting. The militia was able to surprise the British army by hiding in the swamps and forests, ambushing unsuspecting British soldiers, and disappearing. Cornwallis expresses his frustration at this by saying, "If we can't protect our supply lines against the

militia, how can we fight the regulars or the French?" To this, Tavington replies, "We can't find them; they won't fight like regulars."

While fighting with his militia, Martin experiences several poignant moments. One situation has to do with Thomas' death. The day Thomas died, he was carrying a bag full of toy soldiers he had spent many hours painting and playing with. When he was shot, the toy "redcoat" soldiers spilled out onto the ground. Martin carries that bag of soldiers with him throughout the war. There are several scenes in which he is melting those "redcoat" soldiers over a fire and making them into bullets. There is irony in the fact that Martin's "redcoat" bullets are the ones killing Redcoat soldiers. He uses them as a way to avenge the death of his son at the hands of the British.

Another touching scene comes after Martin's son Gabriel is killed by Tavington. Martin is sitting by Gabriel's body and says, "I have long feared my sins will return to visit me, and the cost is more than I can bear." He is referring to the enormity of the sins he committed during the French and Indian War. During that war, he and his men captured Cherokee and French soldiers who had slaughtered settlers at Fort Wilderness. To teach the Cherokee and French a lesson, they killed the captured soldiers slowly, cutting them up piece by piece. They then sent the pieces back to the Cherokee and French. When the Cherokee broke their treaty with the French, Martin said, "That's how we justified it." However, Martin could never reconcile himself to his actions and asked for forgiveness every day for what he had done. When his friend Colonel Bursell tries to convince Martin to "stay the course" and continue fighting, Martin says, "Why do men feel they can justify death? Is it arrogance?" His question about arrogance refers to the way men assume the role of God, convincing themselves they have the right to take a life in return for one that has been lost. Men need to be able to justify death in order to live with their conscience. They are not plagued with guilt when they can ease their mind by saying "I had a right to do it, because of what they did to us." Although his first instinct was to abandon the cause, Martin eventually decides to rejoin the militia when he sees the tattered flag Gabriel spent so much time mending. He realizes the commitment Gabriel had to the cause and continues on.

Although the British were constantly frustrated by the militia, they continued to underestimate the militia's effectiveness. The Continental Army used Britain's disdain for the militia to their advantage many times. At the Battle of Cowpens, the militia's mission was to serve as decoys, lure the British closer, then retreat over a ridge when the British charged. Unbeknownst to the British, the Continental Army was laying in wait behind that ridge. The film shows Tavington chasing the retreating militia, followed by Cornwallis who says "We'll see who takes the glory from this field." It gives the impression that the downfall of the British Army had a lot to do with ego, and to some extent, that is true. By believing the war would be over quickly and thinking they were an unbeatable force, the British Army unwittingly gave the Colonists a huge advantage.

There are a few things in the film that could have been improved upon. One is the impression the film gives that the British soldiers were the only ones who committed horrific acts during the Revolution. There was only one scene in which the Patriots were shown acting in an inappropriate manner and that was when they shot a few soldiers who were about to surrender. In addition, the film gave no hint of the passage of time. It seemed as if the whole war took place in one year. This issue could have been addressed by indicating the names of the battles and the years they were fought.

Taken as a whole, however, the film is a very accurate depiction of the events that took place during the Revolution. It was able to capture the tension, conflict, and emotion that must have been experienced by all involved. It did not fail to show us that war is an ugly event, full of bloodshed, death, and misconduct. Of greatest importance, though, the film illustrates the courage it took for the people of this nation to stand up against the most powerful military in the world and say "No more!"

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Evaluation: *Kathy provided an insightful blend of history and historiography in her review. This allowed Kathy to write a critique of the film's art and historical impact.*

What Is
Good Writing?
The
Anthology
Judges
Give Their
Standards

Paul S. Bellwoar

Good writing moves a reader to forget who he/she is for a while, and it is this temporary suspension of self that allows one to breathe another condition and share in the infinity of the human experience. So often this is why I feel revitalized after an especially remarkable read. The writer has given me the gift of himself/herself and an opportunity to cease being me for a moment.

