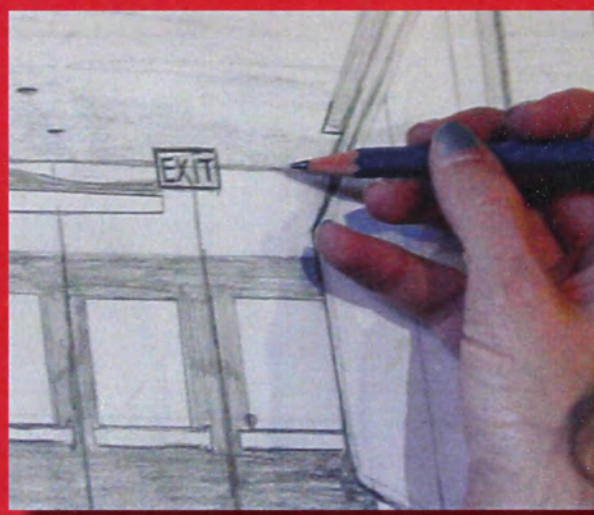
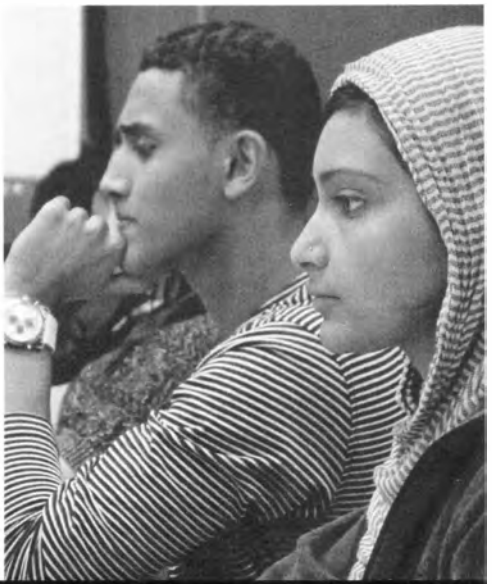



# THE HARPER ANTHOLOGY

## Volume XXIII

## 2011

**An annual, faculty-judged collection honoring the best academic writing, campus-wide, by students at Harper College, Palatine, Illinois**



# Student Authors

Gina Andaas
Craig Babiarz
Ty Beasley
Joshua Blevins
Anca Borz
Nancy Boutcher
Catherine Clarke
Victoria Collier
Maria Daniels
Doug DePalma
Aaron Dingess
Karim Elganzoury
Keith Gabler
Michelle Gibbs
Roman Godzhur
Melissa Handelman
Emma Healy
Charlie Howe
Jennifer Hunter
Andrew Jackson
Carolyn Jarosz
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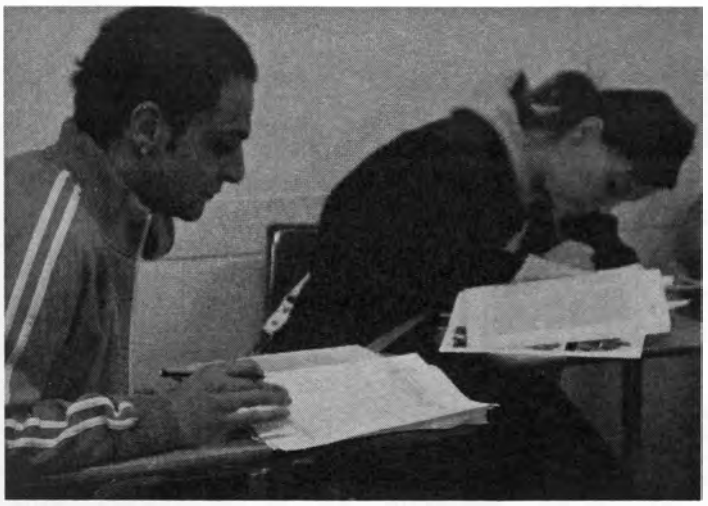
Jordan Johnston
Chandani Joshi
Jorid Keri
Selina Leonard
Hubert Marciniec
Anna Mielnikiewicz
Stacy Morgan
Amanda Muledy
Jack Netter
Lindsay Quid
Josh Roman
Kelly Santoyo
Taylor Schulte
Charles Schumacher
Meaghan Spano
Michelle Stef
Rachel Stuck
Michelle Sullivan
James P. Tufts
Mary VanderHyden
Morgan Wagenknecht
Sung Yim

# The Harper Anthology
# Volume XXIII
## 2011

An annual, faculty-judged collection honoring
the best academic writing, campus-wide,
by students at Harper College, Palatine, Illinois

**Prepared by**
**The Harper Anthology Committee:**

**Charles Brown**
**Barbara Butler**
**Brian Cremins**
**Kurt Neumann**
**Judi Nitsch**
**Pearl Ratunil**
**Josh Sunderbruch**
**Kris Piepenburg, Chair**



# Submission Information

**Submission deadline, 2012 issue:**
**January 25, 2012**

**Submission deadline, 2013 issue:**
**January 25, 2013**

**Send manuscripts electronically by e-mail to kpiepenb@harpercollege.edu, or submit a print copy plus disk to LIB ARTS, Room L203**

**Please include student contact information (e-mail, phone number, street address) with all submissions**

**Submission forms are available at the back of this issue; in the Liberal Arts Office (L203); and in PDF form at the English Department web site:**
**http://dept.harpercollege.edu/english/index.html**

**Submissions are read each January by the members of the *Harper Anthology* Committee, and they are rated on a 5-point scale. Committee members do not rate their own students' papers.**

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**Acknowledgments**

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valued this publication over the years.

# Foreword: Writing to Transform

*Kris Piepenburg, Chair,*
The Harper Anthology *Committee*

Stating it plainly, I am excited by this edition of *The Harper Anthology*. I have read each paper of this issue many times while editing and assembling this publication, and my appreciation of and respect for these papers—and for these students—has only increased. On behalf of the *Harper Anthology* committee, I am honored and pleased to share these excellent papers with the Harper College community.

This edition of the *Anthology* is one of the more eclectic in recent memory, as it features a wide range of types of writing from a diverse group of academic disciplines. This diversity materialized only through the interest and cooperation of our colleagues from all over the campus, who responded to our call for submission of more types of writing from more types of courses to this publication. One paper came to us from Joseph Wachter's Organic Chemistry course, written in chemistry-journal style, presenting the findings of original chemical research; another paper appears here in the form of a website, from Dave Braunschweig's course in IT Project Management; a paper from Diagnostic Medical Sonography, taught by Steven Crow, discusses the physics of moving fluids; papers from Karen Patterson's art courses discuss pieces from ancient Persia and India; and there is even a paper from a Yoga course, in which the student reflects on her semester-long journey in the study and practice of yoga and meditation, under the steady guidance of Pamela Malone. Papers from Humanities, Philosophy, Literature, and English further enrich this collection, examining subjects ranging from Robinson Crusoe to *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. We are indebted to our colleagues, whose support for the *Anthology* continues to enrich this publication, every year.

The papers within this issue are excellent examples of writing for instructors to present in their courses, but they are also works that contribute somehow to the formation of thought and knowledge in the reading public. These papers are, in the words of my colleague Trygve Thoreson, "writing for real" (see the Afterword, pages 184-187, for more of Tryg's thoughts on the purpose of college writing and the need for literacy). In this issue, the effect of "writing for real" on some segment of humanity is clearly evident in the papers from science and technology. Though the writing in a paper like James P. Tufts' "Analysis of the Nitration of an Unknown Benzene Derivative Compound using NMR($^{1}$H,$^{13}$C) and FT-IR[3]" is delightful only for a select audience, it presents the findings of *original research*, which may have implications for future studies. (This is definitely "writing for real.") The paper in the form of a website, from students Nancy Boutcher and Charlie Howe, has value, *now*, for the Harper College community, as its constructive critique of one of Harper's many websites could eventually affect the web presence and presentation of this College department. There is a seriousness of application within these assignments. Learning to write in the style of a chemistry journal, *now*, will serve the chemistry student who goes on to further study and work in this field; maintaining a high standard of writing in presenting information on a website will certainly help students who develop careers in website design and (as the course is titled) IT Project Management. Certainly, these papers have value as *practice*; however, as I have pointed out, they are uniquely valuable in their meaningful content, *now*, as papers presenting information that matters *now*. To borrow Professor Thoreson's phrase again, this is "writing for real."

None of the writing in this *Harper Anthology* could be called "writing for fake." Many of the papers represent what I urge my students to create as they write for their courses and for themselves: some sort of memorable record of their existence and of their studies, that others could benefit from if they were to encounter it some time in the future, perhaps even in the next century. Certain papers in this volume have this sort of timeless value, as the journals of a nineteenth-century naturalist or papers of a twentieth-century literary critic might have for us today. In my estimation, Jennifer Hunter's essay "The Way Life Should Be," a description of current socioeconomic conditions in the state of Maine, has the potential to be meaningful reading 50 or 100 years from now, when perhaps the state of Maine has recovered, through some miracle, or perhaps when it no longer exists; the same sort of quality exists in Jack Netter's essay "Joe the

**Student Reflections on Writing: A Short List of Good Advice for Writers***

- Be honest (Carolyn Jarosz)
- Write it from the heart (Gina Andaas)
- Allow yourself to write naturally (Kelly Santoyo)
- Put time and effort into it (Maria Daniels)
- Do the research (Kelly Santoyo)
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- Accept the challenge, and accept help (Anna Mielnikiewicz)
- Edit ruthlessly (Jennifer Hunter)
- Wait awhile between drafts (Jennifer Hunter)
- Respond to urges to write (Hubert Marciniec)
- Always strive to improve (Emma Healy)
- Write something that transforms readers' perceptions (Rachel Stuck)

* This is the editor's condensed, paraphrased version of some of the student reflections on writing that appear within the pages of this volume.

Plumber Is Not My Hero: The Demise of Intellectualism in American Society," in the student's description of the underestimation of the American mind. One can easily imagine students three generations forward encountering this essay and wondering who this "Joe the Plumber" character was and how he could possibly have been taken seriously (let's hope so, anyway). Mary VanderHyden's brave account of loving, leaving, and losing her alcoholic spouse has a great deal of value in this way, also. Anyone who has suffered or is suffering something like what she describes would find further understanding in reading of her experience. Fifty years from now, one hundred years from now, will alcoholism have disappeared? That is doubtful. The suffering will be similar, and the healing will be just as necessary. In "Love the Man--Hate the Addiction," Mary has taken what she has experienced and transformed it into something that matters today and will matter in the future. She has contributed meaningfully to humanity's ongoing need for empathy in the face of suffering.

Other pieces of writing that really matter, deeply, in this issue, are the Student Reflections on Writing that appear on various pages of this volume. The dozen or so students who wrote these commentaries provide a window into how students work, and they offer valuable guidance for future students. I liked these commentaries so much that I have paraphrased their key points, above, into a list of reminders and ideas to help Harper students succeed on writing assignments.

The long versions of these bits of advice are much more enjoyable reading than this paraphrased list, but I thought that seeing all of these points together would be worthwhile for readers. There is wisdom in this list, and these practices are evident, in all kinds of interrelated ways, in all of the papers in this year's *Harper Anthology*. The many students who have their research papers included in this volume *actually did the research*. They could not have succeeded, otherwise. Some of my own students included in this volume were average or below-average writers, who through having actually *done the research* and *sought understanding,* while employing some of the writing tips above, were able to rise above difficulties and compose outstanding papers. Most definitely, all of these students have left behind memorable records of their existences, providing information, thought, and guidance for the reading publics of today and tomorrow, and contributing to academic discussions; also, as student Rachel Stuck has reminded us, above (and as I have outlined, on these two pages) quite a few of these papers have the potential to *transform readers' perceptions*—one of the most serious purposes of writing for real.

Once more, we thank our colleagues for their support and these students for their serious work, perceptive thoughts, and excellent writing. And, we thank *you*, for reading.

# Reflections on Yoga, Diet, and Meditation

*Gina Andaas*
Course: Physical Education 122 (Yoga I)
Instructor: Pamela Malone

Assignment: *At the end of the semester, students responded to three essay questions regarding their thoughts and experiences about yoga, meditation, and nutrition.*

I signed up for Yoga I as an elective to meet graduation requirements for a Bachelor's of Science in nursing at Olivet Nazarene University. As a former graduate of Harper College's nursing program, I have been a nurse for almost 20 years. However, what nursing school failed to teach me was how to really care for myself.

For the majority of my career, I have worked in the high-stress areas of critical care and the emergency room. I have loved the work, even the 12-hour shifts. However, years of compounding stress without putting myself first have taken a toll emotionally, physically, and spiritually. While I do not have any serious medical issues, I am extremely overweight, which has been a result of my inability to cope with my stresses in a healthy manner. As a healthcare professional, I am embarrassed to admit, I know all of the right choices and ways to cope with stress better. However, I haven't mastered the ability to practice what I preach, yet. Nevertheless, I am a work in progress and will continue to work on putting me first.

In the past five years, I have been transitioning my career to holistic nursing. I am now a nurse, "who recognizes and integrates body-mind-spirit principles and modalities in daily life and clinical practice; one who creates a healing space within herself/himself that allows the nurse to be an instrument of healing for the purpose of helping another feel safe and more in harmony; one who shares authenticity of unconditional presence that helps to remove the barriers to the healing process" (Dossey, Keegan, and Guzzetta 4). I know I am not perfect, nor will I ever be, as I am on a journey. However, I am in a much better place than when I started.

The meditation and diet assignments given during this semester were two things I needed most. Mediation and learning to be quiet and present within is something I continue to struggle with. Setting up a designated time to practice was extremely difficult. I always had school deadlines, work deadlines, family expectations or responsibilities, and a few 12-hours shifts that turned into 16-hour shifts due to patients having life-threatening events toward the end of my shift. Despite my varied times, I found small windows of opportunities to take care of me, even if for two or three minutes. Those short bursts were usually at work in the break room or even in the bathroom. On my days off, I always started the day and ended the day with meditation. During those times, I was less distracted, with sessions lasting up to 15 minutes long. However, I often found myself relaxed but not present within. Particularly during longer meditations, I was always outside looking in. I didn't really realize I was traveling there until I was already there. I was comfortable and relaxed, but maybe I was avoiding something that I need to deal with. After speaking with my instructor today, I realized how much more I need to practice this healing art of meditation.

I have a love-hate relationship with food. I love how it looks, smells, tastes, and makes me feel while I am eating it. However, I hate how it makes me feel when I have made a wrong choice, such as food that is not healthy or overeating good or bad food. I am without a doubt an "emotional eater." I eat when I am happy, sad, bored, or stressed. You name it, I can find a reason to eat. Since my holistic nursing journey, I have recognized this problem and have made many attempts to address it in a healthy manner.

I remember when the instructor asked if anyone ate fast food on a frequent basis, and I didn't raise my hand. Looking around the room and seeing no one else raising their hands made me feel a bit self-conscious. Yet again, this is another area of profound knowledge that I have, but I fail to plan ahead and make time for me. Working full time with a full-time load at school left me with little time to prepare healthy meals; or, that is what I thought. The

**Student Reflections on Writing: Gina Andaas**

During the course of my studies, I began to discover how much I enjoy writing. Without a doubt, spell-check has been my best friend. However, how you lay out your phrases and where you emphasize with punctuation can make all the difference in how your work is interpreted. Writing for me is a true expression of my inner self. Regardless of what I write—a speech, a research paper, an essay, or a personal letter—I always write from the heart and remain true to my authentic self. While this practice may make me transparent, almost vulnerable, I believe it allows me to better connect with the reader, facilitating a genuine relationship.

reality is, when one has the right choices in the house, it takes less time to cook up a healthy meal than it would to hop in the car and drive to a local fast food chain. Writing down everything I eat allowed me to witness firsthand the damage I was doing to myself. It is ironic that I have read books like *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Fast Food Nation*, which each have left me wanting to improve the food I eat. While I do well for a little while, I would always falter and revert to old habits.

Since the assignment to keep a dietary journal, I have cut out the caffeine in coffee and have even opted for green tea on many occasions. In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, I have decreased my red meat to once in two weeks, and I try to eat several vegetarian meals during each week. In addition, I try to purchase organic when I can. I feel like I am doing something good for the environment and myself. The current obstacle I am trying to overcome is an addiction to gluten. While I do not have celiac's disease, I do recognize a decrease in abdominal distention and irregular bowel habits when I cut gluten out. Prior to limiting gluten, I found myself with some irritable bowel symptoms that even kept me from coming to the early morning class. I would have died of embarrassment had I passed any wind during class. I have not mastered this current quest yet. Despite the assignment being over, I am going to continue to try in an effort to continue my journey.

My first exposure to yoga was actually at Harper College as a continuing education credit class. It was called Lunch-Time Yoga. The instructor was a 70-year-old woman who amazed me with her teachings, skill, and inner presence. Since that time, I have dabbled back and forth, taking yoga every once in a while and even doing a little home practice, but never to the extent I would like to. Even throughout this class, I often find I get frustrated with my body and its limitations. While I understand the philosophy behind yoga, I sometimes need to remind myself to be happy within and be gracious for the ability to do what I can. I find when I decrease the negative bashing or pressure to be perfect, I rise to new heights. For the first time in last Monday's class, I did tree pose without falling over, for the first time. I am growing and getting stronger, and this class has helped me do just that. In the meantime, I am going to continue using my yoga blocks and strap with pride, knowing each time, I can go a little deeper, hold the pose a little longer, or move a little faster.

Yoga I has renewed my passion for myself and my will to continue this journey to a healthier me. The diaphragmatic breathing helps me to relax during class and in my daily life. I revert back to this and even use the two-to-one breathing at work when I find myself getting overwhelmed with stress. It's like my secret weapon against stress.

I am so glad this yoga course embodied the holistic practice yoga was meant to be. I am so grateful I had a teacher who didn't make the class just about the exercise of poses. I definitely will continue to practice either at home or in a class format. While losing weight will eventually be a result of loving myself again, the real treasure is finding that inner peace and gratitude, allowing myself to shine from the inside out. Namaste.

## Works Cited

Dossey, Barbara Montgomery, Keegan, Lynn, and Cathie E. Guzzetta. *Pocket Guide for Holistic Nursing*. Sudbury, Mass: Jones and Bartlett, 2005.

Evaluation: *Gina was very open and honest while discussing and sharing her very personal journey during the course of the semester.*

# The Power of One

*Craig Babiarz*
Courses: English 102/Philosophy 115
(Composition and Ethics Learning Community)
Instructors: Andrew Wilson and Barbara Solheim

Assignment: *Write a research paper that somehow combines the two courses.*

What is it about change that upsets us? As a culture, we often praise those who work outside the realm of traditional thought, but as soon as it comes time to implement ideas formed in this manner, we turn in disapproval. We typically choose conservative and invariable lifestyles over flexible ones. Change has the potential to derail us from the linear tracks that bring comfort in their familiarity. While we may be displeased with the courses our lives are taking, we are hesitant to bring alteration to even the most trivial aspects of them. This applies on the personal level, but can also be viewed on larger scales. Those not content with the state of affairs in various levels of government are often seen as nuisances. These individuals disrupt the flow that has developed over the course of many years. Working toward improvement, they are ostracized by so many who would like to see nothing more than a preservation of current ways.

Among all the arenas in which change can occur, that which is socially based may be the hardest to initiate. The norms we have come to accept affect every aspect of our lives and take root in our deepest beliefs. Our idea of what is acceptable is derived not only from our own experiences but also from those of previous generations; and even when the ideas we value are partly or completely illogical and even harmful to society, we embrace them nonetheless. Shirley Jackson uses her story "The Lottery" to give an outside perspective into a practice that can be considered nothing if not self-destructive and detrimental to society. While Jackson is clearly making a comment about how we often fail to recognize such behaviors within our society, she is also, and more importantly, implying that action must be taken to solve these problems. Jackson's story reminds us of why thinkers and leaders like Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King are so crucial, especially in the midst of societies that are, at once, corrupt and asleep. If "The Lottery" featured even a single, M. L. King-like character awake enough and willing to lead the townspeople away from their socially accepted and barbaric practice, then this story's annual and bloody injustice might finally be eliminated.

The town in which "The Lottery" takes place initially seems so perfect that the reader has difficulty imagining that its people possess any flaws. While the children take part in "boisterous play," the mothers arrive and fall into their places: they "greeted one another and exchanged bits of gossip as they went to join their husbands" (Jackson 573). This language suggests the town is normal, but as the story goes on, it becomes apparent it is anything but. It is crucial that Jackson makes this setting as innocent as possible to allow the message of the story to have a fuller impact. Jackson wrote "The Lottery" shortly after World War II, a time when Americans were under the impression that atrocities such as those committed in Europe could not happen at home. As "The Lottery" progresses, "a microcosmal holocaust occurs…and, by extension, [shows that one] may happen anyplace in contemporary America" (Yarmove 242). If this practice can occur in one of the most seemingly ideal communities, surely it can occur in any place or time.

Serving as the only physical object to accompany the lottery through its every run, the box used to holda the paper slips represents much more than a storage container. Within it is the essence of the ritual that has been practiced for a length of time unknown to any of the villagers. It has not undergone any important changes since its formation from the pieces of the original box, and the citizens hold the deepest respect for it. When the black box is brought out to begin the drawing, "The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool [the box rested on]…" (Jackson 573).While this box is obviously of immense importance to the continuation of the lottery, Nebeker suggests that the stool holds equal symbolic significance. As she points out, "that which supports the present day box of meaningless and perverted superstition is the body of unexamined tradition" (Nebeker 106). It is not the practice of the lottery that is so remarkable, but rather the outdated misconceptions that have allowed its continuation; and

these, again, are embodied in the simple stool propping up the weathered, more-or-less unchanged black box, an obvious image of rudimentary closed-mindedness or, as Nebeker might say, unexamination. No one in the lottery's entire history has earnestly questioned it. If it is indeed a centuries-old practice, hundreds of friends and family members have died, yet not a single person has found this disconcerting enough to register a meaningful strike. There must be forces at work blinding the public from seeing the lottery's true face.

The sole fact that the lottery has been carried out regularly for generations places a great deal of pressure on the citizens to conform to this practice. Anyone who questions the lottery is subsequently questioning all persons who have ever taken part in it. To not partake in an activity one's parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents have been a part of is to defy cultural expectations. When one is a young child, he or she has no choice but to follow these guidelines. After years of doing so, it becomes engrained in the mind that this way must be acceptable, for if it were not so, then someone would surely have stopped it already. However, there is no reason that three hundred people cannot be just as wrong as one. In most cases, conforming to an already widely accepted view is much easier than forming an original one.

Even though the townspeople do not know why the lottery started, they carry out the practice, minus some of the enthusiasm, year after year. Since the lottery serves no purpose in bettering society, its continuation cannot be due to necessity. Mr. Summers opens the lottery witha the statement, "'guess we better get started, get this over with, so's we can go back to work'" (Jackson 574). His lack of eagerness to continue this practice demonstrates how ritual has replaced what may have initially been a seemingly logical basis. Old Man Warner hints at what this reason may have been just before the drawing begins. He retells an old saying that goes "'Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon'" (576). Today, we recognize this type of reasoning to be a fallacy. As the lottery and a successful corn harvest are two independent events, no connection can be drawn between them. It is possible that centuries ago, the people of this area could not identify this fact. Amy Griffin reminds us that "Many ancient cultures believed that growing crops represented the life cycle..." and "ancient peoples began sacrificial rituals to emulate this resurrection cycle" (44). A full crop yield was thought to be dependent on a human or animal offering, which relieved the villagers of their sins by transferring them to the deceased (44). As the town in which the lottery takes place is heavily farming-oriented, it seems probable that at some far-away point, the people believed in this and similar superstitions.

However, the town in which "The Lottery" takes place is not ancient. This modern society ought to know better than to follow such vicious and ill-conceived practices. Moreover, as we look at "The Lottery," we are reminded of so many instances in which our own society has committed acts of a similar nature. Look at the injustices faced by African-Americans during the middle part of the twentieth century. Public lynchings were all too common and were even accepted by many segregationists. The individuals who faced discrimination did nothing to warrant their awful treatment, just as Tessie Hutchinson, the victim of the lottery in Jackson's story, does nothing to warrant her own. In "The Lottery," discrimination is based on a slip of paper marked with a black dot, while in the case of the African-American, it was the color of his or her skin. Both instances involve oppression from fellow members of society for reasons the oppressed cannot control. The key difference, however, is that in the case of real-life injustice, a group emerged to correct the mistake.

Through his nonviolent direct action, Martin Luther King Jr. made significant gains for African-Americans. He took a structured approach, maintaining there are four basic steps to any nonviolent campaign: "collection of facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action" (King 645). This refined method ensures that the most basic paths to reform are attempted first, and the most costly are attempted last. Why jump to the streets in protest if the problem can be solved by a peaceful discussion? For issues which cannot be remedied easily, King offers direct action as a solution. In this non-violent form of protest, individuals accept responsibility for breaking the laws they deem unjust. The goal is that this will eventually lead to negotiation and amendment to unjust laws.

Before one can attempt to bring about change, it is necessary to determine whether change is even needed. If upon inspecting a situation it is discovered that a perceived injustice is nothing more than a misunderstanding, no further action is necessary. On the other hand, if an injustice does exist, one must begin by collecting facts

to determine the extent of the injustice. In "The Lottery," no character is able to do this because no character fully comprehends the form of discriminatory injustice being committed. However, if a character were to recognize this fact, then he or she could begin by making notes about various aspects of the lottery. Imagine that Tessie Hutchinson, rather than living unquestioningly in the weeks leading up to the lottery, had decided to do some research about the town's annual drawing. She might have first looked at what the lottery has resulted in over the years. This is, of course, the death of many citizens by stoning. She would then examine the context of this action. What is gained from this? Who is to benefit? As nothing is gained from the lottery, it is an unjust act that King would say "degrades human personality" (647). From this, Tessie should be able to conclude that a case of injustice is present.

Another citizen may claim in defense that there is nothing unjust about the lottery. As everyone has an equal chance to be picked, the system is fair on all accounts. However, there are two gravely important flaws in this thinking. First, a law cannot be considered fair solely because all citizens are subject to its ruling. A system of punishment in which shoplifters are sentenced to death could apply to all people, yet few would call this system just. Additionally, in purely mathematical terms, all townspeople in "The Lottery" do *not* have an equal chance at being chosen. The first round of the lottery brings no unfairness, as each family has an equal representation in the drawing. However, once the second round begins, a single person is chosen from among the members of the selected family. Williams points out that in this system, "individuals who are members of smaller families are more likely to be chosen as the sacrificial victim" (544). To increase one's odds of living, it pays to be a member of as large a family as possible. Within an already immoral practice, then, exists this further case of unfairness.

Since it has been shown the lottery is a blatant violation of justice, the next step Tessie must take to bring about change is an attempt at negotiation. This discussion would ideally take place with the party that organizes the lottery, but since it would appear no single group is responsible, Tessie would have difficulty attempting negotiation. Even though it is Mr. Summers who runs the lottery, he seems not to hold supreme power. When (before the present tense of the story) he attempted to replace the old black box in which the drawings were conducted, the townspeople forced him to keep the old one in compliance with tradition (Jackson 573). Here, Tessie has reached a road block. Whom should she address? The entire town? It would appear that King's approach to the attainment of justice is limited to instances in which a single authoritative power can be identified. In the cases where specific individuals serve as lawmakers, it is easy to direct one's discontent and hear a response. But when an injustice is perpetrated by an entire social group, the situation becomes overwhelming. Where does one begin to initiate change when it is literally everyone who is committing the immoral act? Perhaps the best action Tessie can take in this scenario is to address individuals—acquaintance by acquaintance, friend by friend—about the injustice she has recognized, working to convince the town one citizen at a time.

Tessie's confrontation with the townspeople can go one of two ways. It can end positively for her, meaning they will see and correct the wrong, or it can result in rejection, a more probable end. King tells us "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed" (646). The citizens in "The Lottery" are subject to a form of oppression perpetuated by their social acceptance. This scenario is truly peculiar, however, as it is the townspeople who bring the oppression upon themselves. One would think in this case that the problem could be solved with greater ease, but this is just not so. Many will be reluctant to abandon the lottery, with its strong ties to culture and tradition. In order to bring about reform, Tessie and her followers must demand that change take place.

Before direct action can be initiated, those opposing the lottery must take part in self-purification. Through this process, the soon-to-be protestors prepare themselves for the events ahead. Tessie's group will have to determine when to act, and what form of action to take, to have the most striking effect. They will come to the conclusion that this will entail attending the upcoming lottery and performing some action there. This would have much greater impact than if they decide to boycott the lottery, since when present, they can further uncover traces of injustice. In preparation for this, they will have to ask themselves questions such as "'Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?' 'Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?'" (King 646). For a nonviolent campaign to succeed, its members must be willing to accept the consequences of their actions without struggle.

By watching this protest unfold, other people of the community will, in the mind and hopes of a nonviolent resister like King, become aware of the injustice. Support is gained when citizens are shown that the protestors place their cause above their own well-being. If individuals are willing to serve jail time, even bodily harm, for a law they call unjust, there must be some truth to their claim, as no rational person would sacrifice his or her own freedom and comfort for a less valuable cause.

Convincing others of one's reason for not participating in the lottery may be difficult. It remains true that one has only to gain by not taking part in the lottery, as attending only increases one's odds of an early death. Also, since there are no laws or formal regulations mandating attendance, the citizens in "The Lottery" seem, oddly enough, to be able to do as they please, and for their own reasons, besides. It follows, though, that any instance of a person not wanting to take part could be construed as a purely self-interested act, eliminating any chance of a protest affecting others' views or touching others' consciences; again, the special challenge is not merely in doing as one pleases but, rather, in convincing others of the rightness of one's opposition to the senseless perpetuation of the lottery. For that reason, there is finally only one type of direct action that will be effective in allowing others to see the injustice of the lottery.

Tessie and her followers must wait until an individual is chosen by the lottery and then stand in defense, before the first stone can be cast. This will ensure confrontation between the townspeople and the protestors: exactly what King and Tessie have intended. "The purpose of[any] direct-action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation" (King 646). The townspeople will question why their familiar process has been disrupted. Tessie and the others must then explain the injustice, highlighting the fact that anyone could have been chosen. If the people of the town still cannot see Tessie's point of view, she and her group must remain in defense of the innocent, willing to accept the worst possible fate. At this point, individuals who have been unsure about the ethical ramifications of the lottery may be swayed by the commitment of the few standing before them. Some might join in, while others will undoubtedly remain firmly planted in the status quo. What is important is that this issue, which has been hidden for so long, is now out in the town square (literally and figuratively) for everybody to see. After a period of time, if those protesting can stay the course, negotiation must occur so that regular life may commence once again.

Strangest of all is that direct action may have been rather easily applied in "The Lottery." The village in this story features no armed guards, no attack-dogs or punishing fire hoses; we see no menacing police force or any threat of arrest or violence waiting on the sidelines for a naysayer with a sudden attack of conscience. In fact, the most committed advocate for keeping the lottery is little more than a flatly drawn, rather cranky old man, Mr. Warner, who is proud to have survived 77 years of lotteries (Jackson 576). So once again, in that seemingly manageable environment, the lack of a social firebrand—or at least someone who wishes passionately to protect his or her own life or the lives of family members—is so very curious. But to be fair, there are other instances of real-world injustice in which King's admirable brand of recourse would serve no good. If a group is oppressed in the most serious way possible—that is, if members are killed for discriminatory reasons, as in the case of genocide—direct action can accomplish nothing. Nonviolent direct action will end the same as submitting to one's oppressors. There is no law to disobey that will not result in one's own death, an occurrence that is unlikely to aid in remedying an injustice. It is possible that the right to life cannot be protected using peaceful means alone when those with power are ruthless and resolute. King's principles assume that those in charge are capable of seeing right from wrong. He also relies on the assumption that the oppressed group has interests that overlap with those of their oppressors. During the civil rights movement, African-Americans had leverage in that they could stop using services provided by those imposing discrimination. This is not the true in all circumstances. Direct action, much like any form of action, clearly has its limits.

Many of the types of obstacles faced by King in Birmingham are represented in various forms throughout "The Lottery." For instance, the segregationists that dominated southern politics behave in a manner quite similar to that of Old Man Warner. Both want nothing more than to preserve their current ways of living for reasons that cannot be established. Old Man Warner is all too quick to criticize towns that have abandoned the lottery, calling them a "'Pack of young fools'" (Jackson 576). This is similar to a comment mentioned to King by the white clergy, who called his activities in Birmingham

"'unwise and untimely,'" though they failed to justify either adjective (King 645). While Old Man Warner and the segregationists each stand in the way of justice, there is another group that may hinder reform to an even greater extent.

In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," King makes it clear that he is thoroughly disappointed with the actions of the white moderate. King accuses members of this group of "[preferring] a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice..." (648). The white moderate's concerns lie not in what is right, but rather in what maintains the illusion of a conflict-free environment. This same sort of group makes up the majority of the townspeople in "The Lottery." They know what is right, and even hint at a slight willingness to fight for it, but in the end, they favor an existence free of tension. King is baffled by this "[l]ukewarm acceptance" and believes it, and moderation, to be more frustrating than the outright opponents who work busily to preserve segregation (648). At least those who work against a just cause bring it into the spotlight. All the white moderate is doing is hiding the issues that so urgently need to be addressed.

The characters that appear in "The Lottery" leave the reader yearning for someone to stand up and speak out. Near the beginning of the story, it is hinted that Mrs. Adams may fulfill this role through her mild defiance to Old Man Warner. After his rant about the ways in which the lottery has changed, Mrs. Adams responds,"'Some places have already quit lotteries'" (Jackson 576). This "oblique but nevertheless real gesture of resistance" against Old Man Warner shows at least some concern is present among the townspeople (Oehlschlaeger 260). However, as the story comes to a close, it becomes apparent this upset is not substantial enough to bring about any action from the people. If there were just one character willing to take a chance and lead the town, then this outdated practice might be stopped.

Often, a single person can make all the difference in a movement for justice. Martin Luther King Jr. is just one example of this. When fighting social injustice, one discovers beliefs formed and maintained by cases of tradition, superstition, closed-mindedness, hypocrisy, and apathy. This is why social change is the most difficult type of change to bring about. Successful change demands that all members of society see the ways in which they were wrong, something few will admit to—at least at the outset. Without guidance, we know not how to act or where even to begin. Thus, it is crucial that every movement for justice have an individual at its head, someone who can visualize everything in relation to the big picture. "The Lottery" produces no such character. The citizens' growing skepticism for their outdated practice shows that the unfortunate stoning of Tessie Hutchinson could easily have been prevented. If just one person had spoken up, she could have been saved. The greatest changes made throughout history have always started with a single voice.

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Evaluation: *Craig does an exceptional job of showing how the characters in "The Lotteryé' might have fared better if they had had a leader such as Martin Luther King to guide them along the path of nonviolent resistance. This essay is a pleasure to read.*

# Cracks in a Pretty, Glass Mask: The Upper Class in John Cheever's "The Swimmer" and "The Enormous Radio"

*Ty Beasley*

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper making effective use of at least seven secondary sources and a consistent application of a method of literary analysis.*

"'Well if it's so depressing, why do you listen to it? I bought this damned radio to give you some pleasure,' he said. 'I paid a great deal of money for it. I thought it would make you happy. I wanted to see you happy'" (Cheever 49). These harsh words, an excerpt from John Cheever's short story "The Enormous Radio," were stated to Irene Westcott by her husband Jim, upon Jim learning his wife had been abusing the radio's ability to eavesdrop on the other people in their apartment building. The things she had overheard were dismal most of the time, and the radio had changed her mood toward life and the world around, and upon noticing, her husband did not appreciate this change one bit. Irene had experienced an emotional downward spiral, because she had regaled in all the greed, sadness, and unease of the dark world that crept into her home through the loudspeaker. The societies seen in the two stories "The Swimmer" and "The Enormous Radio," both written by John Cheever, are riddled with estranged people, but they share a commonality in their money, social structure, and status, and most unfortunately, all the problems that having money brings.

In "The Swimmer," published in 1964, a middle-aged man by the name of Neddy Merrill takes a swim through his home county, through the long train of back-yard swimming pools of his neighbors. His suburban neighborhood is an upper-class area, and they spend their time in the lap of luxury. In the setting, "... Cheever represents a world entirely given over to surfeit:a 'everyone...the parishioners leaving church...the priest himself...the leader of the Audubon group...' are all afflicted with excess, symbolized by drinking too much" (Kozikowski par. 3). Everyone in the story is tuckered out and hung over, looking to start once again with a life in excess, and Neddy is one such member of this world. At the start of his journey, he feels youthful and determined, and he swims the first leg of his journey, pleasantly meeting with a few neighbors along the way, attending a party and having several drinks. Although it was midsummer, he spies what he perceives to be a blighted tree, a sign of autumn and a change of season, or time. He finds, after waiting out the storm in a neighbor's gazebo, several houses empty. He does not clearly recall anyone leaving or moving away, and he begins to distrust his own memory. After crossing a very hostile road, he travels through a rich, older couple's yards, who greet him with a pretense of pity. He continues his journey, confused, yet tenacious now. Neddy is ill at ease, reveling in his loss of memory overall, his selling of his home, and something happening to his daughters. And this mystifying forgetfulness continues with the discovery of his friend's surgery, which he again does not recall. He presses on to another neighbor, who buffets him with a not-so-friendly greeting, almost refusing him drink and company. In visiting his old mistress's home next, the place of his love affair, he is denied drink and sent on his way, with the thought that she must have loaned him money as well: money that he must not have repaid. He felt sorrow at the signs of autumn, or age, as his strength left him and he struggled through the final part of his journey home, crying at the sight of fall's constellations in the night sky. When he arrived home, he found his house locked, the windows dark. "During Neddy's swim, he loses everything—wife, children, home, friends, mistress, job, investments, youth, hopes, self" (Slabey 7). Neddy has reached his goal and ended his expedition, but he has arrived at this point a broken man with nothing but a long list of loss, and his memory fails to illuminate how it came to this.

"The Enormous Radio" is set in New York near Sutton Place, in an apartment building filled with upper-middle class people, and the setting is the late 1940s. Jim

and Irene Westcott live with their maid and children in one such apartment. As they are described by Colford, "They appear untouched, unsullied by city life, and Cheever makes this point as well, describing Irene as having 'a wide, fine forehead upon which nothing had been written at all,' and Jim as 'earnest, vehement, and intentionally naïve'" (par. 6). Jim and Irene, as expressed in the quote, begin the story in a state of being wholly untouched and unscathed by the city life and their social class. Their lives are changed, however, with the purchase of a strange new radio to replace their old one, which could feed their love of classical music, something not shared with any of their neighbors. In order to remain in good social graces, they hide this affinity from their neighbors, as they felt it would make them differ too greatly from everyone else. As Irene tries the new radio out, she is displeased with its appearance, but she soon forgets this when she is assaulted with a loud blast of sound, and then a hissing interference that resembled all the electrical appliances in the building, from the elevator to an assortment of electric razors. After Jim called and had the radio fixed, Irene made a new discovery, that instead of truly being fixed, the radio had become a spying device, through which she could tune in on the happenings and sounds of the other people in their apartments, as this machine could pick up their voices! Jim and his wife were elated at first, finding great humor in listening to their neighbors. However, the things that Irene, being a housewife, was subject to hear soon turned morbid and saddening. After taking these peeks into her neighbors' lives, she came to terms with the reality ofaher world: that money and social standing had not made her friends better people, but had merely masked the flaws they all shared. With her changing views, her attitude changed as well, which was apparent in her donation to the Salvation Army band she had listened to while walking to a dinner with her husband, and her silent criticisms ofa the hostess and the other guests while at this dinner. She found some delight in that she was "being good." Later, when Jim found her crying over a neighbor assaulting his wife, he tried to pull her away from listening to the radio, saying he had gotten it to try and make her happy. But money had not bought her happiness, as it never does. She asked desperately if they were different, if they were happy, unlike all the people she had heard. Jim then lied. He told a loving, exasperated lie, saying of course they were happy, and that they differed more than in their taste for music from their neighbors. In the final scenes, Jim has the radio fixed one final time, putting an end to its eavesdropping talents. But in trying to explain that he had indeed lied before, that they had reason to worry about money, and that he was not doing as well as he had hoped at work, Irene couldn't handle it. He snapped, and began to criticize this false sense of piety he thought she had, telling her all that was flawed with her, and all the mistakes she had made that should keep her from feeling different from her neighbors. She tunes him out, trying to make the radio speak good things to her, but it ended the story by announcing a railroad disaster, deaths, and a fire in a blind children's hospital. This was truly the final nail, showing her that the bright world she had hoped she lived in was dark and dreary, and that many people within it reflected that sadness.

"The Swimmer" is a mysterious, and intriguing tale that saddens, enlightens, and greatly engulfs the reader into this past that Neddy is piecing together. Neddy Merrill is a tenacious, gentle, yet down-trodden person who conveys a man who copes with his societal, personal, and economic losses by repressing the memories thereof. Similarly, Irene Westcott is a naïve, disheartened, whimsical person who discovers through her eavesdropping that the world is in fact a much darker, sadder place than she knew, and her own life reflected this realization. Overall, with respect to the societies and issues portrayed in these two stories, it seems that "The Swimmer" shows how a man's mind can try to block out the darker side of his life, but he cannot run from it, and "The Enormous Radio" shows how darka and unfortunate the world can be, and how profoundly such a thought can affect a single person.

The two societies in these stories are similar in many ways. In "The Swimmer," during the opening scene, the author says, "It was one of those midsummer daysa when everyone sits around saying, 'I drank too much last night'" (Cheever 1459). This communicates the kind of activity that composed much of the society's time. In due comparison with "The Enormous Radio," while Jim and Irene are adjusting to the strange, new talent their radio has developed, "Jim tuned to another station, and the living room was filled with the uproar of a cocktail party

that had overshot its mark" (Cheever 45). The Westcott radio had the uncanny ability to tune into the live sounds from other people's apartments in the building they all shared. This party they listened to was quite typical for their social class, drinking and socializing and having a good time. Though not inherently bad, this life of parties and alcohol was a mask and a pain killer for the truth: that they were not good people, and that they merely put on airs and drank to try and keep that sense of being happy. Perhaps some of them truly were, but the stories relate something different. Dearer to these societies than their masks was this idea of a social hierarchy, where one had to remain sociable, popular, and well-versed with friends and neighbors. In "The Swimmer," the narrator reflects on what might be Neddy's own thoughts in saying, "His was a world in which the caterer's men kept the social score, and to be rebuffed by a part-time barkeep meant he had suffered some loss of social esteem" (Cheever 1466). Neddy had become a sort of social outcast, where some of the characters he meets along the journey were friendly, but towards the end became more hostile and cold, such as here at his neighbors' party. Having something to do with past actions which he cannot remember, this barkeep and the hostess had besmirched his image, and he was quick to leave soon after. One can find again, in "The Enormous Radio," when Irene was listening to the radio again, she overheard someone at a cocktail party saying, "'If she catches you standing here not talking to anybody, she'll take us off her invitation list, and I love these parties" (Cheever 48). This comment from one person to another at yet another party is apt to describe the societal requirement for sociability. Simply put, though it was unspoken no doubt, if a person cannot be a social butterfly and play nice and cheery with everyone at the party, that person would be outcast. This hefty importance in these two societies, of social image, is at a ridiculous level, and my view is mirrored by Segel as he believes, "Since Cheever's characters find their reality in their status and possession, and since these are tightly held in a slippery grip, his people have a weak hold on their own reality" (3). Depressingly, Cheever's characters are obsessed with their social status and possessions, and this creates for them a very shallow existence.

The main characters in these stories grow to be different from the society in which they live, and in this difference, they develop observations and opinions of their friends and neighbors. In "The Swimmer," while Neddy is swimming through the pools of the first few houses of his journey, he declares to himself, "Oh, how bonny and lush were the banks of the Lucinda River! Prosperous men and women gathered by the sapphire-colored waters while caterer's men in white coats passed them cold gin" (Cheever 1461). Along his river, composed of a stretch of backyard pools through which he swims, he sees the delightful, happy side of the world he lives in, and how lovely it all looks. And although his own situation becomes more miserable in the end, he never seems to absorb that what he saw was merely the surface of this society. Irene, in the ending scenes of "The Enormous Radio," contrasts Neddy opaquely, crying to her husband Jim, "'Oh, don't, don't, don't,'...a 'Life is too terrible, too sordid and awful. But we've never been like that, have we, darling? Have we?'" (Cheever 49). Irene has seen this dreary world she lives in and ventured past the social masks of her friends and neighbors. She finds them to be truly (and ordinarily) flawed human beings, and Irene is frightened that she too is as flawed and unhappy as they are, ultimately finding that she is no different from the rest.

However saddened these characters and places seem, money should be the ultimate buffer, shouldn't it? Despite whatever little flaws and problems these people have, money can certainly solve it, for money brings happiness, doesn't it? Unfortunately, these stories do not depict a pair of worlds where problems can be cast away with a dollar bill. In "The Swimmer," it seems that money has merely caused Neddy's forgotten and unseen fall from his place in society. At one neighbor's pool,â'..a he heard Gracie at his back say: 'They went for broke overnight – nothing but income – and he showed up drunk one Sunday and asked us to loan him five thousand dollars...â" (Cheever 1466). Neddy shows no immediate reflection upon this gossip, but it was clearly directed at him. This fall from grace he has discovered in himself is truly reflective of how important money was, and how much control it really had over this society. Mirrored too in "The Enormous Radio," Irene overhears a woman declare she had found a diamond from a neighbor's

jewelry, to which her husband responds, "'We'll sell it,' .... 'Take it down to the jeweler on Madison Avenue and sell it. Mrs. Dunston won't know the difference, and we could use a couple hundred bucks'" (Cheever 47). This act of dishonest greed only further defines the grip that money and economic standing have on these societies, where image is everything.

Throughout these two stories, the main characters struggle with a primary conflict, a faceless villain that encompasses all that society truly upholds. Greed, pride, and even a little lust are the primary tones of the stories, with an overall feeling of sadness and misfortune as a result. However, the characters vary in their reaction to this opposing force. In "The Swimmer," Neddy's mind has actually blocked out much of the unpleasant memories of his life up to that day in which he swims across the county. As he interacts and finds out some unpleasant information from others along his journey, he begins to question himself, asking, "Was his memory failing or had he so disciplined it in the repression of unpleasant facts that he had damaged his sense of the truth?" (Cheever 1463). Neddy is truly a pitiful man, for he cannot even recall what has truly happened to him. This quest, Blythe and Sweet would argue, was a method Neddy was using to try and maintain that denial, that purposeful forgetfulness, that false sense of happiness, since he had lost any true sense of happiness with the loss of his family and livelihood. As it states in their critical essay, "Though suburbanites like Neddy Merrill may establish repetitious cycles to retard time, eventually, as the natural cycles indicate, time brings change" (Blythe and Sweet par.11). In "The Enormous Radio," toward the end of the story, Irene pleads with her husband, crying, "'You love me, don't you?' she asked. 'And we're not hypercritical or worried about money or dishonest, are we?' 'No darling,' he said" (Cheever 50). Irene had no real way of coping with this realization that the world was a dark and dreary place, and she could only turn to her husband and beg him to tell her that despite all the rest, he and Irene werea ok and not as unhappy as everyone else. So unfortunate a state has she fallen into, that, in that respect, she is quite similar to Neddy. As conveyed here, "Like Neddy Merrill ... Irene has managed to survive only at the considerable cost of nearly total self-delusion" (Parsell par. 11). Irene was so desperate to believe that she and her husband were different, she pleaded for him to say it, so she could let herself be fooled into believing it. He lied here, to make her feel better perhaps, and perhaps he truly wanted to believe it himself. I would like to note the irony in the idea that at the beginning, she wanted to appear no different than the neighbors, hence the need to keep their musical interest a secret. Contrastingly, she was in tears over the hope that they were indeed different, once she saw how unsavory her neighbors were beneath the surface. Still, Neddy, Jim, and Irene were trapped in these worlds, and they had been changed by the realization of how dreary they truly were.

Throughout these two tales of woe, the characters undergo serious, if not sad changes. Though a dismal prospect to analyze, the two characters begin the story with this sense of happiness and hope, and contentment, and they are slowly ebbed away as reality replaces these thoughts. In "The Enormous Radio," Irene had tried to pass herself off as a good and happy person, but she could not fool herself or her husband with her small acts. At the end of the story, Jim confronts her, yelling, "'Why are you so Christly all of a sudden? What's turned you overnight into a convent girl?'" (Cheever 51). It was with this verbal assault from Jim, about her own past sins—among other things, she had cheated a sister out of an inheritance and also aborted a pregnancy—that she came to the realization that she was no better than her neighbors, whom she now feared would see her imperfections. Colford again mimics my understanding, as expressed here: "She is now in the uneasy position of knowing far too much of what is transpiring all around her and is appalled by the extent to which these apparently virtuous people mask their depravity and greed and licentiousness when they step out into the world" (par.10). Other authors, such as Morace, affirm this change from a false high to a very real, unfortunate low: "Irene has entered the dark forest of moral ambiguity and emerged a different person–emerged, that is, as she truly is rather than as she would like to appear" (par. 4). Sadder still is poor Neddy's situation when he finally reaches home, tired and broken, outcast and much the opposite of the man he had begun his journey as. When his journey ended, and Neddy reached a place he thought he was finally safe,

"He shouted, pounded on the door, tried to force it with his shoulder, and then, looking in at the windows, saw that the place was empty" (Cheever 1467). He came to realize that he had forgotten he sold the house, something had happened to his family, and now he had nothing but this emptiness, for which the house could be a metaphor. The two primary characters in "The Swimmer" and "The Enormous Radio" were left essentially broken on the rocks of this society, which was darker and more unpleasant than they had initially thought.

One of the most striking details of these two stories, primarily within "The Enormous Radio," is how the characters enforce this societal up-beatness, a false happiness, when not all is truly well. These societies are indeed quite dark and sad, and they are false, fake, and deceiving. The large casts of supporting characters suckle on money, social status, and alcohol to try and sustain this idea that they are happy, and all is well with their corner of the world. The main characters feed their desire for happiness by diluting the truth of who they are as people, or by repressing the very memories they have of how far they have fallen. The title characters and their respective societal wholes were only fooling themselves, for although no place save heaven is perfect, pretending that their lives and inner selves were just so was only placing a pretty mask over an ugly face.

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Evaluation: *Ty sees very clearly into John Cheever's world of upper-class urban- and suburbanites, in this sociological analysis of these two stories. It is especially nice to see a discussion of "The Enormous Radio," a fairly famous short story about which not a whole lot has been published.*

# Ethical Breaches of Capitalism

*Joshua Blevins*
Course: Philosophy 115 (Ethics)
Instructor: John Garcia

Assignment: *Argue for a specific point of view pertaining to a moral issue. Incorporate research into your argument.*

When the majority of Americans think of capitalism, they find the word inextricably linked with what they believe are the factors that make America a wonderful country: freedom and democracy, ideals which we hold dear, which we keep close to our hearts and trust as necessary to a fulfilling life. We believe that it is capitalism which evens the playing field, giving us all a chance to strive, and perhaps one day succeed, in becoming vastly wealthy. We invest blind faith in a word, one which represents a system whose mechanisms few of us understand, and defend this word to all who would try to rob us of its ideals, those communist bastards who would like nothing more than to strip us of our god-given rights and freedoms, one of the most important of which seems to be the freedom to consume at will all that we may desire, regardlessa of the consequences. In order to follow the dream ofa consumption, and to bask in the grand illusion that we may all one day become one of the top five percent, most of us end up turning a blind eye to the great harm that capitalism causes, both physically and spiritually.

Capitalism, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, isa "an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods...and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market" ("Capitalism"), which, on the surface, seems a pretty good way of doing business. The basic outline looks like this: I have, or produce, a product which others want. In order to profit, I sell the product. The price of the product is determined by both the public demand for it and its availability, so the more precious the product I control, the more wealth I amass. This seems fair enough; it's really a culture of give and take, and as long as I can provide a service or product others want or need, I have an opportunity to succeed in this world. And that, right there, is the fundamental mistake made when adhering to a capitalist ideology. In reality, very few have the ability to succeed regardless of how hard they try, due to the combination of human nature and the traits in us which capitalistic thinking nurtures.

One of the fundamental problems with the idea of capitalism is that it fosters greed, one of the most basic and abhorrent qualities of mankind. We are all driven, to some degree, by a desire to possess all we see. Capitalism seizes this desire and fosters it, making us believe that to own, to consume, is all that is good and right in the world. It is not just our right, but our obligation, to amass as much wealth as we possibly can in the short time we have, and to ensure that, once we are gone, no one else can get to it, save our own clan. In this world, it's every man for himself, neighbor be damned. This type of world view practically ensures that the average person does not have the opportunity to succeed in capitalist society, because the vast majority of the resources are already owned by a select few, and those few will fight with every ounce of their strength to ensure that not only do they not lose any of those resources to others, but also toa incorporate into their empires the wealth of any they may come across who seem weak enough to overtake. With their already established affluence, they generally have no problem succeeding. This creates an enormous disparity of wealth in the populace, and leads to the exploitationa manipulation, and general disregard for the rights of the second-class citizenry, who become stuck in a cycle of production and consumption that only serves to increase the desperation of their situation, all due to an idea that focuses and heightens a quality that, in an ideal society, we should work to suppress.

In order to meet the demands of consumers, and to .a increase their own wealth, the ruling class, which Marx and Engels term the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels 2), resort toathe exploitation of those less fortunate. The capitalist mindset demands that we make the most profit possiblea and the easiest way to do so is to take advantage of those in unfortunate economic situations. If the factory workers in America demand a fair living wage, which interferes

with maximization of profitability, or if laws are created to protect the workers from maximum exploitation, the easiest solution is to farm out the work to developing countries who can't afford to fight for workers' rights. Why pay one worker fifteen dollars an hour and provide clean and safe workplaces when you can create the same product for a hundredth of the wage and provide minimal, or even no, amenities? Imagine the profit margin if you could create dormitories in which your employees must live, and then charge them the majority of their wages to stay there? Now, labor is practically free. If this idea seems farfetched to some, it is a common overseas practice of the Wal-Mart corporation, according to Greenwald's film *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price.*

Franz Fanon stated, "The well-being and progress of Europe have been built up with the sweat and dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians, and the yellow races" (qtd in D'Souza 257). Of course, the same is now true for America, once a colony of Europe. In an age where we tout freedom for the world at large, the reason we live on such a grand scale is that we mercilessly exploit the rights of those in third-world nations. We don't actually want freedom and high living standards for all, because we would be forced to lower our own in return, and we are unwilling to do so, and have been since the beginning. Slavery was not abolished in the 1800's, it just took new, less obvious forms. Any advancement made in workers' rights has quickly been skirted by companies in the name of profit.

Exploitation, of course, begs the ethical question of whether it is right for one man to use another as a means to an end. Kant has stated rather explicitly that this is unethical. But exploitation goes beyond that, actually stripping the laborer of the autonomy he deserves by simple virtue of being human. The people employed by sweatshops in third-world countries are not there by choice, but because they have no other option. In many cases, land and resources which may have once been owned or shared by a small community have been stripped away, either bought up or taken through force, by large companies (the Coca-Cola company has even dried up local water sources in India for use in soda production, leaving the communities that relied on the water as a drinking and irrigation source with no choice but to buy it back or suffer), who then set up shop and use the displaced populace as a cheap labor source, producing for miniscule wages and nonexistent benefit, that which was once theirs. These tactics are ethically no different than embarking to a foreign land with the purpose of rounding up individuals and selling them as a labor source. As a matter of fact, if we keep them on their own soil, we don't even have to worry about their upkeep. And if they become sick or die, if they are mistreated or malnourished, no one will have to know, because no one is regulating or documenting their treatment. This form of legal slavery is an obvious violation of human rights and dignity, and all in the name of profit. Humans—the same as us, just not as lucky in birth—suffer, starve, and die every day so that we may purchase products from the same companies who construct their demise.

In many American circles, the utterance of the name Karl Marx, and most certainly the espousal of his ideals, is tantamount to coming out and saying you think it would be a good idea if America were invaded and occupied by Soviets, but his chief concern was that of basic human rights. Marx believed that capitalism was an unethical and fatally flawed system, one which left society dangerously divided and trod on the rights of those not in control of the capital. He saw capitalism as a form of worldwide slavery, whether it was the actual enslavement of undeveloped nations, or the mental slavery of those who were caught in its process, producing and consuming in an unending cycle. A quick glance at the state of the modern world would prove him right. In his *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx stated that "the need of a constantly expanding market for (their) products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere" (5). And so it is. There is hardly a nation, hardly a piece of land in the entire world, that hasn't been set upon and exploited by some company in the name of profit. The need to consume is unending, a drive instilled in us from birth, blaring from every TV set, every radio, computer screen, and billboard. It makes us blind to the needs of those around us. Why should I care if someone else is starving? I have to figure out how to get a new car, a larger television, an addition to my house. How can I possibly be concerned with others when there

is so much I still don't have? The problem we miss is that those who truly don't have, have nothing, and part of the reason they have nothing is because we need more.

Even in terms of simple utilitarianism, capitalism is an unethical form of economic structure. The benefits to the world at large simply do not outweigh the negative effects. There is no long-term social benefit from keeping the majority of the world's wealth in the hands of only a few. For every person made incredibly wealthy through unregulated trade, there are 50 million who will suffer. In the face of those numbers, it is hard to argue that capitalism, as practiced, is an ethically justifiable form of economy. In fact, with so many displaced at the hands of so few, the world becomes a powder-keg. It is only a matter of time before the populace realizes that it can rise up and create for itself a better life, and revolution is never without its casualties.

One could argue that all the advancements made in the twentieth century were possible because of capitalism. It's true that huge advancements have been made in communication, health care, transportation, and farming. But they only benefit those who can afford them. The Internet levels the field of speech and communication for those who have the capability to use it. It still gives no voice to those who have no access. And media giants are lobbying at this moment to restrict Internet access to their benefit, shutting out small groups and organizations. We have discovered cures or treatments for myriad diseased, but only those who can afford treatment will benefit. In Africa, three million people still die every year from malaria, which is easily treated. If I were to be diagnosed with a terrible disease, I would suffer and eventually die, because, regardless of whether treatment is available, I cannot afford it. Although we have come a long way in farming, millions upon millions will die every year of starvation, partly because the demands of capitalist production force farmers who should be growing subsistence crops to instead grow cash crops to pay off their country's international debt. These things happen because all of these advancements have been developed in order to turn a profit, not out of a strict sense of duty to humanity. Imagine if these advancements were made strictly for the virtue of benefiting the world at large, if profit were set aside for the sake of the betterment of society. It should be enough for an individual to live secure in the fact that his achievements have saved the lives of millions of people. It should not have to be reflected in his bank account. If the focus were simply shifted to progress rather than profit, the benefit would be tremendous.

Because of its focus on negative human traits, its tendency to exploit those less fortunate, and its disregard for basic human rights, capitalism, as practiced, is an unethical form of economic structure. It brings out the worst in humanity, creating not a society filled with healthy competition, but one in which the disregard for fellow man becomes a factor in success, and this is something that we as a society should not tolerate, much less venerate.

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Greenwald, Robert, dir. *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices.* Brave New Films, 2005. Film.

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Evaluation: *Josh does a nice job examining a feature of society that seems to be often accepted as unquestionably good, and he does so in a way that is both thorough, clear, and concise. Most importantly, he uses various ethical frameworks to inform his argument, which is really the main goal of the course--to become able to see the ways in which ethical theories can inform discussions about issues in the world.*

# Understanding Hemodynamics: An Application of the Physical Principles of Water Flow

*Anca Borz*
Course: Diagnostic Medical Sonography 222
(Essentials of Vascular Sonography)
Instructor: Steven Crow

Assignment: *Students were to locate a photograph with some type of fluid in it, such as a river or waterfall. Then, using the information from class, students were to discuss the principles of fluid hemodynamics in the venous and arterial system and describe how some of them apply to the fluid in the photograph.*

Blood flow is dominated by unsteady flow phenomena and is governed by the physical principles that are common to the flow of water. Vascular hemodynamics are significant because potentially, they can help us understand the development of atherosclerosis. I will be using a photograph of a river to help with my discussion of the principles of fluid dynamics.

One of the most fascinating questions about the flow of fluids is why the flow is smooth or laminar under some conditions but turbulent in others. Both kinds of flow can be observed in rivers or creeks. The river in my picture demonstrates laminar flow that eventually becomes turbulent past the narrowing of the riverbank in the lower right corner of the picture. How do these types of flow differ, and what determines which type of flow prevails?

In sections of a stream where flow is smooth or a laminar, there are no eddies or other similar disturbances. The flow of the stream can be described by streamlines that indicate the direction of flow at any point. The streamlines for laminar flow are roughly parallel. The speeds of different layers may vary, but one layer moves smoothly past another.

As the stream narrows and the fluid speed increases, the simple laminar-flow pattern disappears. Whorls and eddies in the streamlines appear, and the flow becomes turbulent. The same can be demonstrated with the blood passing over a stenosis: as the velocity of blood increases in the stenosis, turbulence is noted distal to the narrowing.

If the density and viscosity of a fluid do not vary, the transition from laminar to turbulent flow is predicted by a two quantities: the fluid velocity and the diameter of the stream or vessel. The correlation between the average fluid speed, its density and viscosity, and the diameter of the stream or vessel is presented in our textbook, *Techniques in Noninvasive Vascular Diagnosis,* by Robert J. Daigle, as the Reynolds Number (Re). The Re is used to describe when turbulence is likely to occur. Re is the product of average fluid speed, density, and tube diameter divided by the fluid viscosity. Turbulence occurs when the Re meets or exceeds approximately 2,000. Higher speeds are more likely to produce turbulent flow, as we would expect. Similarly, an increase in stream or vessel diameter creates the same effect. Although turbulent flow is undesirable in most applications, it *does* make river rafting much more exciting.

What happens if we do work on a fluid, increasing its energy? This increase may show up as an increase in kinetic energy of the fluid, leading to an increase in the fluid's speed. It could also appear as an increase in potential energy if the fluid is raised in height. Bernoulli's principle is a direct result of applying conservation of energy to the flow of fluids. It states that the pressure in a fluid decreases as the speed of the fluid increases.

In the case of a narrowing of a stream, as seen in the photo, it would be expected that the pressure of water flowing in the river would be greater in the constricted section; however, this is not the case. The speed of the water will be greater in the constricted section—where the cross-sectional area is smaller—than in the wider portions. Bernoulli's principle tells us that the pressure of a fluid decreases as the speed of the fluid increases. Within the same fluid, high-speed flow is associated with low pressure. Therefore, across the narrowing of our stream, as the speed of the water increases, the pressure decreases. Furthermore, when the water leaves the constriction and enters a new unconstricted area, its velocity must decrease again. Supposing that the water in the photo does not move up or down as it travels through the constricted region, its gravitational potential energy

Figure 1. In this photograph, titled *Coquihalla River Flows Into Narrowing Canyon, Near Hope, BC, Canada*, the speed of the water is greater at the constricted section, but the pressure of the fluid is lower there, as a result of Bernoulli's principle. Photo by Steve Smith, 2003. Used with permission from the photographer and from *worldofstock.com.*

does not change. How, then, does the accelerating fluid in the constricted region gain kinetic energy?

In the book *Conceptual Physics*, Paul G. Hewitt explains that the answer lies in the fact that the surrounding fluid does work on the part that goes through the constricted region. The forces that produce pressure push the accelerating fluid from behind. Moreover, Hewitt notes that the accelerating fluid has to do work on the fluid ahead of it. It turns out, according to the author, that when the fluid is accelerating, more work is done on it than on the fluid ahead. In this way, "its kinetic energy increases" (Hewitt 241). All through the river pictured, some parts are gaining energy, while others are losing energy; however, the net energy of the entire fluid is unchanged. What would happen if the river widened, instead? By Bernoulli's principle, if the river suddenly widened, we expect this decreased speed to be associated with a higher pressure. The relationship between high velocity and low pressure and its converse apply throughout the flow.

Another law that applies to fluid dynamics is Poiseuille's law. Poiseuille's law describes the relationship between flow, pressure gradient, viscosity, and length and radius of a tube; it states that the flow rate Q in an incompressible fluid along a pipe is proportional to the pressure gradient through a narrowing when the resistance is kept constant. Resistance is represented by the river radius, length, and viscosity of water. In our photo, if the river flowed through a pipe, small pressure gradients across the narrowing would become greater with increased flow volume. Therefore, if the flow volume were to increase, the pressure gradient from the beginning of the narrowing to the end of it would increase. Poiseuille's law is also applicable to arterial hemodynamics: for a fixed-vessel stenosis, with a constant resistance, the pressure gradient through the stenosis is thus proportional to the flow through the stenosis. If we return to the hypothesis that the river pictured in the photo flowed through a pipe, when the flow volume would increase, the pressure gradient would also increase over the river narrowing if the resistance is kept constant. On the other hand, if the radius of the stream narrowing would decrease even more, it would increase the flow resistance. A similar effect would be observed with an increase in fluid viscosity and length of the narrowing. What other factors might influence the flow rate?

Another factor that affects flow rate is friction. According to our textbook, friction is the property of a fluid or gas that resists flow. In our pictured river, the water speed is greatest near the middle of the stream, because there are frictional effects between layers of the fluid itself and between the fluid and the river banks. Let's imagine that the fluid is made up of layers moving through a channel. Since the bottom of the channel is not moving, it exerts a frictional force on the bottom layer of fluid, which moves more slowly than the layer immediately

above it. This layer exerts a frictional drag, in turn, ona the layer above it, which flows more slowly than the next one above it, and so on. The outside layers have greater surface area than the central layers, which creates a parabolic shape to the flow pattern. In addition, there is a smaller diameter of the river over the narrowing, which increases friction and decreases flow. Greater friction is a consequence of more fluid area being in contact with the riverbanks.

The same parabolic flow pattern is observed in blood vessels; however, the parabolic flow curve changes during the cardiac cycle. In systole, most of the blood cells travel at or near the same speed. This pattern of flow—plug flow—displays a narrow spectrum, whereas at end-diastole and throughout diastole, a wide-spectrum display is noted due to the blood flow returning to the parabolic flow pattern, with larger variations in the speeds of the blood cells.

Vascular hemodynamics follows the same physical principles as fluid dynamics. There are many factors that influence flow, and they have been studied by numerous scientists. Consequently, laws and principles that govern fluid dynamics have been developed and explained. Hemodynamics has an important role in atherosclerosis. Understanding the behavior of fluids is crucial in order to be able to demonstrate how blood moves through the body. The principles that apply to the flow of water in the photo also govern the dynamics of blood within the vessels.

## Works Cited

Daigle, Robert J. *Techniques in Noninvasive Vascular Diagnosis.* Littleton: Summer Publishing, 2002.

Hewitt, Paul G. *Conceptual Physics.* San Francisco: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989.o

Smith, Steve. *Coquihalla River Flows Into Narrowing Canyon, Near Hope, BC, Canada.* Photograph. *Worldofstock.com.* World of Stock, 2003. Web. 23 Nov. 2010.

Evaluation: *Anca went well beyond what other students produced for this assignment, in discussing many areas of hemodynamics and using sources other than her textbook. Also, as English is not her first language, I thought she did an outstanding job in expressing herself, as well.*

# A Review of the Harper College CIS Department Website

*Nancy Boutcher and Charlie Howe*

Course: Computer Information Systems 211 (IT Project Management)
Instructor: David Braunschweig

Assignment: *Students were to collaborate on creating a website to document and inform the Harper College community regarding some aspect of technology. This group of students chose to review the Harper College CIS Department website, and to create a website outlining its findings. The project objective was to critique each page of the website and suggest site content that would increase site usability, information availability, educational/curriculum guidance, and ease of use for all site visitors.*

Evaluation: *The website these two students created matches the expections for this project beautifully, and it is outstanding in quality and organization. It is reproduced in the form of screen shots from the actual website in the following pages.*

**Student Reflections on Writing: Nancy Boutcher**

Writing has been a source of comfort for me, and it also gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction. I started a private blog several years ago, where I can put my feelings into words, whether they be happy or sad, or simply a memory I don't want to forget. It is a constructive way for me to process my feelings as well as record my life. At work, I have received many compliments on my writing. As we all know, e-mail is the primary method of communicating in many jobs, and it can be the most unclear, causing many misunderstandings. Too often, we write an e-mail quickly and several e-mails later, realize we didn't actually say what we meant. My goal in writing, both personal and professional, is to communicate succinctly and clearly. I take pride in using proper grammar and the right words to convey precisely what I mean. When the other person responds in the same way, it is very satisfying. The ultimate satisfaction, however, is being publicly recognized for good writing. It validates my beliefs and ability, and inspires me to write more. I am honored to be recognized in *The Harper Anthology*, especially for a technology project.

# CIS Review

Search this site

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## Project Management

**Objective**

- We will be reviewing Harper's CIS Department web pages, providing ideas and concepts that would benefit Harper College staff and the student community.

**Scope**

- This project has the potential to affect those who currently design the CIS website, students, Harper staff, and general users who are looking for online CIS related information regarding Harper College. Our team will review the current Harper CIS web pages and produce documentation which will describe what we have found that works on the current pages, and recommendations for changes we feel would benefit all users and designers of the current pages.

**Assumptions**

- Working as a team, the documentation will be created using Google Sites and all necessary resources will be available to us.

**Cost**

- Cost will be based on time spent by team members and will be added to the Work Breakdown Structure in week 10. Until then, each team member will track their own hours.

**Schedule**

- Weekly deliverables will be posted by 12:00pm on Saturdays, with final versions posted by midnight on Sundays. The final project demonstration will be on Monday, May 17th./

**Recent Announcements**

**Friday checkpoint** We agreed that Nancy would start off the presentation with what we did for the project, and Charlie will end the presentation with lessons learned. We will each prepare our ...
Posted May 14, 2010 1:53 PM by Nancy Boutcher

**Sunday, May 9th Update** 1. applied the cityscape background to the content area on all pages2. changed the page content font to a darker color3. deleted comments and archived them4C changed ...
Posted May 9, 2010 6:29 PM by Charlie HoweC

**Sunday May 2 Update** Updated Quality control with hours worked. In WBS, updated hours worked for team. Updated monitoring and controlling to reflect current project status. Requesting Dave to review site critique pages, and ...
Posted May 2, 2010 9:00 PM by Charlie Howe

**Sunday update - baseline + Quality Control** We took the baseline this week and entered actual work hours and start/end dates to the WBS. We also performed Quality Control on all of our page critiques, and ...
Posted Apr 25, 2010 6:20 PM by Nancy Boutcher

**Checkpoint (Thursday) - WBS w/ actuals + critique pages** We are collaborating on updating the WBS with actual dates and work hours and will have up-to-date file posted by this week's deadline. Working on how to ...
Posted Apr 22, 2010 10:40 AM by Nancy Boutcher

Showing posts 1 - 5 of 14. View more »

**Recent Files**

Showing 1 files from page WBS.

# Project Charter

**Project** Web

**Start Date:**

**Project**

**Budget Information:** TBD

Howe, charles.s.howe@gmail.com
nancyboutcher@gmail.com

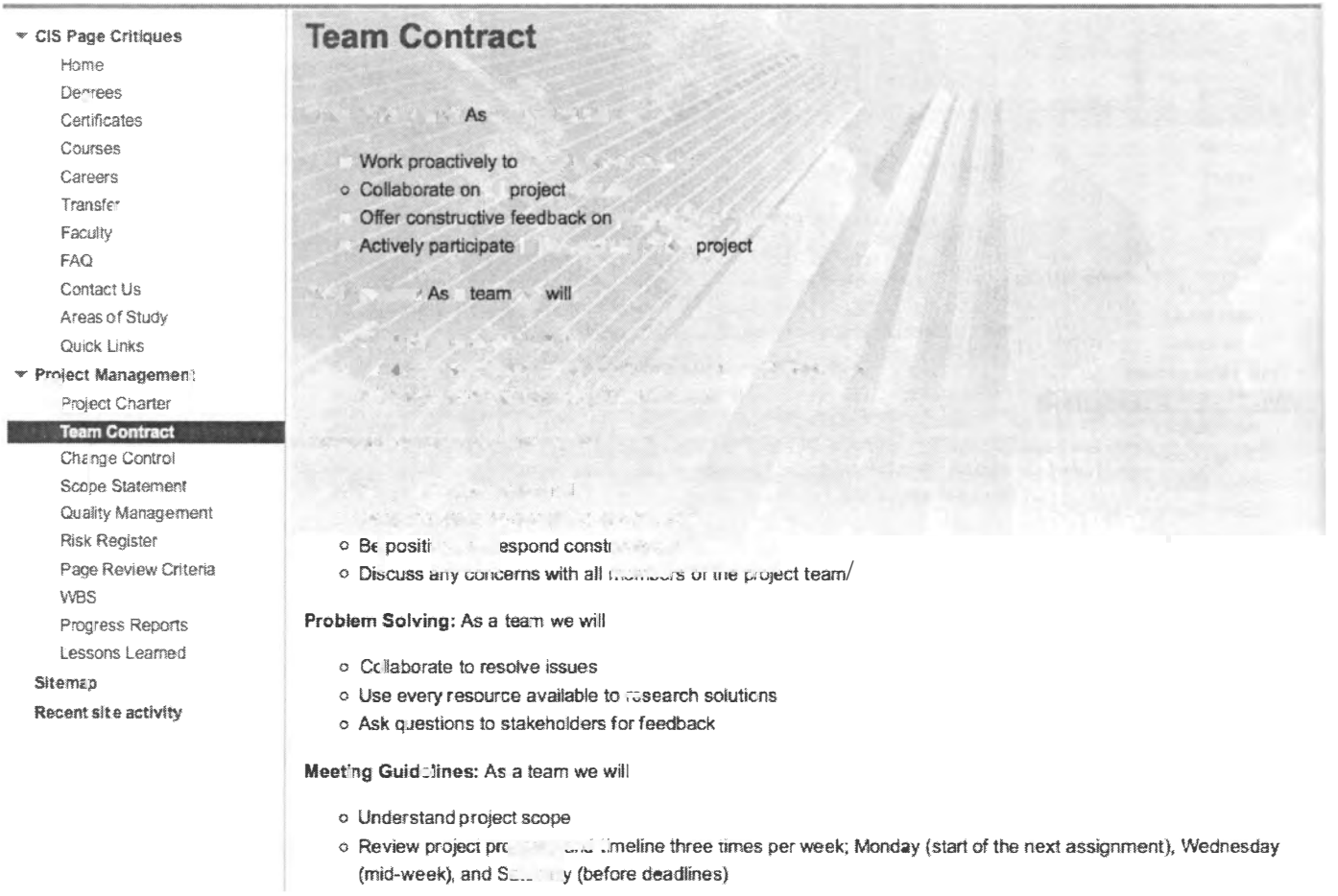
**Main Project Success Criteria:** The project should meet its objectives, deliverables should be completed on time and the project presented on May 17.

