

# PEN



2006-2007  
Volume 13



# PEN

A Faculty Publication of Student Writing

Ocean County College English and Literature Department

## **Editors**

David Bordelon  
Katja Hawlitschka

## **Editorial Assistant**

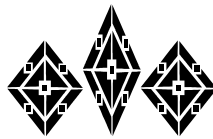
Maria Galindo

## **Financial Support**

Editorial Stipend: OCC/Faculty Association Agreement  
Publishing Costs: OCC Office of Student Life

## Dedication

In honor of their work on PEN in previous years, we'd like to dedicate this volume to Julie Aparin and Karen Veselits. Both believed celebrating student achievement was a vital part of education, and both used PEN as a means of commemoration. While they have moved on to other pursuits, their influence remains in the present edition.



## In Memoriam

The editors would also like to honor two English faculty, Catherine Don Diego and William Kanouse. Their presence brought humor and light to the department; their absence surprised and saddened all. They are sorely missed.

## From the Editors

With this issue, PEN is turning seventeen – so it is almost an adult, but still has a lot of room for growth. We are looking back on a proud history of celebrating strong academic student writing, and we are happy to continue the hard and inspiring work of previous editors. Seventeen is often an age of changes, and we are introducing several: this issue of PEN (earlier issues to follow) will be posted in PDF format on Ocean Cruiser for easy electronic access. We are also planning a Writing Across the Curriculum expansion (see Call for Papers below), and perhaps a more colorful, handier format. Ideas and opinions are welcome!

With this year's issue, we have made only small formatting changes, but can report on a few expansions: our selections represent an even larger number of instructors and classes than last year. We are excited about the wide variety of submissions, which range from PEN's first ever 010 contribution, to several papers from higher level literature, film, and culture courses. Generically, submissions vary, from personal essays, descriptions, and literary response papers, to cultural analysis, argumentation, comparison/contrast essays and fully researched reports. What is particularly enjoyable, as it has been in years past, is the taste these papers give us of the wide and interconnected world of culture, the arts, and the written word, demonstrating the way creative production combines reflection and critical thought with emotion and inspiration. We have included essays on a wide range of topics, both entertaining and thought-provoking: descriptions of surfing, fishing, Egyptian music, and harvesting a Christmas tree; celebrations of heroes and the human spirit in real and literary grandmothers, life savers, and great writers of world literature. Several selections make us ponder serious personal and social issues: from a fear of English class and swimming, to cutting, autism, and animal testing. Like all our previous issues, this one celebrates diversity and global interests: we have essays on growing up Puerto Rican and African American, on international music, on Mexican ancestors, the custom of Bindi, Islamic art and religion, and a painting by Van Gogh. Others inform us about European modernism, Kafka, 19<sup>th</sup> century British Literature, ancient Greek drama, and even the Indian epic "The Ramayana."

Whether playful or serious, personal or political, ironic or dispassionate, these papers make us think, feel, and learn. Some of the strongest essays here show a willingness and curiosity to explore the new, unknown, and challenging, or to take a risk and reveal a painful truth. They recall the timeworn phrase, "The human mind is like an umbrella. It functions best when open." This issue commemorates and thanks the hard-working authors whose open minds and hearts produced writing that left such a lasting impression.

## Call for Papers!

This coming year, to combine tradition with a move into OCC's future, we'd like to revive what PEN has done in the past: publish strong student writing from across the curriculum. Many individual papers in our last few issues (and some of the classes in which they were written) are already strongly interdisciplinary, but now that OCC is moving towards a more writing intensive curriculum, we'd like to honor students, papers, and instructors from other departments as well. Word will be sent out through Ocean Cruiser, committees, word of mouth, and possibly e-mail. Deadline and more info to be announced!



# Table of Contents

## ENGLISH 010: Fundamentals of Reading I

A Hero for all Generations.....	7
By Ramiro Corrales	

## ENGLISH 021: English Fundamentals II

How I Learned to Surf .....	10
By Michael Arabitg	
Secret Shame.....	11
By Leah Brown	
Swimming Lesson.....	12
By Rose Daddino	
Inner Strengths .....	14
By Belinda Daughety	
Fields and Streams .....	15
By James Distefano	
My Favorite Music.....	17
By Dina Elrashidy	
A Little African-American Girl Growing up in the South.....	18
By Stefanie Grosset	
Lost Loved Ones .....	20
By Stefanie Grossett	
An Accident .....	21
By Justin Hurtig	
The Beauty .....	22
By Gintare Lenkauskaite	
“Little Red Riding Hood” in Judith Ortiz Cofer’s Story: “A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood” .....	23
By Julius Martinez	
Reflection of Two Worlds .....	24
By Diana Perren	
The Student .....	25
By Diana Perren	
Maya Angelou’s “Grandmother’s Victory” .....	26
By Nicholas Quackenbush	
The Beauty of a Woman’s Body.....	27
By Brian White	

## ENGLISH 151: English I

The Eastern Bindi: Divine Perception or Fashion Statement?.....	29
---	----

By Nicole Cochran	
Animal Testing.....	31
By Amanda DeCarlo	
The Islamic Religion and its Art, Architecture, and Gardening .....	34
By Dan Governale	
A Comfortable Tradition.....	38
By Christine Lesko	
A Work Memoir.....	39
By Mandy Rabkin	
Autism: Awareness of a New Epidemic .....	41
By James Reese	

## **ENGLISH 152: English II**

Ways to Cope.....	45
By Jacqueline Geller	
Frank O'Connor's Control of Tone and Style in "First Confession" .....	48
By Christie McDonald	
My Interpretation of "The Yellow Wallpaper".....	50
By Christie McDonald	
Van Gogh's Bed, as Seen by Jane Flanders.....	52
By Laura Pavelka	
Kafka: Transition from the Victorian to the Modern Age .....	53
By Megan Myers	
Arsenic and Old Maids: A Critical Analysis .....	56
By Shaun Pilling	
So Much Beauty in Woodworking .....	59
By Shaun Pilling	
Post-Colonialist Theory and Identity: Examples in Literature and Modern Society.....	63
By Robert Sundermann	

## **ENGLISH 240: Women in Literature**

Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Price of Freedom .....	69
By Amanda Taylor	

## **ENGLISH 254: British Literature II**

Responding to William Blake's "The Sick Rose" .....	73
By Sam Szapucki	
Literature of the Industrial Landscape .....	74
By Joe Pienkowski	

## **ENGLISH 255: World Literature I**



“If I hadn’t seen it with my own two eyes...” .....	77
By Chris Jensen	
“The Ramayana” and “The Book of Job”: Comparisons.....	81
By Dawn Vigliotti	

### **ENGLISH 299C: Jewish and Holocaust Literature**

From Haven to Home: The First Wave of Immigration .....	86
By Stuart Aron	

### **HUMANITIES 200: Faces of Modernism**

How World War I Affected the Modernist Era .....	89
By Kaitlin Acquaviva	
The Land of Conformity: A Fairy Tale.....	91
By Susan Taylor	
Musicology and its Relation to Fantasy in Music and Literature .....	93
By Susan Taylor	

### **FILM 200: Understanding Film**

The Somnambulist and the Vampire: Two Examples of German Expressionist Horror.....	97
By Bruce Anderson	

# English 010

## Fundamentals of Reading

Writing is the best way to talk without being interrupted.

Jules Renard

---

## A Hero for all Generations

*By Ramiro Corrales*

I always thought my name was horrible and had no meaning. I thought my parents were crazy, but as I spoke to my father about why he gave me this hideous name, I was stunned to hear the story.

My grandfather Luis had a friend named Ramiro Castillo. Luis and Ramiro were great friends. Whenever they introduced each other to people, they would say, "this is my brother." They were friends since they were little, and they were next door neighbors so they were around each other constantly. Ramiro worked at a candy processing plant named "Colombina." He worked there for about two years and he would tell my grandfather he would get him a job there.

Ramiro finally got my grandfather the job. He started as quality control personnel earning about 30,000 pesos biweekly. At first everything went smoothly, until my grandfather spoke to one of the mechanics, because one of the machines was not processing the labels correctly. The man answered my grandfather in a high tone of voice and became aggressive. He told my grandfather, "Who the hell do you think you are?" You have been here for two months and you think you run the place." The man was upset because he had been working there for about ten years and never got promoted to quality control, and received only three raises.

The man became more and more aggressive as time went by; he began to harass my grandfather, telling him he would kill him, his friends and his family. My grandfather did not have a choice but to report him to the police. One day, as he was walking home for his lunch break, the man confronted him and told him it was his last day to live. My father described this man as about 5'9", 230 pounds, with a muscular build and a bald head. The man shoved and yelled at my grandfather and as he fought back, the man pulled out a revolver. They both wrestled, fighting for the gun. Finally, my grandfather had the gun in his possession, but the man ripped it out of his hand and told my grandfather to get on his knees and make his last wish. All of a sudden Ramiro came out of nowhere and hit the man with an iron pipe over the head; the man dropped to the floor and started to bleed profusely. Ramiro had killed him. He explained to the police he didn't mean to kill him and that this man was going to kill his best friend.

Ramiro was sentenced to life in prison. My grandfather told the police he would go to jail instead of Ramiro, because Ramiro saved his life, but that never happened. When Ramiro went to jail, he told my grandfather to do him a favor and look after his son Juan Carlos and never to forget that he would love him like a brother forever.

When my grandfather had my father, he named him after his hero, and when I was born my father named me after that great hero, Ramiro Castillo. Now that I know I was named after a hero, I am glad to have been named Ramiro, because if it were not for Ramiro Castillo I would not be here today.

I will pass on this name to my son with great honor. The name Ramiro stands for strength and "supreme judge." Ramiro is a Spanish form of Ramirus, a Latinized Gothic name meaning "famous advice." The name is of Portuguese origin.

My last name is Corrales. It is derived from the Spanish word “corral,” meaning an area for livestock. The name was given to those who lived near such a place. There are four different categories of surnames: place names, color names, occupation or trade names, and nicknames. My last name falls under the occupation or trade names, because a corral is where one would work to maintain livestock.

I like my last name and I would like my wife to have my last name. Nowadays women have the right to choose whether or not to take their husbands’ last names when they get married. However, I would like my wife to have the same last name as me, because it is tradition and also out of respect. If my wife does not feel like taking my last name, I would still be with her, and I would love her the same. Not taking my last name would not change the way I feel about her.

# English 021

## English Fundamentals II

Writing is the hardest work in the world. I have been a bricklayer and truck driver, and I tell you – as if you haven't been told a million times already – that writing is harder. Lonelier. And nobler and more enriching.

Harlan Ellison

## **How I Learned to Surf**

*By Michael Arabitg*

When I first started surfing at age thirteen, I remember that I couldn't even stand up. Every time I tried to stand up, I would go crashing down, but I never gave up. When I first started, I rode a beginner board, which is bigger, so that it will float more easily and ride more smoothly. The size of the board was around seven feet long, which is pretty long for me now. As I got better, I started using smaller boards.

At age fifteen, I started getting a lot better; I went from using a seven foot board to using a six foot board which makes surfing more challenging. At fifteen, I could ride a wave, and I learned when to paddle for a wave and when to wait. I also learned how to wax the board the correct way so that there is a lot of grip. From watching other surfers, I learned how to duck dive under a wave, which is when I push the front of my board under the water when a crashing wave comes up to me and hits me with its force. I have to push one foot on the back of the board, which makes me and my board travel under the turbulence of the wave.

At the age of seventeen, I bought an even smaller board since my skills had improved. Around this age surfing is more than just a sport; in my view, riding a wave is using nature's force to move me down the lines. And once I realized this, I became hooked on the sport. It's an adrenaline rush, especially when the waves are huge and you get slammed. The wave holds your body under the surface while the rotation of the wave spins you around uncontrollably, and you don't know when you will get your next breath of air.

Finally, now that I'm nineteen, I still surf all the time and love it. My progression in surfing has increased dramatically. I can do a lot of maneuvers, and I ride a five foot ten inch board which is shaped for higher level surfers. One day I would like to travel around the world to different beaches so I can learn how to surf other breaks outside of New Jersey.

---

## Secret Shame

*By Leah Brown*

It wasn't a suicide attempt; it was a getaway from everything unpleasant. When we cut, we're in control. We create our pain, and we can discontinue it at any time we want. Physical pain relieves mental torture. For a brief moment, the pain of cutting is the only thing in the cutter's mind, and when that pain stops and the other pain comes back, it's weaker. What does cutting mean exactly? Cutting is a secret expedition into the self; in this case, me. Some may ask themselves, why would anyone want to hurt themselves on purpose? Well, cutting themselves is a way of expressing their feelings. What does that mean? It is a means of communication that cannot be put into words or thoughts that are being felt.

You may create in your mind the idea that a person would take the route to self-mutilation only under extreme anxiety, but once I'd crossed that line for the first time, taken that hazardous step off the cliff, just about any reason was a good enough reason, just about any aggravation was enough. Cutting was and is my all-embracing justification. My scars ought to be a charm bracelet of the painful past, each a never-ending reminder of its precipitating incidence, but maybe the most upsetting thing I can say about my cutting is that for the most part I can't even remember the when's and the why's following those wounds. It doesn't take a lot to make me cut. Frustration, humiliation, insecurity, guilt, remorse, loneliness – I cut them all out. They are like a toxic acid, as though lye had been slipped into my veins. The only way I could survive them, I thought, was to keep draining them from my blood.

Cutting very much affects the way I examine myself. I think it's a tremendously poor idea of my character since it's sort of a bizarre thing to do. If I was average and wise and wasn't such a freak, I wouldn't do it. Cutting makes me feel very out of the ordinary, very disconnected from other people. I don't want to create a false impression that I want to be normal because normal sounds unexciting to me. But I would like to be a little less abnormal. Less abnormal in the way I spend my time, energy, and efforts: worrying about normal things like a job, school, and buying a new car, you know, quote unquote "normal" worries, rather than worrying about the next time I might cut.

Cutting is a symbol that can never be taken away, setting us cutters at a distance from everyone else. Pain is important to the bonding, a physical horror that bonds us ever tighter to those who have partaken. The intensity of the experience helps to widen the gulf between us and those who have not shared. Explaining the scars and trying to cover up new cuts until they heal has caused a lot of unanswered questions and pain. It becomes an addition, and turns itself into a way of coping and a way of life for me. It actually doesn't help in the long-term aspect of things, but it does work on a temporary basis.

## Swimming Lesson

*By Rose Daddino*

I was a second grader, living in Ocean Gate, New Jersey, and I was on my way to my biggest lesson in life. For some reason, this lesson I experienced always comes back to haunt me.

Ocean Gate had a population of about five hundred, and my elementary school had about one hundred students. My teacher, Mrs. Henry, was passing out permission slips for swimming lessons at the local pool in town. The moment I heard the word “swimming,” I started to panic. My heart started racing and felt like it was going to explode. You would have to be in my shoes to experience what happened to me. I was four years old when my father threw me into my uncle’s pool and said “swim.” Unfortunately, I sunk to the bottom of the pool. My cousin George saved me from the deep water. But I was devastated by the experience.

While Mrs. Henry continued with all the details regarding the swimming lesson, my only thought was how I was going to get out of this without being embarrassed in front of my classmates. The only person that would understand my anxiety and fears was my mother. I walked home that day with the permission slip in my back pocket ready to show Mom. If it hadn’t been for the fact that she would find out about the lessons from my best friend’s mom who lived next door, I would have never brought the slip home. Giving the permission slip to my Mom was difficult, but I never expected her reaction. She was so excited and happy for me: “Oh Rose, this is great, free lesson!” She signed the slip and happily gave it back to me. I didn’t sleep that night; all I could think about were ways to get out of the lessons. I was consumed with fear and anxiety.

The following morning, Mrs. Henry collected our permission slips and told us that our first lesson was scheduled for Friday at 10:00 a.m. Thursday evening, the day before the first lesson, I asked Mom if I could stay home on Friday. She looked puzzled and asked why; I finally admitted to her my fear of the water and how I did not want to go to the lessons. Lovingly, Mom took me in her arms and assured me that the instructors would teach me everything. “Don’t be afraid, I will be with you the entire time.” My mother’s assurance gave me the confidence I needed; suddenly, I was looking forward to Friday’s lesson and getting over my fears.

The next morning at ten, we walked into the pool area. The two instructors were Allie and Jane. Jane took my hand and brought me over to the shallow end of the pool. She instructed the students to get used to the water temperature before we started the lessons. My fears came back, and when I turned around to look for my mother, she was gone. Mom told Jane she had to leave for work and to take good care of me. I felt hopeless and abandoned.

The lesson started with Jane telling us to hold our breath and put our heads under the water. Everyone was doing great except me and my friend Patty. No matter how many times we tried, we kept getting water into our mouths. When Allie moved all of the students that had learned to breathe to the other end of the pool, Patty and I had to stay at the shallow end until we learned. It was almost lunch time; we would try again after lunch.



---

When Patty and I returned to the pool area, all the students that had learned to breathe were now swimming and playing in the water. Jane wanted us to try again; she told us she would be right back. She was gone for only ten minutes, but it seemed like an eternity. What if I had drowned? Patty and I stood in the water acting like we were practicing while she was gone, but we weren't; neither of us could do it. When Jane returned and asked us if we could breathe under water yet, we hesitated to answer – but then Patty blurted out that she could. She lied so she could join the other kids. I was all alone and afraid of my instructor; she seemed frustrated with me and acted like she didn't want to be there. My only recourse was to lie also: I told Miss Jane that I had also learned to breathe while she was gone. All I wanted to do was join the other students. Miss Jane didn't care if it was a lie; she jumped at the chance for me to join the others. My lie made me more anxious and frustrated; how stupid I was just to tell a lie because of Patty!

I went to join the other students, but only went as far as I could still stand. At that moment, I heard Allie call my name. It was my turn to learn how to swim. She held my waist up and told me to kick my legs and swing my arms over my head and shoulders. Soon it would be time for her to let me go. The only thought I had was that I was going to drown. I kept thinking to myself, Please don't let me go Miss Allie, I don't want to drown; why did I lie? Maybe it's not too late, I can still tell Miss Allie the truth and she might teach me how to breathe. I could not go back to Miss Jane, I just couldn't.

I wondered where Patty had gone. It turns out she told Miss Allie she had cramps, so Miss Allie let her sit outside the pool area on a bench. Meanwhile, just when I thought Miss Allie was going to drop me in the water, Miss Jane yelled out, "I need you Miss Allie," so Miss Allie grabbed me and led me out of the water. She told me I did great and left me. How could she say that? I didn't even learn; I still could not swim; I still could not breathe under water. I would never be able to escape my fear of deep water.

Finally, lessons were over, and my mother picked me up. She was so proud of me. The instructors told her all the students learned a lot that day, so my mother assumed I had learned a lot too. How was I going to tell her I had lied? I guess now I had to lie to my mom too. That night I told her I had cramps. I skipped dinner and went to bed early. When I got into bed, I cried myself to sleep. Not only had I lied, I still didn't know how to swim. I was still afraid of the deep water.

## **Inner Strengths**

*By Belinda Daughety*

Today I had the opportunity to view a photo of a woman dressed as a huntress. She was standing on top of a mountain while holding a spear in her left hand. The huntress was sweaty; her clothes appeared to be torn. Although she may not have appeared beautiful to most, she appeared to be strong. In my opinion, her inner strength is far more beautiful than any makeover she could have been given.

For centuries, men have been known as the stronger sex. This is perhaps because we always refer back to cavemen days when the men did the hunting while the women stayed home and took care of the children. This notion no longer applies to every household today. These days most homes require two incomes. Therefore, in addition to maintaining full-time jobs outside of the home, women also take care of the home and children. While raising children, there are no sick or vacation days; maintaining a home is a full-time job. Furthermore, we must maintain our beauty on the outside to be considered beautiful. These multiple responsibilities require great strength. Strength is not always considered a beautiful quality, which is unfortunate. Beauty is not simply about the outer qualities; beauty is the inner strength of women who perform thankless chores on a daily basis.

---

## Fields and Streams

*By James Distefano*

April is always a special time of the year for me. It's time to gather up my fishing gear, buy my fishing license, and head to the streams in my quest for a world record trout, or at least my world record trout. I have always been drawn to the peaceful feeling I get when I arrive at my destination and start working my way along the river to my favorite spot. The smell of the horse farm and the country air fill my senses. It's a wonderful feeling hearing the river as it flows downstream. My day is already a good day, and I haven't even started fishing.

As I arrive at my secret spot that I call my "honey hole," the horses greet me at the fence line to wish me a good morning. Now here I am, in this beautiful spot, in the middle of nowhere, and taking it all in: the mansion on the hill across the river, the ducks and geese swimming in the river below me, the occasional deer that walks to the water's edge, to take a drink of the pristine mountain stream water, better than any water I can buy in a bottle, and the wild flowers that grow on the river's edge. Now it's time to get down to business as I bait my line and make my first cast of the day. Feeling relaxed, I wait for a bite that sometimes doesn't come for what seems like hours. Some days I catch them, but some days I don't, although every day on the river is special in its own way. I could lose track of time, and before I know it, it's starting to turn dusk, and it's time to make my way back to my car for my journey back home, sometimes with dinner, sometimes without, but always grateful for a wonderful day with nature.

Late fall into early winter is also a special time for me, but for a completely different quarry. With this time of the year comes hunting season, and the excitement starts to build long before the hunt begins. It has been a tradition in my family from my grandpa, to my father, to my uncles and cousins. Long before I was able to go along for the hunt I would wake up early with my dad as he got ready and waited for my granddad and uncles to arrive. Feeling somewhat left behind, I was guaranteed the day would come when I would be included in the hunting party. As I watched them leave, with the sky still dark, I anticipated their return home at the end of the hunt to see what surprises they would bring home, but now it was time to get ready for school, where I would daydream about what I was missing and anticipate the three o'clock school bell to sound off. When they returned, I would run out to the car and stand by the trunk waiting to see what they brought home. Sometimes it would be a rabbit or a pheasant, and other times a deer, depending on the season.

Finally, when I came of age, I was going to be along for the hunt when the season arrived. It was everything I expected. I anticipated stopping at the diner for breakfast, and moving on to the farm where we hunted. The first time I went to the diner, I was somewhat surprised to see many other hunters dressed in their hunting orange. I thought that it was just my family that hunted, but as I gazed around that diner, I realized it was a tradition for a lot of families, and was as much about family as it was about the hunt.

Since those early days, I have spent many a day walking the fields for rabbit and pheasant, or sitting in the bitter cold in the middle of December, waiting for a deer to pass by my tree. I was successful in my quest to become a good hunter and have no regrets about hunting for table fare, but as the years turned into decades and most of my loved ones

started to move to "the happy hunting grounds in the sky," the fun of the hunt was somehow lost to memories gone by. I still hunt today, not with my gun, but with my camera and my memories of days gone by.

My love for the fields and streams was, and still is, a very important part of my life for similar but different reasons. Fishing is a sport where I enjoy being alone as I melt into the wilderness and enjoy being one with nature. On the other hand, hunting has always been a family sport and a way to share time with the people whom I love, respect, and miss. They are two different times of the year that I still anticipate today and will continue to anticipate until the day comes when I too find my way to "the happy hunting grounds in the sky," where I'll find my loved ones and begin the tradition all over again.

---

## **My Favorite Music**

*By Dina Elrashidy*

Music brings out emotions and feelings in me, and when I hear Egyptian music, it makes me feel like I'm a kid again, walking along the beautiful coast of Alexandria, smelling the soothing air of the Mediterranean. Also, although I love all kinds of dancing, my favorite kind is belly dancing. Of course, I can only do this to Egyptian music. It has just the right sounds and accents to make my dancing really dramatic. Even though I live in the United States, I still follow all of the famous Egyptian singers, so I know more about them than anyone else. I've grown up listening to many different kinds of music from all over the world, but Egyptian music is my favorite for several reasons.

