

# PEN



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# PEN

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# Introduction

College students write.

What's often ignored is that their writing is worth reading.

This volume is the latest in an ongoing effort by Ocean County College's English Department to correct that ignorance. More importantly, it is a testament to the writing abilities of Ocean County College students. They research, read, think, plan, think some more, draft, and then work through revisions and proofreading, all in service of presenting their ideas to an audience. And as this publication demonstrates, this audience lies beyond the classroom.

Ranging from a developmental English essay on time management to a study on the difficulties of translating the German pop hit "Neun und Neunzig Luftballons," this writing captures the interests and intellect of our students.

And it's worth reading.

We encourage faculty to submit student writing to PEN; we also thank them and the staff at the Writing Center for all their efforts to assist our students in the writing process. And finally, we thank Student Life for providing the funds to make this publication possible.

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Note on the text:

The writing is presented as submitted with few editorial interventions.

## Dedication

This year's dedication is more so a memorial for our former colleague, Margaret Boese, who for several years taught English, edited the Pen, and also managed the Writing Center, tutoring our students and supervising other tutors. A few years ago, our dear colleague and friend, Margaret Boese, passed away. As members of the Ocean County College community, we wish her spirit a safe passage. The following poem may offer some solace:

### Swept Away

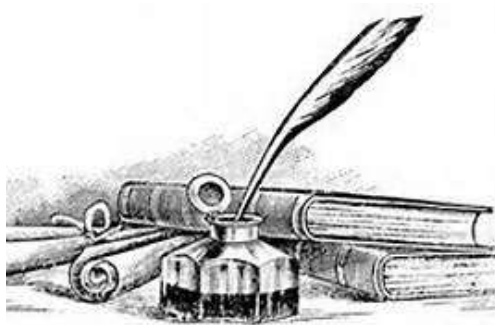
Margaret, Peggy, Professor Boese, Wife  
Mother, friend, colleague  
Intellectual, sensual, soft . . .

Laughter on lips,  
Smoke exhales,  
Wine exuding counsel.

Editor; the text, a sanctum--  
Red tipped fingers treading the magnum opus,  
Reductio.

Flamboyant,  
Collecting shells, driftwood, nets like cobwebs on walls,  
Articulating the cursive on canvas,  
Genuflecting to the Divine.

Poem by Dr. Mary Ellen Carr



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**English 095**  
**Reading and Writing II**



## Time Management

*By Brian Tartas*

If you are a first-time college student, such as myself, you will come to understand the importance of time management. This is my first semester at Ocean County College, and while I may be only taking three courses, I have found it complicated at times to balance out completing homework assignments and focusing on my studies while also maintaining a full-time job. Just like any student in this type of predicament, I have had to find different ways to help me manage the time I do have in a day more efficiently. From my experience, I have found three different tools that have enabled me to manage my time, such as a to-do lists, a planner and a detailed study schedule.

The first tool I use to help my time management skills here at Ocean County College is creating to-do lists. Being a first-time college student tends to be overwhelming as well as intimidating at times. As soon as my professors assign homework, tests or even offer tutoring sessions, I always create my to-do lists. All of my to-do lists are separated by class name. I am currently enrolled in three courses: Reading & Writing, Macroeconomics and Basic Algebra. To-do lists help with my time management by creating a basic outline of what my week or even my month will entail. These lists are basic outlines before I create my detailed study schedule and log it all in my school planner. My to-do lists have very short phrases of assignments and extra-curricular activities I have coming up within the next month. These lists help me manage not only my schoolwork, but as well as my life outside of school.

The second tool I use to help me keep track of all of my schoolwork and daily activities is my planner. On the first day of school here at Ocean County College, I received my school planner. My planner has been very helpful with my first semester because it has given me the opportunity to write down my whole schedule. For example, in my planner, I have written my class schedule, homework assignments and test days. I also write down any type of extra-curricular activities I have scheduled outside of school. My planner is separated into months as well as days of the week, making it very easy to manage my every day schedule. Separating my schedule into time slots in my planner has been very helpful with time management.

The third tool that has tremendously helped me throughout my first semester thus far is making a detailed study schedule. Once a week, usually on a Monday, I write down the upcoming assignments due for the week. I separate my detailed study schedule into categories: Reading Assignments, Writing Assignments, Test Study and Lab Assignments. These categories help me stay more focused and organized during my busy week between school and work. I normally block off two hours of study time for every hour of class time, even if that means studying after work and late at night. Underneath each category, I use subcategories such as date, time, chapter and assignment due dates to keep my schedule more organized. Using these study techniques not only help my study skills but also enhance my time management skills.

In conclusion, time management is a useful skill for first time college students, such as myself. Being a student for the first time after taking a break for a few years is not only intimidating, but can be quite complicated too. The first helpful tool to help me practice time management thus far in my semester is creating to-do lists of all my tasks coming up in the near future. Secondly, writing a very detailed study schedule helps me balance my schoolwork with my home life. The third and final tool I find most helpful is writing all my assignments in my school planner. In short, time management is all about finding your balance. Once balance has been mastered, everything else will fall into place.

## Hey Sir, Sir, What's Your Name?

*By Caitlin Sedillo*

On a blustery cold December morning, as a snow storm approached the mountains of Summit New Jersey, a little girl would soon enter into the world, a girl who would become accustomed to the Jersey Shore. Not knowing the sex of their second child, both a male and female name had been chosen. Had they borne a male, the name was to be Matthew; a girl would be named Caitlin. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1995, the wait was over; a 7 pound 14-ounce baby girl entered the world named Caitlin Sedillo. By reading the origin of my name, Caitlin Sedillo, I hope it intrigues you to find out a little about the history, origin, and meaning of your own name.

First, you become familiar with your first name, learning to say, spell, and pronounce it at a young age. Caitlin is related to the classic, timeless Katherine, and the old-fashioned Irish name Kathleen. All forms of Caitlin mean “pure” (Griffin, 42). John of Gaunt had named his daughter, who, as queen of Castille, making Catalina a Spanish name. The cause of the various ways of spelling Caitlin appears as a result of ancient English, where there was no use of the letter K (Yonge, 122-3). Caitlin in Greek translates to Catherine for a saint who was martyred on a spiked wheel (Spence, 39). Caitlin is currently popular in the UK, and has been one of the most popular names in the USA for some time (Cresswell, 50).

Now that we know how to say, spell, and pronounce my first name, let's begin to analyze my last name, Sedillo. In Spain, the meaning of Sedillo can be traced back to someone who came from León, Spain (MON). The variant spelling for the Spanish form of Sedillo is Cedillo (Hanks, 314). Cedillo can be followed back to many areas of Spain including the province of Cáceres, Cedillo del Condado Toledo, and Cedillo de la Torre (308). Therefore, the only category my surname fits is the place name group, as Sedillo originated from many regions of Spain. The Spanish suffix of -illo appears in *cigarillo* which is a short narrow cigar. Thus the meaning of -illo is small (50 DS). Possibly the populations within each designated location in Spain had few citizens or the number of citizens residing in the area was less than average.

When I do get married, I would like to change my surname to my husband's. Changing my last name provides me with a new identity as a wife and perhaps a mother eventually. Taking the name of your husband when tying the knot has become a tradition, a tradition I do not want to break. Another reason I am willing to take my husband's last name is because I have a brother that will hopefully keep my own surname in circulation. There is no one previously named Caitlin in my family. Sedillo comes from the Spanish language depicting those who lived in specific sections of Spain.

I do like my name because it is different, although there are a handful of people named Caitlin, not many spell it the way I do. I do feel like my name fits me; I like to blend in but at the same time I like to stand out. Caitlin is not royal or biblical, but it is indeed old. In the 1980s, Caitlin was at the height of popularity as America's first heard the name via poet Dylan Thomas's wife, whose name was Caitlin Macnamara (NB). There are limited nicknames for Caitlin, the most common being Cait and Caitie. There are very few famous people with the name Caitlin. Caitlin Hale is an American actress, singer and writer who starred in the 2003 film *School of Rock*. An American actress who has acted in several films and TV series, Caitlin Wachs, starred in *Commander in Chief*, *Cracking Up*, and *Profiler*. Now that we know about my name; “hey sir, sir, what's your name?”

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## Annual Father Son Camping Trip

*By John J. Padgett*

What started out as an inexpensive camping vacation on the Delaware River for my oldest two sons 23 years ago, today is a family tradition for all five of my sons. Upon my return and sharing my trip with my good friend Larry, Larry jumped on board for the next year with his son. Thus, the father-son tradition was born. Through the years, I not only watched my older sons grow up, but, also, their younger brothers joined the trip a few years later and last year my youngest son joined the trip. The years on the river have taught me a lot about the circle of life, watching the boys grow from children to young men, to adults.

In the beginning, when the boys were young children, the dads and I did all the work while the boys played and found trouble. I did all the planning and, upon arrival at camp, the dads set up tents and the cooking area while the boys found the river and of course would get wet even though they were told to stay out of the river. When evening came, the dads prepared dinner, and the boys would play with the campfire, throwing anything they could find into the fire. As the years passed and the boys grew, the trip started to evolve.

It was not long before the boys would help their dads with setting up the tents and preparing the campsite. Also, at this time, the boys no longer wanted to bunk with their dads and would pair up with one of the other boys. As they grew, so did their appetites and the variety of food they would eat. The boys would help a little with the cooking and cleaning, but would also try to disappear and wander the campground in search of young girls to hang out with. Each year the boys continued to grow, not only in size but maturity as well.

My oldest boys are now adults: I rely on them for everything from shopping for the trip to setting up camp, cooking, and cleaning. My son Brian works in the restaurant industry and has become the head cook at camp which gives me more time to relax and spend time with my youngest. Patrick, my third oldest, now an Eagle Scout, helps lead the setup of the tents and campfire for the group. I now watch the older boys working with and, of course, teasing the younger boys as they teach them about camping. The older boys have now become role models for the next generation of boys enjoying the trip.

Ultimately, twenty-three years ago, I never envisioned that that first camping trip would grow into a tradition that has become such an important part of mine and my boys' lives. As we sit around the campfire every year and share stories of trips from the past, I always remind my boys to try to do something like this for their families in the future. It has been a very rewarding experience watching them all grow from young boys into adults.

## Swimming

*By Kyle Richardella*

One of my favorite activities to do is swim. To me, there is nothing like the feeling of diving into a pool and swimming all the way to the bottom of the deep end. It's a great workout, and it is an activity that can truly be done all over the world in pools, oceans, and lakes. I have a deep love for swimming because for four years I was a competitive swimmer, and that was my life. I had practice six days a week, with swim meets on the weekends. Also, my passion and ability to swim saved me from a horrible kayaking accident. Swimming was, and still is, a huge part of my life, but it also saved my life.

My passion for swimming started when I was three years old, learning how to swim. I can still remember my swimming classes and the place where I learned how to swim. Ever since then, I love being in the water, whether it is in a pool or in the ocean. There is nothing like that rush that goes through me when I dive into my pool, or a wave, and the feeling of cutting through the water as fast I can, and coming to the surface to begin swimming. Then when I saw Michael Phelps swimming in the Olympics, he inspired to grow my passion for swimming, and swim competitively. So, I joined the Ocean County YMCA swim team.

I swam competitively for four years, and they were some of the best years of my life. Getting to travel all over New Jersey to compete against some of the best swimmers in the state and get to compete at some of the biggest swim meets in New Jersey was awesome. Some of the biggest meets I competed at took place at Rutgers, and Princeton. The races I usually took part in were 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 freestyle, 100 butterfly, 200 individual medleys, and 100 backstroke. To be able to compete in those events and be able to compete in multiple races in one day, I went through very rigorous training. I had practice six days a week, for two and a half hours, and we even had our own strength and conditioning coach to train us. Those practices were absolutely brutal, with an hour strength and condition, running miles before we even got in the pool. Then once we got in the water, we had an hour and forty-five minutes of an up-tempo swimming with minimal breaks. In practice, we would practice turns, starts, strokes, and speed training. Swimming competitively did not give me much of a personal life, but it has given me friends and memories I will remember for the rest of my life, and I would not trade that for anything.

Along with my passion and ability to swim, swimming saved my life in a horrible kayaking accident. I will never forget the day, August 16, 2015. The day started out great because I was meeting the people I worked with in the summer, and we were all going out to lunch before the new school year started. I was having a great time, and everyone was laughing reminiscing about the good and bad times about the summer, I thought this day could not get any better. So my friend who was at the lunch asked me if I wanted to hang out that day and I said sure. So, we decided that we were going to go kayaking on his uncle's kayaks and ride around for a couple of hours, then go out somewhere to dinner. I will never forget how powerful the swells were when we were kayaking, I almost flipped over multiple times, and, to make matters worse, the lifejackets were at the back of the kayak so there was no way to grab them. After enduring the rough waters, we came to this very calm area where we should have stayed. Instead, my friend's uncle told us to go back into the rough waters and meet him at this little beach area. By then the swells were higher, more powerful, and more dangerous. As we were making our way to the beach area, my friend continued to stop, and we were starting to get farther and farther away from each other, so I stopped to try and stay with him. Then, all of a sudden, I was thrown from my kayak, and in the water. I held onto my kayak waiting for my friend, and he helped me flip it back over, and as I was getting back

in the kayak, I was flipped over by another wave. I came out of the water dazed, and told my friend to go into the marina that was close by, but he refused to do that, so I had to climb the bulkhead to get out of the water. It took me six tries by the time I got out the water, and while I was trying to get out, waves were pulling me underwater and my friend left me to get the kayak. Finally, I was able to get us help to get my friend out and the kayaks. I had multiple cuts all over my arms and legs from this accident, but, if I did not have the experience I had from swimming, I might not be able to tell this story.

Swimming has and will always be a huge part of my life. I feel so comfortable swimming around in the water, and it is a great workout I can do for the rest of my life. It's an activity that I took up a young age, and I'm happy that I started when I was young because I needed a whole life to be ready for that horrible kayaking accident. Swimming is a great hobby of mine that will greatly impact me for the rest of my life.

## Thirty, and Confident?

*By Kelly Larson*

As I sit here, in the college dining hall, struggling to find the most comfortable seat among all the younger and stylish college students, I think, "I'm confident, aren't I?" I am confident that I'm a good student. I must be with a family at home. I am confident that I am proud for taking this step to return to college, a step that wasn't easy to take. However, am I confident in the way I feel about myself? The answer is No. It took a lot to gain the independence I now have: the independence of separating my title from only mom and wife, to include college student, achiever, accomplisher, and so on. So, why don't I feel excited about my journey? Why am I coasting through it? My confidence. Somewhere along my journey, I lost my confidence. I stopped making time for myself to do the things I love, such as running and yoga, that ultimately lifted and supported my confidence.

Let's go back a ripe twelve years, to an age of eighteen when I was just starting to make the choices to becoming me. At that time, I was just discovering my confidence as photographer, artist, adventurer, step taker, college student, and on, and on. I had just made the decision to move to San Diego. I was going to learn to surf, play the guitar, and eat burritos from a beach shack. Although I never learned to surf, it was when I met my husband that I learned to play the guitar. I had started eating burritos from a shack frequently, a little too frequently. I was living my dream without even realizing it! It was then that I made the decision to become photographer, artist, adventurer, and, additionally, wife.

Three years later, with wavering confidence, and way too many burrito pounds added, another adventure began. My husband and I traveled to the Mid-West in shivering, snow covered Minnesota. I was facing new challenges of getting comfortable in a new environment. Gone were the beaches and burrito shacks. They had been replaced with community bean festivals and large statues of Paul Bunyan at every corner. I overcame the obstacles and succeeded in settling in. I also gained a large amount of confidence back by joining a gym and working off those pesky burrito pounds. I was living a new dream! I was then re-invented to photographer, hard-worker, wife, and, additionally, mother!

Fast-forward to another time and, literally, another place, in sunny Virginia Beach. I had taken on many new roles and challenges. I was still discovering how to be the best wife and how to be the best mother to not only one, but also a newborn! I started to coast through life and hadn't realized that I lost the balance of independence and confidence in who I had been. With two very energetic, yet loving boys at home, and a husband that was gone more than he was home, I had simply become wife and mother, period! I had thought there was no room for anything else.

My confidence was at an all-time low. My clothes didn't fit after excess weight from another baby (I had never initially lost the first round of baby weight). I was embarrassed to attend events and barely did so without my yoga pants. Bless my sister's heart, because it was at that time she introduced me to running. I slowly added the word, achiever, to my title of wife and mother. I began making goals for myself and meeting them. As I continued to achieve my goals, I created new ones. I signed up for my first 5k, then completed my first 10k. In no time, I was finishing my third half marathon, and my confidence was at an all-time high! I had made the change from only wife and mother, to become wife, mother, achiever, runner, and accomplisher. For the first time, ironically, I could confidently say I was confident!

Another move, and another adventure, I decided to add another challenge to my list of accomplishments. I had my family, I had my confidence, now it was time to fill that void that pulled at me, to earn my college degree. It wasn't easy and didn't happen overnight, but my family and I made the changes so that I could succeed in yet another goal. I was feeling optimistic. However, I failed to realize I was trading one goal for another. I stopped frequently doing the things I loved to do. I had sadly lost the word, runner, from my beloved title of mother, wife, runner, achiever, accomplisher, and had replaced it with college student. I somehow told myself I could not be both.