**Approach:**

1. Review current CIS departmental site content and usability
2. Verify links in current CIS site
3. Gain experience using MS Project 2007 software by creating the project WBS
4. Create documentation pages based on the WBS, using Google Sites

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

| Role | Name | Organization/ Position | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ect Manager | | Project Manager | charles.s.howe@gmail.com |
| Project Manager | | Project Manager | nancyboutcher@gmail.com |
| Stakeholder | | Assistant Professor / Coordinator | dbraunsc@harpercollege.edu |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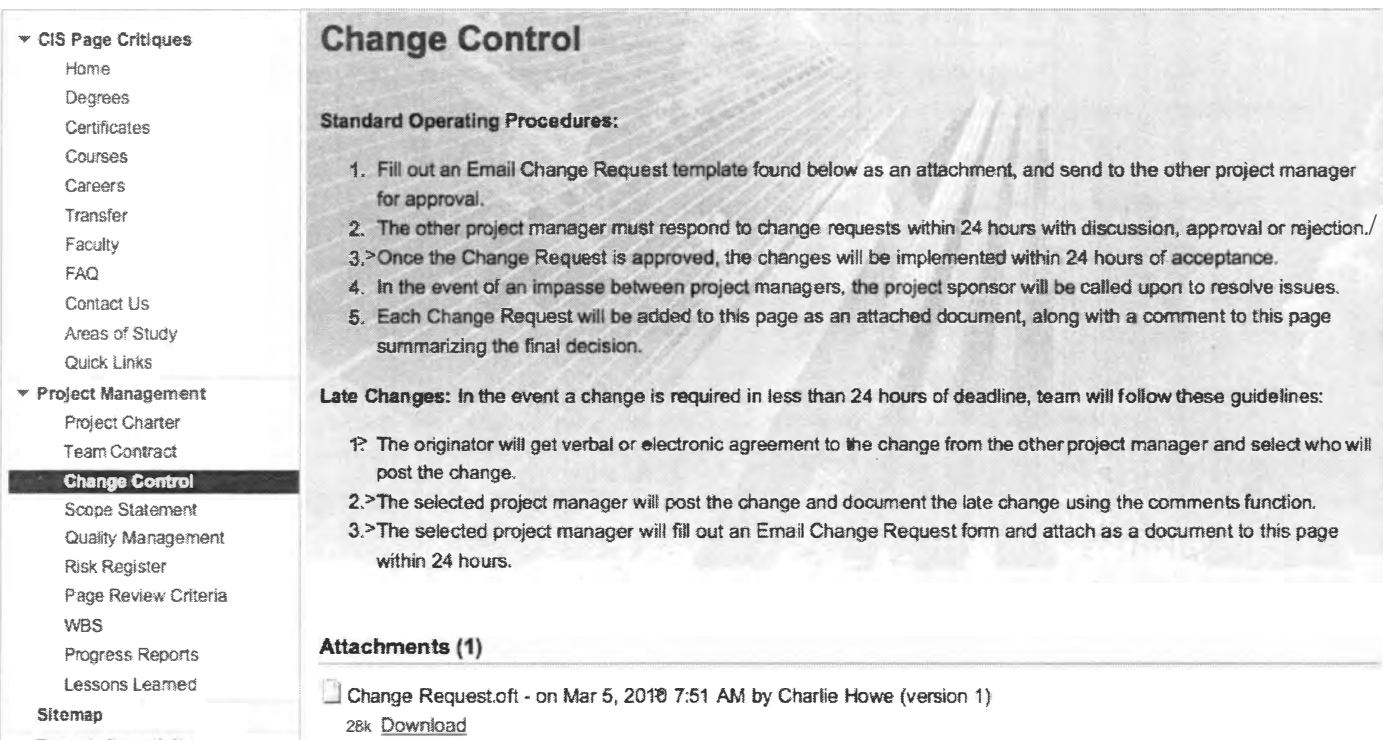
Change Control
Scope Statement
Quality Management
Risk Register
Page Review Criteria
WBS
Progress Reports
Lessons Learned
Sitemap
Recent site activity
Team Contract
As
Work proactively to
Collaborate on project
Offer constructive feedback on
Actively participate project
As team will
Be positi espond const
Discuss any concerns with all
Problem Solving: As a team we will
Collaborate to resolve issues
Use every resource available to research solutions
Ask questions to stakeholders for feedback
Meeting Guidelines: As a team we will
Understand project scope
Review project pr and timeline three times per week; Monday (start of the next assignment), Wednesday (mid-week), and S y (before deadlines)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Change Control
Scope Statement
Quality Management
Risk Register
Page Review Criteria
WBS
Progress Reports
Lessons Learned
Sitemap
Change Control
Standard Operating Procedures:
1. Fill out an Email Change Request template found below as an attachment, and send to the other project manager for approval.
2. The other project manager must respond to change requests within 24 hours with discussion, approval or rejection.
3. Once the Change Request is approved, the changes will be implemented within 24 hours of acceptance.
4. In the event of an impasse between project managers, the project sponsor will be called upon to resolve issues.
5. Each Change Request will be added to this page as an attached document, along with a comment to this page summarizing the final decision.
Late Changes: In the event a change is required in less than 24 hours of deadline, team will follow these guidelines:
1. The originator will get verbal or electronic agreement to the change from the other project manager and select who will post the change.
2. The selected project manager will post the change and document the late change using the comments function.
3. The selected project manager will fill out an Email Change Request form and attach as a document to this page within 24 hours.
Attachments (1)
Change Request.oft - on Mar 5, 2018 7:51 AM by Charlie Howe (version 1)
26k Download

# Scope Statement

**Project Summary**

Our project
educational/curriculum web
special this

**Summary of Project**

- **Project**
  - Charter
  - contract
  - with resources
  - WBS with quality control tasks added
  - WBS with resource costs added
  - Risk register/
  - Lessons learned document
- **Product-related deliverables:** 10 - 15 Google Sites web pages which will provide recommendations for improving the current CIS department home page and the following pages linked from the home page:
  1. Degrees
  2. Certificates
  3. Courses>
  4. >C rs
  5. >Tr sfer
  6. >Faculty/
  7. / FAQs
  8. Contact Us>
  9. >Areas of Study (4 pages)/
  10. Quick Links (7 pages)/

**Project Success Criteria**

Meet project objectives, produce all deliverables on time, and demonstrate the project on May 17, 2010.



# Quality Management

We will use the following standards for critiquing each CIS Department web page.

1./ **Use college level writing**
   - Correct grammar
   - Correct spelling
   - Correct formatting
   - Articulate (expressed, formulated, or presented with clarity and effectiveness)
2. **Use an appealing site design**>
   - Articulate (having parts or distinct areas organized into a coherent or meaningful whole; unified)/
   - Consistent & Readable
     - Headings
     - Fonts (type, style, size, color)
     - Colors/
     - Layout
     - Spacing
     - Indenting
     - Bullets
3. **Ensure technical accuracy** – correctly complete the project (accurate output)/
4. **Ensure technical content**>- fully complete the project (minimum 3-5 paragraphs; thorough critique of each web page)/

# Risk Register

Showing 8 items

| Risk | Owner | Response | Category | Action Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sort > | Sort | Sort | Sort | Sort |
| Teamwork: | communication might affect our performance negatively | Charlie & Nancy | We will talk by phone each week, in addition to electronic communication | People/ Grade | Friday checkpoints |
| Teamwork: communication may affect our performance positively | Charlie & Nancy | We will continue doing what works | People/ Grade | Mon/ Wed/ Fri checkpoints (electronic & verbal) |
| Quality: our quality standards might not be met | Charlie & Nancy | We will complete the quality control tasks using the Quality Management standards we documented | Quality / Grade | per WBS |
| Value: the stakeholder might not find value in the CIS Department web page critiques | Charlie, Nancy, Dave | We will request feedback from the sponsor regularly throughout the life of the project | Value | per WBS |
| Professor's expectations: as students, we might misinterpret assignment instructions | Charlie, Nancy, Dave | We will continue with weekly reviews for feedback | Quality/ Grade | Friday checkpoints |
| Outside interference: job/ family responsibilities or personal issues might interfere with completing a task | Charlie & Nancy | We will communicate with each other and change task ownership | People | Mon/ Wed/ Fri checkpoints, or as soon as possible |
| Resources: one of us might not be able to complete the course | Charlie & Nancy | The other person will assume full responsibility | People | per WBS |
| Resources: computer/ Internet/ application issues may cause late or incomplete work | Charlie & Nancy | We will communicate with each other and attempt to use an alternate source or change ownership | Technology | Mon/ Wed/ Fri checkpoints |

Showing 8 items

# Page Review Criteria

The following format and criteria will be used for critiquing the CIS Department web site, producing critique pages with a heading and at least 3 descriptive paragraphs.

**Page Review heading:**

Name of web page being critiqued:
Critiqued by whom:
Browser used:

**Paragraph 1: Design and Stability**

1. Is information easy to use and find?
2. Is the site visually appealing?
3. >Is the site easy to navigate?
4. >Do the design elements and features (searchable databases, animations, graphics, sound files, introductory and transitional pages, and so on) enhance the site?>

**Paragraph 2: Content**

1. Is the title appropriate to the site's purpose?
2. >Is the content easy to read and comprehend by its intended audience?>
3. >Is there enough detail on this page to provide adequate information and guidance?
4. Does this page meet its objective from both a prospective and current student point of view?
5. Is contact information posted on this page?
6. Is the spelling and grammar always correct?
7. Is the information current and accurate?
8. Is the information updated regularly?>
9. Is there a "last updated" date?
10. Are more links to information on the topic provided?
11. > Does the site contain the highest quality information?

**Paragraph 3: Summary / Recommendations**



# WBS

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Baseline5-2-10_chowe.mpp Download | Added time for monitoring and controlling, set those items to complete. | 862k | v. 5 | May 15, 2010 8:36 PM | Charlie Howe |

Subpages (1): Document Archives

# Progress Reports

This is where we will document phone or email discussions and key decisions not already documented on other site pages, and provide progress reports.

Subscribe to posts

## Friday checkpoint

posted May 14, 2010 1:49 PM by Nancy Boutcher

We agreed that Nancy would start off the presentation with what we did for the project, and Charlie will end the presentation with lessons learned. We will each prepare our slides accordingly.

We will have our slides to each other by Sunday morning to review and merge, leaving us with time to make any adjustments.

We will decide on Sunday which one of us will update the WBS with our hours.

We signed off on the CIS Page Critiques introduction, and the Lessons Learned document; pending feedback from Dave.

## Sunday, May 9th Update

posted May 9, 2010 6:26 PM by Charlie Howe

1. applied the cityscape background to the content area on all pages
2. changed the page content font to a darker color>
3. > deleted comments and archived them>
4. > changed our site name to "CIS Review", and added a site logo which displays in the site name area
5. rearranged the navigation area (I listed the page critiques in a somewhat logical order as displayed on the CIS> Department site; starting with Home, then as listed across the top of their site, left to right; then the links from their left navigation menu)
6. set the site landing page to "Page Critiques"
7. Updated WBS with Monitoring and Controlling with current completed items, and entered Time worked.
8. Requesting stakeholder signoff on site and WBS today.

## Sunday May 2 Update

posted May 2, 2010 8:58 PM by Charlie Howe

Updated Quality control with hours worked.
In WBS, updated hours worked for team.
Updated monitoring and controlling to reflect current project status.
Requesting Dave to review site critique pages, and project site.

## Sunday update - baseline + Quality Control

posted Apr 25, 2010 6:18 PM by Nancy Boutcher

We took the baseline this week and entered actual work hours and start/end dates to the WBS. We also performed Quality Control on all of our page critiques, and signed off on them.

## Checkpoint (Thursday) - WBS w/ actuals + critique pages

posted Apr 22, 2010 10:24 AM by Nancy Boutcher [ updated Apr 22, 2010 10:40 AM ]

We are collaborating on updating the WBS with actual dates and work hours and will have up-to-date file posted by this week's deadline. Working on how to make actual information save as intended.

Our critique pages have been edited for Quality Control and consistency and are ready for team review/ sign off. (Not due until 5/9)

## Checkpoint (Sunday) - risk, baseline, quality

posted Apr 18, 2010 6:54 PM by Nancy Boutcher

We agree to the following.

1. Nancy will edit the Risk Register Sunday night, based on Dave's feedback. (need to change to Monday)
2. Charlie will take a baseline in our current WBS on Tuesday/Wednesday, and archive older documents on the WBS page.
3. Nancy will look at all executing pages for Quality Control on Sunday or Monday.
4. We will submit our team evaluations on Sundays.

## Monday checkpoint - risk, cost, critiquing

posted Apr 12, 2010 3:20 PM by Nancy Boutcher

Risk register and 2 page critiques are ready for review and feedback from Dave. WBS has been tweaked for resources, cost and timeline; also ready for Dave to review. Focus will be on page critiquing this week.

## Monday checkpoint - criteria, resources & risk

posted Apr 5, 2010 8:14 AM by Nancy Boutcher [ **updated Apr 8, 2010 1:10 PM** ]

Charlie and I agree to the following next steps.

1. Charlie will update the Page Review Criteria page so that we use consistent criteria to review the CIS department web pages.
2. Charlie will update the WBS-Gantt chart for the start and end dates in which we will do our page reviews, and for resource percentages.
3. Nancy will create first draft of the Risk Register.
4. We will have Risk Register and at least 2 web page reviews ready to send to Dave for feedback on Friday.

1 comment

## Monday checkpoint - quality, cost & critique

posted Mar 29, 2010 8:38 AM by Nancy Boutcher [ **updated Apr 8, 2010 1:09 PM** ]

Our WBS is updated with quality control and cost; HR resources might still need some adjusting.
The first draft of our critique template is posted; waiting for Charlie to review.

## Friday checkpoint - modify timeline

posted Mar 20, 2010 6:40 AM by Nancy Boutcher [ **updated Apr 8, 2010 1:08 PM** ]

On Friday, March 19, we agreed to change our timeline so that we can move ahead of the Syllabus dates, as reflected in the WBS. To summarize, we agree to:

week of March 22: add quality and cost to WBS
week of March 29: create critique template [Charlie and Nancy both traveling]
week of April 5: risk register / begin executing phase
week of April/12: end executing phase
week of April/19: practice exam
week of April 26: practice exam for final grade; post final MS Project file to Google site
week of May 3: lesson learned document
week of May 10: prepare presentation
May 17: give presentation

We are waiting for Dave's feedback on this new schedule.

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# Home

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Home; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The CIS home page is a basic easy-to-read first page for the CIS department. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page contains more links with short descriptions. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. There is an abundant use of white space with a lot of plain text and it lacks any creative elements, such as those found on the main Harper College home page.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is adequate to provide information and guidance. For current students, looking up information is easy with the no frills statements and links. For prospective students, content is lacking to make the home page more interesting. Its objective is adequate but does not give a general overview of the various areas of study, which a prospective student might be looking for. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors. All links accurately navigate to their respective pages.

In general, the Home page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful, well written information. However, its main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) lack of content for prospective students. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and the font size of the menu items, to make room for adding creative elements. Adding graphics or a short faculty video introducing the Harper CIS page, would increase site clicks and usage. This would also show that the programs within the CIS department are up-to-date with technology, as the site elements could reflect some current technology in use (i.e. streaming video).

The Home page is the first page that future students view to gather information on possibly getting a CIS degree, or to take advantage of any of the other study areas within the CIS department. To improve content for prospective students, we recommend adding an overview of the areas of study. A quick link to "recent" program changes would also be advantageous and offer students an easy way to find any curriculum or degree requirement changes with a quick glance.

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# Degrees

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Degrees; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/degrees/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Degrees page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page has categories of the various degrees Harper offers and links to more information on those degrees. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, but it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is lacking, therefore does not meet its objective. Aside from the category title, there is little information to go on besides the text within the link. All links accurately navigate to their respective pages. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors.

In general, the page is organized and easy to navigate, but its main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) lack of detail. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements. In terms of detail, we recommend adding a short description of the degree corresponding with each respective link. This gives prospective students a quicker way to access the information they are most interested in. Additionally, information on how the job market views an area of study would be valuable to current students, while prospective students may find value in salary ranges tied to job titles and degrees.

# Certificates

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Certificates; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/certificates/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Certificates page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page is organized with links to different software certificates a student can achieve at Harper. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is lacking, therefore does not meet its objective. The content relies on links to get information across to the student or user. Some of the links are self explanatory, but could use some career related information that students and future job hunters would benefit from when making a decision to pursue a particular certification. All links accurately navigate to their respective pages. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors.

In general, the page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful information, but has two main weaknesses: 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) lack of detail. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements. In terms of detail, we recommend adding details under each software heading to describe the area of study. Under the category headings or within the links themselves, we recommend adding some information stating where the Harper certificate program sits in relation to the more known industry certification exams; such as Micrsoft, Comptia, and Redhat. Knowing whether the Harper programs are a preparatory course or equal to the industry exams would be good information for students and curious minds and would increase Harper's credibility.





# Courses

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Courses; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/courses/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Courses page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page is organized into a few main points and a few links describing the areas of study. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, but it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is lacking, therefore does not meet its objective. There is a single paragraph highlighting the point that Harper offers 85 courses in 5 areas of study. Each area of study (Application, Information Systems, E-Learning, Networking, and Web development) has a link that leads to individual class information for the appropriate area. Within the links is a short table outlining the class schedule a student should follow to meet the requirements to achieve the degree in the field. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors.

In general, the page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful information, but has two main weaknesses: 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) lack of detail. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements. In terms of detail, we recommend organizing the 5 areas of study into a grid view contained on this Courses page, instead of linking to separate pages. This would offer a quick glance approach for visitors to see all the information within one page, as opposed to clicking back and forth, and a student could easily visualize a path to finishing a degree. For undecided CIS students, they could see and take common classes within the various areas of study and decide on a degree at a later time. This would save money and time for the undecided student.

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# Careers

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Careers; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/careers/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Careers page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The careers page is one of the most interesting pages within the CIS department, in terms of content. Its main content area is organized into an opening paragraph, an occupational growth table, and an entry-level positions table with salary ranges. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is adequate to provide information to both prospective and current students, therefore the page meets its objective. The opening paragraph includes a link and a brief statement relating to the industry definition of CIS related jobs. Most of the information on the page is compiled by government sites, as quoted on the page, but offers students a glance into what they could be headed for in the future. The growth table is particularly interesting as it points out the fact that jobs will be available for students after they have met their education requirements. There are also useful links to additional information, which all accurately navigate to their respective pages. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors.

In general, the page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful, well written information. However, its main weakness is lack of visual appeal. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements. An additional plus would be to weigh the difference for 2-year degree students as opposed to 4-year degree students in the salary table.

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# Transfer

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Transfer; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/transfer/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Charlie Howe
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Transfer page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page contains some information regarding transfers and links for various people or departments in which to contact regarding transfer requirements. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, but it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is lacking, therefore does not meet its objective. The page is designed to have the student contact an advisor within Harper or the school to which they will be transferring, but there is no indication of which Harper advisor to contact. The page does contain links to useful information such as a PDF file with general requirements for transferring to a 4 year school. All links accurately navigate to their respective pages. The page also includes useful information regarding articulation agreements that Harper has with area schools. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors.C

In general, the page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful information, but has two main weaknesses: 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) lack of detail. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements. We also recommend adding specific contact information for appropriate Harper advisors regarding transfers?

# Faculty

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Faculty; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/faculty/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Nancy Boutcher
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Faculty page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page is a list of all the full-time and adjunct faculty of the CIS department, organized accordingly. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is adequate to provide information to both prospective and current students, therefore the page meets its objective. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors. Every email link, when clicked, generates a new email draft by my default client, as it should. Only 4 of the 7 full-time faculty members have links to personal sites, leaving an obvious omission of valuable and interesting information, which can leave a negative impression of the college.

In general, the Faculty page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful, well written information. However, its main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) missing faculty information. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements (graphics, animations, videos, etc.). We also recommend requiring all full-time faculty to have their own web site and link to it from this page.





# FAQ

**Name of web page being critiqued:** FAQ; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/faqs/index.html
**Critiqued by:** Nancy Boutcher
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The FAQ page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page is a list of 14 questions grouped together and linked to their respective answers which follow on the same page. This design allows the visitor to read all the questions without having to scroll down the page. One of the links is non-functional due to a coding error: the HREF does not match the NAME for *Which counselors are most familiar with CIS programs*. The quantity of questions is at the high end of reasonable; more than 15 would be too many and an indication that information is difficult to find on the site as a whole. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting. The question mark graphic contained on this page is elementary in design and seems to be a random add-on since most of the other site pages do not contain graphics.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The contains enough detail to provide adequate information and guidance targeted mainly at prospective students. The content of this page meets its objective of providing questions and answers; whether they are truly the most frequently asked would best be determined by Harper staff. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors. All the links accurately navigate to their respective pages, however minor improvements can be made to the content.

In general, the FAQ page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful, well written information. However, its main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) minor content issues. We recommend improving visual appeal by changing the overall site layout, reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding creative elements (graphics, animations, videos, etc.). We recommend correcting the coding error mentioned in the first paragraph, as well as these improvements to content:

1. >Links to pages outside of the CIS Department should open in a new tab or window.
2. >In the answer to "Can I test out of CIS 101?", add a link to the text "Harper College Assessment and Testing Center" which navigates to its respective page.
3. In the aswer to "When are classes offered?", change the text of "**Course** Schedule" to "**Class** Schedule", to be accurate.>
4. In the answer to "Which counselors are most familiar with CIS programs?", add a link to the text "....the CIS coordinator or department assistant...." which navigates to the "Contact Us" page.
5. In the answers to "What communications elective should I take?" and "What humanities, natural science, or social science electives should I take?", add a link to the Class Schedule.

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# Contact Us

**Name of web page being critiqued:** Contact Us; http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/contact/index.html
**Critiqued by whom:** Nancy Boutcher
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The Contact Us page is accessed from the Home page. It contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and it contains 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of the page lists the email address, phone number and office location for the CIS Department Coordinator and Assistant. It also contains a photograph of each person, both of which are amateurish. The information provided is easy to find and the page is easy to navigate, however it is not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the page visually uninteresting.

The page title is appropriate for the page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is adequate to provide information to both prospective and current students, therefore the page meets its objective. However, it could contain more information about the two individuals in terms of job function. This may help people in deciding whom to direct their question to. There is no way to know if the information on this page is current, as there is no 'last updated' information present. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors. The page does contain one coding error: both email links go to the same email address (dbraunsc@harpercollege.edu). As a current student, I expected to see a link to Dave Braunschweig's faculty page.

In general, the Contact Us page is well-organized, easy to navigate and contains useful, well written information. However, its main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) minimal content. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements (graphics, animations, videos, etc.); and by updating the photographs with something more professional in style. We also recommend correcting the coding error noted above, adding a link to Dave's faculty page, and providing information about the job function of each individual listed.

# Areas of Study

**Name of web pages being critiqued:** Areas of Study;

- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/cas/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/courses/cis.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/net/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/web/index.html

The Areas of Study category contains links to 4 pages, which contain links to many more pages. Due to the similarity of these pages, they will be critiqued as a whole.

**Critiqued by whom:** Nancy Boutcher
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

The 4 Areas of Study pages are accessed from the Home page. Each of the 4 pages contain a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and they each contain 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of each page is well organized with links to pages describing degrees, certificates, class schedule and courses. The information provided is easy to find and the pages are easy to navigate, however they are not visually appealing. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the pages visually uninteresting. Each page contains a graphic that is elementary in design which adds no appeal or benefit to the pages, and is a poor reflection of the CIS department. Links to current and future class schedules and courses, on the other hand, have a positive impact.

Each page title is appropriate for its page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is appropriate for each page, and increases as expected to subsequent pages. The pages meet their objective for both prospective and current students on the respective areas of the CIS curriculum. The 4 pages appear to be current as they all contain links to the current Class Schedule, therefore I would not expect to see a 'last-updated' date on each page, although it couldn't hurt. Every link was tested with the following results.

- **Degrees:** All links went to respective pages with appropriate headings except "Computers in Business - Computer/ Desktop Support". When you follow the link, the work "Desktop" is missing in the heading (http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/degrees/cib-cs.html). One page or the other should be corrected.>
- **Certificates:** All links went to respective pages with appropriate headings, so the content is assumed to be correct. However, a source of confusion are the 3 certificates listed on the Web Development page that go to different educational departments: Graphic Arts, Marketing and Mass Communications. When I click on those links, I expect to see information about the specific certificate, but what I actually see is the main page of the department with no obvious link about that certificate. Either link them appropriately, or give a brief description about where the links go.
- **Class Schedule:** All links went to the appropriate schedule; content is assumed to be correct.
- **Courses:** All links went to respective course pages with appropriate headings. Content is assumed to be correct on the course pages, but many inconsistencies were found, which follow. One source of confusion was that the faculty contact listed on the course pages did not necessarily match who was teaching the course as listed in the Class Schedule. As a student, I'm not sure who to contact. As a critic, I'm not sure if the faculty contacts named on the course pages are accurate.
  - all course links went to pages with the correct course code, but some course pages had errors in the course title
  - some course links went to old pages of a different design (Java courses)
  - all course pages contained faculty email addresses, but some were hyper-linked and some were not
  - some course pages included a section called "Required Materials", some did not
  - some course pages included an image of the text book, some did not
  - some course pages included the required text book title and ISBN#, some only included a link to Harper's/ bookstore
  - some course pages included the course outline, some did not

In general, these 4 pages and their subsequent pages are well-organized, easy to navigate and contain a large amount of useful, well written information. However, the main weaknesses are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) inconsistency. We recommend improving visual appeal by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements (graphics, animations, videos, etc.).

We also recommend the issues named above be addressed. As students, our preference is for each course page to include the course description, course outline, required materials (including the text book title with ISBN# rather than merely a link to the Harper bookstore), faculty contact name, phone # and a link to the faculty contact's email (rather than an unlinked address). We recommend that the text book image consistently be displayed on every course page. This would create a very positive image of Harper College.

Lastly, we recommend that every link which navigates away from the CIS Department site open in a new tab or window.

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# Quick Links

**Name of web pages being critiqued:** Quick Links;

- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/certifications/index.html/
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/labs/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/highschool/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/fasttrack/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/software/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/testing/index.html
- http://dept.harpercollege.edu/cis/tutoring/index.html

The Quick Links category contains links to 7 other pages containing miscellaneous yet pertinent information related to the CIS Department. This critique will include all 7 pages.

**Critiqued by whom:** Nancy Boutcher
**Browser used:** Firefox 3.6.3

All 7 pages are accessed from the Home page. Each page contains a left sidebar menu and a top horizontal menu, which are useful for navigating to other department pages, and they contain 4 links to key areas outside of the department. The main content area of each page contains information related to their title and are generally well organized. The information provided is easy to find and the pages are easy to navigate, however they are not visually appealing, although some pages have increased visual interest through the use of logos. The abundant use of white space, plain text and lack of creative elements make the pages visually uninteresting. Surprisingly, there is no 'quick link' to Registration.

Each page title is appropriate for its page content, and is easy to comprehend. The level of detail is appropriate for each page, and increases as expected to subsequent pages. The pages meet their objectives for both prospective and current students. The content is easy to read in terms of font style, color, spacing, formatting, and with no obvious spelling or grammar errors. It is unknown how current the pages are as there is no 'last-updated' information present. Every link on each of the 7 pages was tested. Specific issues are noted below.

- **Certifications:** Logos add visual appeal and credibility; all should be there and not just some
- **Dual Credit:** The link to "background information" is out of date
- **Fast Track:** Even though a link for more information is provided, a brief description should be included in the overview; wherever the text includes instructions to "contact" someone, a hyperlink should be used
  - Degree pages
    - Some descriptions are poorly written in that they say "the 3 Accounting courses should be replaced by the courses below"; which courses?
    - The "Fast Track Business Core sequence" courses in the listing should be clearly marked
    - Linking to the respective course descriptions would improve these pages
    - When "(see current catalog)" is written, it should be hyper-linked to the respective page
- **Software:** Logos add visual appeal and credibility; all should be there and not just some; the link to "license keys"> goes to a page with the CIS Department heading, but is inconsistent with the layout/design of the other department pages

In general, these 7 pages and their subsequent pages are well-organized, easy to navigate and contain a large amount of useful, well written information. However, their main weakness are 1) lack of visual appeal and 2) some content issues. We recommend improving visual appeal through comments noted above; and by reducing the size of logos and reducing font size of the menu items, to make room for adding appropriate creative elements (graphics, animations, videos, etc.).

We also recommend adding a quick link to Registration, and coding links which navigate away from the CIS Department site to open in a new tab or window.

# Lessons Learned

**Project Name:** Shaping the CIS Department Web Site

**Project Sponsor:** Dave Braunschweig

**Project Mangers:** Charlie Howe; Nancy Boutcher

**Project Dates:** 2/8/2010 - 5/17/2010

**Project Cost Baseline:** $21,284.87

**Project/Actual Cost:** $10,483.03

**1. Did the project meet scope, time and cost goals?>**

Our project met all the guidelines in our scope. We completed the project on time, and ready to present as the scope> dictated. We came in under budget by $10,801.77.

**2. What were the success criteria listed in the project scope statement?**

Our success criteria as written in the scope statement are: "Meet project objectives, produce all deliverables on time, and demonstrate the project on May 17, 2010."

**3. Reflect on whether or not you met the project success criteria.>**

We kept the success criteria fairly simple, aligning them with the course syllabus and obtaining stakeholder sign off. In meeting our project objectives, we discovered errors in the CIS Department pages which, once corrected, will improve visitors' ease of use. We also documented areas where content can be improved to increase site traffic, and we made suggestions for improving visual appeal with current technologies as a way to convey a more positive reflection of the CIS Department.

**4. In terms of managing the project, what were the main lessons your team learned from this project?/**

The main lessons we learned are:

- Changing people resources during the Initiating phase was instrumental to project success. With 2 out of the 3 initial> resources not participating, the team would not have been able to complete the project.
- Performing this project as a class assignment contributed to its success. The project sponsor (class professor) provided essential instructions and feedback in all aspects of the project (class expectations, project management phases, MS Project, and teamwork). We also had the benefit of learning from the other teams through online discussions and their team web sites.
- Implementing weekly conference calls and not relying solely on email improved team communication. Over the phone, questions can be answered without delay, tone of voice can alleviate misinterpretation and comaraderie is increased.>
- Learning to use MS Project was time consuming and a source of frustration.>
- Balancing individual soft skills of the team - work styles, time management skills, commitment levels and communication skills - was more challenging than the work itself.

**5. Describe one example of what went right on this project./**

Formally defining our page review criteria and quality standards helped us to stay within our scope and keep our focus in terms of the product deliverables. The Page Review Criteria and Quality Standards documents were in addition to the other required project documents, and all team members provided sign off.

**6. Describe one example of what went wrong on this project./**

During our site review for project quality control, we discovered an item in our Project Charter that did not get carried forward into our Scope Statement or Work Breakdown Structure. As project managers, we felt the omission was slight and would have a low impact on our final product.

**7. What will you do differently on the next project based on your experience working on this project?/**

Working as a virtual team allowed us the benefit of managing our own time, which worked well for us. However, things to improve on the next project include:

- In-person team kick-off and closing meetings would improve teamwork and camaraderie./
- Assigning specific project responsibilities to each team member from the start would make expectations more clear
- Increased structure for weekly conference calls would improve effectiveness (meeting agenda; specific day & time)>
- Increased MS Project skills would be a benefit to future projects./
- Increased soft skills would be a benefit to future projects./

# Analysis of *Relief Showing the Head of a Winged Genius*

*Catherine Clarke*
Course: Art 130 (History of Art I)
Instructor: Karen Patterson

Assignment: *Write a formal analysis paper based on an artwork viewed in person at a Chicago art museum. Use visual analysis to interpret the meaning of the piece.*

On the eastern bank of the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, in what is now Nimrud, Iraq, Assyrian leader Ashurnasirpal II built his walled capital city. King Ashurnasirpal's palace, like most of the buildings in Nimrud, was made of mud bricks, but decorative carvings lining the interior walls were made from more impressive and durable natural stone. One such carving, from the palace reception room, can be found at the Art Institute of Chicago. The *Relief Showing the Head of a Winged Genius* is a 20-by-24-inch section of a panel that was approximately seven feet high and twenty-one and a half feet long (Figure 1). The panel, approximately 2 inches thick, is carved from gypsum, a common rock soft enough to be scratched by a fingernail. In light of the stone's consistency, it is surprising that sections of the carved panel have withstood the test of time so well, as it dates to 850 BCE. The form of the artwork and the stylistic choices of the artist reflect the strength and solidity, as well as the balance and organization of the culture from which it came.

The figures in the planar composition extend from the very bottom to the very top of the surface plane, giving them the appearance of being hedged into a space that is barely large enough to contain them. At seven feet tall, they are larger than life-size, which adds to the visual illusion of their strength and power. Although the poses are stiff and static, they are balanced by the curvilinear contour lines of the musculature in the arms and legs, as well as in the details of the beards, wings, and clothing. This combination of rigidity and flowing lines can also be seen in the plants that flank the figures, which depict intertwining vines with evenly spaced, symmetrical flowers. Repetition and symmetry is also present in the figures' identical poses and proportions, as well as in the overall pattern of the composition, which alternates between plants and figures.

Narrowing my focus from the entire composition to the single winged figure from the relief fragment (Figure 2), he is shown in twisted perspective and with very stylized features. The eye is overly large and thickly outlined, giving the impression of an intimidating stare. The ear is also very stylized, forming the shape of a question mark. The mustache and long beard are carved

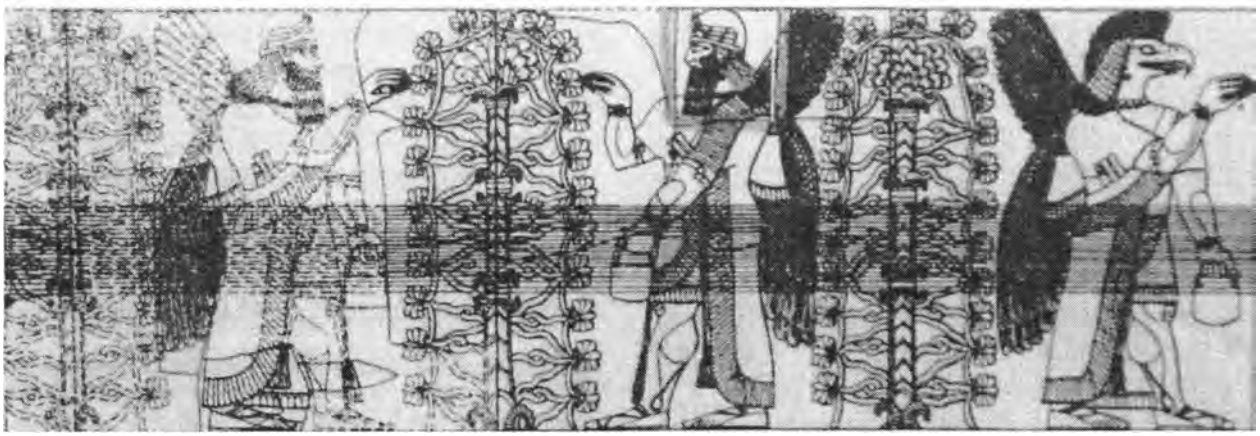

Figure 1. Drawing of 21 1/2- by 7-foot decorative stone carving from an inside wall of Assyrian leader Ashurnasirpal II's palace reception room. The portion *Relief Showing the Head of a Winged Genius* is outlined in a square, near the top center of the image. This fragment of the carving is on display at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 2. A 20- by 24-inch fragment—*Relief Showing the Head of a Winged Genius*—of the carving in Figure 1.

with rows of spirals to represent curls, and the feathers of the wings are also greatly detailed.

Carved in low relief, there are only slight variations in how far the images protrude from the surface plane. The highest point of the relief fragment is the shoulder, which only protrudes approximately one-half of an inch. Most of the carving is a quarter of an inch or less. Clearly, some thought was given by the artist as to the depth variations, however slight. For example, the garment is decorated with details in such low relief that they are just barely visible, which possibly represent embroidery. By comparison, the neck of the garment is slightly higher, and the facial features are higher still. It appears that the artist added the most detail and relief to the areas of greatest importance, drawing the viewer's eye to the face, particularly the eye and ear, the beard, and the wing.

Because gypsum is such a soft stone, it could have easily been smoothed out in areas like the skin's surface and the negative space of the background. However, there are marks that appear to be left by the artist's carving tool. Also visible are slight traces of pigment, which would indicate that the panel was painted. The garment shows traces of white, while the background retains some reddish brown pigment.

The stylistic choices made by the artist reveal much about the culture from which the carving originated. The repetition and symmetry convey a sense of order and organization, while the combination of unnaturally stiff poses and curvilinear lines illustrate a sense of creative balance. There is nothing in the negative space to draw the eye away from the scene and its message, which, according to iconographic interpretation on the wall plate adjacent to the carving, may be a purification or fertility ritual. These choices show an intentional and focused purpose that goes beyond mere decoration.a

The choices of scale and medium are also revealing. The figures' size, relative to both the space they occupy and also the viewers standing before the entire wall carving, convey a sense of power, strength, and importance. The medium adds to this impression, with its appearance of weight and permanence. The 20-by-24-inch fragment depicting the single head is only a fraction of the entire panel, yet even at that size, it conveyed these things. It is doubtful that I would have been able to lift even this relatively small section, it appeared to be so heavy.

Overall, through a formal analysis of the *Relief Showing the Head of a Winged Genius*, many things can be deduced about the Assyrian culture in general and about King Ashurnasirpal II in particular. I would argue that he was a strong and organized ruler. The combination of curvilinear lines and stiff symmetry shows creative thinking and a respect for the balance between man and his organic environment. The use of this combination in the depiction of the plants indicates the control of nature by man, reflective of the Assyrians' agricultural civilization in the fertile crescent. The use of strong contour lines and stylized abstraction ofthe subjects draws the viewer's focus to what were considered to be the most important details, and the lack of depth perception or imagery in the negative space keeps the viewer's attention on that singular focus. An iconographic interpretation of this piece would add another interesting dimension, as would knowledge of the original color palette. Even without those things, though, there is clearly a great deal of information being conveyed through the style and form of the work.

Evaluation: *This paper is a thorough and accurate description of the work's stylistic elements and design principles, and Cathy interprets the work using those observations. The paper is also focused and straight to the point.*

# Male Dominance and the Female Psyche in American Literature

*Victoria Collier*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper incorporating effective use of at least seven secondary sources and maintaining a sharply focused critical perspective.*

Literature is a form of expression that can be used as an outlet for emotions or can make a statement, either on a personal or social level. For one such author, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" became a voice against the treatment of women who sought artistic freedom and were forced into submission by their male counterparts for not conforming to the social norms dictated for women during the Victorian period of the late 1800s. The undertone of the story is a silent protest against the male-dominated world of medicine prevalent in the late 1800s and the widely held opinion that women were mentally weak and should remain domesticated. Suffering for numerous years with depression and a nervous disorder, Ms. Gilman sought the advice of a noted nerve specialist, who prescribed to Ms. Gilman the rest treatment and was told to maintain an academic life without any academic pursuits. Ms. Gilman stated, "I went home and obeyed those directions for some three months, and came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that I could see over" (Gilman, "Why I Wrote the 'Yellow Wallpaper'," par. 2). Ms. Gilman later wrote the "The Yellow Wallpaper," a fictional story which loosely parallels her experience with the rest cure, as a caution to other people concerning this form of treatment of nervous disorders, especially other women. Dismissed and labeled as a gothic tale when first published, Linda Wagner-Martin states "'The Yellow Wallpaper,' revived by the Feminist Press after being out of print for 70 years, is now one of the most often read and written about stories of feminist consciousness" (par.1).

William Faulkner, on the other hand, was the supreme voice against human injustice, social expectations, and male domination that was prevalent in the social world of the Old American South. Born in New Albany, Mississippi in 1897, Mr. Faulkner was raised in Oxford, Mississippi. "His short stories and novels revolve around the fictitious 'Yoknapatawpha County,'" (668) a world created by Faulkner to mirror geographically the region he was raised in and the social edicts he was exposed to in his day and age. Du Fang makes the observation that: "...most of Faulkner's novels concern the conflict and collision between his characters and society. Faulkner senses that corruption in religion and culture is responsible for the tragic downfall of his characters..."a (19). Miss Emily, his character in "A Rose for Emily," is no exception, optimizing the struggle of the feminine southern lady gone bad. Twisted, mentally stunted by a dominant father and living in a fantasy world where time stands still, Miss Emily wages a never-ending war with the citizens of Jefferson, Mississippi and the procession of time.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is a frightening, depressing, hopeless story. Jane is powerless, slipping into madness due to the treatment that her husband prescribes to battle her depression. She is trying to maintain her self-image and her interests in writing, and John is set on remaking his wife into an obedient, subservient wife. Loralee MacPike states, "Her work is, as he suggests, dangerous; but its danger is for him, not her, because it removes her from his control" (par. 3). The treatment John prescribesa leaves Jane isolated, without friends and family, confined in a child's nursery, where she is not permitted to perform any physical or mental exertions. John's confinement of Jane is his way of maintaining control over his wife, as he feels threatened by Jane's writing, which goes against his desire for her to become domestic in nature. The environment John confines Jane to is dominated by bizarre and frantic yellow wallpaper that eventually symbolizes in Jane's mind the hopeless situation John has forced her to deal with on a day-to-day basis. The story centers on Jane's insurmountable struggles to cope emotionally and physically with the domination and control exerted by her husband John. Unable to effectively fight John's treatment, Jane escapes metaphorically into the wallpaper and becomes insane, her way of coping with her situation.

In "A Rose for Emily," we are shown another form of male dominance and control of a female family

member. Emily, the main character, is a sad, lonely, and emotionally disturbed woman who is mentally anda emotionally stunted and becomes seriously unbalanced after her father's death. Throughout her life, her father's domination and isolation has left Emily unable to accept the death of the men in her life. Emily never had any friends and was never allowed to have a family, and she becomes attached to the males in her life in an unhealthy manner due to this forced isolation. Further, as noted by Du Fang, "...she cannot properly handle her relationship with others" (20), which ultimately affects her relationship with her towns- people and her cousins. Though Emily is an unbalanced, lonely and misunderstood individual, she still manages to reject the constraints and interference that her town tries to impose on her. She remains under the dominance of her father, through his memory, though, living in an isolated fantasy world of her own making.

Overall, both stories demonstrate the use of isolation, coercion, and mental domination that was forced upon women during the 1800s Victorian Era through the early 20th century, making them submissive toward men. Jane's inability to successfully fight John's domination and his treatment in "The Yellow Wallpaper" causes Jane to create and escape into a fantasy world that Greg Johnson describes as, "...the Gothic world of her own making" (525). Essentially, the yellow wallpapera becomes her prison, one she must escape from to conquer John's domination over her. For Emily in "A Rose for Emily," the constant domination and will exacted over her by her father in life and in death has left her unable to cope with reality. Jack Scherting observes how Emily is unable to distinguish between the real and the surreal aspects of her life: "She is unable to discriminate between Southern gentleman and a Yankee laborer, between past and present, between sleep and death, between that which is vital and that which is decaying" (401). Emily lives in a fantasy world of her own design, with its own rules, the only world she knows and can control.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is set in the late 1800s, during the Victorian time period, and involves the rest treatment that is prescribed to the main character Jane,a who is suffering from mental depression, by her husband, John, who is also a physician. Jane's frustration stems from her husband's inability to try to understand her mental condition. Jane states that "If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency, what is one to do? My brother is also a physician and also of high standing and he says the same" (Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," 926). There is a sense that Jane, the narrator, is dealing with a mental condition, but she is in conflict with her husband and her brother, who are both physicians, who in their professional medical opinion, have explained away her ongoing depression as a minor nervous condition. She feels helpless, unable to express her opinion about what is happening to her, because her male family members have told friends and other family members there isn't anything really wrong with her. She can't contest their opinions because they are respected medical professionals and male; she is only a female, and her opinion doesn't count. This passage sets up her submission to her husband's treatment and her prescribed isolation, which eventually leads to her insanity.

Jane's helplessness concerning her nervous condition is clearly prompted by John's opinion, which he expresses to his friends and family, that there is really nothing medically wrong with her. He dismisses her as having a minor nervous condition, yet he takes her away and prescribes isolation and rest. Janice Haney-Peritz notes John's conflicting response to Jane's illness:

> Since we have just been treated to an account of John's discourse on his wife's condition, a discourse based on the...'unheard of contradiction' that somehow she is both well and ill, we may want to be even more specific and say that the oppressive structure at issue is a man's prescriptive discourse about a woman. (par. 7)

John's issue is specifically with Jane's behavior and what he sees as her defiance against his wishes for her to conform to the proper wife and mother of her era. He doesn't believe she is truly ill, so he sets out to deal with Jane as one would deal with a willful child. He banishes her from her home, family and friends, as punishment for her supposed illness. It is clear that he has no intent on listening to Jane and her opinion concerning her illness. As Linda Wagner-Martin states, "...listening to her is the last thing on his agenda" (par. 3).

Jane, the narrator, is a young, intelligent woman. John's main contention with his wife is her active pursuit of writing, an endeavor that Jane immensely enjoys. She says, "I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal – having to be so sly about it,

or else meet with heavy opposition" (926). Jane, the narrator, specifies her main interest in this passage, which is writing, yet it is also a serious point of contention for her husband, which causes her stress and is the cause of her anxiety when dealing with her husband. The story revolves around her hiding her writing and the stresses this causes between them. We see the effect this ongoing battle of wills has on Jane's state of mind.

Jane's ongoing depression gives John an excuse to move Jane to an isolated estate three miles outside of town, away from the influence ofafriends and family. The estate summer home that John rents, where Jane is taken and which she remains at for three months, receiving her husband's treatment for her nervous condition, is symbolically important in the story. Jane wavers in her description of the summer estate home, calling it, "A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house and reach the height of romantic felicity – but that would be asking too much of fate!" (926). This opening statement is a flight of Jane's fancy, which gives us insight into the extent of her imagination unconsciously trying to deal with the impending isolation and treatment. Jane has already created a scenario of the tragic heroine enshrined in a nightmare of a haunted mansion. It is aa wishful scenario, about which Janice Haney- Peritz notes, "...what she would like to believe is that the place is really a 'haunted house'" (par. 5). Believing the house is haunted flaunts John's strong sense of reality, which is a point of conflict with Jane's imagination and her struggle to continue her writing. For Jane, from the opening of the story, she has decided that the colonial mansion, the hereditary estate of her husband's choosing and her medical condition, is to become the theme of her Gothic tale and she its heroine. Greg Johnson summarizesa Jane's desire to write her own haunted tale, as he states, "Both the domestic incident and the terrifying short story suggest the familiar Gothic themes of confinement and rebellion, forbidden desire and 'irrational fear'" (522). Already, Jane is fighting John's treatment and has found an intellectual and imaginative way to fight him, finding her strength within the realm of her imagination and inside her mind.

During her stay at the estate, not only is Jane not allowed any mental activities during her rest treatment, she is further prevented from any academic pursuits, which of course includes her being able to write. John further deprives Jane of any physical and mental stimulation, by locking her away in the upstairs nursery, refusing to let her stay in one of the downstairs bedrooms. Jane describes this room, stating,

> It was a nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls. The paint and paper look as if a boy's school had used it. It is stripped off in great patches all around the head of my bed, as far as I can reach, and in great places on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life (927).

Jane is unaware of how John feels about her at this point of the story, and she doesn't make the association that the nursery, with its dismal appearance and barred windows, is to become her prison. This setting gives us a sense of how John feels about Jane and how he treats her as a person. He has essentially relegated her to a status of a child, putting her away in the shabby, neglected upstairs nursery, forcing her to adhere to his treatment for her nervous condition. John seems not to care that Jane is left emotionally abandoned in this dismal room, and we are left with the feeling that Jane is clueless to the fate later to result from her incarceration.

Not only is Jane clueless about her forced incarceration; she is also clueless about the prevalent male opinion that females of the Victorian era were considered to be children and were treated as such by their spouses. As Loralee MacPike points out, "The fact that the narrator's prison-room is a nursery indicates her status in society. The woman is legally a child; socially, economically, and philosophically she must be led by an adult—her husband; and therefore the nursery is an appropriate place to house her" (par. 3). John's incarceration takes away Jane's ability to be an adult, her freedom of will; he has taken away her writing, which may give her financial freedom, and he has taken away her health by deeming her a nervous hysteric. Like a child banished to a bedroom until conforming to a parent's will, Jane is sequestered in the nursery until her behavior conforms to John's expectations.

After being shut in the nursery for several months, Jane realizes that her depression is becoming worse and that John is oblivious to her condition. There is a tone of helplessness and hopelessness in Jane's narration. John has denied her the right to care for her child and to see her family, especially her cousins Henry and Julia, with

whom she not only has close familial ties, but who are also supporters of her writing. Jane is forced to write her memoirs of her incarceration in secret, and this pains her, as she feels guilty that she is disobeying John's wishes. She can't get John to reason with her, and she realizes that she is descending into the realm of madness. Jane states, "John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him" (928). Here, Jane gives the first indication that John's disregard for her feelings and the treatment of her nervous condition is starting to bother her emotionally. Jane is realizing that John is not seeing that her condition is getting worse and that she has been abandoned to the nursery. She is at a loss to get John to consider her well being, and this is the turning point in the story, where her subconscious mind begins to try to defy John and the treatment.

John's disregard of Jane's feelings and her conflicting opinion of her treatment are silently held in check. Like a child, Jane is not able to effectively counter or argue with John concerning his treatment. John is a physician and without his knowledge, Jane has no way of validating her opinion that the treatment is not working. Intuitively, Jane knows that she is not getting well after two months of the rest treatment. Linda Wagner-Martin notes, "Though she does not attack John directly, she knows at her heart that her own treatment would have better results than his is having, and her impatience and frustration at his not listening to her colors her narrative" (par. 5). Jane believes if she can escape her confinement and return to the life she enjoyed, she will be able to get well again. When John refuses to listen to Jane, she pours her frustration into her writing and builds a world of defiance, her only way to fight John and his treatment. Jane slips from reality into the realm of fantasy and at this point, as Janice Haney-Peritz observes, "...the narrator does not move out into the open country; instead, she turns an ancestral hall into a haunted house and then encrypts herself therein as a fantasy figure" (par. 26). Jane becomes the imprisoned and tortured soul trapped in a Gothic nightmare, a common genre of the Victorian period writing style, and she fights to free this imprisoned persona that is in fact herself, the woman unable to fight John's dominating will.

Ultimately, Jane finds that there is no reasoning with John as he continues to keep her detained and isolated at the estate. Jane is left alone in the nursery, without any mental stimulation or personal contact with her husband, his sister or her child, for days on end. Frustrated and slipping further into depression, Jane focuses her imagination on the wallpaper, which has become a symbolic relic of her personal plight. Jane loses herself metaphorically and literally, mentally, in the wallpaper. She chillingly states, "I think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I'll tell you why- privately -I've seen her! I can see her out of one of every one of my windows! It is the same woman. I know, for she is always creeping, and most women don't creep by daylight" (935). Her delusions regarding the woman in the wallpaper is her subconscious mind's way to cope and rationalize her mental illness, and to associate her constant struggle to adhere and obey John's will. Unknowingly, she has projected her situation into the wallpaper, which she construes as a prison, very like the nursery where she has been confined. The creeping analogy also points to her having to creep around John, secretly writing, hiding from him her real feelings and fears. We begin to understand that this is the start of her losing touch with reality and entering insanity, due to John's disregard for her feelings and the treatment he has prescribed.

Jane's relationship with the wallpaper draws an analogy to her own situation, which she finds she has lost control over. According to Rena Korb, "Because the narrator has no physical or spiritual escape from her husband, she must seek relief elsewhere: in the yellow wallpaper, and thus, in the text she creates as she describes her relationship with the wallpaper" (par. 10). Jane embellishes her Gothic tale of horror by making the wallpaper part of her scenario. She draws parallels with her confinement and loss of her self-image, by transferring her hopes, fears and desires into the woman she sees trapped within the wallpaper. The wallpaper symbolizes all in male society that keeps her powerless, child-like, and submissive. In order for Jane to overcome John's domination, she must escape him, whether in reality or in her mind. Jane loses herself within the wallpaper in order to remain true to herself. She can only win against John by escaping into the wallpaper and making herself the woman who resides in this shadowy world of fantasy and shadows.

At the climax of the story we realize the actual victory and defeat of both characters. In reality, Jane was incapable of bending John's will, so her mind has created an escape from the unbearable situation Jane found herself in. In succumbing to her insanity, Jane loses all connection to reality. Ultimately, according to Loralee MacPike, "The rescue of that woman becomes her one object, and the wallpaper becomes at once the symbol

of her confinement and of her freedom" (par. 8). She completely becomes the woman in the wallpaper, losing all recognition of her true self and no longer recognizing John as her spouse, but as some stranger who was her jailor. Jane's last statement is a testament to her break from reality, as she tells us,

> I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked overe my shoulder. "I've gotten out at last," said I, "ine spite of you and Jane. And I have pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" Now why should that man have fainted? But he did and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!" (937)

Jane's victory is to escape into her mind, lose herself in her insanity, in order to escape John's domination and control of her life. It is also her defeat, because she is still a prisoner, under John's control and will never be able to return to her love of writing, her family and friends in a healthy emotional state. John's victory is he now has complete control of his wife and her life. His defeat is that in his arrogance, in his complete faith in the medical profession and treatment of his day, he has driven his wife insane and she is no longer the woman he once loved. Jane's complete mental breakdown causes her to disassociate herself from her ego and from her husband. They are no longer persons to her, as her life and her quest have become the release of the woman in the wallpaper. It is an extreme example of how the dominance of one person over another can destroy them mentally if they have no way to fight back. It also exemplifies the most hostile environments and tactics utilized during the late 1800's in the Victorian era to make women submissive and obedient to their spouses.

"A Rose for Emily" by Faulkner opens during the 1930's, set in the southern town of Jefferson, after the death of Emily, the main character. Faulkner uses flashbacks to different times in Emily's life, starting from the time she is a young woman up to when she is an old woman in her seventies. Emily is a genteel woman who lives her life under the dominance and control of her father, who prevents her from marrying, having contact with her extended family or interacting with the people who live in her town. The narrator says that

> None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the blackground, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the backflung front door. (670)

The town perceives "Miss Emily" and her father, Mr. Grierson, not as everyday citizens, but as celebrities or the elite class, which they can see, but cannot touch or interact with on a daily basis. They are like personalities seen on a cover of a magazine. They imagine Emily's lifestyle and the dominance her father exerts over her. Mr. Grierson's stance and whip in hand metaphorically signify to the townspeople that he dominates every aspect of Emily's life. He is likened to a horse trainer and Emily, in the background, is the horse being held in check and whipped into submission. The white dress they envision Emily in symbolizes her virginity and bride's status to her father, as he has not permitted any man to become part of her life. This dominance eventually keeps Emily from having social contact with the town, living the life of a hermit, living within the ideals and edicts set down by her father. Alone and isolated mentally, she loses touch with reality and her ability to deal with the death of the male figures in her life.

Faulkner utilizes numerous metaphoric symbols that signify the absolute control that Emily's father has over every aspect of her life. She becomes his one most cherished possession, one that he will not share with any other man. Du Fang feels that, "The horsewhip in Mr. Grierson's hand. . .symbolizes his dominant power as aa father. Being strict and overbearing, he 'protects' Emily from the world and the 'young men'" (20). Mr. Grierson covets his daughter as a man would covet his wife, which gives the reader an unnatural feeling that the relationship Emily's father has with her is one of an incestuous nature. Mr. Grierson's complete control and isolation of Emily leaves her not only helpless, but keeps her emotionally tied to him even after his death. She is never allowed to essentially grow up, become an adult, and lead a normal life. Emily's father's systematic dominance of her personal life is not only selfish and cruel, but also reduces her to the level of an indentured slave, much like the Negro society in the American South. Emily is no longer his daughter, but his wife and a slave, a paid possession, very much like the Negro housekeeper. The comparison of slavery, both mental and physically, is linked to Emily's absolute dependence on her father and the town's charity.

Du Fang comments that,a"...excessive protection actually deprives Emily of her own individuality and put her in a position as a slave" (22). Later in life, Emily becomes the owner, very much like her father, dominating the town and controlling their actions as she sees fit. From slavery to ownership, Emily takes over the legacy of aristocracy that her father leaves her, which further isolates and distances Emily from the town, making her an iconic figure in her own right. Emily's father's legacy, as Du Fang points out, is dominant: "Even after her father's death, Emily still lives under his shadow and also the shadow of her father's aristocratic family" (20). It's only later in the story, we see the extent she turns this legacy into an advantage, controlling the town of Jefferson and its citizens.

Throughout "A Rose for Emily," we can appreciate how mentally stunted Emily has become due to her father refusing to allow Emily to interact normally in society. This condition has caused Emily to create a world where death does not exist for the men in Emily's life. Emily has always relied on her father for companionship, her sole family and in a way, a surrogate husband, so when he passes away, Emily refuses to acknowledge his death. We see Emily's first act of denial of death is to keep her father's corpse in the house after he dies, clinging to his memory as he decomposes. She refuses to let the town elders bury her father, because to do so would force her to accept that her father is dead and that she is alone in the world, with no one to take care of her. The narrator, speakring for the town, states, "We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will" (671). Her father never allowed Emily to marry and have a family or retain relations with her extended family, so when he dies, he essentially leaves her mentally and financially stranded, with no one to help her. Emily clings to her father's corpse, denying his death and retaining the fantasy that her father is still around to take care of her every need.

Due to Emily's father's dominance and Emily's submission to his will, she is forever tied to him, unable to let him go, even in death and beyond. This flaw in reality, the inability to accept death, is caused by the unnatural bond created by Emily's father's inability to let Emily live a life of her own choosing. As Victor Strandberg states, "By driving away her suitors as to keep her housekeeping services for himself, Emily's father has ruined her chances for a normal life and thereby grossly deformed her personality" (par 3). Emily reacts like a wife in denial, refusing to accept the passing of her husband, clinging to his dead body, until she is forced by the town elders of Jefferson to bury her father. When the town elders remove his body, they essentially steal from Emily the only security she knows and push her to find a replacement for her father/husband figure. Emily's twisted psychological attachment can be characterized as an unresolved Oedipus complex that Emily develops due to her attachment to her father. Jack Scherting explains from where this Oedipus complex stems and how it later affects her attitude toward the town: "Emily's father had robbed her of a normal sex life, preventing her from resolving the childhood Oedipal complex. And the people of Jefferson, in removing his corpse, had robbed her of the only man in her life" (401). Emily's father's death leaves her hopeless, lost, hiding in fear from the world, until she finds a replacement who can take over the role that her father has left behind.

Emily's idealistic treatment of Homer, a robust northerner who comes into her life after her father's death, displays her child-like attachment to the men in her life. She begins a relationship with Homer, prominently displaying him like a prize, riding about the town with him and ignoring the town as they gossip about her behavior. In turn, the town ladies become a substitute male figure, replacing her father, trying to control and dictate Emily's behavior. The narrator tells us:

> ....some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist ministere- Miss Emily's people were Episcopal – to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister's wife wrote to Miss Emily's relations in Alabama (672).

The town considers Miss Emily to be part of the elite class, an image that her father upheld when he was alive and which Miss Emily is expected to maintain even after his death. Miss Emily's constant struggle with the legacy that her father has left her extends to the town elders becoming her "father figure," dictating what is and what is not proper behavior for a woman of her standing. The town's women feel that it is their obligation and right to interfere with Miss Emily's life since she no longer has a dominant male figure to put her in her place. This

passage also demonstrates that Miss Emily doesn't bend to the will of the town when they interfere with her life. Unless it is a male in her life she loves and has singular dominance over her, she ignores anyone else who tries to control her life. She defends her fantasy life and sends the town scrambling to her extended family in defeat. This is the only instance where she defies her father and his memory, for she refuses anyone keeping Homer and her apart. This is a turning point in the story, and we see that even though Emily is unbalanced, she has chosen the way she has decided to live the rest of her life, no matter how twisted and disturbing it may seem to the outside world.

Emily displays her defiance and uses her aristocratic stand, as perceived by the town, in order to keep alive the fantasy that Homer Barron has become her replacement for her father. She sends the town scrambling for cover, as she takes her place as the lady of society, since that is what the townspeople insist she becomes. This turning point, her fight over Homer and the town's opinion and interference, finally gives Emily the backbone to assume the status she inherited from her father, and she uses it to her advantage to subject the town to her will. It is at this junction that, according to Gary L. Kriewald, "That Emily is 'above the law' in this regard reflects her unique position in Jefferson. Though by birth a pillar of the town's social elite, she. . .holds no position of political power...yet over the years, she exerts considerable influence on the life of the town" (par. 5). Emily retains her social status by murdering Homer, and keeping him behind closed doors. Emily's fantasy remains intact, and essentially, the town turns a blind eye, giving her the ability to commit the murder without any legal consequences.

We discover in the end of the story how defiant Emily has become and to what extent her father's dominance and isolation has warped her mentally. Emily resorts to murder to keep Homer with her forever when she sees the drastic measures the town and her family are willing to take to keep them apart. Emily keeps Homer, after she murders him, in an upstairs bedroom, as a memento of their relationship. The town does not realize the extent of her insanity until they discover his body after her death. The narrator tells us,

> The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long deep sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cockolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay. (674)

Here, we get an understanding of the extent of Emily'sa incapability to let go of the men in her life at the end of the story. Emily has kept the deceased body of Homer for more than forty years, locked up in the upstairs bedroom, laid out in the bed, like a cherished possession. Unable to face Homer ever leaving her, like her father did when he died, she poisons him, therefore keeping him with her for all eternity. Due to the dominance and isolation that Emily's father imposed on her as a child and as a young adult woman, she has never learned how to develop healthy relationships with society. Emily has learned to cope with her isolation and lack of emotional development by creating a fantasy world that ignores death, all of society's rules and restrictions, and any interference by the outside world. The norms and social edicts of society do not apply to Emily and her rationale.

Shockingly, the discovery of Homer Barron's body can be attached symbolically to how Emily saw her men and how she keeps them as mementos of her love and desire. She has kept him upstairs, dried out and pressed, very much like a rose between the pages of a book. Elizabeth Carney Kurtz gives us a deeper meaning behind the title, and the symbolism that roses represent in society, past and present: "Roses are given as tokens of love, or at least deep friendship. Still today, the young and romantic press a rose between the pages of some seldom-used book, to dry and preserve the token" (40). By preserving Homer, she preserves his and her father's image, and her status as a lady, all in an attempt to defy reality, time, and death. Furthermore, she defies what any society would consider normal behavior, by murdering and keeping Homer up in a bedroom, forty years after his death. Victor Strandberg further notes Emily's refusal to conform anda acknowledge any code of ethics that society may try to enforce, by stating "There is no denying that the image of Homer Barron's mummified body, with Emily's tell-talea hair next to its head on the pillow, violates conventional standards ofamorality,ajust as her courtship with a Yankee of low class...violates the conventional code of a Southern lady" (par. 6). To Emily, this is normal behavior and not seen as necrophilia. If the concept were not so horrifying, this scenario would almost be laughable, because Emily has been able to keep this secret from all the townspeople and has effectively thumbed her nose at them and done as she pleased during those forty years. According to Judith

Fetterley, she can pull this off because, "Like Ellison's invisible man, nobody sees Emily. And because nobody sees her, she can literally get away with murder" (par. 2). The townspeople, specifically the men, see her as a Southern lady and therefore would not question her actions openly. By keeping Homer stashed away upstairs, Emily proves she can maintain her Southern "lady" status that the town perceives in ignorance and also maintain the macabre fantasy world she has created for her own happiness.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" demonstrates the extreme measures that can be taken to force a woman to conform to the male authority in their lives. This force can take the form of being isolated from friends, family and other pursuits, to the point of incarceration, without a female being able to contest their fate. Gilman's triumph in "The Yellow Wallpaper," as noted by Linda Wagner-Martin, is,

> In its writing, Gilman created a fable that explains, inductively, that women have rights, women have knowledge, and women have talents that need to be respected and employed. Otherwise, they face the plight of this fictional protagonist-nameless, faceless, characterless, a cypher in the work, and the life, of the real world. (par. 8)

"A Rose for Emily" also demonstrates that a male figure, such as a father, can mentally handicap a female by controlling every aspect of her life, by using domination and isolation to control them. A male family member can prevent a female family member from leaving them, by never allowing them to marry, keeping them away from family and friends, leaving them lost and vulnerable in their own environment. Emily is a victim, not only due to her father's domination, but also because of the unreasonable expectations southern society forces upon her. As noted in conclusion by Du Fang, "Faulkner exposes the way Emily is twisted into a devil by her tyrannical father and by the southern social system" (24). All these factors affect Emily's perception of love, death, and the passage of time. For Jane, in the "The Yellow Wallpaper," victory is bittersweet. She no longer has to endure John's domination, but in order to do so, she is forced to lose herself in the wallpaper, which causes her insanity. Emily, on the other hand, wins in the end. Her mental incapacitation has forced a town to financially support her and bow to her whims. Emily ends up living her life the way she deems acceptable until her death, effectively laughing at her town all the way to her grave.

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Evaluation: *This paper is extremely well researched and written, thoroughly and perceptively developing and supporting a gender studies analysis of these stories.*

# Wading Through Blackfoot River

*Maria Daniels*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Nancy L. Davis

Assignment: *Write an essay of literary analysis centered on Norman Maclean's novella,* A River Runs Through It,a *wherein you relate symbolism to character and theme.*

"He [Paul] had his hat off and he shook his fist at me. I [Norman] knew he had fished his hat band before he threw the rocks. I shook my fist back at him, and waded to shore…" (Maclean 139). The competitive nature between the two brothers while fishing is playful and mischievous, showing the relationship they share and their common tradition that binds them. Paul and Norman Maclean are grown brothers in *A River Runs Through It*, a novella as told by author Norman Maclean about the people in his life, a family tradition of fly fishing, and the beautiful setting of Montana and its rivers. The Big Blackfoot River is a major reflective setting for "It runs straight and hard…" (20), as stated by Maclean, who tells us the river is not only challenging, but also brings a sense of tranquility to the lives of his father, brother, and himself.

Maclean explains the river's connection to his family: "My brother and I had fished the Big Blackfoot since nearly the beginning of the century—my father before then. We regarded it as a family river, as part of us…" (21). With their father, Paul and Norman have fished there since they were young, and it has become an integral part of their lives. The openness and freedom in nature allows them to have free spirits, and the religious discipline in fishing gives them faith in the river. "[T] he most powerful…" (20) river with its "straight rapids until it strikes big rocks or big trees with big roots" (97) has the biggest fish and attracts skilled fishermen with its difficulty and complexity. The river has many challenging elements, and it is a favorite of theirs. The lessons of fly fishing are taught "Marine-and Presbyterian-style" (3) by their father, who considers "'It is an art…'" (2). His art requires respect, and he expects it to be learned in that manner. The understanding of the basics is critical, from the rod, line, leader, and fly to the ability to cast. The teachings are methodical and structured: "art does not come easy" (8). For the father, fly fishing is intertwined with his religious beliefs, and he preaches both with great respect and strict ways. His fishing is a way to relate the special meaning of faith and the rejuvenating bond with nature to his boys. The tradition embraces an intricate bond tying father to sons, and two brothers together.

The Blackfoot River also has similarities that reflect the brothers' characters. For Paul, becoming a master at fly fishing is natural. He has had "fine training—genius, luck, and plenty of self-confidence" (9). His head-strong attitude, will, and brass charisma challenge him the most; he is tough and proves it. He lives hard and wild by

**Student Reflections on Writing:**
**Maria Daniels**

I was taken aback by the endeavor and the intrigue in writing this analytical essay. To analyze an author's work and be able to voice its meaning and/or understanding is a humbling challenge. The research, the rereading, and the annotating all involved in the starting, to the many scribbles of paragraphs, the purposeful hours in the library and in the writing center putting together drafts, the critical revisions, and the endless proofreading, even in my sleep, all added to the passion and dedication of the writing process. I would like to point out that the unrelenting effort of the amazing, dedicated people in the writing center, who tirelessly critique over academic papers, day after day, makes writing a pleasure. They are positive guides in the pursuit of writing well.

gambling and drinking, and he is impatient with life until he fishes. Paul "did not drink when he fished..." (23). He has respect for and finds peace in the river. Although the Big Blackfoot River "runs hard all the way" (20) and even "roars and the water is too fast to let algae grow on the rocks..." (21), Paul is steady, strong, and in control of his surroundings. While in the chaotic current, he stands firm and feels most at home. For Norman, "it was always important to me that I was a fisherman and looked like one..." (24). Fly fishing is a skill highly regarded by his father and mastered by his younger brother, which raises Norman's own fishing expectations. The river offers him a special trance of rhythm and a mirage of colors engulfing an inner tranquility and an artistic view on life. The drive to the river opens an opportunity to communicate, and the brothers "started talking the moment we thought we were draining into another ocean" (21)a Once, they "crossed the divide between our two worlds" (22) and approach their memorable, safe retreat, they relax and open up to one another. Their lives have taken very different courses, and, as such, they have become distant. Both men are unable to understand or to reach out until they go fishing, and then cautiously wade around each other not to get too deep, figuratively and literally.

Maclean describes the brothers' contrasting strengths in their fly fishing. The brothers have in common "the knowledge that we were tough..." (11). While both believe in throwing the first punch in a street fight, they hold different theories about fly fishing. Norman "carried a boxful of flies..." filled with different lures for different situations, and Paul uses a few select reliable flies "all in his hat band..." (95). Paul has artistic forms of casting called shadow and roll casting, and Norman is comfortable with regular casting techniques. The big difference in strengths is that Norman studies "the patterns of a river..., 'reading the water'" (99) and he absorbs the river into his own life; Paul is impatient "to have his flies on the water..." (130). He cannot wait to begin fly fishing; he tackles the water as he does life, with force.

Just as they have differences in their fishing, they also have differences in the way they live, which causes conflicts between them. Norman has "'gone off and got married...'" (13) and has settled down. Paul lives hard, chases stories as a reporter, and gets into trouble with the law. The brothers' lifestyles divide them, making them grow emotionally apart, but fishing brings them together and reconnects the brothers. The river is a perfect neutral zone for both of them where they can let their guards down and expose their own insecurities for the moment while they fish. Even though Norman is the older brother, Paul reaches out to him and helps him while they fish. He gives him advice or tips on how to bring up his limit and encourages him. Norman tries to help Paul: "'I think I could be of some help if you want to work for a big paper'" (91). Norman wants to offer him a chance for bigger stories or a way for Paul to change for the better; Paul is not receptive and changes the subject.

Maclean shows us that the Big Blackfoot River is a symbolic setting, for it provides the three men with purpose, reassurance, peace, respect, and tranquility. For the father, the river provides him with a purpose, the opportunity to learn and help his sons, and "since he couldn't wade, the good fishing water had to be on his side of the river" (130). He is unable to walk through the water anymore, but he can still safely fish his limit from the side of the river and maintain his stability. The river also reassures his faith through the comforting serenity of nature and the closeness to his sons.

For Paul, the river provides an inner peace, requires respect, and challenges him: "Paul liked swimming rivers with his rod in his hand" (133). He welcomes the moving current and swims along without letting go of his rod. The Blackfoot River's wild current reflects Paul's fast, strong, and chaotic life. Like the river, he cannot be restrained: "my brother looked to himself to get himself out of trouble" (141). He relies on his own determination and will in figuring out his shortcomings.

For Norman, the river provides purpose and tranquility, a way to release his troubles and let his thoughts flow in a clearer perspective. "[A]t the time I did not know that stories of life are often more like rivers than books" (98), which signifies his understanding of a life story as an unpredictable flowing course, similar to the unpredictable flowing of a river, as opposed to a book, structured with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

The time that Maclean shares with his brother is short-lived, and he feels regret. Many times throughout the story, he reminds us of the need to stay close to our loved ones, and the importance of sharing a common interest that binds us to our families. As we, his readers, become older, and our choices in life drift and/or separate us from our own family bonds, we also become distant. If we have no shared common interest to reconnect us to our families (at least occasionally), then we only see our families at yearly holidays. These yearly get-togethers are usually crammed with a genuine effort to reinforce the ties and make up for not keeping in touch. The effort is made even more difficult when we discover there is someone who needs our help, and we have no idea how or if they will even accept the help. This hardship weighs heavily upon us, but rarely is it welcomed and/or accomplished. Maclean's father enlightens us to understand our sometimes strained relationships with our loved ones by stating "'It is those we live with and love and should know who elude us'" (161).