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.

Julie Fleenor

I want to hear the writer's voice. I like vivid writing which convinces me that beneath syntax, semi-colons, and transitions beats a heart and that this heart is connected to a brain which thinks. I want to see the writer wrestling with thinking and writing. I want to see discovery. Can every writer do this? Yes. Will every writer do this? Maybe. But when good writing does occur, it is an incarnation wonderful to behold.

Barbara Hickey

In Mark Twain's words, "Eschew surplusage."

Kurt Neumann

Good writing is linear, logical, and orderly; or the other way around: digressive, analogical, allusive. It is highly crafted, like ourselves, and therefore vulnerable. It is seldom profound, often interesting, and always individual. It is personal, social, ideological, and political. Sometimes it is practical and sometimes it exists for its own sake. And the best writing, for my taste, is salted with a little irony and humor.

Kris Piepenburg

Anything begins with reading—whether reading of physical or mental reality or another text. Good writers “have their feet out” before and as they write, to soak up the details and depth of experience, whether lived or read. Whatever world a writer recreates and brings me to life, 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

Laura Christian Ashley

Language is a gift that is more often taken for granted than appreciated. Words can be a weapon or a tool. I enjoy being able to express myself louder on paper than I could ever do in public.

Jeanne Embrey

I have many warm memories of reading from the oversized poetry book my mother had kept from her childhood. I loved the rhythmical sounds as they flowed from the pages. Now, when I put my thoughts on paper, I return to the rhythm and alliteration I so enjoyed as a child—simple words arranged till they sparkle and come to life.

Kathleen Gneuh

Writing is a tool of communication which describes and creates self expression. It can be a love-hate relationship. It can be very frustrating when you struggle for thoughts and words; however, the desire to write increases when your ideas flow and you see positive results. You are then inspired—this incredible feeling comes when all your ideas and efforts come together.

Connie Gorsky

I have always enjoyed reading. The books that hold my interest are those written by authors that write with color. I am a visual person, so if a writer can hold my interest by touching my senses, I become enraptured in his or her work. Since writing has no sound, color, or scent, it becomes vital to create this ambiance through words alone. In this, the writer becomes the illustrator. Words can be very provocative. This is what moves me to write. An author can be a powerful mentor for someone who aspires to write.

My true mentors are Martha Simonsen and Mary Jo Willis, to whom I am eternally grateful for their knowledge and indubitable confidence in my ability to be a writer. Thank you, Martha and Mary Jo, for this life-changing experience.

Joel Hengstler

The myths of ancient times have long been a source of inspiration for artists and authors alike. Visions of mighty Zeus in his command on Mt. Olympus or Odin on his eight-legged horse capture the imagination. What is often overlooked, however, is the vital importance these gods played in everyday life hundreds of years ago. The polytheistic beliefs were as dominant and meaningful then as Christianity is today.

My personal interest in these mythological figures developed many years ago. During my recent studies on this subject, I began to understand how such beliefs served as an insight into the values held by these ancient civilizations. The deeper this understanding grew, the more curious I became as to how and why these beliefs changed with the people, and how as cultures changed, so did their values and beliefs. The paper I authored in this *Anthology* is the result of this curiosity. Hopefully, you will deepen your understanding of these myths and cultures through my research. And who knows? Perhaps hundreds and thousands of years from now, students and archeologists alike will be studying our images, hoping to understand the values we hold dear today.

Melissa Oakley

It is important to me to grow from my past experiences, whether good or bad. I believe writing is the best way to understand grief and the way it affects others, as well as yourself.

Kathy Wilmot

I have been a voracious reader since childhood and believe exposure to reading is essential to the development of writing skills. Reading stimulates the mind by generating curiosity, increasing vocabulary, and expanding knowledge. In addition, selecting a topic that appeals to you will enhance your writing.

Afterword [A]

Apples or Essays

by Joe Sternberg

“There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, not let fall.”