All through my childhood, there was always the singing of Amr Diab playing in the streets. He is one of the most famous Egyptian musicians, and I love his music. His music was everywhere when I was a kid. Now, whenever I hear his music, I immediately think back to all the sights and smells of being a kid. Those were some of the happiest times of my life. Sometimes I feel like I can relive those happy times through my music.

Egyptian music is famous for belly dancers, and I love belly dancing! Only Egyptian music has a special rhythm to the drums that makes it so dramatic and graceful to belly dance to. (Belly dancing is great exercise and brings me a lot of happiness.)

Even though I'm far from Egypt, I follow all the popular Egyptian singers, such as Amr Diab, Ehab Tawfiq, and Nancy Ajham. Every day I read about everything they are doing, and I always know which singer is playing a concert and which singer is making a new album. I also follow the lives of their families and friends and all of the latest gossip.

Even though I enjoy all kinds of music, Egyptian music is my favorite. No other music can make me relive my childhood. I can't belly dance to any other type of music, and all of my favorite singers are Egyptian.

## **A Little African-American Girl Growing up in the South**

*By Stefanie Grosset*

While living in the South during the 1930's, a young African-American girl named Maya experienced a victory unlike any other. It was one that she would remember for years to come. In the deep heart of the South, her grandmother would teach her the rules and regulations of how to deal with the "powhitetrash," and not only that, but also how to survive emotionally. Maya was taught to not stoop down to the illiterate enemies' level, but to hold her head up and know that she sat upon a level they could only dream to reach. As a little girl, Maya was raised by her grandmother named Henderson, who was full of pride and sureness of herself. Maya was already on the right step to a proper and respectful upbringing. Grandmother Henderson was a very religious woman, and her faith gave her spiritual strength, the type of strength that was not common among the other people of the South. It was simply strength that was handed down to her. She was peaceful, noble, and believed in God.

Maya was always taught that she should never be dirty or impudent, and that a girl should carry herself with respect, dignity, and self-worth. These words hung upon Maya like a fish to a hook. Her grandmother strived to make sure that Maya knew the importance of washing her face, legs, arms, and neck before going to bed. The routine of the washing was about more than just washing body parts, it was all about washing your grief and stress after a long day. Maya's grandmother also disciplined Maya when she was disobedient to her. For example, she was very strict about doing check-ups on Maya's body to see if she had washed. Grandmother Henderson convinced Maya "that cleanliness was next to godliness, and dirtiness was the inventor of misery" ("Grandmother's Victory," 15). "All the adults had to be addressed as mister, missus, miss, auntie, cousin, unk, and uncle." These were just a few of the ways Maya was brought up to show respect for her elders. Everyone in the South showed respect for others, except for the "powhitetrash." They were always disrespectful. When they came into the stores, they would crawl over the shelves and into the potato and onion bins. The "powhitetrash" voices were always "twanging" like a "cigar-box guitar" (15). They were very brave, but in a disrespectful way. "Maya's grandmother followed their orders, except that she didn't seem to be servile to their evil ways of bossiness" (15).

Grandmother Henderson would always direct her opinions and words to the adults, but the "powhitetrash" always weaseled themselves into speaking up as though she was speaking to them. One day the "powhitetrash" was coming from school and met up with Maya's grandmother at her store. The "powhitetrash" started to become very rude and showed a lack of self-worth. Maya became impatient and very angry. She thought about reaching for the .410 rifle that was hidden behind the door, but her grandmother simply reminded her not to sink down to the "powhitetrash" level, and that she should just ignore them and feel sorry for them because they didn't know any better. Maya felt sorry for her grandmother because she allowed the disrespect and did not answer back. Little Maya did not know that her grandmother actually won the battle, because what the rude children were looking for was a reaction to their annoying behavior, and the grandmother did not grant them that

glory. Grandmother believed that it was far better to rise above the ignorance of people than to sink below them, and become one of them. That is what Grandmother Henderson embedded in Maya's brain.

#### Works Cited

Angelou, Maya. "Grandmother's Victory." 75 Readings Plus. Ed. Santi V. Buscemi and Charlotte Smith. New York: McGraw Hill, 2004: 14-19.

## Lost Loved Ones

*By Stefanie Grossett*

On October 12, 2004, Dianna Welcome entered eternal sleep. The woman I am speaking about is my grandmother, a very kind and loving person. She lived with my brothers and me since we were babies, and from the time we arrived from the hospital, she grabbed us from my mother's arms and quickly acknowledged us as her own babies. Some children grew up having a babysitter, but not me. My grandmother was my babysitter. When my mother and father went to work she was the one to feed and bathe us, making sure that we had the nourishments that a baby needs in order to grow up healthy. As we got older, and it was time for us to start school, she would always wait outside with us, holding our hands and making sure that we were safe. My grandmother would love to bundle us up in the winter time, which made it hard for us to move our arms because of the amount of clothing she had put on us. When school ended and I was on the bus, I could see her standing outside from a distance, waiting for her babies to come back home, safe and sound. She was a good friend of my bus driver, and that meant I had to behave. My grandmother was superwoman to me, and that meant she could never get sick. She was just too strong. But I was wrong, and she did get sick. Sometimes I prayed to God that she would get healthier, but things just kept getting worse. After so many times of grandmother being in and out of the hospital, I knew her life was coming to an end. Finally, she came home and was put on bed rest. I stood beside her and held her hand, and with the little strength she had, she squeezed my hand. The next day my mother told me that it happened, and I responded, "What are you talking about?" But from the look in her eyes, and the tone of her voice, I already knew what she was talking about. It was eight-thirty at night, a Tuesday. Dianna Welcome was gone, and my whole world came crashing down. The very person that I had a lot of love for was now leaving me, but I guess God only takes the greats for his own special reasons. Sometimes, I still catch myself by the window and looking up at the sky, wondering how she is doing. Then, a sudden feeling of peace comes over me, and I know that everything will be ok, and my mind is at ease. I still often think of my super woman as one of the greats. It is very near and dear to me to know that all of the things she did for us were done out of the love she had for us. This knowledge brings a soothing calm to my soul.



---

## **An Accident**

*By Justin Hurtig*

Many people have been unfortunate to experience the horror of an accident. I have noticed as a young driver, how many dangers there are to driving. In the Northeast part of America, business has skyrocketed, and the roads are packed with people traveling everywhere. With thousands of cars on the roads every day, driving is extremely dangerous. Accidents come about every day, whether they are small bumps or huge collisions of many cars. In my experience, I was lucky enough to collide with only one other car. However, it was the scariest moment of my life.

I was driving home with my girlfriend in the car, it was about 10 p.m., and there happened to be quite a bit of traffic on the road. I was just driving straight at about 40 mph when I heard a scream; and then I felt like we hit a wall. Someone had made a left turn right in front of me; I had no reaction time to stop or even slow down. When we hit, we hit extremely hard – how do you explain traveling 40-50 mph to 0 in less than a second? I can't figure out what was more treacherous – the terrifying scream that came out of the person next to me, or the powerful impact that destroyed the truck I loved. I experienced the worst feeling I can imagine, not only for a day or two, but at least two weeks or more. The passenger in my car ended up injuring her arm and neck. The person who caused the accident looked about twelve, but he had to be seventeen to drive. He knew what he did, and I could see fear and weakness in his tearing eyes. He was too young to drive and had no experience. Now he will pay for what he has done, and hopefully learn from it. Even though I lost the truck I love, I have learned to be more defensive in my driving; and never to trust anyone driving on the roads.

**The Beauty**  
*By Gintare Lenkauskaitė*

This photograph represents women's beauty. This picture is perfect because it shows a perfect contrast between a beautiful body and some other form of beauty. Sometimes, women do many things for themselves to look beautiful, which often leads them to depression and other kinds of illnesses.

In all decades, women have wanted to look as beautiful as the morning sun. Women tried to look their best for their husbands, the media, and for themselves. Accordingly, there always will be some obstacles which will make women try harder and harder to look beautiful and sexual. However, pushing women to dress nicely and take care of themselves is not the right thing to do. There are many more important things for women to do, and it is not only to look good.

Most women are nice both inside and outside; everyone understands beauty in a different way. Husbands, friends, and media should all accept women for who they are. Each woman has her own unique beauty and we should accept and treat each and every one of them the same way.

We all have different opinions, about how people should look, in this case a woman. However, all women should be able to look as they want or dream to be.

---

**“Little Red Riding Hood” in Judith Ortiz Cofer’s Story  
“A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood”**

*By Julius Martinez*

Judith Ortiz Cofer’s literary reference to “Little Red Riding Hood” in her story, “A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood,” explains what Maria La Loca’s life was like in Puerto Rico. In her little town, the pueblo, Maria was a slim and gorgeous girl and had everything going for her. She met a man who she was going to marry, but he left her at the altar on her wedding day, which humiliated her and scarred her for life. After that day, Maria became fat and never really spoke to anyone, just smiled at them with her “yellow teeth.” There is a connection between Little Red Riding Hood and Ortiz’ story. Ortiz is trying to show how parts of both stories are alike.

The wolf in “Little Red Riding Hood” is like the man who ruins the life of a young woman. Instead of eating grandma, this man eats away Maria’s dignity. Maria is never really the same after that day, because she speaks to no one, and she ages quickly. The wolf and the man both changed women’s lives forever. The big bad wolf ate others and took advantage of the people walking in the forest, and men would come to the island just to take advantage of the women there. Little Red Riding Hood will never forget what her grandma told her after that day, and Maria will never forget her experience on her wedding day.

The difference between Little Red Riding Hood and Maria is that the woodcutter saved Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, but Maria was never saved or recovered; she actually got worse. Now she is referred to as Maria La Loca, a crazy woman. Maria didn’t have a happy ending like the girl in “Little Red Riding Hood”; she remained trapped with this insecurity of herself, and she never remarried. Maria couldn’t handle that she was stood up, and it damaged her for life. Townspeople saw what she was and what she became as years passed by.

Ortiz uses this story of “Little Red Riding Hood” as a reference to show the similarities and differences to her story “A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood,” especially in the way Little Red Riding Hood’s and Maria’s experiences relate to each other. Both literary works intertwine. Apparently, Ortiz felt the need to make the allusion to “Little Red Riding Hood” so that the reader can make the connection.

## Reflection of Two Worlds

*By Diana Perren*

Baldwin's illustration of "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," provides a unique description of Harlem's community which had great similarity to the community where I once lived in Newark. His visualization of the poverty, crime and drugs in Harlem allowed me to reflect on my own experiences living on 2nd Street in Newark. No one could have imagined a place that had so much potential for growth, yet remains so far from development.

Baldwin's description of "the rehabilitated side" is not exactly about the rehabilitation of a corner, just about an area stacked with rocks called the housing projects. Unlike in Harlem, there were no housing projects on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, only renovated houses to make the neighborhood viable. Baldwin clearly depicts what becomes of the physical characteristics of a lost community. His classic description of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Lenox Ave, known as gang territory, was so familiar to me that 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Newark became like a mirror image of Harlem's territory of windows. The ghetto neighborhoods of Harlem and Newark both share their "human gaps" where there are people who have outgrown their own community, but never chose to leave. Others chose to move on to better things. While living in Newark, I never understood the concept of my father saying, "You better bail out now, you'll be dead." After six months of being caught up in the madness of my environment, my father's words echoing in my ears would eventually make me part of the "human gaps" of Newark. I never realized my father's words would cause my family so much pain with the death of my sister, Monica.

Baldwin's description on Blacks not owning a sufficient number of businesses in Harlem was like referring to a plague, speaking as if only whites could have a part of entrepreneurship of big companies. Indeed, Newark would prove different: there are plenty of African-American businesses. For example, the owner and founder of City National Bank is Charles Whigman, and there are now big businesses established by Blacks: Phat Pharm, Motown, and Ebony are not just about their own profits, they are also about the black community.

Harlem, like Newark, has its own shameful faces of people who have just given up. Drug addicts bound to the streets only know how to wait for their next fix; this is their way of life. Criminals see opportunities to steal, deal drugs, and kill people due to poverty in the cities as a way of life. Most others just become numb to the way of life.

The author of this story gave me inspirational insight into Harlem's problems, which bear great similarity to Newark's. However, I found myself frustrated and confused with Baldwin's one-sided portrait of only one community in the ghetto.

---

## The Student

*By Diana Perren*

Going back to school as a new student is pressure. It is very frustrating trying to recapture my experience as a pupil. As an adult and a mother, I am looking to accomplish a career; however, it has become very difficult take this class at such a fast pace. Trying to understand what is expected makes me more agitated because I do not understand the material. I am at a point where my frustration has become overbearing; I do not feel as if I'm going to make it through this class in one piece. I go home and cry so much that I do not wish to come back. Then I tell myself if I do not go back, I will just fail myself. The pressure I am experiencing surpasses what I have previously experienced in my life. As with anything else, I feel compelled to do my best, but I still say, "What if my best is not good enough?" So I try very hard, but I still cannot see the light between the damn "red markings." Now what do I do? Just pretend I know what is going on and say the hell with it, or keep trying? Well, I am going to keep trying. There has to be a better way to learn how to write. The early years of elementary school seem like only yesterday, but in my world it seems like the age of "BC" going back to learning what you were taught from the beginning. I am haunted by the thought of English every day. I wonder whether the next assignment will be any easier, or whether I can make it through the quizzes. So to conclude my paper about the pressures of not knowing what to do in English class, I continue my fight through the paranoia to make the best of a really necessary class. My attitude is positive, but in order to be a good student, my main focus is to do my best. Now the question is, "What comes next as a student trying to establish a career?" Answer: first, complete this class, and then find out what's next.

## Maya Angelou's "Grandmother's Victory"

*By Nicholas Quackenbush*

Maya's grandmother states, "Thou shall not be dirty," and "Thou shall not be impudent." The two main rules Maya's grandmother sets before them at such a young age eventually enable Maya and her siblings to gain self-control to overcome many of life's internal and external struggles. In return, the grandmother's guidelines will eventually help Maya and her siblings develop into socially ethical adults, making sure they keep up with their hygiene and being proper in any social situation.

The first commandment that Maya's grandmother lays down before the children is "Thou shall not be dirty." The grandmother reinforces this rule every day when the children wake up and before they go to bed. Maya reminisces, in the beginning of the story, that her grandmother forced them to wash their faces, arms, necks, legs, and feet in the bitterest of winter before they went to bed. After they washed practically their whole body with ice-cold water, they had to lather their extremities with Vaseline. This shows that Maya's grandmother is very strict and wants to engrave daily hygiene rituals into her grandchildren's heads. For example, Maya is analyzing the "powhitetrash" when they were harassing her grandmother. Here she realizes the importance of cleanliness and your appearance to others.

The second commandment that Maya's grandmother introduces to the children is "Thou shall not be impudent." By definition, impudent means lacking modesty. It also means marked by contemptuous or cocky boldness or disregard of others. With this rule, her grandmother is trying to etch into her grandchildren's brains that having a certain regard for people other than themselves can benefit you in their growing process. The grandmother, for example, makes the children call everyone by their formal name, whether it is Mr., Mrs., or Ma'am. This gives the children respect for other people as they grow up.

Maya's grandmother also teaches them something that is not said directly but is shown throughout the story, "Grandmother's Victory." As the grandmother perseveres through all of the daily struggles as a black, southern woman in the 1930's, she obtains the knowledge of inner strength and how much it is needed day to day. Thus, she gave Maya the strength not to hurt the "powhitetrash" while they tried to torment her grandmother.

Clearly, at the end of the story, Maya has learned a great life lesson. She learned with perseverance and internal strength, she can overcome most of the obstacles the life present to her throughout her journey into adulthood. By watching her grandmother's struggle with the "powhitetrash," she realizes that no matter how people may treat you, if you keep your spirits high, no one can bring you down.

### Works Cited

Angelou, Maya. "Grandmother's Victory." *75 Readings Plus*. Ed. Santi V. Buscemi and Charlotte Smith. New York: McGraw Hill, 2004: 14-19.

## **The Beauty of a Woman's Body**

*By Brian White*

The picture I chose to write about is the one about the woman hunting. I believe that a woman, even in that world so many years ago, who could go out and provide for her family, was a valuable asset to her home. Another reason I chose this picture was that she is in her natural state. She is not covered in make-up and not trying to impress anybody, yet she is still one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. In today's society, many women feel they have to be covered in the most expensive clothes, have surgeries to make them look like Barbie, and believe if they are not up to the "Hollywood" standard then they are not beautiful. In my opinion, if a woman can pull off the just-rolled-out-of-bed look, she is more beautiful than Jessica Simpson, who spends countless hours and dollars to look the way she does. In this picture with this beautiful natural woman, she is on a mountain, alert and ready to pounce on her prey. She is accepted in her society. If this same woman came into today's society wearing the same attire, everybody she encountered would probably have a comment for her rugged look. In today's world we are so consumed by thinking all of our women have to be show stoppers. We hardly ever stop and take a look at the female's natural beauty. Above all, the natural beauty is more important than the superficial beauty.

**English 151**

**English I**

A writer is a person for whom writing is more difficult  
than it is for other people.

Thomas Mann



---

## **The Eastern Bindi: Divine Perception or Fashion Statement?**

*By Nicole Cochran*

It is believed that the human being is blessed with an unseen third eye, or a window to a divine perception of wisdom and knowledge. Located on the forehead between the two eyebrows lies the seat of concealed wisdom, and a major nerve point in the human being. It is thus no wonder that the ancient tradition of bindi, or the red dot on the forehead of South Asian women, is displayed in this powerful area. For hundreds of years the bindi has remained a prime representation of Indian religion and culture, but recently it has taken on a new characteristic. As Eastern and Western influences begin to converge, the traditional bindi is becoming less of a religious representation and more of an embellished fashion statement.

The significance of the bindi begins primarily with its placement. According to Eastern religion the body is divided into seven chakras, or “a nexus of metaphysical and/or biological energy residing in the human body” (“Chakras”). Each chakra, with its own designated area of the body, represents a different meaning. The area in between the eyebrows is the sixth chakra, or *ajna*. It is here that the alleged third eye resides; this is the chakra of time and awareness and of light. In Hinduism the third eye represents enlightenment and is denoted with a dot or mark on deities and supreme beings such as the Destroyer, Shiva. This area is believed to be so powerful that it is said that upon the opening of Shiva’s third eye the world will experience an inevitable destruction.

While the bindi is known to symbolize knowledge and enlightenment, it is highly representative of strength and love. The vermilion used exclusively for bindis is known as sindoor, meaning red, red being the color of love. As the illustrious red dot captivates the glare of a lover, the face glows, entrancing the women’s partner.

In its religious connotation, the third eye has no restriction when it comes to sex. It is not uncommon to see the red dot on both males and females during religious and ceremonial events. When visiting a temple, men, women, and children are commonly marked with the red dot by the finger of a priest. However, the bindi as a social symbol can be compared to that of the Western tradition of the sacramental wedding band. “The Indian bride steps over the threshold of her husband's home, bedecked in glittering apparels and ornaments, dazzling the red bindi on her forehead that is believed to usher in prosperity, and grants her a place as the guardian of the family's welfare and progeny” (“Bindis: what you need to know”). The wearing of the bindi ceases when a woman is widowed.

If the bindi is worn traditionally as a sanction of marriage, why then do today’s unmarried Bollywood actresses, such as Aishwarya Rai, and young Indian teens display the bindi on a day-to-day basis? This trend can be accredited to the change in India’s modern society. No longer is the bindi displayed merely by married Hindu women, but by any woman wishing to adorn herself with the embellished dot or gem. While its initial significance has not been entirely overwritten, the bindi is today more a statement of fashion, or an enhancement of beauty. The bindi can be purchased as an inexpensive sticker

adhesive, with designs ranging from the simplicity of a traditional red dot to an elaborate arrangement of semi precious gems, to pure karat diamonds. No longer restricted in size, color, or shape, the bindi is specially chosen to match the day's ensemble, and is the final touch to any well-planned attire.

Not only are non-married Hindu women proudly displaying the bindi adornment, but non-Hindu women and men in general do so as well. Even Western style has integrated the small Indian embellishment into a chic fashion statement. Those who display the small, sticker adhesive bindi are deemed unique and sensual. It is a must have for belly dances, and for the completion of an exotic costume. Wearing the bindi as an adornment at a club is sure to spark attention. Rest assured, it is the perfect accessory to any occasion.

One group that best understands the potential of the bindi is the female musician and celebrity. Artists such as Madonna and Shakira proudly display their jeweled bindis in music videos and for the cameras. Most notably, Gwen Stefani turned this Indian tradition into a big trend when she burst onto the scene with her very own bejeweled bindi in the early 1990s. Ten years later the bindi has found itself in mainstream fashion, but in a unique manner. For a mere six hundred dollars you can purchase a pair of Louis Vuitton *bindi* sunglasses, "glamorous, oversized frames featuring a dangling quartz charm at the cut-out bridge, creating a cleverly exotic look." Thanks to edgy and trendy celebrities, the perfect bindi accessory can be as desirable as the perfect little black dress.

Despite its small and often simple design, bindi is "arguably the most visually fascinating in all form of body decoration" ("Bindis..."), yet it invokes a sense of beauty and meaning that cannot be fully defined. While bindi has evolved from a primitive mark of sindoor powder to intricate adhesives, one aspect remains assured: whether the bindi is worn in homage to the elusive "third eye", as a sacramental display of marriage, or merely as a new-age fashion statement, this tradition is one that is sure to stick around.

#### Works Cited

"Bindis: What you need to know." About.Com: Hinduism.

<http://hinduism.about.com/library/weekly/aa072002a.htm>

"Chakras." Answers.com. <http://www.answers.com/topic/chakra?cat=health>.

## Animal Testing

By Amanda DeCarlo

If I rang your doorbell and told you I thought I could find a cure for cancer or AIDS, and all you had to do was give up your family pet for testing purposes, would you? Could you give up little Rover to let me find a cure for cancer, knowing you would never see him again and he would probably die and suffer in pain? The animals that are used in various tests are not family pets, but they have feelings and they want a nice home and someone to love them. They don't want to be caged up their whole lives having various tests done on them daily. Also, animal testing is expensive, unsafe for the animals (especially if the animals die), and sometimes ineffective. There are alternatives to animal testing that should be utilized.

Some people may not know that animal testing can sometimes be ineffective. In one case in Northwick Park, United Kingdom, "Six young men were nearly killed by a drug 'proven safe' in monkeys...[However], "Tests involving human tissue could have predicted the disaster" (Archibald). In a separate case, somebody wrote to a local magazine saying that if more animal testing had been done, it would have prevented the thalidomide tragedy. This is not true. Dr L J [sic] Schardein, an authority on birth defects, argues:

In approximately 10 strains of rats, 15 strains of mice, 11 breeds of rabbits...and in other such varied species as cats, armadillos, guinea pigs, swine and ferrets in which thalidomide had been tested, teratogenic effects [deformities] have been induced only occasionally...Superior tests involving human tissues, microdosing and DNA chips would make our drugs much safer. ("No Safety in Animal Testing")

Animal testing is not the only way to test new products and prescription drugs. "The Scientific Advisory Committee of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) has approved six new alternative testing methods that will reduce the need for certain drugs and chemicals to be tested on animals" ("Alternatives to Animal Testing"). "The new tests use cell cultures" instead of animals to "establish the toxicity of cancer drugs and identify contaminated drugs" ("Alternatives to Animal Testing"). These new tests will "reduce the number of animals needed for testing" and "will also increase the accuracy," which will make the products safer. The role of ECVAM is to replace, refine, and reduce the methods of animal testing for cosmetics, drugs, and chemicals ("Alternatives to Animal Testing").