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Evaluation: *In her analysis, Maria does a lovely job bridging the elements of symbolism, character, and theme.*

# Capitalism and Crowd Mentality: Themes in Baudelaire and Marx

*Doug DePalma*
Course: Literature 115 (Fiction)
Instructor: Brian Cremins

Assignment: *Students were asked to analyze Baudelaire's concept of the flaneur, which we had covered in class.*

The dawning of capitalism and industrialization created a rift in traditional social standards. Mid-nineteenth-century philosopher Karl Marx would call this void alienation, or the estrangement between people created by a system based entirely on competition. Marx elaborates on this theory most candidly in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.* Charles Baudelaire's "The Crowd" and "The Mirror" illustrate the Marxist theory of alienation on the personal level. Marx elucidates his political discontentment with the development of the capitalist mode of production, and Baudelaire shows disgruntlement with urban sprawl and modernity, most certainly a product of capitalist development. Not unlike the hippies of the 20th century, the flaneur used in Baudelaire fits in with bourgeois society but is at the same time separated by contempt. The alienation Baudelaire and Marx notice, and indeed the very existence of the flaneur, is a direct effect of the genesis of the bourgeoisie and proletariat as defined by Marx. In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx refines previous theories of alienation by previous social scientists and applies them to economics.

Karl Marx was one of the preeminent sociologists of the nineteenth century. One of his most important concepts in relation to Baudelaire is the idea of alienation or estrangement. Marx defines alienation in the following terms: "The *devaluation* of the world of men is in direct proportion to the *increasing value* of the world of things. Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a *commodity*..." (Marx 22). Marx is asserting that the very nature of capitalist production estranges one man from another, and turns what was once a man into a commodity for the capitalist class to manipulate at their leisure. Baudelaire even refers to the "...holy prostitution of the soul..." (Baudelaire 27) in "The Crowd," which is a very Marxian theoretical approach to modernity. Baudelaire's poems often reflect a very isolated perspective that is congruent with the time in which he lived. The poems in *Twenty Prose Poems* were written in the middle of the nineteenth century, a time of great turmoil in Europe. The revolutions of 1848 nearly destroyed the capitalist class and its economic model (Rapport). Topics such as the alienation of the working class would have been of preeminent importance in Baudelaire's time. The Flaneurs share common ground with Marxists in the fact that they are highly dissatisfied with capitalist development. However, when Marxists would gather rifles, Flaneurs gather opium. Marx states in *The Communist Manifesto* that, "The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is" (45). This despotism, the despotism of the crowd, is what Baudelaire grew to disdain in his time.

Baudelaire's poem "The Crowd" is a perfect example from which to study Baudelaire's thoughts on Parisian crowds and capitalism. To Baudelaire, crowds are innately different than any of the crowd's parts. The crowd of modern cities is, in effect, an entirely separate organism from an individual human. In "The Crowd," Baudelaire asserts, "What men call love is very meager, very restricted and very feeble, compared to this ineffable orgy, to this holy prostitution of the soul that abandons itself entirely..." (Baudelaire 27). This cynical approach is indeed very generalized and back in its time a shocking message. He is saying that to be a member of this organism, as Marx said, one must figuratively sell their spirit in both a religious and psychological manner. Here it is seen just how large the rift between individuals had become in the early years of capitalist development. To be part of a huge throng of people but to feel utterly alone and contemptuous toward your fellow crowd member seems to be a hypocritical sentiment. However, this is

precisely what Baudelaire and the flaneurs felt. This can be explained by the vindictive mentality created by a competitive economic system, for better or for worse. The creation of a powerful and numerous bourgeoisiea created the character of the flaneur, one who is a member of the mainstream but also feels unsettled with this role. Benjamin says of this dilemma, "He becomes their (the crowd's) accomplice even as he disassociates himself from them. He becomes deeply involved with them, only to relegate them to oblivion with a single glance of contempt" (172). It is this very discrepancy that causes such mixed feelings within Baudelaire. It is as if Baudelaire admires the apathy of the crowd, but also hates it for the same reason. This psychological anxiety is a common theme in Baudelaire, even in his shortest poems.

"The Mirror" is one of the shortest of *Twenty Prose Poems*. Baudelaire is very good at sending a profound message in a relatively miniscule amount of words and is also proficient in sending no message at all in numerous pages. In the case of "The Mirror," the message is not immediately clear upon first reading. The revolution of '89 is referenced, which is an allusion to the mass upheaval of the French monarchy. In this way, the man looking into the mirror represents those crowds and the law codes they created. Baudelaire questions the practicality of the liberties created in 1789 by saying, "As a spokesman of good sense, I was undoubtedly right; but from the point of view of the law, he was not wrong" (Baudelaire 63). It is clear Baudelaire questions the "good sense" of the law, and this may even show how uncomfortable he was with the rapidly changing society around him. To Baudelaire, the political system of nineteenth century France was simply another crowd.

Baudelaire and Marx both existed in a time of great change in Europe. Capitalism caused Marx to question the future of a system based on greed, and Baudelaire to question the very nature of humans in groups. To question these two things is very important in current times as well as the past. For those who see injustice or are disturbed by changes in society, the aspect of the crowd can be a profound one. To Marx, the crowd was the tool to achieve a communist future. To Baudelaire, the crowd was the tool to send that future into darkness. Baudelaire clearly

### Student Reflections on Writing: Doug DePalma

At the age of eight, I tried to read James McPherson's *The Battle Cry of Freedom* upon finding it in my father's study. When I was fifteen, I tried reading Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. It's safe to say I didn't understanding either in their entirety, but the curiosity sparked in me was a greater gift than any empirical understanding of the material at that moment. I have read both again as my college career advances, yet there are new things and ideas that still remain just beyond the horizon. When I sat down to write "Capitalism and Crowd Mentality" for my literature course, I had this in mind. I wanted to know what drove Charles Baudelaire, a nineteenth-century French poet. I wanted to know what common threads of human experience could connect me with him, and eventually from this thread what understanding I could gain from his poetic expression. What I found was that the common thread between a Harper College student and an opium-addicted nineteenth-century French poet was simply the expression of ideas on paper. As the keys of my keyboard clicked, I could sense that feeling Baudelaire did, as his quill scratched the paper of his *Twenty Prose Poems*. This is the ultimate goal of writing, to me: the relation of ideas and emotions that penetrate not only personal circumstances but sometimes hundreds of years. The universality of creative human expression through grounded, thought-out prose and poetry connects people together from every epoch of history. It made me realize that the eight-year-old boy who tried reading James McPherson or the fifteen-year-old trying to read Karl Marx's defining economic theory is not so different than the one who writes this now, each connected by an unquenchable thirst for further understanding.

disdains the Parisian crowd because of its conformity and social repression. Vladimir Lenin, a student of Marx and first leader of the Soviet Union, wrote in "Conspectus of Hegel's *Science of Logic"* that, "Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it" (Lenin 223). Baudelaire fell into despair because he did not understand this. The human mind can mold the world around it, given more congruent minds. It is evident that humans must forsake their solipsistic nature and march forward into a future of their making, be it the one of Marx or not.

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Evaluation: *Doug did an outstanding job of synthesizing the theoretical concepts from our class readings on Baudelaire and Benjamin with his research on Marx.*

# The Death Penalty: A Moral Dilemma?

*Aaron Dingess*
Course: Philosophy 115 (Ethics)
Instructor: John Garcia

Assignment: *Argue for a specific point of view pertaining to a moral issue. Incorporate research into your argument.*

Since the beginning of time, societies have implemented some form of the death penalty. The reasons for conducting executions have varied, with different political, social, and religious reasons. In more recent times, the practice has faced some changes, especially in the Western world. The judicial process has reserved the death penalty to be used to punish those who have brought death upon another individual, and those who have committed treason. Furthermore, the method by which the accused is put to death has become less cruel, in accordance to cultural standards. In the U.S., several states that had accepted the death penalty, including Oklahoma and Nebraska, have recently issued moratoriums on the practice (Dezhbakhsh, Rubin, and Shepherd). The total number of executions has also declined. The year 2008 witnessed a total of 32 executions, whereas 98 occurred in 1999 ("Facts about the Death Penalty"). The recent decrease in capital punishment nationwide and the corresponding increase of discussion within the political arena reveals that the issue is a significant one. Different reasons exist for why capital punishment has faced strong opposition. These reasons generally pair the lack of consequential benefits with the barbaric level of cruelty the punishment characterizes. In response to the shifting views on the practice, many have maintained that the capital punishment is necessary because it deters murderers and it supplies the proper retribution for crimes of such a magnitude. However, there is insufficient evidence for supporting the death penalty's positive impact on society, and arguments that provide support for it are morally problematic.

One common argument for the death penalty is the claim that it serves as a deterrent for capital crimes. This view is utilitarian in nature; essentially, it judges the law according to its outcome, or effect, on society. If the effect is one that maximizes social benefit, then it can be morally justified. Proponents of the death penalty who use deterrence as an argument believe that the death penalty plays a role in reducing the amount of murders. How can this be known to be the case? Some will allude to different evidence that shows a relationship between the murder rate and whether the death penalty is enacted. When all this data is compiled together, it becomes quite evident that the findings are inclusive (Reiman). An article by Dr. Jeffrey Fagan of Columbia University exposes various errors that have skewed the results of recent deterrence studies. These errors include mistakes in analysis, missing data, and variables that would lead to more accurate results. Also, even if the analysis of these numbers lead to the conclusion that the death penalty deters crime or the contrary, these results still cannot be relied upon. This is because a number of variables can be responsible for affecting the murder rate. These variables might include distinctive features of a culture, or its economic condition when compared to another. Regardless, it would be rather ignorant to assume that the death penalty is largely responsible for dictating the murder rate, based on the numbers.

People who adhere to the belief that the death penalty deters murder also argue this using another approach. Professor Ernest van den Haag, of Fordham University, best sums up this approach. According to van den Haag, "Our experience shows that the greater threat or penalty, the more it deters..." (qtd. in Pojman and Reiman). Basically, the "common sense" argument that van den Haag coins assumes that the higher cost associated with a certain action will play a role in reducing the number of people who will commit the action. Thus, he believes that the death penalty would be more effective in deterring murder than the threat of a life in prison. While this assumption may seem plausible, there are reasons to doubt the effect of this so-called common sense. For one, the conscience is most likely the most restraining mechanism in most individuals. If an individual lacks the internal restraints that are normally existent, it is hard to imagine that the individual will possess the reasoning ability to peer down

the road at potential long-term consequences and run a cost-benefit analysis. Rather, it seems more plausible that an individual with the capability of committing an atrocious crime such as murder lacks the common sense that van den Haag speaks of (Shaw). Also, if death is to be viewed as a factor for discouraging the crime from being committed, it can be argued that the deterrence effect is established despite the possibility of the criminal facing the death penalty (Reiman). For example, anyone who is considering committing a crime faces the threat of death. A substantial number of deaths involving police officers in the line of duty are accounted for each year. Not to mention, citizen ownership of guns is popular in the United States. It makes sense that a murderer would consider the immediate consequences before the long-term ones, if at all. Also, the common sense argument holds to the idea that death is the most feared punishment. A problem arises here, because there is virtually no method to determine if the death penalty is more likely to deter than a life sentence to prison. Also, while it can be acknowledged that the death penalty prevents a murderer from committing additional murders, the same can be argued for in the case of life imprisonment. Life imprisonment effectively keeps criminals off the streets, thereby inhibiting future crime from criminals who face the sentence.

One more consequential concern some people have with not practicing the death penalty focuses on the cost to society that life imprisonment calls for. Here in the United States, the average cost of imprisonment per inmate was $22,650, or $62.05 per day, in 2001. To some, these numbers are troublesome and provide more support to why the death penalty is a good idea, since it helps alleviate a burden from society. However, in a decision involving the life and death of a human being, should monetary value be a factor? Ultimately, there is no stable support for attributing the murder rate to the death penalty. Given the aforementioned, and the lack of proof that would render it more effective than life imprisonment, there is more reason to be opposed to the death penalty from a utilitarian perspective. According to utilitarianism, if no added benefit results, the harsher punishment is only increasing the amount of harm present in a society. However, using utilitarian grounds on the topic of death does have its shortcoming. If maximizing social benefit is the key concern, then justice may be warranted for the death of an innocent person, as long as the benefits outweigh the implicit cost. It is for this reason, alongside other reasons, that some prefer to focus on other aspects of the argument.

The other facet of the argument for supporting the death penalty deals with the idea of retribution. The previous arguments that were mentioned are forward-looking, but the retribution principle requires us to look to the past and place punishment where it is deserved, regardless of the societal effect. One form of the retribution argument is known as proportional retribution. This one does not require that the worst crimes receive an equal punishment, but that within a range of punishments, the severity of a crime is proportional to the punishment. This makes it necessary that society determine what crimes are worse than others. To account for this, elements such as deliberateness and intention may need to be accounted for. Sometimes, a stricter form of the retribution principle is used. Essentially, it is the idea that punishment is necessary because the individual who committed the crime also chose the punishment (Perlmutter). On retributive grounds, the argument "crime fits punishment" argument is frequently used in support of the death penalty. Simply put, they argue that the only way justice can be served in case of a murder is to take the life of the killer (8). Professor of Philosophy Jeffrey H. Reiman doesn't doubt that the death penalty is deserved in some cases; however, he identifies a moral issue with this logic. To him, this form of retribution "proves the justice of beating assaulters, raping rapists, and torturing torturers." Most (if not all) people would be opposed to treating criminals in the cruel ways that Reiman mentions, regardless of the crime. This shows the instability in the strict retribution principle that many uphold for justifying the death penalty. It begs the question of whether or not executions should be placed in the same category as the other foul acts that were named. When analyzing the features of executions, some similarities to the practice of torture can be discovered (Reiman). Two of the main characteristics of an execution are an excruciating level of pain and the display of one human being subjected to the power of another. In execution, the executed is killed

in a defenseless fashion. Also, the physical pain is paired with psychological pain. The psychological element of the pain separates it from the certain death that all humans are to face, because the victim foresees their own loss of life. Reiman also sees the practice of the death penalty as having a negative effect on society due to its characteristics. According to him, it "demonstrates a capacity to resist begging...demonstrates a kind of hardheartedness that aa society ought not parade" (Reiman).

Putting all the arguments together, the death penalty is not a just method for combating murder, or offering retribution for a murder that has already occurred. Through statistical analysis, it cannot be proven that the death penalty deters murder. Furthermore, the idea of "common sense" generating death as the most feared punishment doesn't stand, because of the nature of individuals who are willing to commit crimes of such magnitude and the fact that a more immediate threat of death is present. And lastly, retribution arguments in favor of the death penalty create a moral dilemma, because of the justification it would give to other harsh practices of punishment. Ultimately, prison life sentences haven't been proven to be less effective than the death penalty and should become the standard way of punishing those responsible for the worst crimes, because it avoids the moral questionability that the death penalty exudes.

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Evaluation: *The death penalty is a complex moral issue with many different types of arguments used to argue both for and against it. Aaron does a remarkable job working through these various arguments in a clear and concise way.*

# We Made It Through the Gas Chamber

*Karim Elganzoury*
Course: Speech 101
(Introduction to Speech Communication)
Instructor: Cheryl Golemo

Assignment: *In a narrative speech, share a significant event with your audience in such a way that they will be able to come close to understanding your experience from your point of view. The event should be a personal experience that changed you in some way.*

Will it be quick or will it be painful? How long can I lasta in there? I got myself into this situation and there's no turning back now. Waking up that day, I thought I had been prepared. I had already passed five weeks. I learned how to organize my locker and make my bed according to standard. I learned how to break down an M16 and puta it back together. I even kept pace on the morning runs and tried extra hard at all the physical fitness tests. From this point on, I only had four weeks left. This was just another step to graduating Basic Training. So, how hard could it be?

"Get up!" my drill sergeant said, as he walked down the aisles of bunk beds, kicking each bunk to make sure we were awake . I had to make my bunk, shower, shave, and be outside in less than 30 minutes. By now, this was all second nature. "Get your asses outside," he said, as he walked out the barracks, undoubtedly knowing what was to become of us that day. After my hygiene ritual, I put on my uniform, grabbed my helmet, rucksack, and M40 gas mask, and ran out the door. We all made it outside and waited. We did a lot of waiting in the Army.

Four white trucks pulled up and parked in front of our barracks. The trucks were common transport for basic trainees around base. These trucks looked like U-Hauls. Each one had a truck bed with just enough standing space for 15 soldiers and their rucksacks. Four small six-inch by six-inch windows lined the sides of the truck walls. These windows provided just enough oxygen to keep us conscious. The drill sergeant loaded us on, and the trucks took off.

The one thing that intrigued me was the inside walls of these trucks. Almost every inch was covered with the graffiti of soldiers who were "lucky" enough to have used this mode of travel. It seemed to be odd to see such individual expression. For five weeks, we had had our individuality stripped, and now, to see such expressions in ink, I thought to myself, "I can survive this." After about an hour, the truck came to an abrupt stop.

Doors flung open. As we were shuffled off the trucka my drill sergeant said, "Line up over there and drop your gear, dress-right-dress for your first block of instructions." Like dominoes, we lined up in front of a new uniform, Sergeant First Class Mason. About 25 yards behind her was a red brick building with two doors -- no windows. "Secure your M40 to your right side and prepare to mask up. I want your masks on in nine seconds or less," she demanded, as we each secured the M40 pouch to our right sides. "On the words Gas, Gas, Gas, I want you privates to gear up. Do you understand?" she asked.

"Yes Sergeant!" we sounded off in unison, as we prepared for our cue. "Gas, Gas, Gas!" she yelled! In a frantic hurry, I swung both my hands over to my pouch,a ripped open the flap, and counting to myself, "1...2...", I grabbed my mask and slammed it into my face "3...4...", with my right hand face planted on the mask, I reached for the straps and pulled them over my bald head "5...6...". I was finished. In fact, looking around, we all finished in time. "Good job," she said. With our masks still on our faces, Sergeant Mason marched us over to the building.

We lined up outside the building, when suddenly the door swung open. A masked sergeant emerged from behind the door and motioned us to come in. "Line up on the walls," the muffled voice of the sergeant said, as we cautiously made our way into the room. "In the next room you will be exposed to a form of CS gas. This is the same type of gas used for riot control. You will enter the room 5 at a time and line up on the yellow line to await your further instructions," the sergeant said. Without any delay, he motioned our group through the second door. One by one, we followed each other through. No turning back now.

We entered through the second door. To the left of

the door on the floor was a thick painted yellow line. In the center of the room was a small, metal pedestal about 5 feet tall with a metal plate on top. Behind the stand were two masked sergeants, one standing with a canister in his hand and the other pacing back and forth behind him. "Line up and pay attention," the sergeant with the canister said. "When this canister is activated, it will release CS gas into the air. You are to remain calm and not move until instructed to do so. Behind me is the exit. You are to proceed single file to my right, your left, out the door when instructed to. Do I make myself clear?" the man said. Muffled voices of "Yes Sergeant!" found their way out through the masks we had on. In a few moments, I was going to be exposed to something I had only seen on the news.

As soon as the pin was pulled on that canister, this thick, black smoke came billowing out and filled the entire room. My lungs handled the filtered, smoke-filled air fine. "Pretty cool," I thought. Now we just have to wait for the okay to leave, right? Wrong. The masked sergeant, pacing back and forth, walked up to the first soldier in line, grabbed his mask and pulled it off. "Recite the soldiers' creed" the masked man said. Nothing followed out of the soldier's mouth except coughs and gasps. Surely, he was just an example. They wouldn't do that to all of us, right? Think again. One by one, the man took off the soldiers' masks, each one falling into a whirlwind of coughs and gags until he got to me. "I will hold my breath," I thought as he graciously relieved me of my mask. I'll be okay just as long as he doesn't ask me to… "Recite the soldier's creed," he yelled. Maybe I can get away with just saying a few words, I thought, so I started with "I am an American Soldier. I…" Before I could even get through the second line my chest filled up with the toxic atmosphere. Coughing, crying and drooling, in mere seconds, I was reduced to a baby.

Masks still on, the two sergeants opened the door and pushed the blinded, coughing bunch of us out into the open. "Don't rub your eyes, it will sting more," they said, as we were escorted to a waiting area away from the building. Finally, it was over. Looking around, I couldn't help but feel a sense of cameraderie. We had done that together. We had made it through the gas chamber.

Evaluation: *Karim brings this adventure to life through specific details, character dialogue, and indelible suspense, which keep his audience's attention throughout.*

# Making the Man: Clothing and Identity in *The Taming of the Shrew*

*Keith Gabler*
Course: Independent Study 290
(Individual and Group Identity in Early Modern England)
Instructor: Alicia Tomasian

Assignment: *Produce a research paper incorporating historical and literary material to explore markers of identity in early modern England.*

"Who are you wearing?" is a question often asked on Hollywood's red carpets; the celebrity being interviewed answers the question with the name of the person who has designed his or her clothes. For the moment, the extravagant dress of the star has caused his or her individual "who" to be eclipsed in importance by his or her sartorial "who." This hints at an inconsistency, in which one is able to dress differently from who one *really* is, that lies at the center of public reasoning behind Elizabethan England's sumptuary laws, which dictated explicitly what members of specific social classes were and were not allowed to wear. In her proclamations concerning these laws, Queen Elizabeth strongly condemns "the confusion of degrees of all estates" caused by a "disordered excess of Apparell" exhibited by the lower classes within "the Realme."[1] A similar realm-wide confusion plays out on a smaller scale in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Throughout the play, as Lucentio and Petruchio court their eventual brides, the men take very different sartorial approaches. For Lucentio, clothes are identifiers. They are indicative of one's social status and, therefore, of one's identity as well; however, it is an identifier that is easily manipulated. Thus, the symbols worn within the realm of Lucentio's courtship are misleading; it becomes impossible to tell who is servant to whom, who is student and who is professor, or even who is courting whom. Petruchio, on the other hand, forgoes clothing as a symbol. To him, one's identity is a fixed aspect found in one's physicality, not in the ever-changing fabric of one's clothes. Although Petruchio manipulates his and his subjects' wardrobes, he does so only in order to better expose the person under the clothes. The resulting marriages are informed by each suitor's sartorial approach. Lucentio's use of clothing as an easily transferable identifier renders him powerless in a chaotic marriage with poorly defined roles; Petruchio, however, by recognizing that clothing obscures what it is supposed to identify, finds himself as the undisputed head of his household.

Queen Elizabeth's 1597 declaration relating to the sumptuary laws, on the "avoyding of the great inconvenience that hath growen and dayly doeth increse within this her Realme, by the inordinate exesse in Apparel,"conveys just how threatening a subversion of sartorial expectations could be. The proclamation goes on to legally establish these expectations, as it lists in great detail exactly who is allowed to wear what. If a man had wanted to wear "Silke or cloth mixed or imbrodered with Pearle, Gold, or Silver" and he had been "under the degree of a Baron" and not a "Knight of the Garter" or a "privie [Cousellor] to the Queenes Majestie," then he would have had to either forgo the fancy clothes or break the law; to misrepresent oneself through one's wardrobe in this era was indeed a criminal act, an "intolerable abuse."[2] And although the laws were honored more in the breach than in the observance, the specificity of the lists describing what can and cannot be worn by whom, as well as the number of proclamations concerning these laws, suggests that this was an issue taken seriously.

Excess of apparel was not only targeted in the Queen's proclamations and sumptuary laws, after all. It was also a common subject in religious writings. In her book *Beggary and Theatre in Early Modern England*, Paola Puglatti writes about *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches*, a work of great influence because its homilies "were read from the pulpit of all of the churches in the realm, and since their number was limited...the reading of each was repeated again and again, so that the churchgoer had the opportunity of listening to each several times."[3] Much like the sumptuary laws, the homilies often focus on the maintaining of established social order. "An Homily Against Excess of Apparel," therefore, urges, "that we [should] take in

good part our estate and condition, content with that which God has sendeth, whether it be much or little."[4] However, the homilies go further than the sumptuary laws, as they "express a radical condemnation of both the high and the low who indulge in vanity."[5] Further, in "An Homily on the State of Matrimony," woman is said to be the "weak[er] creature, not indued with like strength and constancy of mind," and, therefore, more liable to succumb to the pitfalls of vanity; the husband, on the other hand, is instructed to be "the leader and author of love."[6] Lucentio and Petruchio may, within this context, be viewed as the monarchs of their respective domestic kingdoms; they are then charged with the same duty as is the Queen, maintaining the status quo. Lucentio's lack of control over the clothing worn by his subjects, coupled with his insistence that clothing be an identifier, leads to a loss of power over them, whereas Petruchio's strict enforcement of his own unique sartorial code helps him to maintain his authority without indulging in the immorality of vanity.

Amanda Bailey, in her book *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England*, writes about the relationship between masters and their lavishly attired servants, in which the servants "were provided costly clothing with which to proclaim not their own, but their master's status."[7] Because of this, many servants' wardrobes were far more extravagant than permitted by the sumptuary laws. The Queen addresses the issue in a proclamation, dated 7 May 1562: "If any, knowing his servant to offende, do not put hym out of hys service within .xiiii. dayes: or so put out, retayne him againe within a yere after such offence, he shal forfait C.li."[8] The Queen clearly expects masters to exercise control over their servants in this matter. However, as suggested by the fact that Lucentio's plans to woo Bianca depend entirely upon Tranio's ability to present himself extravagantly, the power balance often shifted upon the servant's donning of such lavish clothes. As Bailey writes, servants were able "to use the sartorial expectations of their position to outshine their masters and to potentially disobey them in other matters."[9] In the relationship between Lucentio and Tranio, there is seemingly not much separating the two men other than clothes; Lucentio recognizes that his plan will likely succeed because he and Tranio cannot "be distinguished by [their] faces / [f]or man or master" (1.1.201-202).[10] This speaks directly to the Queen's concerns that excess of apparel among the lower classes has led to "confusion" in the realm. In the end, not only is it unclear to the people of Padua which of the men is of a higher social status, the issue even becomes muddled between Lucentio and Tranio themselves.

Much like the "comely servants" about whom Bailey has written, Tranio is empowered by his master's absolute reliance on his ability to impress with his sartorial splendor. In fact, Tranio's increase in power would seem to be larger than average, as he is not only required to represent his master, but he must go so far as to *be* his master, at least in the eyes of the people of Padua. Biondello recognizes the inherent benefits of such a setup: "The better for him. Would I were so, too" (1.2.238). In spite of Lucentio's claim that Tranio is a "trusty servant" (1.1.7), Tranio's actions indicate that Lucentio's trust might be better placed elsewhere. As Juliet Dusinberre writes in her "*The Taming of the Shrew*: Women, Acting, and Power," the confusion caused by Tranio's disguise is so great that, as demonstrated in his interactions with the other men at the feast in the play's final scene, he maintains his elevated status even after his true identity is revealed. Dusinberre explains, "By the end of the play, Tranio has also acquired some social power within its structures....It is as if, from playing the master, he has acquired the manners of a master and now sits in easy fellowship with the real masters."[11] Without the benefit of a wardrobe change, Biondello must continue to do a servant's work, relaying messages for the other men and their wives. At the same time, Tranio sits idly with the masters, presumably still in the fancy clothes that indentify him as nobility. In Lucentio's clothes, he has been able to disguise his defiance as obedience; Lucentio is none the wiser.

Petruchio, on the other hand, does recognize Tranio's subversiveness. Referring to Bianca, Petruchio says, "Here, Signor Tranio, / This bird you aimed at, though you hit her not" (5.2.49-50). The implication that Tranio has been attempting to woo Bianca for himself, if even halfheartedly, indicates that the power structure in this relationship is not what it should be. If Tranio is entertaining ideas of marrying Bianca himself, then his

donning of Lucentio's clothes is not done to serve Lucentio in any way; it is done purely in order to exploit his master's ignorance for his own gain. Tranio's declaration of love for his master--"I am content to be Lucentio / Because so well I love Lucentio" (1.1.217-218)--might be rephrased as "I am content to be Lucentio, because so well I love *being* Lucentio, along with all of the inherent perks." The clothes allow Tranio to stand in for Lucentio, but not without Lucentio losing something in the process.

Vincentio's claim that Tranio has "murdered his master" (5.1.82) is true in that Lucentio no longer quite fills the role of master to Tranio. "Master" is no longer a part of Lucentio's identity. Vincentio associates the loss of Lucentio's clothes with not only the loss of this important aspect of his son's identity but also with the loss of a part of his own identity: "A silken doublet, a velvet hose, a scarlet cloak, and a copintank hat! Oh, I am undone, I am undone!" (5.1.61-63). The identifier of wealth and power has been transferred to Tranio, and Vincentio recognizes that Tranio's gain is his loss. Lucentio's sartorial recklessness has caused so great a confusion that Tranio is in a position where he can have Vincentio thrown in jail simply for claiming to be himself. That Tranio actually would allow to have Vincentio, the man who has "brought him up ever since he was three years old" (5.1.77), imprisoned shows that "trusty servant" is as much a disguise for him as his wearing of "Lucentio" is.

According to the Queen, among the greatest contributors to "disordered excesse of Apparell" were "the youth" who were attending "the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford."[12] She would not have been surprised to see Lucentio, mere moments after his arrival in Padua, with the ostensible intention of studying at the university, ask Tranio to "[t]ake [his] colored hat and cloak" (1.1.208). Vincentio echoes the Queen's sentiments when he exclaims, "While I play the good husband at home, my son and servant spend all at the university" (5.1.63-65). Lucentio makes an effort to assert his independence, but, as demonstrated by Baptista's insistence on meeting Vincentio, he is still dependent upon his father for much, the least of which being the services of Tranio. This is another way in which Lucentio misrepresents himself; he is still under his father's rule, and yet he behaves as though he were independent. Both Lucentio and Tranio must use clothing provided by Vincentio to establish their autonomy. In using the established symbols inherent in the clothing to conceal their fabrications, Lucentio and Tranio help to rob these symbols of their meaning, and, therefore, of their usefulness. Thus, Vincentio is left without a device to establish his identity, and he is "undone."

At the same time, Bianca disguises herself to elevate the status she holds within her family. As opposed to the elevation of social status from which Tranio benefits, however, Bianca uses symbols to create a confusion over her true nature, causing the misperception that she is of a high moral character. There are signs from the beginning that Bianca is not as innocent as she may seem. In fact, the first time Lucentio even sees Bianca, Katharina points out the falseness behind her display of tears as she observes, "It is best / [p]ut a finger in the eye, an she knows why" (1.1.78-79). The tears are fake symbols of unhappiness passing for unhappiness itself. While the homilies warn that the husband should keeps his wife's vanities in check, Lucentio instead falls more in love with her vanities than he does Bianca herself. He raves that "with her breath she did perfume the air" (1.1.176), an apt metaphor for her ability to cover up her unpleasantness with her charm. Of course, like her tears, her charm is artificial; it is made up of symbols of kindness pretending to be the real thing. And, like perfume might be, her charm is a calculated part of her ensemble. Since he encourages her vanities and deceptions to run free, when he finally marries her, Bianca hardly seems the woman he set out to marry. He has fallen in love with an illusion and not with Bianca herself.

Lucentio, during the course of his courtship, does not present himself honestly to Bianca, either; he is "disguised thus to get [her] love" (3.1.33). Their courtship takes place within the context of scholarship, and Lucentio, presenting himself as a scholar, should be an expert suitor; and as the homily on marriage suggests, Bianca will indeed look to him for "strength and constancy of mind." Yet Petruchio is able to see right away that Lucentio is a mere apprentice, not the master that he claims to be. "Oh, you are novices!" he exclaims, astounded with Lucentio's naiveté regarding proper courtship (2.1.309). So Lucentio is also misrepresenting his standing as a lover. Despite identifying himself as a pedagogue with his scholarly robes, he simply does not have the strength,

the experience, or the discipline required to be a proper "leader and author of [their] love." Their relationship, therefore, is founded upon a series of false identifications; it is not surprising that it ends with Lucentio and Bianca in a frustrating marriage.

The relationship between Petruchio and Kate starts quite differently. Just before their first visit to Baptista's as husband and wife, Petruchio ask rhetorically, "What, is the jay more precious than the lark / Because his feathers are more beautiful?" (4.3.171-172). Petruchio's reference to the animal kingdom, with its own natural hierarchy, brings to mind the sort of inherent social order promoted in both the sumptuary laws and the homilies; an ecosystem's food chain, or its list of Who Can Eat Whom, might look similar to the Queen's list of Who Can Wear What. Petruchio, who sits atop his particular food chain as the head of his estate, also understands that within nature, an animal's appearance is often designed to purposely deceive potential predators or prey. As the head of his estate, it is his responsibility to keep his underlings from practicing this sort of deception.

A closer look at the animals that he chooses to compare further reveals Petruchio's philosophy toward clothes. Aesop's fable of the jay and the peacock would have been familiar to Shakespeare's audience. Published in 1597, W. B. Whereunto's translation of the history of Clitiphon and Leucippe describes the counterfeit beauty of the painted woman as being "barer then a Jaye (as the Proverbe is) when all his stolne feathers are plucked from his backe."[13] A collection of Aesop's fables from 1484,o opens its version of this "fable Of a Jaye full of vayne glory" with the declaration that "None ought to were and putte on hym the gowne of other." The jay is beaten by peacocks, when, after attempting to pass himself off as one of them by wearing peacock feathers, his true identity is revealed. The conclusion has the would-be peacock's fellow jays "sayenge thus to hym / yf thow haddest be content of thyn owne vestymentes / thow haddest not come to this vylony."[14] The lark, on the other hand, is known for its distinctive and beautiful voice. Instead of deriving its identity from its outward appearance, the lark is identifiable from a quality that comes from within.

Compare now the relationship between Lucentio and Tranio with the relationship between Petruchio and Grumio. Amanda Bailey argues that there is a similar subversion of power between master and servant in Petruchio and Grumio's relationship. For example, Bailey asserts that Grumio's intentional misunderstanding of his master's orders to knock on Hortensio's door--"Knock you here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir?" (1.2.9-10)--is a way of foiling Petruchio's "wishes to broadcast his newly elevated status [after inheriting his father's estate] to his urbane friend by having his servant pretentiously announce him."[15] The effect, Bailey argues, is spoiled when Hortensio opens the door to the "disgraceful display" of Petruchio beating Grumio in the street.[16] However, one can see in observing Petruchio's avoidance of announcing his social status through ostentatious clothing that the type of pretentious display suggested by Bailey does not fit with Petruchio's character. Further, Petruchio's wooing of Kate does not involve a show of material splendor. In fact, he seems to shun material splendor completely; instead, Petruchio focuses on physical expressions, thus, his repeated orders to "Kiss me, Kate" (2.1.322, 5.1.133 & 5.2.184) and, finally, "to bed" (5.2.188). Therefore, his public thrashing of Grumio is the perfect manner in which for Petruchio to broadcast his status, because it is physical. Grumio will wear Petruchio's livery in the form of his resulting bruises.

During the wedding scene, Petruchio is presented with an ample opportunity to make the sort of ostentatious display that Bailey claims he attempts at Hortensio's. Petruchio instead chooses to forgo extravagance; yet he is still able to demonstrate his authority without any sartorial indicators. Bailey, however, argues that Grumio's dress on the day of his master's wedding is "consistently overlooked" and is essential in understanding the scene.[17] She suggests that Petruchio, in his absurd, peasant-like garb, "seeks to assert his newly established authority as head of the marital household by illustrating to Kate the importance of reining in one's appetite for household stuff," but Grumio, "in his over-the-top outfit suggests that Petruchio's attempts to manage his wife's habits of consumption bear no relation of his ability to control his servants' extravagances."[18] It is worth asking, though, what element of Grumio's wardrobe could be described as extravagant. Is it the mismatched "linen sock on one leg and...kersey boot-hose on the other" (3.2.65-66)? Petruchio's "new hat" (3.2.43) would probably not be

worse than Grumio's "old hat" (3.2.67). Although Bailey believes that Grumio's hat "boasts a crown of feathers that is so ornate that it defies description," the description we are given of what sits atop his hat, that it has "the humor of forty fancies pricked in 't for a feather" (3.2.67-68), suggests that the ornate crown of feathers might very well exist only in Grumio's mind.[19]

Consider also the impression that Grumio makes on the other characters. To Biondello, Grumio looks "not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman's lackey" (3.2.69-70), indicating that his wardrobe is still seen as being a reflection of Petruchio; for a man to be "not like... a gentleman's lackey" is to say that the gentleman does not know how to properly dress his lackey, not that the lackey is unable to dress himself. As opposed to Tranio, who through out-dressing his master is able to form his own separate identity, Grumio is still thought of only in relation to his master. Although Bailey suggests that Tranio is referring to Grumio when he says, "'Tis some odd humor pricks him to this fashion; / Yet oftentimes he goes but mean-appareled" (3.2.71-72), it is not entirely clear that this is the case. In fact, the following lines indicate that it is more likely Petruchio who is being addressed:

> BAPTISTA: I am glad *he's* come, howsoe'er *hee* comes.
> BIONDELLO: Why, sir *he* comes not.
> BAPTISTA: Didst thou not say *he* comes?
> BIONDELLO: Who? That Petruchio came?
> BAPTISTA: Ay, that Petruchio came. (3.2.73-77, italics mine)

Biondello also remarks that Grumio is "for all the world caparisoned like the horse" (3.2.64-65). And both horse and servant, in fact, seem to be "infected with the fashions" (3.2.51). While Bailey takes this to mean that Grumio is "flamboyantly decked out in his apparel," the comparison to a diseased horse is hardly a flattering one. In the horse's case, "the fashions" refers to just one of the numerous physical diseases from which it suffers.[20] (Bevington and Kastan make this clear in their footnotes: "**fashions** i.e., farcins, or farcy, a disease like glanders.")[21] Grumio's dress is simply not becoming, hence, the comparison to a diseased horse.

It is, therefore, not the contrast with Grumio's ill-fitting clothes that brings Baptista to remark that Petruchio's appearance is "[a]n eyesore to [their] solemn festival" (3.2.101)o It is instead the contrast between "Petruchio's unreverent robes" (3.2.112) and his "estate" (3.2.101) that causes the commotion. Baptista and the others are upset because Petruchio is not dressed as they expect one in his situation to dress. Tranio, of all people, remarks that Petruchio has arrived at the wedding "so unlike [himself]" (3.2.104). It is true that without knowing who he is, no one would be able to identify Petruchio as a gentleman. Yet Petruchio defends his clothing choice: "To me she's married, not unto my clothes. / Could I repair what she would wear in me / As I can change these poor accoutrements, / 'Twere well for Kate and better for myself" (3.2.117-120). The idea that Kate will somehow "wear" him emphasizes the physicality with which Petruchio approaches the relationship. Kate's wearing of Petruchio, without mention of him wearing her, suggests both him physically protecting her and his ability to physically guide her to keep her from straying; in other words, it suggests that he has positioned himself to be "the leader and author of [their] love." Further, Petruchio's reasoning is similar to the reasoning behind the sumptuary laws; one's identity is stable regardless of the variety of one's wardrobe. A servant is not made a gentleman by donning "Silke of colour purple."[22] He remains a servant. Although Petruchio can do without the pomp and circumstance involved with aristocratic life, he does believe that there is a certain immutable hierarchy within society, and it is one that he clearly sits atop. His identity, then, is as headman. And unlike Lucentio, who must still answer to his father, Petruchio truly is the master of his house; he answers to no one. By not allowing the expectations of others to dictate how he should dress, Petruchio's defiantly shoddy wedding clothes display his authority better than even the most extravagant garb could.

While he allows Grumio the space he needs to make a fool of himself, Petruchio is far more controlling over Kate's wardrobe. Although he promises Kate that the two of them will return to Baptista's dressed "as bravely as the best" (4.3.54), it seems as though the promise is made only so Petruchio can immediately go back on it. This is similar to the manner in which Petruchio starves Kate while at the same time feeding her "with the very name of

meat" (4.3.32). "An Homily of Good Works: and First of Fasting" gives the primary reason for one to fast as being "to chastise the flesh that it not be too wanton, but tamed and brought into subjection to the spirit."[23] Looked at in this way, Petruchio's taming of Kate can be seen as spiritual, much like the homily on matrimony suggests that it should be. Just as "An Homily Against Excess of Apparel" starts off with the comparison between humble attire and "[the temperate use of] meats and drinks," Petruchio makes a connection between food and clothing.[24] Right before the tailor and haberdasher arrive, Petruchio brings Kate meat that he has "dress[ed]... [himself]" (4.3.40). Next, the relationship between the clothing Kate cannot wear and the food she cannot eat becomes even more pronounced with Petruchio's disparaging remarks about the cap and gown. As Petruchio continues to relate the cap and gown to different types of food, it becomes exceedingly clear that Kate will get neither cap--described as a "custard coffin... a silken pie" (4.3.82)--nor gown, which is "carved like an apple tart" (4.3.89). More than simply, as Bailey argues, "illustrating to Kate the importance of reining in one's appetite for household stuff," Petruchio is demonstrating the emptiness and worthlessness of such "ruffling treasure[s]" (4.3.60).[25] Like the lark, Petruchio and Kate shall obtain their worthiness from within. As Petruchio tells Kate at the conclusion of the scene, "'tis the mind that makes the body rich" (4.3.168), not finery.

In this scene, too, we see Petruchio enforce a sort of sumptuary law of his own as he forbids Kate to wear the haberdasher's cap. Reacting to Kate's claim that "gentlewomen wear caps such as" (4.3.70) the one the haberdasher has brought, Petruchio could be reading from his personal list of Who Can Where What when he replies, "When you are gentle, you shall have one too, / And not till then" (4.3.71-72). In one sense, Petruchio may mean that Kate will not get the cap until her behavior is more mild or tender. The line can also be interpreted to mean that Petruchio will only allow Kate to dress as a gentlewoman once she starts behaving as other gentlewomen do, as deceptively as Bianca, for example. Kate reacts to Petruchio's rejection of the cap: "My tongue will tell the anger of my heart, / Or else my heart, *concealing it*, will break" (4.3. 77-78, italics mine). As opposed to Bianca, who "perfumes the air" with her pretty yet false words, Kate seems unable to purposely mislead with her behavior. Petruchio feels that the gown is more than unattractive; it is also dishonest: "Oh, mercy, God, what masquing stuff is here" (4.3.87). The gown is most appropriate for a masque, or somewhere where people pretend to be what they are not. A dress made of "masquing stuff" would have no place at an ordinary dinner; the wearer would look absurd, as her clothes plainly indicate that she is something she is not. Therefore, Petruchio and Kate are dressed in a manner both morally proper and truthfully representative of their selves as they head to Baptista's "[e]ven in these honest, mean habiliments" (4.3.166).

Along with dishonesty, the gown seems to suggest an immoral sexuality. It is described as being "[a] loose-bodied gown" (4.3.130), which as Margaret Rose Jaster in her "Controlling Clothes, Manipulating Mates: Petruchio's Griselda" explains is "a term for prostitutes' dresses, which allow easy access and conceal the results of the women's labors."[26] In addition, Grumio's behavior displays a level of licentiousness associated with fine clothes. When Petruchio orders him to "take [the gown] up unto thy master's use" (4.3.153), Grumio purposely misinterprets his meaning for something lewd: "Oh, fie, fie, fie!" (4.3.159). While critics such as Jaster may suggest that Kate's "chastity is impugned" with the men's description of the dress, the implication is actually that Kate would *look like* a slut if she were to go around wearing such a gown.[27] It is the gown, not Kate, that is being insulted. Because, as Petruchio explains, "honor peereth in the meanest habit" (4.3.170), Kate's virtue will show through if she dresses humbly.

Comparing the revelation of her honor to "the sun break[ing] through the darkest clouds" (4.3.169), Petruchio emphasizes that one's identity should shine through the clothes that one wears; the clothes should not obscure the view of the individual. At the conclusion of the play, when Baptista remarks that Kate seems to be "another daughter" and "is changed, as she had never been" (5.2.118-119), it could be that he is seeing Kate, and not an identity projected by her clothing, for the first time. Just as he removes the excessiveness in her name and exposes the Kate within Katharina, Petruchio has Kate remove the "bauble" (5.2.126) from her wardrobe to reveal her identity: wife of Petruchio. His command, "Katharine, that cap of yours becomes you not. / ...Throw it underfoot" (5.2.125-126), illustrates the separation

Petruchio expects between wardrobe and identity; Kate will not "become" the hat, nor will the hat "become" her. Kate's obedience then is not only a demonstration of Petruchio's authority over her, it is also symbolic of Kate's body eclipsing her wardrobe. In the spirit of the sumptuary laws and the homilies, Petruchio is enforcing a standard onto his wife wherein she must present herself honestly and submissively. She does so by following her husband's lead and forgoing clothing as an identifier.

All of those celebrities dressed up on the red carpet answer the question, "Who are you wearing?" with someone else's name, either Versace's or Armani's or another famous designer's. There is a level of absurdity to it. If asked the same question, most of the characters in *Shrew* would similarly give a name different from their own. Lucentio would say, "Cambio," Hortensio, "Litio," and Tranio would answer, "Lucentio." Each of them would be admitting to a certain level of dishonesty. Petruchio, however, would be able to say that he is wearing Petruchio. And he would be right.

## Notes

[1]England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), "A declaration of the Queenes Maiesties will and commaundment, too have certaine lawes and orders put in execution against the excesse of apparel, notified by her commandement in the Starrechambero of the xxij. Of Februarie the xxx. Yeere of her reigne" (Imprintedo at London: By the deputies of Christopher Barker, printer to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie, 1588), 1, Early English Books Online STC (2nd. ed.) / 8169. (I have silently corrected all u/v and i/j typography issues and expanded all contractions in contemporary documents throughout my text.)

[2]England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), "By the Queene. Whereas the Queenes Maiestie, for avoyding of the great inconvenience that hath growen and dayly doeth increase within this her realme, by the inordinate excesse in apparel" (Imprintedo at London: By the deputies of Christopher Barker, printer to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie, 1597), 1-2, Early English Books Online STC (2nd ed.) 8257.o

[3]Paola Puglatti, *Beggary and Theatre in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 74.o

[4]Church of England, *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938),326.

[5] Puglatti, *Beggary and Theatre*, 71.o

[6] Church of England, *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, 537.

[7]Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,o 2007), 52.

[8]England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), *A proclamation for the observation of certein statutes with a fourme howe the same shal be executed, and a summarye abridgement of every of the same statutes, folowing* (Imprinted at London: In Powles Church yarde by Rycharde Jugge and John Cawood, printers to the Quenes Majestie,1562), C3r, Early English Books Online, STC (2nd ed.) / 7954.7.o

[9]Bailey, *Flaunting*, 52.

[10]William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Ed. David Bevington and David Scott Kastan (New York: Bantam Dell, 2005). (I have quoted from this edition throughout my text.)

[11]Juliet Dusinberre, "*The Taming of the Shrew*: Women, Acting, and Power," *Studies in the Literary Imagination (SLitI)* Vol. 26.1 (Spring 1993): 74.

[12]Elizabeth I, "A declaration of the Queenes Maiesties will," 1.

[13]Tatius, Achillis, *The most delectable and pleasaunt history of Clitiphon and Leucippe: written first in Greeke, by Achilles Statius, an Alexandrian: and now newly translated into English, by W.B. Whereunto is also annexed the argument of every booke, in the beginning of the same, for the better understanding of the historie* (London: Printed by Thomas Creede, for William Mattes, and are to be sold at his shop in Fleetstreete, at the signe of the hand and Plough, 1597), 46, Early English Books Online STC (2nd. ed.) / 90.

[14]Aesop. *Here begynneth the book of the subtyl historyes and fables of Esope whiche were translated out of Frensshe in to Englysshe by wylham Caxton at westmynstre in the yere of oure Lorde M. CCCC. xxxiii*, Trans. William Caxton (Westmynstre: wylham Caxton, 1484), G2c, Early English Books Online STC (2nd ed.) / 175.o

[15]Bailey, *Flaunting*, 56.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., 57.

[18]Ibid., 59.

[19]Ibid., 56.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, eds., Bevington and Kastan, 108n5ô.

[22]Elizabeth I, "Whereas the Queenes Maiestie," 2.

[23]Church of England, *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, 300.

[24]Ibid., 324.

[25]Bailey, *Flaunting*, 59.

[26]Jaster, Margaret Rose. "Controlling Clothes, Manipulating Mates: Petruchio's Griselda," *Shakespeare Studies* (January 2001): 104.

[27]Ibid., 104.

Evaluation: *Mr. Gabler expertly reads Petruchio in the context of sartorial conventions. His framing of the paper connects early modern ideas regarding self-fashioning with our modern perceptions of personal style.*

# Honor and Dignity: A Quest for Women's Rights in *Frankenstein*

*Michelle Gibbs*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Teresa Chung

Assignment: *Write a paper in which you forward a thesis about a theme in Shelley's* Frankenstein, *support it with textual analysis of the novel, and reference several other, already existing, analyses.*

For most women in today's society (especially the younger women), the idea of feminism and women's rights has been ever present and oftentimes taken for granted. Younger women know of a world where a woman can go to college, have a career, or even run for election of the President of the United States of America. However, this freedom was not always possible for women. In fact, the majority of the history of human existence has been dominated by men. Women were not allowed to own property or to vote. They were not allowed to speak out against men who harmed them. Women were to be seen and not heard. Instances of feminist theories throughout history have punched holes in this way of life. Some of them, constructed by women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, were radical feminist theories that avidly and passionately spoke out against this gendered inequality. Others, however, such as those written by her daughter Mary Shelley, had a more discreet and possibly more effective tactic. In the novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, feminism becomes a central facet in the text. Where, at first glance, the text is speaking of monstrosity and male-centered events, upono closer scrutiny, it contains very fervent remarks on the role of women in society. Shelley writes with a feminist viewpoint that is partially straightforward, but also indirect. She makes the assertion that at the time there was a definite important and necessary traditional role for women as the housewife, but there are other possibilities. The traditional "separate-sphere" society is one in which the woman has her definite role and the man has his. They do not cross over in duties, responsibilities, and freedoms. In the novel, "separate-sphere" is emphasized as a bad policy because of the outcomes of the female characters: most of them die. In *Frankenstein,* instances of a more modern role for women are interwoven throughout the text, but this new position is never completely achieved. For every instance of a woman breaking out of the shell of the traditional, there is a man who is either knowingly or unknowingly holding her back. This says that when the novel was written, society was not ready for this new role, but Shelley seems to be saying that the role can be achieved in the future, that women everywhere need to make small contributions to this until they add up to an overwhelming and undeniable force.

Many interpretations of *Frankenstein* include discussions of Shelley's opinion on the traditional maternal roles and how she believes that it is important to a point, yet there is a distinct need for a more modern role. For example, Doctor Victor Frankenstein's creature was created without a mother. Frankenstein made the creature by himself, without any maternal contributions. Though the creature's conception was more of a pseudo-birth than an actual birth, even the creature notes his lack of a mother: "no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses…" (Shelley 110). He shows a distinct sadness when he notes this, as he has desired love and affection. This particular facet of the plot has Shelley noting that there is a role that women must fill. They must be good mothers, and they must show love to their children. Because the creature did not have a mother, he turns out to be a frustrated murderer due to his lack of receiving affection. This interpretation shows that Shelley recognizes the importance of this traditional role of women. Even when women do fill this and only this role, destruction occurs. For example, Frankenstein's mother Caroline does exactly as she should as a woman. She loves and cares for her son with the utmost affection: "Much as [my parents] were attached to each other, they seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me. My mother's tender caresses, and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me, are my first

recollections" (Shelley 42). Caroline filled her role as a mother very well, which fulfilled her role as a woman. In addition to this, she spent her younger years caring for her sick father (Shelley 41). However, despite all of this, and possibly because of her caring nature, she dies. When her daughter Elizabeth was sick with the scarlet fever, Caroline "attended her sick bed...Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver" (Shelley 49). Caroline, so affectionately called the "best of women," died because she caught the illness from which Elizabeth had suffered (Shelley 49). Mary Shelley writes of these events, showing that even the "best" women in society could not escape having an unhappy fate. When women are pressured and controlled by men and this "separate spheres"-driven society, they will die, which is a symbol of failure, since Caroline could no longer care for her children when they most needed her guidance. Women must press on and attempt to further their role in order to avoid this type of failure.

Many critics believe that the contribution made to feminism by Mary Shelley was a product of her personal life and issues. Author Anthony F. Badalamenti is one such critic. In his essay, "Why Did Mary Shelley Write *Frankenstein*?" he uses the concept of "decoding" in his interpretation of Shelley's novel, which is "a means of finding the unconscious meanings hidden by substitution, a defense used to consciously express an emotionally charged but unconscious issue that would be unbearable were its real meaning open to conscious view" (Badalamenti 420). Specifically, he believes that Shelley's novel is a direct product of "Percy Shelley's many violations of their relationship" (Badalamenti 420). One such violation was that when Mary gave birth to a baby girl who soon died, Percy gave her no support in her bereavement. Instead, he resented the fact that they did not bear a son (Badalamenti 424). This may show in the novel in a reverse way. Caroline and her husband gave birth to a healthy son named Victor, and their family was a vision of happiness: "with this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life, added to the active spirit of tenderness that animated both, it may be imagined that while during every hour of my infant life I received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control, I was so guided by a silken cord, that all seemed but one train of enjoyment to me" (Shelley 42). Percy did not give to Mary's daughter what he "owed towards the being to which [he] had given life," and she interpreted this as the reason why during her daughter's short life, they did not have bliss as the Frankensteins had experienced. A lot of the novel goes back to this fundamental issue of Percy being uncaring towards the birth and death of their daughters. However, this interpretation cannot be a complete analysis of the novel. This single-minded approach can drown out many important facets of the text by simplifying the novel to be a pure autobiography of Mary Shelley. For example, Walton does not fit into this interpretation. In the novel, Walton is painted as a man walking down the same path as Victor, but he is not very far yet. At the end he turns from Victor's path of knowledge and curiosity and goes home with his men. There was no mention of another man in Mary Shelley's life that showed this characteristic of control. Why would she write about a man like Walton, who will live, when Victor is to die, if there was no man like him in her life? The answer is that the novel is not solely an autobiography. There are messages about human curiosity, knowledge, and especially feminism that augment the reading of the text.

One of the most popular feministic readings of the text has to do with parenthood and how it is addressed in the novel. Author Barbara Johnson writes of this in her critical essay, "My Monster/ My Self." She notes how Victor's family contains two loving, doting parents who give him everything he needs and give him a comfortable childhood while the monster is immediately abandoned and alone. However, "the fact that in the end both characters reach an equal degree of alienation and self-torture and indeed become indistinguishable as they pursue each other across the frozen polar wastes indicates that the novel is, among other things, a study of the impossibility of finding an adequate model for what a parent should be" (Johnson 56). Johnson believes that Shelley is trying to use this plot development as a commentary on society at the time of the novel's writing. The polar opposites of parental care, one of which was traditional and desired, the other outcast and loathed, both end up with the same result. The child is alone, full of self-hatred and a physical and emotional mess. Johnson writes that the novel speaks

of the mother's possible rejection of the child, and this scares people because they value the bonds made in motherhood (Johnson 61). This would threaten the entire structure of the family. Johnson's contribution toward the parenting roles can help to better define what the old and modern roles for women are. Johnson writes, "The females... are beautiful, gentle, selfless, boring nurturers and victims who never experience inner conflict or true desire" (Johnson 63). Crossing roles is what is frightening to men. The book "would suggest that a woman's desire to write and a man's desire to give birth would both be capable only of producing monsters" (Johnson 64). This analysis defines women as being trapped, and that is exactly what is trying to be changed in Shelley's theme.

Another similar interpretation comes from Margaret Homans' "Bearing Demons: Frankenstein's Circumvention of the Maternal." This critique notes how "the novel is simultaneously about the death and obviation of the mother and about the son's quest for a substitute object of desire" (Homans 141). Among the things that Victor uses as a substitute for his mother are his university and his sister Elizabeth. She writes, "His mother dies just as Frankenstein is preparing to go to the University of Ingolstadt, and if his postponed trip there is thus motivated by her death, what he finds at the university becomes a substitute for her: modern scientists, he is told, 'penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding places' (ch. 3)" (Homans 141-142). Science's ability to explore death and other related concepts are alluring to Victor because of his mother's recent death. He uses this opportunity to replace her in his mind, thus circumventing the maternal. When Victor has his dream of Elizabeth dying, she is also seen as a replacement of his mother, seeing as Elizabeth transforms into Caroline in the dream.

> The dream suggests that to bring the demon to life is equivalent to killing Elizabeth, and that Elizabeth dead is equivalent to his mother dead. Elizabeth may have been the death of the mother, but now that she has replaced her, she too is vulnerable to whatever destroys mothers...Victor has gone to great lengths to produce a child without Elizabeth's assistance and...to make her unnecessary is to kill her, and to kill mothers altogether (Homans 143).

This logic shows how Victor fears the loss of a mother figure, but he has created that reality by creating the monster. This interpretation can serve as a basis to help me to develop new arguments in that since Victor decides to procreate alone, he is disrupting the traditional role for women that he so fears is being destroyed by a modern role. This is one reason why Shelley says that the traditional role will not suffice for much longer. Men, though they appear to be unwilling to let women change their role in society, are striving for womanly powers, like that of procreation, which circumvents them and pushes them into a new role. Shelley writes this to show the reader that she believes in the modern role for women.

The implications of critiques like the previous, in which women are feared, can be taken to another level. Some interpretations of Shelley's *Frankenstein* have gone to the extent of saying that this new role is seen as monstrous by the men in the novel. Fred Botting's essay "Angels and Monsters: Sexual Subjects and Critical Differences" does just that. Botting argues that women and men are not polar opposites, but their differences define each other (Botting 101). For example, men are physically more capable and so their role is to cut down wood for the fire and hunt for food, whereas women are less physically capable so they are constrained to less intensive household procedures. He goes on to say that women are seen as monstrous because their possible disobedience has the power to redefine what a "man" is (Botting 102): "...women and monsters share a similar marginalized position in the text, from where the ineffaceable necessity of difference manifests itself" (Botting 102). Botting argues that "women are, on the whole, contained as others, a silent threat whose suppression is overwhelming" (Botting 112). This is why Frankenstein and other men in Shelley's novel fear the new role for women. They see that women may have the ability to break out of their traditional place in society and they fear the consequences of those actions. Not only do men fear this, but to extend Botting's analysis, they try to prevent this; men's fears push them to powerfully prevent women from attaining a new role. Many instances of modern women appear in Shelley's text, and each instance results in a failure. Botting's interpretation and criticism lends itself to this extension because he points

out that Shelley draws many similarities between women and monsters, most obviously, the female creature that Frankenstein attempts to create.

Another author who writes about men's fears of modern women is James P. Davis, in his essay, "*Frankenstein* and the Subversion of the Masculine Voice." He believes that in the novel, men "undermine the female voice, but Shelley subverts their subversion, revealing the social consequences of their misogyny and, by implication, the broader historical effects of the masculine literary tradition that they embody" (Davis 307). By misogyny, he means fear or hatred of women, and by this thesis, he means that as a whole, Shelley's novel provides commentary that undermines the men's attempts to hold back the women. Even men who seem to value the existence of women start to try to subvert them: "If the monster's demands for female companionship initially seem to validate the importance of women, his subsequent behavior suggests that he embodies in giant and more explicit form the misogyny at the root of Victor's behavior" (Davis 310). The example he uses to illustrate this is when the monster finds, conveniently, that he can frame Justine for the murder of William. The monster says, "not I, but she shall suffer: the murder I have committed because I am for ever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her: be hers the punishment!" (Shelley 127). He acts out of hatred for the innocent woman, not just out of anger towards Frankenstein. Davis also writes that women's stories are all filtered by the men who tell them, except for in isolated circumstances of letters and direct dialogue. For example, the story of the woman who was to be married to Walton's shipmaster was told only by men. She did not get a direct say in the matter or get to comment on what was told. She is seen as perhaps the happiest woman in the novel because she does not have to be forced into the marriage she does not desire. However, this tale says that "unless a man acts in an astonishing way, listening to and honoring the requests of the woman, marriage will victimize the woman" (Davis 315). This very well may have been Shelley's reasoning for writing this brief passage, as it says how if a man has complete control over a woman, as he does when the woman is in the traditional role, he must act nobly or else there will be sadness and victimizing of the woman. However, I do not completely agree with Davis's interpretation that Shelley subverts the male voice in her novel. While she does have an underlying theme that discredits the way that men subvert women, she does not succeed in showing women that are able to overcome this. In that way, men are not subverted in Shelley's novel because they still maintain control in the end.

Some women in *Frankenstein* are under the absolute control of men and are not able to make decisions when it comes to their identities as women. Doctor Frankenstein's unfinished female creature is a prime example of this. When he is almost finished with this creation, he starts to question his actions and think about the consequences that might occur if he were to finish the creature. He worries, "she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighborhood of man...but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation" (Shelley 144). Frankenstein's foremost worry is that the female will not comply with her male companion. He fears that she will have a mind of her own and will make decisions for herself. The events that he imagines will occur if she does not obey are all very negative and chilling: he thinks she will be inclined to desire destruction and murder and refuse to leave the human race. If she doesn't leave with the male creature, then all men will know what Frankenstein had done and would look down on him as the indirect murderer of his family members. Frankenstein is not willing to risk letting this female think for herself. After all, "she also might turn with disgust from [the male creature] to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species" (Shelley 144). If this female creature has the ability to make her own judgments and opinions, she could break away from the male, and this will further encourage her attempt to conform to the society of men. It is for these reasons that Frankenstein destroys this female creature. Her threat of having a mind of her own is too great to overlook. Shelley includes this development in the novel because of its implications. Mankind is not ready or willing to accept the idea that women may have their own minds. Men see only destruction when they

think of this radical idea. Frankenstein knowingly and willingly annihilates his female creature in order to better assure that this destruction will not occur. This example is very extreme because the female creature does not even get the chance to comply or refuse the men that attempt to control her. She is never even a complete creature before the decision is made that she will be destructive. Clearly, in this time period, mankind was not prepared to allow a new role for women in society.

While the women in Shelley's novel do not achieve a larger role in society, it is not as though they haven't tried: there exist instances in which women are forced to retain the traditional roles, regardless of any previous attempts to break the pattern. One of the most obvious examples of this occurrence is in Safie's story. Safie's mother was a different kind of woman. She did not allow herself to be mentally and intellectually enslaved by men and traditional Turk religion. This Christian Arab woman "instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion, and taught her to aspire to higher powers of intellect, and an independence of spirit, forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet" (Shelley 112). These teachings were in no way typical: in fact, they were completely opposite of the usual lessons a daughter would learn from her mother. A daughter was meant to learn how to cook and how to clean and how to care for children or simple wounds. Back in this time frame, a woman becoming an intellectual power was completely unbelievable and looked down upon. Safie's mind was molded by these teachings, and she dreamed of having a better life than the base and monotonous position that had been the customary place for women. This mother's "lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia, and being immured within the walls of a haram, allowed only to occupy herself with infantile amusements, ill suited to the temper of her soul, now accustomed to grand ideas and a noble emulation for virtue" (Shelley 112). In this instance, Safie becomes the modern woman who will not settle for traditional women's roles. Mary Shelley illustrates with Safie that such women exist, and she gives a direct method for accomplishing this new role, namely, to educate the women and teach them to have a lust for independence and knowledge.

However, though Safie yearns for this new role, the reader finds her unable to attain it. For Safie, "the prospect of marrying a Christian, and remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society, was enchanting to her" (Shelley 112). Unfortunately, this is the downfall of her new position for women. Upon marrying Felix, Safie fulfills that traditional role as housewife. She remains with the family in their cabin, learns their language, and learns their customs (Shelley 107). In essence, she gives up all the unique qualities about her identity by conforming into their family. For example, Safie learns how to speak Felix's language, but Felix does not attempt to learn hers (Shelley 107). Shelley uses Safie's character to illustrate a definitive point in her novel. Safie, a woman who has all that is required to advance the feminine sphere, was dominated by the prominent societal roles. She grew up learning how to be an independent woman, but because of her marriage to Felix, she becomes the opposite of all she had learned. She abandons her past identity in order to adopt a language and culture that better equip her to be with this man. Felix, though he doesn't try to make Safie return to the normal role of a woman, succeeds in forcing her into that role. She does this willingly, showing the commentary that Shelley believed women were not ready for this advancement at the time the novel was written.

The idea that people were not ready for a new role of women is not only illustrated in relations between men and women, but it is also illustrated in relations between only men. At the end of the novel, Walton extremely desires the ability to push on through the frozen ice and continue the voyage to the North to explore. However, his crew is not as willing. They cower at the thought of death and demand that Walton turn the ship around and travel back home when it is possible (Shelley 182). Frankenstein, exceptionally weakened and fatigued, then gives an awe-inspiring speech in order to try and encourage the men to continue. He says, "Oh! be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes, and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable, and cannot withstand you, if you say that it shall not" (Shelley 182). By trying to encourage the men to be heroes, he tries to give them stronger confidence to make the journey a success. However, it is to no avail. The men still desire to go home and eventually, that is exactly what happens. The traditional reading of the ending of the novel is completely opposite of the interpretation offered

here. Most people read the ending in a way that says that Walton's turning back was the right choice and a noble deed. They believe he is rewarded for making this choice by staying alive. However, this interpretation overlooks the ambiguous language used in Frankenstein's final speech. Continuing on in the journey is connotatively positive at the end of the novel, while turning back is connotatively negative. Both readings are valid, though the one offered here lends itself better to Shelley's theme on the advance of feminism. My interpretation highlights less obvious examples of Shelley's comments on feminism. The feminism is hidden in Frankenstein's speech at the end of the novel because it is conveyed by a man to other men. This passage is a great reward for the closer readers of the novel. In the ending passages, the perilous and dangerous voyage to the North is a symbol of the exploration of new roles for women in society. Most people, like the crew, are content to stay back home in the South, where things can continue the way they were previously. However, some people want to investigate these new reaches of the mind and discover new places for women in society. Even though it seems impossible for the ship to break through the ice, it may be attainable in the future if they wait patiently. Shelley is using this symbol as a commentary for women. She writes, possibly, with the intentions of saying to women that they need to be patient and wait for some obstacles to disintegrate and then, at that point, they can push through the difficult trials towards defining a new life for themselves. The unbreakable ice symbolizes the fact that a large majority of the world is unable to conceptualize and accept a new role for women. What women can do while they wait is continue to chip away at the ice with specific examples of strong women in society, like Safie before her marriage. They should try to be more like men aboard a ship who are traveling through uncharted seas in order to unlock a world of glory and admiration for women all over the world to enjoy.

Though at this point in history many women were not even aware of the beginnings of a force of strong women in society, the force was beginning to be recognized by men. Men realized this force because of their fears of losing control of the society. Because of this, men like Felix and Victor Frankenstein tried to maintain control by capturing the free-spirited women like Safie in marriage vows, or by destroying the possibility of strength in women like the female creature. Shelley notes this kind of control in her novel through both of these examples, but continues on to give hope to women. By concluding the novel with Walton's journey and its symbolic significance, she gives the reader the impression that the past suppression of women by men like Felix and Frankenstein will give way to the future freedom of these women. The ending to the novel, though women's freedom is not achieved, is illustrating another step forward in this quest for equality. Whether or not this quest is eventually accomplished is dependent on the women, themselves. If they cower from the trials like Walton's crew, they will fail. However, if they push through with honor and dignity, they will see a bright horizon and a new dawn for women.

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Evaluation: *Especially noteworthy is the good use Michelle makes of sources. Instead of random quotations, she gives each author's main point and explains how her analysis builds upon or differs from it.*

# The Bundrens' Struggle to Adapt in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

*Roman Godzhur*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Barbara Butler

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper using eight or more secondary sources.*

The novel *As I Lay Dying*, written by William Faulkner, is one of his greatest works. It offers an insight on the hardships through which poor American farmers, represented by the Bundren family in this novel, went through during the early 1900s. Unlike many of his other works, Faulkner chose to write this novel from a multiple character perspective, and its purpose is instrumental in delivering a very thorough examination of the family, allowing readers to know exactly what each character is going through. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner creates a unique Southern environment that shows the struggle of the Bundren family going through socioeconomic and urban readjustment in their trip from country to town, mixed with a unique type of narration, as well as great symbolism behind the trip itself.

To truly understand the symbolism and theme behind *As I Lay Dying*, one first has to appreciate that Faulkner is a famous regionalist writer for the American South. In fact, Yoknapatawpha County, used in *As I Lay Dying*, was used in many of his other novels as well. It is also important to note that Faulkner started writing *As I Lay Dying* during the initial stages of the Great Depression. In fact, Ted Atkinson describes it in this way: "On October 25, 1929, the day after the panic broke out on Wall Street, Faulkner took one of these onion sheets, unscrewed the cap from his fountain pen, and wrote at the top in blue ink, 'As I Lay Dying'." (1) This gives us direct evidence that Faulkner was influenced to write this novel by the economic downfall in the U.S. during that time period. The American South was a region affected especially hard during the economic problems of the United States during the early 1900s. Cheryl Lester points out that due to late industrialization, the American South was "profoundly shaped by a transformation that millions experienced as pain, shock, and anguish" (4). The growing industrialization of the South was devastating for the traditional agricultural Southern way of life. Many Southern Americans were engaged in a struggle to maintain a way of life that was quickly becoming extinct, and as a result, millions were forced to make an effort to adapt to new environments, occupations, and social orders (1). A lot of the labor force found it more profitable to migrate to towns and cities in search of work in factories and the business sector. This becomes evident early in the novel when Darl and Jewel return from their factory jobs in a nearby town to their home in the countryside. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner indirectly describes what type of existence a family that chose to preserve a traditionalist, agricultural lifestyle had to go through, as well as a symbolic migration that millions of Southerners made from the countryside into urban areas, in the form of the Bundrens' quest to bury their mother.

In this novel, the Bundren family symbolizes people who were left behind during an era of Southern industrialization. Lester indicates that Faulkner turned to the Bundrens in this novel, and in writing about the characters with more "limited spatial and social mobility, he focused on the tragic or tragicomic mishaps of their journeys and on their inability to adapt to new environments" (5). Addie's request to be buried in the town of Jefferson serves to recreate the historic migration many Southerners were subjected to. Lester states:

> The burial journey to Jefferson allegorizes the reorganization of the rural landscape and the evacuation of the southern countryside to form large-scale, mechanized neo-plantations. Under the pressure of rural modernization, more than four million people either left the South permanently in the first three decades of the twentieth century; left the region and returned; or, like the Bundrens, moved about within the South. (7)

Although *As I Lay Dying* never specifically relates the Bundrens' journey to the depopulation of the rural South during that time period, it does provide evidence for the general depopulation underway in the rural South, and it presents the Bundrens as a symbol of the collective experience of the hundreds of thousands of families who were beginning to set out from isolated Southern agrarian

communities to towns and cities within and beyond the South (6). The Bundren family is forced to make a move toward an unfamiliar territory and face different identities, as well as a different social structure. Even though the connection to the modernization of the South is never directly expressed, on the other hand, it is evoked by "a set of potential linkages and by the incomprehensibly exaggerated weight of the burdens they bear, obstacles they confront, and sacrifices they make along the way" (8). Although the journey to Jefferson is a direct request of a mother who was passing away, it quickly becomes evident that some family members have their own motives for this move. Because Vardaman wants to see a toy train, Anse desires to purchase for himself a new set of false teeth, and Dewey Dell seeks to get an abortion, a direct link can be established as to how much the town community has advanced from an agricultural one.

What makes this novel especially great is the unique characters that Faulkner created in representing the Bundren family. Addie Bundren is a matriarch in the family, who all her life was dissatisfied with her marriage. She repeatedly claimed that Anse and the children have "violated her privacy" (314). The story opens with Addie lying on her deathbed, and in her final form of rebellion she gets Anse to promise her that she will be buried in Jefferson next to her parents. Although Anse does manage this promise, right away he expects the majority of the burden for the trip to go onto his sons Jewel and Cash. Even from the initial point of making a promise to Addie, he was not so preoccupied with burying Addie, but rather seeking to exploit the situation by going to town to obtain some "false teeth" (39). Jan Bakker indicates that Anse is a manipulator of men who specializes in exploiting his family, even his neighbors, to help him achieve what he wants. Calvin Bedient points out the irony that Anse thinks of himself as of a person "beholden to none" (132); though in reality that is clearly not so (264). Despite having false motivation for the trip to Jefferson, Anse remains the leader who is responsible for keeping the family on track throughout the expedition (3). Cash is the oldest son in the family, and he is also the hardest working Bundren. His most notable characteristics are his patience, craftsmanship, and incredible tolerance of pain. Cash's love toward his dying mother can best be observed in the beginning of the novel, when he directs a lot of heart and soul into building a coffin for Addie, right outside the window of her bedroom (5). Darl is the second oldest son and the most sane member of the Bundren family. This can be explained by the fact that out of fifty-nine chapters present in the novel, he narrates nineteen (6). This is more than any other character in the novel. He was against the trip from the start, and the whole Bundren family despises him because he is very good at exposing people for their true motives. He is the only person that knows Jewel is Addie's illegitimate son and that Dewey Dell is pregnant.