So says Robert Frost’s old and tired apple-picker in the much-loved poem “After Apple-Picking.” The long years of harvest over, aching in both instep arch and spirit, he anticipates and fears his dreams since they will remind him of beautiful russet apples as well as those that fell, bruised, and were crushed into cider.

For thirty years I have been teaching at Harper (and even several years before that in two other colleges), and now I am about to retire. The other day, with a few extra minutes on my hands and pushed by a kind of morbid curiosity, you might say, I calculated about how many freshmen essays I have read and scared myself with the tally: 25,000, give or take a few. Now that’s a lot of reading and writing. Figure 15 minutes to “grade” a paper (many easily required twice that time), multiply by 25,000 papers, and get 375,000 minutes. Divide that number by 60; gawk at this number: 6,250 hours. Gives me a crick in my neck just thinking about all that time bent over a desk or computer keyboard (I changed with the technology, you see—from pencil to fountain pen to ballpoint to felt tip to computer). For the days: divide 6,250 hours by 24 and read 260.41666. Hmmm. That number is not so impressive—not even a year. So let’s go back to 25,000 papers. That’s impressive. Surely a lot of reading and may we not forget, writing.

Mine is a strange business in its way. I spend several days in class each week yammering to students about writing, trying to keep them awake with a little joke here and a personal story there, occasionally risking to show them and even sigh out loud over a piece of writing I really love. (Sometimes one or two sigh with me. With me, I think, not at me.) At their homes they spend hours struggling to craft a paper most of them question the value of anyway; then they pass it to me: the teacher. I take the papers to my home (for years my wife and children have learned to do without me over “paper weekends”), assume the position, comment on them, and return them. We do it again. And again. Much too often, judging by their groans. Suddenly 16 weeks pass. Credit earned (or not). I start over. Over and over. Thirty years go by and I find I have taught the children of my students and my former students themselves are teachers teaching my new students. It’s true. “Is Sternberg still at Harper?” they ask incredulously, their lives having shot past mine. For a moment I see myself as they must see me—crooked fingers, crooked back, white beard to my toes. It’s a strange business.

And equally strange—no, much much more strange—I can remember specific students AND specific essays. Now before you scoff at what may appear a boast, consider that I have reached the age when instead of exerting the mental energy to remember and say the name of one of our own kids, I say to my wife, “You know, the one out

there,” and vaguely gesture in the direction of Seattle or Cork or Winona. So, to claim that I remember old students (I suppose some might indeed be old, now) and their writing is, well, it’s to the point of this essay, actually.

The process goes something like this: I remember their essays...and then images of my former students appear. Magic? For example, I remember the essay about finally being able to go to college, so passionately written, and then I remember the returning student of 62, her bright, wrinkled face. She sat on the right side of the room. I remember the essay about incest and rape. I could not finish reading that one until I wiped my eyes. I was embarrassed to mark comma splices and spelling errors, so we talked about her essay in my office. I remember the essay, boastfully written, about being born again to the view that no other religion could match the writer’s. In my office, upset at his grade, this man, the veins in his temples bulging, took God’s name in vain and then slammed my office door so hard, the window glass nearly broke. I swore down the hall after him. It was a horrible scene then, but I have laughed about it many times since. I remember the essay by a sad Hispanic woman who showed me the stars she loved and longed for above her dirt and thatch *casa* in Mexico, the young Vietnamese man who sailed me through the South China Sea to safety, the twenty-something Filipino man whose days as a jitney driver in Manila revealed his indomitable spirit, the serious turbaned Sikh who humbly and painstakingly wrote about his religion then left mid-semester to return to India where fighting had broken out once again. All these people, right here at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, and many many more passed through my classes and into and out of my life—through their writing. (I’m glad for being able to remember them, though many more have I forgotten.) Isn’t it magic?

What lightning leaps from the writing? More gently, what intimacy develops between writer and reader? What kind of communion is this that stains the memory like rich wine on linen? (But please don’t ask *me*, even though I have taught writing for over thirty years, I couldn’t tell you; moreover, I like a good mystery.)