Sitting here in the college dining hall, I wonder, "When did I trade my confidence and self-worth for my college independence? When did I start coasting through my goals instead of enjoying the journey? When did I stop doing the things I love, and when did I lose my beloved confidence?" I may not have the exact answer to these questions. However, I do know that I am confident; I will work hard to have it all. I am confident; I will make room to have a college degree and do the things I love. Most of all, I am confident that one day I will sit amongst my younger and stylish peers and not contemplate my confidence. Instead, I will sit amongst them, comfortably, deciding which burrito to eat, humbling myself over my new title of, mother, wife, college student, achiever, photographer, half marathon runner and ultimately, "one who never stops adding new words to her title!"



## Time Management

*By Kelly Larson*

Peter Turla states, “A plan is what, a schedule is when, it takes both a plan and a schedule to get things done.” If I were to elaborate on Peter Turla's quote, I would add, “Motivation is why.” Being motivated is also necessary to keeping good time management, as well as a plan and a schedule. If I did not have a plan, a schedule, and motivation, my children would never get to school on time, my husband would most likely be eating Taco Bell all of his life, and my health and wellness would be way off balance. I can avoid all of these scenarios by knowing the right tools to use for the when, and what, and additionally, why I plan for my family's life, and ultimately, how time management helps me to juggle my family best.

A schedule is when, and my when begins with a warm cup of coffee on a Sunday morning. My husband knows that when I pull out my planner and lists, that it's best to get the kids out of my hair for a short time. I break open my planner to start the hard labor of comparing my family's energetic schedules, followed by the task of penciling in all my needs on a weekly calendar. Last, I jot down all the things I need to get done onto a to-do list, so that I can check them off as the week progresses. This structure also helps so I don't forget something important. If I forget to pick up a gallon of milk, then my very big and childlike husband, as well as my two actual children, will no doubt starve because they cannot eat their favorite, sugar coated cereal. As a mother of two, and now as a college student, I have found that all these tools are necessary to balancing our time the best, and for making a very happy cereal eating household!

A plan is what, and what I am planning is around my husband's duty days and work schedule so I know when he will be home, or gone. I am planning shopping lists and meals so I am effectively spending my money, and so we are eating healthy, and I am planning my workouts, so that mommy can get some “me time.” For example, if I go to the grocery store without a plan, or list, I end up throwing whatever looks good into the cart. This, always results in a high grocery bill, and I come home with no plan for meals! If I don't pencil in a time, especially around my husband's schedule, to go for a run, I come up with the excuse that I don't have time. Lastly, and newly added to my family's life, is my attending school. I need to plan when I have time to work on homework or study so that I can do well in my classes. If I didn't manage time for homework, I would most definitely flunk out of college –not exactly what I planned for my future.

If motivation is why, then family, and health and wellness are my why. I am a firm believer that good, or poor health and wellness can have a positive, or negative, effect on family life. For instance, running helps to eradicate stress from my day. As mentioned, I have to plan a run around my husband's schedule, and if I am not motivated to run, my stress collects - the term, “There's no crying over spilled milk,” does not apply to a highly stressed mommy. However, when I am motivated to run, it is as if I hit a re-set button on the stressors from my day -and a stress-free mommy means more time to role play saving the princess from dragons.

If I didn't use the right tools, my son would surely miss the bus, my husband would miss out on important family events, and I am confident that my family would get sick of those popular advertised cereals –granted they remembered the milk. Peter Turla states, “A plan is what, a schedule is when, it takes both a plan and a schedule to get things done.”

Having a plan, a schedule, and motivation (or a what, when, and why) are the necessary tools to having good management, and good management skills are how I am able to juggle my family.

## Spread the Wealth: Income Inequality is Hurting America

*By Madelyn Joel*

The issue regarding income inequality is similar to the movie *The Lorax*. In one of the scenes, The Once-ler builds a company that makes and sells Thneeds. The Once-ler proceeds to cut down these trees and disturb the ecosystem just to accumulate money and to allow his business to prosper. For the animals living in the ecosystem, the truffula tree was their only source of food. The Once-ler took away the most important thing the animals needed to survive. After all of the trees were cut down, there was one seed left. A young boy came along and planted it so that the truffula trees could grow again. The animals got back their food source. In terms of America's income inequality, The Once-ler represents the top 1% and the animals represent the bottom 99% of the citizens in America. Coincidentally, the top 1% takes away from the bottom 99%. The upper class leaves the middle and lower class with virtually nothing. The top 1% should do as the young boy did and save the lower 99% by spreading their wealth. When the top 1% holds onto most of the wealth in the country, just like The Once-ler held onto the truffula trees, it is called income inequality. Income inequality is defined as, "the difference in income between societies or between groups within a society" (Walter). Income inequality hurts America's lower 99% because it has a negative effect on employment rates, health, and economic mobility.

The lower 99% of Americans suffer because income inequality decreases employment rates. Thomas Hungerford, a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, demonstrates CHANGE WORD, "a large proportion of the U.S. unemployed have been without work for over 6 months." Most middle-class Americans are losing their jobs, therefore, they are not receiving any income. Without a job, these people have been struggling to get back on the income bandwagon. Since the top 1% is taking in most of the wealth, the lower 99% has no opportunity to get a job to obtain enough income to support themselves. Hungerford refers to this as the "Macroeconomic Stabilization Policy." This is a huge problem for lower class Americans because "high unemployment rates mean the loss of labor income for a large number of workers" (Hungerford). Take the middle class man for example. He is in search for a job but is sadly informed that there are no openings. This is because of intense competition between the top 1%, the bottom 99%, and the people from overseas. As he continues to search, he is struggling to support himself and his family because of his lack of income. This is the case for most of America's lower 99%. Since unemployment is a problem, Americans are living uncomfortably and not envisioning their American dream.

Income inequality not only affects employment but also it ruins the realization of the American dream. The American dream is to obtain income from working to be able to easily climb up the economic ladder. Unfortunately, with income inequality, America's lower 99% keep running into obstacles. Unemployment can be blamed for this as well as some social issues. Richard Wilkinson, an expert on income inequality, jokes, "if Americans want to live the American Dream, they should go to Denmark." But this is no joke. Underdeveloped countries seem to be doing better than the United States. Even though Denmark is not as economically or technologically advanced as us, they are living better because they are a more equal country. Wilkinson infers, from the data shown by his graphs that "more unequal countries are doing worse on all these kinds of social problems." The social problems included life expectancy, population in prison, and even teenage birth rates. If America was more equal, social problems like these would not arise. Therefore, making sure that each citizen is entitled to a job with equal income would help the United States immensely.

Another reason against income inequality is it deteriorates the health of the lower 99%. Lower class families are not getting enough income to stay healthy. Hungerford argues, “the larger the income disparities the steeper the health gradient and the larger the gap in mortality rates between rich and poor.” Since America has unequal income, the people in the lower 99% find it difficult to pay for a visit to the doctor. Whenever they get sick, it becomes a hassle to find enough money to afford a visit. On the other hand, the top 1% is so wealthy that they do not have to worry about a dent in their bank account when paying for a doctor’s visit. They go for their check up and are cured while the lower 99% is still fighting their sickness. Take a low class child with terminal cancer for instance. They need all the money they can get to pay for chemotherapy. Since they are low class, their parents do not have enough income to afford their child’s treatment. Therefore, the child cannot be cured because doctor visits are out of their parents’ budget. The child then becomes too weak and loses their battle against cancer. This is a huge problem for America. Everyone should be able to pay for visits to the doctor. With income inequality, more sicknesses will remain untreated. This is embarrassing for America as well. America is equipped with many different medical technologies. Unfortunately, they are too expensive for the lower 99%. If income inequality was a thing of the past, lower class people would not have to worry about paying for treatment.

Finally, income inequality is a problem because it has a negative effect on economic mobility. Economic mobility is the opportunity for children to be more successful than their parents. Every parent wants the very best for their child so that the next generation progresses. Unfortunately, most of America’s lower 99% cannot even dream of having their kids do better in the economy. Statistics show that “the chances of a poor citizen, or even a middle-class citizen, making it to the top in America are smaller than in many countries of Europe” (Stiglitz). This is bad news for young children wanting to be successful in the future. This is a problem because some of the kids in the lower 99% are very smart. For instance, a middle class child could have the knowledge to improve our country. With a college education, that child can be properly educated. However, since they are in the bottom 99%, they cannot afford to have that college education. If the distribution of wealth was equal, this child would not have this problem and could go to college. Most middle-class students are dealing with the cost of college. Upper class children can easily pay for a college education, but they might not have the same mental capacity as a brilliant lower-class student. Even though most middle-class students go to college, they leave themselves in debt because of student loans. On top of student loans, they are trying to live comfortably. The top 1% is making it extremely difficult for hopeful lower and middle class youngsters to share their ideas and be more successful than their parents.

Some might argue that income inequality is beneficial because America needs wealthy and powerful people. However, the power that the top 1% has can lead to many problems. Most people in power end up abusing it. Joseph Stiglitz, a writer at Vanity Fair Magazine, says, “Wealth begets power, which begets more wealth.” The top 1% is using their money to benefit themselves and other people in the top 1%. In return, they get more money. Since they have power, they can manipulate the way that America is being progressed. For example, the top 1% has control over politics. Hungerford says, “Individuals at the top of the income distribution influence the political process through generous campaign contributions.” For the 2008 presidential election, the people in the top 1% funded both parties in their campaigns. According to Ian Millhiser, a policy analyst, candidates not only “provide Fortune 500 companies with a massive megaphone to blast their political views to the masses [but they] also [empower] them to drown out any voices that disagree with them.” This gives the top 1% political power to help support a candidate so that others will

side with them. This is a problem because these Fortune 500 companies do not understand how the lower 99% lives. They might be funding a candidate who will only benefit the upper 1%. This leaves the middle class with what Hungerford calls “political powerlessness.” People in the lower classes know which candidate is right to benefit them. They do not have enough money to fund a campaign and get others on their side. It is not fair to the lower 99% that the upper 1% has so much control over the leaders of our country. America’s government would improve greatly if it elected a candidate to actually help spread the wealth. The right candidate would help the lower class. The power should be equally distributed between the top 1% and the bottom 99% so that America can progress in the right direction.

At the end of the movie, *The Lorax*, the Once-ler realizes that he had done something catastrophic. He took away everything that the animals had. He began to try everything in his will to fix the problem he caused. This is how the top 1% should feel about the lower 99%. They should spread their wealth to the lower class Americans who truly deserve the money. This way, when Americans are employed, they can receive enough income to help them support their families, live comfortably, and allow their kids to improve the future of America.

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## What Kind of Learner Am I?

*By Repen*

I have noticed, throughout my career as a student, that I am a visual and kinesthetic learner. Recently, I took a test on a website called VARK, which basically confirmed my previous thoughts. Visual and Kinesthetic learners need to see and/or physically do something to learn how to do it in the best way possible. For instance, if I'm learning how to make a bird house, I can't just be told how to build it. I need to watch someone go through the process of building the house; then I need to start building the house and figure out how things work and are pieced together. The same thing goes for academic situations. If I want to learn how to use a math skill, like long division, I need to see a few problems done using the process; then I need to physically do some problems myself before I can grasp the concept. I can't just read directions, do what it says and move on. I need to see examples, so I know what I'm supposed to be doing. This method hasn't always been the best thing, however. When it comes to English or History, there isn't much to learn off visually, so for these scenarios, it would be in my best interest to learn more kinds of learning methods.

For starters, I have an easier time learning visually because I have ADHD. I've always struggled when it comes to paying attention and keeping on track when I'm trying to learn something new. When I try to sit down and read something, I can last for about five seconds before I get side tracked and forget about whatever it is I was just trying to focus on. Watching videos or instructors has been proven to keep my attention more than any book or set of instructions ever have. Plus, watching videos is much more interesting than reading a 5-page instruction manual on how to operate something. Also, physically doing something is one of my main ways of taking in information. When I work through a problem, I learn how everything works, and I can find patterns for problems and solutions. I can grasp the concept better. I first realized that visual learning was what suited me the most when I was in 8th grade, when my ADHD was really beginning to show. I was in my math class and my teacher realized that I was one of the only students not comprehending what was going on when she was telling the class how to solve a problem, so she took me off to the side and did a few problems in front of me.

She showed me the steps and then gave me a few more problems with the answers and told me to find out why that was the answer. Working through the problems and going through all the possible solutions until I found the right one really worked for me. I found out how the problem worked and the kinds of patterns the problems used. The one-on-one help really kept me focused and having her give me problems to test with answers to the questions really helped me to break down the problems and learn how to do them. After moving on to high school, I didn't have the same privilege that I did in middle school. Teachers didn't give me one-on-one time or special problems to work on, or at least not as much. On the other hand, however, I never asked for it. I didn't want to seem "special," so I kept it to myself, and, as a result, I didn't do as well as I could have in school. If I had been open to trying different ways of learning maybe—and not to be offensive to my classmates—I wouldn't be in this class typing this essay.

In continuation, I didn't give myself the chance to learn as much and as well as I could have. I'll never know how things might have turned out if I had just spoken out as a freshman and received the extra help I needed, or even tried to find a new way to learn when I realized the old way wasn't going to happen anymore. I take fault for my mistakes and I intend on learning from them. As a goal for myself, I intend on familiarizing myself with at least two new ways of taking in information. While one way of learning has been most beneficial to me in the past, finding new

ways of learning will help make me diverse and capable of learning in any environment. I want to make my main focus Aural learning, as well as some reading/writing methods. Learning new methods is going to take forcing myself out of my comfort zone and making myself keep on track of what I'm supposed to be doing. For methods on reading and writing, I'm going to have to make myself write something down whenever I learn something new, and when I have time, write it out more and say it to myself. I could also opt to find more reading material for a subject, rather than searching for a video on the subject. Going through this process will effectively engrave the information in my memory. This method is going to be the easier one to teach myself, though. Aural learning is where I believe I'll have the most difficulty. Listening to people has never been a strong suit of mine. I get distracted too easily and forget almost every word they told me about ten minutes after they're done talking. I'd have to learn how to pin point my focus on the person speaking and really listen to what he or she is saying, writing down key points when necessary. This is going to be the most self-disciplinary method, but I'm still willing to give it a try if it means I'll have a larger threshold for learning.

In short, I know that I will always prefer to learn through visual methods; however, I am open to the idea of learning new ways to take in information. Being able to learn in multiple environments is, to me, a very useful skill. Not all types of situations will allow for a visual style of learning. In these scenarios, it would be more useful to have reading and writing be a main form of information intake. People can't always do things in a way that is comfortable or familiar to themselves, so I feel that it is best to be versed in many different types of ways to do something so I'm not so completely out of their comfort-zone. If I am exposed to different types of learning, I will not have as much of a fear for learning that I once did. In the future, I can see myself being able to take in information at a much higher rate and quality than that of which I am currently capable of. I look forward to finding new techniques to help me be a more proficient learner in the future.

**English 151**

**English I**



## Millennial Women on Marriage: Take it or Leave it?

By Erica Swiney

Once upon a time, every young girl's dream was to grow up, find the man of their dreams, get married and have children. Fast forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and this looks very different. Millennial women who are currently the women of the future (as in now) have different dreams and views on this. Adults in this group fall in the 22 to 37 age range with birth years between 1981 and 1996. This group are the new adults of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet they are delaying doing some very adult things, such as getting married. Jane Fullerton Lemons, a journalist with over 25 years' experience, wrote that, "about 26 percent of Millennials are married, much lower than previous generations in that age group: Generation X (36 percent) and Baby Boomers (48 percent)." The rush to the altar is a phrase that is losing its' place in society. Whereas, women once could not get there quick enough, in the present day their pace has gotten a bit slower. But why? Many writers believe that there are several factors that go into this generational stance. Through research, they have found that millennial women are postponing marriage until later in life to pursue higher education for career advancement, cultural shifts in society and the increasing financial burdens in the present day.

Many writers believe that Millennial women are prioritizing their personal achievements such as attaining higher education to advance in their careers over marriage. Lemons wrote in part that, "many say they want to achieve other goals first, such as an advanced degree, a more fulfilling job." The women in this age demographic have set their sights on other dreams and aspirations rather than what the women before them did. Experts estimate that women are outnumbering men when it comes to completing their degrees. According to award winning political theorist and U Penn President, Amy Gutmann, "women today account for more than half of all college students and, for the first time, hold more advanced degrees than men do." They now, more than ever, are making the pursuit of higher education a top priority. In fact, *London New York Times* correspondent, Stephen Castle, wrote that the Department of Education reported that women are, "making up 56 percent of college and university students in fall 2017". Young women who fall under the millennial umbrella are more motivated than their male counterparts to pursue and complete their degree programs. The importance of this achievement outshines the desire to be married and settle down right away. The reason women seem to be more determined to do this is because they view this accomplishment as their "meal ticket" in progressing in their careers (present or future). *Washington Post* columnist, Catherine Rampell, who specializes in topics like public policy, politics and culture quoted a 24-year-old Laura Baker, who was a master's student at the University of Denver in her article "Instead of Work, Younger Women Head to School". Baker, a millennial, stated that, "as women we feel like we have to be more educated to be able to compete in really any field". This suggests that women often affiliate their career success with the level and amount of higher education they have gained. Women are more empowered to be independent as suggested by Lemons who wrote that, "women's increasing economic and social independence and the country's growing tolerance for nontraditional lifestyles have led many young people to rank matrimony behind such goals as an advanced degree or better job". Millennial women know what they want and how they will get it. Although marriage and children are eventual endeavors, they do not place emphasis on this right away. The goal seems to be that they find their own success before they can truly commit to anything else.