"One of the tests is designed to assist the dosage of some highly toxic drugs used in chemotherapy for cancer... Using bone marrow culture from mice and cord blood cells from humans, a test has been developed that will decrease the risk of a lethal overdose in the first group cohort patients to which they are administered, a risk that can not be identified during current preclinical testing strategies" ("Alternatives to Animal Testing"). This new test will increase the safety of the patients as well as reduce the number of animals tested on ("Alternatives to Animal testing"). Bacteria is also a main issue when testing on animals and five new tests address this issue. "One new method uses human immune cells grown in the laboratory, which can detect bacteria just like the human immune system does" ("Alternatives to Animal Testing"). This test will reduce the number of animals used in labs, as well as

reduce the cost of testing, and the best part is that this new test is far more successful in finding contaminated drugs than prior animal tests ("Alternatives to Animal Testing").

The ECVAM in Europe is not the only organization trying to come up with other ways to test certain drugs and products. Here in the United States, we already have alternatives to testing on animals. For starters, there is selective formulation, a process in which scientists try to take "previously tested ingredients to create new products" (Barnard). This will help to eliminate the need for further testing. However, if there are new products that need to be tested, using human skin cells in a test tube is an efficient and humane way to test these products (Barnard).

These human skin cells are called Epiderm and EpiSkin and are "grown in test tubes that are layered to mimic the structure of human skin" (Barnard). According to Barnard, instead of testing cosmetics and household products on the skin of live rabbits, these products can be tested on human skin cells. "Corrositex is another test-tube option that gives an easy-to-read color change reaction to a hazardous product" (Barnard). EpiOcular is a mass of skin cells that is specifically grown to form a thin layer like that of the human cornea. The EpiOcular has the potential to "completely replace the cruel rabbit eye irritancy test" (Barnard).

"Skin cultures taken by permission during surgical procedures (such as breast-reduction surgery) can be used to test whether a chemical can pass through the skin and be a potential poison risk" (Barnard). Human tissue is available from the National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI) which is located in Philadelphia. NDRI is a "nonprofit tissue bank [that] makes more than 100 types of human tissue available for medical research" (Barnard). "NDRI along with Asterand, a company with offices in the US, UK, and Japan that supplies human biomaterials for research, has made it easier than ever for companies to access human cells for testing" (Barnard). The physiological chip is a 1x1-inch square of cultured cells and can also be used for testing. It is "made up of cell compartments that are linked by a lifelike circulatory system that mimics the complex functions of the human body" (Barnard). These chips were developed by the Hurel Corporation in Beverly Hills, and can be used to test for harmful as well as beneficial effects of experimental drugs. The chip also tests the toxicity of the liver and other organs (Barnard).

Rabbit injections are used to check for unexpected fever and inflammation -especially from receiving intravenous medications. "Experiments that measure white blood cell response to chemicals and medical substances can be used in place of [these] rabbit injections" (Barnard). The last type of test that can take the place of animal testing is Microdosing. Microdosing is when "minuscule amounts of a test substance - much smaller than a typical dose used for medical purposes - are given to human volunteers..." (Barnard). The researchers then "track how the substances are transported and absorbed throughout the body" (Barnard).

I believe that animal testing is inhumane; therefore, it should not be used. Whether you think animal testing is wrong or right, there are so many alternatives that there is no real need for it. There are many other ways to test the same products without having to test on animals. Besides being inhumane, animal testing is very costly and even ineffective. Certain medications that did not affect the animals negatively have had hideous, lifelong side effects

---

on humans. If you knew there was a way medication and other products could be tested more efficiently without having to harm animals, wouldn't you be in favor of that? Therefore, using other possibilities for testing, such as manipulating skin cells, would benefit both humans and animals.

#### Works Cited

- "Alternatives to Animal Testing." Biologist 53.3 2006:120-120. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 16 March 2007 <http://search.ebscohost.com>.
- Archibald. Kathy. "ANIMAL TESTING." Ecologist 36.9 2006:6-6. Academic Search Premier, EBSCO. 16 March 2007 <http://search.ebscohost.com>.
- Barnard. Neal. "Animal Testing?" Vegetarian Times 2007: 19-21. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 16 March 2007 <http://search.ebscohost.com>.
- "No Safety in Animal Testing." New Internationalist 2006: 34-34. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 16 March 2007 <http://search.ebscohost.com>.

## **The Islamic Religion and its Art, Architecture, and Gardening**

*By Dan Governale*

The Islamic religion does not only influence the minds of its followers, it also influences the art, architecture, and gardens constructed within its cities and other cities across the lands. Most people view a religion as a way of life, or a connection between themselves and some higher power that is unreachable here on earth. The Islamic religion reflects upon this idea. The religion is based on the beliefs of one God, Allah, who sends messages to the people expressing His beliefs through many prophets. The last and most famous of the prophets was Muhammad, who spread the word of Allah all throughout the lands. He is credited for the modern day Muslim religion, and is the most worshipped prophet of them all (Christopher, 723-726). The Islamic religion influences people to think like Allah; thus, the surroundings of the Muslim people reflect their personal beliefs of God through their art, architecture, and gardening. In fact, religion influences all genres of art and architecture. Distinct differences in Islamic art and architecture help to identify the Islamic culture. The reasons behind a religion having a unique art style is to separate it from all other religions. It shows that the people are truly in touch with their inner spirit and most importantly with Allah. This is similar in Islamic architecture as well. Each building is designed to reflect the Islamic culture, and to truly identify believers as being unique and expressing themselves as Muslims. Also, the gardens constructed by Muslims reflect their connection with Allah, and also present their inner spirit. The gardens also identify them as being true Muslims. Islamic art, architecture, and gardening originate from religious beliefs and have influenced other places such as Venice, Italy to construct cities similar to the Islamic cities.

There are connections between Islamic art and God. One of the main goals of the Islamic religion is to lead a life that would end up in the heavens. The Islamic religion is very strict in what art forms can and most importantly cannot be presented. When we as Americans create art, we have the freedom to draw and paint anything we want. For example, an art store would contain pictures of landscapes, people, animals, cartoons, and so on. However, Muslim art is much more confined. There must be distinct reasons for art to be created, and it must not represent Muhammad in any form. There are certain exceptions such as places of worship where these pictures can be created, but just drawing figurative art without this reason rebels against the Islamic culture. For example, this is the story of a young boy who drew a picture that did not agree with the Islamic customs. He writes, "When on one occasion [my father] caught me drawing a man riding a donkey, he asked me if I had the power to breathe life into them. When I confessed that I had no such power, my father ordered me never to draw or paint human beings or animals ever again, for such drawings were--to him--a blasphemous imitation of divine functions"(Mazrui). The boy's father believes that his son was trying to play the role of God. He believes that it isn't right to imitate God; thus, he tells his son never to draw humans again because he cannot make them breathe. Due to these restrictions in art, Muslim art was never fully expressed. The art forms that suffered the most were sculpture, dance and certain forms of painting. The Islamic culture viewed sculpture as the least popular art form because you can create an

identical form of a human being or an animal. On the other hand, some art is presentable in the Islamic religion. For example, crafts are created as an act of devotion, textiles like weavings and carpets are accepted to enhance the beauty of homes, and ceramics are also very popular to enhance art in Islam. One main belief in the Islamic religion was paradise on earth. The crafts, weavings, and ceramics help to enhance that idea and make life here on earth much more enjoyable. While representational art such as painting humans is understood to be forbidden, some paintings are created with humans in them such as battles and animal hunts. These paintings are known as secular, or separated from religion. They show more than just humans, they present situations like a battle. These paintings were used to decorate the apartments of noble Muslims. One of the more popular types of paintings that originated from the 13<sup>th</sup> century was miniature paintings, which originated from ivory carvings in Egypt. They were linked to the courtly society of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although restrictions kept the Muslims from creating art, they still found ways to express themselves in a dignified way that wouldn't disrupt traditions and hurt their personal religious beliefs (Mazrui, Islamic Art)

In addition to Islamic art, Islamic architecture also has relationships between religious beliefs and constructive elements. Unlike Islamic art, Islamic architecture is much more appreciated. According to The Hutchinson Dictionary of the Arts, "The architecture of the Muslim world, highly diverse but unified by climate, culture, and a love of geometric and arabesque ornament, as well as by the mobility of ideas, artisans, and architects throughout the region. The central public buildings are mosques, often with a dome and minaret; domestic houses face an inner courtyard and are grouped together, with vaulted streets linking the blocks."(Islamic Architecture) The mosque is the center of religious life in the Islamic cities; it is the place of worship for the Muslim people. Mosques aren't only public buildings, however, they are sometimes constructed within homes for a personal place of worship. "All Muslims pray at home sometimes; most Muslim women pray at home every time. Therefore many Muslims have a special place set aside, perhaps an entire room, which is kept clean and ready at all times, and is usually carpeted so that people can kneel in comfort. A non-Muslim visitor might find it strange that an almost empty room is regarded as the most important place in the home, but it is the heart of the Muslim home, the place of prayer"(Maqsood). These mosques don't have to be elegant, however, they are constructed on a useful and practical basis. Next, Islamic cities are designed very uniquely compared to other cities around the world. "The basic cellular unit is the courtyard house, representing the desire for privacy and familial obligations of Muslim life. The houses are grouped into quarters, often of a tribal or ethnic character. Each quarter has its own mosques and facilities. At the center of the city stands the focus of the community, the congregational mosque, the *masjid al-jum'a*. The arteries of this intricate organism are the vaulted streets of the souk, or bazaar, which thread outward from the *masjid al-jum'a* toward the great gates of the enclosing fortified walls. The key monuments and facilities of the city are found along the souk - the religious colleges, baths, hospitals, and fountains"(Islamic Architecture). Each city was preplanned with these general guidelines, making Islamic cities different from any other city. The houses in these cities "are invariably inward-looking courtyard houses. A bent corridor (for privacy) leads from the gated entry from the public lane into a courtyard paved

with tiles, often planted with shade trees and with a pool at the center. Surrounding the courtyard are the principal rooms of the house. Different sides of the courtyard may provide separate accommodation for sections of the extended family”(Islamic Architecture). The design of the homes creates a place to worship in privacy, thus connecting Muslims closer to God. Also, the word of God plays a role in the decoration of the buildings. The earliest of Islamic structures contained Arabic writings that told of the Prophet and the word of God. Much of the architecture that is designed in the Islamic culture is based on religion. The center of all Islamic cities contains a mosque or a courtyard for Muslims to connect with God. This design element is very important for the Muslim people because they are strong believers in their religion (Masqsood, Islamic Architecture).

Many people believe that Venice Italy is influenced by Islamic architecture and religion. The history of the relationship between Italy and Islam proves this theory because the Italians prospered from this relationship in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Italy was a main trading partner in the area, and by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Italy had grown rich and prosperous, ending a long dark age for the Italians. One of the greatest examples of the Islamic influence on Venice is the domed structure of St. Mark’s Basilica. This structure has the closest resemblance to Islamic architecture. Hugh Honour writes, “domes that conspicuously assert the importance of a building became a feature of Islamic architecture from the beginning of its history when the Dome of the Rock was built to outshine the Christian monuments in Jerusalem. A dome was often placed above the bay in front of the *mibrab* of a mosque (the *mibrab* being a niche boldly indicating the direction of Mecca for the prayers of the faithful)”(Honour). This statement makes a direct link between the Islamic architecture and the architecture constructed in Venice. William Beckford in 1780 also noted St. Mark’s resemblance to Islamic architecture: "To the great Mosque, I ought to say the Church of St. Mark; but really its cupolas, slender pinnacles, and semi-circular arches, have so oriental an appearance, as to excuse the appellation"(Honour). In addition, Pietro Estense Selvatico from Padua, also described Venice as being influenced by Islam. In addition, he provided insight into the way the styles of Islam made it to Venice. He claimed “the "Arabian architecture" of the city with its thousand meanders, walls cut like lace, and infinity of ornaments was introduced to Venice by means of the Crusades and frequent commercial contacts”(Honour). Another connection between Islam and Venice is the rooftops. Due to Venice’s dense construction, sunlight posed a problem. This was an issue trading merchants from the East had worked on: “the *altana*, a rooftop loggia giving inhabitants of houses built around dark courtyards access to fresh air and sunlight, was probably introduced to Venice by merchants who had lived in the East where the roof was, and often still is, a room”(Honour). These believers in “Islamic Venice” feel that the medieval palaces of Italy were associated with Muslim religious beliefs. One final reason for this belief was the lack of sculpture and figurative art in Venice. As mentioned before, these art forms were not popular or acceptable in the Islamic religion (Honour, “Islamic Architecture”).

There is also a connection between Islamic gardens and the Islamic religion. “In a largely arid region, the Islamic garden represents an image of paradise. The basic plan is a rectangular enclosure walled against the dust of the desert and divided into at least four sections by water channels. Pavilions are placed at focal points within the gardens”(“Islamic



Architecture”). This image of paradise is a connection between life on earth and Muslims’ belief in the afterlife. It helped them feel paradise on earth even though they lived in the most arid of places on earth. As inspired directly by the Quran, the garden is seen as a kind of paradise, with fruit trees, and four main waterways that express faith, all flowing back to the garden. This water symbolism shows that no matter how far away from the garden you are, you still have faith in the Islamic religion. This is the main reason for the construction of gardens, to prove their faith in the Muslim religion. “To the Muslim the beauty of the garden, and indeed of the whole of creation, was held to be a reflection of God”(Brookes, 381). To Muslims, proving their faith to God is very important: “God has actually defined paradise as a garden, and it is up to the individual not only to aspire to it in the after-life, but also to try to create its image here on earth. The way in which this Word of God was, and is, presented to man was also important, giving Arabic script in which it was written far greater significance than that possessed by mere printed records of events”(Brookes, 381).

In conclusion, the Islamic faith has influenced its people to not only become religious, but also to become artists, architects, and gardeners. People who create art, design buildings, and make Islam beautiful with gardens are very important to a culture. Without these chosen people, culture wouldn’t exist. We wouldn’t have paradise on earth, rather, it would be a boring place. Islam has also influenced other countries to create cities just like their own. This shows how practical Islamic cities are, and how people could come to appreciate the Islamic culture. Finally, this unique religion is known for its great styles. The style of art and gardening is very unique and definitely distinguished from other cultures. Islam is a culture that creates art, architecture, and gardens to draw connections between believers and God. They are very much in touch with their inner spirit, and are proud to express it in all ways possible.

#### Works Cited

- Brookes, John. “The Concept of the Paradise Garden.” Writing About the World. Third Ed. Eds. McLeod, Jarvis, and Spear. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005: 380-381.
- Christopher, John B. “The Prophet-The teachings of Islam.” Writing About the World. Third Ed. Eds. McLeod, Jarvis, and Spear. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005: 723-732.
- Honour, Hugh. “Islamic Venice?” New York Review of Books, Nov. 7, 2002. SIRS Renaissance, SIRS Knowledge Source. Dec. 13, 2006. <<http://www.sirs.com/>>
- “Islamic Architecture.” The Hutchinson Dictionary of the Arts, 2004. SIRS Renaissance, SIRS Knowledge Source. Dec. 13, 2006. <<http://www.sirs.com/>>
- “Islamic Art.” The Hutchinson Dictionary of the Arts, 2004. SIRS Renaissance, SIRS Knowledge Source. Dec. 13, 2006. <<http://www.sirs.com/>>
- Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris. Islam. Chicago, Illinois: Contemporary Books, A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies. 1994.
- Mazrui, Ali A. “Islamic Art and the Imitation of God.” Gemini News Service, London: May 11-18, 2001. SIRS Renaissance, SIRS Knowledge Source. Dec. 13, 2006. <<http://www.sirs.com/>>

## A Comfortable Tradition

*By Christine Lesko*

The first Saturday of December is a red letter day for my family. The alarm clock goes off at six. Everyone, young and old, jumps out of bed and starts rushing around getting ready to go. No one grumbles or grouches about the early hour. It is opening day at the Christmas tree farm.

Long underwear, warm sweaters, hats, and mittens are mandatory equipment. Everyone layers on the warmth; even the little dog wears a sweater. The Christmas tree fields are windy and cold.

My sister is always the first one ready. She goes out and warms up the van. Christmas carols blast from the CD player as we find our way to our seats.

Our destination is about fifty-five miles away. The long ride provides the perfect opportunity for a family caucus. Decisions are made about who will bake which family favorites, which activities will get squeezed in, who will host which events and when. The questions, "What do you want for Christmas?" gets bounced around. The more organized among us take notes, which are much appreciated at a later date by those of us who do not.

The tree farm is nestled deep in the woods. The normally quiet setting is electric with activity when we arrive. The owners of the farm sell the trees as their family tradition. Several generations work together for opening day. An older gentleman waves us into the parking area. The women wisely stay warm in the "cashier" barn. The teenagers tend to the refreshment table, making sure the hot chocolate and donuts are replenished.

There are many families gathered at the edge of the fields, straining for a glimpse of the perfect tree before the starter pistol sounds. Everyone is poised and ready at the stroke of nine. "Boom!" the pistol is fired into the air. Everyone dashes into the fields, eager to pull the tag off the finest tree.

My family spreads out, indecisive enough that most of us come back with at least two tags. Once the initial rush is over, we wander the fields, picking over our multiple selections and purchasing the popular choices.

My family has been going to the opening day for more than fifteen years. It is the perfect way to start the holiday season.

## A Work Memoir

*By Mandy Rabkin*

Work is something one may despise, be passionate about, perform constantly, or prefer to do as minimally as possible. My own work experience is one of trials and triumphs. At the age of sixteen, in the spring of my sophomore year of high school, I became an employee at a local farm market. I have been working there ever since and have developed many new skills, have acquired a new “family”, and have glimpsed some unpleasant aspects of the modern work environment.

Any naive beliefs a young person may have that holding a job must surely not require actual labor would be quickly diminished in the first days of a job. Many young people today rapidly start and quit jobs because they simply cannot handle the pressure. In my own experience, as well, many young people have come and just as quickly forfeited the position with murmurs of too much homework, a better job awaiting, or just plain distaste for work. What these individuals may not realize is just how much there is to learn in a workplace. By working on the cash register, I have been able to improve upon my poor math skills. Similarly, coming from a home without chores, a home in which my parents assume the responsibilities, I have shocked my family with new knowledge of how to mop, how to make the glass cases shine, how to prepare a pot of coffee, and the differences between escarole and green leaf lettuce, cilantro and parsley. Most importantly in my new knowledge, I have developed a sense of what comprises society. I have seen various personalities and people of assorted social statuses. Seeing someone place a thousand dollar catering order and someone else pick through the dumpster in the same day will easily humble anyone.

Many members of the workforce develop close bonds with those they work with, forming a home away from home. A girl my own age, but with a very different background, whom I may not have interacted with if not for the circumstance of working together, has, in fact, become one of the closest friends I have ever had. Also, after learning the situations of my coworkers, I have developed a deep appreciation and respect for these friends and colleagues. Having a firsthand view of illegal immigrants in the workforce, I have been able to form my own outlooks on the controversial matter. I have worked with one particular employee by the name of Felix everyday. He has helped me with work-related issues and also with my Spanish homework. Felix works fifty-five hours a week. He performs only those jobs no one else will: mowing the lawn in hundred degree weather, scrubbing dishes, cleaning drain pipes, and performing repairs on the store owner’s house. When this twenty-seven year old father of four children is asked what he does with his earnings, he replies, “Send it home. Send to parents, the family.” If Felix and others like him were evicted from America, or were forced to become citizens, one must wonder how they and their families would survive, who would hire these happy, kind, yet unskilled laborers, and, of course, who would be left to perform the menial, difficult, and even gruesome tasks they gladly accept.

Through acquiring a job, one may grasp harsh realities of what it takes to succeed in life. I quickly learned that sometimes it is who you know, rather than what you know, that will work in your favor. Although I submitted an impressive resume, consisting of

numerous volunteer hours, it was only after a friend of both my mother's and the store owner's encouraged him to hire me that I was called in for an interview. While I learned a lot about work ethic and dedication from Felix and others, I also observed some less favorable behavior. For instance, one very trusted employee who worked at the market from age fourteen to twenty was recently fired for stealing hundreds of dollars from the register. My own manager, who has less of an education than myself, is prone to cut peoples' hours for a power trip, send me on such tasks as picking up her dry cleaning, and insist that no one be found standing idle, while she herself is rarely engaged in anything work related. While brutal and unfair, these realities are part of the learning experience one must go through in order to become a better person.

The most important thing to be learned in having a job is that work is what one makes of it. It should be hoped that anyone would aim to hold down a job, to learn new things and meet new people, to accept the unfortunate aspects of the world and rise above them. One should work not simply for money or something to do; one should work for experience and knowledge, development and maturity. One should work with the feeling of accomplishment natural to anyone who puts time and effort into what they do.

## **Autism: Awareness of a New Epidemic**

*By James Reese*

Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder affecting children in all parts of the world and is growing at an alarming rate. The statistics reported: 1 in 10,000 births was diagnosed with Autism thirteen years ago, three years ago it increased to 1 in 166 births, and now the *Center for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.)* reports that 1 in 150 births will be diagnosed with Autism, and 1 in 94 boys will be diagnosed. This is more than diabetes, Aids, and cancer diagnoses combined. In the 1950's a Polio statistic was 1 in 3000 children affected, and Polio was called a national emergency. Since now 1 in 150 births will be diagnosed with Autism (Larry King 3/21/2007), this developmental is truly an epidemic.

According to the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, autism is defined as “a variable developmental disorder that appears by age three and is characterized by impairment of the ability to form social relationships, by impairment of the ability to communicate with others, and by stereotyped behavior patterns.” There is currently no cure for autism; there is only a treatment in the form of therapy. The most common therapies used are Applied Behavioral Analysis, Sensory Integration Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Occupational Therapy. Research has shown that diagnosis as early as possible is important, so therapy can begin in the formative years of development. When a child receives a diagnosis from a neurologist or a qualified physician, the child can start on a therapy program provided by the state until the age of three. After the child's third birthday, the public school systems have programs for therapy and education for the child. A plan is developed by a Child Study Team, and this plan is called an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.). The parents should meet with the Child Study Team and review the plan monthly or whenever needed, so it can be amended to comply with the needs of the child. Although the I.E.P. does not always match what the doctor wants, as parents we must become advocates for our children to obtain services. The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community (COSAC) bi-monthly publication *Update* lists four areas of advocacy in the article “Parents as Advocates”:

- Become familiar with the full-range of state and federal government agencies that deal with individuals with autism
- Become more familiar with the workings of the government and legislatures in New Jersey and Washington D.C.
- Become more aware of issues affecting people with autism, and
- Become an Action Advocate (Ball 7).

Children need the parents to become advocates, so they can obtain the therapy they require.

The therapies can vary greatly between people with autism depending on the severity of the autistic traits. The autistic spectrum is like a rainbow with the mildly autistic on one side and severely autistic on the other. The children on the mild side tend to have high functioning skills - some are able to take care of themselves – while those on the severe side will need assistance for everyday activities. Autistic children need many hours of therapy just to be able to function. They have a meltdown if something gets out of place. A melt down is

like a temper more severe, as control can and do. A meltdown minutes to over friend gave me can show son is having a public place:



tantrum but much the children cannot themselves. They injure themselves. can last for several an hour or more. A a card once that I people when my meltdown in a

Because of my son's behaviors, I keep this card in my possession. This type of behavior can have an adverse effect on anyone who may not understand autism. This is especially true in public places. I have used the card on a few occasions, and it has helped others understand what is happening with my son.