Towards the end of the novel, Darl is sacrificed by his family for burning Gillespies' barn, which was intended to burn Addie's decaying corpse. Doreen Fowler indicates that although the family chose to send Darl to a mental institution to avoid being sued, they also did this to get rid of Darl, because of his constant intrusion of their privacy (324). Jewel is the third oldest son, and he is Addie's favorite, because of the affair she had with Reverend Whitfield. The fact that out of fifty-nine sections in the novel, Jewel narrates only one shows that he is one of the least reflective characters in the novel, although he is one of the most determined Bundrens to have Addie buried according to her will (3). In fact, Jewel is forced to sacrifice his most valuable possession to complete the journey, his horse, for which he worked so hard that he nearly lost his health (4). Dewey Dell is the only daughter in the family, and like her mother, she has her privacy violated by an unwanted pregnancy. What is even more devastating for Dewey Dell is that her mother was the only person she could talk to about her pregnancy. However, due to Addie's untimely death, Dewey Dell is forced to deal with this problem on her own. The youngest individual in the family is Vardaman; although his age is unknown, based on his primitive dialogue, it can be assumed he is about nine years old. He refuses to accept his mother's death, and he subsequently identifies her with the fish he had killed earlier. This misunderstanding is best illustrated when Vardaman drilled some holes into Addie's coffin to allow her to "breathe" (5).

The novel's incredible power also comes from its unique type of narration. In As *I Lay Dying*, Faulkner chose to narrate the chapters from the perspectives of the members of the Bundren family, some neighbors, and some townfolks. Stephen M. Ross indicates that throughout the novel's fifty-nine sections, the speech of presentation ranges from poor white Mississippi farmers to small town shopkeepers, mixed with "rich metaphoric digression" and "philosophically charged speculation." He also goes

on to say that *As I Lay Dying* forces onto us the speech of some improbable characters, such as a carpenter trying to explain his reasons for building a coffin, as well as the reminiscence of a decomposing corpse (304). All of these characteristics give the novel a great power, because the reader is able to perceive the story through the eyes of multiple characters. Lester implies that the multi-character perspective in *As I Lay Dying* allows the readers to assess "experiences, beliefs, and aspirations that both bind the Bundrens together as a family and as part of a rural community yet that also separate them from themselves, one another, their community, and the people who live in towns" (6). The Bundren family is unique, and to observe the novel unfold through the eyes of each character offers invaluable insight on the problems faced by the family, as well as the reception the Bundrens obtain from their neighbors, and most importantly, from the townfolks. It helps better illustrate the social divisions within the Southern society. Jolene Hubbs also believes that *As I Lay Dying* differs from other great works in that it presents the characters in a stalemate of frozen time. This creates an illusion that neither ascent nor decline in their journey is made. This idea is best illustrated in the story by the gradual stench coming out of Addie's coffin, as the Bundrens' quest to bury their matriarch has greatly and unexpectedly extended in time (462).

What made industrialization so difficult for some Southerners is their reluctance to give up a traditional way of life, the one that has been preserved for centuries. Lester expresses the idea that the "Bundrens and others like them have been powerfully attached to the land for generations, and...it would be difficult to evacuate the countryside for the purpose of establishing a more profitable mode of agricultural production and...it will be difficult for those who are forced off the land to reestablish themselves elsewhere" (8). Traditionally, the South has also been one of the most religious regions in the United States, and often religious identification with a traditional lifestyle went against the people's own best interests (8). For these people, the adaptation to the new lifestyle has been especially hard and painful. In the novel, Anse exhibits this traditionalist mentality combined with religious beliefs in his condemnation of the town folks:

> It's a hard country on man; it's hard. Eight miles of the sweat of his body washed up outen the Lord's earth, where the Lord Himself told him to put it. Nowhere in this sinful world can a honest, hardworking man profit. It takes them that runs the stores in the towns, doing no sweating, living off of them that sweats. It aint the hardworking man, the farmer. Sometimes I wonder why we keep at it. It's because there is a reward for us above, where they can't take their autos and such. Every man will be equal there and it will be taken from them that have and give to them that have not by the Lord. (63)

This confession by Anse helps explain why certain families chose to preserve this traditional way of life, because it is more closely associated with religious beliefs.

The migrations that resulted from the industrialization of the American South have also created two distinct societies in that region. Andre Bleiksten indicates that *As I Lay Dying* depicts the Bundren family moving in a setting that is itself set in motion. The first symbolic visible barrier between the two societies is the overflowed river with the raging waters that carry everything before it, which the Bundrens have to cross to get to Jefferson (276). The fact that the bridges were old and were washed away by the flood reinforces the idea that a very weak bond exists between the two societies. As the Bundrens attempt to cross the river, a huge wooden log flowing down the current ends up knocking the mules over, with Addie's coffin. Jan Bakker points out that Jewel and Cash go through incredible feats to save their mother's coffin. Faulkner's unique style of narration also proves to be invaluable here, because it allows the readers to see this struggle from multiple points of view (3). In the long run, the crossing of the flooded river caused the Bundrens to pay a big price for it. Cash ends up breaking his leg, the mules drown, and the family almost loses the coffin. Faulkner tries to show here, symbolicly, that each person switching from an agricultural lifestyle to an urbanized one during that time period is forced to pay some sort of an emotional or physical price for it.

When this physical barrier is passed, another significant challenge arises: the town's reception. As soon as the Bundrens arrive in town, it becomes evident that the two societies have different mentalities. In fact, when confronted by a marshal in town because the stench from the coffin disturbed the locals, Anse replied, "It's a public street. I reckon we can stop to buy something same as airy other man. We got the money to pay for hit, and hit aint airy law that says a man can't spend his money

where he wants" (118). This reply reinforces the idea that industrialization in the American South has created two distinct social classes. Anse tries to defend himself by claiming he has just as many rights as any other inhabitant of the town. The town's reception to the newcomers is rather harsh, and it becomes evident that incoming famers have a negative stereotype in the town community. When Dewey Dell went to the drugstore, she received the following reception from a young store clerk:

> She kind of bumbled at the screen door a minute, like they do, and came in. I thought that she had a quarter of a dollar at the most, and that after she stood around a while she would maybe buy a cheap comb or a bottle of nigger toilet water, so I never disturbed her for a minute...I knew that she had already decided before she came in. But you have to let them take their time. (115)

This mental evaluation of Addie by a store clerk demonstrates how the townfolks view the newly established lower class in the American South. Agriculture, the historic lifestyle in this region, is no longer a popular practice, and those who chose to continue it are at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Another notable difference between the two societies is a level of intelligence. The Bundrens decide to pour cement over Cash's broken leg to help ease his pain, despite being previously warned by the marshal, "Why, you'll kill him. You'll cause him to lose his leg. You take him on to a doctor, and you get this thing buried soon as you can. Don't you know you're liable to jail for endangering the public health?" (168) Despite this, the Bundrens carry out the plan. The cement hardens, and in the southern heat it is warmed up to the point where Cash's leg is boiled. When Cash was finally brought to Dr. Peabody, the following comment was made:

> You mean, it never bothered Anse much, no more than it bothered him to throw that poor devil down in the public street and handcuff him like a damne murderer. Don't tell me. And don't tell me it aint going to bother you to have to limp around on one short leg for the balance of your life- if you walk at all again. Concrete, God Almighty, why didn't Anse carry you to the nearest sawmill and stick your leg in the saw? That would have cured it. Then you all could have stuck his head into the saw and cured ae whole family. (138)

It is clear that the Bundrens' actions are viewed as shocking by town people; however, the family itself does not show any emotions over it, as if everything is normal. In fact, Anse's only excuse for cementing his son's leg is "I only meant to help him." (129)

*As I Lay Dying* is a novel that indirectly describes the struggle of migrating farmers in the American South during the early 1900s through its portrayal of the Bundren family and their migration into town, as well as unique narration used in the novel. The unique choice of characters for the Bundren family created wide spectra for how the family functioned and behaved during the trip. This combined with multi-character narration has created one of Faulkner's best novels, with great historic symbolism of social and economic readjustment in the region he so deeply cared about.

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Evaluation: *Roman writes a sophisticated analysis of William Faulkner's complex novel. The excellence of his research paper is all the more remarkable because English is Roman's second language.*

# Compassionate Care

*Melissa Handelman*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Lauren Hahn

Assignment: *Each student interviewed a person with an interesting job, then wrote a paper using narration, description, and dialogue, to profile that person.*

Dr. Ungar has agreed to meet with me on this sunny Friday afternoon. He was able to squeeze me in between his last patient and his grandchildren, who come to visit after they get out of school. After about ten minutes, the doctor and his patient come out. The doctor is in his sixties, with a nicely groomed white beard and short white hair, with curly sideburns that are a couple inches long. His head is covered with a black velvet kippah (skull cap), and he is wearing a black suit and a white button-down collared shirt. This is the traditional dress of Orthodox Jewish men. He welcomes me into his study with his charming English accent.

As a neurologist, Dr. Ungar provides services involving medicine and interventional pain management. First, he must run diagnostic tests and perform examinations. Then, once a diagnosis is given, he finds a way to help relieve the patient's pain. Some techniques he uses to relieve pain include nerve blocks, epidurals, and spine work with needles under x-ray guidance in an operating room setting. In some cases, when the pain will not go away, Dr. Ungar helps them to cope with the pain.

Dr. Ungar began telling me of his history: "I grew up in England. My father, a refugee from Hitler, came to London in 1939. My mother grew up in British India, Colonial India, in Bombay, and was a concert violinist. She won the All India Violin Competition, which brought her to London to study music in 1941. They met in the Jewish Hospital in England in London and they got married in 1949, and I and my twin sister were the product."

Dr. Ungar attended an Orthodox Jewish primary school and high school. He then went on to study in a rabbinical seminary in Israel. After completing his year in Israel, he returned to England where he then attended the Royal London Hospital Medical College. He started medical school at the age of nineteen and graduated when he was twenty-three years old. During the course of Dr. Ungar's medical school training, he was awarded the Duke Scholarship, which allowed him to continue as a medical student at Duke University.

Duke University is where Dr. Ungar's love affair with the field of neurology began, while on a neurology rotation. "It just happened by chance," he said. He then returned to the Royal London Hospital Medical College. Shortly before graduating in 1974, he volunteered to fight in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, otherwise known as the Yom Kippur War. Immediately after graduating, he applied to neurology programs in the United States, and he was accepted to three residency programs in the New York area. He chose to do his residency at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, where he was then awarded the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Fellowship. At this point, he married, and shortly after this, a professor at Columbia sent him to the Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. There, he spent five years as an assistant professor. In 1984, he was accepted to teach at the Harvard Medical School and codirect the Brigham Young Women's Hospital Diagnostic and Treatment team.

In 1992, Dr. Ungar and his wife had their sixth child and decided to move to Israel. They lived in Israel for about ten years until financial problems forced them to return to the United States. In order to move his family back to America, Dr. Ungar opened a practice near South Bend, Indiana, and would travel to America to work for two weeks every month. When his family was financially ready to move back to America, they moved to Chicago, because they needed to be near an Orthodox Jewish high school for girls. He would have preferred to have his practice near his family, but by the time his family moved to Chicago, his practice had already been developed, and he felt that it would have been too hard to just pick up and move.

Since then, Dr. Ungar's practice has grown significantly. He has over four thousand patients, whom he sees regularly. He recently expanded his practice and added a second office in a small town in Indiana, called Rensselear, to make himself more accessible to his patients.

"We counted four hundred patients that were

commuting from Lafayette to my office. I said, 'That's ridiculous; why don't I just go there once a week and see them there?' So I opened a second office right there in January and that's just exploded." There are not very many doctors that would do such a thing. He was doing just fine with the one office, but he truly cares about his patients, and he made the decision to go out of his way for them.

All of Dr. Ungar's children are now out of the house, and his wife is an extremely busy physician's assistant at a nearby nursing home. He commutes to Indiana Monday, comes home Tuesday night, returns Wednesday, and comes back Thursday night. It is a lot of driving, but he had to find a way to be with his family, and wife, and also be there for his patients.

Dr. Ungar has a very special relationship with his patients. He makes himself available day and night. As much as he loves it, though, it seems to take a toll on him. "I am on call 24/7. I am a single practitioner, in private practice, with two offices, and every patient of mine has access to me either through e-mail, Internet, or phone, and I feel responsible for my patients and I feel a bond for my patients so I am very possessive. Unfortunately it's relentless, though, and there is just no time that I can say 'I'm out, I'm going.' I'm always on call. There used to be a time when I could say 'I'm going out of town, so please, ya know, be careful not to call me except for emergencies.' But now, with communications and technology today, I can be in Israel, I can be in the Ukraine, I can be in California, and everyone has access to me anyway."

Sometimes problems do arise. He explained to me how important it is to really know what is really going on with his patients. "Pain is subjective, so someone could lie, but we have ways of seeing if the pain is real or not. The pain has to come from a nerve. The nerve must be damaged. We use MRIs, CAT scans, EMGs, and if we don't see anything, we get suspicious. Usually they will be looking for drugs to divert, and a doctor's charge by his medical practice and by the boards of medicine, by the DEA, and the FDA, is to provide care to his patients. That care may involve the use of opiates. But a doctor also has a duty to the public interest. Most doctors don't realize that, but we have a duty, a medical ethics duty, and the DEA describes that duty as prevention of diversion and distribution, not for the legal practice of medicine. And therefore, I have a duty to make sure that if I suspect a patient of diverting or abusing opiate medication, I take the proper steps in my practice not to support that."

When this problem arises, most patients that are being dishonest will leave within five minutes of being told that they cannot have the prescription. They usually say that they are going to just find another doctor. But the patients that truly are in pain will try whatever the doctor has to offer. Dr. Ungar explains that he believes in non-physical dimensions of pain and suffering. He does not believe that it is just in the brain, and that the human experience of pain and suffering has to be addressed, not just the physical pain.

Most people would assume that he was talking about an emotional or psychological aspect of pain. Dr. Ungar despises those terms. He explained that those words imply that the body and the mind are separate entities. "I am very resistant to that kind of Western training that we got in medical school," he claims. He becomes very agitated while talking about this subject, "It's either in your head, or it's in your body. It's in your mind or its real. It's either real, or you're faking, you're imagining it, or you're psychotic." This kind of thinking is based on a Western model of medicine and he finds it very "non-useful" because he has patients with significant neurological diseases like multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, and stroke, where you can see the damage on the brain, and yet their symptoms are very much influenced by their "psychological state." A patient with fibromyalgia, a rheumatoid disorder characterized by muscle pain and headaches, does not have anything that is visible on an MRI or blood tests, and some general practitioners don't even believe it exists, and these patients are totally disabled by it and are completely normal mentally. He goes on, "So that old-school medical school split between the mind and the body is no longer useful, and most of the cutting-edge neuroscience with the onset of the use of the functional MRI, where you can actually show the difference in the patients who are having depression versus patients who are not, we now see as chemical. What we thought was autism and ADD, we are now seeing changes on the functional MRI. What used to be fibromyalgia, we are now seeing changes in the spinal fluid. So, that split

does not work for me. In my practice I feel attention to the 'psychological,' 'spiritual,' and 'mental' (he uses air quotes for each word) aspects of the pain and suffering is as important as the physical aspects, as you put it, and I would think that most neurologists would not agree with me."

Dr. Ungar speaks with such passion when telling me about what he does and about his patients. But how does he feel his profession enhances his own life? The answer is quite astonishing. "I am a healer. I had wanted to be a healer since I was nine years old. It is so bound up with my self-identity that were you to tell me tomorrow 'we're taking away your medical license' I would take a 350 magnum and shoot myself." He went on to explain that being a healer is just who he is, and it is simply inescapable.

Dr. Ungar says he differs from every other neurologist in the state of Indiana and the state of Illinois. He claims that he is the only doctor that will treat any patient regardless of their financial situation. One-third of his patients have their own private insurance, one-third use public aid, and one-third have no insurance. For those people that do not have insurance, and cannot afford treatment, he charges a mere twenty-dollars per visit. He maintains a working relationship with three free clinics.

The mission statement of his practice is "compassionate care." He feels that this message has to be conveyed from the moment you walk into the office, and it is reflected in the way they treat their patients, all the way down to the billing department. He does this because he wants accessibility for his patients. He wants to be the doctor that everyone knows will help him. He has patients from Illinois, "down south," Indiana, New York, Michigan, and even further. He even has a partnershipo with local hotels and motels so that his patients receive a discount on their stay, because when they travel to him, they will usually need to stay for at least a few days.

Dr. Ungar is a religious man and recites from ancient Jewish texts his reason for having such compassionate care: "In Deuteronomy it says, 'you shall surely heal.ô The rabbis teach us that we learn from here that God grants the physician permission to heal. We learn that it is a mitzvah (commandment) for the doctor to heal. Well, if I'm given a mitzvah to do, how can it be tied to money? That's like saying, 'you know, I can only take care of you if you pay me.' It's an obscenity!! It's Capitalist obscenity!! Many patients lose their jobs and their insurance, that doesn't scare me. I will take care of you for nothing. And that is not because of any reason but the oath I took to take care of my patients. As an Orthodox Jew it is my duty to heal God's creatures, irrespective of their color, race, or ability to pay."

As we finished with the interview, Dr. Ungar wanted to let me know that even though he was a very busy man, he put a lot of himself into his family. He raised his children to be critical thinkers, and he is very proud of each and every one of them. "You know the old saying?," he asked, "if you want to get anything done, go to a very busy man, because you know he will get it done." If something is important to him, he makes time to get it done.

There is a lesson to be learned from this incredible man. He has achieved so much in his lifetime, and touched so many other people's lives. Through his medical practice, by teaching classes in the Jewish community, spending time with his family, and writing countless books and essays, he has definitely left a mark on the world.

Evaluation: *Melissa's paper is outstanding because it is extremely well organized and brings her subject vividly to life.*

# Based on True Events: Inaccuracies of the Dillinger Story in the Film *Public Enemies*

*Emma Healy*
Course: Literature 112 (Literature and Film)
Instructor: Kurt Hemmer

Assignment: *Write a comparison-contrast essay about Bryan Burrough's book* Public Enemies *and Michael Mann's film* Public Enemies.

John Dillinger was a notable Depression-era outlaw whose story continues to be one of popular interest today. Several factors lie at the heart of Dillinger's public appeal, including his penchant for fame, his concern for his own public image, and his cheerful attitude, as well as the decision made by Indiana State Police detective Matt Leach to refer to the group of which Dillinger was a member as The Dillinger Gang. In Bryan Burrough's book *Public Enemies*, the Dillinger story is told in detail, setting a backdrop that provides a better understanding of why Dillinger has continued to fascinate people many years after his death. Dillinger's story is one fraught with an almost infeasible bravado: robbing banks, committing crimes, and escaping from seemingly impossible situations. Along with to these factors, Dillinger acted much like a modern-day Robin Hood during this period. Burrough writes, "At the heart of his appeal, Dillinger knew, was this joshing Robin Hood spirit, the sense people had that he was a regular guy. Dillinger didn't want to be the bad guy" (188). Dillinger catered to his admiring public, joking with officers and detectives, smiling, and even having his picture taken with his arm propped upon the shoulder of Lake County prosecutor Robert Estill. While Michael Mann's film adaption of Burrough's *Public Enemies* maintains some depictions of factual events, several events are changed. Through enhancing and eliminating certain aspects of Dillinger's story on screen, the film alters the viewer's sense of who Dillinger was. The most important differences between Dillinger's depiction in Mann's film and Burrough's book are the events at Little Bohemia, Dillinger's involvement with Billie Frechette, and Dillinger's death at the Biograph Theatre.

Little Bohemia, a lodge in northern Wisconsin, was used as a hideout by Baby Face Nelson's gang and Dillinger during the winter of 1934. There are several integral differences between the depiction of events at Little Bohemia between the film adaption and Burrough's book. The first important difference is that the FBI at this time was not looking for Dillinger at Little Bohemia, and had initially gone there to capture Nelson. The events leading up to the FBI's presence at Little Bohemia also differ. In the film, a fellow gang member, Tommy Carroll, was shot and taken to a hospital, where FBI agents proceeded to beat him senseless for information on Dillinger's whereabouts. The film makes little effort to reveal that the FBI were contacted by the owners of Little Bohemia, Emil Wanetka and his wife Nan, who had discovered Dillinger's identity. Another element stands out in the film in stark contrast to reality. In the film, FBI agent Melvin Purvis kills Nelson at Little Bohemia, and Harry "Pete" Pierpont is killed as well. In reality, no outlaws were killed at Little Bohemia. Instead, innocent civilians were shot, as Burrough describes: "The car wouldn't stop; as Purvis and Clegg moved up the driveway, it was heading straight for them. 'Fire!' both Purvis and Clegg shouted. Shots rang out all across the clearing" (309). The film makes a concerted effort to portray the circumstances at Little Bohemia in a thrilling way that would satisfy the audience's need for action. Further still, while the film depicts a dramatic chase scene involving FBI agents and outlaws alike running through the woods and shooting each other in a sensational fashion, these events did not happen. The film's depiction of the events at Little Bohemia serves as an action scene, enhanced with gunfire, quick movements, suspense, and bloodshed. An accurate portrayal of the events is absent on screen, which includes the FBI's unfortunate ineptitude at handling the situation, because such a depiction lacks in cinematic appeal.

Another important difference between the book and the film involves the portrayal of Dillinger's girlfriend, Billie Frechette. In Mann's film adaption of *Publice Enemies*, Dillinger's involvement with Frechette serves as both motivation for Dillinger's actions as well as an element to sate the love story component of the film experience. Frechette was arrested by FBI agents in a tavern called the Tumble Inn. The arrest occurred with Dillinger sitting in a car, as "[a]gent Ralph Brown, pulling a submachine gun from beneath his coat, hustled inside, followed by other agents. In seconds Billie... [was] arrested" (288). Frechette's actual arrest is blasé compared to the film version, where Dillinger watches her from the car as she is theatrically dragged into the streets of Chicago by FBI agents, the night around her blazing with the brightly lit signs of nearby businesses. The film goes to great lengths to linger upon Dillinger's reaction to this scene, watching helplessly as his supposed true love is ripped away from him. While it is true that Dillinger had initially wanted to help Frechette escape after her arrest, he later gave up this idea. The film stretches the love story between Dillinger and Frechette further, with Dillinger's final words bidding farewell to Frechette. The extent of the Dillinger-Frechette love story is largely fabricated in the film adaption, catering to the desire of the audience to see something romantic. While Frechette was certainly involved with Dillinger, his heart later more accurately belonged to a woman named Polly Hamilton. At the time of his death, Dillinger had on his person a ring from Hamilton, inscribed with the words "With All My Love, Polly" (392). Perhaps it is the modern filmgoer's lack of ability to balance two strong female love interests in a film that led to the decision in downplaying Hamilton as a significant woman in Dillinger's life. The fact remains that it was Hamilton, not Frechette, who was Dillinger's girlfriend on the night of his death.

While both Hamilton and the infamous lady in red, Ana Sage, are depicted in the film, the actual events of Dillinger's murder were tailored for a more cinematic experience. Dillinger's death scene is depicted on screen in such a way that viewers feel as though they are part of the scene. Agent Purvis lights his cigar, providing the signal to other FBI agents that Dillinger has been spotted. A handheld camera sifts through the crowd, shaking with movement as if it is the viewer herself who is racing behind Dillinger. The music swells theatrically as three shots are fired into Dillinger, and he falls to the ground like a rare bird falling from the sky midflight. Using these cinematic techniques, the audience experiences a bittersweet catharsis, mourning the loss of their hero. In reality, writes Burrough, "It happened in a split second: The moment he saw Dillinger reach for his gun, Winstead fired his .45 three times...oHurt fired twice, Hollis once. Four bullets struck Dillinger" (408). The film adaption of *Public Enemies* neglects to include the fact that two women were hit by ricochet bullets. Furthermore, Dillinger's last

**Student Reflections on Writing:**
**Emma Healy**

Writing isn't necessarily a gift bestowed to those lucky few deemed worthy of it, but instead, it is a skill that must be continually fine-tuned, honed, and attended to. Becoming a better writer is much like becoming a better pianist in that one must practice, practice well, and practice often. Writing has always been an integral part of my life, declaring its prominence more and more as I progressed through high school and college. I find myself always writing, whether it is in the form of letters, journaling, fiction, blogging, or doing research. To become a better writer, one must dedicate oneself to the process, acknowledging the doors that being a good writer can open, embracing a self-motivated attention to detail, as well as taking pride in one's own grasp of the written language. A good writer is someone who takes these things into account and makes writing a part of his or her life. A great writer is someone who never accepts his or her first draft as good enough, and instead, always strives to improve.

words are unknown. Burrough writes, "The rookie, Jack Welles, ran up in time to see Dillinger's lips moving. Someone said 'Don't move,' but Dillinger lay still. He was dead" (409). This description of Dillinger's death did not make it to the silver screen, where his character is able to provide the audience with his final words for Frechette.

The film adaption of *Public Enemies* both omits and changes events in Dillinger's life to serve the financially motivated needs of the film industry. While the actual Dillinger story does not lack for excitement and miraculous escapes, it does not seem to adapt well to the formula to which the modern film industry adheres. Scenes like Little Bohemia allowed the filmmakers artistic license to provide their audience with as much action and gunfire as is expected by today's moviegoers. The love story between Dillinger and Frechette, while largely inaccurate, is depicted in the film as being otherworldly and more emotionally involved than it actually was. Dillinger's death, too, is fraught with a cinematically enhanced formulaic adherence, allowing him to die heroically to background music, choking out his powerful last words. The film adaption of *Public Enemies* provides audiences with what they want and gives the audience what they expect. The film *Public Enemies* provides predictability.

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Mann, Michael, dir. *Public Enemies.* Screenplay by Ronan Bennett, Ann Biderman, and Michael Mann. Perf. Johnny Depp, Christian Bale, and Marion Cotillard. Universal, 2009. Film.

Evaluation: *Emma zeros in on the most important changes Mann made to the film and explains how they alter the audience's attitude toward John Dillinger.*

# The Way Life Should Be

*Jennifer Hunter*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Trygve Thoreson

Assignment: *After you finish reading E. B. White'se "Once More to the Lake," write your own narrative essay, rich in details and vivid description, recounting an experience that led you to a new insight or understanding.*

From several thousand feet in the air, all coastlines look the same. I tried to tell myself otherwise, that the ragged formation of dirt and rocks struck a familiar chord, but it wasn't until the rapid, ear-popping, please-return-your-seat-and-tray-tables-to-their-upright-positions, stomach-dropping descent that I was able to pluck out a few familiar landmarks of the southern Maine coastline. There was the Panera my cousin and I used to waste hours at, the South Portland Mall where we used to do our Christmas shopping, and the stretch of two-lane highway that connected the whole of Maine. My fiancé, Jorge, nodded and smiled at each excited squeal, as if there weren't a dozen malls, eateries, and highways throughout the country already. As we hauled our carry-ons down the ramp into the terminal, a sign proudly proclaimed, "Welcome Home!" and "Maine: The Way Life Should Be." I promptly burst into tears.

To say I connected with E.B. White's essay "Once More to the Lake" is an understatement. I grew up in Maine. I spent my summers in a dozen lakes like Mr. White's, at a dozen different Girl Scout and Boy Scout camps, private cottages, and rented cabins. I climbed rocks and mountains alike. I slept on uneven ground, rocks, and roots. I transformed from a pale wisp of a child to a gangly, brown, and freckled fearless tomboy in the timeless freedom of children between spring and fall.

I learned mercy in a canoe, tossing back too-small fishes for next year's potential catch. I learned the fundamental differences between boys and girls with forbidden glimpses into the boys' changing tent after swim hour. I learned bravery at night, tip-toeing in the utter darkness to the outhouse, my almost-bursting bladder as my only encouragement from turning back. I learned of loneliness, listening to the unanswered cry of a single loon desperately searching for its mate. I had my first beer at a lakeside, and learned the lesson of restraint as I wretched up my guts in the dawn of the next day. In the turmoil of adolescence, I learned a rare peace could be found in the middle of a still lake, with only the whirr of my fishing line and the vague promise of catching a fish to keep me company. I learned dire embarrassment in the flashing red and blue lights of a police car at four in the morning, when a not-amused police officer asked me to put my shirt back on and sternly reminded my then-boyfriend that the lake wasn't open until dawn.

**Student Reflections on Writing: Jennifer Hunter**

For me, writing is anxious and manic. It's a whirlwind of trying to get out onto paper what's in my head before I forget it. The precision of writing comes afterward. It's a hard process to look at your bared soul, pick out the flaws and reassemble it back into something coherent, or, more importantly, grade-worthy. You are your own worst editor, because it's easy to become sentimental about bits of phrases, characters, and dialogue. These are the lessons I've learned over my years of writing:

1) Less is more. Expressing the same idea in fewer words takes more effort.
2) If it doesn't progress your story or narrative, and it isn't background information that progresses the story, you don't need it.
3) Be ruthless. Your writing will never improve if you can't self-critique or find someone who won't just glance over it once and tell you it's wonderful. (Thanks, Ms. Bilodeau, who taught me this lesson firsthand.)
4) Rest your eyes between drafting and editing. This "cool off" period is important because it helps me to forget, to an extent, what I've written. It allows time to switch from Writer to Editor, detach emotional responses, and be utterly cruel.
5) Reread your own work. Go back and reread old stories, essays, and poems. They will embarrass, mortify, delight, and surprise you. Sometimes, they will reinspire you.

When I first met Jorge, we faced a very tough decision of where we would live. Like many modern-day couples, Jorge and I met via the Internet. He lived in Illinois, an hour away from Chicago, where there were jobs, schools, and opportunities. I lived in No-Where Maine, where being a Hispanic male dating a white female wasn't always good for one's health. Ultimately, it was decided that I would make the move to Illinois. It made the most sense – his mother could already get me a job. With the impulsiveness of young love, I packed up my modest apartment and didn't look back.

I did not return to Maine until Thanksgiving of 2009. We had been living together for two years, and had spent two years' worth of holidays in Illinois, with his folks. I was desperate to go back to Maine, to see my mother, my high-school friends, my cousins, my nieces and nephew. I imagined a grand reunion, where everyone would clamor to see me; everyone would be desperate to hear all the details of my great new life; my ex-boyfriend would show up and congratulate Jorge for finally realizing what an awesome girl I was; my mother wouldn't belittle me, and we'd go the whole trip without a mother-daughter bicker-fest. Maine was a gorgeous, great place to live. Why had I even moved in the first place? Needless to say, I had unreal, ridiculously high expectations.

Still, I maintained the illusion the entire trip from the airport to my mother's. I even managed to ignore the poor, neglected roads, torn up by the previous year's snowplows and salt; the numerous sad, condemned homes; the garbage strewn across the roads; the overgrown landscaping.

It wasn't until we reached my mother's tiny, cramped apartment that I saw the first crack in my shiny shield of nostalgia. I remembered the day we had moved into this apartment. I had been excited to have my own hallway and room, windows on the ground level, and quiet access to the kitchen door if I wanted to sneak out. Now, I saw none of my teenage excitement. I saw the chipped, peeling paint, the broken floorboards, the leaking toilet, the cramped quarters made smaller by the overflow of the *crap* my mother collected. I had apparently forgotten the smell, as well, the overpowering stench of cat urine and feces. I vaguely wondered what the property value of the building was. I took a mental inventory of the repairs the building would need prior to listing it on the market. I smiled convincingly at my mother's inane, egocentric chatter over dinner that night. Jorge and I slept on the uncomfortable twin mattress of my childhood and I dreamed of fantasy fulfillment for tomorrow.

The visit to high school friends the next day was even more alarming. It was so easy, when we were young

and unaware of the harsh realities of the grown-up world, to fantasize and dream. It was easy for one boy to be a basketball star, one girl to be an actress, and for me to be a best-selling novelist. But the real world of bills, rent, and high tuition fees usurped those costly dreams, and we all had the unfortunate luck of being born to lower-middle class parents in Maine. Maine, the state where retail and fast food ruled the entry-level positions; where you were either professional, like a dentist or account, who was severely underpaid, or you got close and familiar with the phrase, "Would you like fries with that?", or, more tragically, "Can I pay for that with food stamps?" Maine's economy was in shambles well before the whole of the country was in financial panic. Thousands of high school and college graduates flee the state every year for greener pastures; I was one of them.

Two of those that were left--that aspiring actress and basketball star--now shared a too-crowded apartment in the area of town known for drugs and prostitutes. While Maine suffered many financial woes, one industry was always profitable: drugs. Sharing a border with Canada had turned the modern Maine into a prescription and street-drug highway to the rest of the country. And given that three-quarters of the state is undeveloped forest, it was easy for anyone with a green thumb and a few seeds to make a tidy profit.

The former-basketball-star turned small-time drug lord told me of their new plans, to rent out the spare bedroom for extra cash so they could buy a genuine replica sword for the upcoming Renaissance Faire in the summer. Former-actress showed me her costume as a tavern wench. Apparently there was good money to be made peddling pot at these events.

"And then?" I asked, still naive. I wanted them to want more. I wanted them to be more than they were in this moment, and more importantly: to *want* to be more than they were. I wanted them to have a goal beyond a useless new toy. I wanted them to talk about school and new jobs and moving out of the cesspit that was Auburn, Maine. "And then?" I pressed, wanting their dreams to validate my own. For them, it was only now, this paycheck, and this month's bills.

I found out that every year, the night before Thanksgiving, most of our graduating class gathers at a local pub. It's the one time of the year that most of the class is in town, visiting relatives. I'm still not sure why I went. Perhaps I expected to run into more success stories of kids who had stayed in Maine. With fiancé and my desperate need for validation in tow, I went to the bar. I found nothing but disappointment. There were success stories, of course, but they were all kids who had gone away to college or moved on their parents' dime to another city. I got shamelessly drunk that night, the kind of drunk that only bleakness and despair can bring. Outside, I threw up on the sidewalk, in the mushy slush of snow and dirt. Jorge, bless his patient heart, bundled me up and walked me back to my mother's apartment.

There are some people who would call me an elitist, who would say that money doesn't buy happiness and that success isn't always measured in a good job, a fancy house, or a bloated bank account. Perhaps they are right. But it is the stagnation, the lack of momentum, the absence of risky dreaming that upsets me. I grew up in poverty, in thrift store bargains and hand-me-downs, in pity donations from the local church, in pawning off family heirlooms to buy food. I know that children need to continue to dream despite these odds, and be better adults for it.

E.B. White writes of returning to a beloved place of childhood and reveling in the memory of it, of sharing the experience with his child. My beloved place of childhood was not so kind. Below Maine's beautiful face lies a twisted, gnarled, cancerous lump, a growth that threatens to latch on to anyone nearby.

Maine still has its lakes, rivers, and mountains. The camps, cottages, and cabins of my childhood are still there. But the blissful ignorance of childhood is gone. Maine is no place for dreaming, for desiring, or for wishing. Maine is for rich tourists who want to experience the beauty of the outdoors and for the customer service employees who wait on them.

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Evaluation: *Jennifer's carefully selected details and graceful writing style contribute to a powerful and somewhat disturbing new insight.*

# Morality in Nigeria: John Wayne vs. Clint Eastwood

*Andrew Jackson*
Course: Literature 208 (non-Western Literature)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *One option for writing a paper about African literature was to analyze the influence of Western culture in Chris Abani's novel* GraceLand.

The novel *GraceLand,* by Chris Abani, is a novel about a kid named Elvis and his life growing up in Nigeria. Elvis is a morally immature character in the sense that he is still trying to figure out where he stands ethically. During the novel, there are several characters who constantly are trying to influence his behavior; chief among these are his father, Sunday, and his friend whom he met at school, Redemption. Sunday tries to instill in Elvis ideas of "manhood and honor," while Redemption attempts to convey his ideas of practicality and utility without regard to manhood, honor, or any regard for other people. Sunday and Redemption and their polar opposite moralities reflect another recurring theme in the story which is that of "Actor" vs "John Wayne." "Actor" is a morally ambiguous character played in action movies, specifically in reference to Clint Eastwood in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, and other Clint Eastwood action movies. "John Wayne" refers to the archetype of the all-good and honorable heroes epitomized by John Wayne in basically any of his movies. These two forces are constantly at work in the mindset of the characters of *GraceLand* and the decisions that they make.

Redemption is the epitome of the "Actor" mentality. Throughout the novel, he profiteers from a wide array of criminal activities and shows a general disinterest for other human beings, besides the select few with whom he empathizes, such as Elvis. The first time Elvis meets him is at school, where Redemption is trying to bring a goat to the headmaster and asks for Elvis' help. This quote explains why: "He'd met Redemption at school when he first arrived, which in itself was a lucky break, because Redemption was hardly ever in school. He turned up twice a month with gifts for the teachers and the headmaster, who always bumped him cheerfully to the next class" (Abani 25). So even in high school, the first time they meet, he has already learned to play the system and get to the top using whatever means necessary. The first time we meet "Actor" in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, he, Blondie, is acting as a bounty hunter, but with a little twist. Instead of taking a bounty in, taking the money, and finding another, he takes the bounty in, takes the money, then helps the bounty escape, gives him half of the money, and goes on and does the same thing at another town where they will not recognize them. Neither the actions of Blondie nor the actions of Redemption benefit society in any way, Blondie's take wastes taxpayers' money used to pay for the bounties, while Redemption's actions cheapen the education process and in turn lower the respectability of the schools in his particular district or country, depending on how widespread the problem is. The point is that these actions are ultimately unfair to the people around them but they are simply past the point of caring on that issue, which is understandable seeing as how Blondie lives in an extremely volatile moment in US history and Redemption lives in equally bad if not worse conditions.

Both Redemption and Blondie are complex characters who are difficult to completely understand, but certain clues exist as to how they think. At one point in the novel, Elvis and Redemption are transporting some children and human organs for harvest when they get exposed and they have to go on the run. Elvis is obviously distraught about the deal which his friend has involved him in:

> "How could you get us involved, knowing all this? We are as bad as the Colonel and the Saudis."
> "No forget de whites who create de demand."
> "Them too. But how could you do this to me and claim to be my friend?"
> "Firstly, I no know dat's what dis job was. Secondly, dere are plenty people like Kansas who are also looking for money, but I choose you because you be my friend. You can be ungrateful." (Abani 243)

Elvis is angry because he did not want to be a part of what was going on, not because he was afraid of the possible dangers involved in such a job, but because he is morally against what they are doing. Redemption is saying that this is irrelevant; if Elvis did not take part in the job, his friend Kansas would have done it. So one way or the other, the organs were going to be delivered regardlesso of Elvis' decision to join. So if it was inevitably going to happen, Elvis might as well have made money from it happening. Redemption does not justify all of his actions in this way, but this shows his preference of practicality over honor. This is reminiscent of a scene in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, which is actually quoted in *GraceLand*, during which Tuco, played by Eli Wallach, is taking a bath and is confronted by an old adversary whose arm was apparently destroyed by Tuco. This man is standing over Tuco and starts going into a monologue about how much he hates him and such, and while he is talking, Tuco, who was hiding a gun under the bubbles in the bath, shoots him several times and kills him. After this, Tuco is looking at the man's dead body and says "When you have to shoot, shoot, don't talk." The whole concept of the monologue before killing a man is a very ridiculous idea. In reality, what does it matter whether or not Tuco knew his master stroke before he was to die? There is no logical reason. It only is there so that the man would hopefully see the look on Tuco's face before he killed him, very impractical. Tuco, on the other hand, does not say a word about the gun under the bubbles, he just shoots and saves his monologue for after the deed has been done.

Elvis' father, Sunday, on the other hand, could very well be compared to Tuco's adversary in the bathtub scene in the impracticality with which he lives his life, but where the book really draws comparisons is between him and John Wayne. John Wayne is comparable to Clint Eastwood because they both starred in the same kind of films and played very similar characters throughout their entire career, but as stated previously, John Wayne's characters were more "honorable" and "good." There was no question as to his moral position. At first, Sunday does not resemble this at all; he is seen throughout the novel punching Elvis as a kid for wearing cornrows, putting a gun to his head for insinuating that Uncle Joseph raped Efua, etc, but upon closer examination of his history, his driving moral force becomes more clear. During Elvis' childhood, Sunday runs for a position in the government. It very quickly turns into a very dirty campaign wherein most candidates' primary method of persuasion is simply bribing the voting population with massive money drops. Sunday alone stands out from the crowd, refusing to partake in this sort of dirty campaigning, while instead making house calls and talking to voters about real and significant issues. Elvis' thoughts on this are quite interesting: "Elvis did not know why his father bothered. He was bound to lose with his intimate approach of house to house calls where he appealed passionately to kinsmen and women who listened patiently until he finished before asking: "'Yes, Sunday, dat is all well and good, but are you offering as much money as de oder candidates?'" (Abani 178) Even as a child, Elvis understood that Sunday's honor doomed him to failure. Later on, after he loses the election, he gets drunk and starts talking to his dead wife, and at one point he says: "I know I lost. Dat is the consequence of war, Beatrice. Someone wins, anoder loses. But as long as de fight was with honor, both warriors can rest peacefully" (Abani 219). It seems that through the entire election he cared more about how he "fought" than whether or not he won. This is a highly impractical mentality that is destined not to end well for the person who possesses it, which is exactly what ends up happening in the novel.

Because of his dominating morality and predisposition to making every action honorable, he begins to unravel throughout the novel and his life. A major issue in the novel was Uncle Joseph's raping of Efua and Elvis. For most of the novel, Sunday was in constant denial that Uncle Joseph raped Efua, because he could not handle the fact that his own brother was able to commit an act that was so dishonorable. When Elvis eventually confronts him with this fact, he starts to fray around the edges: "'He raped her.ò 'You can't know that for sure, unless it happened to you,' Sunday said. Hiso tone was conciliatory, as though he was subconsciously begging Elvis for it not to be true" (Abani 188). If one were to take this quote seriously, then according to Sunday's logic, if someone got murdered, there would be no way to prosecute them, even if it was done in public

in front of hundreds of people, because only the person who was murdered could ever really know for sure. It is obvious then that his mind is starting to fray from his constant denial of the truth, which is necessitated by his need to believe that he and his family are honorable and respectable.

It seems that Sunday's character is a sort of parody of the "John Wayne" mentality and its impracticality in any real world situation. In the end of the novel, the Nigerian government, in an ill-advised economic strategy to root out squalor and unemployment, bulldoze their area of the city in the hopes that it will be rebuilt better and cleaner than before. The last time that we see Sunday, he is being crushed by a bulldozer because he refuses to leave his home before they destroyed it. He decided right away that he will either die being bulldozed or the operator will not bulldoze his home. There is no yielding in his decision, no middle ground. Redemption, on the other hand, evacuates the city. He builds a new, although just as illegitimate life, outside the city amongst the refugees. Sunday lived in the realm of absolutes: honor versus dishonor, legal versus illegal, good versus bad. Redemption, on the other hand, lived his life in the increments between the absolutes. Both characters had to deal with the same problem in the end of the novel, but only one came out alive.

At one point in the novel, when Elvis is with Kansas and Redemption watching a Dirty Harry movie, Elvis proclaims that Dirty Harry is John Wayne. The following dialogue ensues:

> "John Wayne? You dey mad. Dat is Actor. John Wayne is not in movies anymore," Kansas said. "But...what?" Elvis said, sounding confused.
> "Is okay, Elvis," Redemption explained. "Things change, you know. Now dere is only Bad Guy and Actor. No more John Wayne."
> "Why?"
> "Because de type of movies done change. Dat's all. Now let us watch de movie in peace" (Abani 190).

This dialogue is here for a reason, because in the world of Elvis, Sunday, and Redemption, as well as in the world of John Wayne and Clint Eastwood westerns, the concept of "John Wayne" has gone out of style because people realize the impracticality and the unrealistic nature of the concept. It is too difficult to relate to. At one point in time, "John Wayne" may have had a place in the world, but that time has come and passed. One cannot survive being honorable while living in a world full of dishonorable people. Similarly, one who is dishonorable will probably have a hard time surviving in an honorable world. The lesson is that one should see the world for what it is, and adapt accordingly, as opposed to trying to live in an alternate reality where the ideals that you care about actually matter. This is the mistake that Sunday made and the one which Redemption avoided.

## Works Cited

Abani, Chris. *GraceLand*. New York: Picador, 2004. Print.o

Evaluation: *This is a very interesting paper that makes an informed and well-reasoned comparison betweene Abani's characters and characters in American films. Andrew's comparison is accurate, and the characters' moralities are well explained.*

# Iudicio

*Carolyn Jarosz*

Course: Literature 221
(American Literature: Colonial Days to Civil War)
Instructor: Richard Middleton-Kaplan

Assignment: *Imagine yourself as a member of the congregation addressed by Jonathan Edwards in his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Write your response to the sermon, making sure to engage Edwards' key points.*

**Student Reflections on Writing: Carolyn Jarosz**

"Iudicio" was written after our class read Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The assignment was to write an essay from the perspective of someone in the audience. "Iudicio" is Latin for "the trial," which is how the sermon sounded to me. Edwards' sermons were obviously very popular, even though they sound harsh to our ears. I began to think about how people really did feel about his message at *that* time, not in a contemporary way, and this story grew from there. To be a good writer is to have a painfully honest discussion with yourself that everyone else just happens to listen in on. If the writing doesn't come straight from your heart or soul, it won't touch anyone else's, either. I hope you are touched by these struggles with sin and with self.

*From the journal of William Longman, aged 36 years:*

I have been an earnest and faithful servant of our congregation for many a year, my dear wife joining me in attendance not ten years past. I hold the knowledge and desire to hear that which Reverend Edwards shares with we who are uneducated in the reasons and ways of God. Indeed, it is food to my spirit. I write today to see through a struggle that has starved my senses day and night. My struggle is within myself, and commenced directly following an earnest and excellent sermon by Reverend Edwards this Sunday just past.

The concern Reverend Edwards carries for us within is unquestioned, and undoubtedly the source of his desire is to snatch us from the pit of hell, to save us from the awful fate waiting for the foolish man who believes he can outrun the arrow of God. How true the words about slippery places are! How often the devil is to be found lurking just out of sight, waiting for our foot to slip but just a bit. How often, in fact, does the devil present us with a path that seems green and lively when in fact it holds only rotten herbs and despair? I must repair and examine truly my own conscience.

*From the journal of Mary Edwards, aged 29 years*:

My husband has now delivered the sermon he has been poring over these last three weeks. As I listened to the words, so well thought out and calmly presented, I felt a great uneasiness grow within myself. I know he speaks the word of God, oh how truly I know that! Many that were in the church with me at the time, all good and righteous citizens, shed tears even knowing they had no cause to fear. I know they felt the very flames of hell at our backs as I did, yet we are safe, surely? None that were there that day have any actions to feel shame for. I know of none in our village that have fallen to temptation. We are God-fearing, hard-working, and honest in all things. Why then, did I feel my neighbors begin to regard each other with no small question in their eyes, wondering if *that* one, or perhaps *that* one had stepped off the righteous path? Indeed, why has God bid Jonathan to pronounce this warning if there are none here who need to hear it?

Who in our group would have sinned so grievously as to cause this rebuke in such a public way? I fear what actions this may bring.

*From the journal of Patience Dooley, aged 16 years:*

What life and joy I write with today! Reverend Edwards spake today regarding the sinners and the good man's righteous path. What a beautiful picture he paints, of the sweetness and joy that comes from giving ourselves over to our God in all things. I rejoice in having pledged myself to a man who lives by this moral code in every way. Our life will be a good one.

*From the journal of Benjamin Worth, aged 12 years:*

Reverend Edwards spoke almost without end today. He says God is angry with me every day and night. He says I am a child of the devil. I have not seen the devil anywhere nearby unless you count my brother Thomas, who is endlessly vexing and disagreeable. Why can God not send brothers who have already gained the age of reason, at least ten years old? I would know if God saw me push him in the mud last week?

*Letter to Reverend Jonathan Edwards from the Selectmen of Enfield, Connecticut*:

Posted 23 November 1750.

My Dear Sir Reverend Edwards,

The recent visit by Reverend George Whitefield truly refreshed our souls and spirits and we looked with great anticipation upon your sermon this Sunday past. Reverend Whitefield reawakened in us our purpose and strengthened our resolve, which hath faltered of late. We, the good people of Enfield, once again look to you to sustain us as we continue the journey to redemption.

How saddened were we that instead of the feeding of our spirit you sought but to keep the food from our mouths forever. We looked for guidance and received condemnation. We looked for actions to assure our salvation and were instead given a shovel and bid to dig our final berth as we have no hope of mercy. Make no mistake, sir, we better than any know the way of the slippery path and its dangers. We are aware of the vile temptations that lie themselves so attractively on our plates when we hunger the most.

"God has laid Himself under no obligation by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment." These are your words, and what hope lies within them? What fire is kindled by them to fight on another day? Indeed, sir, we say you have overstepped your bounds condemning this town to hell. There are those among us who have led this community from the very beginning of days, when we fled the heavy yoke of persecution. We are those whose strength, wisdom, patience and hard work made this community. It is ours. Is it you that will determine our seemingly inevitable fall into the pit? Do you presume that you are fit to judge us and proclaim that none are within the bounds of salvation? We believe, sir, you are gravely mistaken and have indeed taken a step beyond reason by proclaiming to know the mind of God.

We seek to meet with you two days hence. Present yourself at the meeting hall early in the day, immediately after tending to morning duties. Until then,

Robert Mather, esq.
Gideon Dolittle
Nelson Dwight
September 1750
Enfield, Connecticut

Evaluation: *Carolyn captures the language, thought patterns, and metaphors characteristic of the period in this highly imaginative response. The blend of creativity and careful attention to historical details is exceptional. She creates multiple viewpoints and establishes them in a wide range of distinctive characters.*

# Father Michael Pfleger

*Barbara Jennings*
Course: Humanities 105/History 105
(Great Ideas of World Civilizations)
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment: *I asked the students to write an essay that introduces the reader to a great thinker who is still living. As long as the thinker in question is (or was, at the time) still drawing breath, he or she would be "fair game" for this assignment.*

Father Michael Pfleger is a Roman Catholic Priest and Pastor of St. Sabina Church in Chicago. He is, as well, a great thinker. Given the world-wide spectrum of possible (and wonderful) choices for this assignment, I have surprised myself by choosing to profile Pfleger, a Chicagoan, for this essay. Perhaps we don't always have to look over acres and oceans to see the embodiment of excellence.

Born May 22, 1949 into a German-American family on the South Side of Chicago, Pfleger attended Archbishop Quigley Preparatory Seminary South as a high school student. He continued his education at Loyola University, receiving his B.A. in Theology and his Master of Divinity from University of Saint Mary of the Lake. In 1966, when Pfleger was 16 years old, he was inspired by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.; he witnessed the confrontation between civil rights marchers led by Dr. King and several disapproving white residents of Marquette Park. During the March to Peace, conceived to protest housing discrimination, Dr. King and others were struck by rocks, and they endured racially motivated chants of "Kill Him" (Fornek). Pfleger later commented, "It was the greatest, most powerful class in non-violence I'll ever get in my life." Previous to his ordination, he did his internship as chaplain at Cook County Jail and ministered at Precious Blood Catholic Church in Chicago. Pfleger was sent to St. Sabina Parish in 1974; at that time, the membership of the church was small, impoverished, and over-run by drug sales, prostitution, and other poverty-induced ailments. Pfleger was ordained a priest on May 14, 1975. His work for social justice was to gain passion and focus at St. Sabina, and in 1981 he became pastor of the parish, where he remains to this day.

I mentioned being surprised by my choice for this essay. When searching for a subject for this assignment, the Roman Catholic Church was not on my radar for places to look, but Fr. Pfleger is not a typical Catholic priest. Among his achievements are the "Keeper of the Dream" from Rainbow/Push; the Distinguished Service Award, Nation of Islam; and the Thurgood Marshall Award. He is the founder of the Employment Resource Center, the Ark Youth Center, St. Sabina Social Service Center, Thea Bowman Spiritual Advance Center, Samaritan House for the homeless, St. Sabina's (80 unit)

Elders Village and the Beloved Community, Inc. In his 35 or so years of service to the community, Fr. Pfleger has received additional special honors: keynote speaker for the national Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Service, January 20, 2003; a speaker in the eulogy of Mrs. Coretta Scott King, February 8, 2006; induction into the Civil Rights Walk of Fame, January 24, 2009; and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Office of Racial Justice of the Archdiocese of Chicago, April 7, 2010.

Fr. Pfleger's recognition and notoriety have not been without controversy. He has managed to become a master at manipulating the media to bring attention to his various causes and along the way made some public blunders that call out armies of traditional devout Catholics to petition for his removal from pastoral duties; that, in turn, has caused the media spotlight to glare squarely back in his own face. Much of the time he is at odds with his own hierarchy within the church. Loyalty to his parishioners and theirs to him has kept the tradition of transfer, to hide troublesome priests within the organization, from stealing him away to a far-off, obscure appointment.

One of the nontraditional events that church hierarchy took issue with was the adoption, in 1981, of an eight-year-old son, Lamar. Priests are not allowed to marry or have families, but Fr. Pfleger persisted in raising Lamar and in 1992 adopted another son, Beronti. His foster son, seventeen-year-old Jarvis Franklin, for whom he assumed care in 1997, was killed by stray gunfire in May of 1998. Pfleger is of the opinion that being a father, and knowing the occasional grief of fatherhood, makes him a better priest. He also feels that priests not only should be able to marry, but women should be able to become priests in their own right. His thinking is based in the biblical fact that the only ones to stand by Jesus in his hour of need, out in the open at the foot of the cross, were John and the women. The church requested an apology for his open disregard for their policy, which he made by distinguishing his personal opinion from his respect for church teachings.

In separating himself from the docile mold of "talking" about the teachings of the church, his activism is embraced in intention and results, if not in method. In the early 1990s, when he perceived the effect of alcohol and tobacco messages on billboards to the area youth, he campaigned to have them removed. When the billboard owners refused to cooperate, he and others climbed up and defaced the signs. Although arrested and charged for destruction of private property, he was acquitted by a jury, and later in the decade, the Chicago City Council voted to eliminate tobacco and alcohol billboards from selected areas of Chicago. He later called the vote "a tremendous victory for the children of Chicago, for our neighborhoods, especially black and Hispanic neighborhoods" (qtd. in "Michael Pfleger," Wikipedia). Six years later, in a reverse tactic of the successful billboard campaign, Pfleger and his parishioners erected twenty billboards stating "Stop Listening To Trash," followed by a list of rappers that use the genre to promote violence and disrespect of women. In another unorthodox method to reach out to drug dealers and prostitutes in his neighborhood, Fr. Pfleger encouraged parishioners and raised several thousand dollars to buy time from the offenders. The time purchased was used to invite the wayward to counseling and job training.

There are many more examples of Fr. Pfleger's maverick style of problem solving, which is why I have singled him out as a great thinker. His commitment to social justice and abilities to motivate people, invent solutions, and persevere in the face of criticism elevate him to a larger circle of social consciousness. For every misstep he makes, there seem to be several successes in close proximity. In a documentary film released in 2009 called *Radical Disciple: The Story of Father Pfleger*, there are questions raised regarding the self-assessment of our religious institutions and societal infrastructure (Fragassi). The style of Fr. Pfleger's ministry may make some people uncomfortable, but most great thinkers suffer that distinction. His focus on effecting change takes the front seat in the vehicles he uses to achieve community enrichment. Especially interesting to me is how he does his work from inside the structure of the Catholic Church. Once a small parish, St. Sabina is now one of the largest, most active, and financially successful congregations in the archdiocese. He has met with reprimand after reprimand and continues his path. Challenging the Southside Catholic Conference Athletic League hypocrisy, he put public pressure on the league for rejecting St. Sabina's inclusion. The league claimed

those traveling into St. Sabina's neighborhood for games would be in fear for their safety; it was (and is) what some might call a "rough area" of Chicago. Calling out the racially motivated decision, Pfleger responded, "Racism continues to be alive and well both inside society and inside the church." (qtd. in McClory "Black Parish..."). Embarrassed by the negative publicity, the Conference reversed the decision.

Calling out the obvious and standing on principle beyond racial and organizational lines has earned Fr. Pfleger the ire of conservatives and many Catholics alike. He has embraced prominent African-American leaders such as Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan, inviting them to speak at his congregation, although some of their beliefs fly in the face of Catholic policy. He also stood by Rev. Jeremiah Wright when he was under media attack for his views and connection to ascending candidate Barack Obama. In part of the media frenzy that was the last presidential campaign, Fr. Pfleger made a mocking statement about Hillary Clinton and a critique of white privilege that drew national attention. I don't think he necessarily voices ideas that are not already in the public mind; it's just that he has the nerve to say them out loud. When the Clinton ordeal came to light I remember thinking that, for me, it wasn't necessarily the black and white issue but, rather, the fact that we finally had a strong woman candidate...and now here's a black *man* to run against her. Historically, I have always felt the pecking order to shift itself that way; first come the white males, then any other men (as long as they are men), and then the women. Whichever way the pie is cut, one can count on Fr. Pfleger being on the side of the oppressed. He has an ability to remain steadfast in his support of the real issues at hand, cut through the rhetoric, and bring social inconsistencies out into the light of day. When he embraces leaders with differing views, he sees the similarities of messages we have in common rather than picking out the differences. It seems to me that is how barriers are broken. People are not going to agree on all the issues, but the issues must be raised. We need to hear the whole of what others have to say in order to make an informed decision whether we agree, disagree in part, or differ altogether. We can't section ourselves off and say that because we are a member of this or that group we won't listen to anything so and so has to say because he also believes in "X." In a world of 24/7 news, sound bites, and viral video, we have to have those who can use these things to bring us full circle and remember what it is we are striving for. Even when the things said come out in a poor choice of words, these words can start a discussion. Starting a discussion is the only way to bring people to true communication. That is why Fr. Michael Pfleger is my choice for a great thinker in priest's clothing.

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Evaluation: *I like this paper's focus on a local person, and its celebration of the person along with concession of his flaws. This is a fun profile to read.*

# "Benway": Bureaucratic Control Addicts in William S. Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*

*Jordan Johnston*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kurt Hemmer

Assignment: *Write a research essay on William S. Burroughs's controversial book* Naked Lunch.

Jack Kerouac called William S. Burroughs "the smartest man in America," but many literary critics referred to him as obscene, disgusting, and boring. His phantasmagoria teamed with his controversial material made Burroughs one of the most infamous writers of the twentieth century. A founding member of the Beat Generation, Burroughs left the literary world in shock with his dark, mordant, and hilarious work. While many Beat writers focused on topics such as self-redemption and spiritual yearning, Burroughs dove into the dark, nefarious world of drugs and addiction, as well as casting his cynical perspective on American politics and culture. His masterpiece, *Naked Lunch*, took nine years to piece together from letters and unfinished ideas into one big, non-linear, and often horrifying novel. Burroughs says, "You can cut into *Naked Lunch* at any intersection point" (187). One of the most satirical routines we can cut into in the novel is "Benway," a deliberate attack on bureaucracy and the medical profession, where the reader meets Dr. Benway and is introduced to the merciless happenings in Annexia and in the Reconditioning Center in Freeland. The routine takes the narrator, William Lee, through the mind of the control addict, Benway, and how he gets his control fix. The theme of "Benway" is total control to perpetuate an infantile society dependent on bureaucracy because control addicts holding seats of power in a government exploit and take advantage of the people within their confines.

Dr. Benway is perhaps the most infamous character in *Naked Lunch*, and in "Benway," the reader is introduced to the sadistic doctor for hire. Ian MacFayden, a writer and Burroughs expert, explains that Benway is a "direct medical descendant of celebrity brain surgeon Dr. Walter Freeman" (212), who invented the "ice pick lobotomy" and performed the procedure often outside of an operating room without a surgeon and traveled the country to perform demonstrations for audiences. Like all of the characters within the novel, Benway is an addict, not for drugs, but control. He is one who "deplores brutality" as it is inefficient, and is partial to methods of "prolonged mistreatment" (Burroughs 19). Benway is an advocate and expert of Total Demoralization, or T.D. Jack Salzman and Pamela Wilkinson, professors at Columbia University, write that "through clever manipulation of the

needs of the subjects under his control, Benway can bring about T.D." (56); he can convince his victims that their "treatment" is completely necessary. Benway is a superb bureaucrat in all aspects of his work and has an insatiable appetite for control of the masses. Benway is also a specialized practitioner in sexual humiliation, which is a procedure that turns heterosexuals into homosexuals through the reinforcement of rejecting heterosexual trends via drugs and hypnosis. Benway is directing the Reconditioning Center in the Freeland Republic and brings the narrator, Lee, to see the INDs, those with Irreversible Neural Damage. The INDs are seemingly comatose as a result of being "over-liberated," according to Benway. He then demonstrates their obedience for Lee by holding a chocolate bar in front of one of the patient's noses, causing animal-like behavior from extreme desire for the chocolate as Benway tosses the bar to the patient in the manner of a person giving a dog a treat. Benway's addiction for control has made him a highly sought-after "expert" for bureaucracies intent on total domination.

The "Benway" routine begins with an overview of Benway's exploits in Annexia, a place contrived by Burroughs that satirizes governments issuing laws and the citizen's responsibility to follow them. In Annexia, citizens are required to apply for and carry an entire portfolio of documents, at all times. Citizens could be stopped anywhere at any time by "the Examiner" (20), who could be in disguise, and they must show that they have their papers with the proper stamps on them that the Examiner gives out himself. The Examiner would only stamp a few individuals' papers and refuse others, leaving them subject to arrest. John Tytell, a leading Beat Generation scholar, writes, "Burroughs' mode is parody. His ambition is to expose the controls created by institutions" (82). Burroughs continues his parodic vision of a wicked, maniacal government by explaining how some documents are issued in vanishing ink and how new documents were always required, causing citizens to race from bureau to bureau trying to meet impossible deadlines. Burroughs brings about a depiction similar to George Orwell's *1984* when describing Annexia's intrusive and "Big Brother-like" policies; he explains how no one was allowed to have shades or curtains on their windows, searchlights were constantly patrolling the area, no one could bolt their door, and the police had keys to every room in the city. Annexia is where Benway is presented with suspects to interrogate provided by the Annexia police on an "assembly line basis" (21). Benway tells Lee about his interrogation techniques, such as the Switchboard, in which electric drills are placed in a suspect's teeth and can be turned on at any time; the suspect is then given an arbitrary switchboard to put certain connections in specific sockets. Every time a mistake is made, the drills are turned on for twenty seconds, and after a while, the signals are sped up beyond reaction time. Another method of interrogation is the use of drugs in various ways in his attack on a subject's personal identity. Benway also practiced his methods of Total Demoralization and sexual humiliation on the suspects brought to him. Annexia is a terrifying symbol for control-hungry bureaucratic institutions.

"Benway" then returns to the Reconditioning Center located in Freeland, where Benway has been called upon to direct. Freeland is "a place given over to free love and continual bathing" where the citizens are "well adjusted, cooperative, honest, tolerant, and above all clean" (Burroughs 19). The presence of Benway is a sign that things may be going wrong in Freeland, because, as Burroughs states, "Benway is a manipulator and coordinator of symbol systems, an expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing, and control" (19). Benway's job at the Reconditioning Center is to maintain total control over the patients, which he, of course, graciously accepts. Critic Vincent Passaro describes him as the "satiric epitome of the modern scientist and technocrat for hire, willing to perform any abomination on assignment" (101). As Benway and Lee walk through the Reconditioning Center, Benway tells a story of a time when he got into a fight with another doctor during an operation after the doctor pushed his hand, severing the patient's artery and spraying blood everywhere. Benway then cuts the other doctor's hamstring with his scalpel and climbs on top of the operating table and jumps on him. Benway explains this as one of the reasons why he was "drummed out of the industry" (Burroughs 27), along with a time when he drank all of the ether during an operation and the patient woke up. Benway and Lee enter the IND ward, where Benway displays his absolute control over the patients

and expresses his hatred for them as they are "bad for the tourist business" (Burroughs 29). Benway then touches on a more serious subject, explaining to Lee his theory on why junkies have a low rate of schizophrenia, which Rob Johnson and Kurt Hemmer, Beat Generation scholars, write is "a theory that Burroughs himself had researched" (220). By inducing schizophrenia, Benway would be able to obtain the highest level of automatic obedience. In the Reconditioning Center, Benway's medical mishaps are revealed, as well as his desire for automatic obedience.

During the tour of the Reconditioning Center, all of the subjects are accidentally released, and from the roof of the building, Benway and Lee watch the terror unravel. Two of the types who have escaped are Latahs, who compulsively imitate every motion due to involuntary hypnosis, and simeopaths, people who are convinced that they are apes, a disorder common to members of the army, and discharge is the cure. The Latahs are subjects that have been completely demoralized and have no will of their own; they are reduced to thoughtless animals and addicted to whomever they are imitating, being completely controlled by that person. It is complete pandemonium as a cast of varying INDs ravage the streets below. Johnson and Hemmer write, "These revolting passages appear to be a reflection of the kind of writing that Burroughs did to 'free' himself of such images and obsessions" (220). The riot ends with the escaped INDs demanding asylum from the "unspeakable conditions" (Burroughs 38) in Freeland. The escaped INDs project the moral that "in a controlled society, all who rebel must be branded 'lunatics'" (Johnson and Hemmer 220).

The most predominant theme of "Benway" is that control is in the hands of a bureaucracy. Burroughs states, "control, bureaucracy, regimentation, these are merely symptoms of deeper sickness that no political or economic program can touch" (qtd. in Holton 26). *Naked Lunch,* as a whole, is a struggle against control and ultimately an escape, and "Benway" is a strong part of this. The routine has two forms of bureaucracies, though similar, in Annexia and Freeland. Annexia is one large totalitarian city formed by bureaucracy. In Annexia, there are two types of people: those who would like a positive government, and those who work for the government itself, such as Benway. The government's employees, like Benway and the Annexia police, are relentless in their efforts for control of the citizens and are far from considering their best interests. Annexia is a dystopia, flagrant and unforgiving in its path toward mass infantilism. Freeland, and more specifically its Reconditioning Center, is the second model for bureaucracy in the routine, extending its division of power to Benway. He is the head of the Reconditioning Center, making him the leader of this bureaucratic institution in which he must perpetuate total control over its residents. The Reconditioning Center being located in Freeland is obviously ironic; the patients are anythingo but free. The patients in the Reconditioning Center are victims of mental enslavement, stripped of their human rights, and under absolute control. Burroughs writes, "bureaucracy is as wrong as cancer, a turning away from the human evolutionary direction of infinite potentials and differentiation and independent spontaneous action to the complete parasitism of a virus" (112). These two nightmarish forms of bureaucracy are atrociously brilliant in capturing the downfall of society to a controlling government which, in some respects, is not too farfetched.

Jerry Bryant, writer and essayist, writes, "Burroughs' books come close to being 'pornographic imprecations', hurled against...America...and his attack is deep and complex. He writes of strange worlds, of people whose actions and feelings are disturbingly unfamiliar, sometimes frightening, sometimes disgusting" (91). To this day, *Naked Lunch* remains one of the most notorious and groundbreaking literary works ever created. A disturbing, non-linear novel of hallucinatory squalor and mordant humor, *Naked Lunch* is one of the most culturally influential pieces of American literature, inspiring writers, artists, and musicians. Burroughs' prose destroys proper structure and organization so crucial to a "good" novel and could bring a traditionalist to the brink of insanity. The shocking yet essential imagery and disgustingly inventive symbolism are only a few elements showing the author's talent. *Naked Lunch* was taken to trial for obscenity and eventually won the case, which has been called by some the last major literary censorship battle in the United States. Burroughs has been a constant victim of harsh criticism toward his work for decades, and *Naked Lunch*, after fifty years, is the primary target. Despite the judgments, the novel garnered mainstream success but still managed

to maintain an element of underground authenticity. One of the major works of the Beat Generation, *Naked Lunch* covered topics that were not so appealing to other writers. Burroughs created an "antinovel that thwarts nearly every expectation that a reader has of what a 'novel' should be" (Johnson and Hemmer 225). Whether it is being commended for its wondrous and horrific depiction of Burroughs's experiences and ideology, or being condemned for its gruesome and graphic imagery and its use of explicit language, *Naked Lunch* is one of the most controversial literary works ever created. The novel reveals a virus and its symptoms are "poverty, hatred, war, police-criminals, bureaucracy, insanity" (Bryant 91), all of which continue to infect global society.

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Evaluation: *Jordan zeroes in on the motif of bureaucratic control in* Naked Lunch *while deftly avoiding the trap of getting fixated, like many students, on the more prurient and horrific aspects of the book, which can often lead writers down dead ends*

# A Maple Leaf Fan in a Blackhawk City

*Chandani Joshi*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *One of the essay assignments in English 101 was to summarize an essay we'd read, pertaining to gender, culture, or social behavior, and to respond to the essay with discussion of and reflection on relevant pertinent experience.*

Bharati Mukherjee experiences the effects of individual concepts of where "home" can be when she and her sister, Mira, both find themselves seeing their residency in the United States in different lights. The following excerpt from "Two Ways to Belong in America" shows how both Bharati and Mira have very different views on America: "I am an American Citizen and she is not. I am moved that thousands of long-term residents are finally taking the oath of citizenship. She is not" (Mukherjee 175). Mukherjee stresses how she seems more toward the side of being an American citizen, while her sister, Mira, doesn't seem to have any part in wanting to be a citizen.

Bharati begins by explaining the similarities she and her sister shared. They both seemed to have nearly identical lives, with the following: "When we left India, we were almost identical in appearance and attitude. We dressed alike, in saris; we expressed identical views in politics, social issues, love and marriage in the same Calcutta convent-school accent. We would endure our two years in America, secure our degrees, then return to India to marry the grooms of our fathers' choosing" (Mukherjee 175). These similar views seemed to change the moment marriage entered the question. Mira married an Indian student, while Bharati married an American student and ruins her family's tradition through doing so:

> In Iowa City in 1963, I married a fellow student, an American of Canadian parentage. Because of the accident of his North Dakota birth, I bypassed labor-certification requirements and the race-related "quota" system that favoured the applicant's country of origin over his or her merit. I was prepared (and even welcomed) the emotional strain that came with marrying outside of my ethnic community. (Mukherjee 176)

The two sisters eventually seem more and more distant when the United States pushes the issue to have any long-term residents become citizens after a certain period of time. There are another few quotations in which both Mira and Bharati have excessively different views. Bharati speaks for herself when she says, "America spoke to me—I married it—I embraced the demotion from expatriate aristocrat to immigrant nobody, surrendering those thousands of years of 'pure culture', the saris, the delightfully accented English" (Mukherjee 178). Her sister Mira seems to have changed her mind completely:

> I asked her if she would follow the example of others who have decided to become citizens because of the anti-immigration bills in Congress. And here, she surprised me. "If America wants to play the manipulative game, I'll play it too," she snapped. "I'll become a U.S. citizen for now, then change back to Indian when I'm ready to go home. I feel some kind of irrational attachment to India that I don't to America. Until all this hysteria against legal immigrants, I was totally happy. Having my green card meant I could visit any place in the world I wanted to and then come back to a job that's satisfying and that I do very well." (Mukherjee 177)

Bharati stresses her sister's different views with how she is more Indian than she is American: "She is here to maintain an identity, not to transform it" (Mukherjee 177). Evidently, Bharati and her sister, Mira, both were raised in the same household but had entirely different views on what it means to be American. Bharati loved being American, and her sister was more Indian.

This specific short essay had a huge emotional impact on me. It isn't often that I read something that has its roots in my parents' Indian ethnicity. Bharati brings up so many different issues in this one short essay, it is amazing how she analyzes them, even when they concern someone as close to her as her own sister. Bharati and her sister, Mira,

both moved to America at one point or another, but the way they adapted to moving was significantly different. I, too, experienced something similar to what Bharati and Mira both went through, in my own household. I have an older cousin named Mitali. She is only four years older than me, and we've been raised like sisters. Mitali was born in Canada when her mother had been visiting, and since she was given Canadian citizenship for being born in Canada, her parents went back to India, leaving her in Canada. Mitali ended up staying with my mother, my father, my mother's younger brother, and my baa (grandmother from my mother's side). I was born only four years later, so Mitali and I were raised nearly the same.

There seemed to be no visible differences between us, since we both participated in the same things. We would go to traditional Indian dances whenever they were held in November, and we would both eat the same sorts of Indian food (or pizza whenever we were allowed to eat it). We both grew our hair out very long, and braided it so it didn't get ruined (I fondly remember how our physical arguments consisted of us pulling each other's braids). In fact, we were both similar even personality wise: both of us watched Indian soap operas, cried when ouro favourite actor Shahrukh Khan died in a movie, and both of us would hide in a bedroom whenever guests visited our apartment. It seemed to continue that way until we moved from our small apartment into three larger houses. My mother bought one for me and my brother, and Mitali went to live with my aunt and uncle. She and I always spoke to one another through the phone, and met as often as possible; however, personality-wise, I became closer to how I behaved at school. I didn't like Indian saris, and I didn't like dancing, especially the way Indians did. My personal identity was changing from the Indian one I had as a child into a more Canadian one. I played hockey, I liked dressing in the traditional Maple Leafs jersey and faded blue jeans, and I liked CDs from awesome bands like Billy Talent and Three Days Grace. I really feel this connection to Bharati, because she said she felt even closer to her identity as someone of America. While I was growing up and becoming more and more Canadian by the day, Mitali was doing seemingly the opposite. She loved wearing Indian saris. She watched Indian movies and even sang along to the songs in these movies. She would attend prayer every day with our baa, making sure that she was dressed for the occasion. Her Gujarati, the language we're taught to speak at home, was fluent and almost flawless when she spoke it. I was much better at English, to the point that I was starting to forget a lot of the Gujarati that I was taught earlier on in my life.