Women typically earning less than men is a well-established fact. For example, a young woman, who in this case, is a millennial will be less likely to get paid the same as her male

counterpart. This woman will have to work harder and build her credentials to be taken as serious as a man is. Women are less willing to limit themselves to lower wages in this generation. As written by Rampell, women are, “already earning lower pay, women are less willing to work when wages fall further”. In order to make a name for themselves, millennial women are taking the necessary steps to increase their earning potential to one they feel they deserve. Attaining advanced education is a means to be taken seriously and to gain the same monetary respect as males do. Millennial women know the value that higher education will have on their future career goals and they are more determined than ever to get it.

Major changes in society have affected the way millennial women have chosen to lead their young adult lives. Technology has made certain accessibilities and conveniences that have swayed young women to alternatives. Lemons cited University of Texas sociologist and author Mark Regnerus when he stated that “Technology has played several roles in these cultural trends. Contraception and internet dating have made sex more accessible — or, in the case of pornography sites, less necessary.” He went on to say that this has “created a massive slowdown in the development of committed relationships, especially marriage, among young adults.” The way millennial women view and approach relationships differs greatly from the generations before them. Online dating and the vast options for birth control give them alternatives, allowing them to wait longer to commit. In the “old days”, like they say, the lack of or absence of birth control put pressures on women to get married and start families. They were not encouraged to do what is being done now, which is essentially to delay marriage and eventual procreation. In the world of online dating, there are many who are simply looking for entertainment and casual company. This is a trend that is more socially acceptable and thus have encouraged women to engage in casual relationships with their male counterparts. With many millennial women on the pursuit of higher education and meeting career goals, they have gotten much busier, providing less time to develop meaningful relationships. Lemons suggests this when she wrote, “Millennial women are focusing on their career success, online dating has made relationships more casual”. Another cultural trend that is making women more prone to delaying marriage is fertility developments. In fact, Lemons wrote that, “Developments in fertility technology have made parenthood feasible later in life. More than half of Millennial women say they would consider freezing their eggs, and 37 percent are open to using in vitro fertilization to get pregnant.” The young women of today can finally take off the pressures of having children right away because this is also another method which allows them the freedom to wait. It puts less of a rush on finding the right guy and starting a family right away. Millennial women have something that those before them did not have options.

Several reporters agree that the increasing financial burdens on Millennial women is delaying the marriage process significantly. Personal finance reporter, Hadley Malcolm wrote that, “millennials still have several significant financial burdens to contend with, including rising student loan debt and rising rent prices.” The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a very expensive time to live in, leaving millennial women to face the financial woes that come with it. They are up against many financial obstacles and feel discouraged to marry while in the midst. It seems impossible for them to pay for a wedding in addition to the other financial commitments they already have. Lemons wrote that, “marriage rates are declining in other countries for at least one of the same reasons they are declining in the United States-lack of financial security.” This further suggest that a millennial woman’s decision whether or not to marry is directly influenced by how well they may or may not be doing financially. The general consensus is that the absence of financial resources can delay Millennials from settling down. And since, millennial women as discussed earlier, are in college working towards a degree, the student loans continue to pile up. Lemons reported that according

to the American Student Assistance, “Student-loan debts are a major hurdle for many Millennials. They create economic insecurity, which makes commitment to long-term life choices of any kind more challenging.” They find the loans to be a large setback and want to focus on getting their life together before bringing someone else into it. Not to mention, the overwhelming costs of a wedding itself. In an article published by the SIR, the author writes that, “people want to get married, though the age at which they believe marriage to be ideal depends to some degree on their personal circumstances” (qtd. in *Despite Diverging*). They recognize the added responsibilities that come with marriage and are in no hurry to increase responsibilities.

The idea of spending money they do not really have for a wedding can be off putting to a millennial woman. For example, millennial women who are independent as stated earlier, are more likely to be paying bills on their own, and this can delay other foundation building blocks for their future, such as long term financial goals. Malcom wrote that, “While they may want to achieve financial stability, save for retirement and build an emergency fund, many may not have the means to do so, say Mark Sieve Wright and Matt Wilcox, executives with financial technology company Fiserv.” This means a millennial woman who is independent and inherited a range of bills from rent to student loans is not in a position to put earnings towards their foundation. This includes marriage. Weddings can carry a large price tag and many millennial women are just not in the economic position to focus their sights on one. In fact, delaying it may be a big stress reliever to this group.

Millennial women have the right to choose. The choices they have is theirs to make and while they navigate through life, they are choosing to do it independently. These women have been granted the right to wait for the very thing they once could not wait for. The anticipation they have now comes from a different place. It’s not about walking down the aisle but about walking towards their future. The one they chose on their own terms. Society has been aiding this very thing in millennial women and it seems it will not slow down anytime soon. Lemons quoted Evergreen State College History and Family Studies teacher Stephanie Coontz when she said, “They seem to recognize that marriage has more potential to be mutually rewarding for those who truly want it, precisely because it's no longer a mandatory institution with rigid rules.” Those rules are no longer valid. The only rules that apply are the ones they decide from themselves. Ultimately, this group of women feel they have business to tend to first, and they plan on settling it before they agree to saying “I Do.”

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## Logging in: The Good, The Bad and the Unknown

*By Taylor LeGates*

We reach for it, crave it, and even rely on it. It's an unexplainable urge to boot up and log into the super technology highway. According to Felix Richter, author of "America's Smartphone Addiction," "the average smartphone owner checks their phone 47 times a day, more than 80 percent check their phones within an hour of waking or going to bed, forty-seven percent have tried to limit their phone use, but only 30 percent have succeeded". We bask in the visual and mental barrage of information, from breaking world news to the obscure habits of a pygmy tree frog. It's all there. Around the globe from desolate islands to the huge urban metros, we have all bought a ticket to the technology show. Writers argue over the benefits and downside of technology. Some writer's state technology is helping society by enabling a faster efficient use of time, encourages individual creativity, improves communications, lifestyles, education, entertainment, social networking and world health. While others argue, that technology is ruining society, increases loneliness, creating job loss, heightened security risks, dependency and even world destruction. How is technology affecting us, physically, mentally and globally?

Technology is growing at such a fast pace the once considered mundane tasks can be simplified. According to research "Most Americans spent at least 8.5 hours per day looking at screens a television, computer monitor or mobile phone, and frequently two or three at once" (Greenblatt). Technology has simply allowed us a faster way to get things done. For example, going to the bank meant driving to bank, filling out forms, waiting in line, talking to a teller then driving back home. Now, we can complete this within a minute's time, all without having to leave the comfort of our homes. We use technology in almost every part of our day to accomplish tasks or interests which allows physical time efficiency. We have unfettered access to a huge amount of information and ease wherever and whenever with a click of a button. We can read the news, sell stocks, learn how to speak mandarin and even change the temperature of your home from anywhere in the world. According to the article, "Impact of the internet on thinking", written by A. Greenblatt "The internet has speeded up and changed the average person's access to all manner of content". Human face to face contact has been simplified through email, text messaging, social networks, skype and face time amongst many other applications. Education is simpler from the use of a calculator to online virtual classrooms. You can attend a class without having to leave your bed or attend a college located across the ocean.

Having the physical ease of pushing a button can make someone's day easier and faster. But, entering this easy technology world, some argue without human interactions social cues, manners and relationships become affected "internet usage pulls people away from their real-world friends and family and isolates" (Clemmitt). Physical tasks have been equated down to simply logging in. According to the article, Internet Thinking by A. Greenblatt, "When we go online, we enter an environment that promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking and superficial learning, but they're not developing the face-to-face human contact skills."

Mentally technology has altered perceptions. One advocate of the use of the internet Marcia Clemmitt, in her articles "Controlling the Internet," and "Cyber socializing" she stated that there are several mental benefits from the internet "online socializing has helped people worldwide link to others with common interests for conversation and support, people can stay in touch with old friends and meet new ones, meeting people online first can sometimes help avoid superficial judgments, internet dating saves time, can transform some political campaigns into more grass-

roots affairs, and that Americans today are probably more in contact with members of their communities and social networks than before.”

But some argue that this quick access is dumbing our society down and too much knowledge just may not be a good thing. In 2018, according to the World Health Organization, “The increased use of technology is associated with cases of excessive use, the problem has reached the magnitude of a significant public health concern”. Research is currently being conducted on the effects of the internet especially on younger generations. According to Larry D. Rosen, a psychologist at California State University-Dominguez Hills and author of two books about young people's use of technology. “Our attention span basically has diminished,” he says. “Our ability to focus on a task without switching to another task has diminished. It's not an inherent change in the way we're thinking. It's a change in technology that forces us to change focus often.”(Greenblatt). Startling statistics state that “One in two youths ages 12 to 18 say they feel addicted to their smartphones or other mobile devices, and an even higher percentage of parents believe their children are hooked. More than one-fourth of parents feel that they themselves are addicted” (Dealing with Devices). According to some writers “Addiction occurs when something becomes all-consuming and has a negative impact on one's life, such as interfering with relationships, sleep patterns, work, hobbies or eating habits” (Adika). And “Technology is not a drug, but it might as well be,” “It works the same way.... It has the same results” (Anderson). Usage according to research indicate “most Americans spent at least 8.5 hours per day looking at screens — a television, computer monitor or mobile phone, and frequently two or three at once” (Greenblatt).

The global advantages of technology have been seen in our resources, health industry, education and government arenas. Homework and guides are found online creating less waste of paper and enhancing the environment. New innovative developments have been made with wind and solar power. There are electric powered automobiles even self-driving. In the health industries technology has lead us to new solutions to world problems, for example safer air machines, new diagnostic machinery catching diseases before they mutate. It has created personal and businesses growth, allowing personal creativity to compete in the business world. Etsy for example allows a person to showcase their personal creations for retail. Websites like Kickstarter.com can help find funding for a new business without the hassle of banks and capital. Technology has raised awareness to the needs of other countries after natural disasters and war, fostering relationships and booster financial aid. The internet news and social media has sparked awareness to once untalked about subjects in the LGBT community, feminists, racism, suicide awareness etc. Some authors argue that the internet has “helped create a “hive brain” that allows people to share thoughts and come to collective solutions to complex problems together.” (Quitney & Raine).

But, awareness can bring about strife. Internet news and social medias have torn people, governments, businesses and careers apart. Gossip, misquoting, unreliable sourcing has brought the ugly side of the internet. Causing war, feuding, and suicides creating a divided world. According the article, Cyberbullying by Thomas Billitteri. “The rise of networking sites, personal web pages and blogs brimming with the minutiae of teen antics and angst has helped to create a rich climate for cyber mayhem”. The projection of the internet’s capabilities is unfathomable and unstoppable.

Technology was once considered a luxury, like being the first family on the block to get a colored television. However, technology is now a necessity. From shopping, banking, schooling you must have an online account or you simply can’t live without it. The internet lures each of us in, we are memorized by its wonderful new abilities. It grows bigger stronger faster every day. Daily innovations of new applications to improve everything from medical diagnostics, create

safer faster travel, faster communications, increase entertainment, improve political relationships, raise public awareness and advance weaponry all the while slowly creating a world of amazement. We keep enticing it, daring it and pushing it to the edge but are we naive to the beast living in the web and could we push ourselves to extinction?

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## Labor Unions: A Necessity in Today's America

By Eddie Bank

The Gilded Age in the late nineteenth century brought America prosperity, wealth, and world domination. Immigrants fled to the United States hoping they could mimic the success of men like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller. However, many would learn that the reality of the American Dream is just a dream. As Upton Sinclair describes in his 1906 novel, *The Jungle*, "Here was a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the verge of starvation, and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers" (111). In cities like Sinclair's Packingtown, immigrants like his Jurgis and Ona were put to work long hours with little pay in treacherous conditions with no mobility for upward progression. They struggled to sustain a family while living in a small, decaying tenement surrounded by a wizened neighborhood that could be mistaken as 1943 Stalingrad. Jurgis and Ona came to the United States as laborers hoping for a better life, but their dream of American prosperity turned into a nightmare as a slave under capitalistic greed. Laborers needed to break from the shackles of corporate tyranny.

American workers began to form labor unions in the 1880's to resist employer oppression (McCutcheon). A labor union is an association of workers united to protect and progress their rights in the workplace. To obtain these rights, early members protested from peaceful sit-downs to causing bedlam in violent riots. Thousands of workers participated in demonstrations throughout the early decades to gain national attention of employer abuse. Once their cries were heard, legislation was passed to grant labor rights. For instance, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937 was approved to shorten working hours and set a minimum wage (McCutcheon). Companies and unions then started negotiating collective bargaining agreements which are contracts agreed by workers and their employers to set rights and entitlements for workers and their bosses. Unions accomplished more of their goals in the proceeding decades like ensuring a sanitary working environment and paid-leave. As of 2014, union membership stands at about 14 million; representing 11 percent of the nation's workforce (McCutcheon). They progressed the working class to the point now where many question their importance. However, without unions, the United States could setback to the miserable times of *The Jungle* where workers' voice in government was muted. Unions are still needed in the United States to preserve political representation of workers, generate economic growth, and combat inequality.

In America, unions are essential in representing workers' interests in the legislature, and increasing their political participation. Unions have a wide influential range in the government. Economic and union expert, David Madland, claims unions have multiple purposes in society "From pushing for fair wages and good benefits, to encouraging citizens to vote, to supporting Social Security and advocating for family-leave benefits, unions make the middle class strong by giving workers a voice in [...] our democracy." A single worker to challenge the juggernauts of government has minimal effect, but a coalition of hundreds or thousands of workers in action demands worthy attention. Government skews towards favoring the affluent and influential; unions are meant to balance the power. Cornell University labor law professor, Lance Compa, believes "To change the balance of power, consumer pressure, government policies, [and] international labor solidarity, new management policies [...] must focus on [...] bargaining rights." It is the constitutional responsibility of office-holders to "promote the general welfare" so the citizenry, including laborers, can live a quality life. They must do so by focusing on the interests of the majority. Laws must be in place to prevent any robber baron from abrogating workers of



their right to hour restrictions, minimum pay, safety conditions, and other benefits. Laborers then become an important voting group for politicians.

When union representatives are active in legislation, unionized workers have higher rates of political participation. Madland found, “for every percentage-point increase in union density, voter turnout increased by 0.2 to 0.25 percentage points.” This can tremendously impact an election. In the 2008 presidential election, “An analysis by the political website *FiveThirtyEight* found that ballots cast by union members and members of households with a union worker boosted Obama's share of the vote by 1.7 percentage points” (McCutcheon). In addition, “unions and their political action committees spent nearly \$450 million during the presidential race while making millions of phone calls and knocking on millions of doors” (McCutcheon). If it were not for the union effort, Obama could have lost millions of votes in 2008, giving John McCain the presidency. Politicians must cater to union interests to preserve their valuable votes. Political participation among workers translates into legislation to help boost the working and middle classes, and serves as another branch of government to check that the bureaucracy is protecting everyone.

All American workers need union activity in government to represent the interests of the working and middle classes. Unions have a mission to ensure that as many Americans are employed as possible and are treated fairly by their employers. In the growing global market, government trade agreements are causing millions of American jobs to be outsourced; unions blockade those deals. Chuck McCutcheon of *CQ Researcher* credits unions with delaying the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement in 2015; keeping thousands of jobs from being sent to foreign lands. Along with preserving employment, unions fight for higher wages. In Los Angeles, unions lobbied and persuaded the Los Angeles City Council to approve a \$15 minimum wage by 2020 that would help redistribute income so the working class can increase their spending (McCutcheon). By allowing more people to earn more money, the rate of spending increases since there are more consumers spending in the economy. Consumer spending then fuels economic progression.

The need for union influence in government translates into employment growth. Unions provide training for workers to compete in the market. Unions, through collective bargaining, preserve highly skilled jobs domestically. Political journalist Harold Meyerson found in Germany that unions typically allow corporations to outsource “lower-value” work, which contributes to about three to five percent of the total labor needed, in exchange for “keeping the most highly skilled and compensated work in Germany.” To help lower-skilled workers in America whose jobs are outsourced, unions train them to tackle the domestic jobs in demand. Missouri Representative John McCaherty claims, “The No. 1 thing [...] that businesses are looking for, is workforce development [...] They [are] looking for trained individuals” in “Construction. Machinists. Welders. Our unions are training people to do those jobs” (qtd. in McCutcheon). Unions provide job training for growing industries, and a chance for people to have a quality living.

Recently, states have adopted right-to-work laws making union membership and paying fees optional. Proponents of right-to-work believe unions are to blame for economic delay. However, research has found right-to-work laws depresses the economy. “Nine of the 10 states with the lowest percentage of workers in unions [...] are right-to-work states. All of them also are saddled with a relatively weak middle class. The share of total income going to the middle class [...] in each of these states is below the national average” (Madland, et. al). Right-to-work laws are not meant to help workers, but the executives of big business. If more states continue to minimize the power of unions, the reverberated demands for a powerful working class will be

diminished by large corporations and factions of the wealthy elite. Social inequality will then be wider than ever—excacerbating the current consequences of a high poverty rate.