Early detection is the key to providing the best treatment for the child. These are some informative checklists of behavioral characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder:

As a baby, does not reach out to be held by mother or seek cuddling, does not imitate others, uses adult as a means to get a wanted object, without interacting with adult as a person, does not develop age-appropriate peer relationships, lack of spontaneous sharing of interest with others, difficulties in mixing with others, prefers to be alone, has an aloof manner, little or no eye contact, detach feelings of others. Impairment of social communication . . . Impairment of imaginative thought . . . Peculiar voice . . . , does not reach developmental milestones, low muscle tone, uneven gross motor skills, covers ears, does not respond to noise or name, acts deaf, does not respond to pain . . . (Sicile-Kira 21-23)

These characteristics are used as a guide, but not a diagnosis. A child does not need all of these traits to receive a diagnosis, only a qualified physician can give a diagnosis. The checklist is used to help a person become more aware of Autism and to seek the help for the child.

The Senate adopted February 13, April 2007 as Awareness resolution Senate's autism the CDC's new statistic of 1 in commitment to within the general public ("The Washington Report").



United States a resolution on 2007, designating "National Autism Month." The reflects the recognition of the epidemic, noting prevalence 150, and a raising awareness

The United States Congress is asking the Appropriation Committee to fully fund the “Combating Autism Act” (C.A.A) resulting in 168 million dollars for several areas of research: 16.5 million for Developmental Disabilities Surveillance and Research program, 37 million for Autism Education, Early Detection and Intervention Program, and 114.5 million for the Secretary and the National Institutes of Health to operate an Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (“The Washington Report”). The C.A.A. will provide some much needed research and funding required to help find a cure or the cause of autism.

Because autism has such a broad definition, it often gets delayed in diagnosis. Studies show the earlier the detection, the better the child will respond to treatment. People must educate themselves about autism because it can affect everyone it touches. Autism is growing in epidemic proportions and this is why we must lobby for research and programs to benefit our children. Autism Speaks ([www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)) and COSAC ([www.njcosac.org](http://www.njcosac.org)) are two very good places to research autism. The children affected with autism need our help. The epidemic of autism needs to be stopped before it grows completely out-of-control; this is why autism awareness is very important!

#### Works Cited

- Ball, Art. “Parents as Advocates.” Update December 2006 : 7.  
 The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autistic Community(COSAC) <[www.njcosac.org](http://www.njcosac.org)>.
- “How to Cope.” Autism Speaks. 2007 Autism speaks. April 1, 2007  
 <<http://autismspeaks.org/howtocope/index.php>>.
- “Larry King Live.” The Mystery of Autism. CNN March 21, 2007  
 <<http://cnn.com/CNN/Programs/larry.king.live/>>.
- Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary. Eleventh Edition.  
 Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
- Sicile-Kira, Chantal. Autism Spectrum Disorders. New York:  
 The Berkley Publishing Company, 2004.
- “The Washington Report.” Autism Speaks.  
 March 20, 2007. Autism Speaks. April 1, 2007.  
 <<http://autismspeaks.org/supportlegislation/index.php>>.

**English 152**

**English II**

The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon.

Robert Cronier



## Ways to Cope

By Jacqueline Geller

When a soldier goes off to fight a war, he is physically weighed down by the baggage he has to carry. Among the things he carries are guns and bombs and ammunition, along with food and water. While these items are necessary, if need be they can be discarded. What can't be discarded, however, is the emotional baggage the soldier's carry. They have to carry the images of death and destruction, and somehow find a way to continue to function. In order to do this, they must find a way to cope. Coping is defined as the various ways people respond when confronted with a stressful situation. Coping "represent[s] [an] attempt to escape, in one fashion or another, from having to deal with [a] situation's demands" (Kazdin 300). Coping mechanisms "are extremely varied. They range from [...] day dreaming, to wishful thinking and escapist fantasy, to making jokes about the stressful event [...] and well beyond" (Kazdin 302). In The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien, the men of Alpha Company coped by joking, by telling stories, and by fantasizing.

Because people have unique personalities, they develop their own personal coping mechanisms. Some people turn to joking as a way to cope. Joking is an effective coping mechanism because "it is a potent agent for psychological removal from stressful situations" (Henman 87). One man who resorted to joking as a way to cope was Azar. This was apparent upon the death of Kiowa, who was killed during a battle and was lost in a mud pit. While they were searching for his body, Azar started joking about the circumstances of Kiowa's death, how Kiowa was "wasted in the waste" (165) and how it was "a classic case [of] biting the dirt" (165). The other soldiers didn't appreciate his humor because they held Kiowa in high regard and they were devastated by his death. They felt Azar's humor was inappropriate at such a sad time and they kept telling him to stop with the jokes. What the soldiers didn't realize, however, was that Azar was using humor to cope with Kiowa's death. While humor may seem an inappropriate response to a stressful situation, many soldier's turn to humor as a way to cope. This was documented by the United States Navy, who, in 1975, began a research program to evaluate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in five hundred and sixty six Vietnamese Prisoner's of War. The study found "there [was] no more increased incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [...] in the VPOW group than in the general population" (Henman 84). The study concluded that the prisoners were better able to cope because they took every opportunity they could to make jokes in order to cheer each other up. According to Linda Henman, "prisoners often found humor to be an effective coping mechanism, a way of fighting back and taking control" (83), and for the VPOW's, humor played an important role in their survival.

The use of humor as a coping mechanism is widespread. Humor also was a key factor in the survival of Holocaust victims during their imprisonment in concentration camps. Victor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor, stated that "humor was another of the soul's weapon's in the fight for self preservation" (Henman 86). It "allowed [us] to escape the confines of the [camp], if just for a few seconds" (Henman 86). When Frankl realized how his mood lightened up after he had a good laugh, he and a friend decided that during their captivity they would "invent at least one amusing story daily" (Henman 86) to help them cope with their imprisonment. Much like the VPOW's and Holocaust survivors, it was

humor that Azar turned to in order to cope. Humor allowed him to escape from his sadness for a little while. While it may have seemed inappropriate, it was his unique way to deal with Kiowa's death.

Another way to help people cope is by telling stories. When you tell a story you have an opportunity to reflect on past experiences and "explore [them] from different angles" (Herzog 909). Story telling was the mechanism that Tim O'Brien, the author, chose to cope. When Tim O'Brien was drafted into the Vietnam war, he turned to writing as a way to cope with his mixed feelings. He opposed the war, but felt an obligation to his family and community to serve. As a way of coping with his feelings, he "passed his nights pouring out his anxiety and grief onto the typewritten page" (Colella 3). He went to the war, and upon his return he continued writing, publishing fiction novels about the Vietnam war. O'Brien originally claimed that when he returned home from the Vietnam war he had "no dreams, no midnight sweats, none of that stuff"

(Herzog 901). However, when O'Brien wrote The Things They Carried, he used his own name, Tim O'Brien, for the narrator of the book. As a result of reading and writing his name in the manuscript, he "began to 'feel' the words and stories in his 'stomach' and in his 'heart'" (Herzog 901). He began to come to terms with his experiences in Vietnam, admitting that "I wake up screaming ugly, desperate and obscene things" (Herzog 901), and that parts of the novel "[came] from [my] own soul; it isn't made up [...]. It is real [...], out of my own life" (Herzog 901). For Tim O'Brien the author, writing the novel became an "opportunit[y] [...] for personal heuristic exercises. He [was] able to explore events after the fact, imagining alternate possibilities, reaffirming previous decisions, and recovering key emotions" (Herzog 909).

Tim O'Brien, the author, paralleled his own experiences in recognizing the importance of story telling as a way to cope when he wrote the chapter "Speaking of Courage". In this chapter he tells of Tim O'Brien, the narrator, receiving an emotional letter from fellow soldier Norman Bowker. In his letter to O'Brien, Bowker told of his difficulties adjusting to civilian life and asked O'Brien to write a story about the night Kiowa died. Bowker told him that "I'd write it myself except I can't ever find any words, if you know what I mean, and I can't figure out what exactly to say" (157). It was this letter that made Tim O'Brien, the narrator, realize that while he "never spoke much about the war, certainly not in detail, ever since [his] return [he] had been talking about it virtually nonstop through [his] writing" (157). He realized that his writing was "partly catharsis, partly communication, it was a way of grabbing people by the shirt and explaining exactly what had happened to [him]" (157). And for Tim O'Brien, the author, storytelling was an opportunity to "cut through the emotional numbness that the war [had] created [...] so that [he could] feel again" (Herzog 909).

In addition to joking and story telling, another coping mechanism is fantasizing. When you fantasize, you do so in order to escape an unpleasant situation. In the novel, Lieutenant Jimmy Cross used fantasizing as his coping mechanism. He loved a girl named Martha, and he carried pictures of her and letters that she sent him. While sitting alone in his foxhole he would pull out the letters "and spend the last hour of light pretending. He would imagine romantic camping trips into the White Mountains in New Hampshire" (1). He would also turn to thoughts of Martha when he was under extreme pressure. As a lieutenant,

he was responsible for the lives of other men. Whenever he had to put one of his men's lives in jeopardy, his fantasies would intensify. For example, when he had to send a man into a dark tunnel that could possibly collapse, he let his mind think about Martha. His fantasy mirrored the situation. He fantasized about "the stresses and fractures, the quick collapse, the two of them buried alive [...]. Dense, crushing love" (11). Another of Cross's fantasies occurred when Kiowa died. While he was searching the mud pit for Kiowa's body, he "let himself slip away. He was back home in New Jersey. A golden afternoon on the golf course, the fairways lush and green, and he was teeing it up on the first hole. It was a world without responsibility" (178). According to Alan Kazdin, fantasizing "represent[s] [an] attempt to escape, in one fashion or another, from having to deal with the situation's demands" (Kazdin 300). And this is just what Jimmy Cross did when he let his mind think of Martha and golf; he let his fantasies remove him from the war.

The mental trauma caused by war is as debilitating as any physical injury. By developing methods to deal with the negative emotions created by their situation, some of the men of alpha company were better equipped to cope with their emotional baggage. The same cannot be said of all soldiers. Because of their inability to develop an appropriate coping mechanism to reduce the adverse effects of their war experience, many soldiers end up committing suicide. Perhaps if they were able to tell a joke, or told a story, or even let themselves fantasize, they would have fared better and might be alive today.

#### Works Cited

- Colella, Jill. O'Brien's The Things They Carried. California: IDG Books Worldwide, 2001.
- Henman, Linda D. "Humor as a Coping Mechanism: Lessons from POWs." Humor. 14 (2001): 83-94. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Ocean County College. November 10, 2006.
- Herzog, Tobey C. "Tim O'Brien's "True Lies" (?)." MFS Modern Fiction Studies 46 (Winter 2000): 893-916. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Ocean County College. November 10, 2006.
- Kazdin, Alan E. "Coping". Encyclopedia of Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Ocean County College. November 10, 2006.
- O'Brien, Tim. The Things They Carried. New York: Broadway Books, 1990.

## Frank O'Connor's Control of Tone and Style in "First Confession"

*By Christie McDonald*

(1) It must have been then that I noticed the shelf at about one height with my head. (2) It was really a place for grown-up people to rest their elbows, but in my distracted state I thought it was probably the place you were supposed to kneel. (3) Of course, it was on the high side and not very deep, but I was always good at climbing and managed to get up all right. (4) Staying up was the trouble. (5) There was room only for my knees, and nothing you could get a grip on but a sort of wooden molding a bit above it. (6) I held onto the molding and repeated the words a little louder, and this time something happened all right. (7) A slide was slammed back, a little light entered the box, and a man's voice said: "who's there?" (282)

This paragraph written by Frank O'Connor is located halfway through the story "First Confession" (282). In this paragraph, Jackie, the main character, explains what he is experiencing in the confessional box. He has never been in a confessional box, doesn't know what's inside, and does not know what to do with himself once he is in there. Jackie's attitude in this particular scene is portrayed as confused, scared and nervous. For example, in sentence (6) Jackie is holding onto the molding and repeating the words a little louder, saying "Bless me, father, for I have sinned; this is my first confession" (282). Most children act this way when they are nervous and confused. O'Connor uses middle diction and descriptive tone to help readers visualize the scenery.

O'Connor has us giggling to ourselves as we find Jackie trying to overcome his situation of not knowing what to do. Again O'Connor's use of middle diction creates the scenery. As we observe in sentences 1-5, these words clearly describe step by step what Jackie is doing. The entire paragraph is humorous, explaining in detail what Jackie is seeing and doing in the box. Jackie first enters the box and sees a shelf; he then decides this must be where he is supposed to kneel. But how does he get up there? Ah! Jackie is good at climbing. He wouldn't have a problem getting up there. It's staying up that's the problem. Jackie locates the molding and hangs onto it. While kneeling on the shelf, he is startled by the slamming of the window opening, a light entering the box and a man's voice saying "Who's there?" When the window opens and a light shines through with the man's voice asking, "Who's there?" we wonder if Jackie is thinking if it is God Almighty speaking to him.

This paragraph is an example of how O'Connor's use of descriptive tone and style shapes the storyline. The entire story tells us about a young boy who is experiencing unpleasant memories of family life. He has an older sister, Nora, who teases and taunts him daily. His grandmother is an unpleasant old woman who he dislikes. He is afraid of burning in hell because of his feelings towards his grandmother. His religious teacher scares him with stories when preparing him for his first confession and communion. Jackie then speaks of happy memories with his parish priest. He tells how his priest took him under his wing and spoke with him about his unhealthy thoughts of his grandmother. Frank O'Connor's tone in this story keeps the readers interested and amused.

In conclusion, it is because of O'Connor's middle diction, specific descriptive words, style and tone that we can visualize the details of the story. I enjoyed reading this story, and, because of O'Connor's control of tone and style, I found myself giggling to myself in this particular paragraph. Having children, I can relate to what Jackie is feeling and experiencing. Children are often teased and taunted by other siblings. Jealousy is often the reason why children tease each other. I love watching how they react to certain situations. At times it can be extremely amusing.

#### Works Cited

O'Connor, Frank. "First Confession" Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing. Ed. Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs. 3<sup>rd</sup> Compact Ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2006: (282).

## My Interpretation of “The Yellow Wallpaper”

*By Christie McDonald*

In this passage written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the narrator, a married female, tells her story of how her husband John, the doctor, is treating her for temporary nervous depression. She knows she is ill, but feels that John doesn't take it that seriously. Her brother, also a doctor, agrees with her husband. She is a writer, but her husband does not want her to write, as it will weaken her, and he wants her to get better so she is able to care for him and their child. While we read this passage, it is obvious that the woman is suffering from what is known today to be postpartum depression. Her actions, thoughts, and illusions bring us to her final breakdown where she takes her own life.

The narrator first explains how she and her husband rent a mansion-like house that had been unoccupied for a long time. Why? Was it haunted? It did resemble a haunted house, and they did get it rather cheaply. Can it be so? She goes on to describe the exterior of the house. It is located back off the road, about three miles from the village. The house is surrounded by hedges and rock walls. It has a locked gate at its entrance. The yard has gardens and greenhouses, all of which are run down because no one is tending to them. The place has been empty for years. Her mind starts to play tricks on her, and she is afraid. John tells her the best thing for her would be fresh air. They choose the nursery on the top floor for their bedroom. She likes the room; it's a big airy room. However, she hates the yellow wallpaper.

Her thoughts: She immediately fixates on this wallpaper. She hates it and starts to have strange thoughts about its pattern. “When you follow the same uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide [...] plunge off at outrageous angles.” Wanting to switch to another room, her husband tells her this one will do her good, and she agrees. After one visit from her sister-in-law, she again goes back to the wallpaper and sees a figure behind the front design that seems to skulk. She is getting increasingly lazy and tired, lying on her bed for hours following the design on the wallpaper. At some point, she becomes suspicious of John and the housekeeper. She has seen John looking at the paper and has caught the housekeeper (Jennie) touching it. She believes the wallpaper is growing a fungus and has strange new shades of yellow that have a smell to it. The smell is foul and seems to be following her all over the house. It is even in her hair. She even has thoughts of burning the house down.

Her illusions: She is convinced that there is a woman behind the wallpaper, creeping around in the evening when the moon hits the pattern. In the daytime, she is still. She has even felt the wallpaper to see if the woman was there behind the paper. Fixated on the paper, she is now seeing the front pattern moving. The woman behind the paper is shaking it, holding onto the bars. She feels the women behind the paper. These women cannot climb through: “Nobody could climb through that pattern – it strangles so [...] for they get through and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!” She is now having illusions of women creeping during the day. She is seeing them everywhere. She wants to help the women escape from behind the paper. She only has one day left to her rental, so she stays up all night pulling down the paper. The

---

housekeeper tells her she wants her to sleep downstairs that night. The narrator persuades her to let her stay in the quiet, clean room. She locks the door behind her. The housekeeper doesn't notice the rope that she has brought into the room with her. She has it with her because when she peels off the wallpaper, and the woman tries to escape, she'll be able to catch her, and tie her up.

Her actions: Her illusions are getting stronger: "I wonder if they all came out of that wallpaper as I did." Now she is having illusions of being one of the women behind the wallpaper. She puts the rope around her neck. John comes to the door, and she tells him where the key is, but he is too late. She takes her life to escape the mind twisting life she has been living.

In conclusion, postpartum depression was not diagnosed during this time period. People did not understand how someone could act the way she did soon after giving birth to a beautiful little child. Forbidding her to write hid what she was experiencing. John could have read her journals if she continued to write openly. He could have possibly saved her from her mental break down and ultimate death. Overall, hormones can play havoc on a woman's emotional and physical state.

## Van Gogh's Bed, as Seen by Jane Flanders

By *Laura Pavelka*

In a letter written to his brother, Van Gogh explains in simple terms how proud he is about the oil painting illustrating his own bed. Likewise, the poem "Van Gogh's Bed" written by Jane Flanders matches the painting in its simplicity of expression. Flanders sees the colors with childlike imagination, comparing the orange to the pumpkin color of "Cinderella's coach" (894). Flanders tries to imagine how Van Gogh felt about his bed, when she says that she sees him tossing between the two pillows. She doesn't think it's an elegant bed, but she does think it's inviting and soft. The painting shows her that the bed is empty; perhaps she thinks he woke up to a beautiful sunny morning that made him happy. It is known that Van Gogh suffered from severe depression, but the bright colors of this painting may suggest to Flanders that he might have had some good days.

The poetess looks at the bedroom as a seemingly bright and exciting memory in Van Gogh's childhood; contrarily, the painter sees it as a restful place, as he states in his letter. The color white has been omitted, perhaps for two reasons: first, it is known that white can be too bright to the eye; second, to a painter, white could represent an empty canvas demanding that his imagination be put to work. This painting leaves no room for imagination: "to look at the picture ought to rest the brain or rather the imagination" (895).

Certainly the bright colors of "Vincent's Bed in Arles" do not look very peaceful, except for the wall in soft lilac. Its strange perspective gives the impression that all the furniture is sliding toward the viewer. The pictures on the wall are staring imposingly in the bed's direction, and could intimidate a person sleeping in it. Staying within the scheme of simplicity of the painting and the poem, I would use the word "crooked" to describe the picture, and maybe it's a representation of Van Gogh's confused mind.

### Works Cited

Flanders, Jane. "Van Gogh's Bed." *An Introduction to Literature*. Ed. Sylvan Barnet  
Et.al. 14<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Longman, 2006: 848-49.



## Kafka: Transition from the Victorian to the Modern Age

By Megan Myers

Transitions in the work of Franz Kafka are frequently bizarre. In one story, “The Metamorphosis,” a man awakes from sleep physically transformed into a detestable vermin. In another tale, “A Country Doctor,” a distance of ten miles is covered instantaneously. Kafka himself lived in a time of peculiar transition, in an era that has been called the “age of anxiety.” During Kafka’s lifetime there was a revolution of the sciences, the arts, widespread social unrest, and national unrest encompassing Europe, the culmination of which was World War I. Time itself in this liminal period must have felt disjointed, a theme often reflected in Kafka’s work. Kafka’s time was a transition period from the Victorian age of conservatism and concrete principles to the uncertainty and unstable ground of the Modern Age.

Kafka’s work itself is paranoid, enigmatic, and set on fluid ground. His stories serve as bizarre transitions from Victorian literature to Modern literature. They reflect the dark underbelly of Victorian life by utilizing the psychological methods and literary styles of the Modern Age. His stories bridge the gap between Victorian and Modern by highlighting family dysfunction, psychological derangement, and the literary theme of naturalistic entrapment.

Family dysfunction is evident in the short story *The Metamorphosis*. The principal source of dysfunction in this tale is the relationship with the father. Kafka’s father, Hermann, was an overpowering figure in his life. Hermann was a source of fear for Kafka, a man that made him feel small and insignificant in comparison. Gregor Samsa, the central character of *The Metamorphosis*, is an autobiographical version of Kafka himself, and the Samsa family resembles Kafka’s own. The Samsa family is not the typical Victorian family: pious, supportive, Protestant in work ethic, and independent. Instead the Samsas are dependant on the financial support of Gregor as no other family member is gainfully employed. The father “was certainly healthy but an old man who had not worked in five years and could not be expected to do much...”(Kafka 27). When Gregor is transformed into a large insect, the father, despite his advanced age, is able to physically attack his disfigured son. He shows his son no compassion as “the father drove Gregor back hissing like a savage...If only the father would quit that infernal hissing...”(20). The father harms Gregor in his effort to shut him away. “...His father gave him a terrific shove from behind and he flew, bleeding profusely, far into the room” (20).

This dysfunctional relationship between Gregor and his father could be read very easily as a personal lament of Kafka’s own experience differing from his father’s domineering insistence on a career path. Kafka’s feeling of large shoes to fill is evident in Mr. Samsa’s “gigantic size of his boot soles” and the feeling that “from the very first day of his new life [...] the father considered only the strictest measures appropriate when dealing with him” (35). Mr. Samsa shows surprising physical aptitude for a man who is unable to work for his family. Gregor’s struggle with his father is a twisted transformation of the Victorian hierarchal social structure. The theme of family dysfunction, particularly Gregor’s

inability to be industrious and independent from the father, is both anti-Victorian and wholly Modern.

Psychology was an emerging science of the Victorian age, and a focus of Modern literature. Kafka's transformation of the theme of psychology to an exploration of psychological derangement is evident in the short story "The Penal Colony." In this story Kafka also transmutes the Victorian fascination with industrialization and machinery, projects it into a brutal apparatus, "the harrow," and then links intrinsically an execution officer's psyche into the workings and performance of his machine. The execution officer in "The Penal Colony" is very proud of "the harrow," which kills by inklessly tattooing a man clean through with an intricate design explaining the lesson to be learned based on the crime committed. The tortuous method of execution is a deranged nod to psychology as, during the sixth hour, "Enlightenment comes to even the dimmest...the man starts to interpret the writing...with his wounds (Kafka 104)." It is a revelation that brings the subconscious into the conscious.

The officer in the tale is psychologically dependant on the opinion of a traveler witnessing an execution. "The officer kept glancing at the traveler out of the corner of his eye as if to ascertain how the execution...impressed him" (Kafka, 105). The officer experiences paranoia at the opposition of the Penal Colony officials, who favor more humane, modern methods of justice over this antiquated method of execution; and he mentally places the burden of the preservation of the "harrow" system on the opinion of the traveler. The officer tells the traveler that he is "the sole advocate" of this method and in his deranged passion he says, "I spend all of my energy preserving what's left" (106-107). The officer's psychosis is so profound that when the traveler confesses that he does not approve of the execution, the officer commits suicide on his own device, an act that destroys the machine along with its proprietor.