These differences should seem pointless to many people; however, to me and Mitali, it was like a world of changes. I remember we used to share a bed because whenever I slept over at her house, we liked to stay up at night and tell each other about what was running through our minds. I used to fantasize about being a singer, possibly being on Canadian Idol. I wanted all of the world to view me as a Canadian first, not an Indian. Mitali had dreams about being an Indian actress. She seemed to want to be viewed as an Indian first. Our childish dreams kept motivating us, and as we spoke, I clearly remember how often she tried telling me to try and be a little Indian. She used to tell me how Indian saris looked beautiful on a woman, and how she thought I would look nice in them. She used to stress how much my mother would have loved to see me do garba, the traditional dances we did every time Diwali came around. I used to counter every word of hers by stressing how wonderful my Canadian identity was. I loved the thrill of the ice shredding as I could skate across it. I loved how English can be one of the most difficult languages to learn, but it still seemed so amazing whenever you learned to write it in a certain way. I tried so many times to explain the thrill I received to her, but she just didn't understand. My beautiful world of hockey, punk-rock, and t-shirts was too different from her own unique world of saris, traditional dances, and culture created thousands of years before we were even born. We were both so different, even though we were raised nearly the same.

Perhaps it is just something psychological that appears unique to every person, but I couldn't understand her at all. We grew up day by day, and eventually she told me how she wanted to marry an Indian boy who would be well educated but still ultimately be acceptable to our family. I couldn't grasp marrying in our ethnicity. Like most open-minded Canadians, I believe strongly that any person has the right to choose the spouse of their own liking. Bharati expresses how she married outside of her

ethnicity but wouldn't change that for her life. I agree, ino a sense. I wouldn't mind marrying someone Canadian, but not Indian by race, at all. It occurs to me every time that I consider marriage, I really can't see myself marrying someone who is Indian. I'm just too different. They probably wouldn't understand my love of turning on my iPod and dancing around to the heavy bass of Green Day and Guns n Roses. The excitement behind how I can just grab my skateboard and go shred the streets, or just flip on the TV to watch Total Drama Island on Teletoon, is something completely unique to my Canadian identity. I doubt someone who is Indian of culture would enjoy that half as much as I do. Mitali said she couldn't see herself with a person who isn't Indian, either. I can't help but agree with her. She is completely Indian by culture; she would never be able to like how someone outside of the Indian culture might live. It would be more like torture to have her marry someone who isn't Indian, while for me, marrying in my ethnicity is like torture.

Mukherjee speaks of how her sister went back to India after some time, because of her stronger attachment to India. For some time, I couldn't understand that at all, until just two months ago when my father decided I should study in the United States to ensure I have a better future. I agreed to come, solely because I realized that I had a better future here, and without even knowing, I realized how Mira felt. Although the United States may seem similar to Canada, I saw so many immediate differences. No one here really experiences how fun it was to go outside in winter and play hockey in the snow. No one else here would keep hoping the Leafs might win the Stanley Cup, even while knowing it wasn't likely. I am like Mira here. I don't want to be an American citizen if it means giving up my Canadian citizenship. I'm too attached to who I was in Canada to even consider giving it up for the United States. Mira spoke for a large amount of the world who are immigrants. Even now, my father calls himself Indian, even when he hasn't been to India in over fifteen years. Most of my family in Canada would call themselves Indian, even though their citizenship is Canadian now. Before, I could hardly relate to them, but now I see their views clearly.

Thinking back now to whenever Mitali and I would be under the covers of one of our beds, talking about our day and what we were going to do, I think I know how she feels, too. If I were to go back to Canada today, I would never want to leave. I'm Canadian by heart, and I always will be, because that was like my home. I might be living here in the United States, but whenever I look back, my identity is Canadian. If I were to speak to Mira now, I could honestly tell her that her decision to go back to India was both correct and incorrect. She was in love with India, and she had every right to go back to India, because that was where her heart was. However, she left behind a future in the United States. Even if she didn't feel her heart was here, she could still stay there and be Indian by heart. Truthfully, I feel like I'm in between where both Bharati and Mira stand. I am proud of the country I was born and raised in, but realize I have a future to build here in the United States.

Bharati Mukherjee had a precise idea of what I was talking about when she stated, "The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation" (Mukherjee 178). Immigrants either have to accept the rules of the country they are part of, or leave them. I, myself, plan to go back to Canada at some time, when my education here is complete. So in a sense, I side more with Mira than I do with Bharati. It all depends on our personality, our thoughts on our identity, and our true culture. Whether Bharati or Mira were correct really wasn't the question behind the essay, but how the two sisters seemed completely different on some topics shows that we all process our experiences in different ways. Home can mean a different thing to two extremely similar people.

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Evaluation: *I like this essay for how clearly and candidly the student articulates her thoughts and describes her experiences, and for the range of cultural experience that she reflects on.*

# Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic": A Torn Dream of Islamic Fundamentalism and Western Consumerism

*Jorid Keri*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper incorporating effective use of at least seven secondary sources and maintaining a sharply focused critical perspective.*

Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic" is a short, heart-breaking tale that examines the socioeconomic hardships and behavioral differences faced by an immigrant Pakistani family living in the Western world. Parvez, a night shift taxi-cab driver in the streets of London for more than two decades, can not comprehend his seemingly bright son Ali's behavior as of late. Ali, an exceptional athlete, loving boyfriend and successful accounting student, appears to have drastically changed, lost interest in his previous self-proclaimed materialistic endeavors, and has now fully embraced the Islamic faith. In his tale, Kureishi depicts the conflict between Parvez's self-taught, easy going, enjoy-life-to-the-fullest, adopted Western mentality and Ali's newly acquired stern belief of living life strictly according to the Holy Koran and hatred toward Western immorality. The two clash fiercely and continuously while presenting theo generational gap and different views on subjects such as personal growth, religion, family life, and the Western world. The story culminates with the Asian immigrant dream being torn apart by the violent and close-minded personalities presented by Kureishi: the infinite tug-of-war between Parvez's liberalist, consumerist aspirations (including his friendship with a prostitute named Bettina) and Ali's backward, fundamentalist, Eastern values slowly but surely destroy this Pakistani immigrant family. Kureishi later expanded "My Son the Fanatic" into a movie of the same title, directed by Udayan Prasad and hitting theaters worldwide in 1997. The movie, although fairly similar to the original short story, contains a few important changes, namely Ali's name being changed to Farid, an introduction to the Fingerhut family (Ali/Farid's British girlfriend and her family), Bettina and Parvez's ever-growing relationship becoming a crucial point of the entire plot, and the insightful inclusion of Mr. Schitz, an arrogant, hedonistic, yet seemingly good-natured German businessman.

Hanif Kureishi's own experience of growing up in a half-immigrant Pakistani family in London inspired him to write a fictional, yet truthful portrait of the assimilation problems and identity crisis faced by Asian immigrants living in England. In an attempt to display the profound effect the foreign, social and materialistic pitfalls and the past religious demons can have on a struggling immigrant family, Kureishi seems to have written an autobiography by displaying the character strengths and weaknesses of the older, seemingly Western Parvez and the younger, fundamentalist Ali. Throughout his tale, Kureishi presents the reader and viewer with a firsthand experience of how a generation gap and mentality differences between its members can ultimately destroy a family's dreams of happiness and prosperity.

It is clear throughout both Hanif Kureishi's original short story and the motion picture inspired by it that the jazz-loving, whiskey-drinking, liberal Parvez loves life in the Western world, and he views England as the land of opportunities for himself and his family. In his movie review, Dan Clanton observes that although the Lahore-born Parvez was raised a Muslim, he seems to find a liberating freedom in his new cultural surroundings (par. 2). After leaving behind the cruel, narrow-minded, Islam-dictated mentality that prevailed in his native Pakistan some twenty odd years ago, the passionate and secular Parvez has spent more than two decades working exhausting night shifts as a taxi-cab driver in an attempt to provide for his wife and son. His efforts at assimilating, however, appear to have been fairly ineffective; it is a quarter-century after his initial immigration, and he still finds himself at the bottom of the social ladder, helplessly looking up at the discriminating and abusive natives

he serves on a daily basis while patiently awaiting his moment of socioeconomic success.

During Kureishi's tale of this father and son, Parvez displays numerous character flaws. In the short story, he is presented as fairly careless and a poor communicator, especially with regard to his wife. She is nowhere to be found during the majority of the plot and even in the small, referential appearance she does make, she is "ordered to sit down and keep quiet, though she had neither stood up nor said a word" (641). In the film version of the story, Parvez's deteriorating marriage to Minoo is developed in various scenes, and the dominant theme portrayed by Kureishi's characters is that of unhappiness, contempt, disillusionment, and fanaticism. It is clear that Parvez's love for his wife has ceased to exist, and the cold manner with which he treats her makes both him and Minoo feel miserable.

Another major flaw in Parvez's actions can be identified in the ingenuity and complacency he displays regarding his misery and poor social status. It seems as if the same hungry Parvez who is just dying to fit in and get accepted in the West has equivocally compromised with his poor social status, financial instability, and sad reality and is even proud of his settlement. In his 1999 review of the movie, David Edelstein denounces Parvez's foolishness, by stating:

> Parvez begins with a magnetic confidence in his own foolishness: He's proud of how he grasps for status. In the movie's prologue, he can hardly contain his delight that his son is set to marry the daughter of the local chief inspector, a man whose revulsion for this dark-skinned taxi driver with his cheap camera is manifest in every frozen half-smile (par. 4).

The level of comfort Parvez has with his misfortunes portrays the irony that has been his stay in England for the past twenty-five years; the ambitious man who migrated with his family in hopes of a better future, equal treatment and ultimately, social acceptance, has increasingly accepted his fate, given up on his dreams, slowed down his gallop in the assimilation race and is delighted at the possibility of losing his dignity while slowly crawling up the social ladder.

Throughout the film version of Kureishi's short story, the viewer gets to witness Parvez's socially inflicted inferiority complex and willingness to serve others, once again caused by his eternal, delusional hopes of fitting into the same system that has pushed him away for years. This is especially showcased when Mr. Schitz, a drug-loving, inconsiderate, party-animal German entrepreneur staying in London on a business trip hires Parvez for his services and relies on the latter to provide him with transport, a tour of the city, and even prostitutes. Trine Vinter Mortensen highlights Parvez's ability to serve and compares him to an eager delivery boy and a native servant looking to please his colonial master (par. 2). Despite his goodwill and continuous efforts at assimilation, Parvez lives in a capitalist and consumerist society, and his forever-immigrant status coupled by his exhilarating, low-paying, seemingly "low-class" job have isolated him from reality and instilled a feeling of inferiority deep inside his soul.

Mortensen describes Parvez's unfavorable social status while highlighting the latter's undying desire of finally "making it" in his review "The Empty Accountancy of Things":

> Parvez's son Farid is getting engaged to Chief Inspector Fingerhut's daughter and Parvez is thrilled, since this means that he will finally be able to climb up the social ladder. He is very eager to please Fingerhut and behaves in a submissive and inferior manner. Fingerhut, on the other hand, regards Parvez and his family with contempt, and is everything but pleased to be connected with this low status Pakistani family. (par. 2)

In this passage, Mortensen perfectly contrasts Parvez's feelings on his son's engagement to Madeleine with those of Mr. Fingerhut. The immigrant Parvez is delighted by Farid's accomplishment and believes this relationship will lead to acceptance by the native English and ultimately help the family ameliorate its social status. Mr. Fingerhut, however, views Parvez and his family with contempt and is far from happy with his daughter's choice of a working-class Pakistani immigrant boyfriend.

Despite his various weaknesses as a husband and insecurities as a man, Parvez is described as a loving father who desires simply the absolute best for his only child and fears any other outcome as a failure. Although

personal liberation and fleeing from cruelty and poverty were Parvez's main reasons for migrating to England from Pakistan, a better future for his young son has been Parvez's greatest source of motivation over the past quarter of a century. In his comparison of the works of Hanif Kureishi and American novelist Philip Roth, Sander L. Gilman denotes key similarities between the two authors' roots and ambitious families with this confession by Roth:

> The immigrant family and its desire for integration and respectability, the self-obsessed son with unruly desires and a taste for goy girls, were right up my street. The belief in education and learning, the family's desire for their sons to be doctors and even artists—anything but not a failure—along with the son being amazed by the father's oddity, seemed immediately familiar to me (par. 3).

Parvez believed England to be the perfect place for raising his son, and he is initially happy with the way Ali/ Farid has turned out. In the film, he's a great athlete, a bright accounting student, an aspiring model, and has a lovely English girlfriend, Madeleine. As someone who has spent years unsuccessfully trying to become one with the Western culture despite his age, Parvez is more than happy with his very English son and is waiting for him to complete his degree and start a family. As Kureishi states in the story: "Once this happens, Parvez would be happy. His dreams of doing well in England would have come true" (640).

When it comes to his view on the life in England, Ali undergoes a dramatic metamorphosis throughout Hanif Kureishi's twisted plot. During the early stages of his story, Kureishi introduces Ali as a prosperous accounting student with a very exciting future ahead of him. He seems like the poster child for perfection: impressive athlete, great student, music enthusiast, modeling hopeful, a very active social life, and in the film, he's about to get engaged to Madeleine Fingerhut, the girl of his dreams. Parvez could not be more proud with his only son, and knowing the pitfalls in a city as big and populated as London, he's happy to have raised an ambitious young man with a good head on his shoulders. Ali apparently loves life in England, and his father is elated to see his son thriving. In Parvez's eyes, Ali looks to have conquered even what Parvez himself has struggled to do so for decades. In spite of all of this, the son feels lost and confused amidst all of this consumerism and the materialistic lifestyle of the West, and he ultimately finds spiritual relief exactly in what his father ran away from more than twenty years ago: the Koran. As Sander L. Gilman notes:

> Eventually it becomes clear to Parvez that the physical changes in his son, such as his growing a beard, are the clue to his transformation. He prays five times a day; he ritually washes beforehand. He is being transformed by the religious tradition that Parvez had abandoned after his mistreatment as a child at the hands of the mullahs in Lahore (par. 5).

As this passage suggests, Ali has quickly transformed from the accomplished child tailor-made to fit Parvez's modern dreams, to the religious, obtuse-minded nightmare the latter shunned almost half a century earlier. The former feels as if he doesn't belong in England anymore and as his father's ambitions of Western grandeur increase, so do Ali's insecurity, fear for his future, and hatred toward the locals. Both father and son feel uneasy with their unfavorable social status and the disapproving Westerners' opinion of them; however, their respective responses differ like night and day. Parvez tries harder to fit in and assimilate into the distantly familiar culture of his dreams by complying to the manipulative ways of the West, while a fed-up Ali gives up on his attempts of becoming one with the West and adopts a fundamentalist Islamic viewpoint.

In his article "A Phoenix Called Resistance," Jasbir Jain perfectly depicts the growing generation gap between Parvez and Ali: "Parvez is increasingly receptive to Western attitudes while Ali turns more and more to Islamic norms. The father is perhaps looking for freedom, the son for identity and security; and while one gradually moves towards acceptance and erasure of difference, the other nurses a sense of rejection" (176). Although he was born in London and is as English as the next person, Ali has began to feel like a persona non grata in his own city, society, country. In the article "A Daughter, a Father," Stanley Kauffmann attempts to rationalize Ali's change: "The engagement doesn't last, and Farid [Ali] makes his way, mostly off-screen, from this attempt at assimilation to fierce Islamic fundamentalism" (par. 2). The realization

and acceptance of the possible discrimination and racial abuse he will continue to be a victim of in England have shattered Ali's previous reality and forced him to seek refuge in his previously lost Islamic roots.

The more time passes, the more extreme and unforgiving Ali/Farid's views seem to get. As a concerned Parvez attempts to understand his son's newly acquired Islamic convictions midway through Kureishi's story, this exchange takes place: "He had explained patiently to Ali that for years he had worked more than ten hours a day, that he had a few enjoyments or hobbies and never went on holiday. Surely it wasn't a crime to have a drink when he wanted one? 'But it is forbidden,' the boy said" (642). This quote contrasts Ali's and Parvez's viewpoints on living. The older, non-religious and more experienced Parvez appears to have a simple and easygoing attitude toward life, similar to most Westerners, while his son has become a devout Muslim who believes in strictly following the Koran. Ali makes his stand on the West crystal clear with this statement: "'The Western materialists hate us'... 'Papa, how can you love something which hates you?'" (Kureishi 643). Through this segment, Hanif Kureishi explains the son's general idea about life in the Western world while simultaneously displaying the tremendous change this opinion of his has undergone from the first few lines of the story. Although he has been raised in England, Ali has suddenly begun to detest Westerners, their superficial, sinful approach toward life, and the way they constantly look down upon Muslims and Asian immigrants. Later, in the same scene, Ali proves the fanatic in him, as the narrator summarizes his words:

> The Law of Islam would rule the world; the skin of the infidel would burn off again and again; the Jews and Christers would be routed. The West was a sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug takers and prostitutes...My people have taken enough. If the persecution doesn't stop there will be jihad. I, and millions of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause. (Kureishi 643)

With this extract, the narrator once more describes Ali's frightening, intolerant convictions about the West and the world's near future, according to him. He appears to have become truly illogical, as evidenced by his strong belief in a Muslim crusade of sorts that will "cleanse" the world of its hypocrisy and immorality very soon. Ali proudly and blindly showcases himself as an emotionally unstable, psychopathic radical. This suggests that not only has the young man changed his general views on life and the Western world, but he is willing to resort to murder and terrorism in order to protect his newly acquired, yet faulty and xenophobic set of beliefs. The once loving, intelligent young man with Western ambitions is dead and gone; he has now been replaced by an angry, cold-hearted, disillusioned Islamic fundamentalist who sees the world through hatred-filled eyes. Not only does Ali no longer reason for himself, but he also doesn't appear to be bothered by repeatedly hurting and negating those who brought him to life and truly love him throughout the story. The generation gap is fueled by polar opposite mentalities.

Ali is clearly uncomfortable with what his father seems to tolerate while facing each day. The father does not make any considerable effort to break through the social barriers and has resigned himself to his sad and slow reality of working as a taxi-cab driver. Ali/Farid, however, has had it with the disgust with which the West views Pakistani immigrants, and he will not stand for it any longer. Trine Vinter Mortensen weighs in on the son's reaction, in the movie, to the Western abuse and indifference, by stating: "Farid reacts against the emptiness in his own life and in society. Materially he has everything he could want, since Parvez is working hard to provide his only son with material goods. However, Parvez's choice to prioritise materialism over spirituality has resulted in a spiritual void, which afflicts Farid" (par. 8). Ali (Farid in the movie) feels misled by the materialism that surrounds him; the continuous prejudice displayed by the superficial English towards him, the son of an immigrant, working-class family, has slowly destroyedo his lifelong Western dreams and propelled him to hate his place of birth. This hatred is outlined well by Mortensen in this quote: "Farid is treated by society as being inferior, but he refuses to be inferior. He says, 'Whatever we do here we will always be inferior. They will never accept us like them. But I am not inferior!ò He is ashamed and infuriated by Parvez's submissive behavior and lack of self-esteem in relation to Fingerhut, and later says to his father, 'It sickens me to see you lacking pride'" (par. 10). Ali is visibly let down by his father's denial of his past,

his origin, and his religion, and also by his father's lack of self-respect, and he does not want to follow in his pathetic footsteps. He cannot comprehend Parvez's "cowardice" in reference to the Western bigotry and believes the latter's lack of faith to be the greatest contributing factor to his troubles. To make matters worse, Ali has fully embraced fundamentalism as a coping mechanism to the English's self-perceived superiority and injustice.

Although life in England seems to have transformed Parvez into a pseudo-emancipated, broad-minded, self-perceived modern man, it has not changed his long-living defiance toward Islam and religions in general. Early in his story, Hanif Kureishi introduces Parvez as a freethinking skeptic who has maintained his distance from the Koran and Muslims ever since his childhood days:

> Parvez had grown up in Lahore where all the boys had been taught the Koran. To stop him falling asleep when he studied, the Moulvi had attached a piece of string to the ceiling and tied it to Parvez's hair, so that if his head fell forward, he would instantly awake. After this indignity Parvez had avoided all religions. Not that the other taxi drivers had more respect. In fact they made jokes about the local mullahs walking around with their caps and beards, thinking they could tell people how to live, while their eyes roved over the boys and girls in their care. (641)

As evidenced in this passage, Parvez is not a religious man by any means. He seems to have always lacked any real interest toward Islam even as a child, and life as a poor immigrant in the Western world has certainly helped reinforce his atheist beliefs.

Sander L. Gilman sheds light on Parvez's irreligionist tendencies while once again underlining the subconsciously biographical leitmotif of Kureishi's short story in his article "The Fanatic: Philip Roth and Hanif Kureishi Confront Success": "Similarly, Kureishi's own father 'had talked about the childhood monotony of having to learn the Koran by rote, and of being hit by sticks by the Moulvis.ò Consequently, Kureishi says, he 'wouldn't teach us about Islam, which we came to regard as pointless superstition'" (qtd. in par. 5). Not only does Kureishi appear to be portraying his father through Parvez's actions and beliefs, or lack thereof, through this quote, but he clearly identifies his strong convictions against Islam by admitting it to be merely a worthless superstition. Just a few paragraphs later, Gilman investigates further into Parvez's modern-day hereticism:

> Religion and religious ritual has been abandoned in the Western diaspora by Parvez's migrant generation as a sign of the world of poverty and cruelty from which they have escaped. This was typical of the Pakistani migrants of the 1960's who suffered an almost total lapse of religious observance; yet migration was not perceived as a threat to their heritage. (par. 6)

In this quote, Sander L. Gilman explains the source of Pakistani immigrants such as Parvez and Kureishi's father's indifference toward the Islamic faith. They have happily embraced the new, theologically independent, experience of life in the Western hemisphere in an attempt to finally leave behind their troubled, intolerant, fanatic, chock-full-of-prejudice pasts, to pursue happiness and attain financial stability in a free-market democracy.

If Islam to Parvez is a bitter memory pertaining to the negative, fanatic past he escaped from, to Ali it is the only viable method he can use to hit back at the scathing Westerners' ridicule and incomprehension. In his articleo "Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller," Kenneth C. Kaleta identifies this major difference of beliefs between father and son: "There is a philosophical division between Muslim fundamentalism and the Asian immigrant dream. The economic and social system in England affronts some immigrant beliefs while it is itself at the heart of what others believe in" (par. 6). In this passage, the ever-present generational gap and differing general views on life in the West and Islam between Parvez and Ali are portrayed. Parvez believes the West is the promised land of possibilities, and he wishes for his son to fully embrace this much-sacrificed-for opportunity and achieve socioeconomic success, while Ali is fed up with English consumerism, feels let down by the materialistic and immoral surroundings he has called home for years, and wants to distance himself from the Western charlatans who continuously ridicule Muslims such as himself. Kaleta highlights the source of Parvez and Ali's conflict once again through this analysis:

> Earlier in the story, the author reveals this underlying tension in the postcolonial Asian community: "'But I love England,' Parvez said, watching his boy in the rearview mirror. 'They let you do almost anything here.' 'That is the problem,' Ali replied." Ironically, this exchange occurs in the rearview mirror, with Parvez watching Ali while he is driving his taxi. The image suggests the conflict: Parvez has accepted the western work ethic and is driving a cab to provide Ali with western comforts; Ali, however, will not go along for the ride of western consumerism. He has seen his father sell himself out and he refuses to do so. (158)

In Parvez's eyes, the only way Ali can succeed in life is by assimilating with the English culture and living his life free from the spiritual and social burdens faith can provide, and the fact that his son has decided to quit school and has turned to Islamic fundamentalism saddens Parvez greatly. In Ali's eyes, however, his father has gladly given up his identity and past in exchange for humiliation, deprecation, and the prospect of chasing an impossible dream. This is exactly where these two powerful characters clash on a scene to scene basis: as time has passed, they have each moved in completely opposite directions and what is seen as right, ideal, and worth fighting for in one's eyes, is wrong and a devastating failure in the other's.

One of the most substantial differences between the author's original short story and the movie version is the development of Bettina's relationship with Parvez. An always-in-good-company yet lonely and insecure London prostitute, she displays numerous similarities to Parvez's character throughout the movie's plot while always providing the latter with sound advice and a comforting shoulder. Like Parvez, she is visibly living the life of a pariah among her own countrymen as she finds herself stuck at the absolute bottom of the social pyramid, caught up in the slowly consuming business of sex exploitation. Not only did Kureishi's decision to further broaden theo image of an individual somewhat unexplored in the original short story make Bettina a much more intriguing character, but it allowed her to play a greater role as she transformed into a real meeting point between father and son. To Parvez, Bettina is much more than just a regular client: she's his best friend, his confidante, his psychologist, his lover, and most importantly, she is the only English person who treats him like a normal human being and shows him the acceptance and respect he has anxiously been seeking for decades. To Bettina, Parvez is a mirror. She sees herself in this lower class, socially rejected, simple Pakistani immigrant who transports her, helps her find work, seeks her advice when in doubt and treats her like a woman and not merely a temporary satisfaction of his carnal temptations. Parvez and Bettina, although frowned upon and discriminated against by the society they live in, appear to have found an innocent form of true, nonjudgmental happiness in one another that has blessed them with a relieving sense of belonging at last. In his movie review, David Edelstein analyzes the parallelisms between their respective situations by saying:

> After all, both Parvez and the call girl Bettina are playing by capitalism's rules, trying to get a foothold in a society that closely guards access to its more "proper" ladders to the top....What she does and what she is have no connection; she does what she does to get by. The affection between her and Parvez comes from the happy realization that in spite of their differences, they're on the same (bush league) team—and each has figured out what the other is truly worth. (par. 5)

If Bettina represents everything that has been missing in the father's English experience for the last twenty-five years, she is the polar opposite of what the son stands for. In the film, the dangerously religious Ali views Bettina as an outlet of perversion, an example of human filth, the poster child of the West's immoral infatuation with sex. Not only does Ali vehemently refuse to listen to Bettina's attempts at reconciling the now broken father-son relationship when the two meet in the short story, but he shares the disgust he feels toward Bettina and his father's judgment for associating with her through this exchange:

> "And how are you getting on at college? Are you working hard?"
>
> "Who are you to ask me these questions?" he said, looking out the window. Then they hit bad traffic and the car came to a standstill. By now Bettina had inadvertently laid her hand on Parvez's shoulder. She said, "Your father, who is a good man, is very worried about you.o

> You know he loves you more than his own life.'"
> "You say he loves me," the boy said.
> "Yes!" said Bettina.
> "Then why is he letting a woman like you touch him like that?" (Kureishi 645).

The irrational fundamentalist in Ali exposes himself once again as he launches a scathing attack on his secular infidel father and Bettina. Without thinking twice about the damage his non-accepting attitude and ingratitude cause to those around him, Ali is always lightning quick to criticize, castigate, and verbally abuse anyone who does not follow his flawed, extremist, pseudo-religious agenda. Instead of using his newfound religious devotion as a powerful yet peaceful solution against the negativity he and fellow West-inhabiting Muslims continuously face, Ali has unknowingly become a part of the hate machine he's dying to see suffer.

The finger-pointing and social hardships faced by Parvez and his son in England are very common for Pakistani immigrant families. In an interview conducted in 2006 with *Brooklyn Rail* journalist Hirsh Sawhney, Hanif Kureishi opens up about the way Englishmen labeled him and his family during his youth: "My childhood was to deal with being a Paki. I was a Paki; our family was the Paki Family. That had a profound affect on me. So my position in the world, as anybody's position, is dictated by social circumstances" (qtd. in par. 15). This description resembles the social position Parvez seems to have in England. Although he has spent the past twenty-five years of his life struggling to make ends meet and provide for his wife and only son in a hard-working, honest, and almost slave-like manner, Parvez is still racially abused and discriminated against regularly, to the point where he has to carry a cricket bat in his car as a means of self-protection.

Although Kureishi wrote his story at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the saddening, yet realistic and even biographical nuances he chose to employ throughout his tale serve as further proof of the social hardships Asian immigrants constantly deal with as they attempt to start a new life in England and the West in general. The prejudice these individuals continuously face coupled with their less-than-favorable social status and inter-generational differences in mentality are all causes of the lately ever-present, Islamic fundamentalist phenomenon portrayed in "My Son the Fanatic." Kureishi has decided to discuss an occurrence that is relevant, controversial, and eerily familiar to him: contrasting life and the assimilating process as seen through the eyes of the migrant, middle-aged Pakistani immigrant to that of the latter's second-generation, English-born child. By injecting some of his own experiences into the main characters' personalities, the author sheds light onto the origin of the Islamic fanaticism witnessed during the last few decades in England and how colorful the coping mechanisms used by various generations of Asian immigrants can be. Kureishi incorporates his distant past, the strikingly similar issues he faced growing up in England, and sublime, vivid imagination in an effort to present the West with a viable, firsthand view of the Islamic extremist epidemic that has plagued the modern world as of late.

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Evaluation: *Jorid's discussion of the problems portrayed in Kureishi's work is articulate and well-researched. I am especially impressed with how well he explains and analyzes the film version of this work of literature.*

# The Hidden Graves

*Selina Leonard*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Aaron Almanza

Assignment: *The purpose of this narrative essay is for you to give your reader a detailed explanation of an experience in your life.*

For a while, I had been toying with the idea of buying flowers for a grave that didn't have any. This notion was based in the theory that no one wants to be forgotten after they die. At first, I didn't know what cemetery to go to, what grave to pick, or what kind of flower to leave. When I found St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Cemetery, I didn't know what I would find. The tragic story that became unearthed in that graveyard will stay with me forever. No one could ever deserve the kindness of a stranger more.

I was leaving the Harper College parking lot when I realized that St. Michael's was right in front of me. My idea of leaving flowers hit me, and I swerved into the correct lane to go lonely grave searching. At first, I was nervous. I am not Catholic, so I wondered if that might cause a problem. Also, I didn't know anyone currently resting in St. Michael's. I had the same feeling one might have when attending a party in which all of the guests are strangers or awkwardly distant acquaintances.

In the end, I still went. Leaving flowers as a nice gesture seemed a bit more important than worrying if I'd fit in at a cemetery. The first grave I found with no flowers was a man that was recently buried, having died only two weeks prior. He was a father and was born in 1929. As he was newly deceased, it did not seem odd to me that he had no flowers. I pressed on. I spotted a few people laying flowers near a grave down the path from me. This instantly made me feel even more awkward and out of place, so I looked at my feet and kept walking.o

Thanks to my viewpoint, I found a grave marker that I would probably have missed given any other circumstance. It was overgrown with grass and leaves. I couldn't even make out the name. Quickly, without thinking, I removed the foliage and read the marker. The grave belonged to John Krawczyk. He was eight years old. It was shocking how young he was. I almost cried for him. Having died that young, he had barely eveno begun to live. I sat there for a moment in reverie. What could have happened to have robbed this boy of life? All I could think of was the parents of this child. How did it happen? What if they were there to see it happen? How were they coping now? Were they even alive? The grave marker said that the boy died in 1985, so perhaps any of his surviving family members had moved on.

I started to wonder if he had any siblings when I took a step back and found them. A little overgrown like the first, I saw that John Krawczyk was one of six Krawczyk children graves lined up side by side. None of the graves belonged to anyone over sixteen. That was when I cried. Just as I was about to walk back to my car, the death dates stood out to me. Each and every dead Krawczyk in that row had died on the same day, December 15th, 1985. What could have happened? Instantly, this mystery piqued my curiosity. I memorized the spelling of the family name, got in my car, and decided to investigate.

As soon as I got home, I grabbed my laptop and opened up a Google browser. Six kids die together? It had to make headlines at some point. At first, I found nothing but music references. Someone with the last name Krawczyk had made a hit song in 1985 that I could download for a ring tone in three easy payments of 99 cents. Finally, I found the first of four important links. The first two were from the *Chicago Tribune*. They did a piece covering the children's schools following their deaths and made brief reference to a fire. The second article gave more detail of the deadly house fire and the following funeral. *The Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* also had articles with important information. With the facts I had quickly gathered, the event went something like this.

Late one Saturday night, a fire started in the Krawczyk home. Its origin was undeterminable, according to all four stories. The eighteen-year-old brother, who was there when the fire occurred, left the house and called the authorities. His three older siblings were all out of the house with friends at the time. Their mother, who was recently divorced at the time and also recovering from

a recent heart attack, was out bowling. The fire lasted from Saturday night to Sunday morning, what would have been one of the victim's 16th birthday. The deceased children were found in their bedrooms by the authorities. Something in there sounded anywhere from odd to at least preventable.

After knowing this, I couldn't help but feel for the family. I coul imagine them standing in the yard watching their house burn down, crying, and holding onto each other. I could also imagine them just continuing to hang out with friends or bowl a strike without knowing that their family was in danger. After they had received the news, did the elder sisters cry? Did the mother leave the bowling alley in a panic? Perhaps they simply dropped whatever they were doing to be at the house. I could see the family on their knees, praying to God that the firefighters could save their siblings, son and daughters. What could have been going through their minds? Their mother was recently divorced and had survived a heart attack. That fire could have been the straw that finally broke the tragedy-weary family. How could a family that had gone through so much cope with such a tragedy? Knowing that they'd never see the faces of Katy, John, Amy, Emily, Karen, and Kelly must have been unbearable. Would they have even stayed in the area after a loss like that? After the family had gone through so much, they still had to lose six of the ten children.

In particular, I wondered at the pain of Kevin, the brother who made it out alive. He may have had the chance to save his siblings. Maybe panic stole that chance from him. What if he never had the chance? Maybe he noticed the fire already progressing too far for anything to be done. What would that sense of helplessness feel like? What would it be like to know that those you love were only feet away and yet were already beyond saving? His pain must have been unimaginable. Was that pain what kept the Krawczyk family from visiting the graves? It's possible that they do visit and simply haven't seen how the grass has tried to cover the names. Still, I felt curious about the ones left behind. Opening Google again, I found nothing. I even tried searching for the father, who seemed unmentioned in the four articles. There was no trace of the living family. I was not sure that no obituaries meant that they are still alive and well, but I hope their lack of headlines means their tragedy ended with the fire.

There were many disturbing questions left that the articles could not help me answer. First, what kind of fire was it? How in all this time did they not have a determined catalyst? Why did Kevin not have time to wake his siblings? Was there no smoke detector system in this house? If the authorities were contacted promptly, why was the loss of life so great? Was the fire preventable? Was it arson? Perhaps one of the most disturbing questions of all, did the sole survivor of the fire start it?

Through more investigation, I may yet come to know the answers to some of these questions. The whole story was still quite a lesson in mortality. No one should die in a fire like that, especially people who are so young. I can't help but feel extreme sympathy and sadness for the whole situation. No matter what happened, six children still died. That, regardless of cause, is a tragedy. Perhaps the Krawczyk family does visit the graves at St. Michael's. Perhaps they don't. I, however, will. Those poor children died nearly twenty-five years ago. So, twenty-five years later, six white roses will show that someone remembers them.

Evaluation: *Selina's narrative captures a strong sense of intrigue. Her emotions and desires are powerful, as she takes the reader into her motivation for taking the trip, what goes on in her mind, and how this discovery has impacted her life.*

# On the Justified Enforcement of Morality

*Hubert Marciniec*
Course: Philosophy 231
(Ancient and Medieval Philosophy)
Instructor: John Garcia

Assignment: *Discuss a current social issue; use a philosopher we discussed during the semester to help address this issue.*

It is uncertain that there is ever justification in forcing one's will upon another. Furthermore, even if the ends justified such behavior, legislature, *etc.*, science, and reason are far from proving that such methods can ever instill a desired characteristic in an individual. Delving more into the abstract, one may also suspect that alleged success with such methods is not truly a success since it remains uncertain as to whether the desired quality (pertaining to qualities that need be an intrinsic and wholly embraced part of the individual) is in fact acquired and not adorned superficially by the individual in an effort to placate. With these difficulties in mind, rational beings have long sought to create a society in which morality is a common foundation between all living beings, rational and not. For most, if not all, of recorded history, we have declared that to some degree, the enforcement of morality is justified. This belief is likely to have been spawned from a sense of universal truths that are said to be exempt from logical proof. Truths such as the undesirability of pain or the freedom to live are justified by default – perhaps biologically, naturally, or by existence itself.

Yet, even these basic freedoms are often denied to rational and nonrational beings. Unlike the acquisition, however, the denial requires significant justification. If such freedoms are denied inexplicably, a powerful opposing reaction is generally produced. It is to protect against the loss of these basic rights that a uniform system of justice has developed. A number of such systems, including the current one, have long been accepted because the alternative of anarchy, in which the weak are helpless, is implicitly considered unfavorable to all. While these systems have been serving us to the best of their capability for centuries or more, we must always consider the level of their effectiveness, possible improvements, or even complete reconstruction. To do this, we need to answer the abstract question stated above. If an individual acts morally in order to placate, he cannot be said to be moral because he was equally likely to act contrarily if found under contrary pressures. Morality must be the most foundational component of the individual to ensure she will act morally for its own sake, and thereby, consistently. Our modern justice system fails to generate a moral populace because it is centered on suppression of injustice rather than promotion of justice, and inflicts harmful rather than rehabilitating punishment.

Plato's *The Republic* is an extensive dialogue that discusses the possibility of constructing a just state. Socrates engages a group of prominent Athenians, addressing therein the causes of inept justice systems. While a manifest solution is not present, the ideas presented in *The Republic* and *Gorgias*, another of Plato's works, offer a promising groundwork for identifying, and perhaps overcoming, dysfunctional justice systems.

In the *Gorgias*, Plato dispels the misconceptions that society held, and probably still holds, about justice and suffering harm, the primary concern being that suffering injustice is always preferable to causing injustice and, effectively, having caused injustice, it is preferable to submit to punishment than to escape it. While Polus (a student of the famous orator Gorgias for which the dialogue is titled) defends the conventional view, Socrates argues that causing injustice is baser, causes more harm, and therefore is worse than suffering injustice. As the agent of injustice is more deplorable, the unjust must seek redemption by the hand of a judge as the sick seek health by the hand of a doctor. He goes on to discuss the nature of punishment and why an unjust person should prefer it. "Do not those who punish rightly employ some kind of justice in doing so?" (Plato 69). Polus concedes this to be obvious and Socrates goes on to point out that "medicine [cures] disease, and justice excess and wickedness" (Plato 69). Since justice corresponds to the soul and health to the body, Socrates determines that

being a just individual should be the main concern of all.o The religious terminology may not appeal to everyone, but we need not think of it in those terms (especially considering the myriad of nuances lost in translation over the years). Rather, it is important to consider that when referring to someone's soul, Plato is concerned with those abstract qualities which must become an intrinsic part of one's being.

Ostensibly, this argument seems to support the modern justice system. Contemporarily, transgressions are met with punishments determined by a judge, or, in minor cases, prearranged punishments that were at some point determined by a skilled judicial agent. Once the violator submits to the punishment, she is reestablished as a just member of society. However, looking back to Plato's argument, the individual should seek punishment, preferring personal justice rather than gain any advantage brought on by injustice, but this is seldom the case. Breaking the speed limit in order to preserve one's job has probably never resulted, after the shift at risk, in that individual reporting their speeding to the police and requesting to pay the predetermined fine. Conversely, an individual choosing not to speed likely employs logic such as "if I am pulled over, I will lose more time," or "I cannot afford a fine." These scenarios leave no room for the kind of justice Plato discussed, which should be sought unquestionably for the benefit of the most important part of the individual and without consideration of temporary consequences. Yet, these temporary consequences seem to be the driving force in determining our behavior in relation to society. Voegelin makes a similar observation in his analysis: "The validity of the *doxa* [Greek word relating to opinions or beliefs, which is not the way Plato would approach Justice] concerning the origin of law rests on the assumption that men would commit injustice if they were free to do so, and that only enlightened self-interest induces them to agree on the laws" (76). The *doxa* is simply the public's view of justice, which is based on their personal experiences of pleasure and pain and does not relate to a universal sense of justice, which could potentially inspire the kind of devotion Plato described.

This presents two possibilities: rational beings are not concerned with the things Plato thought them to be, or our method of punishment is inconsistent with justice in the Platonic sense. While either or a combination of both is a plausible explanation, we must give Plato the benefit of the doubt in order to continue our inquiry. Turning then to *The Republic*, we find a potential disparity between what our judges would call justice and what Plato would. The dialogue begins with an attempt to define a just person, which actually plays out as Socrates' exposing of specious conventional views. Polemarchus proposes

**Student Reflections on Writing:**
**Hubert Marciniec**

Writing is certainly a habit that stands outside of my usual activities, sometimes even hinders them. It can strike at any time and it strikes often. Amidst studying, for no class in particular, it grips me. A flurry arises from the steadily guided thoughts evoked by the text and I find myself fumbling for a notebook so that I can attempt to tie them down to a linear expression. Amidst casual socialization, another flurry erupts from the already haphazard rambling, and I must remove myself from the world of outer interaction, coerced by an unknown force, to organize the wild ideas I am far from attesting.

It wasn't until I began to take school more seriously that I acquired the means to cope with these sudden urges to write and incorporated new modes of expression for them. Harper College has been an excellent experience for me as an aspiring writer. From Professor Solheim, I learned about logic and ethics and that although I didn't have the right answer, I could delineate my thoughts clearly and sincerely. From Professor Garcia, I learned important fragments of the history of philosophy and that there have been (and are) many others who felt compelled to pour their struggle out in words and that those words are not dead matter. From Professor Wilson, I learned the beauty and ambiguity of literature and that words can do anything if you take the time to understand them and never take them for granted.

that justice revolves around giving each man his due. Plato once again utilizes the analogy of technical skills, in effect calling medicine the art of healing the sick and justice something along the lines of promoting excellence. If justice were simply giving each man his due, it would take little argument to prove (as Socrates did) that a just person would be correct in harming the bad (or unjust). "But must we not then say of a man that if harmed he becomes worse by the standards of human excellence?" (Plato 13). This yields a contradiction in that, since a woman could not be called skilled in medicine if she made a patient ill, a just man would in fact be the opposite if he reduced another's excellence (justice). So to harm, which by definition worsens, is never the action of a just individual.

With this disparity in mind, we look once again to our justice system. With minimal exceptions, our methods of punishment consist of harming rather than rehabilitating the individual. These methods do not adhere to Plato's idea of a just punishment, because harm, by definition, will worsen the individual in question. Absurdly, this entails that an individual totally removed from the justice system is more likely to become just than one that is subject to it. Once again, just is meant in the intrinsic sense; to the untrained mind, the ticketed speeder drives away five miles under the speed limit, but it is unlikely that he is contemplating road safety and preservation of life. The fine is confiscation of the individual's labor, which (if it at all is) the individual cannot connect with his crime and is therefore harmed in a manner unrelated to his transgression. This punishment is justified to society by long-held traditions based on the *doxa* (opinions or beliefs) mentioned above. Having felt the pain of loss due to a road collision, one may emotionally justify a penalty for anything that may cause such an occurrence, without having to consider what injustices actually took place or how to correct them; the illusion of correctness (as displayed by the ticketed individual) is satisfactory. Unfortunately, this only satisfies the emotional or instinctual part of the human.

Plato identifies three parts to the conscious being: the instinctual, the spirited, and the reasonable. The constituents are difficult to summarize, but a brief overview will suffice for the purpose of investigating our justice system. The instinctual part can be likened in some respects to the id of psychological theory; it produces our basest desires for pleasure and reactions to pain. The spirit is similar to our will; it is the inner strength by which we can engage our world to acquire pleasure and escape pain. Reason plays the role of moderator. Perhaps like the superego, it is aware of a more complete picture of reality, and, if properly developed, may restrict shortsighted or superficial solutions proposed by the instinct, before our spirit is carried away with them. The development of reason is not an easy task, but it is the only part of us which has any chance of fathoming true justice. Looking again to the example above, a person functioning primarily by reason would not be satisfied by a speeder being ticketed, because, unlike a person led by instinct, she realizes the difference between the appearance of justice (the violator driving away slowly) and the reality of justice (the violator realizing the dangers to others he was creating). "And isn't the element of prevention, when present, due to our reason, while urges and impulses are due to our feelings and unhealthy cravings?" (Plato 147). Likewise, our instinctual tendencies toward justice, which bizarrely resemble an equal distribution of *in*justice, must be prevented by reason if we are ever to discover the absolute nature of justice.

In a later portion of *The Republic*, Plato discusses the nature of reality, which can be divided into four parts: images, the tangible (depicted in images), ideas (of the tangible), and absolutes. This matter is even more complex than the division of our being, so once again the description will be limited to what is necessary for the investigation of the justice system. The tangible realm is the world in which we function daily, the world of objects; it is where our opinions and beliefs are developed. The realm of ideas can be represented by mathematical postulates and natural sciences, concepts which are unchanging. The absolutes are just that: the infallible and unperceivable (by the five senses) truths, upon which all reality is based. Plato seems to say that through the contemplation of absolutes, a person is brought closer to understanding the true nature of reality or, for example, the nature of justice. Many would say that *The Republic*'s main focus is on the absolutes and how the valuing of them over the material world can help steer society toward

a more ideal state. On the other hand, in *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, Crombie states:

> The *Republic* is concerned, in the relevant passages, with the material world, for it is concerned with the question of how to train men for government; and, while the text indeed talks about the structure of the system of forms, it remains the case that, one almost any view of the relationship between forms and things, statements about forms must entail corresponding statements about things. (171)

Accepting Crombie's view (the forms are equivalent to absolutes) that a practical approach to attaining truth is contained in *The Republic* may help further our investigation as it offers a possible explanation for the absence of absolute justice in the modern system. Plato did not believe that everyone was capable of ascertaining knowledge of the absolutes, but this does not absolve our leaders, past and present, from generating a system that fails to grasp true justice in any degree. Their failure is evidenced by contradictions within their application of justice. In fact, it seems to be a temporary label rather than an unchanging truth.

The most prominent contradiction refers back to one of society's basic assumptions, the right to live out one's existence. With respect to this right, our justice system forbids the killing of any individual. Yet, the same government is itself permitted to deem the killing of ano individual just under certain circumstances or even entire bodies of people if it declares war against another state. It is beyond the scope of our investigation to determine which is more permissible, but it suffices to point out the contradiction. If the system seeks true justice, it would never seek to harm an individual, as argued previously. Therefore, only one of the laws can be correct. Either death is not a punishment, but is at times the only possible rehabilitation, or murder itself is not a crime, but only the murder of an individual with alternative hopes for rehabilitation. If the latter were true, a murder trial would be primarily concerned with the character of the victim and not simply with proving that the killing occurred. So, the system maintains contradictory labels of just and unjust on similar (arguably identical) acts.

The next question pertains to *what* has prevented our leaders, in the generations of social organization, documentation, and science, from elevating the justice system toward absolute justice. The answer seems out of reach. *The Republic* describes the governing procedure necessary for creating a class of rulers with the ability and desire to focus their efforts on true justice and steer the state in that direction. Unfortunately, most of the methods would be considered controversial today, and, even if instituted, it is not certain they would yield the intended results. Still, there is wisdom to be gathered from these proposals. Until this point, we have considered the totality of society to be at fault for the lack of true justice, but society, and every law within its history, is the work of individuals. If *The Republic* can be interpreted in an alternate way, the discussions of government and correct leadership represent the individual's progress toward absolutes, rather than that of a governing body that would subsequently lead the blind masses to it.

Plato readdresses the division of reality with a graphic allegory, in which he goes beyond merely describing the four realms and relates also the possible position of rational beings within them. In the allegory, the majority of people are prisoners in the lower levels of reality mentioned above, represented by a speciously lit cave. The light is cast by a fire behind the prisoners and it also casts shadows upon the wall in front of them. These shadows, which are all the prisoners may look upon due to bindings, are the *images* previously mentioned. The shadows are created by puppets, which represent the tangible world. Outside of the cave are the real objects that the puppets are imitations of; these real objects represent the realm of ideas, the unchanging concepts of science and mathematics. Finally, the sun, the source of life and perception imitated by the fire of the cave, represents the absolute.

It is difficult to relate the allegory to our journey through life because of the temptation to view it literally. We are already in the sunlight and confident that our world is close to, if not the ultimate, reality. The allegory instead considers the tangible world we interact with as the puppets of the cave. A person met in the ordinary sense would be the puppet that casts a shadow (eg, a photograph) upon the wall. We can break from the bindings in the cave by realizing that a person is not a

collection of photos, events, and memories (shadows), but something real, present before us. This allows us to look upon the puppet that cast the shadow. The bright fire may hurt our eyes and tempt us to return to the world of shadows. If we can stand the pain of the fire, we may go further and risk the blaring light outside the cave. At this point we cease to view the human as a temporary physical manifestation, and consider the unchanging idea of humanity. Once again, this may be painful to someone who is used to considering humans and relationships with them by means of photo albums and anecdotes. Relating the outside of the cave and the sun of the allegory is the most challenging part because there is no longer a physical object for comparison in our world; the latter stages are purely intelligible. Hence, the pain of dwelling on them correlates to the pain of "viewing" them in the allegory. To dwell on the unchanging concepts (outside the cave) and eventually become accustomed enough to view the sun (the absolute) is exhausting. Though it is painful, directing our energies toward the eternal abstracts is the only way we can hope to fathom true justice. It is disheartening to note that it is only a hope, but if we do not brave the brightness outside, we are doomed to embrace the illusions of justice that do not correct wrong-doing in the long term.

This denotes the final phase of our investigation. Those trapped in the cave lead their lives according to *doxa*, and have an underdeveloped reasoning faculty. This imprisoned majority is the cause of all hitherto justice systems including the one discussed herein. By viewing the tangible world as the ultimate reality, we delude ourselves into following our opinions and beliefs as we would follow the absolutes. The fault does not lie singly with leaders or partisans. Rather, each has alternately enabled the fixation on temporary justice by welcoming the material world's illusion of justice by consequence. This in turn greatly reduces the following generations' hopes of glimpsing and pursuing absolute justice because they are surrounded by instances of transgression and consequence during their most sensitive years. Their spirit then, reacting to the instinct's distaste for harm, focuses on how to avoid the behaviors that result in punishment, and slowly, reason is diminished as there is no use contemplating the absolute when the individual finds his consequence-free world to be just. Even without the emotional bias of the earlier example, a child witnessing endless instances of speeding/ticketing interactions soon forgets the danger the speeding may have created and focuses on avoiding the harmful ticket.

A justice system based on punishment is not the greatest evil in our society. It may possibly lead to social harmony. If every individual within the system is successfully deterred from carrying out antisocial acts, the populace will probably live out their lives with great joys and minimal pain. Still, in the absence of intentional harms, the deepest questions remain unanswered. Are we living justly? Are we living up to our potential? Is there something we can do beyond existing in precisely the manner we happen to find ourselves?

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Evaluation: *In my view a great paper has to offer an original insight, and this is certainly true of this paper. Hubert argues, using Plato's* Gorgias, *for the view that our justice system does not and can not make people more just since it does not aim to transform a person's character but only to control their behavior. It's a powerful claim, articulately defended here.*

# What Drives Men to Violence

*Anna Mielnikiewicz*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Examine a pair of thematically related stories in a literary research paper, maintaining a consistent critical perspective and making effective use of at least seven secondary sources.*

"Counterparts," by James Joyce, is the story of a dayo in the life of a man named Farrington. He works as a transcriber in a legal office, in Dublin, Ireland, where his body overwhelms his desk and he feels constantly nagged by his boss, Mr. Alleyne. Farrington is a heavy drinker whose ego battles with the disappointments of his life. A night out drinking with his friends turns sour when he arrives at home. "Like a Winding Sheet," by Ann Petry, tells the day of Johnson, a tired African-American man, working the third shift at a factory in New York in the 1940's. Johnson's day is started with playful banter from his wife, but it deteriorates when he gets into confrontations with two other women. His ego is bruised badly, and his body shows the signs. The day ends in horrific violence against his wife. "Counterparts" surprises the reader with its violent ending, while the racism and sexism in "Likeo a Winding Sheet" is shocking. Farrington is a massive,o alcoholic man who unleashes his rage on a child, while Johnson is a well-mannered man who deals with sexism and racism in the severest of ways. "Counterparts" shows the quick breakdown of the male ego, leading to violence,o and "Like a Winding Sheet" shows the effect of racism leading to uncontrollable rage. The social class structure in each man's society places them at the bottom of the chain, which only intensifies everything they encounter.

In "Counterparts," Farrington works as a copyist, and this is where his problems begin. Joyce writes that "he was a tall man of great bulk, a hanging dark wine-colored face, with fair eyebrows and a moustache" (1604). He also states that Farrington lifted up the counter as he got up and walked "out of the office with a heavy step" (1604). Farrington is described by Coilin Owens as a "heavyset man frustrated by his demeaning and monotonous job" (par.1). The image of this giant walking through a legal office shows him completely out of his element. The job he held was a bruise to his ego. This work of copying document papers might seem like a woman's job to many eyes, and he hated doing it. There isn't a better way to lower the image of a man, than to put him in a job he hates and doesn't fit doing. According to Mark Spilka, James Joyce "mixes sympathy for this misplaced creature with a clear critical eye for shared shortcomings and envied strengths" (190).

Farrington is from the city of Dublin, where the story takes place. His boss, Mr. Alleyne, has a Northern Irish accent. During the time the story took place, Ireland was being influenced to modernize by the British. Mr. Alleyne's accent suggests that he was a supporter of the British. There must have been strong feelings from the people of Ireland during this time for any kind of change. "While it may seem that the insignificant details of Farrington's struggle in the confines of Dublin society have little correlation to Ireland's colonial condition, Fredric Jameson contends that 'the story of a private individual is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society'" (qtd. in Malenich par. 2). All of this didn't help Farrington's relationship with his boss. Mr. Alleyne is described by Joyce as having gold-rimmed glasses, a clean shaven face, and a "head so pink and hairless that it appeared to be a large egg" (1605). Paul Lin describes Mr. Alleyne as "a well-oiled piston in a factory assembly line" (par. 10). Farrington appears to be constantly being screamed at for not finishing his job on time or running out of the office longer than he is allowed for his lunch. "Alleyne lectures his clerk as if he were a disobedient schoolboy oro a witless servant" (Spilka 191).

On the afternoon of "Counterparts," Farrington ditches out of work for a quick beer and is dazed when he runs back to his desk to try to finish his copies. Kevin Dettmar writes that "even with the threat of being fired hanging over his head, Farrington cannot bring himself to make the copy" (par. 58). When he returns to the office, Mr. Alleyne approaches him, accompanied by a female

**Student Reflections on Writing: Anna Mielnikiewicz**

I always thought that I could never put words down on paper and make someone else understand my thought process. What I learned is that everyone has a writer inside of them, but it takes a great teacher to help you understand. I would have never made it this far in my process of writing if it wasn't for the teacher that taught me. Writing anything almost comes naturally now. This teacher didn't give up on his students and did his best to make us understand, in any way he could. I was the student that was always in fear of writing papers for a class, but now I am broadening my schedule, to make sure that there *are* papers that need to be written for my class.

client, and he yells about letters missing from a file. Mr. Alleyne, trying to impress the wealthy female client at his side, demands Farrington to answer whether he takes his boss for a fool. "Faced with this public humiliation and affected by the combination of alcohol and suppressed rage, he [Farrington] blunders into an impertinent and accidentally witty answer, which sinks him in deeper trouble" (Owens par. 2). In the story, Farrington's "tongue had found a felicitous moment: 'I don't think, sir, he said, that that's a fair question to put to me'ó' (1607). This confrontation shows the importance of the female presence for these two men; they are fully aware of the woman standing beside them, and they try to "up" each other in this verbal battle. Paul Lin writes that "both men actually seek Miss Delacour's gaze for validation and a unified sense of a masculine self" (par. 8). Farrington had won this fight, but he would have to apologize to Mr. Alleyne and then pray he would not be pushed out of the office like a man before him had been.

The only thing that can make Farrington feel better about his minor victory with his boss, would be a night of drinking with friends. Farrington, needing financing for his night out, decides to pawn his watch chain. Then, he gets his night started by meeting Nosey Flynn, O'Halloran, and Paddy Leonard at a public house. They stood each other rounds while Farrington boasted about his achievement, in standing up to his boss. "In the pubs he becomes a kind of office hero, a boss killer, an Irish warrior using wit instead of force to master all tyrants" (Spilka 194). Delany states, in regard to their drinking, that "The person buying a round gains status by playing the role of a generous host; the others enjoy the honor of receiving a favor from the buyer as well as the more practical dividend of getting a free drink" (par. 4). Higgins, a man who works with Farrington, joins them. The atmosphere is high, and Farrington is at the top. The custom of standing each other rounds was something to show solidarity between each other as all men from the same place. There were rules to this custom and if one didn't follow, he would be shunned out of the circle and considered an outsider: "Any drinker who has money in his pocket is expected to share it, but he has an equivalent claim on anyone else's windfall. Everyone is thus provided with 'drinking insurance,' guaranteeing that few evenings will be completely dry" (Delany par. 4).

Leonard introduced the men to a British acrobat named Weathers. He joined their circle and ordered an Apollinaris, "a foreign mineral water" (Delany par. 7). This drink is "more a lady's drink than a man's; it is fizzy and therefore frivolous" (Delany par. 7), and an "Apollinaris is...ordinary soda water dressed up to appear fashionable, the sort of thing that only a snob would order" (Delany par. 7). Weathers was rubbing Farrington the wrong way by ordering this expensive drink, while the others stuck to the cheaper ones. Also, Weathers wanted to introduce the circle to some ladies; this irritated Farrington because his friends said he would not be able to come because he was married.

Their night continued at yet another bar where Farrington spotted a woman with a blue scarf, big hat, and yellow gloves. "Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace" (1610), and "When she finally returned his intense stare, he noticed the oblique expression in her big brown eyes" (1610). Lin states, "Farrington is even more delighted in this frozen moment of recognition, the recognition of his own masculinity and heterosexual desire" (par. 23). She only glanced at him a few times and when she was leaving, she bumped into him, and in her London accent said: "O, pardon!" (1610). Farrington's eyes followed her out of the bar, but she didn't return the gaze this time, and

"He was so angry that he lost count of the conversation of his friends" (1610). The woman stole his "high" and Farrington "cursed his want of money and cursed all the rounds he had stood" (1610). Farrington felt rejected, and his ego was damaged by this British woman in the bar. As Garry Leonard states, "validation in 'Counterparts' is conferred by the female gaze" (qtd. In Delany par. 9).

His friends were discussing strength with the British acrobat, Weathers, who boasted so much that they "had called on Farrington to uphold the national honor" (1610). This strength was being tested in the form of an arm wrestling match between two men: Farrington and Weathers. Their match began and "after about thirty seconds Weathers brought his opponent's hand slowly down on to the table. Farrington's dark wine-colored face flushed darker still with anger and humiliation at having been defeated by such a stripling" (1610). Of course, Farrington yelled for a "best two out of three" (1610). Although this trial took a little longer, the outcome was the same. Weathers had yet again won the battle. Farrington suffered a severe blow to his ego again. Farrington's red face shows humiliation and a man on the verge of breaking down: "No longer the space in which his masculinity is re-created and renewed, the public house becomes the place where Farrington's masculine identity becomes further dismantled" (Lin par. 26).

Farrington, "a very sullen-faced man stood at the corner...waiting for the little Sandymount tram to take him home" (1610). The events of the day and night had battered this man, and he was a wreck. The narrator states that "he [Farrington] felt humiliated and discontented; he did not even feel drunk" (1610). The level of damage his ego had taken is apparent in this passage:

> He cursed everything. He had done for himself in the office, pawned his watch, spent all his money; and he had not even got drunk. He began to feel thirsty again and he longed to be back again in the hot reeking public-house. He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said Pardon! his fury nearly choked him. (1610-11)

This was a man at the edge of the cliff, his fury held in with no outlet. The demeaning job, not having money, still feeling sober, the younger smaller British man showing more strength, and the rejection of the beautiful British woman were too much for him to absorb.

Farrington arrived at home, only to find that his wife was out at the chapel. Mark Spilka points out an interesting detail, that if Farrington was out after work drinking, he must have gotten home between 11:00 p.m. and midnight (197). It seems odd to Spilka that a chapel service would be held this late, since if his wife would be home, she would be the obvious recipient of Farrington's violence (197). Spilka believes that Joyce wrote it this way intentionally (197). Farrington's son Tom, whom he confuses with another son Charlie, was home and comes to help him. Tom assures his father that he will cook him dinner, but when Farrington takes a look at the cold cooking fire, his emotions fly. Farrington grabs his son and starts to beat him with a walking stick. "Tom clearly has done nothing to deserve his father's wrath, but that wrath must be spent, and Farrington contrives an excuse to take it out on his child" (Dettmar par. 61). His son has no way of escaping and can only cry out: "I'll say a Hail Mary for you pa, if you don't beat me" (1611). Farrington unleashes all the battering he took throughout the day on his innocent son.

In "Like a Winding Sheet," Johnson is portrayed as a tired, working, black man. Johnson works the third shift at a factory, pushing a cart around all night and picking up finished parts at each work station. His legs are worn out, and it's hard for him to get out of bed. He just can't seem to "get used to sleeping in the daytime" (1620). He has worked at this job for two years, but it still doesn't seem to sit well with him, to sleep during the day. There is also something that suggests that "Johnson...is a man of good intentions who seldom acts on them" (Spilka 272). In the morning he meant to wake up before his wife did to make her breakfast, but it just didn't happen.

Mae, Johnson's upbeat wife, teases him from the moment he wakes up. Johnson is still lying in bed wrapped in the bed sheet, while Mae is already getting ready for the work day. She tells him he "looks like a winding sheet, a shroud...like a huckleberry in a winding sheet" (1620). This isn't the kindest of remarks to say

to anyone, especially to your husband right when he wakes up. However, Johnson smiles to himself and lays back, enjoying Mae's giggling. Her playful banter has a soothing effect on him. Their relationship appears to be open and loving. Mae hurries him to get ready or he will be late again, like he has been for the weeks prior.

Mae realizes that it is Friday the 13th, and hesitates about leaving their home. Johnson is there alongside of her "urging her gently and it took time" (1621), but "... he was late for work again because they spent fifteen minutes arguing before he could convince her she ought to go to work just the same" (1621). He instantly thought to himself that "he couldn't bring himself to talk to her roughly or threaten to strike her like a lot of men might have done," simply because "he wasn't made that way" (1621). This isn't reassuring that he tells himself he won't strike her. That idea formed almost too quickly in his head. Spilka writes that "her superstitious panic scarcely calls for it, nor does the fact that she herself can be blamed this time for making him late" (274).

Johnson arrives at his factory job and starts pushing his cart around the concrete floor. He noticed his boss, the forelady, was already there. According to Jennifer Brody, the time period of the 1940s is significant here because "for the first time in history 'blacks' and 'women' entered manufacturing jobs in record numbers, especially in the North, where this story is taking place" (par. 7). Petry writes that "he could never remember to refer to her as the forelady even in his mind," and that "it was funny to him to have a white woman for a boss in a plant like this one" (1621). As he passed her, she called him over to acknowledge that she knew he was late for work again. The woman looked furious and started with her speech: "'You guys always got excuses; every guy come in here late always has an excuse. His wife's sick or his grandmother died or somebody in the family had to go to the hospital, and the niggers is the worse. I don't care what's wrong with your legs. You get in here on time. I'm sick of you niggers'" (1622). The choice of wording infuriates Johnson. His body reacted quickly; fists clenched and veins popped. Johnson didn't just keep quiet and take his boss's abuse; he responds right away, letting her know he would not let anyone call him a "nigger." "Johnson's first reaction is reasoned and fair, in the face of gross racism, and his anger is plainly justified" (Spilka 274). The forelady stepped back from him and claimed the word just slipped out, a simple accident. Johnson had to tell himself that this boss was a lady, and again he could not hit a lady because of reasons that he was not made that way.

The rest of the night at work went by as normal. He could see people's mouths moving, but he couldn't hear the words. The closer it got to quitting time, the more the women snapped at each other. The people surrounding him at work all seem to have anger and aggression built up. The schedule of working third shift and standing at your machine through the night probably has a lot to do with it. Since it was payday, Johnson got his envelope, then crammed outside with all the other workers and headed towards the subway. He appreciated the dark sky and longed to be able to sleep right away to catch hours of darkness, but knew it wouldn't happen. When Johnson and Mae would meet at home after their shifts, they would listen to the radio or cook before heading to bed.

Johnson, wanting to wait out the crowd before the long train ride to Harlem, stops outside a restaurant. When he looked through the window, the coffee urn caught his attention. He saw workers drinking coffee and their faces changing. He saw people smiling and talking. He quickly walked in and got in line behind the others waiting for a cup of coffee. The cup of coffee was so precious that he saw people being careful so they wouldn't spill any out of their cups. Finally when it was his turn, the white girl serving the coffee informed him: "No more coffee for awhile" (1624). Johnson's body reacted again with hands clenched. Johnson couldn't believe this girl serving coffee would not serve him any just because he was black. When he left the restaurant, he didn't look back. If he would've looked back, he would have seen the girl refilling the coffee urn since she was out of coffee. He would have noticed her exhaustion in working through the night, just like him. The confrontation that happened with his boss was still fresh in his mind, possibly without him even knowing. Carol Bender suggests that "his anger continues to build, running through his body like poison and everyone, it seems, degrades or belittles him" (par. 4). Mark Spilka believes that Johnson "is now the extended victim of his previous bad experience" (276).

Johnson returned home, "still seeking an outlet" after his intense day, to find Mae already there (Spilka 277). He grunted at her after she asked him if he got in trouble with the boss. Instead of taking this opportunity to talk to his wife about the painful day he just had, he only snaps at Mae. Johnson "saw that her sense of humor was struggling with her anger. But her sense of humor won because she giggled" (1626). Mae called to her husband, "Aw, come on and eat. You're nothing but an old hungry nigger trying to act tough and" then she giggled again. Johnson loved the sound of his wife's giggle, but he didn't hear it. Suddenly he got the bodily reaction he was experiencing during the day: fists clenched and tingling. Johnson's hands flew into Mae's face, and he repeatedly struck her. "The knowledge that he had struck her seeped through him slowly and he was appalled but he couldn't drag his hands away from her face" (1626). Through theo day, Johnson had dealt with racism and sexism, and now it had all been released onto his wife.

According to Mark Spilka, in "Counterparts," James Joyce used his uncle as a model for the main character of Farrington (199). Spilka also stated that Joyce's uncle was a billing clerk, abused his children when he was drunk, and apparently had a child who actually cried out the same phrase as Tom did in the story: "I'll say a Hail Mary for you pa, if you don't beat me" (199). James Joyce's father was also a drinker, but he chose to abuse his wife instead of his children (Spilka 199). Mark Spilka believes that the reason Joyce chose his uncle as the model for Farrington is because Joyce has a "fear of testing the power implications of marital violence" (199). Ann Petry, on the other hand, didn't have a specific situation that her story "Like a Winding Sheet" is based on. Petry came from a "tiny town in New England," according to Sandra Alexander (par. 1). Alexander also writes that Petry "moved to New York after she got married, which is where she learned to write and become good at it" (par. 4), and that "Petry actually wrote this story for a magazine she worked for" (Alexander par. 10). According to another critic, "Her fiction typically involves African-Americans struggling against the crippling impact of racism, her overarching theme involves a more broadly defined notion of prejudice that targets class and gender as well as race" (Seidman par. 9).

These two stories both end in tragic violence. The men in the stories feel bruised and battered by their encounters and in turn take it out on the ones closest to them. A phrase in an article by Jennifer DeVere Brody explains the violence caused by these characters. She writes: "the blows meted out by these male characters are meant to ensure their own limited power" (par. 27). Farrington and Johnson seem to have little control over their daily lives and feel belittled by everyone around them. The only way they feel like they have control over anything is to choose a weaker victim, close to home, that they can overpower. The damage done to their egos escalates through alcohol or feelings of racism. Alexander describes this as an "environmental force adversely affecting human lives so that its victims can neither understand nor control the devastating effects upon them and those they love" (par. 19). Mark Spilka, however, feels that Johnson in "Like a Winding Sheet" "should be accountable for beating and possibly murdering his wife instead of being played as the victim just because he can't directly face the racial and economic injustices" (278). Paul Lin believes that "Counterparts" "shows that it is frequently the bodies of wives and children of drinkers who must bear the most" (par. 28). "Counterparts traces the chain reaction of violence as it spreads, partially fulfilled, frustrated, reversed, and finally displaced, to an innocent and defenseless victim"(Owens par. 6).

Both of these stories show two lower- to middle-class families dealing with unnecessary violence. Whether the cause is sexism, racism, classism, or alcoholism, both of the men in these stories turned to violence because they had no answer. Farrington is a troubled man who uses alcohol as a crutch between the life he hates and the life he wishes he had. Johnson seems like a loving, kind man but has rage that his body finds hard to control, and that his mind can't grasp. The issues these men dealt with in their society are visible today, as people still must work jobs with horrible hours and insufficient pay because the immediate need is to help their family. Younger generations are not attaining the education needed for them, and they end up struggling in the lower class. After years of struggle, emotions can build and explode into violence. These stories were shocking, but the problems they describe are apparent in today's world every day.

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Evaluation: *Anna writes clearly and confidently in this essay. She used her research especially well to illuminate the social problems contributing to the plight of the men in these stories.*

# The Blackest of Words

*Stacy Morgan*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper incorporating effective use of at least seven secondary sources. Maintain a steady critical perspective.*

"*Othello* has become a play about its hero's blackness, and, for many, a racist play" (Skura 299). Shakespeare's *Othello* is a cleverly written play that reveals how racism can influence those in society. Society has recognized Othello as a good man and masterful general; yet, he is undone by the sly workings of a servant desperate to establish his own supremacy. The hateful, manipulative villain, Iago, cunningly uses his resources to tear down any individual deemed better than himself. *Othello* implies that jealousy and racism are powerful tools of destruction that when used together with malicious intent can produce a truly monstrous treachery.

"Shakespeare's play is divided into two phases: Venetian romance followed by chaos on Cyprus" (Skura 312). Othello's romance with Desdemona is aggressively challenged by Brabantio, Desdemona's father, before the Duke. It is here that Desdemona professes her love for Othello and their marriage is proclaimed legitimate. Desdemona is granted permission to accompany Othello on his mission to Cyprus, where he is to defend against the advancing Turks. However, a storm destroys most of the Turkish fleet, and Cyprus becomes the stage for Iago's coy manipulation. Through a tangle of lies and careful scheming, Othello is led to believe that Desdemona is an unfaithful adulteress who has coupled with Michael Cassio, Othello's lieutenant. The jealousy inspired by Iago's lies drives Othello to madness. During an emotionally savage scene, Othello takes Desdemona's life, after which Iago's plot is revealed. In light of Iago's plot, Othello judges himself harshly and repents by taking his own life. The tragic ending leaves readers with the questioning thought of "how could this happen?" The simple truth is, Iago's use of racist suggestion and jealous conviction provides the rope in which Othello hangs himself.

"Though Othello is clearly a major character, he fits Greene's notion of an 'underprivileged' character, because Othello is a man of African descent who may experience racism at the hands of a white antagonist" (Mills 155). Othello's African lineage classifies him as a Moor. Shakespeare never specifies where Othello's origin was located. All that is known is that Othello is African, which labels him a foreigner in Venice. Othello's Moorish status sets him apart from the Venetian characters of the play. At times, Othello is referred to as a Moor rather than his proper name. This is an attempt to distinguish him as different, reminding all that Othello was not meant to be part of Venetian society. Skura quotes several references to "typical Moorish behavior" that Othello demonstrates throughout the play:

> Vitkus claims that Othello "reverts to the identity of a black devil" and "the stereotypical 'cruel Moor' *or Turk*—jealousy, frustrated lust, violence, mercilessness, faithlessness, lawlessness, despair." D'Amico says that "his behavior evokes the stereotype of the hot *African* subject to irrational jealousy, a slave to superstition (the handkerchief) and violent moods." According to Bathelmy, "although Othello intensely wishes not to be a typical stage Moor [sic], he finds himself in exactly that position" (305).

Moor Othello may be, but he is also more than this. "Already, when we first meet him, he is a Christian and a 'self-made man' who has made the most of opportunity and his own genius and has overcome the handicaps of being foreign and black in the white Venetian world in which he has found a place" (Bell 2). One of the largest differences that separate Othello from other Moors is his choice of religion. Where most Moors were typically Muslim, Othello has embraced Christianity, and "...as a Christian, he is more welcome into Venetian society than he might otherwise have been" (Pettigrew par. 10).

Othello has found a place in Venice as a great general. Known as a great warrior, he regales others with his heroic tales. It is his grand story-telling that wins him Desdemona's heart. Othello's adventures have wooed Desdemona. She has fallen in love with him for his heroic deeds and thrilling dangers. Yet, this courting was held in private, and Brabantio was unaware of his

daughter's elopement until two eccentric men informed him late in the night:

> IAGO: Zounds, sir, y'are robbed! For shame, put on your gown!
> Your heart is burst' you have lost half your soul.
> Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
> Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!
> Awake the snorting citizens with the bell.
> Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
> Arise, I say! (*Oth* 1.1.85-92)

Iago's crude and vivid language in addition to the current situation enrages Brabantio. Learning of his daughter's union with Othello turns Brabantio into a racially prejudiced adversary in this play. Brabantio quickly travels to the Duke for assistance with this complication. Before the Duke, Brabantio cries out his anger:

> BRABANTIO: She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
> By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:
> For nature so prepost'rously to err.
> Being no deficient, blind, or lame of sense.
> Sans witchcraft could not.
> DUKE: Whoe'ver he be that in this foul proceeding
> Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
> And you of her, the bloody book of law
> You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
> After your own sense: yea, though our proper son
> Stood in your action.
> BRABANTIO: Humbly I thank your grace.
> Here is the man---this Moor, whom now, it seems.
> Your special mandate for the state affairs
> Hath hither brought. (*Oth* 1.3.68-73)

Brabantio's hoarse language is full of resentment toward Othello. He is determined to demoralize Othello by claiming he uses the stereotypical magics and charms of witchcraft to seduce his daughter. Brabantio soils Othello's image further by describing their union as a corruption, as well implying that Othello is a thief who has stolen Desdemona away. Also, in naming Othello a Moor, he is attempting to establish his own dominance in the presence of the duke by addressing Othello's foreign status. Brabantio's message is clear; Othello and Desdemona's marriage is unacceptable.