Frost’s apple-picker says, “I am overtired/ Of the great harvest I myself desired,” and I admit it: I, too, am tired. Tired of “grading.” The poem is really talking to me lately, and I know it’s the time for change. But the mystery that remains and astounds me still is the act of writing/reading. Electrifying. It thrills me, now; I feel it even as I type these words to you; we are connecting. That’s the link between my students and me, between me and my students’ writing. It has changed me and, apples or essays, it is cherish-able. Is cherished.

Afterword [B]

A Real Teacher of Writing?

by Peter Sherer

“So you have a soul...that you can’t see, smell, or touch. Goodie for you!” I glared at the short and caustic response to what I had thought had been a good essay. It was the spring of 1965, and Dr. Kildahl, my freshman rhetoric teacher, was returning an essay in which I—partly in response to one of Plato’s dialogues we had studied—was attempting to defend the existence of my soul. “Try it again, Sherer.” So I did, and about four drafts later he had this to say to me: “I’m still not convinced that you know you have a soul, but there is something masterful in the presentation here.” He lied, for there was nothing masterful about my writing. I was a mere nineteen-year-old trying to come to terms with the language. But then and there I started thinking about writing as something for my life, and I started caring about it.

A few years later as a child-teacher in Harper’s newly formed English department, I sought renewed confidence as a writer. I had made the grade on those college papers, but could I write as a teacher of writing would want to write—would need to write? Had my former professors really wanted to read what I had written? Likely not, for I wasn’t liking a good share of what my own students were writing. Then came an English 101 Directional Process-Analysis assignment. As a model for my students, I wrote an essay in which I detailed the procedural steps one might take in reading a common figure of speech. I liked that essay well enough to give it

to my students...and to risk sending it off to a publication of the International Reading Association. Could it be? They would publish it! And more—some graduate students and college instructors from other places wanted to use it in their own instructional materials or teaching manuals. Had I found a place? Might I one day qualify as a real teacher of writing?

Perhaps, but the right answers to these questions would finally come from my students. Well, these right answers didn’t come soon or often enough. I, a young instructor in utter frustration, once asked a seemingly disaffected male student just what he was up to in my course. He paused and then responded, “I’m just cruisin’.” So he was... and so, it seemed, were so many other motionless, expressionless, wordless forms whose names came to me in columns of black ink on green printout...after green printout. Just cruisin’. But then one winter afternoon my office work was interrupted by a visit from a former student who had gone on to become a nurse. She proudly presented me with a copy of a trade journal which included an article with her name attached to it. “Now, I can thank your composition class for that,” she announced as she pointed to a professionally printed text. I took little credit for her work, but I gloried in the moment, for she had brought me an answer I so wanted and needed to hear.

Reassurance of my worth and place as a writing teacher has come more easily to me in recent years.

Students, perhaps naively trusting the words of a man with brow wrinkles and graying hair, show some respect, or at least deference; talented and cherished colleagues give support; and student writers whose essays over the years have appeared in this *Anthology* indeed assure me, as they instruct and inspire their classmates. Bud Babbitt's 1990 argument for enclosed cockpits in racing boats yet teaches my students about enthymemic reasoning and controlled writing. Tracy Hayes's 1994 account of an experience with her father in a Chicago bar reminds current students that the best writing often comes first from the heart. Chris Kouzios's 1997 stipulative definition of "bandwidth" convinces students that modern cyberspace words can be explained better by the old techniques of analogy and metaphor than by technical jargon. And Laura Schumann's recent defense of traditional dinner-table rituals shows that meaning is often best made by an unadorned, economical, forceful prose style.

I'll be retired as a Harper teacher as this *Anthology's* issue comes from press. I'm not quite ready for some sagging rocker by a cabin door, but when I am I'll have some things to think back on. I'll likely think about the music my mother gave me, and about a green bicycle that took me to places far and varied. Surely I'll think about writing and so much life as a writing teacher. If these thoughts prove comforting, I'll have, in fair measure, Harper's writing students to thank.