Unions are needed to further lead the movement to combat economic and social discrimination. To prevent economic discrimination, unions advocate to diminish employer abuse. They are critical in ensuring that workers are cared for and protected with policies like Social Security, the Affordable Care Act, minimum wage, and anti-discrimination laws (Madland et. al). These policies, among others, prevents any citizen from being discriminated for certain services because of their income. If all states adopted right-to-work laws, “2 million fewer workers would receive health insurance and 3.8 million fewer workers would receive pensions” (Madland, et. al). Advocates for not amending healthcare as a right of citizenship are forcing all workers to fend for their own medical needs. Among the working poor, many would live without any health coverage. This would cause anyone to feel unmotivated, neglected, and in crippling health because they cannot afford to see a doctor. Supporting a family would be difficult because there is not enough income to fund a stable living; leaving the breadwinner feeling like a failure, and abandoning their family in misery. President Clinton’s Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, notes compared to nonunion workers, union members “earn 30% higher wages [...] and are 59% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance.” When workers are represented by unions, most do not have to fear failing to support their family, and are more active to work. For instance, when Fruit of the Loom adopted “a collective bargaining agreement with higher wages, better conditions, and a strong health and safety committee. Workers have maintained high productivity levels, and the company has added employees” (Compa). Company growth is reflected upon employee happiness. When workers are happy, businesses flourish, and more money is made for all to put back into the economy—developing a strong fiscal system.

While unions ensure workers are not discriminated because of income, they have contributed to the battle against social inequality as well. McCutcheon believes “Labor has been in the forefront of [...] anti-discrimination measures that apply to all workers.” During that mission, unions have assisted in the progression of women’s rights in the workforce. Featured in *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, Sarah Standiford reports, “[...] from the Center for Economic Policy and Research [...] found that unionization raises the pay of women workers by almost \$2 per hour.” An entire gender is more empowered because of unions. As the gender wage gap closes, more women can contribute to boosting the economy. The valuable minds of women should not be muted because of their gender. The more productive minds in society, the faster the nation can develop. Unions help launch brilliant women into authority, as they are able to train anyone despite ethnicity, creed, gender, or sexual orientation to be empowered.

The narrative for Jurgis and Ona does not end well, and it will not end well for the working people if unions lose their influence. About 11 percent of workers are union, but all Americans can benefit from their achievements. Other causes are needed to be fought for with unions as the front: balancing income inequality, completely closing the gender wage gap, ending racial, religious, and sexual discrimination, eliminating sexual harrasment in the workplace, granting workers the right to family, vacation, paternity, and maternity leave with pay, and ensuring healthcare to all citizens as a guranteed constitutional right. Perfect equality has not been achieved yet, and there is still more work for unions to accomplish.

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**English 152**

**Writing II**

## Food: The Flavor and Spice of Asian Literature

*By Sharon B. Sussick*

Raspberry truffles, chicken curry, dal with rice, spiced cashews, fish cooked with raisins in a yogurt sauce, and rice cakes in a broth of coconut milk. These and other exotic and mouthwatering foods are commonplace in Asian literature. This part of the world has seen many wars, colonization, and the fall of numerous empires. No doubt, Asians have many stories to tell. On the surface, it would appear that the authors of literary works, such as Jhumpa Lahiri are merely sharing with readers their experience with food. On the contrary, Food plays a part in daily life, family, and reflects current emotions from celebration to despair. Much of these stories are told by Asian-Americans that involve having dual identities, walking a line between Asian and American customs and traditions. Through food and culture, Asian-Americans are committed to preserving their heritage. Birthed from the largest and most populous continent in the world, Asia, comes some of the most riveting contemporary literature involving many rare and delectable dishes.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a Pulitzer Prize winning, Asian-American writer that craftily weaves food into her writing. Lahiri, of Indian descent was born in London and raised in Rhode Island. This unique outlook shows the struggle of those “living two lives” as her work “My Two Lives” refers to. In this piece, Lahiri writes about “speaking Bengali and eating rice and dal with my fingers” (Lahiri 612). Anyone native to her country would likely know that dal is a flavorful dish of lentils and that eating rice and lentils with one’s hands is a daily practice in India. Lahiri continues to mention food in her fictitious writing entitled “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine.” This thought provoking and engaging story, as told through a young girl’s eyes, describes a man from Pakistan who works at the local university with the girl’s Indian-American parents. This young girl, Lilia, gets acquainted with this man, Mr. Pirzada, as he comes over often to partake of the family’s meals. Lahiri vividly describes food many times in this story. For example, Lilia explains that her parents had a hard time finding mustard oil in their local community. It is to be assumed, that mustard oil is a staple in an Indian household and part of Asian cooking. Another reference to food is seen in the outset of the story where Mr. Pirzada comes to Lilia’s house “bearing confections in his pocket” (Lahiri 614). Further on in this piece the reader learns the significance of the candies. Lahiri’s story goes on to tell of the year Pakistan was engaged in civil war. The city that Mr. Pirzada was from, Dacca, is in complete violence and chaos, causing him to worry and wonder if his family is not only safe but alive. Mr. Pirzada’s shares a picture of his seven daughters at a picnic, “their braids tied with ribbons, sitting cross-legged in a row, eating chicken curry off of banana leaves” (Lahiri 614). This description gives a glimpse into the life and role of food in Mr. Pirzada’s family. Likely, for Mr. Pirzada this image also conjures up memories of better times.

Lahiri also uses food to show Asian-American life when telling of a scene where Lilia’s parents are in the kitchen. These scene is depicting Lilia’s mother in the kitchen “presiding over a skillet of fried spinach with radishes” (Lahiri 615) while her father is eating spiced cashews. Lilia’s then asks her father for a drink for the “Indian” man and gets corrected by her father who gently chastises her for not being taught world events in school and in turn, not being informed of how Pakistani and Indian people are at odds and many still find eating with another an unthinkable act. Lilia then wonders why both groups are so divided when she sees her father doing the same things as Mr. Pirzada, such as, eating pickled mangoes, consuming rice with their hands, eating fennel seeds after meals for digestion and sharing the ritual of dipping biscuits into tea. Again, it is clear to the reader that food plays an integral part in Asian life, so much so that this young girl easily compares similarities in customs and cuisine.

Lahiri goes on to mention food when telling the touching story of how Mr. Pirzada gives Lilia many sweet confections when he visits. Mr. Pirzada gives Lilia cinnamon hearts, honey filled lozenges, raspberry truffles, white chocolates and sour pastilles. Lilia is said to covet each treat “as I would a jewel, or a coin from a buried kingdom” (Lahiri 617) and places her treats in a sandalwood box given to her from her grandmother who used to store nuts inside of it. Mr. Pirzada shows Lilia kindness in giving her candies as a way to connect and remember his several daughters. Candies can also represent innocence, as a young child shielded from the suffering of war and rape. As Lilia is growing up and learning about the world she finds the news from Dacca quite disturbing. Lilia doesn’t find it appropriate to tell Mr. Pirzada of her worries for him or his family, instead she says silent prayers while letting candies dissolve in her mouth as a quiet invocation.

The use of food in Asian literature is also seen in the meals that Lilia’s family shared with Mr. Pirzada. These were more than simply eating together. These meals served as way to bond, share, celebrate, mourn, find common ground, and support one another in times of distress. This is similar in American culture when holidays are celebrated with different types of food and in times of grieving it is common for after funeral refreshments or gatherings at a relative’s home. Interestingly, the mood the family was feeling influenced what was served. One dinner served by Lilia’s mother is described as “lentils with fried onions, green beans with coconut, fish cooked with raisins in a yogurt sauce. I followed with the water glasses, and the plate of lemon wedges, and the chili peppers” (Lahiri 617). This meal no doubt took much preparation and reflects the festive nature of the evening. In contrast to this, when the Lilia’s parents and Mr. Pirzada are understandably disturbed by the news that India and Pakistan were going to war, the only food that Lilia’s mother prepared was a bland and basic meal of boiled eggs and rice. Mr. Pirzada also stopped bringing Lilia candy, most likely overwhelmed by fear and worry over his family’s survival. At the end of Lahiri’s story she relieves readers by telling of Mr. Pirzada reuniting with his wife and family, all of whom are safe and sound. In an appropriate closing, Lilia’s family shares a meal in celebration of their safety. Lahiri adds food to her story as another character, adding depth and personality to a story about serious issues.

As seen in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Asian inspired stories, food is an effective way to show the flavor of a culture. Lahiri takes what could be to some an uninteresting story about differences between similar cultures during a civil war and adds her unique seasoning to it, making it relatable using food and spices of the east. Food can be used in literature as an instrument to express to reader’s emotions and experiences from Joy to sorrow and celebration to mourning. Culinary traditions are a unifying and enjoyable part of daily life in Asian and American cultures. The use of Asian cuisine helps readers get a firm grasp on the author’s experience of being a part of both places; Asia and America. Food is a fascinating character in these short stories as it adds life and zest to each author’s writings.

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## “The Story of an Hour”

*By Maria Nitka*

When reading a story, it is very hard not to wonder what others may have felt reading it as well. In the short story, “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, the main character, Mrs. Mallard, seems to be quite relieved and happy that her husband had just passed away. Her reaction may have been shocking to some as Chopin allows for the readers to form opinions based on what may have been a troubled marriage. Reading this story, concentrating on Mrs. Mallard’s perspective on marriage, I surmised that individuals of different backgrounds may react differently to her reaction based on their own experiences with marriage, their gender and perhaps their age, similarly to the way my mother, father and I reacted to the story.

Being twenty-one years old, I have not yet been able to experience marriage, but I have observed many marriages develop over time. For example, in my parent’s marriage, from time to time they may disagree, but they always come to some resolve; there is no such thing as a perfect marriage, because no human being is perfect. We all have different ways of how we interpret life and, therefore, have different opinions which more than likely will cause us to disagree. However, I also am witness to a strong and beautiful marriage about which I can say, with no doubt in mind, that when my parents have to part for the very last time, they will do so with great sorrow heavy in their hearts. In Chopin’s story, we all can agree that the Mallards experienced difficulty in their marriage from Mrs. Mallard’s whispered words shortly after she learned of her husband’s death, “free, free, free!” (Chopin 525). I can interpret from Mrs. Mallard’s words “she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely” (Chopin 525). Once having been in a controlling relationship unable to be heard and having my own voice, I do understand that relief and feeling free ending a relationship as Mrs. Mallard is describing. Knowing that this was written well over a hundred years ago, Mrs. Mallard unlike me, probably didn’t feel she had that option to end her relationship as she would have in the modern world. Due to the stigma associated with divorce a hundred years ago, Mrs. Mallard most likely didn’t see any other options to cure her unhappiness in her marriage. On the contrary, is divorce the answer? As the divorce rate is rising rapidly, we have gone in the other direction rather than working to resolve and compromise in relationships to make them better. Therefore, we should question why didn’t Mrs. Mallard express her unhappiness and work harder at her marriage and wait till her death to feel free... heartbreaking.

Marriage is an institution of love, which binds two people together, forever, but in this case, Mrs. Mallard’s forever is not what she wanted. To introduce the main question, why would Mrs. Mallard feel this way? When I first introduced “The Story of an Hour” to my mother, I asked her what she thought of Mrs. Mallard’s feeling free from her husband and she said “I don’t understand how a woman would feel free when her husband died, unless their marriage was awful” (L. Nitka). She then started explaining that in the text, it stated, “and yet she loved him---sometimes. Often she had not” (Chopin 525). My mother then said “love isn’t what changes, it is the people in the relationship that change, ultimately making it hard for the other to love what the other has become” (L. Nitka). This made sense to me, as Mrs. Mallard and her husband probably changed a lot as the years went by. Then I asked her what she thought of the line “Free! Body and soul free!” (Chopin 525). She began to say, “When we die, our soul becomes the ultimate freedom, letting go of pain. Mrs. Mallard had said that right before she died, explaining to everyone around her that her soul was free from the physical and emotional sense of her pain and suffering. Ultimately finally free to be the individual she wanted to be” (L. Nitka).

It may come as a surprise to most, but my father agreed with both my mom and me that she had a right to feel that way. However, my father went a little deeper into surmising that perhaps Mrs. Mallard may have been abused by her husband, which makes sense as she described that in her statement of her body and soul being now free. He then began to tell me that initially she was saddened, but didn't grieve deeply about it: "She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone" (Chopin 524). Then I had asked him if he thinks that maybe the reason why she didn't leave him is because the husband had threatened her in some way if she left; my father agreed, nodding his head up and down. My father who is passionate about history, had mentioned that "this scenario was very likely back during the age of the Catholic Church, it was unheard of that a couple would even consider divorce, but it was also very unlikely because women usually didn't have a say in what to do or how to do it" (K. Nitka).

To conclude, even though both people that were interviewed shared the same opinion, they both had a different take on the way they came to those conclusions based on their own experiences. My mother believed that there was more of a psychological approach to the way Mrs. Mallard felt, not being able to be her own person and have her own voice which caused her own unhappiness. On the other hand, because my father felt that Mrs. Mallard may have been abused causing her to oppress her feelings, and historically what occurred during the era of the Catholic Church with the stigma of divorce, she had no other choices. However, my views weren't from experiencing marriage myself yet as I am only twenty-one, but it is of what I witnessed in my parent's marriage: the love and understanding, with the disagreements ultimately ending always in a resolution. I grew up knowing that marriage isn't as perfect as fairy tales make them seem to be; they don't show the real workings of relationships only the glory. In this story, it is clear that not all marriages are perfect and need work; however, I understand they can be great as I feel it is portrayed in my parents' marriage. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mallard never felt free to be truly who she wanted to be until she believed her husband had died. Hence, many people will have different experiences within their marriage, if we learned anything from this story it should be that one should speak up and work toward resolving their unhappiness and not wait till their death to be free to be themselves.

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## The Decay of the Southern Aristocracy: “A Rose for Emily”

*By Alexis Pangilinan*

The defeat of the Confederacy ushered in change that would affect the lives of southerners for generations. As Abraham Lincoln put it, the Civil War engendered a “new birth of freedom,” which was an optimistic view of one of the most tragic events in American history (“Historic Words Comfort”). The South had to come to the realization that the life they once knew was coming to an end, and that the very core of southern society would need to be redefined. No longer would the southern gentry be able to lead the comfortable lives they were used to: sipping mint juleps by day and entertaining high society by night. This disconnect would essentially lead to the death of old southern ways, because change in a society is inescapable, and the world continues to move forward. In essence, William Faulkner highlights this inevitable decay of the southern aristocracy in “A Rose for Emily,” through the description of Miss Emily’s house, the rise of the new generation, and the characterization of a fallen noblewoman.

The last symbol of Southern aristocracy, Emily’s house is a testament to the old way of life in Jefferson, and it is literally and figuratively withering away. There was once a time when the home was seen as prosperous, elite, and pristine, but the neighborhood in the present, is deteriorating and has fallen to the realm of the ordinary. The home with its “big, squarest frame” is now yellowed and smells of “dust and disuse - a close, dank smell,” sticks out amongst industrialization, “cotton wagons,” and “gasoline pumps,” that fill the town (628). A home is supposed to represent the very core of the household, where one’s ideologies and practices are accepted. Emily’s house is a microcosm of these old southern values, and this physical decay of the emblem of southern tradition exemplifies that the values once cherished, are now seen as out of place. Miss Emily’s house essentially becomes a shrine to the past she cannot let go of, and the nobility no longer present. The town’s morbid interest in the home finally comes to an end when Emily falls “ill in the house filled with dust and shadows” (633). This image of death and the memory of the past are embedded within the building, and it is described as a tomb. Not only is the house dying, but so too are the customs of the southern gentry.

Faulkner continues to stress the decay of the old southern lifestyle through depicting a society that refuses to let go of the past in order to preserve traditions that are behind the times. The town seems to be stuck between Miss Emily, “a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town,” and the new rising generation (628). This emphasis on finding that the town is beginning to turn on Emily, suggests that change is on the horizon. While it is apparent that they are on the edge of widespread transformation, the townspeople are still faced with constant reminders of the past, manifested in Emily, her house, and even the town’s cemetery where “anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers fell at the battle of Jefferson” (628). The author describes the rise of the new generation as the up and coming “backbone and the spirit of the town,” for they are the representation of the fading southern aristocracy, to give way to societal changes and economic progress (633).

The unnamed narrator speaks for the town as a whole, and holds some respect for time honored notions of status and tradition, but it is contrasted with the criticism of the old. Dressed in their Confederate uniforms, their idea of time “with its mathematical progression” is confused and the past is “not a diminished road, but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches” (633). This highlights the idea that for Emily and the elders of the community, their past has not grown dim because they all cling onto the idealistic history of a life of grandeur. A life where the biting snow can never wither away the southern spring and is not destroyed by rebellion. While

rebellion was an “impressive teacher, though a stern and terrible one,” it came as a “means of progress and enlightenment,” as Frederick Douglass, African American social reformer and abolitionist, pointed out. This instructor’s motivation was to fight against the old southern way of life and oppression, to hopefully educate society. In expressing the disdain for those who want to continue to live in a romanticized world, the idea that separation from southern aristocracy can be attained with the decay of the old way of life into the rise of the new generation.

Faulkner makes the point that Emily’s physical deterioration is proportional to the fall of the southern nobility, for she is the manifestation of the elite. Emily was raised during the antebellum period in America, where her family once stood as the Great Griersons. In every facet she is the epitome of the concept of the southern belle, “a slender figure in white,” an ornament to decorate the home, and a docile woman of good breeding (630). The hierarchy of the south consistently put women in their socially accepted roles where according to historian Alexis Girardin Brown, the “highest roles [they] could aspire were those of nurturing mother, dutiful wife, and social moral pillar” (Brown). This social contract she is expected to fulfil was ready to be completed on her end, but she is never able to achieve them and in turn, the very core of her identity is shaken. With the conclusion of the Civil War, the world she once knew was destroyed, and the already limited options she had as a southern belle dwindled further. Her entire means of survival and potential for a future, rested solely in the man of the household, he was to provide for her financially, and to find her a husband when the time came. However, when her father died, so too did her prospects.