The Duke is in a rather uncomfortable situation. The Duke wishes Othello to travel to Cyprus to ward off the Turks, and he also does not wish to offend the influential Brabantio. The Duke has listened and taken in Brabantio's rant. Next, the Duke carefully listens to Othello's monologue of how he won Desdemona's love with words, not witchcraft. Afterwards, they send for Desdemona, and she expresses her love for Othello to be genuine. With the corresponding testimonies given, the Duke finds no reason why Othello and Desdemona should not be married. By means of this conclusion, the Duke announces, "If virtue no delighted beauty lack / Your Son-in-law is far more fair than black" (*Oth* 1.3.289-90). Fleissner comments, "His point is that Brabantio should realize that the Moor acted both fairly and squarely, hence he did not resort to underhanded witchcraft (as he had been suspected) to gain the hand of the pale-skinned Desdemona" (6).

Brabantio cannot comprehend why Desdemona has chosen Othello. Brabantio was under the impression she was not concerned in marriage since she had turned away "The wealthy curled darlings of our nation" (*Oth* 1.2.68). In a private discussion with Iago and Roderigo, Brabantio confides, "Call up my brother.---O, would you had had her!" (*Oth* 1.1.175). As a man concerned about standards of society, Brabantio believes Roderigo is a more suitable match for his daughter because he is white, even though Brabantio earlier states that Roderigo is not worthy of his daughter. Roderigo is destroyed at the thought of Desdemona's marriage. In his despair, he turns to Iago for advice.

Brabantio, Roderigo, and Iago complete the racist trio of this play. "All the characters seem to view Othello's color as a physical liability: Brabantio and Roderigo are horrified by it; Iago views it as unappealing" (Bent par. 10). Iago inspires racist attitudes in other characters. For example, once he tells of Desdemona's marriage, Brabantio suddenly looks down upon the man he once called a friend. Othello is now appalling because of his blackness, which according to Brabantio, deems him unfit to partner with his daughter. Again, Roderigo is consumed with jealousy that Othello has won what he desires; because of his envy, he takes the effortless path toward

racist insults to discourage Othello. Finally, Iago's true villainy shows, for he is consumed with the most hatred of any character. Not only does Iago make blatant racist attacks against Othello's blackness, but towards women as well. "Iago plays verbally the game Othello later plays physically: he smothers his wife. His misogynist jokes are intended primarily as lights into his own character and that of his culture, partial answers to the question: why is he so vicious?" (Sproat 45).

Iago plays the puppet master of Shakespeare's work, despite his servant status. Bell claims "He is one of the new breed of men who not only claim advancement by merit but will manipulate and scheme for advancement" (3). As a genius schemer, he stages key meetings that cause stirring events, such as Roderigo's grapple with drunken Cassio, which ultimately loses Cassio his title of lieutenant. Iago's influence is so great that he can recruit the assistance of others to obtain his objectives; for instance, he uses his wife's aide in obtaining Desdemona's handkerchief so that it can be utilized in his despicable plot. All of this is accomplished as he vigilantly whispers manipulative lies in the ears of every character. Bent even suggests that at times "Iago seems to believe his own lies" (par 7). Iago's convincing and charismatic demeanor takes him far in his devilish plan. Iago exploits every possible resource to obtain what he desires.

An endless list of motives lurks in the crevices of Iago's mind. "Does he act out of hatred for the Moor, jealousy at Cassio's rank, the rumor that Othello cuckolded him, or to further the romantic ambitions of his patron Roderigo?" (Bent par 6). Iago's hatred for Othello is confirmed multiple times, as well as Iago's opinion that he should have received the promotion to lieutenant instead of Cassio. To add sinister depth to this inventory, Iago suspects that Othello has slept with his wife Emilia. The only unselfish motive Iago has for his atrocious scheme is his connection to Roderigo, which is still far from "noble" intent. Iago is disgusted by his servant stature and longs to prove his supremacy above his master Othello. Perhaps he feels undermined by Desdemona's conversation about women and feels justified retaliating against her. Finally, Bent sums up that "Iago frequently characterizes his own machinations as 'sport,' and indeed he has a genius for intrigue, which, like all genius, can produce virtuosity for its own sake" (par 8). This would mark Iago as a disturbed individual who toys with others as a pasttime out of sheer monotony. Coles also reasons that:

> Iago is, rather, the government official, the doctor, the lawyer, the businessman, the architect, the teacher—anyone who is for whatever reasons unsatisfied enough with his or her life (no matter its privileges) to feel relentlessly spiteful—though secretly so. A smart man, a brilliantly manipulative man, an ever-so-shrewdly sly man, he knows how to take the measure of someone else—bring him down by bringing out the worst in him. (par. 5)

Iago is the mastermind running the show: "Not only does Iago have more lines than almost any other character in Shakespeare's oeuvre, he is also the most intriguing" (Bent par 5). Cunning charm, quick wit, and vicious determination to see others suffer combine to craft Iago into a true villain. Stealthy Iago hides a mischievous spirit under his enchanting facade. Skura writes, "Iago is the smarmy priest who promises to exorcise his patient's black devils but instead violates and blackens him artificially, more than any devil" (317). The evil intentions that Iago possesses render him the blackest character of all.

Blackness is a significant expression used to fully understand the writings in *Othello*. "Audiences seem to have been no less sophisticated in juggling the literal and figurative meanings of the word 'black,' sometimes meaning (1) literally dark color, sometimes (2) figuratively dark (evil and/or foul), and sometimes (3) both" (Skura 308-9). The dual meaning of this one word creates a double-edged sword that could destroy many possible meanings of the text if one doesn't associate the proper description. Blackness can be seen in a whole new light and shed insight to the play. Imagery and tone have a dramatic effect on the reader's feelings and mood of the story, and understanding "blackness" helps complete that experience.

Describing Othello's blackness is only part of the way racist characters attempt to tear down Othello. Several characters compare Othello to beastly creatures. In the very first scene, Iago refers to Othello as "an old black ram" (*Oth* 1.1.88). Shortly after that, he is referred to as a "Barbary horse" (*Oth* 1.1.112). By associating

Othello with these animals, Iago is attempting to make Brabantio think of the lower stature in which society will label Othello. Suggesting that Othello is no better than a laboring animal is a harsh and demeaning criticism. Iago worsens this horrific association by insisting that children from the obscene "beast with two backs" (*Oth* 1.1.117) would be of mixed heritage and discriminated against as well, causing extreme embarrassment for Brabantio. Emilia also brands Othello as a more sinister monster when she refers to him as a "blacker devil" (*Oth* 5.2.133). Emilia uses strong racially labeling language to develop a connection between the sin he has committed in murdering Desdemona and the malevolent overtones his skin may possibly represent.

However, "Othello's jealousy, not his blackness or his Moorish origin, is responsible for the murder" (Skura 307). Iago has ignited the unstable, raging emotion of jealousy. Consumed with Iago's lies, Othello "makes himself as much responsible for his own downfall as Iago; Othello never confronts Desdemona about his suspicions until it is far too late and he has already started down the path of murderous revenge" (Mills 158). Othello shows his stereotypical Moorish weakness by falling prey to the jealousy. Yet, Pettigrew explains "that Iago manipulates Othello cannot itself be taken as an indication of a particular weakness in Othello's character, since Iago manipulates all the characters in the play with similar cunning" (par. 9).

"Othello's moral decline may have been partly understood as a movement from an acquired whiteness to a more brutal darkness within" (Pettigrew par. 14). Othello's savage murder of Desdemona surprises all the other characters. No one could fathom that Othello would be driven to such aggressive means, for at the beginning of the play, Othello is the hero, one who is looked upon as an example to others, yet "Othello's collapse into murderous violence would seem to be an illustration of the way, according to the racist view, the coating of civilization must slide readily off the 'savage' personality" (Bello11). Othello is now viewed in two lights: the respectable man his outward shell portrayed and the wicked creature of Iago's working that is hinted at in the darkness of his skin.

Othello is torn between the noble man he is in the beginning of the play and murderer he has become in the end. In Othello's last speech, he seeks one more time an acceptance into society and asks forgiveness. But the only notion he truly gains is "an acceptance of his original status as a racial outsider, which neither his military achievements nor his marriage have succeeded in permanently altering" (Bell 6). "At the last, Othello surrenders himself to the prison of race he thought he had escaped" (Bell 14). With guilt and harsh self-judgment, Othello takes his own life so he may join Desdemona in death, for they are genuine lovers that "come from legend, not history; lovers are always strangers in each other's worlds" (Skura 311). Othello and Desdemona failed each other in a world that would not accept their love because it was smothered with the blackest prejudice.

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Evaluation: *Stacy has prepared a very focused reading of the role of race and social class in Shakespeare's* Othello. *This is a well-informed and clear-sighted application of the sociological critical approach in discussing the conflicts in this play.*

# Taking Note of Steven Pinker

*Amanda Muledy*
Course: Humanites/History 105
(Great Ideas of World Civilizations)
Instructor: Richard Middleton-Kaplan

Assignment: *Identify and synthesize the work of a contemporary great thinker or great contributor to the humanities who is active today in his or her field. Your main goal is to convince your reader that your subject merits the designation "great thinker" or "great contributor to the humanities."*

If asked to name a great thinker, most people would drop names like Socrates, Galileo, or Plato. Perhaps someo would name the world's more recent brilliant minds, likeo Einstein or Darwin. But how many would mention ao name of someone alive today who has made a difference in the last few years? With so much focus on the time-tested greatness of the Greek philosophers, Renaissance painters, and foundation-building scientists, it becomes easy to assume that revolutionary thinking happened in a time long ago and a place far away. While much of humanity's modern-day knowledge and social structures are owed to these now legendary giants of achievemento it is important to realize that great ideas are not a thing of the past. World-changing individuals are alive and well, working in laboratories, universities, and studios. There are people we have not even heard of today that will become household names, like da Vinci or Aristotle, for the work they have done. Great thinkers are not dead. One only needs to look as far as Steven Pinker, a professor at Harvard University, to see the proof of that.

If asked what he does professionally, Steven Pinker would probably simplify things by saying he is a teacher. Indeed, "professor" is one of the few titles broad enough to encapsulate many of Pinker's other possible labels: an experimental psychologist, a linguist, a cognitive scientist, a philosopher, and an author. Primarily teaching alternately at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard, Pinker's other involvements are extremely diverse. He has written dozens of articles for publications like *The New York Times, The Chicago Sun Times, TIME Magazine,* and a number of scientific magazines, as well as eleven books focusing mostly on linguistics and cognition. He was a finalist for the nonfiction Pulitzer Prize twice. In 2004, *TIME Magazine* cited him as one of the top 100 scientists and thinkers, and he has lectured three times on the stage of TED, the popular non-profit organization dedicated to promoting new ideas. He has spokenointelligently on everything from humanity'so history of violence to the exploration of the simultaneous belief in God and evolution to the rhetoric of Sarah Palin. According to his Harvard biographical page, other items that adorn his twenty-seven-page resume are six honorary doctorates, participation in the Human Genome Project, a few appearances on the *Colbert Report,* Chair of the Usage Panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary,* and Humanist Laureate (chosen by the International Academy of Humanism).

Steven Pinker has a burgeoning list of achievements and awards. However, it is the mind behind the accolades that is so worthy of note. The diversity of subjectso into which he has insight makes it difficult to limit his influence to one category of focus. Pinker would most likely point to his books on linguistic studies as his lastingo impact on the world. In these, he claims that language is a human instinct and discusses the acquisition of languageo in children. Some of his more famous publications are *How the Mind Works*, *The Language Instinct*, and *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language.* He has some interesting points in these books on the nature versus nurture debate, the essence of our desire to communicate, and why languages are similar in construct. However, I feel his lasting impact will be not in this area of specialty.o Pinker should be remembered for his commentary on ethics.

Though he teaches a class called "Morality and Taboo," there are no Steven Pinker books about ethics. However, there should be. He has dabbled in presentingo his ideas to the public in articles like "In Defense of Dangerous Ideas" on RichardDawkins.net, where he explores the human tendency to discard culturally unacceptable thoughts as "immoral." He has also written

an article called "What the F***?," found in the political journal *The New Republic*, on the collaborative societal demonizing of one turn of phrase over another. In my opinion, however, Pinker's best look into the phenomenon of morality is done in an article he wrote for *The New York Times*. His insight into the nature of ethics in his article "The Moral Instinct" is revolutionary enough to have changed the way I think about human nature, and brilliant enough to merit a place in a future academic class on great thinkers.

In "The Moral Instinct," Steven Pinker attempts to trace moral behavior to its beginning. Why do we consider some people saints and others despicable? He begins by asking his reader to morally rank Bill Gates, Mother Teresa, and Norman Borlaug. He assumes Mother Teresa, with her sad eyes and acquaintance with suffering, will be labeled the most moral. Bill Gates, on the other hand, is much too rich to be considered moral. He conjures up images of evil corporations and robber barons. As for Norman Borlaug, Pinker suspects no one reading is quite sure who he is. Then he lists the pragmatic, tangible good each of these people have done for the world. Mother Teresa, who "extolled the virtue of suffering," "offered plenty of prayer but harsh conditions, few analgesics and dangerously primitive medical care" ("The Moral Instinct" 1). Bill Gates, after calculating how he could do the most good with his money, decided to donate large amounts to helping fight common diseases, like malaria, in third-world countries. And the mysterious Norman Borlaug is credited with saving over a billion lives for his scientific research that lessened the problem of world hunger. Pinker shows that the human opinion of what is moral can sometimes be tricky, and, on occasion, people trust imagery, fashion, or even illusion to tell them what morality is or is not. This idea of illusions causing morality is Pinker's hook—he says that there is research being done with illusions and fictional situations to prove that there is a real moral instinct that has evolved in people. Because "a disrespect for morality is blamed for everyday sins and history's worst atrocities," it would seem to Pinker that this concept of morality is significant enough "to have to be bigger than any of us and outside all of us" ("The Moral Instinct" 1). He predicts society's concern is that if morality is revealed to be merely a matter of illusions, perhaps people would no longer have any reason to act morally. But Pinker says that scientific studies of morality will build on the stronghold of morality rather than tear it down. This new wave of morality studies with a biological twist asks questions about why human beings believe that some things are right or wrong. Researchers hope that, in doing this, they will discover a genotype-based reason why, generally, it is not considered immoral to personally prefer the color red to the color blue, but it is considered immoral to personally prefer killing someone over a dispute rather than settling it over coffee.

Pinker discusses a "moralization switch" that turns on when one realizes that an action is not merely "disagreeable ('I hate brussels sprouts'), unfashionable ('bell-bottoms are out'), or imprudent ('don't scratch mosquito bites')" ("The Moral Instinct" 1). He notes that the disapproval of rape and murder is not considered to be a matter of custom, but a universal wrong. The comprehensive nature of the species-wide "wrongness" of some actions is what Pinker calls the first hallmark of moralization. The second is the felt need to punish the offender—and that it would be "wrong" not to. The comparison Pinker gives of a moral switch being on or off is the difference between a moral vegetarian or a health vegetarian. There will probably be a spirit of recruitment in a moral vegetarian, looking to call other people to a higher cause. He or she may attribute virtues to his or her eating habits and think that the consumption of meat causes base and cruel behavior. There will be more of a focus on purity, meaning that a grilled cheese that has been made on a grill that is also used to cook burgers will be considered contaminated. A health vegetarian is not as likely to have the moralization switch flipped (unless they consider health to be not just beneficial, but moral), and will not try to bring others to the cause or give the person at work heating up a bowl of chicken alfredo a dirty look. Pinker goes on to talk about the push and pull of the times on society's concept of what is moral, bringing up the more recent demoralization of smoking. There are a few things that are being amoralized at the same time, such as marijuana, homosexuality, and illegitimacy. He notes that, interestingly, there seems to be a committee for the "Law of Conservation of Moralization, so that as old behaviors are taken out of the moralized column, new ones are added to it" ("The Moral Instinct" 1). Sometimes, a double standard emerges in socialized

morality. Pinker uses the example of a man forgetting to change the batteries in the smoke detector, therefore putting his family at risk, as a person whose actions are not considered immoral, despite the possible consequences. He also notes that eating a Big Mac is "unconscionable," but eating a rich, expensive dessert or imported cheese is not. These inconsistencies in peoples' moralizing can go much further into uncomfortable territory, and the results can be quite disconcerting.

Take Pinker's next example. He supposes that there are a brother and sister who, one night, decide it would be fun to have sex. The girl is on birth control, but the brother decides to use a condom just in case. They enjoy themselves but decide that they will not do it again. The two feel that the event has brought them closer and they do not regret what they did. Is this wrong? Hackles go up, teeth grit, and the impulse is to scramble for a good reason why the reaction is moral repulsion. Incest causes birth defects—is that not a good reason why incest is morally wrong? But, in this case, the two took more preventative measures than most couples do. There will be emotional repercussions, will there not? Incest is traumatizing. But it is clear here that both parties are pleased with what happened. This story is not Pinker's attempt to declare that incest is right or wrong. It is just pointing out that when people moralize, they often work backwards. They take an initial reaction, declare their opinion, and go searching for the reasons only if pressed. For some moral quandaries, the only reason given is "'I don't know, I can't explain it, I just know it's wrong'" ("The Moral Instinct" 2).

Pinker goes on to further his point that convictions and justifications are often out of sync as he explains two philosophers' "Trolley Problem" experiment. These philosophers took a huge sample size of 200,000 people from all over the world and came up with consistent results. The situation proposed to the test subjects was this: A trolley is hurtling down some tracks that six people were working on. You, the test subject, are close enough to throw a switch that would change the course of the trolley from its path, on which five workers would be hit and killed, to a path on which one worker would be killed. Would you throw the switch? To this proposition, almost all people from all places gave a resounding "yes." Then a new situation was proposed: The trolley is again heading for the five workers, but now you are on a platform above the tracks. The only way to stop the trolly is to throw something huge in the path of the trolley, and the only thing big enough nearby to stop it is a fat man. Would you push the fat man onto the tracks to stop the trolley? In this situation, most people said they would not take action, even though it is the same sacrifice of one life for five.

Pinker mentions this study because of the connection it has with the science of how the mind works. As people debate the harm they do to another in a case like the second trolley scenario, three parts of the brain light up on a magnetic resonance imaging scan. One is the emotional part, which deals with the idea of harming someone. Another part that lights up is the reasoning center. The third part is the one known to deal with conflict—in this case, the emotion and reason fighting each other.

**Student Reflections on Writing:**
**Amanda Muledy**

It seems preposterous to associate good writing with confusing writing. Yet, in academia, I think we often look for ways to fog up our prose. Like living in a foreign country, we quickly pick up "academic-ese" when we are in school. We trade in simplicity for phrases that are wordy and important-sounding. We embed our meaning in long, complicated sentences that need exhausting amounts of dissection.

An embarrassingly short time ago, I prided myself on my ability to craft an intricate maze of sentences that would stun through fanciful façade. In the blink of an eye, I could turn a five-word idea into a thirty-word sentence. But I had forgotten that the whole point of writing was to communicate. Now, my values as a writer have shifted. As I develop an increasing amount of confidence in the value of my ideas, I now take pride in how effectively I make a connection with my reader. I find that I can even do this without sacrificing the elegance I once suspected would be missing if I cut down on my word count!

But in the first scenario, in which the object directly ino contact with the subject is a switch, only the logic part of the brain lights up, and no moralizing flags go up in the emotional center. Pinker believes that there is a biological basis to why a moralizing switch is thrown, and that we will possibly be able to find a part in the brain in the emotion center that controls morality. To corroborate this, known sociopaths who have been scanned do not have the usual lighting of the emotional part of the brain when presented with a situation like that of the second trolley, where they are directly connected to human suffering. Damage to this part of the brain can even cause sociopathy. Also, morality may be genetic. Character traits called "conscientiousness" and "agreeableness" were found to be very similar in twins separated at birth, while not as closely related to adoptive siblings. Much of this evidence points to morality perhaps being part of human physicality, with genetics and some personal prejudices dictating the differences between what one person believes is moral and the other does not.

Since humans are evolutionary creatures, Pinker also believes that not only is some morality biological, but that it evolved from somewhere. By a system of giving and receiving, people can live much better lives. When communities were mostly clans of relatives, it was beneficial, from an evolutionary standpoint, to care for and nurture others. In a "favor for favor" world, the farmer gives corn to the hunter in return for his fur, and both have better lives. A bartering system may be at the core of our moral evolution. But then communitieso became more than that single family, and what would stop the farmer from just taking from the hunter without giving up any of his goods? Here, Pinker cites a biologist named Robert Trivers, whose studies could prove that natural selection would favor those who we would think of as moral. Paraphrasing, he says:

> A favor-giver not only has to avoid blatant cheaters (those who would accept a favor but not return it) but also prefer generous reciprocators (those who return the biggest favor they can afford) over stingy ones (those who return the smallest favor they can get away with). Since it's good to be chosen as a recipient of favors, a competition arises to be the most generous partner around. ("The Moral Instinct" 6)

Anticipating the argument, Pinker says that, theoretically, one would only have to *appear* the most generous in order to win the competition. However, the favor-giver would develop a kind of internal lie detector instinct after being duped enough, and he would be able to spot those who were not truly the most generous. Therefore, the easiest, simplest, and most logical path to being *perceived* the most generous is to *be* the most generous. The Golden Rule does not now look like an unnatural stifling of people's inherent selfish desires, but as the most natural possible way to live life. Pinker does not assume this is the rule for the entire human species, which has "its share of generous, grudging and crooked characters" ("The Moral Instinct" 6). But he then notes that "the genetic variation in personality seems to bear the fingerprints of this evolutionary process" ("The Moral Instinct" 6).

Pinker concludes by postulating that humans are born with a rudimentary moral sense, dictated by genetics and evolution. It is then cultivated by experience, personal preference, and society. While weight is given to different "themes," like "harm, fairness, community (or group loyalty), authority and purity" ("The Moral Instinct" 4), all work from the same base, which is why almost all agree that murder, rape, and stealing are morally wrong. Morality, and the reasons behind it, are not just "figments of our brains" ("The Moral Instinct" 7). Morality makes sense from an evolutionary standpoint, and it is what makes our society tick.

I believe this way of looking at morality is revolutionary and exciting, because it frees humanity from seeking a higher authority and divine justice to determine what is "good" or "bad." Because religion has been at the heart of so much violence, I feel as if in order to move past humanity's history of brutality, religion needs to be downplayed. So many, though, seem to fear that if religion is thrown out, all reason for morality will go out with it and we will lose the thin, starving civility we have managed to keep alive long enough to prevent the world from becoming a Sodom and Gomorrah. I have heard it said that society would devolve into anarchy withouto a belief of God waiting upstairs to reward the good and punish the bad, and I have heard people wonder aloud how often a healthy fear of Hell has kept many would-be

criminals in line. Even those who live by the Golden Rule without religiosity as a motivator may wonder what would happen if people did not have religion's guiding hand in society to give them a greater moral purpose. Would they all become barbarians? Steven Pinker, in his article, has given humans permission to trust their humanity. He has done away with the need for anything more than their nature to be altruistic. It, in fact, becomes *natural* to be a good person. People can be moral because it is logical and because it is part of evolution, and that shoots down one more reason to continue their collective dependence on religion, which has such a heavy hand in violence and atrocity.

It is invigorating to believe that, for those more inclined to look to reason than spirituality, morality is not necessarily some fabrication or some internalization of human laws. I have often wondered if maybe I have been trained to believe that illegal things are also morally wrong when they are not necessarily so. The example of smoking given in the article is a big contributor to my distrust of morality's concreteness. Smoking has become unfashionable, and in the process, immoral. The flimsy nature of this particular morality makes more sense after reading the article. It would appear that some moralities are societal and surface-level, while some have remained a foundation for morality for a long time. I have also been curious as to how much my idea of what is right and wrong has been dictated to me by my parents, my schools, and my church. It is hard to believe that something so personally and vehemently felt, like my repulsion for theft, was simply built into me from childhood as an effort to mold me into a compliant citizen. This article gives me a real, concrete reason for why I personally believe things and why I have the impulse to be kind. Pinker's article satisfies some of my psychological curiosity about myself, as well as my intellectual curiosity.

My idea of a person of greatness is one who never lets convention confine his or her pursuit of discovery and then, in this disregard for convention, discovers something that makes the world a better place. Because of Steven Pinker's laundry list of brilliant, wonderful works, it was very hard to narrow down my review of him to only a small essay's worth of study. This inspection of the moral roots of human beings is not the only thing Steven Pinker has given to the world that is enlightening and thought provoking, but I feel it is what he should be remembered for. In "The Moral Instinct," he has given the logic-dependent realists of this world a reason beyond "God Sayeth" for their morality. This is a feat I have never seen tackled with such elegance or so lacking in ulterior motive or a tone of vindictiveness. He is not an angry atheist. He is not a white-washer. He is merely someone looking at things in a new way, and in sharing the new way, encouraging others to embrace the moral creature they were born to be. And what better criteria for a great thinker than someone who causes a people to look at their world, themselves, or their fellow human with a new appreciation for what they see?

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Pinker, Steven. "In Defense of Dangerous Ideas." *RichardDawkins.net.* The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, 23 July 2007. Web. 24 April 2010.

Evaluation: *After a bracing overview of Pinker's considerable accomplishments, Amanda moves quickly and logically to extended focus on Pinker's essay "The Moral Instinct." Its ideas are explicated with thoroughness and clarity, as Amanda offers a rousing account of its explanatory power.*

# Joe the Plumber Is Not My Hero: The Demise of Intellectualism in American Society

*Jack Netter*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment: *For the second paper assignment of our fast-track English 101 class, students were asked to write a paper developing a cultural critique.*

Throughout its history, America has maintained a tradition of enterprise and hard work, ingenuity and inspiration. Against almost insurmountable odds, Americans fought to victory in World War I, recovered from the near-death experience of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, beat back the onslaught of the Axis Powers in World War II, and twice fostered a sea change in the technological landscape, both in the industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century and the technological revolution of the late twentieth century. Americans have, perhaps more than any other culture in the history of humanity, epitomized the bootstrap mentality, pulling themselves up time after time to continue and to prosper. These endeavors have produced the heroes of our time: Madison, Adams, Edison, Tesla, Ford, and (Neil) Armstrong, among many others. Americans have sought leaders who have braved adversity and inspired the masses through their words and actions: Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Kennedy, to name just a few. These great thinkers were held in the highest regard and respected for their knowledge, their bravery, and their achievements.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, it seems that we, as a nation, no longer value those qualities. Instead, we hold in disdain and distrust those who might create a just and sustainable future. Are the nuances of political intricacies so complex that we should abandon rational discourse and succumb to the race for the lowest common denominator? Do we now live in a time when advances in science have become so abstract that it is far easier to discredit the scientists than face the realities of the science? Is the commotion and chaos of the world around us so overwhelming that we should abandon secular pragmatism and, indeed, common sense, and revert to a paranoid, ethnocentric, religious fanaticism? These are the questions we must face. Just as climate change and the decline of the Roman Empire led to the period in Western Europe broadly referred to as the Dark Ages, might we in the United States be on the brink of a new Dark Age? Are we approaching a time when reason is trumped by superstition; a time when scientific fact is abandoned for religious belief?

In the campaign leading to the presidential election of 2008, the Republican front runner was John McCain, a respected senator from Arizona. A decorated war hero and a 26-year veteran of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate ("About John"), he was well-known as an eloquent, well-spoken, moderate Republican. After much speculation, his campaign chose as his running mate the plain-talking, no-nonsense, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. She was relatively young and very energetic, exactly what McCain was not. She also had a tendency to go off script. She had difficulty answering unrehearsed questions during interviews and would talk around questions in a blitzkrieg of fragments and non sequiturs. Her detractors chalked this up to some combination of a lack of intelligence and a lack of experience. Her supporters, on the other hand, attributed this to the fact that she was an everyday person, and that she had been somehow tricked by the media. They held that the vice-president should indeed be someone that was just like them.

In the course of the campaign, McCain's opponent, Barack Obama, engaged in conversation with a man named Joe Wurzelbacher. Mr. Wurzelbacher quickly became a darling of the campaign and of the Republican Party. Soon known as Joe the Plumber, he was held up as the prototype of the average American: Joe Six-Pack. He began to appear on cable news shows and at campaign stops. He was an overnight sensation. The most casual observation revealed that he had little to say of any real import, and that he didn't seem to have a firm grasp

on any of the political issues of the day (he obviously misunderstood the Obama tax plan and the fact that it would most likely *lower* his taxes, even if he bought the company he worked for), much less on the platform of the political party and candidate for which he professed his support. Still, he was put forth as a hero, as someone whose opinion mattered.

Perhaps the most vocal of all the players in the last presidential race and in politics as a whole was cable TV news itself. Commentators on the right and the left did a disservice to rational discourse by viciously spinning minuscule fragments spoken by anyone even remotely related to one side or the other. We have replaced our best and brightest with least and loudest. Overly dramatic shrieks of "socialism" and "fascism" shroud what are actually fairly reasonable differences of opinion in a cloud of obfuscation until even a moderately educated and informed viewer is whipped into a frenzy. It evolves into a simple ratings grab: tomorrow night's guest must be more shrill and outraged than tonight's.

In each of these cases, rational discourse is abandoned for talking points and news bites. Rather than seeking an explanation of the matters at hand from the myriad impartial information sources, observers latch on to the rhetoric crafted by campaign insiders. Getting to the bottom of an issue is far too complicated and time consuming and requires too much energy. Why bother when there's always someone standing by to validate paranoid tendencies?

The only thing that appears easier than feeding the paranoid, irrational fears of an uninformed populace is ignoring the things that we actually should fear. Educated climatologists the world over using the most powerful computers available to model climate data agree: the Earth's weather patterns are changing. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide have been rising dramatically since the dawn of the industrial revolution. Global average temperatures are increasing. Glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates. Sea levels are rising. Everyone from scientists to government officials around the world to the leaders of the very industries causing the greatest carbon dioxide emissions agree that the Earth is in the throes of environmental change. Yet, according to a recent Gallup poll, more Americans than ever feel that reports of climate change are "exaggerated" ("Increased Number Think Global Warming is Exaggerated"). There is no evidence that increasing numbers of everyday Americans are becoming educated, degreed climatologists. There is no evidence to support the idea that global warming isn't a real, immediate threat; quite the opposite. Seemingly, it is simply the fact that the situation is so dire and the remedies so draconian that it is much more attractive to ignore the facts and believe the incomplete and irrational arguments of its detractors.

Perhaps there is no better example of this head-in-the-sand mentality than can be found in the wave of fundamentalism sweeping our nation. Faith and religion have a significant place in the building of this country, indeed, in the history of human civilization. From early pagan and druid celebrations of sacred holidays (upon which much of the modern day Christian religious holiday calendar is based) to the dawn of the mythology of the Greeks, to modern day Christian, Buddhist and Muslim society, religious beliefs have formed important parts of the structure of civilized society. During the most trying times in history, Americans have turned to their faith and their religious communities for support. Religion, however, has also been the basis for some of the most cruel and violent human behavior. The Inquisistion, the Crusades, both Muslim and Christian, and the disputes over modern day Israel, Palestine, and the occupied territories demonstrate the ways in which religious principles can be used to justify war and terror.

The same, one might argue, can be seen in the modern-day rise of fundamental Christianity in the U.S. Many believe that a new era of fear, ignorance, and intolerance are the hallmarks of many brands of fundamentalism. While the extreme examples are the realm of the headline-grabbing sects—the Branch Davidians in Waco, the Michigan-based Hutaree Militia, or Fred Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church—a rising tide of everyday Christians with generally mainstream beliefs can be heard to express radical anti-gay, anti-abortion and anti-environmental beliefs to the point of promoting violence in support of their cause. At the very least, these views are often unscientific, uninformed, and far outside the mainstream. It would seem that this behavior might rise from a state in society that brings individuals from more

sheltered environments face to face with circumstances and lifestyles that they may not otherwise experience, and that are far outside their comfort zones. Outwardly gay lifestyles portrayed on television might be shocking to a resident of a rural, middle-America community who may feel that homosexuality is a choice, all scientific evidence to the contrary. Or perhaps, scientific principles and practices may run far afoul of long-held religious beliefs. The stories of Genesis and creation in the Bible are simpler to grasp than the complexity of radiocarbon dating and evidence of evolutionary history. In each case, it appears that secular scientific discoveries that run contrary to traditional religious beliefs are viewed by some as a threat to the very fiber of society.

History has taught us that knowledge and scientific endeavor constantly challenge humans to question their assumptions and investigate the evidence. While issues of intellectual import have become more political over the past fifteen years, to say that fundamentalist unscientific and anti-intellectual beliefs in the U.S. are entirely politically motivated would be too cynical. But what other explanation will hold? It stands to reason that large portions of the population have abandoned reason in favor of belief. They are allowing themselves to be told what to think, rather than investigate the evidence and make an informed decision. We, as a society, are forgetting how to be intellectual, forgetting the importance of intellectualism. Our leaders play to the distractions of consumerism and popular media, and we end up with exactly the government we deserve. Rather than electing the smartest guy we can find to be president, we flock to the guy who we like, who is packaged to look and sound like us, the guy with whom we would like to have a beer. Even a well-spoken, literate president must dumb down his rhetoric to appear genuine to the electorate. As a result, the "intellectual elite" have become the bad guys. The best and brightest that possess the wherewithal to help us resolve our social and environmental crises are relegated to the level of nerdy, forgotten eggheads. What a frightening proposition.

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Evaluation: *This paper really does make readers take a look at themselves and the world around, exactly the purpose of a cultural critique.*

# Annotated Bibliography for a Research Paper on Carl Sagan's *Contact*

*Lindsay Quid*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Pearl Ratunil

Assignment: *For this assignment, procure five scholarly books and/or articles on your research topic and annotate the contents of each one. The annotation should describe and evaluate the source's arguments, its evidence, and its potential benefit to your research topic.*

**Beckman, Petr. *A History of Pi.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971.**

This book discusses the periods of time in history when pi made progress in the mathematical and science world. Petr Beckman argues that the history of pi is a reflection of the history of man. He proves his thesis by supplying historical information relevant to the discovery of pi and how pi relates to the overall history of mathematics. He covers a span of time from the ancient Greeks to the modern era (1971 when the book was published), focusing mainly on western civilization. He supplies various methods to compute pi as well as many mathematical formulas in which pi is relevant. He cites 35 differences sources from which he extracted his primary knowledge to write the book. The book is not as much a history of pi as it is a means of loosely using pi to explain a broader view of mathematics.

**Begley, Sharon. "Math Has Pi on Its Face." *Newsweek* 120.22 (1992): 73. *Academic Search Complete.* EBSCO. Web. 17. Apr. 2010.**

This article discusses ideas proposed in the book *Pi in the Sky* by John Barrow. Sharon Begley argues that there are severe imperfections in the foundation of mathematics that could jeopardize all the sciences. Begley proves her argument by taking excerpts from Barrow's novel and direct quotations from research he had done. She also proposes opinion from Kurt Godel, an established mathematician whose life's work was analyzing systems with self-consistent rules. There was not much information posed outside of what came from Barrow's novel; therefore, without reading the novel directly, it cannot be determined how much evidence exists to support this thesis.

**Cook, Harry and John R. Wood. "Looking at Nature through Other Eyes: God's Governance of Nature in the Religion-Science Debate." *Christian Scholar's Review* 39.3 (2010): 275-290. *Academic Search Complete.* EBSCO. Web. 17. Apr. 2010.**

This article gives an overview of relevant literature pertaining to God's presence in the natural world, theories of design, and his relation to pain and suffering. Harry Cook and John R. Wood argue that all events in the natural world ultimately abide by God's natural intention. The authors support their thesis by presenting information from multiple opposing works of literature. They attempt to discredit any literature that states the opposition to their argument by over-stressing any criticism that the discussed works of literature received. They stress that they know the world abides by God's natural intention because they have faith it does, and there is no requirement for it to stand up to some experimental test. The viewpoints of the authors are clearly from a religious perspective. Almost all of their evidence in support of their thesis is derived from the Old Testament of the Bible. They provide little else by way of evidence to support their thesis. The greatest strength to their thesis is rather in the criticisms of the opposition.

**Kukla, André. "The One World, One Science Argument." *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 59.1 (2008): 73-88. *Academic Search Complete.* EBSCO. Web. 5 Apr. 2010.**

This article discusses the flaws in the "One World, One Science" argument proposed by cetists (a group of scientists involved in the project of establishing

Communication with an Extraterrestrial Intelligentisia). Andre Kukla argues that the cetists' controversial claims about science and the world are what ultimately lead to the major flaws in their theories. Kukla supports his argument by breaking down common ideology from cetists into particular categories and then category by category states the flaws in their logic. He does this by using supporting mathematical equations and concepts. He also proposes logical flaws in their realm of thought, areas where there are holes in their theory. He uses multiple excerpts along the way from scholarly articles relating to "science and alien intelligence" to support his thesis.

**Stacey, Kaye, and Jill Vincent. "Finding the Area of a CIRCLE." *Australian Mathematics Teacher* 65.3 (2009): 6-9. *Academic Search Complete.* EBSCO. Web. 10 Apr. 2010.**

This article proposes several different ways to prove the formula for the area of a circle, mainly pertaining to secondary education. Kaye Stacey and Jill Vincent argue that deductive reasoning can help a child to understand there is a rationale behind every formula in mathematics. The authors demonstrate this by showing the different methods that can be taught to find the area of a circle. They propose drawing a circle on grid paper and counting the number of squares that lie within the confines of the circle and deducting the area from basic counting principles. They suggest dividing the circle into multiple triangle shapes and rearranging them into a parallelogram or a rectangle. This allows the students to reference previously understood material to learn a new concept. They also suggest that by constructing a square inside the circle and outside the circle, students can understand the concept of the "radius" and thus visually conclude why the area of a circle must be approximately $A = \pi r^2$ Lastly, they divide the circle into a series of multiple rectangles. They then arrange the rectangles to from a triangular shape to demonstrate the radius and its relations to the circumference of the circle. The authors offer very substantial evidence to prove their thesis.

Evaluation: *Annotated bibliographies are challenging to write because they need to describe a source succinctly and clearly. They also describe sources for a projected research paper—one that may not be written yet. Lindsay's bibliography is commendable because she was reading sources on the history of mathematics in order to analyze the science fiction novel* Contact. *Her annotations were clear and show her understanding of complex ideas.*

# Shiva as Nataraja: The Meaning Behind the Dance

*Josh Roman*
Course: Art 133 (non-Western Art)
Instructor: Karen Patterson

Assignment: *Research a non-Western artwork of your choice and compare/contrast it with a second non-Western piece viewed in person at the Art Institute of Chicago. Address the following three themes in your paper: cultural context and significance, iconography, and style. As part of your paper, assess your assumptions before beginning research and how they have changed as a result of your study.*

Within the Hindu religion, the cult of Shiva is among the most popular. Of the many depictions of Shiva in art, Shiva as Nataraja is one of the most recognizable in the West. The word "Nataraja" means "Lord of The Dance" and is a depiction of the Indian God Shiva or rather an aspect of Shiva, whose dance coincides with the creation and destruction of the universe. Although numerous examples of the Nataraja exist, and they generally all share the same symbols, there are minor differences between many of them due to how each of the pieces are produced, where they were made, and when. Although a single piece may be studied to reveal most of the meaning behind the work, the Nataraja is significant in that so many pieces exist that show similar elements, yet each one is unique. It is this uniqueness in the pieces that not only helps clarify what trends and beliefs were present at the time of creation, but helps embody the Indian belief that depictions of deities serve as a vessel for that being (Subramuniyaswami 317). It is also through examining two similar pieces, one located in Museum Rietberg, Zurich (Figure 1), the other located in The Art Institute of Chicago (Figure 2), that a comparison of similarities can be established and that the differences can be made clear to appreciate each as being a unique variation on the same subject and yet part of a greater whole.

"As the king of dance, Siva (Shiva) perfected dance, relating power and grace manifested through the physicalo body and affecting the cosmic body of the universe" (Williams 269). This dance symbolizes causation, not only in destruction but in creation and rebirth of the universe. In one story connected with the Nataraja, the *Daksha Yaga*, Sati tells of a wife of Shiva who was humiliated by her father and jumped into a fire altar. Shiva, overcome with the pain of her death, danced ferociously and ended the universe to find solitude (Williams 269). This story is significant because it imparts an emotional tone to the dance and becomes something that others, followers or not, can relate to. In another story, Nataraja is connected with funeral rites and cremation, dancing amid the ash of the dead (Williams 269). Other stories related to the Nataraja focus not on Shiva as destroyer, but as a creative and preserving force, with destruction being merely the result of a brief pause in the dance as the rhythm changes (Jansen 111). Depictions of the Nataraja are relegated primarily to imagery used in religious festivals related to Shiva, or are housed in niches along temple walls as processional imagery. At the shrine to Nataraja at Chidambaram, the Nataraja is placed in the garbhagriha instead of the lingam (Srinivasan 3,4 and Kaimalo24, 25). But even at Chidambaram, the Nataraja is not the subject of worship; instead, what is worshipped is the absence of the lingam. In this way, despite being one of the most popular forms of Shiva, its purpose is fleeting, just as it describes the universe as being simply one part of a greater cycle of creation and destruction.

Although depictions of dancers in a similar pose can be traced back to Mohenjodaro and 2500 BCE, Nataraja, as the form which is commonly recognized, started to appear as late as the seventh century CE. Most of the bronzes that are held in museums or private collections date to between the eighth and eleventh centuries and were made at a time when there was a rise in interest in the Nataraja icon (Srinivasan 8). In addition to bronze castings, the Nataraja also appears in stone carvings (Subramuniyaswami 47). In both, and throughout its usage in the religion, what is depicted remains mostly unchanged. In the typical depiction, the dancer has four arms; the upper right hand holds a drum, which not only creates the music of the dance and creation but also symbolizes the duality of male and female (Jansen 111). The lower right hand is raised to show a mudra, or hand symbol of blessing ando protection (Jansen 21). The upper left hand holds a flame symbolizing not only destruction, but a catalyst for life (Jansen 45). The right leg represents obscuring grace, as it stands upon a demon that is believed to represent ignorance. The left leg is raised, representing grace and a release from earthly bondage (Subramuniyaswami 41). The lower left hand gestures toward the left leg as a sign of assurance that grace is a way toward liberation and as a sign of strength and power (Jansen 24). Around the

Figure 1. Sculpture of Shiva in the Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland.

Figure 2. Sculpture of Shiva in The Art Institute of Chicago.

dancer burns a circle of flames representing the cosmos and consciousness (Subramuniyaswami 41 and O' Riley 82). The snake that is wound around Nataraja's body, a cobra, represents fertility and the power present within all persons (Subramuniyaswami 41 and Jansen 50). In this dance, Shiva appears alone, with long hair, as both a comment to his ascetic nature and a suggestion of a duality of male and female forms (Williams 269). Shiva wears a long necklace that droops down to his belly; its length symbolizes benevolence. In many depictions of Shiva, this necklace is decorated with snake motifs as a symbol of having power over fertility (Jansen 34). It is, however, possibly worth noting that not all of the meaning of the imagery has remained constant over the years. One example of this is the aforementioned demon named Apasmara, which Shiva is standing upon. According to more recent views, the figure is the body of a demon that depicts ignorance that Shiva has vanquished and now tramples in his dance. However, earlier views suggest that this figure is that of a dwarf, such as those who frequent other Shiva imagery, and that it is seen as a benign figure showing a sign of supreme devotion to the deity (Kaimal 13-15). This variance is important because it suggests a changing meaning to the iconography over time and reinforces the need to look beyond just a single instance to understand its meaning and the beliefs that embrace it.

Stylistically, these bronzes feature the same sorts of things as might be expected from an early Indian piece. The limbs are usually tubular, and the figure usually displays rounded joints. The torso is usually triangular and without defined muscle tone. The face is simplified and idealized, hair and garments depicted not as they would actually look, but as a sort of idealized form that complements the figure and further expresses movement within the piece. There is also a subtle stylistic and proportional contrast between the tall dancer, with long limbs and flowing form, and the wide body of Apasmara, with short limbs and misshapen form, on which the dancer is perched (Kaimal 14, 15). All of this lends itself well to establishing balance and rhythm, as well as variety within the composition.

In casting the statue, the ring of fire, the flowing braids of Shiva's hair, the headdress, and the garments also serve as an aid to ensure equal distribution of bronze throughout the piece (Srinivasan 13). It is possibly due to this technical requirement of casting and the decisions of the artist toward coping with these issues that there is significant variance in how these objects appear and intersect with each other from one piece to the next. Using the two pieces in Figures 1 and 2, one can see how some of these necessary differences have manifested stylistically. The Zurich example (Figure 1) has a much

more refined circle of flames, smaller braids, and a more intricate headdress. Compared to the Zurich example, the Chicago example (Figure 2) has features that are less clearly defined, with less detail on the body of Apasmara. However, it might be worth noting that some of theseo differences might be related to a variance in height of the piece. Although both pieces are of a similar height, with the Zurich piece at 82 cm and the Chicago piece at 71.1 cm, and subsequently similar proportions, this difference allows for finer details to be rendered more completely.

These pieces also differ by what additional iconographic elements are present. In the Zurich example (Figure 1), a chakra, or wheel with spokes, is clearly visible floating among Shiva's braids; this wheel is a symbol of life and death and serves to reinforce the cyclical theme of the piece (Jansen 52). In contrast, the Chicago example (Figure 2) shows many cobras intertwined in Shiva's braids, establishing a further emphasis on fertility (Jansen 50). As each piece is made using a method of lost-wax casting, the mold each piece came from as well as the wax sculpture that served as its framework is unique. In being something that cannot be replicated exactly from one instance to the next, there is room for variation between pieces according to the artist who carved the wax, who commissioned the work, and what physical elements needed to be present in order to make a viable piece (Srinivasan 12,13). Although the Chicago example also has a flowing sash that the Zurich example does not, there does not seem to be any purely iconographic meaning behind this, but it is likely there only for aesthetics, by adding the suggestion of movement and to aid in casting.

Although both the pieces feature slightly different iconography and different stylistic forms, both come from a similar period in time, the one from Chicago dating to the tenth century and the Zurich example coming from the eleventh-twelfth century. In this, they are also similar in how certain features, like the hair, headdress, and garments are rendered, as well as the overall workmanship. This period also was one in which dance was more widely expressed in art, which becomes evident in the pose and the sculpture being more naturalistic than earlier works of the same subject (Srinivasan 10,11).

When I first saw a photograph of Shiva as Nataraja, I really didn't think there was all that much to it. To me it just looked like a figure, one I mistakenly assumed to be female given the soft contours and the Western notions that dance is in itself is a feminine thing. I had no more notion of what was really being depicted than I had in there being so much variety within a single subject. My interest here was less about the piece in general, but one which was guided by the research itself. In being a popular depiction, it is also one of the most discussed and most relevant to an outsider who might want to counter their biases. It was through research that I became aware of profound concepts that are illuminated in an ancient form, among these being a connection between Shiva's dance and the subatomic dance of particles as they are created and destroyed (Subramuniyaswami 41 and Srinivasan 2). It was also through research that I discovered just how much symbolism is present in the work and how little certainty there is in the source of that symbolism. Apasmara, for example, is mentioned as being a hindering force in some texts, but is described as a complementary and subservient force in Padma Kaimal's "Shiva Nataraja: Shifting Meanings of an Icon," which led to some difficulties in knowing how exactly to address that element. What is clear from all of this is that although one can get the basic idea of what is depicted in Nataraja by only looking at one example, aso evidenced by the works of Kaimal and Srinivasan, there is a deeper story to it all, both artistically, religiously, and historically, which can only be seen when one looks beyond a single piece to the larger picture.

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Evaluation: *Josh fully satisfied all of the requirements for the paper assignment. His paper excels in the compare and contrast section, which evidences careful observation as well as the strength of his analytical skills.*

# The Fairer Sex: A Gender Studies Analysis of *Othello*

*Kelly Santoyo*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper making effective use of at least seven secondary sources, and maintaining consistent use of a critical perspective.*

The play *Othello*, by William Shakespeare, begins on a quiet night in the middle of a street in Venice where two men, known as Roderigo and Iago, have begun to create a ruckus in order to arouse Brabantio and inform him of his daughter's disappearance into the night to elope with her lover. The reader discovers that Brabantio's daughter is none other than the fair and beautiful Desdemona. Her lover just so happens to be none other than the black general hired by the Venetian army, known more commonly as "the Moor," and whose real name is Othello. At first, this creates a great and unsettling ordeal among everyone who hears of this occurrence. However, Othello and Desdemona go before the senate in order to plead their case as well as profess their undying love for one another. It is not until then that this marriage becomes accepted by everyone except for two people: Brabantio and Desdemona's unwanted suitor, Roderigo. Not until Roderigo begins to cry out to Iago regarding his unhappiness in hearing the news of his beloved Desdemona's marriage to another man does Iago begin to plot against Othello. This begins the course of Iago's web of lies that will entangle as well as damage everyone he comes into contact with. He uses Desdemona's honest actions and twists them so as to deceive Othello into believing she has been unfaithful, during the short time they have been married, with his trusted lieutenant, Michael Cassio. This false rumor throws Othello into an irreversible rage that consumes him and keeps him from seeing Desdemona's good nature. In the end, Othello smothers his wife to death for thinking her unfaithful. Emelia, Iago's wife, exposes her husband for who he truly is: a lying brute. Unfortunately, Othello does not realize his misjudgments until after his beloved wife is already dead; this then compels him to commit suicide. The outcome of the story leaves a horrible, gruesome death for most of the main characters and keeps the reader wondering how and why the accumulating actions culminated the way they did. Throughout Shakespeare's play, there are many situations and instances where the reader can see just how much the end result of the story is greatly affected by the internal, external, conscious, and subconscious viewpoints of how the men and women see and treat each other. Othello's anger and jealousy stem from his perceptions of women, and the men in general depict the women as nothing more than mere objects to be possessed and fawned over if not trampled on. The women in *Othello*, however being submissive to the men at times, indeed had their own personae and were more assertive and strong-willed than the men were capable, if not willing, to see.

Straight from the get-go in act 2 scene 3, we are given more than a mere glimpse into Desdemona's true self. This is the first time she is introduced in the play, and Shakespeare brings her out fighting strong. Right away, he places the fair maiden amidst the Venetian senate, where she courageously and assertively stands to explain her actions as well as profess her love for Othello, which is completely against her father's wishes. Also, Desdemona goes as far as pleading with the senate to allow her to accompany Othello on his journey to Cyprus:

> ...if I be left behind,
> A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
> The rites for why I love him are bereft me,
> And I a heavy interim shall support
> By his dear absence. Let me go with him.
> (*Oth.* 1.3.254-258)

Garner explains this passage as, "Her wish not be left behind as a 'moth of peace' is a desire not to be treated as someone too fragile to share the intensity of Othello's military life" (par. 10). Her assertiveness is what pushed her to speak with the senate in the first place. In the last

line of the stanza, Desdemona does not necessarily ask the senate if she could go with Othello, she tells them to let her go. Later on in the play, as Othello waits for her arrival at Cyprus, he calls Desdemona his "fair warrior" (*Oth.*2.1.174), a person who shows courage or aggressiveness. Both of these qualities have been profusely shown by Desdemona while she was in front of the senate. Another instance where Desdemona shows her confidence is when Cassio confides in her and asks for her help in reinstating not only his position as Othello's lieutenant, but also as his friend. Desdemona tells Cassio:

> Do not doubt that; before Emilia here
> I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
> If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
> To the last article. My lord shall never rest;
> I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;
> His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
> I'll intermingle everything he does
> With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,
> For thy solicitor shall rather die
> Than give thy cause away. (*Oth.*3.3.19-28)

Desdemona takes on this plea and soothes Cassio's mind by telling him that no matter what happens, she will get Othello to turn the other cheek and place Cassio back into the position he once held by Othello's side. This excerpt in itself shows Desdemona's confidence in the very things she sets out to accomplish. She tells Cassio that it shall be done. Even before her death, Desdemona "challenges Othello as she had challenged her father and defends herself with the same straightforward precision she used before the Senate" (Neely par. 21):

> And have you mercy too! I never did
> Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio,
> But with such general warranty of heaven,
> As I might love. I never gave him token. (*Oth.* 4.2.58-61)

Desdemona uses every opportunity she has in order to stand up for herself and exert the same kind of confidence she has throughout the play. As Joan Ozark Holmer explains it, "Desdemona is literally a warrior...with faith

### Student Reflections on Writing: Kelly Santoyo

Writing has always been a bittersweet passion of mine. I love being able to express myself and get my point across to others in a way I cannot always do with verbal language. However, writing for a grade is a different story. Unless the topic is of interest to me, I can find myself becoming restless, having to take frequent breaks to refresh my mind. Normally, I sit down and just write what comes to mind, as opposed to making an outline with several drafts. I have always thought that gathering information ahead of time was so tedious.

For me, some factors that contribute to success include my obsession with using the English language correctly; taking classes that I have a high interest in; and being able to work well under pressure. One major downfall of mine, which is actually what I do with most of my papers, is procrastination. I would not recommend this at all. It took a total of about twelve hours with only two hours of sleep in order to complete this paper on *Othello.* This did not include the amount of time taken in order to gather enough information to incorporate into the paper.

Doing research ahead of time may seem tedious, but it is essential to putting togeter a well-written paper. Researching a topic brings new ideas and different points of view that can easily be incorporated into the composition. In addition, it will definitely make writing a lengthy paper a lot less difficult. Other words of wisdom that I would give to anyone working on a paper are: use the thesaurus and dictionary constantly; have someone else read your essay; never wait until the last minute to write it; and get help, if you need it, from someone who is knowledgeable in the English language as well as with the required paper formats, such as MLA or APA.

as her shield" while "her tongue is her sword...used defensively against Othello and offensively on behalf of Othello" (par 1).

Emilia is also one of the smartest, most worldly women in Shakespeare's plays. Many times we can find her alongside Desdemona, giving her advice that only a woman married for so many years would already know. When Othello leaves Desdemona in a rage over her loss of the handkerchief he had given her, she is left with Emilia contemplating what had just happened. Emilia then asks her:

> EMILIA. Is not this man jealous?
> DESDEMONA. I ne'er saw this before.
> Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief;
> I am most unhappy in the loss of it.
> EMILIA. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
> They are all but stomachs, and we all but
> food;
> They eat us hungerly, and when they are
> full,
> They belch us. (*Oth.* 3.4.94-101)

Surprisingly, Desdemona says Othello is not the jealous type. However, Emilia goes on to say that within at least two years of a marriage, men begin to show who they really are. She uses a simile and describes men to be like stomachs and women like food. They fill themselves up with women, but once they have had enough, they discard the women altogether. Throughout the rest of *Othello*, Emilia schools Desdemona in various topics ranging from jealousy to adultery, of which Desdemona knows nothing or very little. Emilia proves to be the smartest of all right before the end of the play when she begins to suspect that there is someone who has been plotting against Othello and Desdemona by scrupulously placing false rumors here and there:

> I will be hanged if some eternal villain,
> Some busy and insinuating rogue,
> Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
> Have not devised this slander. I'll be hanged else.
> (*Oth.* 4.2.130-134)

Because of her worldly views and street smarts, she is able to speculate about the treason behind the whole situation before anyone else even gets wind of it. However, it is not until the actual conclusion of the play in act 4 scene 2 that Emilia is able to finally bring all the pieces of the puzzle together. This allows her to rightfully and truthfully testify against her own husband, Iago. She courageously defies him and obtains a direct will of her own. Carol Neely goes more in depth to say, "Emilia's confession is not just a refusal of obedience; it destroys Iago's plot and refutes his philosophy, which requires that she act according to her own self-interest" (par. 31).

Throughout *Othello*, many of the men portrayed themselves to be utterly enthralled with the women. Take Michael Cassio for instance. Many times, the reader would see him as though women were the only important topic in his life. We can see this early in the play during act 2, scene 1, when Montano asks Cassio if Othello is married:

> MONTANO. But, good lieutenant, is your
> general wived?
> CASSIO. Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid
> That paragons description and wild fame;
> One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
> And in th' essential vesture of creation
> Does tire the ingener. (*Oth.* 2.1.60-65)

Cassio tells Montano that Othello is most fortunately married to a woman whose beauty much exceeds both description and fame. Even writers have no words to describe her. Cassio goes on to say that the creation of Desdemona itself has exhausted her Creator. The lieutenant is so enthralled with the mere beauty of Desdemona, it is almost as if she becomes heaven itself for the moment that he envisions her. The way Cassio describes her is so intricate, and he makes it a point to say that Othello is the fortunate one to even have her. Not far along after Cassio's conversation with Montano, once Desdemona arrives at Cyprus, Cassio begins to describe her as the greatest treasure on board the ship:

> CASSIO. Oh, behold!
> The riches of the ship has come on shore!

> You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.
> Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
> Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
> Enwheel thee around! (*Oth.* 2.ϕ.83-88)o

He tells everyone to get down on their knees before her. He praises and commands the grace of heaven to be entirely upon her. This once again shows how Cassio is enraptured by women. He praises them, glorifies them, and is awed by them. One could almost say that he himself is somewhat in love with Desdemona. For the most part, it is very easy to say that the lieutenant places these women on a pedestal and idolizes them. Garner further explains that "the extravagance of language Cassio uses earlier in describing Desdemona…in fact comments more on his character than on Desdemona's" (par. 5). Even Desdemona's unwanted suitor, Roderigo, exhibited the same type of behavior when it came to envisioning his lustful crush. He followed Desdemona all the way to Cyprus in order to win her away from Othello. Roderigo also attempted to woo her by buying her jewelry that he had given to Iago to pass onto Desdemona. Roderigo argues with Iago when he has given all he has had to Desdemona and is beginning to believe that Iago is playing him for a fool: "…The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist. You have told me she hath received them, and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance but I find none" (*Oth.* 4.2.183-187). Angrily, Roderigo states that he has given enough jewels to Desdemona that would so easily convince a nun to turn away from her vows of purity and chastity as well as away from her convent. Not obtaining Desdemona's love or affection enrages Roderigo. This shows how much he is willing to do in order to win her love through material objects. It can also be seen as [Roderigo's] offerings given to a deity. This is his way of worshiping Desdemona compared to Cassio's words of praise and affection. Another example would be Iago's conversation with Cassio regarding Othello's extreme love for Desdemona. Earlier in the play, Cassio was demoted by Othello for fighting with Roderigo and was completely upset. Iago used this to his advantage and manipulated Cassio into thinking it would be best for him to go after Desdemona and try to get her to fix his relationship with her husband, Othello. Iago tells Cassio that Desdemona is now in charge of Othello since he is so obviously enthralled with her. He also says that because Desdemona is so kind, she will not turn Cassio away from his request and will try to mend what has been brokeno between him and Othello. Iago tells Cassio:

> You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general. I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess yourself freely to her; importune her to help to put you in your place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before. (*Oth.* 2.3.276-285)o

"Our general's wife is now the general" (*Oth.* 2.3.277). Right here, Iago boldly informs us that Desdemona is the one in charge in regard to her marriage with Othello. From now on, whatever she says goes. Iago enforces this by saying that Othello has become devoted to Desdemona entirely. The men in this play are pictured as being lovesick puppies that follow every which way a woman goes. The men constantly bark and sniff and crave the women's attentions. This passage tells us that the women are always in charge of the men.

Iago is the only character in Othello who does not praise, follow, nor worship any of the women. There is only one instance in the play where the reader is able to catch a glimpse of another side of him. In act 2 scene lo Desdemona, Emilia, and Iago are talking about women, regarding who they are and how they act. Iago does not have anything good to say about women, let alone his own wife. Desdemona says Iago's words are merely ignorance. She tells him that he pays more attention to and describes only the worst of women. However, she asks him how would he describe a woman who is worthy and does not condone evil? Iago then goes into describing a beautiful, wise, rich woman who would not

allow those things to go to her head. She holds her tongue instead of unleashing it; she knows men chase after her and yet does not bother with them. She may be wronged, but still allows that person to stay and lets her discomfort and anger fly. He describes her to be strong and active, yet doubts that there is a woman like that. Desdemona asks Iago what this woman would be strong and active for. He then goes back to his regular self and says that this woman is there only for idiots to slobber over and for her to tend to household affairs:

> DESDEMONA. O heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the worst best. But what praise
> couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed – one that in the
> authority of her merit did justly put on the vouch of every malice itself?
> IAGO. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
> Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
> Never lacked gold, and yet went never gay;
> Fled from her wish, and yet said "Now I may";
> She that, being ang'red, her revenge being nigh,
> Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly;
> She that in wisdom never was so frail
> To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
> She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind;
> See suitor's following, and not look behind:
> She was a wight (if ever such wight were) –
> DESDEMONA. To do what?
> IAGO. To suckle fools and chronicle small beer. (*Oth.* 2.1.142-157)

Although Iago constantly bashes women throughout the play, this is the one time we get to see a different viewpoint he has on women. It is almost as if at one time during the course of his life, he too glorified and loved women. Something later on, however, has turned his viewpoint sour. He used to envision a beautiful woman who was down to earth and at the same time was also very smart, strong, kind, and independent. He uses the word "wight" to describe this perfect vision of a woman. The definition alone adds to Iago's description; the woman is not only brave, strong, active, and nimble, but a supernatural being. He is saying and believes that it is impossible for there to be a woman anywhere who could fit this description. Since the very beginning of the play, Iago has been very negative when it comes to the way women are in general. He already has his preconceived notions, and nothing has been able to cause his views to waver. In act 2 scene 1, Iago has a conversation with Emilia, his wife, and Desdemona in regard to the way women act. This took place after all three had just arrived on the shores of Cyprus. Iago began to antagonize Emilia by saying:

> Come on, come on! You are pictures out of doors,
> Bells in your parlors, wildcats in your kitchens,
> Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
> Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds. (*Oth.* 2.1.109-112)

As Wayne states, "In this catalogue of vices, women are vain, talkative, vengeful, idle and wanton" (par. 14). All of this is repeated by Iago throughout the play in various different ways. All that is ever heard from him when it comes to women is that they are completely worthless to him. Robert Pack goes in depth to describe this and states, "In Iago's eyes, all women are promiscuous creatures driven by lust whose claims of innocence cannot be found credible" (par 18). This is also enforced when Iago states later on in the play, "She never yet was foolish that was fair, for even her folly helped her to an heir" (*Oth.* 2.1.136-137). This conversation was a continuum of Iago's, Desdemona's and Emilia's from when they had arrived at Cyprus. Valerie Wayne says, "Iago...claims that four different kinds of women are sexually wanton: either their beauty or intelligence helps them to bed, or their ugliness or foolishness get them there anyway. Fair or foul, wise or foolish, women are all whores to him" (par. 19). Iago has been shown to be the complete opposite of all the other men throughout the play. He is the only one who despises women right from the very start. Iago constantly bashes females and tears them down from the high pedestals that they have been placed upon by other men. William Maginn goes on to say that Iago "...thinks light of women in general, and has no respect whatever for his wife" (par. 9).

Iago attempts to push his views on Othello by

deceiving him to believe that his newlywed wife, Desdemona, has cheated on him. Once he is alone with Othello on the castle grounds, he begins to spin his web of lies. In order to get Othello to think twice about Desdemona's actions, Iago tells him, "She did deceive her father, marrying you; and when she seemed to shake and fear your looks, she loved them most" (*Oth.* 3.3.206-208). After this, Othello begins to look at Desdemona in a different light. No longer can he see her as the pure and innocent woman he once saw her as. Adamson says, "Iago can 'prove' to him with suspicious ease that Desdemona all along has been 'that cunning whore of Venice'" (par. 22). Later on, in act 4 scene 2, Othello has a conversation with Emilia, and he asks her to tell him all about Desdemona being unfaithful. However, since she is not, Emilia does nothing but tell him the truth. Othello is not pleased with Emilia's answers. Once she leaves the room, he speaks to himself and says:

> She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd
> That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
> A closet lock and key of villainous secrets;
> And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't. (*Oth.* 4.2.20-23)

At this point, Othello has gone off the edge and will not be coming back. He is totally convinced that Desdemona has cheated on him. For this very reason, he begins to call her a whore and sees her as a person who has hidden away many evil secrets from the world. Othello says Desdemona is a whore who is able to keep that secret hidden very well. This once again reinforces the idea that women are seen as heavenly angels until a single spot, blemish, or wrinkle appears on them. In that moment that even a faint whiff of a fall from grace appears, the men automatically strip the women off their pedestals and throw them unto the ground beneath their feet. Othello now views his wife through a different set of eyes. Instead of beauty, he now sees wretchedness. Before, he was able to look at her as a beautiful, kind, and intelligent woman, but unfortunately, his torn and revengeful heart has twisted her once wise actions into those with a malicious meaning hidden behind every move. He backs up his statement by proclaiming that Desdemona is filled with so many hidden secrets. Therefore, he considers her to be a secret whore. Even though Othello witnesses Desdemona getting down on her knees to pray, he still twists it and chooses to see the opposite. He sees her as a hypocrite and despises her even more for doing it. This also implies that at one point it has crossed his mind that, Desdemona, being so false, and yet performing such righteous actions in the presence of others (kneeling down and praying), do not go together or make any sense. However, he still chooses to ignore Desdemona's innocence and, instead, see her goodhearted actions through a twisted mindset. In act 4 scene 2, Desdemona is trying to figure out what it is that has happened that has gotten Othello so upseto with her. She asks him what it is that she has done wrong, but Othello just keeps repeating her question and beating around the bush. He does not outright tell her at this point what the reasoning behind all of this is. All he does is describe just how bad this deed is that he thinks she has done against him and their marriage. Desdemona is a nuisance to him, but Othello also makes it clear that she is still very appealing to him. Since he still has some feelings for her, this whole ordeal is too much for him and makes him wish she was never born:

> OTHELLO. O. ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,o
> That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,o
> Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
> That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'ero
> been born!o
> DESDEMONA. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?
> OTHELLO. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
> Made to write "whore" upon? What committed?
> Committed? O thou public commoner!o
> I should make very forges of my cheeks
> That would to cinders burn up modesty,
> Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?
> Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
> The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
> Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth
> And will not hear it. What committed? (*Oth.* 4.2.66.80)

Once Othello no longer sees Desdemona as pure and just, he becomes enraged and treats her like garbage. Even though she asks him what it is that she has done to get him

to be so angry with her, he still refuses to tell her anything. It is as if no one else's opinion but his own matters. He trashes her and plays around with her emotions without any explanations given for his own actions. Ironically, he is doing to her what he thinks she is doing to him; he is keeping secrets from her. He is also denying himself from Desdemona. Othello cheats on her emotionally while at the same time ruining them both emotionally. Othello uses a metaphor to describe how he sees his wife along with his feelings toward her at that moment. He portrays her as a weed, a plant that contains no value nor use. Even so, he still feels a longing for her. This internal conflict between seeing her as a filthy whore and the delicate and pure creature he once saw her as confuses Othello and makes him wish she was never born. He describes her purity as "fair paper" and a "good book." Both are delicate objects that can easily be wrinkled and torn. This implies that the innocence of women is both fragile and easily blemished. For instance, Othello has had no physical evidence of Desdemona's betrayal and yet, he listens and believes the rumors that come from a single man. The last seven lines of the passage, Shakespeare uses personification in order to emphasize just how strongly Othello feels towards this wrongdoing. Upon the mentioning of this deed, his cheeks would turn so red with anger that they would burn modesty to cinders. Heaven looks down upon and shuns this sin while the moon shuts her eyes and turns away from it. Even the promiscuous wind, that touches everything in sight, is quieted and hides within the depths of the earth so as not to hear of it.

Throughout this entire play, women are either seen as heavenly beings or as wretched prostitutes, without anything in between. They belong to the men and serve as both their servants and as property. This can be shown in act 1 scene 3 when Desdemona first comes out to speak to the Venetian senate in order to testify her love for Othello:

> My noble father,
> I do perceive here a divided duty.
> To you I am bound for life and education;
> My life and education both do learn me
> How to respect you: you are the lord of duty;
> I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband;
> And so much duty as my mother showed
> To you, preferring you before her father,
> So much I challenge that I may profess
> Due to the Moor my lord. (*Oth.* 1.3.180-189)

Desdemona is declaring an act of obedience and duty to both her father and to her husband. This excerpt can be seen as a "property transfer" between Brabantio, Desdemona's father, and Othello. Robert Pack portrays this as, "...Desdemona's marriage to Othello is regarded by her father Brabantio as a betrayal...as if Desdemona's primary commitment were to her father and should continue to be so" (par. 5). Brabantio is indirectly saying that Desdemona is his property and not Othello's. However, Desdemona sees herself that she rightly belongs to her husband. This was reinforced at a young age for her since she grew up witnessing her own mother do the same with her father. Desdemona directly affirms "the submission of her will to a husband" (Maillet par. 21). This all implies that women are nothing more than something to be owned by the men. Further on in the play, in act 3 scene 3, Othello has been brainwashed by Iago. He strongly thinks that Desdemona has cheated on their marriage with none other than Cassio. He is completely heartbroken and feels that in order to get over this, he must despise her instead of love her. Othello feels that no man can really have a woman because they must always be pleased (by other men). He says he would rather be a toad living in the griminess of a dungeon than keep just a small portion of Desdemona, whom he loves:

> She's gone. I am abused, and my relief
> Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
> That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
> And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
> And live upon the vapor of a dungeon
> Than keep a corner in the thing I love. (*Oth.* 3.3.267-272)

This definitely enforces Iago's point of view when it comes to all men being unhappily wed. Othello is very upset with just the mere thought of his wife cheating on him. Since he has no real proof of this ever happening, this also shows us that purity in women is very important to the men. With just the slightest vapor of a bad odor,

they are automatically pulled down from the pedestal that they have been placed upon and seen as dirty rags. Also, it is almost as if Desdemona is his possession with the way he says, "...that we can call these delicate creatures ours..." (*Oth.* 3.3.269). Once reality has hit him, he realizes that he cannot possess her entirely. Othello finally sees that he cannot truly control her. Othello reinforces this with the last few lines when he says he would rather not have Desdemona at all if he cannot possess all of her. In "Where Iago Lies: Home, Honesty and the Turk in Othello," it states that "It is Othello's anxiety that Desdemona does not belong to him... it would seem that security of identity depends on security of possession and of possessions..." (par. 10).

*Othello* is filled with many different viewpoints on women and their place in society next to the men. Even though the women themselves are strong-willed and -minded, the men are blind to this and would rather have them as something to possess. With others, like Michael Cassio, the women are more than merely people. Ironically, females are also worshipped, loved, and seen as mystical beings by the same men who so easily dispose of them. The tragedy lies in the men's masochistic views of themselves and the world they live in.

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"Where Iago Lies: Home, Honesty and the Turk in Othello." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 14.3. (2009). *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 27 Apr. 2010.


Evaluation: *This gender studies analysis of Shakespeare's* Othello *is simply outstanding. This student has so much to say, so well, about so many key passages pertaining to the identities of women and men in this play, and she has used research well to help supplement and further her ideas. Kelly has written a convincing and perceptive analysis of this play.*

# Muhammad Yunus and Microcredit

*Taylor Schulte*
Course: Humanities 105/History 105
(Great Ideas of World Civilizations)
Instructor: John Garcia

Assignment: *Students were asked to choose a living person who they believed was worthy of the title "great thinker." The expectation was that students would lay out criteria for what it is that makes one a "great thinker" and then argue that their chosen individual fit these criteria.*

What makes an idea or a thinker "great"? One person's response to, say, Darwin's theory of evolution might be awe, but another person might respond with outrage. If the criteria for a great thinker is that he is universally admired, then no great thinkers exist because no one is universally admired. However, some universal characteristics of great thinkers can be agreed upon: their ideas are innovative and have impact, they see problems and ideas where others don't, and they tackle issues of serious significance.

The problem of poverty in developing countries is one that has dogged governments, philanthropists, and aid workers since the mid twentieth century, but poverty has always existed in some form. Undoubtedly, it is an issue of serious significance, both to those suffering from poverty and to the rest of the world. In the recent past, a novel solution has emerged: microcredit. As Sengupta and Aubuchon define it, "microcredit includes the act of providing loans of small amounts... to the poor and other borrowers that have been ignored by commercial banks" (9). Microcredit has allowed for some of the world's poorest people, particularly women, to bring themselves and their families out of poverty. Furthermore, microcredit allows the poor to take themselves out of poverty rather than relying on government support, because it encourages entrepreneurship. With a small loan provided by a micro-lending institution, a borrower is encouraged to find ways to generate their own source of income. Microcredit is an ideal solution for developing countries, which have many poor citizens and lack money to fund programs to help them all. The concept is also notable because it appeals to Western capitalists. If done right, microcredit doesn't have to be an ongoing handout. Micro-lending institutions have the potential to become self-sustaining, yet remain completely charitable. Microcredit is undoubtedly one of the great ideas of our time.

The remarkable story of the development of microcredit can be traced back to a great thinker: economist Muhammad Yunus. Yunus was born in 1940 in Bangladesh and studied economics in the United States as a Fulbright scholar. After Bangladesh's independence in 1972, he returned to teach at Chittagong University. In an effort to understand rural poverty, he began visiting the poorest people in the town of Jobra, Bangladesh in 1976. His idea for microcredit came from a single encounter with a poor woman. The story illustrates his ability to see a problem that no one had addressed before and come up with ideas to deal with that problem.

Yunus' idea for microcredit came one day after he and a colleague approached a 21-year-old mother named Sufiya Begum, who was making bamboo stools outside her home while her naked children played in the dirt. In Yunus' conversation with her, he learned that she borrowed twenty-two cents worth of bamboo from a middleman each morning. She sold the stools she made over the course of the day back to the moneylender each evening to repay him. She was earning two cents a day in this arrangement. Although Sufiya was talented and hard working, her family was barely surviving. In *Banker to the Poor*, Yunus writes:

> In my university courses, I theorized about sums in the millions of dollars, but here before my eyes the problems of life and death were posed in terms of pennies...it seemed to me the existing economic system made it absolutely certain that Sufiya's income would be kept perpetually at such a low level that she would never save a penny and would never invest in expanding her economic base. (48)e

That day, Yunus resisted the urge he had to give Sufiya the twenty-two cents she needed to break her cycle of debt.