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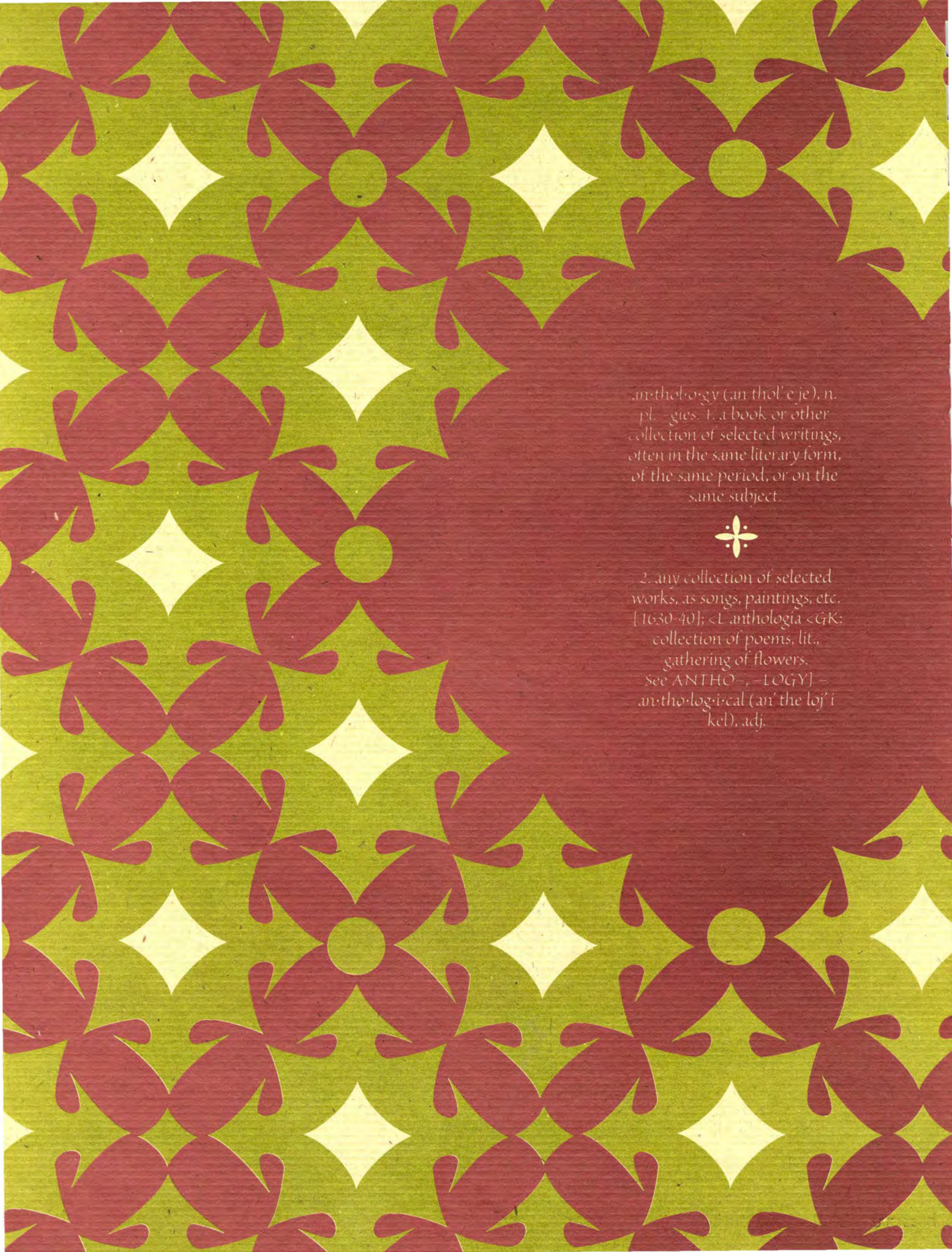
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Contributing Faculty



anthology (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.