From that moment on, the decay of her life became commensurate to the fall of the southern aristocracy. A woman who had grown up expecting a life of luxury, was met with pity, for she was alone in the world, left with no skills or fortune, and had finally become humanized. In this way, the barrier between the normal world and the “high and mighty Griersons” throughout the course of the story, becomes muddled, and the idea of the southern nobility being impervious is negated (629). Over the course of decades, she finally transforms into the shadow of the noblewoman who once held her head high within the town. Emily’s hair “grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt-iron-gray” (633) and she became bloated, like a “body long submerged in motionless water” (629). This description reinforces the idea that Emily’s decay from a beautiful southern belle, to a member of the walking dead, is equivalent to the fall of the aristocracy. The social contract she cannot escape binds her to her current state of tragedy, and the pressure to uphold her old lifestyle goes to further her demise and to further the destruction of the old southern lifestyle.

Faulkner paints a kaleidoscopic world in, “A Rose for Emily,” in which lies many elaborate layers to emphasize the changes in the South. The past and the present seem to blend together discordantly, and the struggle over which one will prevail is apparent. It is through this struggle that readers can come to the realization that time goes on ad infinitum, and those who ardently refuse to evolve, are left behind. In this case, what is being left behind is the idea of an elite social class, to make room for an era of change. As Faulkner stresses, it is only through the decay of the southern aristocracy that an opportunity to move forward into the future can be achieved.

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**English 211**  
**Introduction to Poetry**

## God Fearing Sheep: Questioning God in “The Lamb” and “The Tyger”

*By Tyler Rozell*

Is god just another vehicle for the people who run the world to drive their agendas? God seems to be the ‘go to’ answer that politicians use when they want to sell something to the public. Take what George W. Bush said, “I’m driven with a mission from God. God would tell me, George, go and fight those terrorists in Afghanistan. And I did, and then God would tell me, George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq. . . . And I did.” (Qtd. In Kamen). How godlike of President Bush to avenge the victims of 9/11 by attacking the wrong country, twice.

God is not just a way for power hungry neo-fundamentalist politicians to drive policy, he is a marketing tool created by some early advertising firm, on some early version of Madison Avenue, to get donations and sell funny hats. Organized religions seemed to have evolved to take advantage of this character’s marketability. This marketability has been used to sell everything from bullets, bombs, and hatred towards others who do not fit in the hegemony. It has encouraged people to fear the ‘others’ in society; to punish those who do not follow their orthodox lifestyle.

It seems unlikely that if there was a god he would look brightly on organized religion. As different sects of the same religion commit genocide and war crimes against each other, would he really be smiling down on anybody? Would he praise a Pope for not wearing ruby encrusted slippers while millions of children starve, or was that ‘fashion statement’ long overdue? How would their mascot, god, look on the Pope living in a gilded mansion surrounded by priceless pieces of art, taking donations from the elderly and poor? How would he feel about a pope who preaches about what type of sex is appropriate while working to hide the pedophilia that has plagued his church?

It seems like only the intellectual and artistic class can see through this ruse. They are a class of people who are able to see through the propagated myths put out by the church through their works of art and literature. John Lennon’s “God,” Stephen Crane’s “The Open Boat,” and Pearl Jam’s “Mind Your Manners” question god and organized religion. There are also many poets that question the existence of god. One poet who does this is William Blake. In “The Tyger,” Blake’s speaker asks questions about the existence of tigers and lambs; the speaker questions how the two species could be created by the same creator, and what that creator’s motivations might be. Although some readers interpret Blake’s poetry as devoutly religious, it really is against religion. Blake raises doubt in “The Tyger” by having his speakers question religion through ambiguity in pronouns, choice of words, and god’s role in evil.

The ambiguous language used in “The Tyger” is one way that Blake questions god’s existence. In organized religions, the church’s orthodox definition of god is not to be questioned; it is written in stone. In contrast, ambiguity in poetry allows the reader to interpret their own meaning either from a word, line, or the whole poem. One type of word that poets can play around with are pronouns. Pronouns like he, his, she, hers, and thy are used in place of proper nouns. This can become confusing when talking about more than one person; it can be easy to get lost because of uncertainty as to what ‘he’ refers to. Throughout his poem, “The Tyger,” Blake’s use of pronouns becomes confusing; it is hard to decipher who Blake is referring to in the poem. This can be seen when he asks “What the hammer? what the chain, / In what furnace was thy brain?” (13,14). The liminal literal boundary between the tiger, and the creator makes it unclear if Blake is referring to the tiger or the creator with the word “thy”. By doing this it suggests that perhaps the tiger and creator are one. The idea that beings create themselves is fundamentally anti-religious; it means that every single person is the master of their own fate. It means that individuals

decide the meaning of the world through free will for themselves rather than having the answers fed to them by someone else's interpretation. This means people would be their own god and would make their own rules to follow. It frees followers from the constraints of organized religion.

"The Tyger" also uses specific words and phrases to evoke a questioning tone. In poetry word choice is imperative to convey a deeper meaning. If a writer chooses to put a specific word or phrase there is a reason. Conversely, if a writer leaves out a word it is also significant. In "The Tyger," Blake chooses to leave the word 'god' out of the poem all together. This is significant because it is a poem that talks about creation. To leave god out of it suggests doubt by omission. In addition to leaving god out, the speaker asks eleven unanswered questions in "The Tyger." Questions are significant because they signify that the speaker is uncertain about the answer. Through a religious context, "The Tyger" sets forth questions which equate to doubt to the answers provided by the church. Questioning the answers given by the church is the first step to questioning the institution as a whole. These types of questions contribute to the tone of "The Tyger." *Songs of Experience*, the collection that "The Tyger" is published in is described as, "dark, cynical, and angry because society has destroyed the ideal world of innocence" (Stade and Karbiener). The tone is "dark, cynical, and angry" because it does not attempt to give answers to the questions it raises. Religion tends to try and sugar coat these answers in order to keep its followers happy. Blake keeps his tone dark and uncertain to avoid this doctrine. By doing this Blake is holding his poetry to a higher standard of truth than organized religions. He is encouraging his audience to find truth in literature rather than in sermons.

In addition to his use of ambiguous language, Blake's questioning of god's role in the existence of evil is another way that he questions religion. A common challenge to the existence of god is: why is there evil in the world if there is an omnipotent being watching over it? In "The Tyger" Blake's speaker ponders this question when he asks, "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (20). The way that Blake explores the relationship between the tiger, lamb, and creator is interesting. Why would an omnipotent being create a lamb and a tiger? Is the lamb's sole purpose feeding the tiger? One reason that the speaker seems to be questioning God's presence is through the existence of evil. Religion's answer would be that it is all a part of 'god's plan' and will eventually benefit the greater good. This is a pandering answer, as it does not really answer the question so much as it calms fears around the lack of justice in the world. This does not provide an answer to why there is evil in the world so much as it says that things eventually work out. On the other hand, the speaker from "The Tyger" avoids trying to calm down the readers; in fact, the speaker works hard to encourage readers to take questions seriously and demand serious answers. By pointing this out the speaker shows how little the church really knows about the world. By showing this the Blake's "Tyger" poetry points out that there are inconsistencies and hypocrisy in the church's interpretation of god. It is important for more people to start questioning god. God's marketability falls when people start to think critically. Politicians will always try to use god to gain control of the direction America goes. They will try to use him to disenfranchise 'others' and unite the hegemony against them. But using god to sell wars becomes harder when people start questioning the motivations of the neo-fundamentalist politicians like George W. Bush. Like a tiger, Bush's predatory use of god to sell policy resulted in a lot of sheep getting hurt. A wild tiger is dangerous, however if America never allows the tigers out of their cages they can do no harm. While religion has historically and currently been able to have an immense impact on policy if Americans fight back against these politicians they would have no bite. It is important to question religion because blind faith gives power to the power-hungry predators. In future

elections, politicians will continue to use god to take control. A society that asks questions about the nature of reality is a society that is capable of seeing past religious pandering. This society would be able to see god as he really is, a cheap, antiquated, cartoony mascot that is used to sell them on policies designed to hurt them and help the people who wrote them.

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## Being Known and Being Human: Emotional Connections in Poetry

*By Autumn Shenko*

What does spending the day folding laundry mean? What about helping someone move or buying someone an expensive gift? For some, it is a boring household chore or social responsibility. For others, it is an act of love. They can just be meaningless actions or they can be signals that someone cares. These personal connections, these acts of kindness, keep people thriving. It stops loneliness, it opens people up, and allows true intimacy to happen. This is a key characteristic of being human—knowing someone and being loved. That is why poets so often write about intimacy. J. Ross Eshleman, an author of sociology, and Dr. Juaane Clarke, a professor at Wilfrid Laurier University who focuses on social research, define intimacy as “any close association or friendship that involves informal warmth, openness, and sharing” (qtd. in Moss and Schwebel 32). Poets often get to the heart of the matter—they do not try to cover up true emotion. Poets could just as easily write that everything is fine and that they do not feel anything one way or another. It would be so much easier—imagine a poet writing a poem about someone she secretly loves and the subject finding it. That would be horrifying and embarrassing—but poets continue to write because it is human emotion. If poets were not going to be honest, it would be easier for them to never write anything at all. No one cares about what poets are pretending to feel, readers want true, unfiltered emotion. The scenario in poems may be fabricated, but the underlying feeling is not. Poets all over the world share their most intimate feelings, and their speaker’s most intimate feelings, with the world. This is evident in the British poet Wilfred Owen’s poem “Dulce et Decorum Est,” American poet Kim Addonizio’s “First Poem for You,” and “Beets” by Mihaela Moscaliuc, a Romanian poet. In these poems, intimacy is drawn from the speakers’ experiences of war, lust, and love.

In Owen’s poem, the speaker shares an intimate account of trauma during the war. It is difficult for anyone to be open about emotionally damaging events. Most people keep their dark, shadowy parts locked away in closets only to be opened by the most trustworthy people in their lives—they do not let just anyone know if they have tried to kill themselves before, if they have been raped, or if they have otherwise had an agonizing experience. Even if they do let people know, they will not go into much more detail than that. However, Owen’s speaker is incredibly open about his own horrifying experience in war. He holds back no detail to his “friend” (25). He recounts, vividly, his experience watching a fellow soldier die in front of him. He does not just state that during war he watched his friends—his comrades—die, instead, he goes into detail about a specific event. The speaker tells his friend about the soldier’s “hanging face,” “writhing” white eyes, and the “gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs” (20, 19, 22). These are sickening details to tell someone and should only be shared with a therapist or an incredibly close friend. This, however, is not the most personal thing the speaker shares. He tells his friend that he is being haunted by this occurrence, and that even still “In all [his] dreams, before my helpless sight, / He plunges at me” (15-16). These are incredibly intimate detail to share with someone and the speaker is laying this all on his friend. This would not happen if they were not close. It is a common trope in war literature that the speakers who have suffered remain silent because they are unable to express their emotions (Cole 473). Owen’s speaker does not do this—he opens himself up and allows true intimacy to happen between him and his friend. Even though his experience was traumatic, he still allowed his friend to understand him on a deeper level.

Moreover, war leads to intimacy between fellow soldiers. Soldiers spend day after day with each other, protecting one another with their lives, sharing their private moments and emotions.



The subsequent bond they share should come as little surprise. This bond lasts beyond the physical world and into the spiritual. Owen's speaker, to the day he shares his intimate moment with his friend, still dreams about the same man dying. Not once, either. The speaker notes that he sees him "in all [his] dreams" (15). He is being haunted, in a sense, by this man, and through it is only through his dreams, the soldier plays a large role in his subconscious. If this experience, and this soldier, had not touched him in a personal way, there would be no point to remember it. Furthermore, the speaker was in a treacherous war, yet this death sticks out in his head instead of any other. There had to have been some sort of connection—even if it was just in the soldier's death—that allowed the speaker to keep him so close in his mind. This is not a deliberate connection, but it has been established nonetheless. Repetition of meeting, the distinct physical motion of the soldier reaching for the speaker, the expressive nature of the dead soldier's being, shared commitment to the same cause (the war), and a sense of closeness all contribute to levels of intimacy (Moss & Schwebel 33). These connections soldiers make with each other do not dissipate after the war is done—they still have a special connection with those who fought alongside them. Owen's poetry often draws from the "intense experience of intimacy" to further the harsh realities of war (Cole 486). The relationship between the speaker's dream soldier and the attempt to connect with his friend show the depth of intimacy in a traumatic period.

Intimacy is not only found in war—the apparent lust in Addonizio's poem shows the speaker's desire for a more intimate relationship. Sex is one of the most intimate acts people can do. When she gives her body to another, she is trusting her partner when she is at her most vulnerable. However, when people express their emotions honestly with each other, a deeper sense of intimacy is achieved. This is what Addonizio's speaker wants: she and her partner have satisfied their relationship on a physical level—the desires of the flesh—and now she wants to satiate a deeper need. The couple's relationship has clearly survived on their physical intimacy, but now they must reach the next level—love or romantic intimacy. The speaker already suggests a future. However, she does not say flat out in the poem that she desires a committed, serious relationship. While touching her lover's tattoos, she thinks of the ultimatum: their relationship will either "persist" or "turn to pain" (11-12). The reader understands that the speaker prefers one over the other, though. The speaker still touches the tattoos "trying"—trying for a future, trying to make the relationship work, trying to turn their lust into something more (14). Their physical relationship clearly shows that they know each other intimately which lends itself to sexual attraction, or lust, but it is also clear that the couple is missing that mutual affection and desire for a deeper relationship. If the speaker was entirely comfortable with her lover, she would have a better understanding of his potential reciprocation. Her uncertainty in the relationship allows the reader to understand what is still missing. The speaker has already shown her partner where she is most vulnerable physically, and now she needs to show where she is vulnerable emotionally.

Alternatively, Moscaliuc's poem illustrates an intimate love between the speaker and her significant other. Her intimacy is a closer to what most think about when they think about intimacy and even love. In the poem, the speaker is caring for the person she loves. This is not in a co-dependent way or in a my-husband-is-sick-let-me-devout-my-time-to-his-final-days way. This is in pure love—"pure heartthrob"—and the result is one of the most intimate forms of passion. The speaker wants her significant other to love beets like she does. She takes time to broil them, and then, once they are done, she offers to "slather" the beet with various condiments to make it more desirable (9). This extra care she takes into one meal of one vegetable shows her deep love. The language she uses to describe the beet heavily implies a sexual relationship as well. The beet is given a "hot tongue" that "pries open [her] mouth," and her husband takes off the skin of the beet

like a “slip” (5, 6, 18) Then, to make matters more obvious, after he rejects the beet, she compares the beet to Aphrodite, calling her “the-beetroot-goddess” (26). Beets, then, act as a symbol for their love and love in general. This, however, does not win her partner over. Instead, he feeds her the beet, his own “whiskered heart” (26). This is a tender moment and a very personal one. Generally, people need to be quite close to one another to allow someone else to feed them. It is not taken lightly in our society. When hanging out with friends, it is deemed odd if one of them decided to feed another. It is a very sensual act. When the speaker is fed by her significant other it lets the reader know the nature of the relationship—it is serious enough for the man to feed her his heart.

Intimacy does not just exist in romantic love, but in friendships and even between strangers, under the right circumstances. It is a necessary part of the human experience to let others in—even when someone may fear getting hurt. Being open can sometimes be cathartic, like in Owen’s poem; nerve-wracking, like in Addonizio’s; or easy, like in Moscaliuc’s poem. These speakers exemplify, in a way, what it is like to be human—to crave being known. Even beyond these three poems, intimacy is a topic that shows up in life time and time again. If poets did not give readers insight into these emotions, imagine how lonely the world would feel. Poets let others into their world and it creates a connection. People love feeling known and understood—someone can relate to a poem across time and space because of the emotional weight it carries. It is a desirable feeling to be honest with another and with oneself, and as long as there are humans in the world and robots annihilate human contact, poets will continue to share their most intimate moments on the page and intimacy will still be an important part of everyone’s lives.

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**English 215**  
**The Graphic Novel**

## The Graphic Novel: An Adult Case of “Green Eggs and Ham?”

By Malcolm Wagner

A six-year-old in 1999 found great enjoyment in chewing five-second lasting bazooka gum just to read and pocket the small comic-lined wrappers, they loved cutting out *Peanuts* and *Garfield* strips out of the Sunday paper (keeping in the lines), and having dad read the same *Calvin and Hobbes* book repeatedly to his dismay. That six-year-old grew and fostered an evolving love for the medium of comics and graphic novels trying as they may, to bring loved ones into the light and genre-haters off their backs and into the temporal vortex of the gutter. As the wrestling inner six-year-old boldly defended, the twenty-something sought out why some still have their hang-ups with graphic texts, whether outright refusing to acknowledge the medium as a platform for learning or not being able to “get into it” despite having tried to. What is stopping people from pursuing and achieving the sublime satisfaction of reading a work in this medium so deserving of unique recognition? Fear of the unknown and the lack of guidance in approaching the work in a way in which one can glean as much as it has to offer. Through the audience’s acceptance of their role as the “implied reader,” the awareness of semiotics as a mode of communication, and the interplay of images and text, graphic novels are elevated to contend with and surpass the gross misconception that the medium is subordinate to traditional forms of art and literature.