Psychological derangement flies in the face of the Victorian notions of artistic morality and functionality, yet Kafka's work is still tied to Victorian literature in its opposition. Modern literature, such as Dostoevsky's work *Crime and Punishment*, delves deeply into the psychological nature of man. Kafka bestrides the two literary movements with the theme of psychological derangement.

Literary Naturalism was a movement that sought to explore the relationship between human behavior and the environment, which would activate man's instincts for survival. The short story "An Old Leaf" comments on Victorian society by showing how characters respond to a situation of naturalistic entrapment. The shoemaker in a town overrun by barbaric invaders camped in the town square, narrates the tale. He opens his narrative saying "We have not been overly concerned about this until recently and have gone about our daily work..." (Kafka 131). The narrator is an average middle-class Victorian; he is pragmatic and industrious even in the face of adversity. These barbaric invaders disrupt the natural order of the society. The presence of the invaders becomes the environment in which the townspeople must survive. To survive, all levels of the society simply appease the barbarians. The shoemaker explains, "You can't say that they [the barbarians] employ force; when they grab at something, you simply stand aside and leave them to it (Kafka 132)." The townspeople keep the barbarians fed with meat from the butcher, collecting money to help

---

him with this burden. Even the Emperor is ineffective and withdrawn. “The imperial palace has attracted the nomads, but it does not know how to drive them away again” (132).

Kafka’s commentary on Victorian society through the use of literary Naturalism is that society is weak and ineffectual even in its expression of values. This overrun Victorian town is defenseless, yet is part of an empire, a term evocative of the conquest of others. In this situation there is no nationalism, no defense of the homeland; even the emperor hides when the outsiders come to the center of his empire. The voice of Kafka in “On Old Leaf” is one of a Modern man looking back critically at the Victorian age of Imperialism, scoffing at its ironies.

Kafka’s work bridges the gap between the Victorian and the Modern. It is as though Kafka is standing on the Modern side in his literary themes and style, and reaching back to the Victorian for his inspiration and source of ridicule. Through family dysfunction, psychological derangement, and naturalistic entrapment, Kafka’s modern voice silences the values and grim realities of his Victorian experience.

#### Works Cited

Kafka, Franz. The Metamorphosis and Other Stories. Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003.

## **Arsenic and Old Maids: A Critical Analysis**

*By Shaun Pilling*

When reading Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," the most immediate reaction has to be one of shock and dismay about Emily's action. Obviously, she's a troubled figure; a tragic character for her living situation, yet unsympathetic for her apparent murder of Homer Barron. Central to Emily's neurosis is a serious bout of repression, one that extends through several sides of her life. Emily is essentially a child lost in time, unwilling to remove herself from the quiet and controlled life she lived with her father. What complicates this issue further is a personality disorder stemming from the lack of acceptance of change. It's this redundancy, though - the mental disconnect in relation to change caused by the very fear of change - that caused Emily to not only kill Homer, but to take her father's life as well.

This analysis is certainly questionable, but quite feasible to argue with a mixture of careful attention to detail and a rudimentary knowledge of personality theory. To begin with, let's inspect the most obvious conclusions to be drawn. There is an apparent parallel between Emily's reaction to her father's death and her response to Homer's. In both situations, she clings desperately to the corpse, unwilling, or perhaps not attempting, to accept the passing of a key figure in her life. Emily's attachment to Homer is a clear case of projecting her father upon him. And because of this mental mirroring, her maintenance of the corpse is likely indicative of what she would have done with her father's, had she been given the chance. This strong fixation on the dead, an inability to let go of her father and accept the changes that must come about in her life, is the first, most overt, layer of repression. Emily withholds normal emotion, by choice or nature, and refuses to go through a proper phase of grief.

A more subtle case of her separation from reality can be found in her stubborn attention to the privileged class her family once belonged to. While her family's wealth is never quite stated, it is implied through the imposing size of her home as well as the presence of the servant Tobe, and their class roots are clear in the way Emily carries herself about town in her few brief appearances. This can also be construed from the very fact that the family has been such a topic of discussion in town for at least forty years. With her father's passing, though, and her withdrawal into that formerly grandiose home, Emily remains oblivious to the clear decline of her family's position in town. Her character is somewhat disparaged by the gossip mongers, the home falls into disrepair, and the tax remission placed on Emily by the Colonel comes into question. The aldermen and other officials of each ensuing generation then try to make Emily's loss of privilege clear in their fruitless meeting and returned tax forms. But she is stubborn again, and refuses to accept not only that she owes any tax money, but apparently also does not understand that the Colonel has also passed on, as indicated by her repeated requests to "see Colonel Sartoris". Emily has so removed herself from the goings on of the town, and the passing of time, that she has become lost to the age. In her small world inside of her home, alone with Tobe and Homer's long dead body, nothing has changed. Thus, how could the outside world have moved on at all? This disconnect with reality presents another repressed facet of Emily's life: if she does not observe change, then change could not have possibly taken place.

---

Of course, to compare her present to her past, I need to take better stock of her childhood. From what is present in the story, told explicitly or implicitly, a relatable picture can be drawn. Emily's father groomed and protected her to become a chaste figure. She would not be the flirtatious southern belle or a debutante, but a precious figure carved in his design. How well this molding worked is made apparent by taking a look at the town's treatment of Emily: she is practically an alien figure to townsfolk. Having essentially lived her life in an ivory tower, this shrouded life took on a mythology of its own. She became a figure of curiosity, as much of her life, before and after her father's death, had been one of conjecture; with the town's only true insights coming during her brief relationship with Homer Barron. Here they see Emily acting closest to "normal", in the generally accepted sense of the word; with a lover about town. But this is an exception to the rule, as Homer's disappearances only heighten interest into how their relationship could have devolved. Additionally, it is possible to assume that, based on the lack of a mother figure anywhere in the story, that Emily's father had lost his wife at some point early in his daughter's life. It wouldn't be stretch of the imagination, then, to assume that her father's own shielding and sculpting of Emily was in great part due to his insecurities and sorrow over the loss of his wife. Emily's treatment of her father and Homer, in turn, merely came about as a sort of mimicry of emotion and sentiment. She regards her scant male relationships with deranged attachment, and in the case of Homer, attempts to establish control so as to not lose him as she did her father. This would, again, be an expression of repressed tendencies: an inherited trait and a vicious circle of modeling, forcing Emily into a static state of being that is both unwilling and incapable of change. Emily can relate only as she has been taught and shown in her formative years.

With this evidence, I can now better illustrate the previously mentioned murder theory. Emily's father has passed, without a clear indication as to the cause. His death leads to a clear shift in Emily's character, and the privacy of her life with must come into question. We need to ask what is being withheld. What is present on the other side of the story? It's my argument that Emily suffered from an Electra complex. Her father's reliance upon her as a sole feminine figure, and alternatively, his presence in Emily's life as the sole male figure, caused an unnatural, romantic bond. Emily was shaped to his command, perhaps in the conservative image of her mother, and she accepted this lifestyle because it was all she had known. They grew a dependence upon one another; Emily could not foresee a life without him. However, at some point, something complicated the issue, and catalyzed the murder.

The most likely source of this complication is a change in the status quo. Something instilled a fear of loss into Emily, and forced her damaged psyche to take the most drastic of measures in order to keep her father all her own. My supposition is that she suffered a paranoid bout of psychosis, a loss of contact with reality, which resulted from her father's attempts to sexualize their relationship. By the time of his death, Emily was a fully developed woman, and at this point in his life, it would seem her father's intimate loneliness overcame him, causing him to force himself onto his daughter. This new dimension disrupted her concept of normalcy, and after becoming a victim of rape, her small, contained world started to crack. Emily would go on to solve this matter with the only other aspect of life she had become aware of: death, the familiarity of which was bred with the early loss of her mother. Her psyche demanded things return to the safe, understandable relationship they once

shared by stopping her father from taking such brash actions. In her manic state, murder would have seemed like the only conclusion. Summarily, she poisoned her father, much like she would go on to poison Homer, and established a controlled familiarity in both relationships.

Following his death, the discovery of the corpse, and the removal of the key figure in her struggle for normalcy, Emily sought to find another male figure to center her life around. As made apparent by her brash haircut, her first attempted idol would be herself. When this failed to satisfy her basic psychological needs - which appear to be centered on a separate physical form, indicated by her attachment to her father's corpse - she happened upon the outsider, Homer Barron, and as stated before, saw something of her father in him. Most likely it was the control and order he demonstrated with his workers, as the foreman of construction, which reminded her of her father's commanding grip on her small life. While she modeled a new life around Homer, he instead seemed to be more inclined to make it a normal relationship in the accepted sense. To be blunt, he was probably looking for sex. Obviously, this theory goes against the commonly insisted belief that he was a homosexual. However, evidence of his presumed sexual preference draws mostly from a scant few turns of phrase on Faulkner's part (being a man's man, among others) rather than any derived logic. In any case, despite granting Homer board, seeking his company and a new figure to revolve around, Emily refused him. Homer would leave her and Emily would break down again. But this time, she could not bear to lose another guiding figure. Emily lured Homer back to her, probably with a deceitful promise of sex, only to repeat her earlier actions and killing Homer, keeping him forever in the same precious little image she had of her father. Forever still, forever pristine, and forever familiar. She would her share bed with him for some undetermined length of time. Emily would also keep up his clothes and surroundings, trying to manage and maintain the lifestyle she psychologically demanded from herself; one centered on utter devotion to her selected figure; right until the day she died.

Of course, some big leaps and liberties have been taken in this analysis. I tried to withhold becoming overly presumptuous, while simultaneously playing against some more commonly held beliefs of the story's subtext. But, the beauty of the truth in "A Rose for Emily" is that fact is highly subjective to the interpreter. We're told a tale through the second hand eyes of third hand accounts, and are mostly left to fend for ourselves. This piece is in every way a psychological character study, of both Emily and the townsfolk, and I've merely gone with my strongest inclinations. Rigid interpretation be damned, I think my conclusions are as valid as those ever fit to print. Plus, I think incestuous rape is more credible a plot device than outright necrophilia.

#### Works Cited

Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily." The Norton Introduction to Literature. Ed. Alison Booth, J. Paul Hunter, and Kelly J. Mays. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. 594-600.

## So Much Beauty in Woodworking

By *Shaun Pilling*

The mid-life crisis: that feeling of dread people are said to experience when, upon taking inventory of their lives, they realize that these lives are not what they dreamt them to be in childhood. It's typified in the usual cliché: a 40 year old man buying sports car, a desperate change in career, a primal urge to chase younger partners, hoping to be rejuvenated with youth by osmosis. There are some sad truths in the idea, and it's a potent element in storytelling for that reason. We can empathize with these characters, even if we haven't gone through a crisis of our own, out of familiarity with the subject and fear of our own future. The writer can influence us either to pity these self-parodic characters, or root for them as underdogs. And it's because of this potency that it has become the centerpiece of many stories told, and many yet to be told. With any hope, of course, we'll be given a fresh and unique take on the idea, as there are many nuanced emotions and grounds to explore. For a prime example of the same story being told twice through two entirely different characters, we can look to the 1999 film *American Beauty* and the John Cheever's 1954 story "The Country Husband."

Both the film and the story center on protagonists who represent the typical adult male suffering through a "mid life crisis." In *Beauty*, Lester Burnham is a forty-two year old advertising executive, who finds himself being controlled by his wife, Carolyn, to maintain a social status quo; who is ineffectual in parenting his troubled daughter Jane; who has essentially submitted to the overwhelming numbness his suburban nightmare envelops him in. In "The Country Husband," we're presented with Francis Weed, an office worker in his 40's who sates the social needs of Julia, his controlling wife, by allowing her to drag him to empty social get-togethers; who is overwhelmed by the demands of his three young children and his frustrated elder daughter Helen; who finds that he has managed to repress both his memory and emotions for the sake of not having to bother with another trifle in his life. He can't even capture his family's attention by enduring a near-death experience in a plane crash. Superficially, Lester and Francis are parallels of one another: men fed up with the mundanities of life and emotionally detached from their families. They are both time bombs of the Id, desperate for release. And, shortly, they both receive the catalyst necessary for the reaction.

For Lester, it comes in the form of a teenaged cheerleading friend of his daughter. He first sees Angela during the half time show of a basketball game he feels obliged to attend for the sake of Jane. He fantasizes a vision of Angela on the court, tearing open her uniform and showering Lester in rose petals, indicative of the carnal "forbidden fruit" aspect. It's his lust and longing for Angela that causes Lester to figuratively wake up and rediscover that long absent sense of desire. In Francis's case, his trigger too, is a girl. While at one of the numerous and interchangeable neighborhood parties, he recognizes his neighbors' maid to be a woman he once saw in France when he served there during World War II. He recalls seeing her stripped naked and humiliated, and vividly recalls the wind hardening her nipples. Francis had long since shut out much of his memory of the war; in fact he couldn't even recall the names of the members of his unit; and it is this sudden, sexual image that releases the floodgates. In a town where it isn't even considered polite to acknowledge the war, he

feels isolated, but now curious and hungry for freedom. Again, on the most base of levels, the similarities between the two men are obvious: a lust is revived, and that “wide-eyed wonder” is returned to their worlds.

The sexual elements in both of their awakenings should be considered strongly. Lester is sexually frustrated, as illustrated by an earlier scene where he masturbates in the shower, commenting in narration how pathetic it is. There's clearly no longer any romance between him and Carolyn, as they lie lifeless and inattentive in bed. They have become sick of each other, and for Lester, Angela's youthful beauty must be a symbol of that pubescent craving for physical love. Lester is reminded that he once was young, and tries to fulfill this longing sensation. Francis, too, is essentially looking for boyhood love. While the maid does bring back his memories of the war, he takes note that she has aged slightly since then. His mind needs that visual reminder of youth, and so, it immediately places it onto the next beautiful face he sees, his newly hired babysitter, Anne. While Francis does fantasize about running off to Paris with Anne, his essential concern is that of physical contact, and of sex. He excites himself merely with the thought of touching Anne, and in a moment of frustration later on, even considers raping her to satisfy his needs. In addition, in support of that need for “young love,” Francis composes a silly and saccharine love letter to Anne, stating over and over how madly in love he is with her. It reads as the rantings of an elementary school child suffering from puppy love, rather than a grown man romantically involved with a woman. So, ultimately, in both Lester's and Francis's case, the central urge of their mid-life crises is for the kind of sex that can remind them of their younger, better days.

After each character has experienced his “light switch” moment, they begin to act out in rebellion against the world they're surrounded by. The social meetings that they're brought to against their will are a primary concern for both, and thus prime staging ground for their anger. At a real estate gathering, Lester brags flamboyantly about his “great relationship” with Carolyn, and begins to make out with her in front of her peers. Not only does he act out in this manner to make a scene, but clearly there is some intent on his part to parody the actual relationship he and Carolyn have together.. Shortly after, he disappears to smoke pot behind the building with a waiter. Francis, on the other hand, makes a scene at a neighborhood party, boisterously laughing at terrible jokes and taking glee at a woman's story about her dead cat. All the while, he is more interested in returning to his house to drive Anne back home, after a pit stop at Shady Hill's “lover's lane.” This, of course, is followed by his altercation with Mrs. Wrightson, a prominent figure in the neighborhood social scene. In both situations, there's a clear attempt at subversive action, and neither Lester nor Francis express any concern for the damage to the social reputation their behavior might cause. These events inevitably lead to heated discussions with their wives at home. With Lester, who is also reveling in the fact that he has quit his job and committed blackmail for a good severance package, the argument erupts at the dinner table. While Carolyn bemoans his new nature, he rants angrily about being a prisoner in his own home, culminating in his violently throwing a plate of asparagus against the wall. Similar aggressive tendencies show in Francis's fight with Julia. As she vents her anger over the damage Francis is causing to his entire family's social status, he is overcome with anger, striking his wife in the heat of the event. Clearly, Lester and Francis harbor deep seated resentment towards their wives for the lives they've molded for their husbands.



Along the same lines of acting out, both characters express a very base and childish nature at some point in their rebellion. Lester, for example, succumbs to frivolous childhood envy. Carolyn arrives home to find a 1970 Firebird in the driveway, and finds out that Lester had traded in his Camry for it. What's later revealed is that this is the same car his cousin had owned in Lester's childhood, and in essence, he was only looking to satisfy his personal desire, despite the fact that the Firebird is ridiculously inconvenient for a family man. In the same scene, Lester is playing with a remote controlled car, clumsily driving it into Carolyn's feet as she enters the room, and, upon announcing he's made the exchange, he famously quips in juvenile fashion, "I rule." These are less the actions of a mature man than they are indicative of a man-child.

Francis, similarly, acts out of jealousy. He strikes up a conversation with local teenage outcast Clayton Thomas, during which Clayton expresses disdain for the superficiality of the Shady Hills populace, and his desire to escape. Logically, Francis should appreciate this sentiment, as it mirrors his own. However, Clayton then mentions that he is engaged to marry his girlfriend, one Anne Murchison. Once Clayton has left, Francis comments to Julia on how the boy is lazy, irresponsible, affected, and smelly. He follows up on this behavior in a conversation with an associate of his, Trace Bearden, about recommending the boy for a job at a local office. Francis rejects him, saying that Clayton is worthless, and any kindness done to him would backfire. Obviously, Francis is ludicrously jealous of Clayton's relationship with Anne, and despite their concurrent views on their surroundings, he instead lashes out against the boy at every opportunity, spiteful and jealous of what he himself can't have.

In addition to these larger details, both Lester and Francis make pithy attempts at capturing their interest's affection in superficial ways. When Lester overhears Angela telling Jane that she'd really find her father hot if he was more muscular, he begins to work out incessantly in his garage. He even goes so far as to ask his neighbors about the best workout routine for making himself "look good naked." Along a similar line of logic, Francis intends to win Anne over by buying an expensive bracelet from a jewelry store, a spur of the moment purchase on his way home. While he never ends up giving Anne the bracelet, this laughable attempt at buying love is outright childish. Both men's behavior is quite clearly indicative of the typical mid-life crisis: a desperate regression to immature actions to recapture the sentiments of youth.

However, for every similarity, each a small piece of the larger picture, there are just as many stark differences in Lester and Francis' actions, demeanour, and, ultimately, their fates. Perhaps the most blatant of these differences is the utter severity of Lester's change in mindset. After falling for Angela, he is unapologetic in his alienation from Carolyn, and makes more of an attempt to befriend Jane's boyfriend Ricky than exhibit any serious parenting skills. Where Francis immediately apologizes for striking his wife, and soon after begins to try to reverse his emotional changes, Lester takes things a step further, acknowledging and expressing indifference to his wife's affair. While Lester hates his job and takes on the less stressful occupation of drive-thru cook, Francis merely channels all of his woes into the dream relationship he has with Anne. And where Lester ultimately attains his goal, and Angela tries to give herself to him, Francis meekly backs away from his interests after he finds her already taken.

There are also more blatant differences in their experiences. While Angela takes the initiative, teasing and toying with Lester at various moments, Anne's only approach towards Francis is in a moment of depression over her own father's reputation. While Francis broods in his mental fantasy world of his seemingly perfect life with Anne, Lester takes action in every feasible manner, aggressively trying to change his life instead of merely watching from the sidelines. He approaches Angela, he tries to shape himself into her ideal image of a man, he quits his job, he switches cars, and he confronts his wife and the man she's sleeping with. Basically, Lester flaunts and acts upon his new outlook on life. In the meantime, Francis dreams of a better life, backs down at his wife's demand, makes meager attempts at confronting those around him that he loathes, and ultimately, gives in and attempts to dupe himself into believing that he's a better, whole person for backing away from his new found flair for life, and instead, sitting in his basement, carving furniture out of wood.

And this encompasses the main difference in the stories of these two troubled men. As mentioned before, the reader, the viewer, the observer, must make a choice of rooting for these characters as underdogs, bucking the system and forcing their own ways upon the world. Alternatively, we can take pity on these characters for their inability to make the changes they need. The most extreme contrast between Lester Burnham and Francis Weed is strength of character. Lester runs head first to the cliff, that edge of society and acceptability, and takes the leap; Francis meanwhile tiptoes to the edge and then backs off in cowardice. We root for Lester, and truly feel for him when he's taken out while he's burning his brightest. But for Francis, we sigh dejectedly and wonder if he wouldn't be better off in Lester's place. Humorously enough, even in death, Lester is ultimately the more compelling character, as he muses gleefully over the route his life has taken, reflects on his family, and lets us know just how much beauty he's found. Meanwhile, Francis builds a coffee table, as the dogs and cats outside live freer lives than he.

While from a philosophical and dramatic perspective, it is quite easy to side with Lester Burnham, from a practical stand point, perhaps one can relate to, or at least understand Francis' decision. What will Lester's family gain from his death? While Lester himself says he is fulfilled, he leaves behind a family that was already on the edge of being torn to pieces and now lacks a central figure. Did Lester act selfishly? It can certainly be argued. Francis, while emotionally castrated, will be there, the ever available scapegoat and puppet of his occasionally loving family. To tell the truth, both of these men, these fathers and husbands, died. The resolution to both sides of the mid-life crisis is the final resolution, physically and emotionally, respectively. Is either fate any worse? It's difficult to say. In the end, though, it feels safe to fall back on this logic: if you're going to change your life, be sure not to inadvertently hit on your closeted homosexual ex-marine neighbor. The situation will not end well.

#### Works Cited

- American Beauty. Dir. Sam Mendes. DreamWorks, 1999.  
Cheever, John. "The Country Husband." The Norton Introduction to Literature. Ed. Alison Booth, J. Paul Hunter, and Kelly J. Mays. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. 74-91.

## Post-Colonialist Theory and Identity: Examples in Literature and Modern Society

*By Robert Sundermann*

The two binary opposing forces seen in post-colonial theory are the colonizer and the colonized. In the process of colonizing another country, it seems as though one's personal and national identity is lost in the conflict between colonized and colonizer. This can be said on both sides of colonization. The colonized may become influenced by the views of those colonizing, whether they view the colonized as inferior, as an exploitable source of economic prosperity, or both. The colonizers may also be met with resistance put forth by the colonized. These are only a few of the many possible effects of colonization on societies, cultures, and individuals. Colonization can also lay the foundation for a discovery of collective identity through the confusion that occurs during the conflict between binary forces.

A pure display of post-colonial theory is seen in Frantz Fanon's "Speech to the Congress of Black African Writers" in 1959. In this speech he thoroughly explains post-colonial theory as well as his stance concerning the potential negative outcomes of colonization. Important subtopics of this speech include the perspective of both colonizer and colonized, the destruction of indigenous culture, and the actions necessary in successfully opposing colonization. Although resistance is possible on the part of the colonized, it is almost certain that there will be cultural casualties. Some of the colonized may obtain the "gaze of the colonizer" and view themselves and their own culture as inferior in an attempt to better themselves in accepting the culture and views of the colonizers. The destruction of culture is seen through the "gaze of the colonizer" and cultural assimilation is forced upon the colonized.

Further cultural destruction appears to take place in the resistance against the colonizers. Resistance action is taken when the colonized fight the culture and ideals forced upon them by a rapid cultural transformation. The indigenous people shape their culture for resistance against the colonizer. The process of colonization involves the destruction of a precolonial culture and the creation of a different culture under colonial rule. Yet, by that time the cultural casualties have already begun. A place which was once free of colonists and would have most likely changed on its own, now has formed a cultural resistance contoured to fight the specific culture, ideals, and actions of the colonizers. This new indigenous culture has become a bastard culture through the results and actions of the conflict: it is now a combination of the indigenous culture, the colonizer culture, and the current cultural resistance.

Ania Loomba states that "The 'othering' of vast numbers of people, and their constructs as backwards and inferior depended upon what Abdul JanMohamed calls the 'Manichean allegory,' in which binary and implacable discursive opposition between races is produced. Such oppositions [...] are crucial not only for creating images of the outsider but equally essential for constructing the insider, the (usually white European male) 'self'" (104). This statement reinforces Fanon's statements quoted earlier.