Instead, he returned to the university and asked a research assistant to compileα list of villagers in Jobra that were in the same situation and estimate how much money they needed. Based on this list, which included Sufiya, Yunus made his first loan to a group of 42 people for 27 dollars. He asked them to repay the loan whenever they could afford to.

After this first experience, Yunus began to thinko about how he could help more poor people. Clearly, the people he had met needed access to credit. However, traditional banks see several problems with lending to poor borrowers the way Yunus wanted to. First, the poor have no collateral and are viewed as not credit-worthy. They have no assets, and a bank has no way of recouping its loss if the borrower defaults. Poor borrowers are deemed not credit-worthy because they are often already in debt, unable to find employment in traditional salaried jobs, and live in areas where poverty is endemic. The second major problem is that many borrowers are illiterate and cannot read the "fine print" on a loan or fill out a deposit slip, making it impossible for them to navigate the traditional banking system. Finally, even if a banker were to take a leap of faith and the loan they issued for say, fifty cents, was repaid, the interest charged wouldn't cover the paperwork and administrative costs that were necessary to issue a loan of any size through traditional banking channels. In short, Yunus' idea of providing credit to the poor was ridiculous from the standpoint of a respectable financial institution.

Yunus' decision to ignore what many would see as insurmountable obstacles is one part of what makes him a great thinker. Yunus chose to devise his own lending institution to provide credit to the poor. As he saw it, the demands that banks placed on borrowers insured that only the rich could borrow money. In 1983, he started the Grameen Bank, which pioneered a new lending concept: microcredit.

Microcredit is revolutionary from both an economic and philosophic perspective. Economically, "the remarkable accomplishment of microcredit lies in the fact that some of the successful microfinance institutes report high rates of repayment, sometimes above 95 percent" (Segupta and Aubuchon 10). This high rate of repayment from high-risk borrowers has astonished economists who traditionally assumed those results were impossible. Yet, microcredit loans consistently yield those results because of a few key factors that Yunus recognized early on. The Grameen bank and the microcredit institutions that followed lend primarily to women who, compared to men, are less mobile, make sounder investment choices, and thus are more likely to repay loans. But the most crucial part of microcredit's success is because of its group lending structure. At the Grameen Bank, borrowers organize themselves into groups of five, and then approach the bank for a loan. All group members must agree to the bank's rules and undergo training. The first loans are made to two members of the group. If the first two members repay their loans, then the next two members are offered loans. If those four members repay their loans, then the fifth member can receive a loan. If any group member defaults on a loan, the bank will rescind their line of credit (Segupta and Aubuchon 12). The group lending structure is critical to the success of microcredit. Group members can impose social pressure on their members to repay loans. And because the borrowers choose their own groups, extremely risky borrowers who are known in the community to be irresponsible are less likely to find support, making it difficult for them to affect the borrowing pool. This enables the microcredit banks to keep the interest rates low and still remain profitable.

Microcredit is revolutionary from a philosophical perspective as well. Yunus is not merely the creator of a sound and sustainable lending policy for an underserved group of consumers; his views about poverty are a revolutionary synthesis of the economic views of the lefto and right. This is exemplified in his description of the beliefs of the Grameen bank:

> Grameen believe that the poverty is not created by the poor; it is created by the institutions and policies which surround them. In order to eliminate poverty all we need to do is to make appropriate changes in the institutions and policies, and/or create new ones. Grameen believes that charity is not an answer to poverty. It only helps poverty to continue. It creates dependency and takes away individual's initiative to break through the wall of poverty. (Yunus, *What is Microcredit?*)

In the United States and the rest of the Western world, this is a novel view of poverty because we typically have a sharp divide between the left's take on poverty, which doesn't blame the poor for their situation but encourages charity, and the view of the right, who admonish the poor to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. As Engler explains:

> On the one hand, Yunus sounds like a Reaganite. In celebrating bottom-up entrepreneurialism, he rails against "handouts" and denounces the dependency created by welfare systems in Europe and the United States....On the other hand, Yunus is harshly critical of the global economy's insensitivity to the plight of the poorest and its erroneous assumption that all people are motivated purely by the desire to maximize profit. (82)

Yunus' views seem to have struck a chord with philanthropists – microcredit has been an incredibly popular charitable venture, with the wealthy being attracted to the entrepreneurial and capitalistic leanings of microcredit. Microcredit is also notable because it relies on an idea that is usually unheard of in economics: trust. Yunus writes that the "most distinctive feature of Grameen credit is that it is not based on any collateral, or legally enforceable contracts. It is based on 'trust,' not on legal procedures and systems" (*What is Microcredit?*).

Yunus' ideas have helped countless people attain a better standard of living because he demonstrated a remarkable ability to find a unique solution for a profound problem. Yunus' legacy as a thinker is best summed up by Engler: "here is a person who speaks of building a world not based on greed and profit, a world where markets still function but do not control vital aspects of life, and where a different type of socially motivated, cooperatively minded enterprise flourishes" (87). Yunus synthesized two styles of thought about poverty and developed a revolutionary economic concept. He truly deserves the title "great thinker."

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Evaluation: *Taylor's arguments are always compelling; here, she makes a strong case to include Muhammad Yunus, who came up with the idea of microcredit, on the list of living great thinkers.*

# The Things Words Can and Cannot Carry

*Charles Schumacher*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Catherine Restovich

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper.*

"In war you lose your sense of the definite, hence your sense of truth itself, and therefore it's safe to say that in a true war story nothing is ever absolutely true" (O'Brien 82). Tim O'Brien makes a distinction between what is traditionally considered fact and the intangible reality that contains emotional and psychological experience in his fictional work, *The Things They Carried*. Without disregarding the importance of historical truth, O'Brien stresses the importance of the often overlooked emotional reality that is frequently absent in historical accounts. He confronts the issue of language and its inability to convey experience in the true and fullest sense. The very root of Tim O'Brien's storytelling format is grounded in the limitations of personal perception and its associated issues propagated throughout human language.

Tim O'Brien asserts in *The Things They Carried* that another kind of truth exists beyond what we traditionallyo consider "true." O'Brien suggests the significance of a more complete "truth": a truth that captures the emotional and psychological experience of associated physical events as they occur. In some ways, these truths are similar to the literary genres of fiction and nonfiction. The criteria for literature to be considered nonfiction is that the work gives a realistic and accurate account of the tangible evens that take place. We unconsciouslyo ask if the events described within that work would line up with those found in a history book. If the answer is yes, then we consider the work to be nonfiction: a work that represents pure fact. Fiction, on the other hand, is so broad that it can be described as anything produced by the imagination or that which does not represent complete historical accuracy. While many nonfiction works do contain accounts of emotions experienced, those accounts are limited to blatant and open narration of the feelings associated with an experience. This means of expression can be very limited because of the necessity of relative experience in many cases. If readers have not experienced anything similar, they will likely misinterpret the emotions trying to be imparted. Because the Vietnam War was so chaotic and unique, O'Brien seems to believe that writing the straight up-and-down facts of emotional and psychological experience would be largely ineffective. He instead finds an interesting and difficult-to-achieve middle ground where (as we understand it) the facts are being told, but changes are made wherever necessary to better convey the experience. This manner in which O'Brien communicates his characters' emotions by skewing the physical events earns *The Things They Carried* the fictional label.

In the vignette "How to Tell a True War Story," O'Brien's distinction between historical and emotional truth is especially obvious. He makes several seemingly contradicting statements in his instructions of how to tell a war story properly; he begins the chapter in saying "This is true" (O'Brien 67), yet later says "in a true war story nothing is ever absolutely true" (82). Society's traditional understanding of truth as a strictly historical fact is emphasized as O'Brien makes us aware of the other truth, emotional truth. Historical truth contains the play-by-play physical events as they occur, while emotional truth represents the psychological experience of people present in those events.

According to O'Brien, war is unlike anything else humans can experience. "How do you generalize?" O'Brien's character asks in reference to war (80). He attempts to describe war in such terms to show how difficult and confusing the result is: "War is hell, but that's not the half of it, because war is also mystery and terror and adventure and courage and discovery and holiness and pity and despair and longing and love..." (80). The historical truth about war invokes understanding of terror and despair in part, but if a soldier's experience involves feelings of fun and adventure and love, how can this possibly be conveyed by factual accounts when even the horrible experiences are underrepresented?

In order to better understand why O'Brien alters factual events and even admits to making up others in

his struggle to convey the true extent of the experience of a soldier in Vietnam, we must understand his specific struggles. O'Brien's battle is rooted in the philosophy of language and the limitations of perception. In philosopher Francis Bacon's work, "The Four Idols," he analyzes the things that distort human perception and breaks them down into four categories he labels as "idols." His theory states that these idols are what limit the ability of our mind to perceive the full truth. Bacon defines the "Idols of the Marketplace" as the stumbling stone associated with language. He calls these idols "the most troublesome of all: idols which have crept into the understanding through the alliances of words and names. For men believe that their reason governs words, but it is also true that words react on the understanding" (Bacon 551). By this he means within society, the power and weight a word carries is determined by what people understand it to mean. Most words have a few slightly varying definitions within the dictionary. A person who learns a particular word may not know the slightly different definitions of the word, and if someone else taught them the word, their understanding of the word may be influenced by even the slightest difference in their instructor's definition. Bacon describes this problematic phenomenon: "Yet even definitions cannot cure this evil in dealing with natural and material things; since the definitions themselves consist of words, that those words beget others: so that it is necessary to recur to individual instances, and those in due series and order" (551). The reason that even the definitions of words are troublesome is not because of the words themselves, but because of the person learning the words. Each individual sees and understands the world through a different lens that is crafted by their relative experiences, so even the simpler words that define another may be interpreted differently by many. Bacon says that the common people who comprise the majority (whom he affectionately refers to as "the vulgar") tend to understand words similarly: "Now words, being commonly framed and applied according to the capacity of the vulgar, follow those lines of division which are most obvious to the vulgar understanding" (551). As a result of being part of the majority, the common understanding of a word becomes its definition.

The language used in these programs that smother the masses are the words that describe the physical events, the historical accounts. O'Brien's struggle with the inability of words to convey true emotion in war stories branches from Bacon's analysis of words. Bacon notices that the majority of "commoners" understand the words in the same way because of their similar life experiences. Especially in later 20th century America and continuing presently, we similarly see the common desensitization of the masses that is facilitated by technology. The evening news bombards homes with images and stories of horrific acts of violence. On the rare occasion in which an overly dramatic, unrealistic, and likely inaccurate war movie is not playing in theaters, one can almost undoubtedly find one on television. These entertainment accounts are numbing to the inhumane reality of violence and war. After so frequently hearing a statistic of X number of people dying gruesome deaths that day in an ongoing war, and after seeing countless films that glorify war in unrealistic ways, the "commoner's" stomachs stop turning when they hear war stories.

In general, words cannot be assumed to carry a ubiquitous understanding; words mean slightly different to some and vastly different to others. Within the realm of historical truth and depicting factual accounts of events, words cannot carry the intangible perceptions of those involved; they do not do justice to the countless and complex feelings tied to even the smallest event. Thus, O'Brien must overcome society's potentially warped understanding of the only language appropriate for a war story while simultaneously painting a picture of the psychological experience of fighting in a war unlike any before, one that the soldiers barely understood themselves.

Against these odds, O'Brien succeeds in expressing the emotional and psychological experience of a soldier in Vietnam in *The Things They Carried*. He cleverly does this through the various "Tim O'Briens" he creates in the book, altering some events and entirely making up others, then presenting them in the manner of a historical retelling. By creatively employing these strategies in the difficult realm of the Vietnam War, O'Brien paints a picture of the experience unlike any other author before him.

O'Brien leads us through *The Things They Carried* from the perspective of the author/storyteller as well as

a character within the book. One of the things O'Brien accomplishes by this is confirming to readers that they are reading neither pure historical fact nor pure fiction. As a reader, we come to understand the curious middle ground to which O'Brien brings us. We believe there is fact in the stories to some degree, but we are also receptive to what O'Brien is attempting to express by altering the events. The two Tim O'Briens almost create a picture-within-a-picture scenario. As the author, we see O'Brien alter fact in order to place himself in certain situations. As a character within the book, we see O'Brien altering "fact" within the story in order to further capture emotions and experiences of characters he may not have been able to otherwise.

By seeing O'Brien as the author within the book, he pushes readers to ask a certain question: Why is he letting us witness his struggle to tell the story? O'Brien is making a commentary on the healing power of writing and the importance of the preservation of memories. Alex Vernon believes O'Brien is posing the question, "Can one achieve moral or spiritual redemption through storytelling?...Can we revisit our wars in writing stories—can we make imaginative pilgrimages back in time and space—and find some solace, some meaning, some salvation?" (Vernon 222). O'Brien the author seeks this very peace through his writing. He tries to honor his friends' memories and deal with them at the same time. Critic Patrick Smith believes the story about Linda is an analogy for O'Brien's method of traveling back in one's memories:

> When his young friend Linda dies in "The Lives of the Dead," O'Brien, a child himself at the time, connects that childhood tragedy with every event and every person that follows. He sees the soldiers who were killed in Vietnam—Kiowa, Curt Lemon, and the others—and imagines himself as a young boy, skating with his beloved Linda. His skating becomes a metaphor for the passage of time, the figure eights connecting past and present (and, when seen from above, tracing the symbol for eternity), his naïve conception of time and mortality still admirably untainted, his imagination remarkably keen.e(101)

The solace and peace that O'Brien suggests writing can offer is far more evident and convincing in the story with Linda than it would be to flat-out instruct with no examples. Smith also comments, "An important dichotomy for the writer is the relation between the physical and psychological; he recognizes that while the body remains viable for only a brief period, the spirit remains" (109). The dynamic of the numerous Tim O'Briens is used to stress the importance of the war's emotional and psychological experiences; these are the ones that are retained in memory and spirit. There is something in watching an author struggle to convey a point that digs a deeper understanding. Reading only a single account of an event causes us to assume the author was satisfied with how they expressed the event; we pay less attention to the details in such a case. Yet, with O'Brien, we see him tell the same story over and over, and in that, we notice the subtlest differences in details. Noticing these details can drastically affect the emotion induced. Exemplifying how much O'Brien the author benefits from his focus on the reality of the emotional experience is the first step in getting readers to understand that message.

In order to capture what he believes to be the true paradoxical nature of the experience of fighting in Vietnam, O'Brien openly admits to altering and making up pieces in the stories he tells. A prime example of this is in "How to Tell a True War Story"; O'Brien narrates the events of Curt Lemon's death repeatedly, each time changing or adding details. The reason he retells the death of Lemon over and over in the story is because the literal events (whatever they might be) do not do justice to Lemon's death. Whether or not Lemon and Kiley were playing chicken with the smoke grenade or were just tossing it around to kill time is not what is important for O'Brien and his troop. What is important is how unfair Lemon's death felt. The understanding O'Brien attempts to invoke is that Curt Lemon was still just a kid who died pointlessly. Lemon may or may not have died as a direct result of his own stupidity or carelessness, but the important part to O'Brien is how Curt Lemon was just a kid! He might have been a stupid kid, but a kid nonetheless! Countless young men lost their lives far earlier than they should have in Vietnam. If you can imagine dropping a few little kids in a war zone, would you be surprised if you found them playing catch with a smoke grenade and

accidentally stepping on a land mine? Curt Lemon might have actually died from a stray gunshot or in an ambush. If he did, however, describing his death with those pure historical facts makes the memory stale and easy to brush over for listeners: "The focus is not only on the event but on the 'truth' of the story, with O'Brien revealing at the end that all of the events are 'true' but none of them actually happened. They are true psychologically and morally; they capture the character of the experience; they represent a well-told story that is believable; but none of them represent factual events" (Nagel 137). Describing his death in this way, O'Brien invokes the sympathies we have for young kids, the appreciation for their goofy playfulness, and the desire for them to live a full life. Describing Lemon's death in this manner recreates the true tragedy of losing him: "In the end, of course, a true war story is never about war. It's about sunlight.... It's about love and memory. It's about sorrow" (O'Brien 85).

In the beginning of "How to Tell a True War Story," Rat Kiley writes a letter to Curt Lemon's sister about what a good guy he was and tells stories of the things he did in Vietnam, the historical facts. The sister never writes back, which makes Kiley angry and resentful. This is an analogy O'Brien uses to articulate his frustration with readers and why he tries so hard in repeating stories to get them right. He does this because he wants to invoke a response, but because of the limitations of language and perception, people so often miss the point! Mark Heberle states, "The sister resembles the narrator's well-meaning but theme-deaf listener, who weeps for the baby water buffalo while ignoring the point of the episode: Rat Kiley's pain" (191-192). Later in the vignette, Rat Kiley shoots a baby water buffalo, and O'Brien comments on how people come up to him and are sad about the poor baby water buffalo. According to Heberle, this is O'Brien expressing frustration for those who even further misunderstand what he is trying to convey:

> Missing its subject is worse than mistaking its fictionality. The story does not represent Tim OBrien's trauma, but Rat Kiley's. His love for hise best friend is displaced through his behavior toward a Vietnamese water buffalo and Curt Lemon's sister; both the little atrocity and the profanity are reactions to combat death, brutal expressions of loyalty to a lost comrade. (191)

Even if you do not fully understand these analogies O'Brien uses, you understand that these people are missing the point. During this vignette, our sympathies are with Rat Kiley, since his friend just died. As readers, we side with Kiley and almost villainize Lemon's sister and the lady who approaches O'Brien about the water buffalo. Having our sympathies, we feel the frustration and irritation Rat Kiley and Tim O'Brien feel with the two women. We understand their crime is misunderstanding and missing the point. Tim O'Brien cleverly uses these women as examples of what not to be like, and thus shows us without realizing it, what we should be reading for. He produces a subtle subconscious push toward the opposite of these women, a push to make us look for the emotion and not be distracted by the fictional images he uses to communicate them.

Through the dual perspectives of Tim O'Brien in *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien makes readers aware of his struggle to achieve something. That something quickly becomes clear to be the emotional truth of the experience. In letting us see him struggle, in letting us see him feel discouraged in failing to achieve the reactions he wanted within the book, he invokes our sympathies, and without our realizing it. We suddenly find ourselves paying greater attention to the details, trying to comprehend the psychological experience he strives to depict. His use of repetition and alteration ties into this, as it is a fundamental piece of evidence of his struggle we witness. Additionally, each time he retells something, we receive the multiple exposure that is sometimes needed to truly understand something. As Merilyn Litt describes:

> The repetition in Tim O'Brien is not some absentmindedness on the part of the author, but a device to make the reader realize that reading a story is not the same as understanding what happened. You think with each slightly different iteration of the story "Oh that's what happened," until you come to the realization that maybe you can't know what happened. (Litt 1)

Repetition created an opportunity for O'Brien to subtly change details in the recounts, to insert details that pique our attention, little details that otherwise would have been looked over. As we progress in the book, we start to see through a different lens than the individual and relativistic

one we began the book with. We start to analyze from the perspective of what emotion is trying to be expressed. Without ignoring the unrealism of events, we do not become distracted by them. We instead see the unrealism as a measurement for the psychological condition trying to be communicated: how unbelievable it might be, how foreign and inexplicable the actual emotions might have seemed to the characters at the time.

Emotional truth is something that is difficult if not impossible to force upon someone. A person has to be open and receptive to what you are trying to express; if they do not want to see it or do not feel compelled to see what you are trying to say, it is easy to simply brush off. Through complex and clever writing, Tim O'Brien overcomes the hurdles of language philosophy, and he succeeds in doing what he claims to fail at in *The Things They Carried*: he captures the truth of a war story.

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Evaluation: *Charlie situated O'Brien's work within Francis Bacon's "Idols of the Marketplace," where he argues that O'Brien's language is "grounded in the limitations of personal perception." Schumacher's analysis is a study in linguistics and displays an advanced, philosophical rendering of O'Brien's writing.*

# Perfecting Profit: The Primary Concern of Robinson Crusoe

*Meaghan Spano*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Teresa Chung

Assignment: *Write a paper in which you forward a thesis about a theme in Defoe's* Robinson Crusoe, *support it with textual analysis of the novel, and reference several other already existing analyses.*

Originally published under the title *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner,* Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* may surprise the first-time readers who anticipate a little more in the narrative than what they receive in the sometimes exhaustive recounting of the daily labors of Robinson Crusoe. The term *adventure* brings to mind a lofty and careless man who relishes in fights and foreign lands, enemies and heroes—not a detailed accounting of making bread. There is then not much of the stereotypical venturing to be had by Crusoe, who has his head primarily filled with devices to better his economic situation in solitude. Although Crusoe's industry on the island is far more prominent then the venturing aspect of his narrative, *Robinson Crusoe* was widely accepted as a children's adventure story until readers began to give serious commentary on Defoe's novel. Critics have since then drawn conclusions ranging from probable spiritual and political commentary by Defoe to historical contributing factors, such as colonialism. Instead of seeing Crusoe as one piece of a religious system or a political system ruled by Defoe, it is important to view Crusoe as a being in himself and to bear in mind that for the majority of Crusoe's narrative, he focuses on gaining advantages through the use of resources and relationships with people. Overall, Defoe's novel seems to suggest that Robinson Crusoe is a man primarily preoccupied with increasing his profit. Profit is not limited in definition to an increase in monetary earnings being greater to money spent, but should also encompass matter such as time spent or resources given being less than what is received. In this paper, I will demonstrate the manner in which Crusoe seeks profit by how he forgoes the middle station of life for greater monetary profit, the profit he receives from increasing his property on the island, and how his relationship with Xury and Friday are about how he can profit from them.

Removing himself from the middle station of life is one instance that demonstrates how Robinson Crusoe is primarily interested with increasing profit. Within the first few pages of the novel, Defoe makes it clear to his readers that Robinson Crusoe is ready to forgo his spot in the "middle station" of society (Defoe 4) for the opportunity of "raising his fortune" (Defoe 15). According to Crusoe's father, the middle station of life can be described as one which is "most suited to human Happiness" (Defoe 4) because it does not have the hardships and toils of the low life, nor the envies and ambitions that delude the high life (Defoe 5). The description that Crusoe's father gives sounds like a utopia of sorts, which even the reader may find alluring. However, having a station where happiness is secured and necessities are provided does not remove Crusoe's "Inclination" to leave, because in this episode, Crusoe is primarily invested in the monetary profit he will get from leaving the middle station. Crusoe was already "resolv'd to run quite away from him" (Defoe 6) because he is more interested in profit, but if he is resolved, then the reader is left to wonder why he waits. When he finally decides to leave is actually a demonstration of his interest in the outlook of gaining more than what he receives. Although still entirely bent upon leaving, Crusoe remains with his family, at a standstill about his profession, even "obstinately deaf" to starting a life of trade, until a companion invites Crusoe (Defoe 7). It is not the invitation that prompts Crusoe's quick decision but rather the fact that he will be able to go free of expense. "That it should cost me nothing for my Passage, I consulted neither Father or Mother anymore... (Defoe 7).

There has been much written on these beginning pages of *Robinson Crusoe,* more precisely Crusoe's "disobedience" to his father, in which critics have

attempted to establish Crusoe as a figure of religious commentary, a symbol of political freedom, or as a character influenced by changing social conventions, assigning Crusoe a role in a scheme. Bell and Watt touch on the importance of this episode as a reflection of rights of freedom and the individual. Ian Bell sees the opening passages of the novel that put father and son at odds as Defoe's commentary on the political system of patriarchy. Bell argues that Defoe appears to be supporting John Locke's view against patriarchy by having Crusoe disobey his father, and in not taking his father's advice, instead choosing his own path, to "establish himself as a successful and prosperous trader" (Bell 30). Children have the right to their own freedom once they reach an age of maturity (Bell 29), and so Defoe uses Crusoe as a model of the mature child who is able to determine his own path and benefits from his freedom. As to Crusoe's isolation on the island as a punishment, Bell contends that it happens so long after Crusoe's freedom of choice from his father, that it's "quite inappropriate to see it as a deferred punishment for leaving home" and instead should be seen as an "unfortunate consequence of natural freedom" rather than an inevitable outcome (Bell 30). While doing well to acknowledge the positive outcomes of freedom of inclination for Crusoe, Bell does not make particular mention of the reason for Crusoe wishing to leave. If not for wishing to increase "his riches" (Defoe 15), then there would have been no desire for Crusoe to benefit from the freedom that Bell writes about in *King Crusoe: Locke's Political Theory in Robinson Crusoe*, and so it remains that profit is still the primary desire of Crusoe. In Ian Watt's essay "Robinson Crusoe, Individualism and the Novel," Watt argues that "profit is Crusoe's only vocation, and the whole world is his territory" (177). Watt contends that it is "individualism" of the seventeenth century, or the rise of the individual's freedom of choice to his economic, social, political, and religious roles, that makes Crusoe Defoe's symbol of the man who betters himself through "seeking profit" (174). During this period, Watt explains, there was a rise in individualism, and people were beginning to have the ability to move out of the position of life they were born to, or from where they were born, or how the King determined the course of their lives. I believe that it is this "individualism" that contributed to Crusoe's ability to profit because he was granted economic and social mobility. He was not tied to an apprenticeship, like his family's position in society may have previously called for, and so he had the ability not only to acquire the desire for an increase of fortune, but to obtain it as well. Without this "individualism," it would be difficult to determine how Crusoe could find a way to profit in a fixed occupation. Crusoe's mind is always set on achieving more profit and so despite "all the desirable Pleasures" (Defoe 4) of existence that the middle station of life with his family will afford him, he is looking above him for more opportunities to increase his profit.

Another opportunity to gain profit does afford itself to Crusoe when he lands on the island. Money no longer has value to Crusoe (though he still manages to stash it away) (Defoe 120), so the profit he now seeks is through increasing his property. Upon realizing his "dreadful deliverance" (Defoe 43) on the island, Robinson Crusoe is filled with fear because, after spending his life in highly colonized civilizations and then living on an island filled with none of the modern conveniences he had grown accustomed to, Crusoe saw no prospect before him but "that of perishing with Hunger" (Defoe 43). It is for the sake of survival that Crusoe will at first only hunt as his need for food arises and even preserve the rest should there be no hope for food the following day (Defoe 56). Acting in this way is a means of survival—food is necessary to survive, and the text leads the reader to believe that what he can hunt or pick is sufficient to avoid starvation. But as Crusoe's time on the island lengthened and he gained more knowledge about his surroundings, he began to expand his provisions, which includes setting up a plantation (Defoe 107) and setting a trap to obtaino three kids to start a herd (Defoe 134). The expansion of his property might suggest that Crusoe is actually losing instead of gaining because he is still just one person at this point in the novel, but he now has a larger portion of land to tend to and more mouths (the goats) to feed. The first thing to consider is that the tools Crusoe uses are freely taken from the shipwrecks, and aside from having to make a trip to obtain the items, obtaining them is a gain, only. Though a considerable time is spent in realizing the right period for harvest and planting, the result is actually a gain to Crusoe because he no longer has to take the time to search (maybe pointlessly depending on season) for crops on the island (Defoe 107). Likewise with his herd, Crusoe no longer has to go out and hunt and use his ammunition, so the time spent in making the traps and catching the goats are less than what he gains in having a

tame herd for his needs (Defoe 134). With Crusoe alone on the island, it leaves the reader wondering, if Crusoe is a man influenced by his desire for profit, then why is he raising crops when there is no one to buy them, or increasing his livestock when there is no other person to trade with? It seems that these are actions more suited for his life on his plantation in Brazil than on a deserted island. But how else can profit on the island be measured by the restless Crusoe?

Here, Novak may argue that profit is a lesser concern of Crusoe at this point in the novel. Being isolated on the island brings about the discussion of Crusoe as a man in a "state of nature," and to Novak, a man who Defoe used to support that man was a social being, and that the freedom of the island was not so important to Crusoe as "the comfort and security of civilization" (23). Novak further relates that once finding the footprint in the sand, Crusoe's fear compels him to abandon all of his production (35)—which would include letting free his goats and even destroying his own plantation. This is rather unprofitable to Crusoe, in a way undoing all that he has been working on because of fear being most prominent. However, the actions were never done. Instead of destroying his property, Crusoe actually expands it further to compensate for what he feels is a lack of security (Defoe 184). This time spent on increasing his security together with his previous property gains gives Crusoe a further self-claim on the island, which will eventually allow him to profit from the people who come to "his island." Another critic, Brett Mcinelly, acknowledges the importance of colonialism for the novel. It is because of the colonial setting that "Crusoe gradually learns how to assert himself over land and people" (Mcinelly 2) to achieve a self-image that is dependent on the "expanding empire" (Mcinelly 5). The individualism that Ian Watt had previously written about in *Robinson Crusoe, Individualism and the Novel*, is, in Mcinelly's opinion, dependent on the colonial setting because "Crusoe's self-image enlarges the farther he travels from England" (Mcinelly 5). He argues that *Robinson Crusoe* is the first novel precisely because of the attention paid to Crusoe as an individual, an image that is sought through his interaction with a world full of "Others" (Mcinelly 2) who occupy cultural and religious differences. It is these "Others" as well as a foreign environment that Crusoe then must find resolution with, in order to move toward economics and commerce (Mcinelly 14). In regard to colonialism having an impression on the character of Crusoe, I agree with Mcinelly. Without this "expanding of empires," Crusoe would not have been able to sail to Brazil to claim his gradual profit. Along with affecting his self-image, colonialism also contributes to Crusoe's desire for gains in his life, because he is always seeking outside for further fortunes. When he leaves his family, he leaves the country (Defoe 5). When he leaves to obtain the slaves, he completely leaves the island. He's always expanding outward, so a great contributing factor to his ability to profit is because of the possibility of expansion.

Another instance of how Crusoe is primarily concerned with profit is illustrated in his relationship with Xury and with Friday. Instead of seeing Xury as an equal who is escaping from imprisonment and wanting to give him freedom out of human compassion, Crusoe gives the boy an ultimatum – "if you will be faithful to me I'll make you a great man, but if not...I must throw you into the sea" (Defoe 21). The boy is no threat to Crusoe's life or survival, yet Crusoe chooses to have him as a servant rather than to be an equal traveler with him. He profits from Xury because the boy is more knowledgeable about their surroundings, and he works for Crusoe on the ship. Although Xury is kept in the place of servant in Crusoe's thoughts, Xury does not try to run away or profit from Crusoe's own lack of expertise. The boy is more knowledgeable when it comes to finding water and obtaining nourishment on the land they come to (Defoe 26), and though Xury could have easily run off and left Robinson to perish, he stands by him. The boy even demonstrates attitudes that surpass the role of one obeying orders when he tells Crusoe "If wild Mans come, they eat me, you go wey" (Defoe 23). Despite the innocent and touching loyalty of Xury and the promise Crusoe makes that he will protect Xury and keep him, Crusoe just as soon sells him off for monetary profit (Defoe 31). After betraying the relationship, for the sake of additional profit, the only time Crusoe thinks of Xury is not when showing remorse, but it is when he needs someone to tend his land for the sake of further profit (Defoe 116). In the end, Xury was just a means for Crusoe to profit through Xury's knowledge of the area, his ability to work for Crusoe, and how much money he was worth as a servant.

The other servant Crusoe has during this time on the island is Friday. The first companion that Crusoe has had after his 28 years of isolation would make the reader assume that Friday would be someone who would hold a high importance to Crusoe. Crusoe does consider Friday a "faithful, loving, sincere Servant" (Defoe 193). And much like Xury, who Crusoe had once said "spoke

with such Affection" to him (Defoe 23), Crusoe describes the manner in which Friday's "Affections were ty'd to [him], like those of a child to a father" (Defoe 193). But for all these affectionate terms that come from Xury and Friday to Crusoe, they are not returned. Even the saving of Friday was of little expense to Crusoe, who had weapons, compared to the weaponless natives (Defoe 209). Instead, Crusoe takes from Friday what he can, including the expansive knowledge Friday has about the area and peoples, making him a servant and having him work the property that Crusoe had worked himself (Defoe 196). Because Crusoe still eats the food that Friday is now taking care of, he is profiting greatly from Friday's presence. Friday asks for nothing in return and certainly gives Crusoe more than he receives from Crusoe in the form of labor, knowledge, and companionship. Considering that Crusoe comes to trust Friday enough to decrease security between them (Defoe 195), it is not impossible to consider that Friday could have very well killed and eaten Crusoe while he slept and taken his positions and land to obtain all the profit of the property himself. Instead, grateful for being saved by Crusoe, Friday is satisfied. Some of the interpretations of Friday include him as a means for Crusoe to define himself by comparison (Mcinnelly 7) and as a noble savage, who is of high virtue as a savage because of his willingness to be civilized by Crusoe (Novak 47). In Paul J. Hunter's essay "Friday as a Convert: Defoe and the Accounts of Indian Missionaries," he explores reactions to Friday's question about why God didn't just kill the Devil. While some commentators of the time believed that this form of reason was absurd for a savage, Hunter contends that it is similar to questions from indigenous people at that time (242). Furthermore, a questioning of this nature was seen at that time as "evidence of religious awakening" (Hunter 246). Validating the authenticity of Defoe's portrayal of Friday is important, but I think it's more important to understand why Friday was written in beside Crusoe. More than commentary or Defoe's opinion of natives and colonizers, the relationship between Friday and Crusoe is especially important to the true character of Crusoe because there are so few people in the novel that Crusoe interacts with for a long period of time. So instead of questioning if the portrayal of Friday is accurate, readers should be questioning, why is it that Crusoe wishes to be with Friday and Xury, too? It is only with Xury and Friday, two servants from whom he can benefit, that Crusoe wishes to comment on, because he is more interested in what he can gain from a human relationship, beyond the friendship the social animal, man, seeks. Crusoe's relationship with Xury and Friday, two individuals who think kindly of him and are willing to put their lives out for him, are in the end only commodities Crusoe is able to profit from through their knowledge and ability to work for him.

Robinson Crusoe is surely not the lofty adventurer, seeking only the thrill of life, which the title brings to mind. Through the demonstration of Crusoe leaving the middle station of life, of how he spends his time on the island increasing his property, and how he uses his relationship with Xury and Friday for his own profit, it is evident that Crusoe is primarily concerned with increasing his profit.

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Evaluation: *Meaghan invites us to look more closely at a work considered "innocent" enough for young readers, revealing the ways in which profit-making is celebrated under the guise of adventure.*

# "The Chrysanthemums": A Picture of an Unsatisfying Spirit

*Michelle Stef*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Barbara Butler

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper using eight or more secondary sources.*

*Trapped*, *frustrated*, and *deprived* are some words that describe Elisa Allen in John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums." She feels trapped by the role society has placed on her, frustrated that she can't escape this hold, and deprived of fulfillment in her life. Elisa Allen is a strong, passionate, adventure seeker who is being held back not only by society but also by her husband. Miscommunication in her marriage causes lack of fulfillment in her life. Desperately searching for a way out, she looks to a tinker. To her disappointment, he is also like any other man in society. Some critics have suggested that Elisa is the one who is causing this frustration by being defensive and not satisfying her partner sexually due to wanting to be dominant. Not finding fulfillment, she looks to her garden of chrysanthemums. Through these characters and symbolism, Steinbeck illustrates a theme of inequality between genders and the significance of sexual fulfillment. Elisa Allen realizes her entrapment and desire for fulfillment won't ever be quenched; she has to live with an unsatisfying spirit.

Living an unexcited and uninspired life, Elisa Allen tries to find meaning in her garden. Her husband, Henry, says, "You've got a gift with things…I wish you'd work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big" (227). He doesn't suggest she help him with the ranch even though she does find interest in those matters. As Gregory J. Palmerino asserts, it's clear that Elisa is capable of raising a crop for the orchard, for she has "planters' hands" (165). "Henry does not acknowledge Elisa's equivocal acceptance to his disingenuous offer and can only reply, 'Well, it sure works with flowers'" (Palmerino 165). She has a thirst to see the world and experience new things. She shows curiosity later on in the story when she asks her husband about the fights, which women usually don't go to, and when talking to the tinker she says, "…I wish women could do such things" (231) when referring to the tinker's job. Due to her frustration with life, she tries to find fulfillment and excitement through the tinker. When the tinker notices her chrysanthemums, Steinbeck says, "The irritation and resistance melted from Elisa's face" (229). Steinbeck also says, "Her breasts swelled passionately" (230), which shows she was attempting to seek sexual achievement through the tinker. She is devastated when the tinker throws away the chrysanthemum she gave him, and she still tries to tease her husband at the end of story by asking for wine at dinner and being interested in the fight. William Osborne says that Elisa's frustration is due to her not knowing who she is and where she fits in society (qtd. in Akers 67). Joseph Beach has said that Elisa Allen is "'one of the most delicious characters ever transferred from life to the pages of a book'" (qtd. in Akers 67). Charles A. Sweet has claimed she is an embryonic feminist whom Steinbeck uses in response to feminism (qtd. in Akers 67). Elisa Allen is a "'representative of the feminist ideal of equality and its inevitable defeat'" (qtd. in Akers 67).

*Clever*, *canny*, *exciting*, and *smart* describe the tinker in "The Chrysanthemums." Elisa idealizes the tinker as a smart and exciting man. The misspelling of his sign on his wagon indicates that he has not had much schooling. Kari Meyers Skredsvig observes that the tinker is very proud of his skills, his knowledge, his ability to use tools, and his reputation (60). He flirts and banters with her, which helps him receive business from Elisa. When he feels challenged by Elisa, he responds defensively (Skredsvig 60). To Elisa, the tinker is a way for her to escape her entrapment; he shows interest in her. Once he has received the business he desired, he feels no need to cultivate her; he then puts her down to where he thinks she belongs and reminds her she doesn't have as much freedom as men do (Skredsvig 61). Elisa highly idealizes the tinker since she is so desperate. The fact that the tinker throws away her chrysanthemums shows that the idea Elisa had of him wasn't real, just an image she created out of being desperate.

Henry, Elisa's husband, is what society paints as a good husband; he is solid, providing, and caring. He has just received almost his own price selling the cattle, which according to Elizabeth McMahan, shows he is ao good provider, and he's caring enough to take Elisa out for a dinner and movie (43). He is in charge of all the major work on the farm like cutting the hay and taking care of the cattle and orchards (Skredsvig 61). He also is unimaginative, and he can't please his wife. Robert Benton comments that Henry doesn't "'fulfill her need for aesthetic companionship'" (qtd. in Akers 67). He doesn't see that Elisa wants more than just being a housekeeper and tending to her garden. He represents society; Henry believes that there are two distinct roles for men and women and neither of them should be crossed. He takes Elisa out for dinner and a movie, thinking that is what she would like since she's a woman, and only men like fights. There are gender-specific positions so women should not be treated as equals, even though Elisa desperately wants to be.

Elisa and Henry's marriage is an "...outwardly passive, comfortable relationship between the two which satisfies Henry completely but leaves Elisa indefinably restless..." (McMahan 43). Some have observed that their marriage demonstrates "confidence and mutual respect," which is not enough for Elisa (McMahan 43). Elizabeth McMahan suggests that there is a "lack of rapport" between Henry and Elisa (43). This can be seen when Henry suggests to Elisa about going to the fights:

> Henry puts on his joking tone. "There's fights tonight.
> How'd you like to go to the fights?"
> "Oh, no," she said breathlessly. "No, I wouldn't like fights."
> "Just fooling, Elisa. We'll go to a movie." (227)

Elisa's serious reply to Henry's joking shows that Elisa isn't very amused with Henry, although she is amused and shows humor when talking to the tinker. This lack of a bond is also seen when Henry compliments Elisa's flowers and appearance. When complimenting the chrysanthemums, he comments on how big the chrysanthemums are, not their beauty, and this extends into his compliments to her:

> "Why-why, Elisa. You look so nice!"
> "Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by nice?"
> Henry blundered on. "I don't know. I mean you look
> different, strong and happy." (232)

The words Henry chooses here on complimenting his wife's appearance, after she has spent hours making herself look beautiful, are not what Elisa wants to hear. She has put on her "newest underclothing and her nicest stockings and the dress which was the symbol of her prettiness" (232). After all this preparation, Elisa does not want to look "strong" (McMahan 44). Seeing that Elisa isn't amused with his compliment, Henry then says, "Youo look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon" (232). Many women, including Elisa, wouldn't want such a compliment.

The lack of connection and attachment between Elisa and Henry is due to their lack of communication. Gregory Palmerino mentions that there are many incidences for a fight, but the conflicts never progress into one (164). "This absence of friction prevents Henry and Elisa's relationship from progressing, whether it be as lovers, partners, or parents" (Palmerino 164). Both partners withdraw from each other and turn to either the garden or housework for Elisa or the cattle and the tractor shed for Henry. One of the couple's basic problems is that they don't know or don't want to fight (Palmerino 164). When Henry suggests that Elisa use her skills for the orchard, he doesn't notice that Elisa actually does want to take on this responsibility and simply replies, "Well, it sure works with flowers" (227). Instead of Elisa voicing her opinion, she keeps quiet so as not to bring about a conflict; she diverts the topic by asking Henry who he was talking to. Asking Elisa to go see the fights in a joking tone is a way Henry deflected his true desires of seeing the fights and to hide his true feelings.

After Elisa replies she wouldn't like to see the fights, Henry answers quickly that he was "just fooling" (227) to avoid conflict. Conversations that might produce friction and disagreement are not pursued (Palmerino 165). The couple comes close to having a fight and expressing their desires when Henry compliments Elisa on how she looks. Henry's "blundered" response of meaning "strong" to Elisa's question of what he meant by "nice" was followed by Elisa insisting she knows what Henry means by "strong." Henry takes his wife's questioning as a game rather than a confrontational and challenging response and answers kindly by saying, "You look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon" (232). Elisa's "rigidity" is lost for a second, and she responds by scolding Henry for what he

just said. After being "complete again," Elisa takes pride in how strong she is. Henry also becomes himself again when he takes a glance at the tractor shed. A fight has been suppressed once again; both have returned to their distant selves (Palmerino 165). Elisa doesn't even express rage toward the tinker's action of throwing away the chrysanthemums; containing her feelings and emotions is what she is used to doing. Henry and Elisa's marriage is "...one that avoids inherent discord and, ultimately, any possibility for progression" (Palmerino 165).

The chrysanthemums are strong, lovely, and flourishing like Elisa. They symbolize Elisa and how limited her life is. Their flowerbed, like Elisa's house, is tidy and in order. She says she has become one with the plants; she identifies herself in them. Flowers have similar qualities as women, like delicacy, beauty, fragility, and innocence (Skredsvig 61). Kari Meyers Skredsvig says that the flowers serve as markers for her realm (61). Chrysanthemums are the one thing that she can pour herself into and that society will allow her to; it's designated as Elisa's space (Skredsvig 61). When the tinker notices the chrysanthemums, Elisa gets excited and changes her mood as though he has noticed her. She offers to give him some of the flowers, just as if she was offering herself to him. When the tinker throws aside the flowers, Elisa is rejected once again and cries at the end of the story. Just as the tinker has tossed the chrysanthemums, so has society tossed away women as only mothers and housekeepers. Elisa, like the chrysanthemums, is unimportant and is good only for decoration, with little worth in the world.

Elisa's passion is for her garden; she feels a connection with it, something she can't explain, which is evident as she's trying to describe the feeling to the tinker (230). She has a gift, "planter's hands," that is a source for strength, as Cynthia Bily observes (1). When working in her garden, she becomes "lean and strong," her fingers are strong, and her work is "over-powerful" (226-27). Her passion is shown with how knowledgeable she is concerning the flowers (Skredsvig 61). She gives the tinker detailed instructions on how to take care of the chrysanthemums (230). Her knowledge is also portrayed with how well her flowers are growing, and her husband agrees. Some, like Kari Meyers Skredsvig and Mordecai Marcus, have suggested that her devotion to her garden is a projection of her maternal instinct since she doesn't have any children (qtd. in Akers 67 and Skredsvig 61). Mordecai Marcus adds that "'she finds a substitute in her flowers'" (67), and Kari Meyers Skredsvig says that her skill, her pride, and her nurturing are best seen in her garden (61). Cynthia Bily comments, "Elisa already leads a lonely life, in terms of her connections with other human beings. Her only passion is for her garden, and when she is alone in the garden she is her truest self" (1).

Two strong themes in "The Chrysanthemums" are that men don't treat women equally and that the need for sexual fulfillment can influence illogical behaviors. Even though Elisa is a strong, intelligent woman, her talents go to waste. She is more intelligent than the two other characters, but their lives are far more exciting and fulfilling. Henry doesn't treat his wife as an equal partner; he uses vague terms when describing his business deal. He talks down to Elisa as if she has no intelligence of the matter, like she is a child. Elisa has given away flowers for no money; she actually paid the tinker fifty cents for a task she acknowledges that she can do herself, while Henry gets almost his own price for the cattle he sold (Sweet 47). Charles A. Sweet suggests that all Elisa's hard work is rewarded by a Saturday night dinner and movie (47). "And in the end her dreams of feminine equality are so shattered that her former state is impossible; she accepts her social role..." (Sweet 47). The tinker also doesn't see women as equal to men; he tells Elisa, "It ain't the right kind of a life for a woman" (231), even though Elisa says she can do the tinker's job just as well as he can. She says, "I could show you what a woman might do" (231). The act of the tinker throwing away the chrysanthemums and rejecting Elisa as she is expressing sexual desires toward him has "stripped her of her dignity and dreams of equality" (Sweet 47). Steinbeck wanted to demonstrate through Henry and the tinker that society doesn't treat women as equal; men ignore women's potential even though it can benefit them. To Steinbeck, it's a man's world dominated by masculinity (Sweet 48).

Second, Steinbeck illustrates the need for sexual fulfillment. Elisa's marriage is passionless and sexless. Her marriage to Henry doesn't meet her needs sexually. When the tinker comes along, her entrapped desires push

forward. Influenced by her needs, she tells the tinker, "Every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. Hot and sharp and –lovely" (230). Her language here has a somewhat sexual nature to it and is forward. The narrator also says, "She looked deep into his eyes, searchingly" (230). "Kneeling there, her hand went out toward his legs in the greasy black trousers. Her hesitant fingers almost touched the cloth. Then her hand dropped to the ground. She crouched low like a fawning dog" (230). She puts herself in the hands of a complete stranger, showing how desperate her sexual needs need to pour out. After the tinker has left, Elisa gets ready for her night out by "Scrubbing herself...until her skin was scratched and red" (230). She puts on a dress that emphasizes her sex appeal, unlike her garden attire in the beginning of the story. Stanley Renner suggests that Elisa putting on her "newest underclothing and her nicest stockings" (232) is an anticipation of the sexual suggestion of the night (51). With all of Elisa's preparation in hopes to be fulfilled sexually, emotionally, she is still in her fence and puts up barriers toward her husband's courtship (Renner 51). Elisa tries to excite Henry through her appearance, but she is still defensive (Renner 51). Renner questions the reason for Elisa's sexual disappointment by asking "Why is Elisa's life unfulfilled?" (52) Elisa turns away from her husband's courtship, which according to Renner suggests that there might be something wrong with their marriage (52). Could the lack of communication in the Allens' marriage be affecting Elisa's sexual fulfillment? The fact that she does turn to the tinker to overcome her disappointment shows that her marriage isn't satisfying her sexually. This could be due to Elisa's defensiveness toward society or her husband. Her desire and sexual needs have been hidden for so long that when they do finally come out, they overpower Elisa and crush her once again when her desires aren't fully met.

Roy S. Simmonds suggests that Elisa is the one who is unable or unwilling to satisfy her partner sexually (45). All of her motivation and sex drive is placed in the care of her flowers, "the phallic symbols over which she exercises complete mastery" (Simmonds 45). When Elisa overreacts to her husband's comment on how nice she looks, this shows that Elisa is one that doesn't submit to men. Instead, she takes pride in how strong she is by saying, "I'm strong? Yes, strong..." (232). Elisa has a need to be in control of the men she comes in contact with, keeping them at arm's length (Simmonds 45). Even her flower garden has a fence around it, not only to keep out animals, but also to keep out her husband and the tinker. Only when the tinker has seduced Elisa by showing interest in her chrysanthemums does Elisa let him cross the fence into her side; "Elisa finds her defenses in danger of collapsing to the extent that she almost allows herself to succumb to male dominance" (Simmonds 46). "She stood up then, very straight, and her face was ashamed" (230); though many have suggested that the shame Elisa feels is due to a married woman being tempted by adultery, Roy S. Simmonds proposes that the shame she experiences is because she realizes she lowered her defenses to male dominance (46). Interestingly, with all the sexual tension between the tinker and Elisa, they never end up actually touching. She doesn't touch his trouser legs, or his hand when giving him the pans to work on, or when Elisa pays him (Simmonds 46). Maintaining dominance is what Elisa thinks she has achieved with the tinker. She devalues the ability of his dog by saying, "I see he is. How soon does he generally get started" (228) when referreing to the tinker's comment of how bad his dog can be in a fight, and she challenges his own ability, asserting she can "sharpen scissors too" and "...beat the dents out of little pots" (231). She jokingly threatens the tinker that he might have a rival one day (231). Renner agrees with this view and also suggests that Elisa is not entrapped by men and society, but is one who hides herself in a "fortress of sexual reticence and self-with-holding defensiveness" (qtd. in Akers 67). This view is one that is controversial, yet still intriguing and offers a different outlook on Elisa's sexual frustration.

Elisa's unsatisfying life is due to how society, including her husband and the tinker, view women. Unequal to men, women are to be housekeepers and mothers; they are not to be equal partners or use their talents to help their husbands. Elisa's strong, passionate, adventurous spirit has no place in the society; she's held back by society's rules. Even though she is smarter than the two male characters, she can't express her potential. She's searching for meaning, purpose, and sexual fulfillment. The chrysanthemums she tends provide the

only purpose she is allowed to have. Elisa realizes she has to live with her entrapment. Some say this entrapment is caused by her defensiveness and not being able to satisfy her partner sexually, but her defensiveness and her desire for male dominance are due to how society has been treating her. She has put up walls not to have to be hurt again. The lack of communication in her marriage has provoked her not to respond to Henry, which has affected both of them sexually. Though things have progressed from Elisa's time, women in our society still feel trapped and unfulfilled due to the lines society has drawn with genders. Only when these lines have been taken away will women feel a sense of equality. The illustration of a woman's fight against society's gender roles and how important and powerful sexual fulfillment is in Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" are still true today. John H. Timmerman comments, "...the story deals symbolically with 'the dream of the artist, the artist's freedom of expression, and the constraints of society upon that freedom'" (qtd. in Akers 67).

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Evaluation: *Michelle's analysis of John Steinbeck's story is strongly rooted in her judicious quoting of passages from the primary source, and it reaches fruition in her intelligent use of secondary sources.*

# Fromm and Emerson: Denial of Apparent Western Individuality

*Rachel Stuck*
Course: Humanities 105/History 105
(Great Ideas of World Civilizations)
Instructor: John Garcia

Assignment: *This essay was part of the take-home final for the course. Students were asked to pick two thinkers from the course and then present an argument as to whate these thinkers would say about a question I posed or about a contemporary issue. Rachel chose to look at the question of whether or not American culture is extremely individualistic.*

The claim that our culture is increasingly individualistic is true in some aspects, and false in others. It is true in that fewer and fewer people know their neighbors and depend entirely upon themselves and a handful of trusted companions. Americans, in particular, are more individualistic in this way, and hesitate to ask for help from neighbors and friends. Communities have shrunk, and suburban neighborhoods are apparently only good for progressive dinners and cookie swaps during the holidays. However, the American culture has become decreasingly individualistic in a way that is much more significant. Individuality in speech, actions, and principles has declined into massive conformity. This is the opinion of both Erich Fromm and Ralph Waldo Emerson. They both hold this latter form of individuality in the utmost respect and fear the monster of conformity, yet for reasons as different as their writing styles. Fromm holds that true individuality is what allows for a human spirit and worldview, while Emerson maintains that individuality causes great and inventive thought.

Erich Fromm, in "The Individual in the Chains of Illusion," claims that a loss of individuality is a loss of humanity, and would therefore lead to uncompassionate human beings. Citing the atrocities of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, Fromm notes the lack of care for people of other nations, creeds, and races. Of the dropping of the atomic bombs, Fromm writes, "Indiscriminate destruction of human life had become a legitimate means for attaining political goals...aEach side brutalizes the other, following the logic 'if he is inhuman I must (and can) be inhuman too'" (4). He argues that each group terrorizes the other quite inhumanely simply because the other has done so previously. Because of this, Fromm calls for disobedience.

Fromm tells us, "Disobedience was the first act of freedom, the beginning of human history" (9). He concludes that disobedience was the means to attain intellectual development and humanity. Without disobedience and individual thought, Fromm implies, all human beings will be subject to conformity on a major scale, such as in totalitarian states. Such conformity is what led to the mass killings of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and even, according to Fromm, what caused the United States to use the atomic bomb against Japan to end World War II. Fromm writes, "I believe that we are in great danger of being converted into complete organization men, and that means, eventually, into political totalitarianism, unless we regain the capacity to be disobedient" (10). This obedience toward those who govern and cause conformity will lead, he believes, to a dangerous mindset, where nationalism defeats all other aspects of life. Fromm already saw this sort of living in the young people of Western cultures, especially "Cliché thinking, conformity, and obedience to the anonymous authority of public opinion and of the accepted patterns of feeling" (8). The idea that the culture of America is leading people to become increasingly more individualistic would be utterly ridiculous to Fromm. He saw the degradation of individualism as he watched the World Wars, and the only way he saw an escape was to become increasingly disobedient to conformist thought. The sort of individualism to which Fromm alludes is one that will lead human beings to care about one another as human beings and ends in themselves, not means to an end.

Similar to Fromm, Ralph Waldo Emerson, in "Self-Reliance," calls his readers to become rugged individuals. The common mantra, "Be true to yourself," would be

**Student Reflections on Writing: Rachel Stuck**

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. I say a thousand words are worth so much more than a mere picture. With a thousand words, an entire story can take place, vivid images can be permanently impressed on the mind, and imagination can take flight. President Abraham Lincoln inspired an entire nation with only 272 words in *The Gettysburg Address.* It is the brilliant artist that can take the mundane and create something spectacular. Words are simple, yet complex. They are dull, yet exotic. They are boring, yet fascinating. Leonardo da Vinci made the seemingly commonplace portrait of a woman a truly breathtaking work of art. Simply through a tweak in a woman's smile, da Vinci has captivated the world for centuries with the *Mona Lisa.* Similarly, powerful writing has the ability to transform the way in which we view the world.

an appropriate summary of this essay. Addressing the issue of conformity, Emerson writes, "Your genuine action will explain itself and your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing" (Emerson 16). Just as Fromm called individuals to not conform in thought, Emerson does so regarding actions. Acting in an ethical or virtuous way explains nothing about oneself, but acting in accordance with one's nature appropriately expresses individuality. Commenting on the phenomenon of conformity, Emerson notes, "It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude" (9). He acknowledges here that it is, in fact, easier to conform to society. Being an individual is more fulfilling and more authentic regarding identity. Yet Emerson observes that, in society, "The virtue in most requests is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs" (6). Emerson warns, just as Fromm does, of the dangers that lie in conforming to society. However, contrary to Fromm, Emerson desires an intellectual individualism not to be more humane toward others, but to advance and better society. This does not diminish the fact that Emerson would disagree with the idea that Americans are becoming more individualistic. Physical and financial individualism do not imply intellectual individualism. The greatest part of what many consider individualism today comes out of the conformity to be financially and emotionally stable. People are more concerned with being accepted socially than with being themselves. Emerson exemplifies this idea when he writes, "We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents" (Emerson 2). This issue of personal shame has been exacerbated since Emerson wrote "Self-Reliance," and he would be appalled by the lack of individual thought in today's society.

Both Fromm and Emerson would be quite shocked that the people of Western society could even be thought of as individualistic. Americans, as a whole, believe that they are complete individuals, but they are only so in the surface sense: they are free from financial and emotional dependency. Yet true individuality, not merely determined by action, is that of nonconformist action and thought. The two thinkers are fully aware of this discrepancy, and warn against this exact idea of conformity in thought and action. Fromm hopes for individual thought to revive humanism and compassion within the world, and the end of nationalism through this thought. With this, he believes, the world can become more united, with less strife among nations and peoples. Emerson desires that individualism would come about to create new ideas and promote greatness in members of society. Even though they hope for two different outcomes, both would come about through true individual thought and nonconforming action, which Fromm and Emerson would argue is not apparent in American culture today.

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Fromm, Erich. "The Individual in the Chains of Illusion." *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers.* Eighth ed. Ed. Lee A. Jacobus. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. 328-37. Print.

Evaluation: *Rachel is an outstanding writer who is able to see subtleties in the writings of the thinkers we studied—subtleties that other students, even those in the Honors course, were unable to see. Her arguments are nuanced and well supported by evidence from the texts she is examining.*

# Abner Snopes: Rebel with a Cause

*Michelle Sullivan*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Andrew Wilson

Assignment: *Write a literary research essay.*

In William Faulkner's "Barn Burning", the behavior and actions of character Abner Snopes are racist, rash, and destructive in his personal relationships with family and with society as a whole. Faulkner portrays Abner as unlikeable to the reader, making it difficult to defend or find cause for his personal and social complaints. A patient analysis of Abner is warranted, however. An understanding of the "matters of culture, race, class, and power that affect Abner Snopes" during the thirty years after the Civil War can help the reader understand and perhaps defend Abner's behavior and actions (DeMott 430).

"Barn Burning" takes place post-Reconstruction in rural Mississippi, where racism and the unjust division of economic resources are pervasive. Significantly, racism between poor whites and former slaves resulteda mainly from the frustrations in competing for farminga jobs and the additional interference to owning property. "Like the landowner, blacks interfered with the ability of poor whites to control property, which they equated with personal freedom" (Moss 43). Abner Snopes is a poor,a white tenant sharecropper who falls victim to a perpetual cycle of hard work, resulting in poverty, not property. Abner is

> aware of his interchangeability as a white sharecropper with "exploited black labor"... "In the nineteenth century [it] was not simply white skin but access to the vote, to the bodies of women, the right to defend one's country in war, to hold arms or to hold property, the right to acquire capital, and, especially, the right and ability to dominate black people." (Watson n.pag.)

Abner feels entitled to this definition of whiteness; however, because he is poor, he cannot attain this level of whiteness, contrary to the ability of the white upper class. Competing with former slaves for jobs and with the rich men for whiteness drives Abner's racist behavior. Abner's awareness of his place within the community compels him to respond with a "stiff foot.a.[that] had attained to a sort of vicious and ravening minimum not to be dwarfed by anything" (Faulkner 519).

Abner refuses to accept the cultural expectations of his life and defends his right to retaliate, defyinga his low-class subordination. In the opening scene, Mr. Harris accuses Abner of burning his barn after an incident involving Abner's refusal to fence his hog. The "old stock laws required farmers to fence in their crops while allowing for the open grazing of livestock" (Lessig n.apag.). After the Civil War, these laws were debateda by much "opposition and animosities" (Lessig n. pag.). Abner's "unprintable and vile" remarks (Faulkner 516),a after the judge acquits him from this barn burning charge, exemplify his "wolflike independence and even courage when the advantage was at least neutral which impressed strangers, as if they got from his latent ravening ferocity not so much a sense of dependability as a feeling that his ferocious conviction in the rightness of his own actions would be of advantage to all whose interest lay with his"(Faulkner 517). Even in the face of his economic struggles, Abner still displays a relentless confidence to move forward and honor beliefs he shares with others in the same position during that time in history. Furthermore, Abner's actions with fire symbolize his personal beliefs that shape his character. When the Snopes family is settling at a campsite, Abner builds "a small fire, neat, niggard almost, a shrewd fire" (Faulkner 517), as was usual and customary in the evenings for the family. This is ironic, given the magnitude of Abner's use of fire in the barn burnings. The symbolic meaning of fire helps to characterize Abner Snopes, as Faulkner gives "the true reason: that the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring of his father's being, as the element of steel or of powder spoke to other men, as the one weapon for the preservation of integrity...and hence to be regarded with respect and used with discretion" (Faulkner 517). Fire is the weapon that this under-class man uses to defend

himself against an upper-class man who is able to afford guns. In Matthew Lessig's critical essay, he explains that because of "the history of Southern stock laws and anonymous acts of violence such as barn burnings, the relations of planters and their tenants were never settled and humble, but persistently dynamic and contested" (n.pag.). The willingness to defend himself and his family with fiery confidence, regardless of consequence, characterizes Abner Snopes as static, with consistent strength in personal self-respect.

Abner decides to take tenancy as a sharecropper on the land of Major de Spain, who is a member of the upper class within the community. When Abner and his family come to Major de Spain's vast estate, Abner walks through a pile of horse manure and then enters the home with condescending words and a shove to the "Negro" butler (Faulkner 519). Of course, Abner also famously and deliberately smears the expensive white rug with the horse manure from his boots. Once Abner exits the home, he cleans his boots off on the step and refers to the home as "Pretty and white…[built from] nigger sweat" (Faulkner 519). "Everything in this chain of actions suggests deliberate provocation by Abner spurred by his own prior assumption that the de Spains have insulted him" (Bertonneau 15). The de Spain house and even the property around it are a kind of insult that defines Abner's contempt for the beauty and order of the rich at the expense of the oppressed.

After Major de Spain forces Abner to clean and return the rug, de Spain complains that the rug is ruined. He humiliates Abner by reminding him he will never possess the one hundred dollars that the rug costs. Consequently, Abner is charged twenty bushels of corn against his crop. "Though an atypical expense, the incident nevertheless illustrates the perpetual cycle of debt upon debt that shackled many tenant farmers, both white and black, to the service of one landowner" (Moss 42). Abner then sues Major de Spain because he believes it is an unfair charge. The judge also reminds Abner of his low socioeconomic status by saying "'twenty bushels of corn seems a little high for a man in your circumstances to have to pay'" (Faulkner 522) and settles the charge to ten bushels. Feeling humiliated and slighted, Abner takes matters into his own hands by defending himself with fire to burn the barns of those who he believes unfairly condemn him. Being constantly condemned is a living hell for Abner. Faulkner describes Abner as "something cut ruthlessly from tin, depthless, as though, sidewise to the sun, it would cast no shadow" (518) and a "hand like a curled claw" (519). These images of Abner are devilish, and as critic Thomas Bertonneau explains, "The Devil, in folklore, limps in his left (cleft) foot, and given his connection with fire there is something truly devilish about Abner Snopes" (15). Coincidently, Abner's devilish disposition depicts his place in hell and "for his own purposes; his entire life was 'war,' and war, as they say, is Hell" (Bertonneau 15).

"For Abner Snopes the only principle lending significance to his war with the de Spains of this world is that of blood loyalty—determination to beat your personal enemy if you can and keep faith, at all costs, with your clan" (DeMott 43). The costs include the "harsh and cold" tone directing a bloody and beaten Sarty into the wagon (Faulkner 516), then again to his wife as she cries when seeing and wanting to care for Sarty's bloody face. This could be Abner's way of communicating to his family, with confidence, the importance of moving forward with determination in the presence of terror and tears. Abner is galvanized by his belief in loyalty to family, unconditionally at any cost, so much that he speaks to his young ten-year-old son, Sarty, with a "voice harsh like tin and without heat like tin" to express his concern that Sarty would betray him in the courthouse even if guilty (Faulkner 517). Abner proceeds to tell his young son the importance of becoming a man that supports his family; otherwise, the family will not reciprocate. A poor man during this time in history could only gain respect from his immediate family because of the social segregation and the common lack of respect between classes. Despite his fearsome verbal and physical disposition, Abner does show some level of responsibility and care for his family. Although the Snopes family experiences many disruptions as a result of Abner's actions, there is "always a house of sorts waiting for them a day or two days or even three days away" (Faulkner 517). Abner honors his responsibility as a consistent provider for his family regardless of his meager means. An example of Abner's sincerity for his family is when Sarty "remembered… [the] harsh silhouette of the hat and coat bending over

the rug" (Faulkner 520), allowing the family to sleep while Abner appears to stay up most of the night to finish cleaning and then returning the rug to Major de Spain. Another peaceful family moment occurs after the court hearing regarding Major de Spain's rug. Abner spends the rest of that particular day with his sons, socializing with merchants and telling stories "long and unhurried" of his time as a "professional horse-trader" (Faulkner 523). Abner provides equal shares of cheese and crackers for himself and his sons, watching and commenting on the horses being traded in town. These moments imply that Abner wants people to listen to him when he speaks, respect him for his work experience and contribution to society, and know that he is an advocate for equality. The cold truth, alas, is that Abner was actually a horse thief during his long-ago time as a soldier, but this does not compromise the degree to which the above-mentioned scene illustrates a moment of bonding to promote family loyalty.

"Barn Burning" is a story that takes place during a tumultuous time in history. The Civil War has ended, but thirty years later, a new struggle exists in the Deep South. A lack of evolution toward human equality presents itself through the segregation of race and the lack of fairness between classes. "As a result of the tenant system, the poverty and the self-esteem of many white farmers worsened after the Civil War" (Moss 42). Abner Snopes is a man in conflict with a society that supports racial and socioeconomic unfairness. Perhaps Abner's approach to defend and fight against this unjust society is reckless; however, a poor man during this time could only use what he had and could afford: fire and family loyalty. Just as a rich white man acts opportunistically, so does Abner. Faulkner explains Abner's use of fire to symbolize his beliefs and defense against this unfair and unjust society with the intent to be heard and respected. Abner uses what he can afford and what is at his personal disposal in order to represent and defend himself during this period of history. Family loyalty is an undeniable value that Abner intends to convey to his family, especially young Sarty. Abner does this in a way that only he knows how. Because the reader does not know Abner's childhood experiences, it would be difficult to judge his expression of beliefs different from what he perceives as rightful and just. Additionally, the justice system has changed over time and probably would have ceased many of Abner's shenanigans, with anger management classes, community service, and the involvement of The Department of Child and Family Services. Unfortunately, these initiatives weren't available at the time.

At the end of the story, young Sarty expresses his respect and love for his father even though he struggles to accept his father's behavior and actions. Abner's conviction and determination to carry on regardless of consequence is experienced through Sarty's behavior during the story and in the end. Sarty does believe his father is guilty, and as Faulkner's readers know very well, he does warn Major de Spain of his father's intent to burn the barn, regardless of consequence. After hearing shots, Sarty no longer sees his father and chooses not to return to his family and his life of despair, (yet again) regardless of consequence: "He did not look back" (Faulkner 526). The ending offers the hope and confidence of a future generation doing better than the previous. It could be argued that Abner's determination to move forward, regardless of what may lie ahead, channeled his young and decent son -- standing at the crossroads -- to gain that wisdom and do the same, perhaps in a different way. "The price of wisdom is suffering, but the price of freedom, of whatever kind, is wisdom, and this, painfully, in some tiny measure, Sarty has gained" (Bertonneau 15).

After reading William Faulkner's "Barn Burning," one could conclude that Abner Snopes is racist, violent with his family and community, and full of rage. However, it is important to understand why he behaves in this manner, even though, by current standards, these profound flaws are socially unacceptable. In his critique of Abner Snopes, Benjamin DeMott explains that "ignorance and insensitivity falsifies Abner's nature" (431), and perhaps it is the illiteracy and lack of formal education that shape Abner's views of the world and his opinion of how to adapt to it. A tenant farmer experiencing dozens of movings cannot support a stable academic education for his own children because it "would have taken time away from the real chores that put food in their bellies, such as raising crops and hunting" (Moss 42). Additionally, the separation of class was unjust with respect to social support for literacy and socioeconomic status. This

situation could understandably force Abner, who is trying to support a family within an unsupportive society that he once fought for (however self-servingly), into an endless rage to serve and protect himself and his family. Abner's brand of righteousness and his parallel expectation for his young son, Sarty, may be considered skewed by current society; however, "it is not only improbable but—genetics being what they are—impossible for him [Sarty] to eliminate inbred characteristics" (Hiles 80 - 81). Sarty, in the climactic ending of the story, does betray his father by warning Major de Spain of Abner's intent to burn the landlord's barn. However, he does inherit his father's independent quality of personal integrity by exercising his own self-righteous beliefs. Abner's acts of defiance, violence, and racism for the sake of personal integrity are inexcusable. Yet, his fiercely independent spirit and unwavering approach transcends to his young son, who displays a lawful and honest approach. Essentially, it is a personal value embraced by both father and son with contrasting behavior toward the same cause: "preservation of integrity" (Faulkner 517).

## Works Cited


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Watson, Jay. "Introduction: Situating Whiteness in Faulkner Studies, Situating Faulkner in Whiteness Studies." *The Faulkner Journal* 22.1-2 (2006): 3+. *Literature Resource Center.* Web. 15 July 2010.


Evaluation: *I have taught "Barn Burning" for years, but this is the first time I've seen a student defend Faulkner's infamous curmudgeon, Abner Snopes. This excellent English 102 essay features iron-clad logic, a bit of American history, and (most of all) human understanding. "Just as a rich white man acts opportunistically," says Michelle, "so does Abner."*

# Analysis of the Nitration of an Unknown Benzene Derivative Compound Using NMR($^1$H,$^{13}$C) and FT-IR[3]

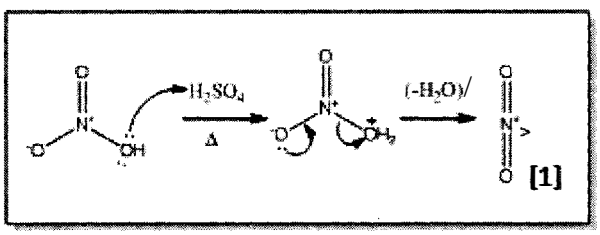
*James P. Tufts*
Course: Chemistry 205 (Organic Chemistry II)
Instructor: Joseph Wachter

Assignment: *Students were given an unknown aryl compound and asked to nitrate it by reacting it with nitric acid and sulfuric acid. Then, they would use NMR and IR spectroscopy to determine the identity of their original unknown compound and write a report of their results in the style of a scientific journal.*

## Introduction

Over the years, the nitration of benzene and its derivatives has become one of the fundamental tools used in synthetic organic chemistry. It has become a popular choice, in part, due to the facile nature of the reaction as well as for its use as an intermediate to other nitrogen moieties. For example, the reduction of the nitro moiety to the aniline product is simple and typically results in high yields; the use of nitro intermediates that lead to the aniline moiety has been widely reported, notably appearing in many dyes and pharmaceutical compounds. An example of this transformation was recently granted a patent[1]; nitrated compounds of benzene derivatives were used as a route to aralkylamines; aralkylamines provide high-affinity bonding to sigma-1 receptors in mammal cells, a property that makes them candidates for cancer treatment drugs. Herein is reported the nitration and structure elucidation of an unknown benzene derivative ($C_8H_8O_2$), using NMR($^1$H,$^{13}$C) and FT-IR. Figure 1-1 explains the mechanism for the formationa of the electrophile [1]. The overall reaction, shown in Figure 1-2, between methyl benzoate [2] and electrophile [1], follows the general mechanism of electrophilic aromatic substitution; the reaction pathway leads to the formation of methyla3-nitrobenzoate.

Figure 1-1. Mechanism for the formation of the nitronium cation.



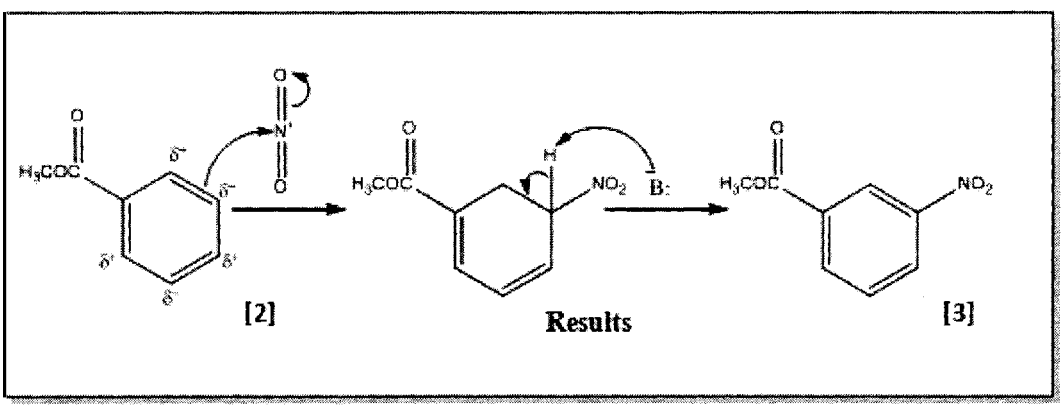




Figure 1-2. Mechanism for the *meta*-directed attack of the nitronium ion.

## Results

When purified, the product of the reaction was 369 mg of a yellowish-white chalky compound; the calculated yield was 55.5%. Acetone-d6 was used as solvent for NMR($^1$H, $^{13}$C) analysis. The $^1$H-NMR spectrum of **3** showed peaks at (3.971 ppm, s; 7.828 ppm, t; 8.536 ppm, m), the multiplet at 8.536 ppm characteristic to several overlapping aromatic proton signals. The $^{13}$C-NMR spectrum of **3** showed signals at (52.477 ppm, 123.227 ppm, 127.332 ppm, 130.358 ppm, 130.885 ppm, 134.874 ppm, 147.570 ppm, 164.190 ppm), which matches the number of carbon environments expected from the unknown compound formula($C_8H_8O_2$). FT-IR analysis showed weak cusp-like peaks, (~1700-2000 $cm^{-1}$); medium overlapped peaks, (3000-3100 $cm^{-1}$); a strong sharp peak, (1717.3 $cm^{-1}$); several small rounded and sharp peaks, (centered at 2961.7); two strong bands, (1270.5 $cm^{-1}$ and 1292.2 $cm^{-1}$); and two medium-to-strong peaks, (1352.2 $cm^{-1}$ and 1528.1 $cm^{-1}$).