Wolfgang Iser in *The Act of Reading*, (1978) uses the term “implied reader” (34) to refer to a theoretical figure that possesses the background knowledge necessary to interact with a text and the “literary repertoire” on which it draws upon. In Sean Connors’ essay, “Altering Perspectives: How the Implied Reader Invites Us to Rethink the Difficulty of Graphic Texts,” he explains that the extent of one’s repertoire—“a collection of social norms, values, and conventions that exist in the world outside of text, and that readers and writers ideally share”—determines the ability in which one can readily adopt the role of the “implied reader.” Iser’s concept of the implied reader is crucial in the realm of graphic novels-- a medium where reader participation is a dynamic task. Connors details how students who possess knowledge of literary, artistic, and cinematic conventions and those who are willing to adopt the role of the reader—approaching the graphic novel with an open mind and a willingness to apply outside knowledge to the framework of the medium—“are able to engage with graphic novels in ways that students who lack familiarity with the diverse range of conventions they employ are not.” (34).

Confronting Otto Nuckel’s *Destiny*—a novel absent of text, a story in roughly etched and scored woodcut panels—is no easy task if one is to approach it with the notions and experiences of the 21st century. While the emotions evoked in *Destiny* are universal to man, the conventions Nuckel employed in the work are specifically hinged to the time period, political and economic climate, and the natural constraints of the medium. A responsible read of the work includes background knowledge of the Depression in Germany during the 1920s and ‘30s, the evolution of German Expressionism with the aim to “‘render visible’... the raw effects of emotion, sexuality and spirituality [...] which explore the hidden world of the unconscious [...]to shed light on the complex impulses underpinning daily life” (Buchanan). The acknowledgment of the restrictions of woodcuts as a medium to showcase a story in pictures, is crucial in recognizing the significance of each element within a panel. The nature of broad, staggered, and often ambiguous line work within woodcuts, as opposed to crisp lines of pen and ink, force the reader to engage with the panel using a close eye so as to derive a clearer meaning. This task of participation on the reader’s part grows from within the panels, to between them, since our participation in the act of closure is the only bridge between the images (McCloud). The fluidity of *Destiny* relies on the reader since the panels “...fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected

moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality” (McCloud). Our understanding and meaning of the novel as centered on a female protagonist whose journey through life is one marked by sorrow, is the closure that we provide page by page and the meaning we extract while we participate in the closure necessary to make comics “work.”



The three panels above appear on a single page each, in sequential order, in the chapter Nuckel titled “The Child.” Without any dialogue or narration, the reader is left to rely on the knowledge of the chapter title, the elements within the composed panel, and the panels’ contextual relation to come to a general conclusion that: before daybreak our protagonist left her room in a rush, delivered her baby riverside, and in an overwhelming grief, actively or passively saw to the drowning of the child, which was fetched out of the water, limp and lifeless, by sailors. One can see how the chapter titles help to catalog the events, although this wordless novel does not give the reader a passive reading experience by any means. *Destiny* invites its readers to shed their preconceived ideas about books comprised of seemingly rudimentary renderings absent of words, by drawing on the rich cultural, artistic, and literary conventions Nuckel employs. When one is able to draw on those conventions, and bring their knowledge to the analysis of the work, the message gleaned is luminous.

While the adoption of the role of the “implied reader” is instrumental to one maximizing their interpretation of a work, so is the awareness of semiotics as a mode in which the creator is communicating to the reader through our knowledge of universalities. Semiotics—the study of signs and what they signify—acts as a bridge of communication from creator to reader, through acceptance of shared signifying knowledge whether universal, cultural, or personal (Atkin). Integral to the study of Semiotics within Linguistics is the idea of denotative and connotative meanings. While a “...denotational meaning of a sign would be broadly agreed upon by members of the same culture,” (Barnard) connotations are not strictly subjective or personal meanings but instead they “are determined by the codes to which the interpreter has access” (Silverman). In this way, the role of the “implied reader” holds the same weight as the “interpreter” of semiotics in accessing meaning through their participation. The creator utilizes essential elements or cues, placed in the work, to which it is the reader’s task to recognize, draw upon, and attach signifiers to, resulting in meaning or understanding.

In *Watchmen*, semiotics abounds for the reader to pick up, draw out, relate, and continue to notice. Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons craft this subset of communication and employ it in many

fashions throughout the graphic novel, though poignantly used as an identifier for characterization. The Comedian's badge—the classic yellow smiley face—is a denotative signifier for the character throughout the novel. Even before the audience is able to attach the sign to the character, we see the blood spattered smiley badge on the curb of a murder scene, stirring up connotative meanings of irony, contradiction, and fallacy. As we explore further, the tainted smiley badge comes to signify the “joke” of innocence and a mockery of the masses. Rorschach's mask of changing inkblots pulls signifying knowledge from the field of psychology and applies it to his convoluted identity, building on the meaning of the sign—from the first encounter, to his eventual arrest, subsequent psychological evaluations, and his uncompromising death. The semiotic weight of the mask affords Rorschach's identity a natural complexity of limitless arrangements within a restricted binary of black and white thinking. While *Watchmen* contains a plethora of signs for study, Dr. Manhattan is a character whose visual portrayal and backstory begs a symbolic evaluation. Even characters within the novel are incapable of holding such evaluations back. The inset of “Dr. Manhattan: Super-powers and the Superpowers” showcases a DaVinci-esque rendering of Dr. Manhattan blurring the lines between man and divine being, as Milton Glass recounts Dr. Manhattan's “phenomenal genesis,” as a “wholly original entity,” a man capable not only of ending wars, but “a man to end worlds.”

From this rendering of the article's cover page, semiotics introduces and reinforces the content within. One may recognize Dr. Manhattan as a new-age Vitruvian man, applying new meaning of anatomy, symmetry, and science to an established symbol. His arm span reaches to a sphere of a hydrogen atom—the simplest and most abundant in the universe—and his navel is centered by its nucleus, indicating this force field is within his domain. Claiming the symbol as his own, the mirrored source is shown on his forehead, indicating that Dr. Manhattan is a being of different belonging. Above and below, the symbol of the Soviet flag alongside stars and stripes, reinforce our meaning of the countries as political “superpowers.” Every point that Glass touches on in his article, is wrapped up in the semiotic weight of the signs used on the inset cover.

Being aware of the signs and symbols used in graphic novels, one is able to recognize those cues as more than visual filler but as a visual portal for communicating ideas and feelings. Semiotics act as a powerful mode of expression, conveying a message or multiple without having to rely on words, creatively freeing up space for the creators to carefully craft and emphasize the words they choose to use.

Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, talks about the communicative balance between textual signs and iconic signs and what they offer both its creators and its readers: “Comics is a great balancing act. An art as subtractive as it is additive—and a baffling two-step of time and space. But nowhere is the balance between the visible and the invisible more conspicuous than in pictures and words...” (206-207). In this medium we see how the interplay between text and images can converge to evoke mood, contradict each other ironically, emphasize or complement. The creator has a dispensary of communicative tools at his desk to aid in the crafting of his mastery. There are works that make heavy use of text, even varying texts simultaneously. There are works that strip themselves of narration and dialogue completely, aiming instead for the “wordless novel.” And there are works, like Chris Ware's *Lint*, that make such rounded use of the interplay between text and images that the result is an interwoven, deliberate convergence and retreat in which the fluidity of our reading and response rests.

By adopting the role of the implied reader, and recognizing the semiotic weight of both images and text as signifying signs, one can approach *Lint* with the veracity and mindfulness needed to absorb and process the patterned life of the protagonist. Ware is highly attuned to

perspective of character and adjusts the scale of the image text interplay to its authentic weight. From the pixelated form of infancy, the blurred and spotty overtones of black, red, and white gradually form into distinct shapes and identifiable characters: “dA dA,” “MAMAMAMA,” and “JRdN” (1-3). The pictures and words become more and more vivid as Jordan “Jason” Lint grows and becomes more complex. Ware masters the medium by knowing when to stay within the patterns of panel structure and symmetry, and when to break away from that paradigm entirely, favoring a fragmented coalescing of text and images—both of which are precisely executed. We see an example of this below, where the inner thoughts of the protagonist are shown as a mixture of text and images, of varying weight.

In the midst of reflection, prayer, and seeking forgiveness, Lint thinks of his deceased mother, his deceased best friend, and the state of his marriage, but by showcasing the text “my...me... me... me...” visually, Ware emphasizes to his audience that Lint is still a character stunted by his selfishness.

*Lint* is unique in the way it encourages reader participation and identification with a less than desirable protagonist and while there are many facets of Ware’s work that can be attributed here, perhaps a subtle headline within *Lint* best describes it: “Feelings, Not Words, Tell the Whole Story.” How does one best capture feelings in order to convey the whole story? The power of comics as a visual language is tied to the nature that not only the signs, but color, panel structure, line work, composition, style and so forth, signify to its readers. The images and properties of artistic convention in a sight-based medium like graphic novels, can act as subtle and powerful emotional instigators in a way that literary texts can only achieve through more direct means. Expanding beyond the cliché that a picture is worth a thousand words, one must look at the graphic novel medium—where space is premium for both images and text—as harnessing the power and capabilities that both art and literature possess and utilizing them to their extent, pushing the limits of their respective fields, and of one’s own ability. In approaching the textual and visual elements of the medium as a marriage—however that power dynamic takes form—one can appreciate what extraordinary “fruits” are birthed by the laborious and meticulous toiling between text and images.

If we adopt Iser’s construct of the “implied reader,” analyze the iconic signs that pervade comics through the lens of Semiotics, and remain aware to the subtleties and complexities of the interplay between images and text, we can approach the medium of graphic novels with a readiness that will equip us to participate, and in turn, receive all that the works have to offer. If we open a comic book with a simplistic view, with judgement in our minds, we will only take with us a narrowed view of what it can offer. If we instead choose to roll up our sleeves and engage with the comic, bring our knowledge to its bindings, fill the gutter with our ready and willing imaginative capacities, and keep our minds open, this medium to which we are employed as readers has no limits to how it can expand and shape our thinking if we agree to supply it with that energy. While there are some things we may need to give up or grow out of, comics are not one of them.

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**English 230**  
**Science Fiction**

## Good vs. Evil as Seen in the Characterization of “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

*By Adrienne Merchant*

From the earliest moments of conceptual thought, the distinction between good and bad is a notion emphasized in not only familial interactions, but also societal expectations. It is a core theme throughout the existence of man, with strong associations with moral processes, that has become largely enmeshed within the confines of religious schools of thought over time.

Through this interaction, the grace of angels has become the epic personification of good, while the deceitful wrongdoing of demons has been labeled as the oppositional evil. The epic duel that has wrought between these two factions has been the focus of multiple works of literature, with prevalence in the southern gothic genre. The depiction of good versus evil has long been an aspect explored by the southern author Flannery O'Connor; yet, the manner in which she uses the literary tools of characterization to paint contrasting views of each in her short story “A Good Man is Hard to Find” adds a special dynamic which allows readers to ponder this theory on multiple levels of scrutiny with the core focus resting on the final interactions of just the father and mother and the Misfit. In doing so, Flannery O'Connor developed a form of writing that allowed for increased awareness and sensitivity to the plight of good and evil through the representation of the relatable context of personification in her characters of “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

As one of Flannery O'Connor's most famous literary works, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” was first published in 1953 as a work of horror, set in the southern state of Georgia (Kaplan). It was the title piece in O'Connor's first short story collection, and has gone on to be merited as one of the most reviewed works of southern gothic literature. The story revolves around the themes of identity and sins of pride through the exploration of O'Connor's protagonist, the grandmother (Holmes). At the onset of the story, the grandmother reveals her tragic flaws in her selfishness and pride, as she attempts to alter the destination of the family's upcoming vacation. She rails at her son Bailey, with whom she lives, in an effort to scare him into canceling their Florida vacation in favor of Tennessee, where she has friends she would like to visit. Ironically, the grandmother uses the presence of an escaped killer in the area to support her position, which seems to be a highly unlikely threat at the time. When her pleas are blatantly ignored by Bailey and his wife, the grandmother is forced to accept that the family will vacation in Florida. Still feeling superior to her own son, and his family, the grandmother dresses pretentiously for the trip with the foresight that she wants to ensure that people know she was a lady in the event that she somehow died along the way. Disrespecting Bailey's implicit directions that her cat, Pitty Sing, remain at home, the grandmother makes sure she is the first one in the car, the morning they leave, with her pet secretly stowed away in a hidden basket. The journey south is burdened by Bailey's two unruly older children and the pretentious grandmother, who incites them to tantrums. As a result, the family ends up detouring in search of an old plantation the grandmother believes is nearby, although she comes to remember it actually is far away in Tennessee. Under directions from the grandmother, Bailey turns down a bumpy dirt road which unleashes a frantic Pitty Sing and causes him to roll the car into the ditch along the road. It is only after this accident that the stranded family notices a formidable old hearse approaching. The grandmother unwittingly seals their demise in voicing her recognition of

the Misfit killer, whom she had flippantly attempted to use as a pawn earlier in the story (Kaplan). The employment of irony and dark humor present in this interchange is a central element in establishing the appeal of the O'Connor's depiction of good versus evil within her character's involvement.

The grandmother is the first character that Flannery O'Connor introduces us to, which is significant because she is the protagonist of the story. In holding with the short story genre, O'Connor is quick to establish her protagonist's flaws in both her behaviors and beliefs from the start (O'Connor 1-2). The immediate introduction to the prideful and selfish ways of the grandmother helps to distinguish her as relatable, though it is in a manner that mostly elicits disdain in the reader. John R. Holmes related that, "Being 'a lady' is an important part of the grandmother's self-identity, yet it is defined externally, by clothing, and seems dependent on other people's opinions." The description of the grandmother's identity is closely tied to her own conceptualization of her inherent goodness and respect for the good lineage she possesses. Although this depiction has little relativity for modern audiences, the story's first audience in 1953 was highly likely to sympathize with the grandmother's beliefs on appearance and social standing, as this notion is prevalent amongst the older generations of the southern regions. The grandmother's employment of such distinction, though, is in reference to the possibility of her own death and the importance of maintaining her stature through the end, even though neither would mean very much (Holmes). Such views cast into doubt the older woman's understanding of goodness, as it relates to her actual faith and not just her wealth and breeding. T. W. Hendricks supported this idea in his essay entitled "Flannery O'Connor's 'Spoiled Prophet,'" where he ascertains that "The grandmother's good qualities are, however, compromised by her delusions about her background and social status" (131). Flannery O'Connor used this imperfect depiction of goodness in the grandmother to emphasize the fact that being good does not equate to divinity, but rather associates largely with the flaws of human nature. Despite these imperfections, the grandmother retains a sense of dignity and grace in contrast to O'Connor's other characters (Hendricks, 130). This distinction plays into the portrayal of the imperfection of her goodness in such a way that she, alone, is afforded the opportunity to realize a moment of grace in the end.

Another proponent of the depiction of good versus evil that is prevalent in "A Good Man is Hard to Find" rests with the depiction of the grandmother's family and the dynamics of their interactions within the story. Bailey, the grandmother's only son, is presented as a very passive character in light of the tenacity of the grandmother. Hendricks proposed that Bailey was portrayed in such a light to show how being raised under the oppression of his domineering mother had left him with an uncertain affinity for being authoritative (129). This image allows for readers to understand Bailey as a character that does not have the strength to maintain a sense of goodness, but rather is complacent in being resentful and disillusioned. Flannery O'Connor established this personification for Bailey and his young wife in describing their response to the grandmother in that, "Bailey didn't look up from his reading so she wheeled around then and faced the children's mother, a young woman in slacks, whose face was so broad and innocent as a cabbage and was tied around with a green head-kerchief that had two points on the top like rabbit's ears" (2).

With further explanation of these parents as being neglectful of disciplining the spoiled and insolent behavior of the older two children, Bailey and his wife become shadow characters.

With no definitive good characteristics, it can be understood that the grandmother's family are more depictions of the evil personifications of modern families.

This dismal moral standing is even prevalent in the depiction of Red Sammy Butts and his wife who own the Tower Roadhouse that the grandmother and her family stop to eat at. Despite advertising that depicted Red Sammy as a happy man whose food is famous, the family encounters a deserted parking lot with Red Sammy's large body wedged under the front of a truck (Hendricks 130). This depiction is meant to show the disdain Red Sammy and his wife have acquired for how they appear to patrons. O'Connor even alludes to the unfaithfulness of Red Sammy to his wife, solidified the commonality of sin that their family has become acquainted with (Hendricks 130). Through this admission, the essence of evil is hinted at in the personification of both Red Sammy and his wife.

O'Connor intentionally employed this contrast to not only emphasize the imperfect goodness of the grandmother, but also to make a statement about the spiritual exile that modern families had become complacent with (Hendricks 129). By establishment of this comparison, Flannery O'Connor enabled the reader's ability to deter presumptions about the preference for absolute goodness in order to foster a better understanding of the grandmother's tainted ability to champion the good cause. Through the detrimental depictions of the complacency of both families, Flannery O'Connor qualified the grandmother, in a sense, as a beacon of light amongst her characters.

Despite the good that is exemplified through the grandmother's character, Flannery O'Connor allowed for her own human nature to guide the dark irony of "A Good Man is Hard to Find." Because of this realistic approach, O'Connor created a character that she described as lacking comprehension but still having a good heart in the end (Kaplan). In light of this characterization, it is understandable that the grandmother never fully took responsibility for her family's demise because she could not understand her role in setting the preceding events into motion. As John Desmond cited in his critical essay entitled "Flannery O'Connor's Misfit and the Mystery of Evil," there is an understanding amongst the Catholic theology, that influenced O'Connor's perception of good and evil, that being evil will generally appear as doing good to the sinner who performs the task (144). Here is where Flannery O'Connor used her characterization of the grandmother to create a bridge to that of the Misfit.