The comment stating that the individual identity constructed in these colonial situations is usually from the "white European male" perspective is accurate in relation to colonial

theory in literature. But colonialism takes many forms in modern society. The example that fits colonial and post-colonial theory perfectly is that of the war overseas, mainly between the United States and Iraq. The mass media portrays the Iraqi opinion on this event as being almost perfectly split. The United States forcibly removes Saddam Hussein and declares that the Iraqi form of government is “inferior” as the “democracy” imposed upon Iraq is met with both praise and resistance. Iraqi citizens wearing suits and plain clothes line up to vote and proudly dip their thumbs in purple ink to publicly show that they accept their recently Americanized form of government. Other may don a more religious garb and refuse to vote while still remaining supportive of their fallen leader Saddam Hussein. The visible difference here is that some Iraqi people exercise cultural resistance through the use of violence and bombings. Thus, current Iraqi culture is a mashed up picture with deep religious ties and either a strong acceptance of or resistance to the Americanization of Iraq. This is a perfect example of colonialism in modern society, and it shows that many have not learned from the destructive actions taken by previous colonizers.

Another example of post-colonial theory is seen in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, New York. Bedford Stuyvesant is a predominantly African-American community which has deep cultural roots dating back decades into New York City history. Due to a high crime rate, the cost of housing is extremely low in Bedford Stuyvesant. This low cost attracts young, mostly white college students looking for a decent living situation for the right price. The long-time African-American residents believe their culture is slowly being eroded, and that they are being forced out of the neighborhood. Many African-American residents have adopted the slogan, “Bed-Stuy, do or die.” This is a celebration of their African-American roots, and expresses a determination not to move away from Bedford Stuyvesant in order to cement their positioning in the neighborhood. This shows how the African-American residents are also radically changing their culture in an attempt to resist gentrification. They are not causing harm to non-African American residents, but rather truly defining their cultural identity through their race and their neighborhood in the hope of attracting more African-American support for their cause to keep Bedford Stuyvesant black.

This development in turn met with opposition by those who accept gentrification and seek out residence in Bedford Stuyvesant because of its low rents. The members of this resistance are mostly young white college students attending Pratt Institute, which is located in the heart of Bedford Stuyvesant, and other young white residents with various obligations in New York City. The most revealing artifacts in their resistance to the strong African-American ties to the neighborhood are popular t-shirts with a picture of an AK-47 assault rifle and a text that reads “Defend Brooklyn.” The t-shirts essentially poke fun at the African-American resistance to gentrification and express their wearers’ feelings of apathy towards any previous cultures residing in Bedford Stuyvesant. They simply do not care and above all do not want to be told where they can and cannot live based on historical and racial neighborhood ties. Although this is a recent and ongoing situation, cultural reform can already be seen on both sides of the argument, as both sides are following the theory of post-colonialism through their beliefs about each other and their opposing cultural reforms.

Another example of post-colonial theory in literature is seen in Rudyard Kipling’s The Jungle Book. The most telling examples are seen in the actions taken by the human village, the tribe of wolves, and Mowgli, as he negotiates between these two groups. When Mowgli is

---

first accepted into the human village, he is labeled an outcast and a feral child raised in the jungle. He is seen as inferior to the humans living in the village, yet they still utilize his jungle skills to herd the buffalo of the village. Other than this task assigned to him, Mowgli's caretaker and the villagers seem to question Mowgli's actions and try to rehabilitate him into what they see as a normal human being. Later in the story, Mowgli uses the task of herding the buffalo to his advantage in order to kill an old foe. Although Mowgli seemingly abused his power, he rid the surrounding jungle area of an extremely dangerous tiger. The villagers stone him and he is once again cast out into the jungle. Perhaps it is not because of his actions that Mowgli is cast out, but because of the label the villagers had placed upon him. Rather than viewing Mowgli's killing of the tiger as beneficial to the village, the villagers see it as a destructive action taken because of his emotional tendencies developed in the jungle. This event can be viewed in a number of ways, yet the villagers seemingly alter their perspective of the situation to match the way they see Mowgli. Mowgli then returns to his former society in the wolf pack, but refuses to join them out of spite for casting him out earlier in the story. Mowgli roams the jungle to hunt alone, uninfluenced by any societal beliefs.

This work not only expressed the view of the Other in a fictionalized story, but it also is a mirror for modern society. Where identity exists, others also exist. This is not only a matter of identity, but also of labels. Even those who believe they may live a life free of all labels and take life as it comes, are labeled as those who believe they are free of labels. In modern society labeling is inescapable. Personal identity is another view of the label we bestow upon ourselves; anyone who does not fit our label is considered the Other. This view of identity and Other can also be examined through the views of deconstruction theory. In order for identity to exist, it must be defined by that which it is not. The Other and personal identity are binary opposites, yet need each other to exist and define themselves.

Examining the various perspectives of The Jungle Book, it can be seen from each that there is a self and an Other. Also, through the views of self and other arise views of inferiority. The villagers view Mowgli as inferior, yet they have no idea who he is. Views of inferiority stem from an overall lack of understanding, and an identity of the Other is formed through vague interpretations. From this there also stems the need to clearly define oneself. In a collection edited by Bruce Alvin King, C.L. Innes states that "the literature produced as part of a cultural nationalist project is a literature produced in opposition to the narratives and representations which deny dignity and autonomy to those who have been colonized. But their opposition is addressed not just to the colonizing power, nor even primary to it, but to the people of the emerging nation, and seeks to engage them in their own project of self-definition" (120). When applied to The Jungle Book, this statement seems accurate. Perhaps not consciously, Mowgli uses the buffalo to kill the lion Shere-Khan in the jungle, showing that he may never lose his ties to the jungle as it is a large part of his identity. The villagers also engage in a process of self-definition by violently kicking Mowgli out of the village, showing him that they do not act like Mowgli or share his ideals. As for the self-definition of the emerging nation, examine Mowgli when he sets out with Grey Brother to hunt alone in the jungle free of both human and wolf societies. Mowgli is a feral cross breed of human raised in the jungle, while Grey Brother is a wolf influenced enough by Mowgli to trust him and hunt by his side, also free of societies. Together their different identities and

backgrounds appear to lead to a process of self-discovery and definition that can only be achieved free of societies and found within themselves.

Stephen Dunn's poem "To a Terrorist" addresses the collective identity of those perceived to be terrorists. Dunn feels for the oppression of countries who may produce terrorists, yet also expresses his hate for their actions and violence. When looking at this poem from the perspective of questioning identity, the Other, and post-colonial theory, Dunn's poem is very misleading. First, the labels which have been mentioned throughout this paper only define identity through the Other. Dunn is not a terrorist; those who seek to change Dunn's political beliefs are considered terrorists. If this letter is to a terrorist in the eyes of Dunn, those considered to be terrorists would completely disregard the poem. Dunn has no way of knowing whether terrorists consider themselves to indeed be terrorists. Thus the poem is misdirected by the terrorist label.

The poem also mentions Dunn's belief in Christ's forgiving nature: "Christ turned his singular cheek, one man's holiness another's absurdity" (38), stating that in forgiveness, the forgiver is right and the one being forgiven is wrong. It seems as if Dunn implies that the actions caused by his religious beliefs are righteous and violent actions are caused by another religion. From a post-colonial standpoint, Dunn views the terrorists as the Other and inferior because of their violent actions and their religious affiliation.

The poem itself is another telling example of the impossibility of escaping labels, and of modern post-colonial thoughts. Dunn first uses the vague label of a terrorist to direct his poem. He expresses his sympathy for the actions causing the "terrorists" to act violently, but states that he still hates them for their actions. Perhaps the actions of a "terrorist" are a tool of resistance to colonization. Colonization brings about violence, and if it were not for colonization, it is likely that violence and "terrorists" would not exist either. The true meaning and direction of Dunn's poem is ultimately clouded by labels and feelings of inferiority, showing that colonial thoughts are still pervasive in modern society.

Post-colonialism in past and present literature offers an interesting look into modern society. The destructive examples of the past are still alive today. There are inferiors and superiors, selves and others, us versus them. Through the examination of post-colonial theory, the questions surrounding identity may be more clearly defined or left open for even more interpretation. There is no escape from binary oppositions and thus there will be a self and other by which identity finds definition. Perhaps in this research we can find the reason for modern thoughts, and we may discover that our thoughts, actions, and identity are products of something much larger than ourselves.

#### Works Cited

- Dunn, Stephen. "To a Terrorist." Alicia Ostriker: Poems for the Time. MobyLives. 4 Feb 2007. [http://www.mobyLives.com/Ostriker\\_anthology.html#Dunn](http://www.mobyLives.com/Ostriker_anthology.html#Dunn).
- Fanon, Frantz. "Speech to the Congress for Black African Writers, 1959." Reciprocal Bases of National Culture and the Fight for Freedom. 4 Feb 2007. <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/fanon/national-culture.htm>.
- King, Bruce Alvin. New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Google Book Search 05 May 2007.

<http://books.google.com>.

Kipling, Rudyard. The Jungle Book. Chapter 4. Project Gutenberg. 4 February 2007.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/236/236-h/236-h.htm>.

Loomba, Ania. Colonialism/Postcolonialism. New York: Routledge, 1998. Google Book Search 05 May 2007. <http://books.google.com>

**English 240**

**Women in Literature**

Writing keeps me from believing everything I read.

Gloria Steinem



---

**Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman:  
The Price of Freedom**  
*By Amanda Taylor*

Focusing on the themes of independence and self-identity, Kate Chopin's and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's writing reflects the rush of freedom that occurred when each was separated from her husband. Whether it was their intention or the side effect of a family tragedy, both writers reached the peak of their literary careers in the period following their loss or separation. Kate Chopin's most famous piece The Awakening tells the story of a woman unhappy in her marriage, and determined to break free of it. Much like the female narrator of Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," Chopin's character does achieve her own liberation, but neither character achieves happiness. Instead Chopin's commits suicide, while Gilman's hits the bottom of insanity.

More comparable to Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" would be Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," in which a woman is informed that her husband has died in a train wreck. However, instead of grieving, she celebrates her newfound freedom. Both the woman in Gilman's story and the woman in Chopin's story were bound by their husbands. Neither one was allowed to leave her house by order of her husband out of love and fear for their lives in their sickened conditions. Gilman's character proclaims, "Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia. But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there." It's not that her husband does not want her to leave the house, but rather that he believes her illness will only worsen with the stress and pressures of social interactions. Eventually spending all of her time indoors and suffering from overmedication, the woman goes insane, tearing down the wallpaper she believes taunts her and creeps around her, and declaring herself free. Chopin's character, Mrs. Mallard, also makes such a claim when told of her husband's death. "Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own," she thought in place of grieving thoughts of her husband. Both characters tolerate their husbands rather than love them, and put freedom above them by the end of each story. Also in each story, the main characters are treated with a "rest treatment." While "The Story of an Hour" does not state this directly, it is assumed that since Mrs. Mallard is confined to the house, and treated delicately with tragic news, that she does not do much work, either, like cooking or cleaning, and simply rests.

The main difference between the two stories is how each woman goes about attaining freedom. Gilman's character strives for freedom. First, she asks her husband John for a little bit. She asks if she may leave the house on several occasions. John forbids it claiming "he would as soon put fireworks in [her] pillowcase as to let [her] have those stimulating people [Cousin Henry and Julia] about now." Soon after that, the woman begins her descent into madness, and starts obsessing about her wallpaper and how she might get out the woman she sees inside of it. In Chopin's story, the reader never encounters Mr. Mallard, so it is impossible to tell whether or not Mrs. Mallard ever inquires about the world outside her house, although the film adaptation of the story assumes she does. The difference in the acquisition of each one's independence is that Gilman's character is shown working for her

release, while Mrs. Mallard has a sense of freedom thrust upon her. But neither one's freedom comes at a low cost; one loses her mind, while the other loses her life.

Another difference that exists between the stories is the time frame. Chopin's story spans one hour, as claimed by the title. Gilman's, however, spans several days and several diary entries throughout which Gilman's unnamed character can be seen deteriorating mentally. It is obvious a short while into the story what the fate of her mental state is going to be. There is no surprise for the reader when at the end of the story, the woman is biting beds and tearing down wallpaper claiming to have set free not only a woman who lived behind it but also herself. On the other hand, the death of Chopin's character is a complete surprise, as are most of Chopin's endings. Never once does the reader expect Mallard's husband to "return from the dead" because the storyline previous to her death was non-horrific. Although the happiness of Mrs. Mallard is alarming and even disturbing to think about considering the circumstances, her death is even more alarming and frightening.

Also, despite the fact that the reader knows both women are oppressed by their husbands, intentional or not, the oppression is less clear in one story than it is in the other. In "The Yellow Wallpaper" it is very obvious that the husband John does not want his wife to leave the house, despite her pleas and the fact that all the rest she is getting does not make an impact on her condition. In fact, this idea is based on experience, as Gilman herself was a patient treated with "rest treatment" and found that it did not help her, and two years after treatment she suffered a mental breakdown. Even when she wakes in the middle of the night, when she leaves the bed, John says to her, "Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold." Contrarily, in "The Story of an Hour," the husband is not present at all. Within the first sentence, his death has been revealed, and in the second paragraph its nature is described as well. It is not until Mrs. Mallard is alone in her room crying, "Free! Body and soul free!" that the reader may assume Mrs. Mallard has been held in captivity by her husband.

This also allows the reader to wonder if her husband Brently had asked her to stay within the house due to her condition, or if perhaps she was only oppressed by the role of a woman in her time period to respect her husband's wishes, even if they were not demands. Brently Mallard may not have been the despotic force the reader usually assumes him to be, unlike Gilman's John who is the distinct reason for his wife's confinement. Where the woman of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is hardly tolerant of her husband by the end of the story, Mrs. Mallard reflects fondly on the time she loved her husband, and thinks that despite her happiness at freedom, she will cry at his funeral, despite taking advantage of the perks of his death: "She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that never looked save with love upon her, fixed and grey and dead." In addition, instead of denying his death, Mrs. Mallard easily accepts it, and weeps upon hearing of it. "She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms." Therefore, although she readily accepts her husband's death, she does briefly grieve before celebrating. This separates her from Gilman's character, whose husband does not die, but is distanced by his wife's insanity. By the end of "The Yellow Wallpaper" the wife is incapable of loving her husband because she is consumed by her obsession. It is

---

plausible that Mrs. Mallard loved her husband, and never sought freedom. That perhaps she only embraced it when it presented itself to her in such a neat little package.

Much like the events in their lives, Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote about characters that felt liberated by the separation or loss of their husband. Each writer is similar to her own character. Kate Chopin does suffer the loss of her husband, but turns to her interest in writing because of it. Granted, she started writing to support her family, but there were other easier forms of work for women at the time. Gilman separated from her husband after birthing her first child, and falling victim to what most believe to be postpartum depression. Gilman herself sought freedom as her character did, through obtaining a divorce and later remarrying. These events are reflected in both writer's works, most notably Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" and Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper". Chopin's The Awakening also references ideas of freedom through unwanted means, although not nearly as strongly or clearly as does "The Story of an Hour". Despite the varying circumstances of each character's journey towards independence, both do accomplish the same task, although they do so through different means. While one searches for it, the other stumbles upon it. Where one suffers a long path to success, the other succeeds in merely an hour. However, both do succeed, and both pay the price of freedom.

# English 254

## British Literature II

I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back again.

Oscar Wilde

---

**Responding to William Blake's  
"The Sick Rose"**  
*By Sam Szapucki*

"The Sick Rose"

O Rose thou art sick.  
The invisible worm,  
That flies in the night  
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy:  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake

Blake's "The Sick Rose" tells of a dying rose attacked by an unseen disease. The disease takes the form of an "invisible worm." The "bed / of crimson joy" refers to the beautiful roses. The last two lines seem to be about the worm's need to feed on the rose. His life is enhanced as the rose dies. The parasitic worm must live off of beauty. On the surface of the poem, we could take the rose as a symbol of love, as roses usually symbolize beauty and romance. Knowing that Blake was one of the radical thinkers of his time (like Wollstonecraft and Godwin), I believe this poem to be about society rather than love. Blake was part of the group of writers that initially supported the revolutions in America and France and felt that this was the dawn of a new age. The rose, in this poem, was to symbolize society as a whole. The invisible worm could be seen as the monarchy. As the worm's life is sustained by the rose, monarchy exists solely to feed off the soul of society. Society would be much better off without monarchy, but monarchy cannot exist without society. "Of crimson joy" stands not only for the rose, but also for the bloodshed of the revolution. This bloodshed exists in all revolutions throughout the world. The life that is destroyed through the bloodshed is a necessity for change. "The Sick Rose" takes a stand against the tyrannical system that had been in place in Great Britain for years and years. With the revolutions in America and France, Blake saw an opportunity for change. It would not be an easy transition and everyone must make sacrifices for society to change.

## Literature of the Industrial Landscape

By Joe Pienkowski

In the “Industrial Landscape,” an overview of the Victorian “Machine Age,” editors Heather Henderson and William Sharpe emphasize the anguish of the working class whose lives became more and more bleak. The once beautiful work places were now becoming shady places that drained the emotions of those who worked in them. Charles Dickens and Friedrich Engels were two authors, among many, who lived through the Industrial Landscape. They both showed what the working conditions became like with machines taking over manual labor.

During the industrial revolution, British work places began to crumble. The factories significantly changed the role of the worker. Machines began to take the jobs of people, and “the factory system disrupted not only traditional patterns of work but also family life” (Damrosch 1137). The cities began to become crowded and even more pleasant work places began to change in the eyes of those who worked there. Families saw their previously upbeat towns become dark and deadbeat towns, and their living conditions worsened: “whole families – sometimes several families – might live in a single room” (1137).

Literature on the Industrial Landscape, can sometimes be difficult to comprehend. The third edition of *The Longman Anthology: British Literature, Volume 2 B (The Victorian Age)*, included pieces by Charles Dickens and Friedrich Engels, which depict the working conditions during the industrial revolution.

In Charles Dickens’ excerpt from *Hard Times*, “Coketown,” readers experience a realistic vision of what it was like to live in the “hard times” of the industrial revolution. Manual labor was becoming less and less needed. The industrial revolution brought machines into the work place, and it was hard for the population to find work. Those who did find work would compare their new work places to their previous ones. Dickens includes great visuals, so readers can truly see what the living and working conditions were like during these times of hardship. He begins the story by describing the town as being a vivid contented red color; however, because of the lack of manual labor, the buildings around town were now a dark blackish grey. In Dickens’ time, factories and industrialization began to displace the human workforce, and people had to do something new for work. The color comparison is Dickens’ way of showing his readers the changes over time. The town was first a satisfied red brick, clean and happy. When factories took over, it became a dim grey, dirty and sad. In Dickens’ eyes, the town was now in a state of pandemonium, with most of the townspeople out looking for work. Also, the factories were horrendous and deplorable to anyone who did find work there.

Friedrich Engels’ excerpt from *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, “The Great Towns,” demonstrates that despite the progress of industrialization, there were many negatives. Although nice elegant neighborhoods were built around town, there were still poverty-stricken people. These once respected people, who worked in factories, were now living in run-down houses sometimes with more than one family. The bad and the good will forever be together, as are spring showers and winter snow. Even the working class poor

---

were separated into (not identified) classes: “The workers are segregated in separate districts where they struggle through life as best they can out of sight of the more fortunate classes of society” (Damrosch 1153). Will there ever be common ground between people; will they ever be able to stand side by side without class rankings and separation?

The industrial revolution truly made the working people into the working poor or the lower class. Before machines, factories were filled with workers, with people working hard, long hours making money to survive. They were known as the working class. However, when machines took over, these once appreciated people became the lower class or working poor, because they were now doing any job just to work, and they were paid little to nothing. Dickens and Engels clearly put it in plain words, to readers of the Victorian age, what the “Machine Age” was, how it took over the work place and also laid the foundation for the class system we are still familiar with today.

#### Works Cited

Damrosch, David and Kevin J.H. Dettmar. “Perspectives: The Industrial Landscape.”  
*The Longman Anthology of British Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York: Pearson,  
2006.

**English 255**

**World Literature I**

The pen is the tongue of the mind.

Miguel de Cervantes



---

**“If I hadn’t seen it with my own two eyes...”**

*By Chris Jensen*

Ironic contrasts between sight and blindness, ignorance and insight are central themes in “Oedipus the King” and contribute much to the play’s tragic impact. Each of the central characters in “Oedipus” plays an active role in evoking the play’s ironies and symbolic references to sight and blindness. In the play, the concept of blindness is explored through the contrasts between physical blindness and a lack of intellectual awareness, while the concept of sight is investigated in terms of contrasts between actual vision and intellectual recognition. The play deals with the theme of insight in terms of each character’s degree of self knowledge, and his or her ability to comprehend and act upon that awareness. The play’s final irony evolves from the combined effect of all three of these central themes.

Although Oedipus perceives himself to be fully self-aware, superior, and intellectually brilliant, he is, in fact, neither as aware, as superior, or as intelligent as he imagines. Oedipus’s egotistical intellectual arrogance gradually drives him to his tragic fate. Throughout the entire play Oedipus embodies arrogance, whether it involves attempting to evade his predestined fate, boldly murdering Laius, tackling the riddle of the sphinx, or vowing to find the long vanished murderer of King Laius. In each of these instances, Oedipus is absolutely certain that he is doing the wisest possible thing. In actual fact, he is merely blindly fulfilling prophecy as well as moving ignorantly toward his demise with each action he takes. The theme of insight comes into play here in various ways. Oedipus believes himself to be full of insight and therefore acts with certainty, force, and arrogance. He never even considers the possibility that he could be mistaken, capable of human error, or lacking in full knowledge. Instead, he believes that it is those around him who are narrow minded and lacking in understanding. Oedipus “sees” others as foolish, intellectually limited and flawed, when, in most instances, the greatest foolishness, flaws and limitations are his own.

Jocasta’s ignorance of Oedipus’s identity, as well as her blindness to the truth of her incestuous marriage adds another aspect of irony to play. Had Jocasta, much like Oedipus, not attempted to avoid her fate, or had she merely killed the infant Oedipus herself, she would not have had to face the horrors she encounters at the end of the play. Jocasta is blind to the realities of her parenting and of her marriage. She unknowingly marries both her child and the murderer of her husband, Laius. She lives completely unaware that she has fulfilled, rather than avoided the prophecy she so fears. For Jocasta (again like Oedipus), the crushing irony is that she is completely blind to the truth of her own situation for most of the play. She acts boldly, assuming that she has managed to outwit the horrible prophecy and escaped her fate. “Apollo brought neither thing to pass. My baby no more murdered his father than Laius suffered – his wildest fear – death at his own son’s hands. That’s how the seers and all their revelations mapped out the future” (636). However, when she finally realizes the actual facts of her life and gains insight, she “sees” suicide as her only escape.

In direct and ironic contrast to Oedipus and Jocasta, Tiresias (the seer) is always physically blind, but virtually always has insight into the people and events around him.

While he never has his eyesight, he always has a more complete understanding and awareness than Oedipus or Jocasta. The most continuous irony of the play evolves out of the constant reversal of Oedipus's and Tiresias's roles as sighted and blind individuals. Never is Oedipus with his natural sight able to see the reality of his situation. Always, the sightless Tiresias has insight and understanding that Oedipus imagines having, but actually lacks. Oedipus accuses Tiresias, "You've lost your power, stone-blind, stone-deaf – senses, eyes blind as stone!" (627-628) Then Tiresias says to Oedipus, "Blind who now has eyes" (630). If the outcome of this irony were not so horrible, it would be almost funny.