## Discussion

Upon analysis of the NMR($^1$H,$^{13}$C) and FT-IR spectra, the structure of the final product was determined to be methyl 3-nitrobenzoate. FT-IR analysis was useful in determining various functional groups present in the product. Both peaks in the ranges (~1700-2000 $cm^{-1}$) and (3000-3100 $cm^{-1}$) are characteristic of aromatic overtones and aromatic C-H bond-stretching, respectively. The peak at (1717.3 $cm^{-1}$) is characteristic of C=O bond stretching. The peaks (centered at 2961.7) correspond to allylic C-H bond-stretching. The two strong bands at (1270.5 $cm^{-1}$ and 1292.2 $cm^{-1}$) are characteristic of C-O bond stretching of an ester. The medium-to-strong peaks at (1352.2 $cm^{-1}$ and 1528.1 $cm^{-1}$), are evidence of the N-O bond stretching of the nitro moiety.

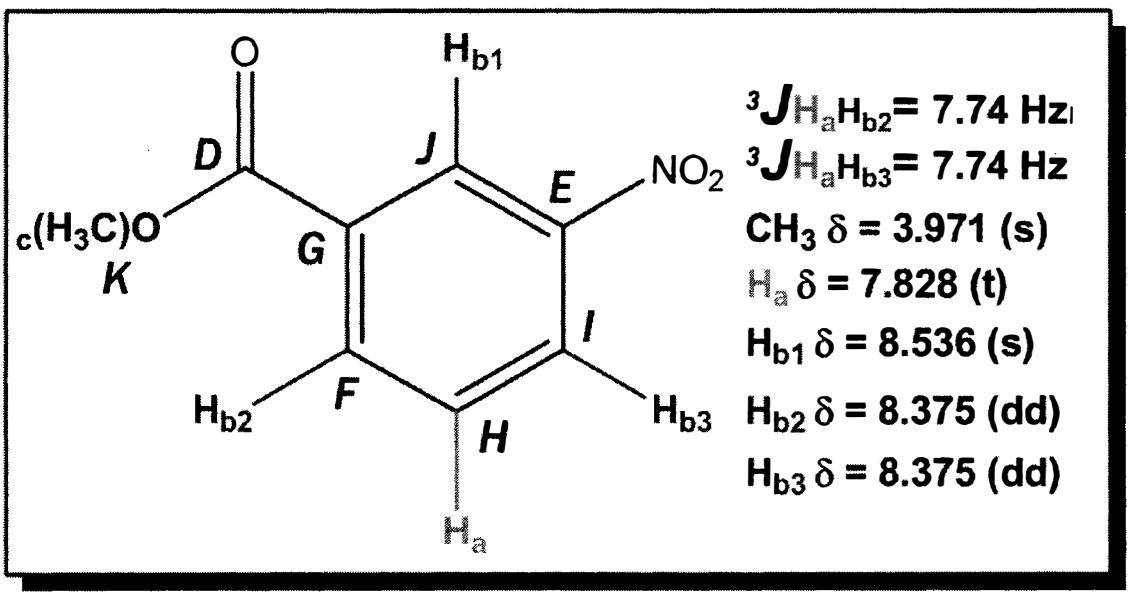



Figure 2-1. Correspondence with the $^1$H-NMR and $^{13}$C-NMR spectra. In this Figure, [b1, b2, and b3] are overlapping signals in the spectrum and are labeled to reflect that. J coupling constants are also listed.

Figure 2-1 correlates peaks present in the $^1$H-NMR to their chemical shift. The triplet appearing at (7.828 ppm), integrates to (1.00 H) and is in the characteristic range of an aromatic proton. The only environment that fits this description is **[A]**;this is supported further when considering the partially negative, and therefore more shielded, nature of a group *meta* to a withdrawing substituent—which is expected as both ester and nitro moieties are present. The only explanation for the multiplicity, based on the provided data, is that **[a]**is coupled with two other adjacent aromatic protons; this notion is confirmed by the coupling constant values for **[a]**appearing in the characteristic$^3$*J ortho* range.

The multiplet that appears in the (8.289 ppma– 8.814 ppm) region integrates to (3.00 H); this is also within the characteristic aromatic region. The multiplet in this region can be explained by the existence of non-adjacent aromatic protons. This region is composed of the overlapping splitting patterns produced by **[b1, b2, and b3]**aThe fact that they are overlapping indicates some level of chemical equivalency; this can be explained if each proton is in a position *ortho* to an electron withdrawing substituent. The singlet appearing at (3.971 ppm), integrates to (3.00 H) and is characteristic of (C-O) chemical shifted methyl group **[c]**.Based on FT-IR analysis, there is evidence for both nitro and ester substituent groups; it can then reasonably be concluded,when also considering the multiplicity and chemical shift of **[a],** that these two groups must be *meta* to each other. The $^{13}$C-NMR spectrum showed a small peak at (164.190 ppm), which is in the characteristic carbonyl range correlating to **[D]**. The shift of **[B]** is most likely due to the inductive effect in the C-N bond. The clarity of the aromatic region in the $^{13}$C-NMR spectrum allows for assignment of peaks for each carbon environment based on predicted electronic effects of the substituent groups: **[K]** (52.477 ppm), **[J]** (123.227 ppm), **[I]** (127.332 ppm), **[H]** (130.358 ppm), **[G]** (130.885 ppm), **[F]**(134.874 ppm), **[E]** (147.570 ppm), **[D]** (164.190 ppm).

## Experimental

To a solution of methyl benzoate (0.500 g) and sulfuric acid (3.00 mL) at 5°C, ice-cold nitric acid (1.1 mL) was added drop-wise over the course of 22 minutes. After the addition was completed, the reaction vessel was allowed to cool for 10 minutes. Then, the reaction mixture was poured into shaved ice (9.97g); after mixing well, a white precipitate formed. The reaction mixture was then vacuum-filtered and rinsed to a neutral pH with cold water. The collected product was then triturated in cold methanol (1.0 mL) and finally filtered again to obtain final product. The product was a yellowish-white chalky looking solid. Methyla3-nitrobenzoate (369 mg, 55.5%) was collected as the product. **$^1$H-NMR (Acetone-$d_6$, 90 MHz):** δ (ppm) = 3.971 (s, 3H), 7.828 (t, 1H), 8.536(m, 3H). **$^{13}$C-NMR (Acetone-$d_6$, 22.5 MHz):** δ/ (ppm) =52.477, 123.227, 127.332, 130.358, 130.885, 134.874, 147.570, 164.190. **FT-IR (silicon crystal):** $cm^{-1}$ = 1700-2000 (w),3000-3100 (m), 1717.3 (s), 2961.7 (w), 1270.5 (s), 1292.2 (s), 1352.2 (m), 1528.1 (m).

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1. Ruoho, Arnold E.; Hajipour, Abdol R.; Chu, Uyen B.; Fontanilla, Dominique A. Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, USA; PCT Int. Appl., 69pp., Patent WO 2010059711, (2010).
2.o ChemBioOffice Ultra ld.0 (all figures).o
3. Harper College Lab Manual, Nitration of an Unknown Aryl Compound, Section for Compound B. (2009).

Evaluation: *Jim did a particularly nice job with his writing in this report, especially in adhering to typical chemistry journal style.*

# Love the Man— Hate the Addiction

*Mary VanderHyden*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Sara Whittleton

Assignment: *In this essay, students were to review material from their own personal journals written during the semester, then focus in on one issue, research it, and rewrite the entries as a personal essay with research.*

I was the wife of an addict. I loved a man whose drug of choice was alcohol and prescription medications. He won many battles, but he remained on the forefront of a raging war between addiction and love of self. Time and time again he stood and fell, trying desperately to conquer and control such a strong enemy. Each small victory was monumental and euphoric. We'd celebrate by saying that this time was really "it" and life was going to be perfect from now on. We were going to be a normal and intimate nuclear family guided by love, not compulsive drinking. These victories were fleeting as the lure of alcohol once again called to my husband. Many would ask me why I stayed. My reasons were vast (the children, the fear of being alone, and lack of confidence or possibly courage), but I stayed primarily because of his small bouts of sobriety. When they did occur, I caught a glimpse of the man, not the addiction. The "man" was charming, warm, thoughtful, funny, handsome, giving, loving...he was wonderful. The "addict" was careless, cruel, angry, sloppy, neglectful, hurtful...he was horrible. I believed with all my heart, if I loved the man and hated the addiction, that all of us could coexist together. We could make this marriage, this fractured life, work because I felt he was really in there. I said countless times, "You just don't understand. The core is good. What surrounds it is rotten." I write this paper in the hopes of enlightening you, the reader, as to what a woman experiences living with a man dependent on alcohol. I will pull from my life experience and of others that went to each Al-Anon meeting with me. Al-Anon is a support group for wives and families of alcoholics. By being best informed on this increasing problem, you may be able to offer support and encouragement if someone in this situation one day crosses your path.

First, for you to understand the magnitude of this problem, you need some information on alcoholism. In case you're not familiar with its definition, alcoholism (also known as "alcohol dependence syndrome") involves compulsive and uncontrollable moments in which one drinks alcohol in large quantities, despite failing health and relationships. This type of consumption causes the brain to change and creates a tolerance and need for alcohol. It amazes me what our bodies are capable of. We can actually change the chemical makeup of a vital organ to accommodate an addiction. Drinking impairs not only physical senses and reflexes, but also mental judgment, causing many good people to make bad decisions. Alcohol-related deaths include homicide, suicide, car accidents, and physiological damage such as brain death, heart failure, and liver disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in the year 2007 alone, there were over 14,000 deaths due to alcoholic liver disease and over 23,000 alcohol-induced deaths, "excluding accidents anda homicides" ("Alcohol Use: Mortality" par. 2). What wea need to consider is that not only does it cause loss of life, but also loved ones left behind to live with the pain and grief caused by alcoholism.

Eight million women in the USA alone live with and love an alcoholic husband or partner (Velleman, Copello, and Maslin). One doesn't choose this life; unfortunately, it usually finds them. In my case, I married a man whose drinking problem surfaced shortly after our wedding. I knew he liked to relax with a beer or two, but I had no clue just how deep-rooted the problem truly was. So many factors play a role in his condition. He was raised in a home with an abusive, alcoholic father for the majority of his life. He was exposed very early on to violence and dysfunction. He witnessed on countless occasions his father beating his mother and even became a target for his punches when he was only a child. His mother finally found the courage to leave his father when he was 15 years old, but the lack of a male role model in the home (even though it may have been a negative one) led him to seek a father figure elsewhere. A neighbor soon took him

in and introduced him to alcohol and illicit drugs. This set the stage for disaster. What his mother tried desperately to take him out of this life, other men tried even harder to push it on him. His gentle disposition and fragile self-worth made it hard for him to say no. Years passed, and by the time he was handed over to me for love and care, I had a pre-made addict just waiting to come out of his shell.

The beginning of our marriage was uneventful and filled with the normal acclimation that any newlywed couple goes through within the first year. We bought a home in the hopes of filling it with memories and eventually children. He was hard working and dedicated to his job. He drank beer on the weekends, and it just catapulted from there. I began to notice the change, the true crossover from social drinking to problematic when my daughter was a baby. He'd disappear for hours only to return red-eyed and stumbling. He couldn't attend a family barbecue without becoming heavily intoxicated. To add insult to an already wounded heart, he'd belittle me and tell me how stupid I was for accusing him of being drunk. I was the antagonist and just trying to pick a fight. At first, this diversion worked. Later on in my Al-Anon family group meetings, I'd come to find out this was known as "smoke and mirrors." The drinking partner would take the attention away from his own actions by pointing out faults or make accusations in efforts to draw the focus away from himself (*The Dilemma*... 53). I'd feel guilty and end up apologizing. He'd usually run off, saying he needed to get as far from me as possible. I'd listen as he called me horrible names and slammed whatever door was available at the time: car, front, back, restaurant, friends. Little did I know, he was just getting away from me so he could drink some more. I'd wait up, listening intently for the key to turn in the lock. Those nights played out the same each time. Two scenarios would occur. I'd wake in the morning on the couch, or he'd come in and I'd help him to bed. I'd try to show him how much I loved him by not questioning his whereabouts for the past few hours. We'd greet the new day by acting as if the night before never happened. He'd grab his mug of coffee and kiss my temple. I smiled and just let him leave for work. I did this for years.

I enabled his behavior. I gave him room to grow as an alcoholic by not holding him accountable for his actions (*Living With an Alcoholic* 14). What made matters worse was his own mother, who had been married to an alcoholic, turned a blind eye as well. I'd ask her for advice and she'd reply, in a sweet way, "not to worry." She threw in, every once in a while, "Oh the poor man. What am I going to do with him?" However, I received very little support or advice.

Things escalated very quickly from that point. The first time he hit me, or tried at least, my daughter was one year old. I did the right thing and called 911. The officer saw the hole in the door and asked me what happened. I told him that my husband tried to hit me and I moved out of the way. He then turned to my husband and asked him the same question. "I got mad and hit my wall. She's lying. I already spoke to the dispatcher. She knows my wife is lying." The officer pulled me into the hallway and asked me again if he tried to hit me. I don't know why I did it. I told him that I think I may have mistaken the punch and he was truly trying to hit the wall. The officer didn't even second guess my answer. He shrugged and told my husband to go somewhere else for the night. That was it. My protectors, both officer and husband, offered me little to no protection whatsoever. My husband called me 30 minutes later from a pay phone. He realized that things had gotten out of control and said sorry over and over. I told him to come home. He walked through the door and went to bed after hugging me. He hit the bull's eye several times after that, but he made me believe that it wasn't intentional. Those types of episodes would be his proclamation of sobriety. He'd never let his drinking hurt his family again. We'd go on to lose our car, our home, our credit, with the worst loss being our dreams.

My story isn't ground-breaking. It is centuries old. Woman meets man, man meets woman. They fall in love, and he begins to drink. I look back now. To this day, it's hard to believe that a strong-willed woman such as I could have been in this type of relationship. How could this have happened? I could go into male-versus-female stereotypes, possibly touch base on cultural expectations of women and marriage, or even belief systems. But the question I wanted to answer was, why did I stay for so long in a relationship this unhealthy? I had all the signs pointing me in the direction away from him, but I felt

obligated to stay and even more, was afraid to leave. Those good qualities that he possessed always drew me back in: his gentle spirit, warm smile, and especially how much he loved his children. No doubt has ever crossed my mind in regard to his love for the children we created together. I asked many other women in my support group the same question. Their answers were sometimes the same as mine, and others differed. Some felt unworthy of their husband's love. If they couldn't receive love from the one they married, why would they deserve it from another? Also, lack of support; shame; disbelief from family, friends, or loved ones; or the need to nurture and heal the man she married. I did this one as well.

After I fell out of love with him as a husband, I found a new form of love. It was parental and protective. He was one of my children in need of raising and direction. Some women believed that it was a cultural norm. He was the man, acting out his testosterone. She was the lowly, weak female who needs to "stand by her man" (Dugan and Hock 74). Some women simply believed he would change for the better and things would eventually work out. Whatever the reasons, one thing remained steady. We loved our husbands. The head of the support group, Stacy, a survivor of a violent marriage to an alcoholic, made a point that gave all of us hope. We loved so much that we stayed. She said it proved that if we were capable of deeply loving an alcoholic, then we could learn to also love ourselves in the same way. Stacy put it, "Only when that happened could we decide to walk away forever or lead the man to help." That was powerful and profound for me, as well as for the many other wives that understood what she was trying to convey. It's possible to love another even if you don't love yourself, but demanding love and respect because you know you deserve it keeps you from letting yourself stay in a bad situation. She said that's how you could discern from keeping up the fight or throwing in the gloves.

It's easy for someone to say that you should just leave. Getting out is another ballgame. Studies report time and time again that over seventy-five percent of women that initially leave an abusive or alcoholic spouse will return within weeks (*Living With an Alcoholic* 203). I had so much invested in my marriage: time, money, children, emotions, and pride. I didn't want to say that I failed. Like my support group leader said, you have to love yourself. I went home that night and gave him an ultimatum: get help or get out. I said this so many times before, but the spark behind my words started with my mouth and spread like a flame through the rest of my body. I understood now what I had to do. His tears began, and his shoulders slouched. His eyes rested on the floor, and he promised to get help. This was part truth, part empty promise. I knew he wanted to be the man he vowed to be on our wedding day. That was evident, but I had enabled him so long he knew I was easily appeased by his tears. I hounded him on a daily basis. I made phone calls for him. I talked frankly with his mother when she asked me what was going on. I told my family what had been happening for years. I no longer covered his tracks, and he was furious. I took my control back, and this pushed him to the edge. He didn't believe I would do it. He continued to "secretly" abuse prescription medications and alcohol. Within a week, I packed up my babies, and we moved into a one-bedroom apartment. I had never done that before. It was wonderful to feel so in control, so powerful. This feeling of empowerment would only last so long, though.

Leaving is a part of the process. The aftermath is harder; then you act as a buffer and clean-up crew after a horrible accident. My babies didn't understand how I could leave their daddy. To them, he was perfect. He baked with my daughter, tucked her in next to him almost every night, took her on dates for lunch or treats, helped her with homework, and entertained her friends when they came for visits. She hated me for taking her away from him. She called him all the time, asking him when we were coming home or when he was coming to get her. My third child was in love with his daddy and constantly asked for him. My eldest shook his head at me in shame when he overheard my phone calls. This was all so overwhelming for me. I had sheltered them from his drinking, so they were clueless as to why I tore our family apart. Even in the midst of pointing fingers and confusion, I still kept his secret from his children. On average, the sober partner hides the abuse that they have endured from their family, and especially from their children. This was observed in a case study conducted by researchers in 2006. Forty separate families ranging in nationality, age, and socioeconomic status were

questioned and evaluated. Ninety-eight percent of the sober partners hid the behaviors of the abuser from their loved ones. Their children's emotional stability was the motivating factor (Dugan and Hock 51).

My parents were wonderful and supported my every step. They loved my husband very much and called him regularly to check on him. My mother-in-law was angry with me. How could I leave him so open and vulnerable? I knew how innocent he was. I knew what he had been through as a child. I was supposed to be taking care of him, not uprooting his children and "jumping ship" when things got hot. As much as I love her, because I still do, I still can't comprehend why she reacted in that way. Yes it was her son, but she was once a victim of the same abuse and she did the same as I did. She took her children and left a physically abusive husband who drank and then hit his family.

My husband may not have put his hands on his children, but he drove drunk with them in the backseat. He slept as they wandered around with dirty diapers, too young to care for themselves. He forgot to feed them meals or sent them out the door on cold mornings wearing nothing more than t-shirts: dirty t-shirts, even. Neglect is a form of abuse, and I reminded her of that fact. He was messing with their psychological and emotional health. I may be able to talk myself out of the abuse that I endured, but the well-being of my children could never be overlooked. It's natural for a mother to protect her offspring, even if they don't know that they need protection. There's no way that I could make everything better, but I tried my best to be there for them. I scheduled little things to do with them. I couldn't afford much, so we had movie nights where we cooked a meal and had a picnic in front of the TV. We went to Border's and read books for hours at a time and then went for some food at McDonald's where at least the dollar menu offered a fun, cheap meal. I may not have been able to give them their daddy, but I could give them unconditional love and support.

In the meantime, I had to get my emotions and feelings in order. I asked myself many, many times: what was I doing? Was I causing more harm than good in the lives of my children? Was it out of spite or anger that I left? I was, in a sense, letting go of a life that I had known for almost 12 years. I felt exposed and vulnerable, like a snail without its shell. I had taken care of this man for so long that he had engrained his routine in me. I was only caring for myself and my four children now. Though the sober partner eventually opens their eyes to the abuse, on average, it takes one person more than 10.5 years of their life to leave an abusive situation (Velleman, Copello, and Maslin 43). Being minus one was foreign to me. It would take a lot of adjusting. I had to wean myself off of obsessively worrying about him. I would drive to the home that we shared when he was away and I'd tidy up. I'd collect dishes, clean the kitchen, vacuum, and even bring him groceries. He never let on that he knew what I was doing, if he noticed at all. One thing that I was sure of, despite the guilt, fear, and opposition, was that I was right for leaving. It was the unfinished state in which things were left that ate away at me. He still didn't seek help and was getting worse. He used his depression as an excuse to drink more and pop an overload of painkillers. He had totaled three separate vehicles in a matter of three months and resorted to selling his painkillers to pay off the debts. He borrowed from his sister and hacked my accounts. He stole what little financial cushion I had set aside for my children. He was below rock bottom. I called his mother and explained the situation. I told her if we didn't get him help, if she didn't support my efforts, she'd lose her son forever. These words worked.

We quickly made arrangements for all of us to move back to Illinois and get him into rehab. This put my mind and heart at ease, knowing he was going to get help that would hopefully put him on the right track. That track would never again involve me, but it didn't mean that I had to stop caring altogether. This was a part of my healing process, as ironic as that might sound. It helped me move forward, knowing that the father of my children would be okay. It saddens me to say with a heavy heart that this wouldn't be the case. My husband was involved in a tragic accident that caused irreversible brain damage. He lost his life and battle on August 23, 2009.

I'm one of the lucky few that turned around and didn't look back. So many women leave and return. This is a never-ending cycle of self-doubt and fear. I went home from many of my Al-Anon meetings scared that I'd return the following week to see one or two empty

chairs. Unfortunately, that fear became reality as a few of the wives claimed that all was well in their homes and they no longer needed the support. All I could do was hug them one last time and remind them of the things they had learned in the hopes that it would call them back to a group of individual women who apart was not as strong as when they were together. We fed off of each other's small successes and used them to build our own strength. That's what the support group was for, after all. It wasn't a counseling session. It was a chance for women and families in the same situation to unite under one common thread: alcoholism. It wasn't our choice to be brought together under such circumstances, but nonetheless, that's how we came to be. I don't know what happened to them. It's been a couple years now since I last heard from them, but I pray that they're in a good place, a safe and happy place. As for me, I'm sure of who I am and the choice that I made. I'm a survivor of abuse and neglect. I looked at my options and picked the path that took me away from hurt and toward good things. Many women that leave these poisonous relationships go on to doubt that they'll find love again. It's hard for them to recognize true intimacy. Trust is hard to come by because it has been broken time and time again. The wisdom you have can be good and bad, making you overly cautious. I'm still apprehensive in many ways concerning relationships. Sometimes I feel too damaged for another. As of now, I'm in the midst of a new love and feel overwhelmed at times. I constantly second-guess my decision to be in a relationship, and the man I love is always having to talk me down from these moments of involuntary fear. At times, I feel undeserving of his love. I know I'm not to blame for the choices that my late husband made when he picked liquor over me, but it still leaves one feeling unworthy and small. Time heals all wounds. Mine are still open, but hopefully, being in a healthy relationship that involves mutual respect and a lot of patience, I'll be able to see the wounds eventually close.

Being in a relationship and marriage with a man so intent on making addiction a priority gave me a stage on which to offer advice to others in the same situation. I walked away with bruises on my soul but also knowledge to share. During one of my counseling sessions, my counselor told me that endless case studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, report that in the U.S. alone, that there is less than a 5% chance of a spouse remaining married to their alcoholic partner after the alcoholic has received behavioral, cognitive, and psychiatric therapy. You may not have the experience that I did, but that doesn't make you less worthy to be a support system for those in need. Listen to what someone in this type of situation has to say and then do the right thing. Lead them in the right direction by offering options. Knowledge is power. Many women don't recognize that they're victims of abuse when they have an alcoholic partner. Making a person aware that this is not the norm can open others doors to opportunities that they may not have known available. Al-Anon is just one portal of support. You have support groups through churches, the world-wide web, and various districts, communities, and local colleges. There is publicly funded counseling offered by the Department of Health and Family Services. My most important message is that there are options and help. I hope my experience and research will lead to greener pastures for those who have walked the same road.

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Evaluation: *Mary understood the parameters of this personal essay assignment well and jumped into an important subject, recognizing her own hard-won experience as a source as well as competently layering in outside research sources. The result is a moving and informative personal essay that captures Mary's unique writing voice.*

# Happy New Year

*Morgan Wagenknecht*
Course: English 101 (Composition)
Instructor: Kris Piepenburg

Assignment: *Students were asked to write an essay based on personal experience involving struggle against much larger and greater forces, and to somehow reveal some of the various natures, tendencies, or ways of human behavior.*

If I don't open my eyes, maybe this is a dream. Nope, I am not dreaming. I am awake. Little did I know, but the nightmare was just beginning. The cold air surrounded me, biting at exposed flesh and forcing my mind into alertness. Did I leave a window open from sneaking a cigarette in my room last night? Already dressed for the day in my pajamas from the night before, I got up out of bed, my whole body shaking from the cold air that leaked through my window from outside, I didn't care what I looked like, it was freezing outside and I was cozy in my boyfriend's hoodie. I stood over the bed and looked down at him laying there. He was rolled up in my cream-colored down comforter. His face was the only visible part of his body, and it was lit up perfectly by the light that was shining through the crack of my door from the hallway. I leaned down, my face close to his, and whispered, "Are you coming with me today baby?" And he quietly responded with a mumble that meant, "Nah, I'm staying in this nice comfy bed." I managed to get a soft kiss from him. Thinking back on that moment, I still haven't forgotten how sweet that kiss was. It would be a long while before I would see him again, and I had no idea how special that kiss would be to me. I snuck out of my room quietly and began my journey to Northwest Community Hospital.

It was just a few days after Christmas, and my mind had been racing for what seemed like weeks on end. I hadn't slept more than 30 minutes at a time, which was the result of not knowing exactly what my racing thoughts consisted of. Things were moving so quickly that life had become a blur. My mind was stuck on fast forward with no pause button to be found. I knew what the results of these symptoms would be, because I'd been through it all twice before. What made this hospitalization different from the others is that for the first time, I wanted to be there and I wanted to get help. My past experiences were forced upon me by my concerned peers. I will never forget this particular Christmas, or the days that followed. I have never handled extreme stress the way others did. I never asked for help. I built walls around me, and when the load I tried to contain within my walls was too great, they broke apart, and so did I. My walls burst because of a number of things. I was about to fail my way out of my senior year in high school due to the lack of ability to concentrate, and the pressure to catch up. On top of that, I was also in an incredibly toxic relationship. He was addicted to all sorts of drugs, and being the compassionate person I am, I tried to save him. That was a huge mistake. I was blinded with infatuation, and couldn't see just how poisonous he was to me. He was dragging me down with him, indirectly pressuring me to engage in his unhealthy behaviors like smoking weed and dropping acid. With the stress of trying to save my boyfriend from continuing to live his life as a drug addict, combined with having fallen behind in school, it was a recipe for disaster. This time, as the bricks came crumbling down, not only was vulnerability exposed, but as I scrambled to pick the pieces back up, I found a special brick: courage. This one piece of my puzzle would help me put one foot in front of the other when I walked myself into treatment. I was absolutely terrified when my parents told me I was going to be evaluated for an outpatient program at a local hospital. The program took in kids of all ages up to age 17. I, of course, was going to be the oldest of the group, as I was still a 17 at the time. My first reaction to that was, "Oh sweet! None of us want to be here, so it'll be really easy. Nothing will get done and it'll be a breeze." Little did I know how drastically my opinion would change in a short matter of time.

I crawled into the cramped backseat of my mom's car, curled up into a ball, and slept while she drove me to Hell. When we arrived, I looked up at the two-story red brick building. It was curved in such a way that it seemed to tower over me and would clamp down in an instant, like a bear trap if I moved wrong. It looked cold with the

snow from the night before scattered across the ledges of each brick. My mom pulled up under the canopy leading to the lobby of the outpatient building. She dropped me off and went to park while I waited outside in front of the doors. I was afraid to go in by myself. It felt like forever as I stood there with the icy breeze chilling me to the bone. As she walked up to me from the car, I took a really hard look at her: what she was wearing, the way her hair was blowing in the wind, her beautiful blue-green eyes lit up by the sun that was hitting her just right. I suddenly got the overwhelming feeling that something was going to go terribly wrong, but I held my head up, gave her a half smile, and we continued on our way to the reception desk inside.

The woman called the director of the outpatient program, and she quickly came down to meet us. She brought us up in the elevator to the second floor, where the evaluation room was. In hushed tones, she spoke briefly to my mother and then escorted me into a cold, white room. There were four overstuffed chairs surrounding a large white table in the center of the room. I sat down quietly and pulled my boyfriend's sweatshirt tightly around me, breathing in his scent that remained from the last time he wore it. The interview began. The evaluation consisted of a series of questions about my thoughts, habits, and past experiences. Based on my responses, they would determine if I was eligible for the outpatient program. It was over in a matter of 20 minutes, but it felt like an hour had passed. She let me out of the room and asked my mother to enter. I sat down on the bench at the end of the hall. I was still tired from the night before, so I lay down and curled up in a ball with my hood up. In a matter of minutes, I was asleep. It felt like only a moment had passed when I felt my mom shaking me awake. When I looked at my phone, I realized that almost an hour and a half had gone by. The woman brought me and my mother back into the room I was interviewed in. After we all sat down, the moment they looked at me, I knew what was about to happen. "We feel that it would be in your best interest to go into our inpatient treatment, rather than the outpatient program. We think you're at a high risk for suicide and want you to be safe." I heard the words, but didn't believe them. I could only lie to myself for so long, because the truth is that they were right. I spent far too much time thinking about how much easier it would be to just let it all go and die. At the time, I was furious with their conclusion, but looking back at it now, I'm grateful that they picked up on the signs I tried so hard to conceal.

I thought I was in a bad dream but I couldn't wake up. This was no dream; it was really happening. I felt a tear drip from my glazed eye, and I couldn't stop it. My eyes overflowed, as I begged and pleaded with my mother to let me come home. I became hysterical at that point. My mom wouldn't even look at me, let alone talk to me. I didn't know what I had done wrong. I was especially scared that I wouldn't be able to tell my boyfriend goodbye, or that I loved him. He was leaving the next day for a residential drug treatment center over three hours away. I wasn't going to see him for a very long time, and I didn't even tell him I loved him before I had left. This was not how today was supposed to be! My anxiousness was somewhat calmed when they told me they would allow one phone call to him, to say "goodbye." I remember us crying together as I sat in the hallway that I'd be living in for the next 9 days. He was sobbing as he whispered, "Just be strong baby, we'll see each other again. I love you so much! Please just don't forget about me." It was the quickest five minutes of my life, and I'll never forget the way that I felt.

After we hung up, I sat in that chair by the phone and stared at the space around me. The wood floor was polished so well that the lights overhead reflected back, making it seem as if you were walking on fluorescent clouds. The hardwood floor created a logical path down three hallways, each leading to another wing of the facility. One wing led to the offices of the counselors and the main exit door, the one I'd do anything to run through. Down another wing were the group rooms and the school rooms. And down the last wing, my least favorite hallway, were our bedrooms: my cell.

As I sat there examining my new home, the nurses started taking my vitals, and the counselor started removing from my person all the articles of clothing and jewelry that were not allowed. They took the things I felt I needed the most: the friendship bracelets, my hoodie, and my promise ring (all gifts from my boyfriend). Those three things symbolized my whole life, because my life revolved around him. I felt completely stripped. Everything happened so fast that I didn't even have a moment to react. I just sat there, doing everything they told me to do.

The first few days were the worst. I holed myself

up in my room on the first day. My room consisted of a creaky, twin-sized bed, a desk that was bolted to the wall, a heavy chair, and a garbage can that would soon start my war. On the lower part of the wall, next to my bed, was a box that shed a dim light. The light was bright enough that the counselors could see where we were at night on the cameras that were installed in the upper corners of our rooms. That light was really annoying me, so I took the garbage can and positioned it in front of the light to block it, so I could actually sleep. Not even 30 seconds later, the overnight nurse called me over the speaker phone and told me to move the garbage can. I pretended like I didn't hear it. She said it two more times before she came into my room and moved it herself. I freaked out and started screaming. I was already irritable and scared enough, and she was the icing on the cake. Without a thought, I picked up the heavy, metal desk chair and tried throwing it through the window a couple times. I was then escorted to the "quiet room." I was in that room for three straight days, just crying and sleeping. I did not want to be there at all. I wasn't ready to change my ways: cutting, doing drugs, binging and purging. These were my coping skills. These were the things that helped me deal with my stress and my pain. I knew no other ways and was not open to suggestions. The stress and pain derived from my suppressed feelings about past events dated all the way back to my young childhood. Regardless of if my feelings were valid, they still existed. As a child, I felt abandoned by my father. He was rarely around, and it's hard for me to think of memories that he was included in without looking at a picture to trigger it. I also had what I thought was the perfect older brother. He was the one that rarely did anything wrong, and received all the praise and glory that I was desperately seeking. As a result of feeling underappreciated, I started to purposely lash out to gain attention from those around me. I was sneaking out of the house in the middle of the night at the age of 12 to go see my 15-year-old boyfriend, whom my parents did not approve of. I should have listened to them, because the consequences of this particular relationship would leave an everlasting hole in my heart. I was sexually abused that summer, and spent the next five years trying to keep it a secret. The pain of keeping something so big to myself for so long played a huge role in my ongoing depression. I also felt an unspoken pressure to follow in my brother's perfect footsteps. The stress of trying to be everything that I thought others wanted from me, and never fully being able to feel as though I could trust someone with my darkest secret, is what ended up being my greatest downfall.

I had a lot of time to think while I was in the quiet room. I thought about everything, and I mean everything. I began to psychoanalyze myself. I thought about what I had been doing, what caused me to do those things, what were the conditions of the environments I was putting myself in, etc. I thought about all of it, and for the most part, I also spoke my thoughts out loud. My father once told me, "Once you say something out loud, it becomes the truth and can no longer be hidden in your mind and twisted to suit your situation." I talked to myself for three days about who I thought I was. In the end, I came up with one final conclusion. I realized that my ways were wrong and that there really are other ways to deal with the stress and pain. I just needed to be open to learn new things, instead of playing it safe with what I already know.

After three days, I decided to give participation in the daily activities a shot. Our mornings started with breakfast and were followed with yoga. It was in that first yoga group where I had a revelation. In those 30 minutes, I felt so relaxed. My mind had never been clearer than it was in that moment. It was then that I decided to commit to recovery, and not just "give it a shot." I thought that they might be on to something here.

The days went by slowly, and I was struggling to open up during groups. I became especially lonely at night. I would lay there in bed and cry most nights because I felt so secluded. All the support I had on the outside was gone, and I thought that I needed it now more than ever. I missed my boyfriend more than I could describe, because he was my security blanket that I would retreat to whenever I was scared. I lived for the letters he would send me, reminding me that he felt the same way I did and was missing me just as much as I missed him. In a really odd way, I felt that our relationship had never been stronger. And it wasn't just my relationship with him that was strengthening, but also with my parents.

I remember the first time my parents came to visit me, five days after I was admitted. I was never happier to see a familiar face than when I saw them walking toward me down the hallway. They brought Scrabble with them, and we sat in the day room playing that game for two hours. The sun was shining through the bullet-proof

windows, brighter than normal from the fresh white snow that covered the ground. We were laughing and talking. For once, I felt like I had a normal family. I felt like a somewhat normal person. I felt that there was still a part of me missing, though. But, I would soon find it unexpectedly.

It was New Year's Eve, 2009, and a night I will never forget. Right before we had our recreational group where we would watch a movie related to our recovery, we had a group about cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions is a fancy way of saying "errors in thinking patterns." I was sitting next to a girl named Tracey. She was 16 years old and a heroin addict. Our counselor asked us to give an example of when we thought we were thinking clearly, and she was the first to speak. She told us about her most recent relapse, the one that got her readmitted to treatment. She told us her story calmly, which made me uncomfortable because based on the series of events she went through, I thought she should have been bawling her eyes out. She explained how she remained sober for the first couple days after she was released from her last treatment center. But, all of that went downhill when her boyfriend came back around. I could relate to her in that aspect, as my boyfriend played the same role in my life. I'd be getting stronger and healthier every day, and he'd come in out of nowhere and destroy any kind of progress I had made. Her boyfriend ended up convincing her to use again, and she had missed getting high so much that she ended up overdosing. She was passed out on her friend's bed, her boyfriend had left, and her friend had been standing over her motionless body for quite some time. She was breathing very shallowly and her skin was a pale white. It took a surprisingly long time for her friend to call an ambulance, and when the paramedics arrived, they warned her friend of how Tracey would have died if she had waited any longer. The way she told us this story, in a matter-of-fact sort of way, was a mind-opener for me. She didn't see the errors in her thinking, and I thought they were obvious. It was incredibly disturbing. After that, I began to compare my thought processes with hers, and it became really easy for me to determine where my errors were. I approached life with the attitude that the glass was always half empty, rather than half full. Although in reality my life was perfectly fine, I'd find a flaw that didn't really exist and would blame myself for whatever the problem was. It was beyond me that another person's story could change my life so much.

In my last few days, I blossomed. I confronted my past and my fears of not living up to others' standards, and started to develop new habits and coping skills. I took the prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference," and ran with it like the wind. At that point, I was able to fathom the idea of living for myself instead of those around me. I began to let my guard down and trust others. Letting love in became easier, and I also had developed a better sense of judgment when it came to whom I could trust and who I could not. Those nine days were filled with life-changing events for me, and as much as it helped me, I was still incredibly thrilled to go home. I was also frightened beyond all belief. I had been living in a sheltered place learning these new ways of living and, all of a sudden, I was being thrown back into the real world where I had to apply these things on my own. Since then, I've had my ups and my downs. I've slipped many times. But, I am proud of myself for always coming back to normal: normal being sober, healthy, and clean. I'll still never forget the overwhelming emotions I felt during that time in my life, like the fear of the unknown, the frustration of being told what to do, the loneliness of being separated from society, etc. I could go on and on, but I'm going to leave it at that. As I share this experience with you, I'm taken back psychologically to that period of time, and the emotions creep up into my soul in their rawest terror. I can calm them down, and that is progress. As embarrassed as I could be about my experience, I am more humbled by it and more accepting of being human and normal. I will remember it for the rest of my life. The past is where we derive our identities. While it is unwise to dwell in one's past, it is equally so to deny it.

Evaluation: *Morgan's essay is candid and detailed, as she looks back on a very challenging time, to examine her progress through personal difficulties toward a personal victory.*

# The Allegorical Use of Sexuality in Richard Wright's *Native Son*

*Sung Yim*
Course: English 102 (Composition)
Instructor: Catherine Restovich

Assignment: *Write a literary research paper.*

One of the biggest underlying themes in Richard Wright's *Native Son* is the subtle ways in which the characters are sexualized. Among the obvious examples are how, upon the discovery of Mary Dalton's body, Bigger Thomas is accused of not only murdering the heiress, but raping her, as well as how Bigger searches for privacy in a world with little space for the black and poor. For Bigger, lashing out in violence is a way to break tension, which is often sexual in nature, at least on a subconscious level. Mary's murder, and Bigger's subsequent violent reactions to the crime, are symbolically erotic in nature, and driven by three emotions associated with how one often deals with human sexuality: fear, guilt, and shame.

The novel introduces the reader to the main character, Bigger Thomas, and his family members, as they each start their day at the ringing of an alarm clock. The family lives in a cramped kitchenette with little room, in which the idea of privacy and personal space is unheard of. Bigger's mother instructs Bigger and his brother, Buddy, to "Turn [their] heads so [she] can dress" (Wright 3). As instructed, "The two boys averted their eyes and gazed into the far corner of the room. The woman rushed out of her nightgown and put on a pair of step-ins" (Wright 3).

It is established in the very beginning of the novel that Bigger Thomas has no living space to call his own. He finds comfort in the outside world, with his friends who are presumably in equally squalid financial situations. He runs with a small gang of young black men who cause mischief and do petty crimes for little pay. Later on in the novel, Bigger meets up with his friend, Jack. The two decide to go see a movie. During the movie, Jack says to Bigger, "I'm getting hard" (Wright 30). The two boys then masturbate in the theater. The scene is a fleeting one, and it passes by with little in the way of graphic detail in the narrative, relying heavily on the dialogue to communicate what is physically happening, and one may, at first glance, miss the characters' motivations for committing this unsavory deed. There are several reasons for Bigger and his friend's actions. For one, there is the clear disregard for etiquette and the law, for, why should they care if they leave the floors of the theater dirty and encrusted in semen? It is not their personal property, and they do not even address the issue, but rather jump into the act without much narration, which implies that they have done this before. They are shown no respect, and therefore, they will show none. Second, where else would they go? Masturbation is a healthy and personal behavior, a normal human function, but Bigger has no room to do it in his home. One could hardly imagine his family members averting their eyes as he'd gratify his own sexual needs, and therefore, he and his friend, who is most likely in a very similar situation, seek out solitude in a darkened theater. This small section of the book is also an allegory—driven out of his home to find a personal haven, Bigger ends up committing a crime in a public place. And he is, quite literally, breaking sexual tension by doing so.

In the first book, titled "Fear," Bigger and his friends are planning to rob Blum's store. Bigger is secretly fearful and does not want to rob the place, especially because the owner of the store happens to be a white man. Rather than make his fear be known, he suppresses it out of shame. When his friend, Gus, arrives later than the rest of his gang, he feels relieved—"Gus was not there. He felt a slight lessening of nervous tension and swallowed" (35). Bigger then projects his trepidation onto Gus. Here, we see Bigger filling the need for an emotional outlet by lashing out in violence. One student writer, Masaya Takeuchi, explains that, "At that point Bigger defends against emasculation by projecting this fear onto Gus and feminizing him, forcing him to lick the phallic knife to signify Bigger's restored tough masculinity, but at great cost to their friendship" (59). As Takeuchi claims, Bigger's actions in this scene are visceral and motivated by the fear of shame—Bigger does not want his

cowardice to be discovered, for the vast majority of his actions are motivated by an innate desire to escape shame. And as fear and shame are often associated with human sexuality, there is also an underlying tone of eroticism in this scene. He is not only vindicating himself for Gus and his friends' insults, but dominating Gus in an attempt to restore his "masculinity." And again, he is afraid of being seen in a subservient light, being sexualized rather than sexualizing, which would be yet another invasion of his personal space. Again, this scene is another example of violence being utilized to break tension. The climax of the scene is when Gus relents and licks the knife as Bigger instructs, and afterward, while Gus is feeling violated and resentful toward his friend, Bigger feels relieved and more relaxed than he did before. There is even an outpouring of emotion outside, when Bigger finds tears in his eyes while he is alone, though he ignores what could be interpreted as the boiling over of his repressed, long-standing sadness and sense of injustice by telling himself that it is merely a side-effect of laughter.

In this novel, it is apparent that Bigger does not have any significant interpersonal relationships with other black males. For Bigger, other human beings, especially black males (for it is that much easier to draw comparison), represent more reminders of the impossible challenges that keep him rooted to the ground; and what's more, other people are only more witnesses to his inability to function as a man, as well as a human being. He lives behind a fence in order to escape judgment, and the subsequent shame. Not only that, but Bigger is also running away from the plight of others, which, in turn, causes him to feel all kinds of guilt and shame. By being around other black men and women, he is confronted daily by the impossibility of his own situation, as well as his complete inability to be mobile and helpful to others, especially his family members. "He must therefore strengthen the defense mechanism of 'toughness' in order to protect himself against shame and guilt for his family's suffering and to prevent suicide or murder. This toughness, this assertive masculinity, prevents Bigger's bonding with other black males" (Takeuchi 59). He has a powerful desire to be the "alpha male" whenever he is confronted by black men, for it is his only means of feeling significance and social control. It is also notable that throughout the novel, it is apparent that Bigger is full of uncertainty and self-loathing. When he first meets Mary, for example, she is nothing but kind to him, if not rather cheeky and presumptuous. She leaps past societal bounds and tries to get to know him as a human being, insisting that he call her by her first name and going so far as to sit next to him and shake his hand. While there are plenty of racial and societal reasons for Bigger to feel the way he does, which is confused and resentful at best, on a personal, psychological level, it is because in the face of kindness, Bigger is confronted by his hatred for himself. He hates Mary and Jan because they are being unexpectedly kind to him, a person that he has grown to loathe.

The tension between Bigger and Mary and Jan begins to merge with sexual desire and confusion as the night wears on. All three have been drinking, and the two lovers are being physically intimate in the backseat of the car, which is yet another personal boundary hurdled without much regard. Feeling the effects of the alcohol, Bigger glances at the rearview mirror to see that "Mary was lying flat on her back in the rear seat and Jan was bent over her. He saw a faint sweep of white thigh" (Wright 78). But soon after, Bigger drops Jan off and the two lovers say goodbye. This time, tension is built, and never quite peaks, only sloping down and fading away slightly. As with the rest of the book, Bigger is not at all in tune with his emotions, unable to articulate his feelings or the psychological repercussions of what he has witnessed. Instead, he dryly berates them in his head, thinking, "They plastered, alright" (78).

When Bigger drives Mary back to her home, she is too drunk to make it up to her room alone, and he feels obligated to help her, for fear of being chastised for leaving her drunk and unattended. While he is trying to get her to her room, she falls asleep. He finds this to be more than an inconvenience, now closer than ever before to a sleeping, supposedly vulnerable white girl. While Bigger is the one making physical contact, because it is out of obligation, he feels almost violated and dominated, which sums up his feelings toward white society perfectly. This creates an awareness of his resentment for Mary, and therefore all whites—"Again, he hated her; he shook her" (83). But it is of no use, and Bigger ends up in Mary's bedroom, a place where he and most of society feels he does not belong. The physical contact goes as far as Mary kissing Bigger,

and Bigger kissing her back. This is a strange milestone for Bigger, who has never had such intimate contact with a white woman before. Again, tension mounts, but Bigger lays Mary down on her bed and does not pursue much further gratification, knowing the implications.

Very soon after that, the blind Mrs. Dalton enters the room, calling to her daughter. Bigger panics and pretends he is not there, opting to silence Mary's mumbling by pressing a pillow to her face. "Both immobility and fear engulf him as he accidentally murders Mary Dalton" (Joyce 2). As it is stated in the book, Bigger's intention was never to deliberately end the young woman's life, but to silence her, if only momentarily, in order to escape recognition and the theorized subsequent punishment. And when the moment is over, he is gripped by an even greater fear, for the punishment for this result is far more severe than if he had simply been discovered in the room with a drunk and breathing Mary. What is most interesting about this scene is that Bigger is, as he is in the majority of the first book, inactive. He does not actively murder Mary, but does so passively; her life is snuffed out not by his awareness of any injustice, any great, symbolic rage, but simply by his inability to act, his complete and utter impotence in the face of paralyzing fear. The murder, while it is less so for Bigger, is Wright's way of achieving literary climax, after the highly sexual build-up of tension in the previous few scenes, in the car and in Mary's bedroom just before Mrs. Dalton wanders in. It also again illustrates how completely powerless Bigger has been all his life, stuck in the dual roles of an "Uncle Tom" and a "negro brute." Yet, there is much more to this one moment, for, even though the murder could only be described as a terrible accident, a mistake, this is also the first time Bigger has ever truly held responsibility for another life in his hands. This is the first time that Bigger's actions, or even his existence, have had much consequence on the Earth. And what a consequence—after the murder, the mass media is driven into a frenzy simply by the idea that Mary has *disappeared*. When her bones are discovered in the furnace, there is an explosion of attention on what is, unbeknownst to any others, just one of Bigger's mistakes. Bigger realizes that he can no longer remain impotent and frozen by fear, if he is to survive. His actions following the murder are surely deliberate, but this is the first time that fear motivates him to *act* rather than *re*act. For the first time, he calculates his actions and weighs the consequences instead of unconsciously doing what his instincts tell him to do, as illustrated by his hiding the body in the furnace as well as the writing of the ransom note. In "Jim Crowism: The Catalyst for Bigger Thomas's Violence in Richard Wright's *Native Son*," ita is suggested that Wright "introduces Bigger Thomas asa an African American character whose meaningless lifea suddenly gets meaning after accidentally murdering Marya Dalton..." (Mehervand 1). Exhilarated by the unexpecteda and inadvertent release of tension and freedom from thea trappings of contemporary life as a black man, Biggera becomes a man renewed. The murder marks the beginninga of a new way of thinking for Bigger; he is suddenly livinga with innate purpose—to survive and escape.a

After the murder, Bigger goes over to see Bessie. When he explains to her the nature of his crime, she suggests that "they" would say he had raped Mary. Internally, Bigger relents and accepts this as fact simply because that is how it would be perceived—"Every time he felt as he had felt that night, he raped. But rape was not what one did to women. Rape was what one felt when one's back was against a wall and one had to strike out.a. to keep the pack from killing one. He committed rape every time he looked into a white face" (Wright 227-228). The previous passage sheds some light on how cornered Bigger feels for the entirety of the book. Whether or not he had actually, physically raped Mary is irrelevant, for he is already a rapist in the eyes of the world around him. This is yet another reason why Mary's presumptuous behavior is so difficult for Bigger to accept, as society has made any contact between blacks and whites, whether friendly or not, criminal and aggressively sexual.

Of course, Wright takes the stereotype of the black rapist and expands on it in a way that is strangely humanizing, latera on. While many criticize Bigger's character for being a stereotype, Wright's writing forces the reader to see his inner workings, his conscious and unconscious desires as well as fears, which in turn, forms a recognizable face in the mind of the reader.

While Bigger and Bessie are hiding out together, Bigger feels the discomfort of tension build up in him again. He tries to quell this nervous anxiety by initiating physical contact with Bessie. Having already accepted his role in society as the black brute, the rapist, it is

remarkably, disturbingly easy for him to force himself on her and ignore her refusal. This and other scenes point to the idea that throughout the book, Bigger is simply trying to escape his everyday torment. His biggest motivation seems to be avoidance of discomfort, for that is all he knows how to do. Not given the chance, he has never known what it is to pursue happiness, but rather, he knows how to try to escape fear, shame, and pain. For Bigger, sexuality is not hot and passionate, but cold and numb, only a means to escape worse feelings.

After he rapes Bessie, once she has fallen asleep, paranoia takes over and he realizes that he cannot take her with him, and he cannot leave her to go to the authorities. He bashes her head in with a brick, opting to figuratively silence her as he had literally silenced his previous victim. Bessie's murder is different from Mary's in both intent and nature. While it was obviously a deliberate crime, it was also much more passionate and even sexual in its violent nature. He brings the brick down again and again, feeling her skull change shape beneath the force of his weapon, her blood all over his hands—while abhorrently violent, it is also arguably the most intimate act in the book. This time, he is up close, and he *knows* his victim. This time, he is not a man who has killed, but a murderer. It is one of the few times in the book where Bigger is not mentally escaping to another world, but trapped in the gruesome moment.

Bessie's murder eventually catches up to him, and he is accosted by law officials on top of a roof. When he is arrested, he meets communist party lawyer Max, who explains to him that what he did was not his fault, that the system had created Bigger and made him who he is. Bigger begins to relate to what he is saying. "Max's explanations help Bigger understand himself. In the first two parts of the novel, Bigger does not know who he is. At the end of 'Fate,' he still does not know, but he has begun to think deeply about it. He is beginning to understand himself, and the explanations are part of this change; they are 'justified' also in that sense" (Averbach 2). While Bigger lacks the educational background to articulate his feelings and motivations, Max's simplistic explanation incites heavy emotions in Bigger, and he begins to reflect on what had led him to his crime. Since the murder, he has acquired a new sense of pride; he feels that he has done something so shocking and horrible that it has forced whites (a homogenized mass toward which he only feels resentment and deeply rooted hatred) to look at the ugly result of their oppression of minorities. He has stepped past the line that they have drawn in the dirt, and he knows that now that he has become liberated from the limitations whites have set, now that he has done something that he was not supposed to do, there is no going back to being the "obedient negro." In the persona of the "brute negro," Bigger has found freedom from the shame, hate, fear, and inescapable tension that had been such driving forces in his life and actions. While he still does not possess the level of understanding to put his new feelings to words, he verbally accepts his new identity toward the end of the novel, to Max's horror—he exclaims, "*...what I killed for, I am*! It must've been pretty deep in me to make me kill" (Wright 392). One could interpret this exclamation in two ways—the first being that perhaps the intoxicating freedom from fear and shame has led to a great realization, that Bigger Thomas has readily accepted his new role in society as a criminal, a sociopathic murderer, thereby finally accepting the white perception of black men as truth, or, that Bigger's fear of death and further prosecution, perhaps even in the afterlife, has led him to become dissociated and even a little delusional. He may be speaking out of fear once more, paralyzed by his fear of death, of the fleeting quality of life. If he admits to himself that he has done wrong, and that his life is about to end because of a terrible mistake, he is confronted by his own insignificance and impotence. I believe that the latter suggestion is the more accurate one; he needs to believe that he can and has accepted his acts, whether good or bad. He has worked so hard and gone through so much just to escape punishment, and still failed. And the "guilty" verdict makes it that much more apparent that there is little hope in the world—he is not able to change the world the way Max had intended, and there is not a thing he can do about it, for it is too late. The idea that he had ended up in that place simply because of a terrible mistake, one that is not a significant part of his identity, is simply too much for Bigger to bear, so he opts to believe that he was always headed for jail. And with those words, he has not only decided to simply become who the world expects him to be—a violent rapist-murderer—but to accept the white, racist idea that all black men are destined for mundane failure or imprisonment. The tragedy

of Bigger Thomas "...is not that he is cold or black or hungry, not even that he is American, black; but that he has accepted *a* theology that denies him life, that he admits the possibility *of* his being sub-human and feels constrained, therefore, to battle for his humanity according to those brutal criteria bequeathed him at his birth" (Baldwin 22). Bigger has allowed himself to become ashamed of who he is, his "black skin." There is little in the way of rational reasoning for this; his shame is motivated by his fear of his own impotence. In the end, he must accept the so-called truth of the white world, for the knowledge that he is unable to help his own cause fills him with fear. He is afraid of the fact that he is unable to break free, that his existence would have been, even without his having committed the murder, mundane and purposeless at best and violent and full of horror at worst. What's more, on a deeper, allegorical level, Bigger represents not only the main character's case, but that of all African-Americans during this time period, and their inability to break away from society's racist oppression. In the beginning of the novel, Bigger expresses his deferred dreams of being an airplane pilot to Gus. He explains simply that because of whites and poverty and racism, he is unable to do any of the things he wishes he could have done. Black men and women were not allowed to dream in that day and age, and most of them were doomed to fail from the moment of birth, unable to spread their wings or to imagine an existence free from the fear of unfair persecution or shame for things that they could not help. Another reason for Bigger's strange and almost ambiguous exclamation could be that it is better for him to think that he has lived out his purpose. He wants to believe that he was always destined to be exactly where he is at the end of the book, and that he has not dashed away his potential, but rather fulfilled his destiny and has lived with a certain purpose, no matter how grim.

There is again a sexual theme to be explored about the ending of the book. One could perceive the first book, "Fear" to be the building up of tension for both Bigger's mindset as well as the novel. Most of "Flight" also serves this purpose, and Bessie's rape and brutal murder might be seen as the sexual climax of the book in its entirety, while "Fate" is the following denouement, the aftermath. In the aftermath of Bigger's crimes, especially after his last encounter with Bessie, Bigger is left with the stark and chilling reality of his actions—he is now, undoubtedly, a murderer, a rapist, just as the world around him had always thought and feared. When he says, "...*what I killed for, I am*..." (Wright 392), he is desperately trying to justify and rationalize his actions in order to achieve the ability to accept himself for what he is for the first time in his tragic life.

*Native Son* is simple in structure and carries overtly erotic second meanings in each of its books. There is "Fear," the exploration of the lack of personal space and therefore the lack of sexual freedom; there is "Flight," which reads like an allegory for the quest to find sexual gratification and therefore Bigger's identity as a man free of society's expectations; and "Fate," which chronicles the aftermath of Bigger's sexually charged crimes and his acceptance and integration of his self. What is most apparent about Bigger's character is that the way in which he deals with his accidental crime is that of a confused adolescent who has never been given a chance to grow up to be a healthy, functional, whole human being. He is out of touch with his emotions and sexually frustrated, and these characteristics carry over to his actions in the real world, as seen by just how stifled he is, in every respect of the word. Paralyzed by his fear and unjustified shame, he lashes out, desperately creating ripples in the fabric of the oppressive society around him in any way he can.

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Evaluation: *Cindy moves way beyond the traditional analysis of Bigger's actions as a result of his environment. Her focus on human sexuality is intense. She offers a psychosexual reading of Wright's work that is difficult to put down.*

# Afterword: Writing for Real

*Trygve Thoreson*

[Adapted from Chapter 1 of Trygve Thoreson's *The Freshman Essay* (NewYork: McGraw-Hill Primis, 2009)]

Few college students think of themselves as writers. Why should they? After all, an abundance of pressing and immediate demands jostle for position at the top of a college student's agenda. An active social life is one thing. Enough money to live on is another. *Where* to live (with parents? friends? sig. oths.?) yet another. After the immediate needs are handled, the larger questions students ask rarely center on writing skills. What major to choose? Accounting? Dental Hygiene? History? Economics? Engineering? Art? Secondary Education? Information Technology? Will there be jobs available in those fields? What will the salaries be like? What will tuition cost next year? Which teachers are the easy graders?

At some level, the college student is vaguely aware that writing is important--people in charge keep saying so--but this bit of information typically generates about as much attention as the humming of a mini-fridge against a dorm room wall. If a student got through high school all right, surely he or she can get to the other side of college with only the intermittent annoyances of "themes" or "essays" and (inevitably) the dreaded research paper. And then (just think of it!) no more writing classes again--ever! Free at last!

Of course, not all beginning college students think this way, but more do than many English professors care to acknowledge. If, for example, freshman English were not required, enrollment in Composition I would dwindle to a precious few enthusiasts--mostly apprentice professional writers and people who worry overmuch about their writing skills--and multitudes of composition teachers would be out of work.

Yet English composition remains a cornerstone of the college curriculum, and college students necessarily become writers. Life demands it. Since the time of the ancient Sumerians, civilization has required note-taking, bookkeeping, list-compiling, record-keeping--all kinds of writing. And writing has always been a skill that must be taught.

It's a simple truism: to fuel the immense engine of our postindustrial economy, just about everybody has to read and write. We need literate nurses to track patients' medical charts; literate supervisors and administrators to do personnel evaluations, progress reports, letters to clients; literate citizens to write letters to the editor and to legislators; literate radio broadcasters to read advertising copy; literate contractors and laborers to read specs and write job reports. In these, and almost any other job you could name, literacy is not recommended; it is mandatory.

But do all of these people need to write well? Shouldn't the level of literacy obtained through high school be sufficient? How much literacy does one really need? And why, of all things, should students be asked to master such strenuously academic forms as essays or research papers? How often, in our adult lives, will we be called upon to compose personal essays or analyze animal imagery in *King Lear*?

It's true that most of us will succeed in stumbling through life with large gaps in our educational backgrounds. If we know little or nothing about Renaissance art, if we never play a violin or master quadratic equations or learn the terminology of macroeconomics or read *Moby Dick*, we may still function quite effectively in our chosen profession and die contentedly at an advanced age, having quietly savored the multiple satisfactions of a life well lived. And yet, and yet . . .

If we don't feel confident about our writing, we will, at some level of consciousness, feel incomplete--maybe even a little ashamed. Business executives who can't write well often know it, and they take great pains to hide their inadequacies, asking others to "look over" their memos or "fix this up a little" before an important document gets sent out. Committee members charged with writing up minutes worry about those "English teacher types" who will scan their work for errors. Students sometimes apologize to their teachers when handing in papers, saying, "I've never been very good at writing, so please don't be too hard on this." Even professional writers fear the harsh judgments of the critics, in particular when the

critics uncover some glaring imperfections in the writer's prose.

Students also need to get in the habit of writing sustained, orderly, fully developed prose. Certainly, many forms of writing encountered in the world of work require only quick notations and a minimal level of correctness. But often more will be demanded. Reports to supervisors, newsletter features in the employee bulletin, even letters to clients are extended pieces of writing, and usually require the kinds of structure, support, clarity, and fluency that the three-to-four-page personal or argumentative essay showcases. The essay is a staple of college courses for a reason—it really does lay a foundation for all sorts of writing.

So how much is needed, and how good is good enough?

In these, as in just about all other aspects of writing, there are no single, one-size-fits-all answers. Writing may be viewed as an art, a craft, a set of problems to be solved, an obstacle to be overcome on one's way to fame and fortune, a joyous avocation, an indispensable outlet for self-expression, a pain in the you-know-what. All of us will decide for ourselves what kind of writer we want to be. The only certainty is that each of us *will* be some kind of writer, whether we want to or not.

For college students, the first important move is to decide that the quality of their submitted work really matters, that it will be interpreted by others as a definitive statement of who they are, of what they think, of how they wish to present themselves to the world. Simply that shift in attitude (and the earnest work that will follow from it), will do much to propel them into that expanding (but still, alas, too small) circle of the spectacularly literate. And spectacular literacy is the goal. If only a substantial minority among us could write like, say, F. Scott Fitzgerald or Willa Cather or Toni Morrison, how much better would be all those workplace memos and emails and flyers that pour forth in such appalling profusion from our information-obsessed culture?

Is the goal unrealistic? Perhaps. But when students start thinking of themselves as real writers, they take an important first step on the road to developing the skill and the confidence they will unquestionably need in whichever of life's paths they choose. Students may already have formulated goals to become parents, employees, car-owners, college graduates, small-business entrepreneurs, volunteers, church-goers, homeowners. It may or may not be what they want to hear, but it's true: students will need to become writers as well, and high-school-level competence may not be enough.

Bummer, right? It's all seems just so . . . *arduous.e* There are so many pages waiting to be written, so many mistakes waiting to happen. For some students, it may be helpful to remember that even the most acclaimed and accomplished writers were seriously deficient in one or another aspect of the writing process. F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, was a lousy (really lousy) speller who had the misfortune of living in an era before Spell Check. In the manuscript of his first novel *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald routinely misspelled dozens of words, among them *seasen, pilgrimmages, nessesary, paralized, apon (*for "upon"), *chrystalized, facinating, indefinate, niether, legarthic* (for "lethargic"), *automnal,* and *intrinsicly.* Even the rewritten typescript version contained multiple spelling errors, such as *burgoise* for "bourgeois" and *valiently* for "valiantly." And critics of the published novel gleefully pointed to a number of howlers that somehow managed to elude the editor's pencil even after the work was officially enclosed between hard covers.

But beneath the terrible spelling (some people just have trouble with that) lurked a superb prose style and a formidable literary intelligence. The embarrassing mistakes in *This Side of Paradise* crept in for two reasons: 1) Fitz-gerald's ineptness as a speller, and 2) the author's and publisher's rush to get the book out quickly. With just a little more care in both the writing and editing stages of the process, Fitzgerald's distinctive and original voice would have come through without the distracting presence of multiple misspellings. Fitzgerald's reputation survived these gaffes, obviously, but at the time his status was by no means assured. Closer attention to the elementary mechanics of draft revision would have served him well.

In *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft,* Stephen King, the best-selling fiction writer, recalls a moment of childhood revelation. In trouble at school for some hurtful comments he'd written in an underground paper called *The Village Vomit*, the school authorities tried to turn the boy's creative talents toward more "constructive channels." They arranged for him to contribute sports

items to the local weekly newspaper at a wage of half a cent a word. Here's King's account of what happened.

> *I took my fair share of English Lit classes in my two remaining years at Lisbon* [High School], *and my fair share of composition, fiction and poetry classes in college, but John Gould taught me more than any of them, and in no more than ten minutes. I wish I still had the piece--it deserves to be framed, editorial corrections and all--but I can remember pretty well how it went and how it looked after Gould had combed through it with that black pen of his. Here's an example:*
>
> Last night, in the well-loved gymnasium of Lisbon High School, partisans and Jay Hills fans alike were stunned by an athletic performance unequalled in school history. Bob Ransom, known as "Bullet Bob" for both his size and accuracy, scored thirty-seven points. Yes, you heard me right. Plus he did it with grace, speed . . . and with an odd courtesy as well, committing only two personal fouls in his knight-like quest for a record which has eluded Lisbon thinolads since the years of Korea . . . . e
>
> *Gould stopped at "the years of Korea" and looked up at me. "What year was the last record made?" he asked.*
>
> *Luckily, I had my notes. "1953," I said. Gould grunted and went back to work. When he finished marking my copy in the manner indicated above, he looked up and saw something on my face. I think he must have mistaken it for horror. It wasn't; it was pure revelation. Why, I wondered, didn't English teachers ever do this? . . . .*
>
> *"I only took out the bad parts, you know," Gould said. "Most of it's pretty good."*
>
> *"I know," I said, meaning both things: yes, most of it was good--okay anyway, serviceable--and yes, he had only taken out the bad parts. "I won't do it again."*
>
> *He laughed. "If that's true, you'll never have to work for a living. You can do this instead. Do I have to explain any of these marks?"*
>
> *"No," I said.*
>
> *"When you write a story, you're telling yourself the story," he said. "When you rewrite, your main job is taking out all the things that are not the story." Gould said something else that was interesting on the day I turned in my first two pieces: write with the door closed, rewrite with the door open. Your stuff starts out being just for you, in other words, but then it goes out. Once you know what the story is and get it right--as right as you can, anyway--it belongs to anyone who wants to read it. Or criticize it. If you're very lucky (this is my idea, not John Gould's, but I believe he would have subscribed to the notion), more will want to do the former than the latter.* (56-58)

Door closed, door open. A student's first draft is the person herself, in the full majesty of her flawed glory: corny jokes, unnecessary asides, tangled sentences, ideas that trail off into meaningless babble or that simply repeat themselves, bad spelling, and a few glowing red embers of real ideas that she might later blow into flame. And--I believe as firmly now as I did the day I first set foot in a college classroom--for myself as well as for my students, all the trouble is worth the work.

Writing is solitary and communal, private and public, hopelessly complex and surprisingly easy. All of us can learn to do it and do it well--with maybe a dash of style and grace thrown in. But for students to become writers, real writers, requires a set of genuine commitments. Student-writers must be convinced, first of all, that their writing *matters*. Then they need to be able to shift some of the focus from themselves and their purely personal interests and concerns in order to focus on the audience they're trying to reach and the purpose they're seeking to fulfill. They need to think about the occasion that prompts the writing. Finally, writers need to accept the inevitable structures of the creative process. They need to acknowledge that their best work rarely comes out right the first time, that rough drafts must be visited and revisited--perhaps several times and often with the assistance of others--before the work is ready to make its debut on the stage of the world. As with all performances, an author's written work may garner applause or catcalls (or some combination of the two), but the chances of success are much greater when careful, thoughtful rehearsal has prepared the way. And the bows taken will then feel, and be, deserved.

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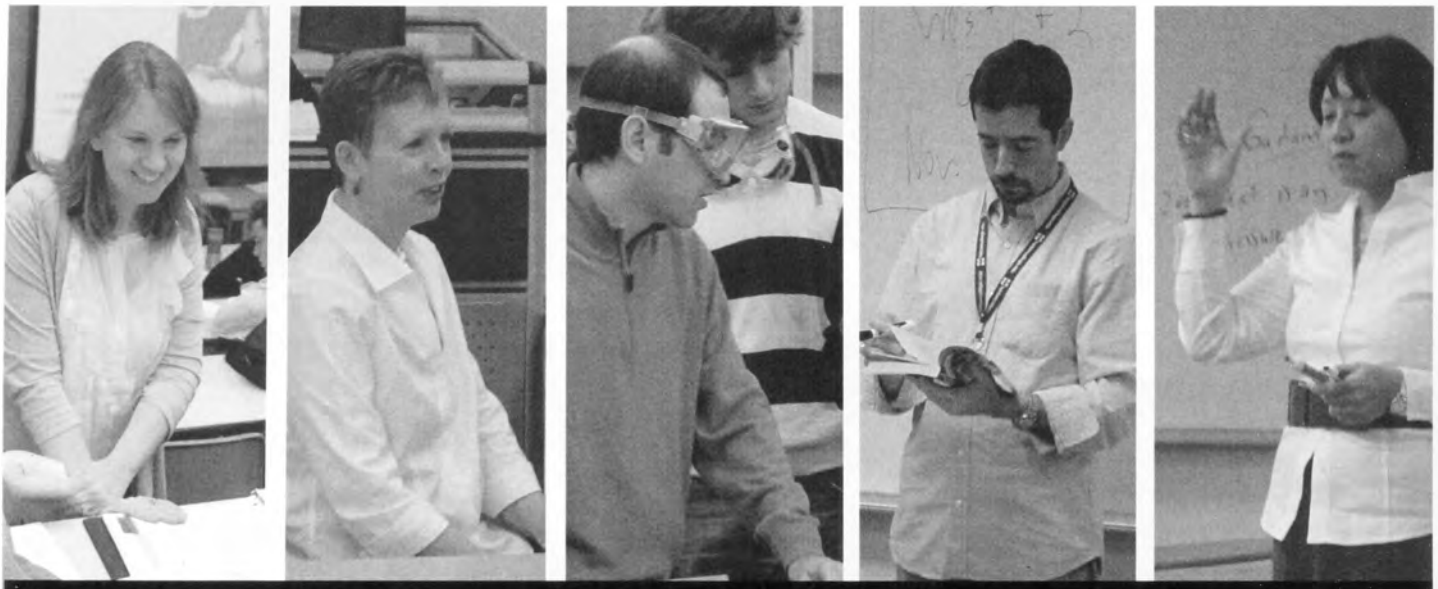

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Pamela Malone

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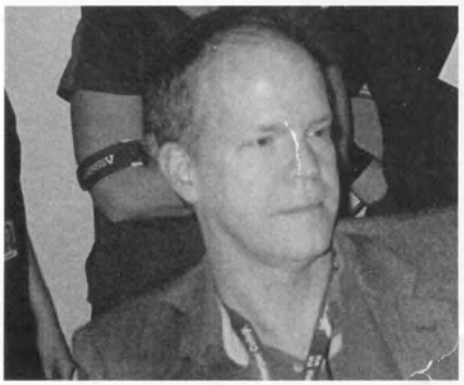

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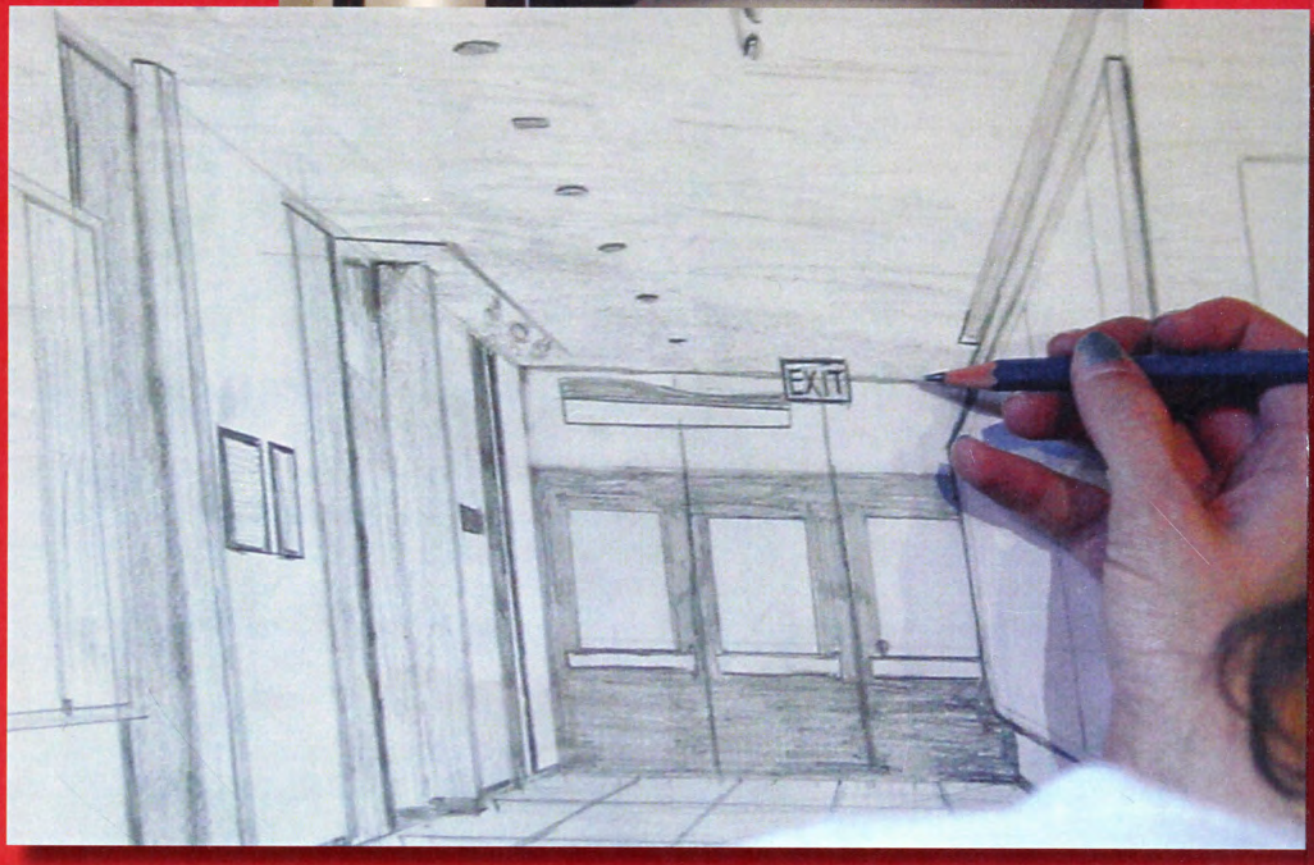


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