In the characterization of the Misfit, Flannery O'Connor develops a multi-faceted serial killer who rationalizes his misdeeds as a means by which he will attain some form of retribution for the hardships of his life. His own identity is explained in, "I call myself The Misfit,' he said, 'because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment'" (O'Connor 26). This deranged character is relating that his crimes are justified by the hardships of his life, yet still believes that his punishment has never been justified by the extent of his misdeeds, hence the name 'Misfit.' In this light, the Misfit views himself as a solitary entity that is both unique and isolated in his views of the world. This concept is emphasized as the Misfit repeatedly accounts how he has always been different, always on the outside of social acceptance (Desmond 151). It is this difference which allows the Misfit to justify his actions despite some understanding of the evilness of them. Desmond explains this perspective in stating, "The Misfit rejects the committal world, just as his sense of 'justice' is individualistic rather than communal"(151). Even though the Misfit can identify the evil within him, he excuses it based on his claims to personal suffering and difference from other men. In adhering to this characterization, the Misfit believes he has no sins to

atone for, but that the depravity of life has led him to become who he is. A core concept that the Misfit accredits with the creation of the character he is comes from the religious story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This discussion with the grandmother reveals that the Misfit blames Jesus not for having raised the dead, but for doing so without him present, so that he would be resigned to forever doubt the validity of the story (Hendricks 135). It is his skepticism which O'Connor uses to distinguish him as being outside the religious context of normal society. As a result of his question of doubt, the Misfit attempts to justify his evil as his only pleasure he must enjoy for his 'few minutes' in the sun (Hendricks 136).

The struggle of good within the grandmother clashes with the evil thriving within the Misfit's character in such a way that Flannery O'Connor was able to convey the complexity of each. John Desmond explained this notion in saying that, "Good and evil, as potentialities and as actualities, are inextricably intertwined in human beings, and this is true for both the Grandmother and the Misfit" (144). This concept is fitting of "A Good Man is Hard to Find" as it summarizes Flannery O'Connor's depiction of acts of evil with actions of grace through the interactions of the grandmother and the Misfit in their final moments. The Misfit's reaction of hatred in the grandmother's moment of grace is the culmination of O'Connor's characterization of each in the battle between good and evil. It is not necessarily true that the Misfit hates the grandmother for her charity in this moment, but more likely that his pain and fear of being loved and accepted at this point in his life has disabled him from understanding the salvation of goodness (Desmond 152). By reacting as he does, the Misfit feels as though he is justified in his defensiveness through past experiences. This mindset allows the Misfit to kill the grandmother quickly and boldly in an effort to transfer some portion of his own evilness onto the grandmother, but the reality of the act leaves him in a state of increased pain (Desmond 149). Reflection on the virtue of goodness that the grandmother possessed in the end brings the Misfit to the realization that he does still have some sense of vulnerability. This concept leaves him so shaken, that in the end he rejects evil on the grounds that there is, "no real pleasure in life" (O'Connor 28). The salvation hinted at through the shift in the Misfit's character allows for the open interpretation of its actual meaning.

In conclusion, Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" employs characterization to detail the internal struggles everyone has over the fight between good and evil. It establishes the constraints of religion and how faith affiliation plays into one's understanding of the inherent goodness, or evilness, of a situation. Within the character development of the grandmother, O'Connor provided readers with an understanding of moments of grace as being more than misconceptions, and provided evidence for the revelation that such moments are largely influenced by the imperfections of human nature. The contrast of modern disdain for such distinctions was used to show the contrast despite such influences of human nature. In providing this dynamic depiction of characters, Flannery O'Connor gave her audience reason to reflect their own understanding of good and evil and its relative impact by the choices of life. For these reasons, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" has established an understanding of personal virtues with relation to goodness, while allowing for the notion of evil to find root in the same establishment through the characterization contained within its text.

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## Young Girls; The “Perfect” Victims By Christina Mitchell

In today's society, it is common to hear about women and girls of all ages going missing. In fact, it is much more common to hear about missing girls today, than it was over twenty years ago. Even though adult women still go missing as well, young girls tend to be the targets of foul play more often. Most of the time when a young girl goes missing, it tends to be the works of an older, more mature man. These men are, more often than not, considered to be sociopaths. A sociopath is someone who knows that his actions are seen as morally wrong but they do not care. They often manipulate and use people. They feel like their needs are above everyone else's and they have no conscience or empathy towards people that they take advantage of. They use their charm and wit, to take advantage of innocent girls, who have barely any life experience. They are going after people who technically cannot defend themselves. The reason for this is that young girls are vulnerable to older men. They are taken away by the fact that an older man is interested in them. Most girls are in a rush to grow up and think that they will fit in if they hang out with men who are older than them. These girls often do whatever the men tell them to do. Girls go as far as having sex, committing crimes, and doing drugs, in an attempt to impress these men and keep them interested in them. A teenage girl does not think she can say no to an older man, once she has said yes. They believe that if they do they will lose their social status that comes along with this new and exciting relationship. Believing that the only reason they are popular or seen as cool, is because they spend all of their time with these older men. These girls do not have the necessary experience or knowledge it takes to see who these men truly are. They are not able to see that these men are using them for their own personal and sick needs.

While not all teenage girls who mess around with older men go missing, they are still exposed to inappropriate things. They are still used and abused by these men who claim they really care about them. However, they do not care about them at all. They just see these girls as easy prey; as something that they can have until something better comes along. Often times they get the girls addicted to drugs and alcohol to maintain their control of them. The girls go along with whatever these men say because they are so good at manipulating people into thinking that they are sweet and caring people but in reality, they are often times the most dangerous.

While the news, movies, and television speak about sociopaths who take a hold of their victims, certain literature pieces do too. Authors know that sociopaths draw the attention of their readers. Readers are interested in the idea of a sociopath finding their next victim and they want to see the lengths that those sociopaths will go in order to keep them under their control. So authors write about what they know their readers want to read. A classic sociopath who has taken advantage of a young girl and ultimately leads her to her demise, either metaphorically or literally. Since sociopaths rarely change their beliefs or actions, that appeals to a reader's desire to find out just how dangerous these people can actually become.

Two classic short stories describe the characteristics and journeys of two very different but similar sociopaths and their victims. In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, by Jennifer Egan, Egan details to the readers the journey of Lou and his victim Jocelyn. While in “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” by Joyce Carol Oates, Oates illustrates to the readers the journey of Arnold Friend and his victim Connie. Both of these short stories show the true definition of what a sociopath is. These two sociopaths share similarities, including their desire to mislead and take advantage of an underage girl. They also have very different but distinct ways of going about getting their hands on their victim. While there is no argument that both of these characters are

absolutely destructive to these two young girls, they have one very big difference. This difference becomes what makes these two characters' complete opposites.

Egan introduces Lou in the third chapter "Ask Me If I Care". Right away the reader gets a very descriptive picture of the kind of person Lou is. He is described as being a very successful and rich music producer in the San Francisco area. He is eventually revealed as being romantically ambitious and ends up having six children through three separate marriages. None of his three marriages last and he finds himself single again and again. At one point in his single days, he comes across Jocelyn hitch hiking and he stops to pick her up. From that day on, Jocelyn's life is never the same. She falls hard for Lou and thinks that meeting him is the most exciting thing to happen to her. He is a music producer with no real responsibility. Time after time, he calls her beautiful and makes her feel special. Since she is in a rush to experience all of the things Lou has, she starts to distance herself from her friends, including her best friend Rhea. Just like Jocelyn, Rhea also wants to be included and wanted by someone. So when Jocelyn starts having a physical relationship with Lou, Rhea wants to know all of the details. She needs to feel important, as well as needing to fit in with Jocelyn because she thinks Jocelyn is going to have more experience but then ultimately stop being her friend. One night at a night club, Rhea comes face to face with reality. She voluntarily goes to hang out with Jocelyn and Lou, even does cocaine in the bathroom with Jocelyn but it is the events that happen after the drug use, that make Rhea rethink her decisions. Jocelyn, has no problems with pleasuring Lou in the middle of the nightclub, which Lou gladly accepts. However, Rhea does not want to be "Lou's Girls". After that night, Jocelyn runs away with Lou, leaving behind Rhea and all of her other friends. Rhea, ultimately grows up and ends up having a pretty decent life. She ends up having a happy and loving family with three kids. Unfortunately for Jocelyn, her life is shattered by Lou's desire to have his way with her.

A few chapters later, Egan describes Jocelyn's feelings for Lou in "You (Plural)". Jocelyn goes to see Lou on his death bed, as he is now twenty years older than when they first met. Jocelyn blames Lou for the way her life has turned out. She ends up entering a point where she cannot believe that she spent so much time and attention on someone who ends up just getting old and washed up. Lou is no longer living the fast, exciting and dangerous lifestyle he once lived. This causes Jocelyn to suddenly realize this is not the man she once knew and admired. Which then causes Jocelyn get angry at Lou for the way he acted towards her, twenty years earlier. As he was the main reason she went down the wrong path. Unfortunately, Jocelyn was not mature enough to see how the actions she was making as a teenager would have direct implications on how her life turned out when she got older. Now she is living with her mother, has no children or family of her own, is working to get her B.A. at U.C.I.A., and is struggling to stay clean. All of these things in her life are because of her desire to allow Lou to mistreat her.

Just like Jocelyn, in this chapter, the readers get a sense that Lou has come to regret many of his actions in life. His partying and sociopathic personality, not only brought Jocelyn down in life, but it also caused one of Lou's children to become estranged and eventually take his own life. While the readers still may not feel empathy for Lou, because his life turned out the way it did because of his actions, they get a sense that he wishes he had chosen a better way to live. At the end of this chapter he is alone in an empty house, with no one around. Unlike many years earlier, when he always had a house full of people and a lot of parties all the time. When Rhea and Jocelyn go see Lou one last time, Jocelyn finally gets to see the monster who took away her innocence and ultimately ruined her life. She has imagines of drowning him in his pool. Even taking the interaction as far as saying to Lou, "I should kill you. You deserve to die," (Egan 90). L o u then looks at Jocelyn and smiles his old smile, he



simply replies, "Too late," (Egan 91). This gives the readers the sense that Lou already feels dead inside.

Just like Egan, in "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" Oates gives the readers a very unique and creepy sociopath. Arnold Friend is, in many ways, just like Lou. He comes across his victim, a young girl named Connie, and he does whatever he has to do to get his hooks into her. Connie is a typical teenage girl, who rejects her "good girl" image. She is constantly put down by her mother because of her looks. As her mother used to be beautiful but has since gotten older but her looks have faded. Connie's older sister, June, is frumpy and conservative. So June is always getting all of their mother's affection and praise. Since their father has no real interest in his children either, Connie has a constant feeling of not being enough for her family. So she goes off in search of love, attention, and affection from as many boys as possible. She needs to be able to cultivate her sexual persona, in order to make her feel better about herself. Often times, dressing one way at home, so her parents do not suspect anything, while also dressing differently in public, to continue to receive the attention she desires.

Connie basically lives two different lives, one at home and one outside of her home. So when Arnold Friend appears, these two lives collide. When he first sees Connie, she is out with another boy that she knows and she just happens to pass by Arnold's gold car. He sees her and immediately says, "Gonna get you, baby," (Oates 1). This first encounter freaks Connie out as well as shows the readers the first glimpse of Arnold's sociopathic personality. Arnold then comes to Connie's house and causes her two personalities to not only collide but too do it violently. Although she thinks that she is mature enough to handle a sexual relationship, once she attracts an older man she is left terrified. At one point her inner child shows through when she calls out for her mother. Even though she tries hard to seem like she is in control, Arnold's presence at her house leaves her in a state of panic.

Originally, Arnold's gold car has sayings on it that at one-point use to be cool but they are no longer in style. This makes Connie think that Arnold is older than he says he is. At first, she thinks he is a decent guy but some things that Arnold says makes Connie rethink Arnold's sincerity. His appearance is even less impressive as he seems to have some sort of mental issue. Even though he seems appealing to Connie in a dangerous way, she is not mature enough to deal with it when it is thrown directly into her face. After all, Arnold is an older, highly sexualized man who offers to take Connie away from her unhappy life. Arnold is clearly different from anyone that Connie knows and this gives him an appealing mystery. Until, he starts to quickly make demands that Connie leave her home and go with him. He adds to his strange, threatening demeanor by keeping a calm voice and gently trying to coax Connie to come outside. He is smart, telling Connie that he will not come in the house unless she picks up the phone to call the police. Arnold potentially does not want to leave any evidence of himself behind, so unless he has to, he will not go in after Connie. He invites fear into Connie, as opposed to attraction, after he claims to know things about her, her family and her neighbors. Oates puts the idea in the readers' heads that Arnold has been stalking Connie and that is the way he knows all of these things about her. He says that if she does not come with him, he will wait there until her family comes home and then he will kill them all. Arnold does everything in his power to manipulate Connie into voluntarily coming with him. He uses things like flattery, he uses mind games and he uses threats to try and convince Connie to be a "good girl" and listen to what he says. Eventually, Connie willingly goes with Arnold and the story is left with an open ending as to what happens to Connie. As she comes out of the house and walks into Arnold's arms he says to her, "My sweet little blue

eyed girl” (Oates 9), Even though Connie's eyes are brown, showing that Arnold only sees or cares about what he wants. Arnold, ultimately becomes the reason that innocent Connie goes from being a child to an adult. Of course Arnold uses drastic, violent means to do this, which shows his very sociopathic personality shine bright.

Sociopathic personalities tend to have a devastating effect on the people who are manipulated by these personalities. In literary fiction, sociopaths are included in some pretty great pieces of writing. In “A Visit from the Goon Squad,” Egan takes the reader on Jocelyn's journey of being a victim to Lou's sociopathic and predatory personality. Even though she does not have the best life after her relationship with Lou ends, she is still alive and able to try to be happier in life. In “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” Oates takes us on Connie's journey of being a victim to Arnold's sociopathic and predatory personality. However, Oates leaves Connie's journey open ended and the reader has no idea whether she lives or dies. While Lou and Arnold have very similar personalities when it comes to victimizing young girls for their personal gain, they have very different endings to their stories. Lou is able to move on after his relationship with Jocelyn. He ends up having some sort of regrets later on in his life. However, Arnold is not shown to have any conscious or change of heart towards his treatment of Connie. He clearly manipulates Connie, just as Lou manipulates Jocelyn, but the difference is that Lou ends up having a heart. He is still just as bad of a man as Arnold is but at least towards the end the readers get a chance to feel like he has somewhat of a good side to him. That maybe as Lou sits on his death bed, he has had some sort of revelation of his life. It not enough to make readers feel bad that Lou is dying but enough to feel like he knows he made mistakes in life and they may emphasize with him a little bit. It is said that sociopaths rarely change and Arnold Friend shows just that. However, Lou shows that maybe sociopaths may have the ability to be better people after all. So even though Lou and Arnold are similar in their desire to have control over a helpless victim, they are very much different. All of these personality traits are what makes reading about sociopaths so intriguing. However, none of that really matters because regardless of whether or not a sociopath is capable of change, really does not matter. One thing for sure, is that their young victims are always left dismantled in a puddle of destruction.

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## People Never Change

By Maryka te Kurzynowski

Obstacles and challenges inevitably alter the course of one's life. Experiences, both good and bad, most often lead to growth and maturation. However, does growth and maturity lead to change? Arguably one of the most controversial questions is: do people change? Can one's innate personality truly evolve over time into something different? It seems fair to assume that although life presents challenges, one's persona lily never fully changes. In Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, she plays with the concept of time and its effect on the characters she creates in her chapters. Although the novel introduces a variety of different characters, who live in turmoil throughout different points in the story, Egan goes deep into the story li ne of one character in particular, named Sasha. Throughout the novel's entirety, the reader becomes invested in Sasha's life, as narrated throughout different ages and settings. Sasha's complex character undergoes a series of events that affect her psychologically, this is seen throughout her teenage, young adult, and middle aged years. However, although her character is faced with trials, the reader learns that Sasha never really changes. Three chapters in particular that illustrate Sasha's personality remaining constant are "Found Objects", "Goodbye, My Love", and "Out of Body". Egan seems to be conveying the message that despite the passing of time, people never truly change. Al though her circumstances change, Sasha undoubtedly remains as a static character. Through her characterization, Egan creates a clement of understanding between Sasha and the reader.

The readers are introduced to Sasha's character in the first chapter of the novel, "Found Objects". Sasha is single woman, in her thirties, living in New York City. Right off the bat, it becomes evident that Sasha is seeking psychiatric help for a serious problem she suffers from, Kleptomania. Because this is the stories beginning, the reader is really unaware of just how serious of a problem this is for Sasha, and how long she has been struggling with it. Through dialogue with her psychiatrist, it is easily discovered that Sasha's rationale for stealing stems from her insensibility for others. Egan writes "I don't think about the people" (7) when Sasha is explaining her mindset when acting upon her impulses to steal. The fact that Sasha admittedly claims not to think about people while she is stealing speaks innumerable volumes regarding her character. It is almost fair to say that it is her insensitivity that gives her fuel. It is at this point that Sasha becomes characterize by the reader.

Sasha's lack of empathy that is discovered in "Found Objects" reoccurs throughout different chapters of the book, and therefore different chapters in her life. Because of this, it seems to be fair to conclude that Sasha's character is one that is quite selfish. Almost everything she does is done to benefit herself. She complies to all of her impulses, neglecting the feelings of others. This idea is key to understanding Sasha's character, and how it does not change the more the reader learns about her. Sasha's kleptomania is almost symbolic of the lack of respect she seemingly has for others, a concept that is very prevalent in later chapters of the novel. She is blatantly ignorant of other's feelings.