Similar to Oedipus and Jocasta in a way, the people of Thebes are blind to the truth yet think they have understanding. They see Oedipus as their savior, while he is, in reality, the cause of their troubles. Oedipus comes to Thebes after solving the riddle of the sphinx, and gains the unquestioning respect and praise of the people. In their blind hero worship, they actually crown Laius's son and his murderer their king. They go even further in their blind ignorance and offer Jocasta as a "trophy wife" to Oedipus. In doing this they both help fulfill the incest prophesy and bring the curse of the Gods upon themselves. Blinded by their hero worship for Oedipus, they accidentally help to destroy him and curse their City as well. Both the city and its rulers live in blind ignorance.

Ironically, the entire goal of Oedipus's life is to use his intelligence to avoid his fate when, in fact, he is creating his fate by himself. Every step of the way, his choices are designed to avoid fulfilling the prophecy; yet every action he takes brings him closer to achieving it. Two key factors that contribute to Oedipus's fate are basic misconceptions. He overestimates his knowledge and intellect and is therefore arrogant and intolerant of human error. Each of these traits ultimately helps to destroy him. If Oedipus had not been so arrogant, had not seen himself as vastly superior, he might not have tried to reinvent or resist his fate. Ironically, if Oedipus had been more modest and let things be, he would not have left Corinth and fulfilled the prophecy. Instead, his arrogance and excessive self-confidence lead him to attempt to outsmart the Gods and avoid his predetermined fate. The gods fully understood Oedipus's arrogant nature and knew what he would try to do in order to avoid his fate. All that was needed was for Oedipus to act on his presumptions regarding his intelligence and the outcome was a certainty.

This also made for a more dramatic ending for the play. Oedipus is sure, for so long, that he has avoided his damnation. When the truth is finally revealed to Oedipus and he discovers the ultimate truth of his existence, he is completely and utterly astonished and crushed by his own ignorance: "O god – all come true, all burst to light! O light – now let me look my last on you! I stand revealed at last – cursed in my birth, cursed in my marriage, cursed in the lives I cut down with these hands!" (649, lines 1307 – 1311)

This leads into yet a greater irony. Near the end of the play, Oedipus physically blinds himself with Jocasta's brooches by gouging his eyes out. "He rips off her brooches, the long gold pins holding her robes – and lifting them high, looking straight up into the points, he digs them down the sockets of his eyes, crying, "You, you'll see no more the pain I suffered, all the pain I caused! Too long you looked on the ones you never should have seen, blind to the ones you longed to see, to know! Blind from this hour on! Blind in the darkness, blind!" (651, lines 1403 -1410) When at last Oedipus gains insight into his true identity, the horror of his former lack of awareness, and his shame drive him to physically

blind himself. He has made so many errors, while thinking that he saw things clearly, that he now cannot bear to see anything any longer. He now exchanges his intellectual insight for physical blindness.

Examining Jocasta, one finds various ironies involved in her character as well. She consented to having her child killed because of her fear of the prophecy she and Laius had been given. By doing this, Jocasta felt sure that she could outwit the Gods and could avoid her fate. Like Oedipus, her self-assurance and arrogance guided her destruction. It is also an interesting irony that Jocasta, her son, and her husband, Laius all believed that they had the capability of changing the fates destined for them.

“Oedipus: My wife – she gave it to you? Shepherd: Yes, yes my king. Oedipus: Why, what for? Shepard: To kill it. Oedipus: Her own son, how could she? Shepard: She was afraid – frightening prophecies. Oedipus: What? Shepard: They said – he’d kill his parents. Oedipus: But you gave him to this old man – why? Shepard: I pitied the little baby, master, hoped he’d take him off to his own country, far away, but he saved him for this, this fate. If you are the man he says you are, believe me, you were born for pain” (648-649, Lines 1289 - 1306).

In each case, the individual believes that they can avoid the prophecy. Jocasta and Laius try to avoid it by sending their son out to be killed. The Shepard believes that he can avoid the fate, save the infant, and still accomplish his job by giving him to the old man. It is evident that the real irony lies in the fact that the effort to avoid pain and fate is exactly what brings the fate to pass! Jocasta is involved with another irony as well. She is devastated by the loss of her infant son, and yet, in the end, she becomes suicidal when she realizes that Oedipus is not dead. She now realizes that she married her husband’s murderer as well as her own son. In a further ironic twist she had children by Oedipus, thereby completing the prophecy’s total catastrophe.

A conversation between Oedipus and Tiresias is a prime example of the play’s ironic contrasting of blindness and insight. Although Tiresias is physically blind, he was not prevented from “seeing” the truth. He knew that the prophecy (Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother) would, and had, come true. Oedipus questions Tiresias, who is, at first, unwilling to reveal any of his knowledge to Oedipus. Tiresias’s reasoning behind this is to prevent pain for Oedipus, as well as for himself. In his ignorance of this fact, Oedipus grows angry. He knows that Tiresias is withholding information. Oedipus calls him names such as, “The scum of the Earth” and says that he “Would enrage a heart of stone.” Oedipus then makes an assumption and accuses Tiresias of plotting the murder of Laius. In response, Tiresias reveals the truth that Oedipus himself was the killer.

“Is that so? I charge you, then, submit to that decree you just laid down; from this day onward speak to no one...” Oedipus becomes very defensive. More angry words are exchanged, and Oedipus says that Tiresias has lost his powers, and that he is “Stone blind, and stone deaf.” This is a truly ironic statement since Tiresias has, in fact, spoken complete truth: a truth that Oedipus lacks the ability to see or understand. Also, consider that Tiresias is mocked by Oedipus for his physical blindness, yet Oedipus himself is physically blinded by the end of the play.

Terms such as ignorance, awareness, sight, blindness, puzzles and solutions play a major role in the play “Oedipus the King.” The play creates irony throughout by giving one

character a specific trait and another related character the polar opposite of that trait. Throughout the play people who appear wise are actually ignorant. People who have their eyesight lack vision. Oedipus whose claims to fame lie in his supposed intelligence and problem solving skills is in fact the model of ignorance and totally puzzled by the true facts surrounding his life. The play's warnings about life seem to suggest that there are few simple solutions to life's real problems and that awareness is the most valuable tool available. "Oedipus" creates a feeling that above all, one must have insight in order to fully "see" and comprehend the world around them. Ultimately, one has the freedom of creating one's fate, since fate is the compilation of one's actions.

#### Works Cited

Oedipus the King. The Norton Anthology of World Literature. Volume A, Second Edition.  
Ed. Sarah Lawall and Maynard Mack. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.  
617-658.

## **“The Ramayana” and “The Book of Job”: Comparisons**

*By Dawn Vigliotti*

In reading “The Ramayana” and “The Book of Job”, it was surprising how many similarities there were considering the two stories come from two very different worlds. The most poignant and obvious similarity is that which tells of righteousness, honesty, faith and virtue. Both stories can be used to instruct people how to live.

“The Ramayana” is a great Indian epic that tells about life in India (500 B.C.) and offers models in dharma. The hero, Rama, lived his whole life by the rules of dharma. Likewise, “the Book of Job” has long been praised as a masterpiece of literature. Job is a figure in the Old Testament described as an upright, virtuous and righteous man who lived his entire life in Uz according to God’s law.

“The Ramayana” begins with Rama, a prince, living a privileged life in a palace with his wife, his father, his three mothers and his three brothers. “The Book of Job” begins with Job living a privileged life. He was wealthy in terms of slaves and cattle. He had seven sons and three daughters and was “the greatest man among all the people of the East” (77).

Life for Rama was progressing as it should according to the rules of dharma. He was about to be crowned as the new king which made everyone happy. “The people rejoiced as if they themselves were being installed on the throne. They said to one another Rama’s coronation is truly a blessing to all the people. While he rules and he will rule for a long time, no one will even have an unpleasant experience or ever suffer. Rama too was happy to see the huge crowds of people” (896). Likewise for Job, life was as it should be according to God’s law. After each of his sons’ celebrations, Job would pray for them.

In an instant, both Rama’s and Job’s lives would be changed drastically. Queen Kaikeyi challenged King Dasaratha similar to the way Satan challenged God. Kaikeyi used dharma to benefit herself and her son Bharata by putting the king in a position where he would have to “destroy” Rama’s life. “Kaikeyi now said to Rama...how can a truthful man, a righteous king go back on his word...I shall reveal the truth to you if you assure me that you will honor your father’s promise” (897).

In the book of Job, Satan challenged God in order to prove that Job’s fear of God was only because God blessed him. Satan wanted to prove to God that Job would curse God if everything he had was taken away. “Then Satan answered the Lord and said Doth Job fear for naught? Hast thou made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou has blessed the work of his hands, and all his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath and he will curse thee to thy face” (78).

When Rama learned that he would not be king, and worse, would be exiled into the forest for fourteen years, his response was befitting a true righteous hero. “Promptly and without the least sign of the slightest displeasure, Rama said so be it I shall immediately proceed to the forest to dwell there clad in bark and animal skin...I shall go and I myself will gladly give away to my brother, Bharata, the kingdom, wealth, Sita and even my own life, and it is easier when all this is done in obedience to my father’s command” (897).

When, in one day, Job lost all his material possessions through various calamities and his sons and daughters were killed when a tornado destroyed the house they were gathered in, Job, though deeply grieved, worshiped God and did not curse him: “Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground and worshipped and said naked came I out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord, in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (78). Satan then made another challenge saying that Job would curse God if he himself were harmed. Job was then struck with painful boils over his entire body.

Though “Rama was not affected at all by this sudden turn of events” (897), his brother Laksmana and his mother Kausalya were devastated. “Laksmana said: I think Rama should not go to the forest. The king has lost his mind, overpowered as he is by senility and lust. Rama is innocent. And no righteous man in his senses would forsake his innocent son. A prince with the least knowledge of statesmanship should ignore the childish command of a king who has lost his senses” (898). Kausalya said “you cannot go to the forest because Kaikeyi wants you to. If as you say you are devoted to dharma, then it is your duty to stay here and serve me, your mother” (898). Sita, on the other hand, does not try to deter Rama from obeying his father, but simply tries and succeeds in convincing Rama that she belongs at his side. Sita says to him, “...the wife alone shares the life of her husband...the husband alone is her sole refuge here in this world and in the other world too. Hence I shall accompany you to the forest...life with the husband is incomparably superior to life in a palace...nor will I regard life in the forest as exile or as suffering. With you it will be more than heaven to me. It will not be the least hardship to me; without you, even heaven is hell” (901). Laksmana also insisted that if Rama intends to obey his father and be exiled into the forest, then he too will accompany him. “Laksmana now spoke to Rama; if you are determined to go, then I shall go ahead of you...my place is near you, my duty to serve you” (902-03).

Job’s wife was not so understanding. She didn’t share Job’s strong faith in God’s will. In fact, she lost what little faith she might have had and told Job to curse God and die. “Then said his wife unto him Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die” (78). Job however, refused to sin with his lips. He said to his wife “though speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall not receive evil?” (78)

Entering their new hermitage, “Rama, Laksmana and Sita dwelt in it with great joy and happiness” (904). Although Rama, Laksmana and Sita all accepted their “punishment”/ new life without question, Job had a more difficult time of it. After he sat in silence with his three friends for seven days and seven nights, he finally spoke. He began to curse the day he was born and the night of his conception, wondering why he did not die at birth or even be stillborn. He wondered aloud why the suffering who longed for death are allowed to linger. “After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day...let the day perish wherein I was born and the night in which it was said there is a man child conceived...why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly...wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not?” (79)

Rama did not begin to question his new life until his wife Sita was abducted by Ravana. It was then that he became angry and vengeful and began to curse everyone and everything. He began to think that he must have done something so horrible to have deserved such punishment. Rama said to Laksmana,

“No one in this whole world is guilty of as many misdeeds as I am, O Laksmana and that is why I am being visited by sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief, breaking my heart and dementing me. I lost my kingdom, and I was torn away from my relations and friends...I lost my father, I was separated from my mother...I was getting reconciled to that misfortune. But I could not remain at peace with myself for long. Now this terrible misfortune, the worst of all, has visited me...The demons have earned my unquenchable hate and wrath. I shall destroy all of them. Nay, I shall destroy all the powers that be who refuse to return Sita to me. Look at the irony of fate Laksmana: we adhere to dharma, but dharma could not protect Sita...I shall set aside all these virtues and the universe shall witness my supreme glory, which will bring about the destruction of all creatures including the demons.” (919-20)

Laksmana tried to console Rama and convince him not to lash out at all of creation: “Rama, pray do not go against your nature...who does not misfortune visit in this world, O Rama? And misfortune departs from man as quickly as it visits him. Hence, pray, regain your composure” (920).

Job’s friends, however, were not quite as comforting. They each were convinced that no one, especially one as righteous as Job, could be punished so severely without cause. Eliphaz directs Job to seek God’s forgiveness expressing his view that the innocent do not suffer, only the wicked do. Bildad suggests that if Job would repent, God would fill him once again with joy. Zophar suggests that Job actually received less suffering than he deserved. This annoyed Job as he was confident in his own integrity. Job expressed only his desire to speak with God to ask Him what he has done to deserve such suffering. Unlike Laksmana to Rama, Job’s friends do not offer any help or solutions, just opinions about Job’s guilt. They are convinced that suffering comes to the wicked and therefore Job must be wicked.

Job, while maintaining his claims of integrity and how he has treasured God’s word, admits he is awed by God’s dealings. He concludes his debate with his friends by listing various sins, which if he had committed, he agrees he would have been guilty of and deserved punishment for. He again and still maintains his claim to innocence, his belief that he does not deserve his great suffering.

Rama and Job are similar also in that they both withstood their suffering until the time came when each of their lives were restored. Both men were able to hold tight to their righteousness and virtue. Rama said, “A noble man does not recognize the harm done to him by others and he never retaliates, for he is the embodiment of goodness. One should be compassionate towards all, the good and the wicked, nay even toward those who are fit to be killed: who is free from sin?” (248) Lord Siva said to Rama “you have fulfilled a most difficult task” (950). Bharata said to Rama, “Rama here is your kingdom which I held in trust for you during your absence. I consider myself supremely blessed in being able to behold your return to Ayodhya. By your grace, the treasury has been enriched tenfold by

me, as also the storehouses and the strength of the nation ...Thus did Rama rule the world for eleven thousand years, surrounded by his brothers” (952, 953).

When at last Job is granted his desire to have an audience with God, he is overwhelmed and admits his unworthiness and inability to answer any of the Lord’s questions. Job’s response to the Lord is to humbly acknowledge God’s ability to do everything. He also confesses that he spoke of things he did not understand. Job now repents. The Lord then blesses Job by giving him twice the number of livestock he had in the beginning. He is also blessed with seven sons and three daughters. The book of Job closes with the comment that Job lived another 140 years before he finally died. “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before...so the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning...after this lived Job an hundred and forty years and saw his sons and his sons’ sons even four generations so Job died being old and full of days” (92-3).

As “The Ramayana” tells of righteousness and devotion to good over evil, so does “The Book of Job.” From childhood, most Indians learn about the characters and incidents of “The Ramayana”. They are taught to “live as Rama, live as Sita”. Likewise, studying “The Book of Job,” Christians can learn of God’s power, wisdom and sovereignty. Christians can see how men of God grappled with the question of God’s justice and can observe that God does take notice of the righteous. Both stories inspire readers to hold onto their faith at all costs, even when there are no obvious answers to be had, because in the end, the reward will be great.

#### Works Cited

- “From *Job*.” The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Volume A, Second Edition. Ed. Sarah Lawall and Maynard Mack. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002: 77-93.
- “The Ramayana of Valmiki.” The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Volume A, Second Edition. Ed. Sarah Lawall and Maynard Mack. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002: 890-953.



**English 299C**

**Jewish and Holocaust Literature**

Storytelling reveals meaning without  
committing the error of defining it.

Hannah Arendt

## From Haven to Home: The First Wave of Immigration

*By Stuart Aron*

Isaac Mayer Wise, Emma Lazarus, and Penina Moise are all authors whose writing reflects their dual allegiance to Judaism and Americanism. As American Jews, they sought to balance their identities - to openly declare themselves as Jews while strongly affirming their role as American citizens.

Emma Lazarus, a Jew born in America, was heavily involved in the American literary community, yet many of her writings have a Jewish theme. One such example is her poem entitled, "In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport."

Lazarus begins the poem with a description of the noises of the busy vacation town of Newport, noises that cannot enter the "consecrated spot." The second stanza depicts the synagogue as almost an allegory of the state of Jewish culture at that time and place. Lazarus writes that, "No signs of life are here: the very prayers...Inscribed around are in a language dead." She later uses the words of extinction - "...the light of the perpetual lamp is spent," and writes "Upon this relic of the days of old, the present vanishes." But it is then that Lazarus reaffirms the existence of Judaism and Jewish culture. After she describes the biblical themes of The Jewish exodus from Egypt and the receiving of the Torah, Lazarus shows that Judaism has been rekindled in the New World. She speaks of "green grass," a symbol of life and rebirth, then writes, "And still the sacred shrine is holy yet." She reveals her reverence for the place of worship and her belief in God (Norton, 103).

Moise, who was also an American-born Jew was, like Lazarus, involved in literary, privileged circles. She was active in the Jewish community and wrote in both secular and Jewish venues.

In her poem entitled, "Miriam," Moise illustrates the biblical story of Miriam, the sister of Moses, near the Nile river in Egypt. She describes Moses being given over, in a sense, to God, as "the child, to manhood reared," how he has "left his proud abode," and how the "oracle of Israel has set his nation free." At the end of each stanza Moise describes Miriam as "the bright star of the sea," "fair maiden of the sea," and "enlightener of the sea." In the second to last stanza, however, Miriam, who is the hero of the poem, is described as a "rash lady of the sea," and in the last stanza as a "lost star of the sea" (Norton, 70-71).

Moise could be making a statement on feminine identity, both then and now, but she is also affirming her connection specifically to Jewish feminine identity. The words "spirit's promised land" invoke the idea of both the biblical land of Israel and America, the promised land for many Jewish immigrants of that time.

Wise, who is credited with being one of the most important figures in the American Jewish Reform movement, was a prolific writer who wrote much about Jewish culture and Jewish life in the United States.

In his editorial entitled "The Fourth of July, 1858," Wise is expounding on the meaning of Independence Day and what it means particularly to Jewish Americans. In this essay, Wise discusses Jews both in the context of their biblical, cultural heritage, and as Americans coming to a new land--in essence, their modern-day promised land. He writes,

“Next to the Passover feast the fourth of July is the greatest, because it is a memorial of the triumph of liberty. Israel’s redemption, God’s direct interposition in behalf of liberty and justice, the first successful declaration of independence...the fourth of July tells us the glorious story of the second redemption.” Wise likens the Jewish redemption from the land of Egypt to the promised land of Israel to the Jewish settling in America.

Wise then goes on to reassert the statement that “Moses forms one pole and the American Revolution the other...the biblical theories revolutionized all the conceptions of the ancient world, and form the solid basis of modern society” (Norton, 84-85).

This is a clear demonstration of Wise’s position on how he believes American Jews should acculturate. He gives equal significance to Moses and to figures of the American Revolution, and goes as far as to make the bold statement that the American conception of democracy is actually based on biblical ideas and thus significantly contributed to the fundamental ideologies that formed the open and free society that is America.

It would seem that the aforementioned authors gave equal weight to their dual identities—being both Jews and Americans. One could say that they considered themselves to be Jewish Americans, and with equal conviction posit that they saw themselves, too, as American Jews. The authors were able to make their roles work with one another to create a new kind of Jew in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### Works Cited

- Lazarus, Emma. “In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport.” The Norton Anthology of Jewish American Literature. Ed. Jules Chametzky, J. Felsteiner, H. Flanzbaum, and K. Hellerstein. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000: 103.
- Moise, Penina. “Miriam.” The Norton Anthology of Jewish American Literature. Ed. Jules Chametzky et.al. New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2000: 70-71.
- Wise, Issac Mayer. “The Fourth of July, 1858.” The Norton Anthology of Jewish American Literature. Ed. Jules Chemtzky et.al. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000.

# Humanities 200

## Faces of Modernism

There is no royal path to good writing; and such paths as exist do not lead through neat critical gardens, various as they are, but through the jungles of the self, the world, and of craft.

Jessamyn West

---

## How World War I Affected the Modernist Era

By Kaitlin Acquaviva

The Modernist Era, which took place between 1889 and 1940, demonstrated great changes in personal perspective and thought. The true catalyst to these transformations was World War I, which had a huge effect on art, writing, artists, and culture in general. Before 1914, technology and science were factors in the modernist cultural revolution, and enabled society to see the world around them in new and often exciting ways. This led to new expression through art and writing which were mostly positive. This is most evident in Ezra Pound's *In a Station of the Metro* where modernist themes of distortion of time and fragmentation are utilized, but the poem is positive, or at least neutral, in nature. However, after World War I, these new expressions seemed to become more disillusioned and negative due to the horrors of the war, the mistrust of the government and other people, and the fear of the changes taking place throughout the world.

The causes of such distrust and fear stemmed from the creation of a new type of war on a large scale, a high death toll, and general lack of security from the war. These were experiences that people had not been exposed to before on such a great scale, and it ripped them from their secure views of perfect, well-organized countries. The loss of young men to tanks, airplanes, and chemicals was devastating and completely new to the United States, which had not been at war for hundreds of years, and had never heard of a world war.

During and after World War I, artists and writers began to express their fears and disillusionment through art and writing. Picasso, Eliot, Pound, Woolf, and Hemingway offer prime examples of works that demonstrate post World War I views. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922) creates a view of post war individuals, and their feelings of confusion and sorrow. He includes characters from all walks of life, from kings and queens, prostitutes, and a young girl, to office workers to portray how the war has changed everyone. He also utilizes many hallmarks of modernism including fragmentation, inclusion, subjectivity, distortion of time, archetypes, questions, wordplay, disillusionment, and alienation. Hemingway is also a master of depicting post world war views. His terse writing, although quite descriptive, is excellent for showing the change of emotions and distorted views the war had brought. His excerpt from *A Farewell to Arms* shows how death has sadly become routine, and that possibly some prefer it to living in the damaged world of post World War I. The young soldier's final request in life is "If you are going to shoot me, please shoot me at once without further questioning." With this, Hemingway makes his simple point that war is pointless, and the psychological damage it has caused is irreparable.

As for the artistic aspect of post-war expression, Picasso seems to visually master changes in perspective rather than through the mind's eye, as the writers of the time were able to accomplish. His creation of synthetic cubism, being able to see all aspects at once using real pieces of things, reflected the feelings of people who felt they could see much more movement in society, and how the changes were modifying people and life in general. He took older paintings of famous buildings and changed them into moving pieces by using different brush strokes, and enabled people to capture the sense of movement and change

even in a still painting. Also, his neoclassical work *Guernica* (1937), which depicts a German bombing and the brutal deaths of war, is a famous example of post war expression.

In essence, the Modernist Era was revolutionary especially post World War I. This was reflected in writing and art by authors and painters who shared disturbing feelings with the people around them. These new forms of expression, although often negative, enabled society to relieve some of their disillusioned feelings, and to share their fears with others through literary works and art pieces.

#### Works Cited

- Ernest, Hemingway. Excerpt from A Farewell to Arms. Chronology Articles Literary Excerpts Poetry and Even a Short Story. Dr. Brown, 2007. 1.
- Pound, Ezra. "In a Station of the Metro." Imagism. Excerpted from The Pound Era, 1971. "Pablo Picasso." Wikipedia. 16 Feb. 2007  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo\\_Picasso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo_Picasso)>.

## The Land of Conformity: A Fairy Tale

*By Susan Taylor*

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who ruled over a land called the Land of Conformity. Everyone in this land was happy, and lived perfect lives, conforming to all the values of the king and queen.

As it is thought to be normal to have children, the king and queen planned their blessed event, they would have a son first and he would conform to their values. And so it happened.

They had a boy.

The fairy of the land, named Conformity, came to bless the child and put a spell on him that he might always conform to his parents' values.

And so he did.

As time passed the king and queen thought it normal to have a second child, and this one was to be a girl.

And so it happened.

They had a girl.

But before they could call in the fairy, Conformity, the more powerful fairy, Fate, heard of this baby girl and wanted to be a part of the event. Meaning well, she put a spell on the child that she might be different, her own person, with a free spirit that she might make changes in this land of conformity for the betterment of the land.

When the king and queen heard of this they were aghast. No one was allowed to be different in their land of conformity.

As the child grew, it was apparent that she was different. She spoke without being spoken to. She didn't keep her royal bedroom spotless.

She made friends with people of the wood that were suspected of wrongdoing.

The more the king and queen tried to make the princess conform, the more confused the princess was, for she wanted to please her parents as her brother did but nothing she did made them happy.

After a while the king and queen gave up in their efforts to conform the princess and paid all their attention to their own agendas and their son.

The king liked to indulge in the rum of the land, spending all his time now at the drinking hole. The queen, not wanting him to forget about her, spent all her time at his side.

The princess, trying desperately to get the love and attention from her family, acted out. She spent time with the boys, for she was told by the wise serpent that if she could find love with a boy then it would heal the hurt she felt. She indulged in opium, for she was told by the wise woman that it would heal the hurt she felt. She spent time with the 13 fairies because they accepted her different nature and free spirit.

When the princess was twenty-two the king died, and she was devastated. The man who had made all the rules of the land, whom she tried so hard to please, was dead.

Soon after a prince came along and saw the princess, fell in love with her and cherished her free spirit.

The prince told the princess that he loved her. Of course, she did not believe him because how could anyone love someone who did not conform?

As time passed they became great friends.

Then one day the princess took ill. She was so ill that she could not even take care of herself. When the prince came to her, as he frequently did, he told her that he would take care of her. She did not understand why because she had not known unconditional love. In order to get love in this land you had to conform. But the prince was very persistent in showing his love. After a time the princess accepted this love and grew in her true spirit and changed forever. The queen was in quite a quandary for she had never thought for herself and was lost. She became depressed.

So the Prince and Princess moved to a far away land known as the Land of Uncertainty, where they danced naked in the wooded hills.



## Musicology and its Relation to Fantasy in Music and Literature

By Susan Taylor

In a world where we are faced with tragedy every day, a little fantasy from upbeat or soothing music is a productive way to temporarily escape. Musicology, the academic study of music, including music history, music analysis, music aesthetics, and historical performance practice, shows that music adds a significant element to our emotional state. There is certainly an abundance of books about how music affects the emotions and cognition. Personal experience tells me that reading good quality literature, when you have time to enjoy it, can be another productive way to escape to fantasy land.

Wikipedia.org tells us that “[H]umans spend enormous amounts of time, effort, and money on musical activities. Why? The modern, international field of music psychology is gradually exploring a multitude of issues that surround this central question [...] Topics of study include: musical behaviors such as dancing and responding emotionally to music, the role of music in forming personal and group identities, the reasons why we like some kinds of music and not others, and the psychological processes involved in musical performance” (wikipedia.com). As stated in the class, “And the Fire and the Rose are One,” there are many different emotional responses with variables such as a major scale, a minor scale, dynamics, live or recorded performances, and each person’s individual perception of the performance. It is these emotional responses why humans are spending so much time, effort, and money on music: people want to feel good. Music can take them to a land of dreams as in *The Nutcracker*, or *Sleeping Beauty*.

There is an abundance of books that tell us about the effects music has on humans emotionally and physically. Such books include *Perceiving Affect and Structure in Music: The Impact of Seeing a Musician Perform*, *The Cognition of Tonality- as We Know it Today*, *The Role of Melodic and Temporal Cues in Perceiving Musical Meter*, and *Music: A Link Between Cognition and Emotion*. Most people would not need to read a book to know that music affects us emotionally and physically. In the emotional context, every high school girl who has ever had a secret crush on someone has listened to a love song and fantasized that this someone was singing it to her. In the physical context, listening to classical music with soft dynamics, conjunct motion, and a slow tempo could be just what you need to soothe that last nerve at the end of a chaotic day. On the other hand, music with loud dynamics, allegro tempo, in a major tonality could pick up someone’s spirits when they are downhearted. But if the disconsolate want to feel better and need a resource for what music would best fit particular circumstances, one of these books could be a remedy.

*The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty* (all versions), and *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* are all examples of fantasy in music and literature. And if one has read the literature before the performance that puts into words the dreams, visions and illusions, one should be able to escape by imagining what it must be like in the characters’ fantasies. The other musical works read in class are also examples of fantasy in music and literature, but some musical compositions do not have a positive effect on the emotions. The theme of underlying death in Alban Berg’s tragedy, *Wozzeck*, is morose. The psychological ups and downs in the *Golden*

*Notebook*, expressed in the complex structure of the fugue keeps a reader on her toes too much to be relaxing. While Dickinson's poems have a comforting rhythmic text, the sluggish way the music moves in Copland's accompanying compositions may not have a calming or uplifting emotional effect. *Heidenroslein* and *Der Erlkonig* are just plain eerie.

Another area of musicology is Ethnomusicology, the study of music in its cultural context. Oxford University Press states on its website that "[R]esearch in music history can benefit [ ] from psychological analyses of the personalities of composers in relation to the psychological effect of their music. Ethnomusicology can benefit from psychological approaches to the study of music cognition in different cultures. Research is only beginning in many of these promising areas of interaction."

Due to the complex backgrounds (places, times and cultures) of some of the composers and writers we have studied in this class this writer would have to agree with this statement: Georg Buchner's "perceptive critiques of early Rationalist thought" (class handout), reflected in the personalities he created in *Woyzeck*, is a clear example of his insightful reasoning to the mind of a common man - which Woyzeck was not. Ann Sexton's poetry is an apparent representation of her insanity. Anyone with some background in psychology can infer that she was sexually abused as a child. The fantasy she creates is most probably based on past experiences rather than imaginings.

Instead of playing violent video games or listening to wicked music played on so many radio stations that have a negative effect on our emotions; people should try listening to the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" or "The Waltz of the Snowflakes" by Peter Tchaikovsky. They will help to escape emotionally and physically into a fantasy world that can only be achieved through Music and Literature.

### Further Reading

- Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects. Edited by Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology. By Derek B. Scott, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations. Edited by Stephen A. Crist and Roberta Montemorra Marvin. (Eastman Studies in Music.) University of Rochester Press, 2004.
- Intercultural Musicology: The Bulletin of the Centre for Intercultural Music Arts, London, U.K. Edited by Cynthia Tse Kimberlin and Robert Kwami. Centre for Intercultural Music Arts; Music Research Institute, Inc. Semiannual. Vol. 1, nos. 1-2 (October 1999).
- The Washington Post, 4/21/2004. "U Still Got It, Prince; The Purple One's Back, More Vibrant Than He's Been in Years With 'Musicology'."
- The Boston Herald, 4/23/2004. "Prince aims to reclaim throne with 'Musicology'." (Arts and Lifestyle)

- 
- The 1998 Canadian Encyclopedia, 9/6/1997. ELAINE KEILLOR. The 1998 Canadian Encyclopedia 09-06-1997 Musicology.
  - Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland (JSMI). Coedited by Barra Boyell, Aileen Dillane, Paul Everett, Wolfgang Marx. Society for Musicology in Ireland. Annual. Vol. 1, no. 1 (2005).
  - Reference & Research Book News, 11/1/2006. 0754652114. "The Discourse of Musicology." Hooper, Giles. Ashgate Publishing Co. 2006.
  - The Women's Review of Books, 6/1/1994. "Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship."

### Links

- <http://www.psych.cornell.edu/people/faculty/clk4.html>
- Society for Music Perception and Cognition
- Psychology 418/618: Psychology of Music (spring 2003 information)
- [http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/medicine/psychology/music\\_psychology/](http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/medicine/psychology/music_psychology/)

### Works Cited

Oxford University Press website. 13 December 2006.

[http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/medicine/psychology/music\\_psychology/](http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/medicine/psychology/music_psychology/)

Wikipedia online encyclopedia. 13 December 2006.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/music\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/music_psychology)

## Film 200

# Understanding Film

The mere process of writing is one of the most powerful tools we have for clarifying our own thinking. I am never as clear about any matter as when I have just finished writing about it.

James Van Allen

## The Somnambulist and the Vampire: Two Examples of German Expressionist Horror

By Bruce Anderson

One of the most famous exports of the Weimar Republic period of German history is German Expressionist Cinema. The Weimar Republic lasted from 1919 to 1933 and saw great advances in areas such as art, architecture, and film. German films of this period were heavily influenced by the expressionist movement in art. They incorporated angular, off-kilter sets, weird props, unorthodox camera angles and strange costuming and make-up in an attempt to portray psychological states of mind. These films were extremely popular worldwide and the movement was quite influential, heavily impacting Universal's famous horror films (particularly *Frankenstein*). The thread of German Expressionism's influence winds through film history to the present day, no mean feat for a style created near the beginning of cinema itself. When it is taken into account that most of Weimar cinema's films were destroyed during the Nazi period, the influence of the relative handful that remain is astonishing. Films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, Carl Boese and Paul Wegener's *Der Golem*, Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, and F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* and *Faust* are some of the better known of the surviving German Expressionist films. The similarities and differences between two of these films, *Caligari* and *Nosferatu*, will be discussed here.

February 1920 saw the release of *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, which was immediately successful in Germany and very popular when released worldwide. According to Leonardo Quaresima in *German Expressionism: Art and Society*, *Caligari*'s success was due to "a precise agenda that was pondered by the German film industry. The resounding success of *Caligari* was neither accidental nor just lucky; it was piloted by a concerted promotional campaign that focused on its novelty and the surprise pairing of the film medium with the Expressionist movement. The producers' goal was to give a new impulse to the film industry.... The operation was launched to break the stalemate in the industry, which had seen a rapid drying up of ideas, hackneyed repetition of themes, and the growing ennui of the audiences, who were tired of the traditional film genres..." The industry intended to "bring about a leap in quality, to shepherd the medium toward a new standard" (Barron 91). This "new standard" was adopted in many of the films of the Weimar cinema which were to follow, notably F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*.

*Nosferatu* was released in 1922 and, although not fully immersed in the expressionist style like *Caligari*, used many expressionistic elements to convey the tale of a vampire coming to Germany. The story is the first screen adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but (in an attempt to avoid paying royalties to Stoker's estate) the names of the characters were changed. The ploy didn't work, however, and Stoker's widow had all of the prints ordered destroyed. Fortunately, a few survived and so the film lives on in restored versions. Here is Murnau's vampire as described by reviewer Gilberto Perez: "Loomingly thin, with long predatory arms culminating in claws, the two front teeth protruding like a rodent's, and between pointed ears a pale bald head like a bare skull, *Nosferatu* monstrously suggests a cross between a human skeleton and a rat. His skeletal aspect, the way his figure evokes the

skull and bones beneath the skin, helps establish this vampire as a specter of death” (5). This depiction of the vampire is very different from Bela Lugosi’s portrayal in the later Universal version of *Dracula* (1931). Conspicuously absent from Murnau’s version are such mainstays of the vampire mythology as crosses, stakes and the creation of new vampires. “One of the most noticeable differences in Murnau’s version of the Dracula legend,” states Jim Shepard of the New York Times, “is the way he dumped Stoker’s Christian metaphysic entirely. None of the sacred ammunition that Stoker provides-- communion wafers, holy water, crucifixes-- have any role; instead, Galeen [screenwriter] and Murnau’s contribution to the genre is the destructive power of daylight: nature itself takes care of a problem that seems to be a dark parody of its own fertility” (12). Despite stealing the basic story, Murnau obviously intended to add his own spin to it, in part by endowing the film with expressionistic elements. It is the use of such elements that gives *Nosferatu* its kinship with *Caligari*.

Certain similarities between the two films are strikingly obvious: the somnambulist Cesare’s cabinet and Count Orlok’s coffin; the menacing shadow each throws against the wall (each film has a scene where a menacing shadow hovers over a person in bed); the rooftop chases (in pursuit of Cesare and the mad real estate agent Knock respectively); and of course experimental visuals. In *Caligari*, these take the form of bizarre sets and props, while *Nosferatu* makes use of such techniques as fast motion, negative image photography and stop-motion animation. The makeup and costuming in each film is fittingly creepy and weird, especially in the cases of the two killers. In *Caligari* there is a scene where the Doctor sits Cesare upright in his cabinet in order to feed him. This scene is so similar to the scene in which Orlok rises poker-straight from his coffin that it is hard to imagine that Murnau was not influenced by Wiene’s film. Perhaps the strongest similarity between the films, besides their expressionistic styles, is simply the concept of both “monsters,” Cesare and Orlok, sleeping in boxes. A further similarity between the films is their strong influence. As has been stated, *Caligari* had a strong visual influence on Universal Studios’ horror output as well as on film noir, and quite recently has been an inspiration for film and video director Rob Zombie. *Nosferatu* has been remade and reimagined, as in Werner Herzog’s 1979 update and 2000’s *Shadow of the Vampire*. Max Schreck’s performance has been called “the unsettling center of a film that moved figures as diverse as André Breton and Jack Kerouac to rhapsodies, and that continues to influence filmmakers to this day” (Shepard 2).

Although these films have many similarities, they are each uniquely innovative and utilize very different approaches regarding theme and presentation. *Caligari* was innovative in its creation of an expressionistic world. *Nosferatu* showcases the first instance of what is perhaps Murnau’s most important contribution to cinema. He is “generally credited with having been the first to understand the expressive potential of the moving camera.... [W]ith *Nosferatu*, he was already one of the first to consistently design individual shots -- referred to as tableaux by early filmmakers -- as not simply static compositions but negotiable spaces open to every sort of intrusion and transformation. He turned *Nosferatu* into an inventory of entries and exits, of trajectories in which the frame was explored in unexpectedly eloquent ways; and in doing so, he further liberated movies from their theatrical mind-set” (Shepard 5). Whereas *Caligari* is immersed in expressionistic visual style (“Not a whiff of nature is allowed into the askew spectral sets of *Caligari*” [Perez 2]), “[i]n *Nosferatu*, Murnau is hybridizing two approaches that seemed opposed in the early 20’s: the expressionism of German films like

*The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and the depiction of the sweep and luminosity of nature displayed in the films of Scandinavians like Carl Theodor Dreyer and Victor Sjöström.... Much of the power of *Nosferatu* comes from its efficacy at rendering the permeability of the border between the familiar and the uncanny and presenting us with a nature that seems to operate, as one critic put it, ‘under the shadow of the supernatural’” (Shepard 7).

The films’ themes are also explored through different approaches. *Caligari* makes use of circular symbolism, according to Weimar cinema research specialist Ian Roberts, to convey the cyclical nature of power, while *Nosferatu*, claims Jim Shepard, employs juxtaposition of opposing images as a metaphor for the lack of absolutes. Despite claims by *Caligari*’s script writers, Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz, that Wiene’s addition of a framing story weakened their antiauthoritarian message, Roberts argues that the addition, along with many symbols of circularity, deepens the original intent by showing that authority always finds a way to reassert itself. The added message is that authoritarianism and rebellion are each part of an unending cycle. Many critics believe that the ending shows the doctor to be innocent and ready to help, but Roberts argues that he remains a menacing figure, all the more so due to his pretensions of benevolence and position of power. No one but the “madman” knows that he really is Caligari. Roberts insists that “its conclusion clearly showed the foreboding image of Dr. Caligari free to continue his nefarious work” (4). Roberts offers as further evidence a 1970 review by critic Walter Kaul which claims that the framing story “succeeds in warning the audience of the dangers of authority re-established. In other words, the frame forms the outermost of a series of concentric circles which emanate from the film’s core in the mental asylum” (7). Imagery that denotes cycle and revolution includes the iris-in and -out transitions, the spinning carousels, the organ grinder, “the repetition of the loci, with characters constantly returning to the same spot” (Roberts 10), Caligari’s round-rimmed glasses, and the spiral painted on the asylum’s floor. Of the spiral floor, Roberts says, “It is at this location, after all, that the wheel turns full circle, for this is the place where the attempt to unmask and overthrow the Doctor is defeated, the point at which Caligari regains his position of ascendancy” (11). As for Murnau’s use of thematic juxtaposition in *Nosferatu*, Shepard asserts that, “The viewer begins to realize that various juxtaposed elements are intended to have more of a metaphoric than strictly narrative relationship, as we’re repeatedly presented with visual juxtapositions that seem to assert that the polarities we expect will be maintained -- like purity and corruption, innocence and knowledge, or desire and repulsion -- are breaking down. The morning after Hutter’s first night in the castle, he notices marks on his throat in the mirror, and smiles. At the moment of his greatest danger the next night, with him in a swoon and his baleful, implacable host looming over his bed, we cut suddenly to Ellen, back in Bremen, sitting bolt upright in her bed, stretching out her arms and calling to him. But it’s *Nosferatu* who responds, turning from his prey and gazing offscreen in a perfect eyeline match, confirming the film’s insistent subversive implication that the pure at heart are as much on the monster’s wavelength as those already given over to perdition. (The diabolic Knock and Ellen are from the very beginning sensitized to the vampire’s approach.) Our unease is then masterfully underlined by our sense that the explanatory intertitles at times misrepresent the images: ‘Hutter, far away, had heard her cry of warning,’ we’re told immediately after Ellen’s call has apparently lured *Nosferatu* away from her husband. But her husband was clearly visible, and out like a light; he hadn’t heard

anything” (9).

One last difference between the films is in their attitude toward life in a post World War I world. “Made in the immediate aftermath of the First World War,” Perez tells us, “*Caligari* allegorizes that war in a tale of insane authority impelling youth to somnambulistic murder. This horror fantasy began in Weimar Germany a cinema of anxiety and gloom fabricated in the studio. F.W. Murnau’s 1922 *Nosferatu*, perhaps the greatest of Weimar films, was another response to the First World War: a response not to the insane authority that unleashed the war but to the death that ensued. Murnau’s film endures as one of the most resonant and unsettling responses that have been made in art to the death that inescapably awaits us” (2).

In conclusion, *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and *Nosferatu*, two films of the same era and country, influenced by the same artistic concept, have probably as many differences as they do similarities. Both were hugely popular and influential, both could be called “horror” films, and both are certainly expressionistic in style with certain types of images in common. On the other hand, each has its own distinct filmmaking style, each demonstrates unique innovations and techniques, each has its own particular themes and symbolic systems, and each is quite distinct from the other in visual presentation. Both films are responses to the First World War, but the messages are markedly different. Two German Expressionist horror films, both of a kind, yet each divergent.

#### Works Cited

- Barron, Stephanie, and Wolf-Dieter Dube, ed. German Expressionism: Art and Society. New York: Rizzoli, 1997.
- The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari. Dir. Robert Wiene. Decla-Bioscop, 1920.
- Nosferatu. Dir. F.W. Murnau. Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, 1922.
- Perez, Gilberto. “Nosferatu.” Raritan Summer 1993: 52 pars. Online. Internet. Apr.2007. Available <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=17&sid=05a4ce91-6c8c-4a8d-b292-8d9c98e2f5d2%40sessionmgr3>
- Roberts, Ian. “Caligari Revisited: Circles, Cycles and Counter-Revolution in Robert Wiene’s *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*.” German Life and Letters April 2004: 14 PDF. Online. Internet. Apr. 2007. Available <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=12511818&loginpage=login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Shepard, Jim. “Again, Nosferatu, the Vampire Who Will Not Die.” New York Times 10 Sep. 2000: 16 pars. Online. Internet. Apr. 2007. Available <http://80-proquest.umi.com.libproxy.ocean.edu:2048/pqdweb?did=59754853&sid=5 &Fmt=3?&clientId=62069 &RQT=309 &VName=PQD>.



## **Index of Faculty Contributors**

### **Professor Judith Angona**

The Somnambulist and the Vampire: Two Examples of German  
Expressionist Horror *by Bruce Anderson*  
Kafka: Transition from the Victorian to the Modern Age *by Megan Myers*  
A Work Memoir *by Mandy Rabkin*

### **Dr. David Bordelon**

Ways to Cope *by Jacqueline Geller*

### **Professor Karen Bosley**

A Comfortable Tradition *by Christine Lesko*

### **Professor Ali Botein-Furrevig, Ph.D.**

From Haven to Home: The First Wave of Immigration  
*by Stuart Aron*  
The Islamic Religion and its Art, Architecture, and Gardening  
*By Don Governale*

### **Dr. Sandra Brown**

How World War I Affected the Modernist Era *by Kaitlin Acquaviva*  
A Hero for All Generations *by Ramiro Corrales*  
The Land of Conformity: A Fairy Tale *by Sue Taylor*  
Musicology and its Relation to Fantasy in Music and Literature  
*By Sue Taylor*  
Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Price of Freedom  
*By Amanda Taylor*

**Dr. Mary Ellen Carr**

- How I Learned to Surf *by Michael Arabitg*  
Secret Shame *by Leah Brown*  
Swimming Lesson *by Rose Daddino*  
Inner Strengths *by Belinda Daughety*  
A Little African-American Girl Growing up in the South *by Stefanie Grossett*  
Lost Loved Ones *by Stefanie Grossett*  
An Accident *by Justin Hurtig*  
The Beauty *by Gintare Lenkauskaite*  
Little Red Riding Hood in Judith Ortiz Cofer's "A Partial  
Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood" *by Julius Martinez*  
Frank O'Connor's Control of Tone and Style in "First Confession"  
*By Christie McDonald*  
My Interpretation of "The Yellow Wallpaper" *by Christie Mc Donald*  
Van Gogh's Bed, as seen by Jane Flanders *by Laura Pavelka*  
Reflection of Two Worlds *by Diana Perren*  
The Student *by Diana Perren*  
Literature of the Industrial Landscape *by Joe Pienkowski*  
Maya Angelou's "Grandmother's Victory" *by Nicholas Quackenbush*  
Responding to William Blake's "The Sick Rose" *by Sam Szapucki*  
The Beauty of a Woman's Body *by Brian White*

**Professor Karin Gargone**

- How World War I Affected the Modernist Era *by Kaitlin Acquaviva*  
The Land of Conformity: A Fairy Tale *by Sue Taylor*  
Musicology and its Relation to Fantasy in Music and Literature  
*By Sue Taylor*

**Dr. Katja Hawlitschka**

- Arsenic and Old Maids: A Critical Analysis *by Shaun Pilling*  
So Much Beauty in Woodworking *by Shaun Pilling*  
"If I Hadn't Seen it with my Own Two Eyes" *by Chris Jensen*  
"The Ramayana" and "The Book of Job": Comparisons *by Dawn Vigliotti*

**Dr. Maysa Hayward**

Post-Colonialist Theory and Identity: Examples in Literature  
and Modern Society *by Robert Sundermann*

**Professor George Perabo**

The Somnambulist and the Vampire: Two Examples of German  
Expressionist Horror *by Bruce Anderson*

**Professor Barbara Roshak**

Autism: Awareness of a New Epidemic *by James Reese*

**Professor Louise Silverman**

Animal Testing *by Amanda De Carlo*  
Fields and Streams *by James Distefano*  
My Favorite Music *by Dina Elrashidy*

**Professor Jayanti Tamm**

The Eastern Bindi: Divine Perception or Fashion Statement?  
*By Nichole Cochran*