Egan later transitions into presenting the reader with background knowledge on Sasha, all the while reinforcing her point of how time docs not necessarily affect her personality and how she behaves amongst others. It seems fair to conclude that Egan's writing tactic in this story is to interconnect her characters, and therefore create this sort of world that the reader then becomes a part of. Academic journalist Roy C. Flanagan agrees with the idea that Egan's chapters relate to one other, making the novel a unique experience for the reader, he explains "Egan shapes the

thirteen-story collection as a kind of album with an A and B side and a connecting story 'A to B,' so one could think of each story as a kind of punk song wherein a character's transgression forms a complementary theme that finds its counterpoints with others." In Sasha's case, her unique and complex characterization links itself to various chapters, illustrating Egan's use of time and how little it impacts her character.

One could make the argument that Egan's tactic of presenting short scenes from different time periods would limit the reader's knowledge of characters, however, this is not the case with Sasha. Because of her complex and static character, Sasha's character invests the reader in a way that is striking and powerful. *Kirkus Reviews* explains that "It can be alienating when a narrative bounce from character to character, emphasizing interconnections rather than developing a continuous story line, but Egan conveys personality so swiftly and with such empathy that we remain engaged." Egan's capability of investing her reader's through her story fragments is a reflection of her methodical approach to literature, and her strategy of attracting the reader to her material.

In chapter eleven of the novel the readers are taken to Naples, Italy, during the time of Sasha's late teenage years. It is discovered that she is living on her own in Italy, under the radar of her family, and her uncle Ted is sent to find her in the hopes of bringing her back home. It is very early on in this chapter that the reader realizes things will not go according to Ted's plan. Why would they? Egan has already made the reader well-aware of Sasha's character; she is a wild card who is seemingly uninterested in appeasing the feelings of anybody but her own. Although this chapter really profiles the psychological workings of Ted's mind, it is in fact, very reflective of Sasha's character. This chapter takes place approximately ten to fifteen years prior to "Found Objects", however, based on information previously gathered on Sasha, the reader is not surprised by her behavior. In fact, her behavior towards her uncle further proves the point that Egan appears to be making, that Sasha ages but her character does not change.

It is discovered that Sasha's kleptomania starts as early as her teenage years, as well as her insensitivity to others. In a dramatic scene between her and Ted, Egan writes "The door opened a crack, and Ted's wallet bounced on his head and dropped to the floor. "Go to hell." Sasha said..." (230). Two very important things are happening in these lines: Sasha has stolen her uncle's wallet, and is seemingly unapologetic about doing so. Egan's portrayal of a young, frustrated, attention-seeking teenager has allowed her to write about Sasha's character in the future as an insensitive kleptomaniac. What Egan has created through Sasha's characterization is truly a remarkable experience for the reader. By creating a character who is predictable and consistent, even over time, the reader feels able to identify with that character on a personal level. Sasha's unchangeable character provides the reader with a sense of a relational connection to Sasha. Although her character is complex, and arguably difficult to like, by understanding her, Egan has irreversibly brought her character to life. It is fair to assume that Egan's strategy of characterization is used to invest the reader into her novel, as it seems to be the case due to Sasha's character.

A chapter in the novel that is powerful and a moving experience for the reader is "Out of Body." In this chapter, Egan writes in a second-person narrative. This, in and of itself is a writing technique that inevitably draws the reader closer to the characters, but especially when Sasha's character appears. Sasha's character in this chapter proves to be exactly what Egan has created her to be, manipulative and insensitive. This chapter evokes emotion within the reader as it deals with elements such as love, friendship, sexuality, and coming of age. The heavy and emotional topics in this chapter serve as a vehicle for Sasha's character to prove itself as insensitive. This chapter is no exception to Egan's well-constructed characterization of Sasha. In regards to her kleptomania,

the reader learns that this too, is again, something that has not changed about Sasha throughout the entirety of the novel. Egan writes “She'd started shoplifting at thirteen with her girlfriends, hiding beaded combs and sparkly earrings inside their sleeves, seeing who could get away with more, but it was different for Sasha-it made her whole body glow” (194). Egan's mention of the term “shoplifting” clearly implies that Sasha has been at this a long time. At this point in the story, the reader has not been introduced to any side of Sasha that does not include a record of her stealing. It seems as though Egan is showing the strong and dominant personality that Sasha has and that time has no bearing on her inner being.

Time, a concept that Egan infuses into almost every chapter of her novel, is a key element in understanding Sasha. Jessica Jernigan, author of “Time Passes”, a book review on Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, further explains this concept of time and its impact on the novel. “Time's effect on Egan's characters-and, by extension, on all of us emerges as one of Egan's central concerns” (Jernigan 4). Explaining that time is one of Egan's central concerns is supporting the claim that the concept of time is directly related to Sasha's character. Egan's approach to time in relation to Sasha is that although time passes, and life happens, one never fully changes.

Aside from the fact that Sasha's stealing has not changed, neither has her blatant insensitivity towards others. Rob, the story's protagonist claims to be in love with Sasha, and based on the dialogue within the text, Sasha is well-aware of this. The reader is pulling for Sasha to do the right thing, and not lead Rob's character on, but based on the background knowledge Egan has previously provided on Sasha, it is assumed that this will not be the case. Rob and Sasha's relationship is so close in fact, that Egan explains it from an outsider's perspective, she writes “Everyone assumed you were a couple-it was that deep between you and Sasha” (196). She later explains “You'd fall asleep holding Sasha and wake up with a hard-on and just lie there, feeling this body you knew so well ...” (196). Egan has seamlessly illustrated the reality of Rob's emotional and physical connection to Sasha, she has created this emotion within the reader that is rooting for Sasha, despite all of her shortcomings. Unfortunately, Sasha not only dates another boy, she has no qualms about displaying their relationship in front of Rob. Egan writes “He kisses Sasha like they've been apart for a week” (197). This is being told from Rob's perspective, Sasha is completely insensitive to his feelings. Tracing this back to “Found Objects,” Sasha admits that her rationale for behaving a certain way is that she does not think of anyone else, she thinks of herself. In this case, Sasha is completely neglecting Rob's feelings, having no desire to preserve them, she is merely concerned with her own pursuits, her own desires, and her own feelings. Egan's reinforcement of Sasha's insensitive character is constantly drawing the reader into the novel because of the investment and familiarity with her.

Egan has done an outstanding job in the characterization of Sasha. It is fair to assume that by the end of the novel, the readers feel a strong sense of understanding with Sasha's character, albeit flawed. By the end of the novel, it is understood that many years have been recorded. Throughout the recorded series of events. However, the reader is undeniably left with the knowledge that although much time has passed, Sasha, has not seemed to change very much, if at all. Egan presents Sasha in numerous chapters throughout the novel, playing with the element of time and how exactly it impacts the characters. The reader is made aware of the fact that throughout Sasha's life, as displayed in the stories, her character never fully changes. Sure, she experiences different parts of the world, falls in love, goes to college, but her personality remains very much the same throughout. It seems as though Egan is relating the concept of time to the progression of self, examine how one, in this case, Sasha, grows from her life experiences. Although time passes, Sasha is arguably stuck in it. This is seen through her addiction to stealing, and her blatant disregard

for the feelings of others. Perhaps Egan really is sending the message that people never really change, identity is innate, and often times its impact is lifelong.

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**English 234**

**Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature**

## Memory Machines – Dreams, Desires, and Philip K. Dick

*By Kevin Pellegrinelli*

We all dream. As humans, it is one of the many things we have in common that we don't even consider. It's a second nature of sorts. Another thing we all have in common is shaping those dreams into desires and goals. Plenty of us describe ourselves as “dreamers,” and we spend a lot of our lives chasing particular life or career goals. Another thing that we tend to do though is downgrade those dreams and goals once we reach them. There's a mentality that sometimes overrides what we've done in favor of the notion that we can always outdo ourselves. In Phillip K. Dick's “We Can Remember it For You Wholesale,” we get a great look at this very concept. Through the examination of memory, whether it be recalled, repressed, or implanted, Dick tells a tale that highlights one of humanity's most inexplicable flaws; that we find ourselves unsatisfied with even the greatest of accomplishments under our belts.

To start us off, Dick introduces us to our protagonist, Douglas Quail, the “dreamer” (figuratively and literally in this case) of the story. “Douglas Quail is a man who dreams both waking and sleeping about what he most wants” (Malmgren 141). Quail seems to be disappointed with every aspect of his life. He has a lowly job, a poor relationship with his wife, and a seemingly unrelenting need for something greater. Dick has us meet Quail as he is waking up from the dream that occupies his mind constantly; a trip to Mars. He seems completely wrapped up by the idea of visiting the planet, even though he is completely aware that, due to his station in life, he will never get there. With this aspect of the story, Dick shows us that a root desire in all of us is to want something we cannot have. Quail could easily set his goals lower, but, like many of us, he refuses to. In his situation, he's met with discouragement on the limited fronts available to him. He knows he's in no position to even fathom the trip, and his wife, Kristen, suggests a simpler, more common kind of vacation. Quail, however, will not be swayed. In his case, there is an alternative that, on the surface, seems incredible, and would most likely intrigue many if it ever came to exist.

In the future Dick's story takes place in, REKAL, Incorporated exists, and they specialize in implanting memories. The content of these memories can be specifically put together to meet nearly any desire a customer could have. It comes off as a very enticing service, but only until one considers the power of such technology. Sure, you could walk into REKAL and ask to stop the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and, once their services were rendered, you'd believe you did it. They'd then go to great lengths to make sure that belief stuck with you for the rest of your life. At the end of the day though, the memory still isn't real. It hasn't had any actual effects on the real world; only your own. So while the possibility that REKAL offers is amazing both from a technological standpoint and a business idea, there are so many things about it that are fundamentally wrong. Dick showcases the fact that the rights and wrongs wouldn't matter to most people though. He knows, like many great sci-fi writers, that want and desire initially outweigh reason and morality. If there is something “better,” most people chase that option, and Dick uses Quail to prove that point. “In this story, Quail’s desires and yearnings to both visit Mars and to have a more fulfilling life runs up against the reality of a disapproving wife, his finances, Rekal, and Interplan” (Doursesaux).

We soon find out that Quail has actually been to Mars and his one-time employers at Interplan had employed REKAL to implant memories over the top secret work he had done.



It's not until Quail is nearly put under before his procedure that this memory comes back to him. In a way, Dick shows the kind of dangerous repercussions that would come along with this type of technology. In many sci-fi stories, authors warn us about the advantages that may come into play in the not so distant future. In this particular tale, Dick lets us see how the technology can not only be used for deceptive, treacherous purposes, but to actually rid someone of their memories. In more classic trope fashion, the two higher powers in play (Interplan and REKAL) are working together to look out for their own interests. They're doing a great service for themselves; Interplan's mission is carried out and, supposedly, kept a secret forever, and REKAL get the satisfaction that their technology isn't just extremely successful, but also essential in some cases. On the other hand, these two forces are responsible for the condition Quail is in when we meet him. Because Quail's memories had been repressed and his life implanted by recall, he longed for something greater. "The result of the repression had been the emptiness around the meaningless signifier to which Quail's desire had attached itself" (Link 105).

After Dick exposes that darker side of REKAL to us, certain question can't help but be asked. Is Quail unhappy with his life? Is he, on some level, aware that a part of him has gone missing? His dreams of Mars, which weren't even dreams at all, clue us in on the possibilities that his repressed memories may have been fighting their way out. Instead of seeking any kind of help within though, Quail looks for the quickest and easiest way to gratify his dreams. Maybe he could have found a way to get the planet. Maybe someone along the way in his life could have reminded him. On a subconscious level, maybe Quail doesn't want a better past or present; maybe he just misses the one he had. It's strange that both scenarios he picks for himself are ones that have already happened to him. In this way, Dick employs a sort of strange nostalgia. By having Quail's focus remain on two past memories that reshape as the greatest dreams he can fathom, the hopeful thought that he still has some of those memories in his mind presents itself. "The story thus reads very neatly in psychoanalytic terms as an example of repressed original experience reenacted in displaced form" (Malmgren 141).

Dick presents his ultimate statement with the memory Quail chooses to implant after he finds out about his past with Interplan. Instead of a secret agent mission to Mars, he will be the planet's savior. This fits very well in the mold of "nothing's ever good enough." All the while, Quail's dream was that Mars trip. He threw money at the chance to have that memory. He even found out that it was an actual memory of his. Rather than be happy that his dream was his reality, he had to take it further. He couldn't just be happy with his own life or his own past. Instead, he asks for an even more lofty and grand memory involving the fate of the planet and an alien invasion. "The ultimate fulfillment of Quail's desire lies literally 'out of this world'" (Link 105). When we learn that this memory is also actually part of Quail's past, we're left to wonder "what will be enough for him?" By examining these recollections, repressions, and the possibilities of memory implantation, Dick peels back the many layers of our constant want for something greater and urges us to be happy with what we have.

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**English 240**  
**Women in Literature**

## Mid-Term

By Kristen Weinbel

Ironically, throughout this course of Women in Literature, in-class discussions and in-class readings have reverted back to the topic of education for women quite often. One may ask, how is this ironic? Simply because while in the class, handfuls of women are learning about their ancestors being degraded and unable to pursue a worthwhile career, and, yet, these students are doing that exact thing they read about and they are doing it without fear, or any regard to the wrath of men. Reading stories such as these symbolizes the absolute strife that women in past generations have gone through just to guarantee the women in this very course to be lucky enough to sit in a chair, in a college setting, and fearlessly learn information about these brave, strong, and wildly smart women.

One piece of work studied within this course that harps on the necessity of the education of women is Mary Wollstonecraft's, *A Vindication on the Rights of Women*. Of course, the title itself is telling the reader that this text will present plenty of pleas in the favor of women during the 1700s. This text displays incredibly passionate lines that prove just how far women have come in terms of education and the right to it, and how demonized this topic was many centuries ago as Wollstonecraft explains:

"I patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been my result? --- a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity" (373). This quote is essential to Mary's points within her proposal about women's rights because it exemplifies that the issue at hand for women is not only the lack of education for girls and women but also what actually is being taught within the classrooms once these women do receive an education.

Wollstonecraft continues, "One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers," (373). These two excerpts from Wollstonecraft's work highlight the status of women and display that, regardless of the type of education a woman received, it was still engorged with sexist trends- trends which lead these girls and women to believe the only path for them in life was not one of education and knowledge but rather being used as a mere toy or doll within a man's game of life.

Another author whose work features great pleas towards the education of women is Judith Sargent Murray and her piece entitled *On the Equality of the Sexes*. Murray's work here begins within a short poem and continues into textual paragraphs that harp on essential things that should be, but are not available to women. "Is she united to a person whose soul nature made equal to her own, education hath set him so far above her that in those entertainments which are productive of such rational felicity she is not qualified to accompany him," (339). This quote mentions a monumental discovery made by Murray after she goes on a paragraph's worth of a tangent on how lack of education is incredibly harmful to women and society as a whole. Murray is expressing the thought that if a woman is not even educated properly, she cannot even do basic activities or participate in a common conversation with her own husband. This text itself displays the absolute

ridiculousness of what was happening during the 1700s which was the fact that a woman was considered weak in strength and intellect, but that was only being re-enforced time and time again because she essentially had no choice in the matter.

Men were actively placing women in the role of stupidity and then criticizing or demeaning them for it which in and of itself is an entire issue towards women and education. If a woman is told she cannot excel or will never be smart enough, how is she going to even try to break that stigma? It is because of the brave and uniqueness of women such as Murray and Wollstonecraft that women were able to branch out of the normality of society while beginning to shatter the ever-standing glass ceiling and this alone is a pretty amazing feat for these early women authors.

Another author featured in this course who used her writing skills to create a need for women's education was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In her text *Address to the New York State Legislature, 1860*, Stanton focuses on social issues in which she brought to the attention of legislators and this alone is a symbol of amazing perseverance. Being written during a time where rights for women were seldom practiced, it is clear that Stanton possessed absolutely no fear towards powerful men which in a 21st century millennials point of view, is pretty damn awesome. Stanton states, "Undo what man did for us in the Dark Ages, and strike out all special legislation for us; strike the words "white male" from all your constitutions, and then, with fair sailing, let us sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish together," (632). Stanton's writing that is addressed towards legislators is one of grace, power and, surprisingly, a bit of backing down. A huge trend that has been discussed so far within this course is one of which women saying things that were sometimes demeaning simply to play into the minds of men and win them over. Stanton uses statements such as "We do not ask our legislators to spend a whole session in fixing up a code of laws to satisfy a class of most unreasonable women," and "we do not ask men to represent us; it is hard enough in times like these for a man to carry become enough to represent himself," (Stanton 632), in order to give the men what they want to hear while getting her point across effectively which alone arguably displays Stanton's incredible sense of knowledge.

Moreover, it took great pride and courage for women such as those listed above to actively pursue equality in terms of education for all women. This pride and courage alone should be enough to continue shaking generations to come straight to the core and reminding any woman who is lucky enough to live during this time period of educational equality in America just how far we have come and yet, just how far we must continue to go.

Fanny Fern featured waves of advocacy for women's rights within her texts and possessed a personal interest in doing so. Her text *Blackwell's Island* features a posing question to her reader asking "are they, or are they not *immortal*?" as Fern continues to say, "Decide before you shoulder the responsibility of such a girl's future," (593). This question is one of importance, asking men to consider that women are, in fact, people and they do, in fact, deserve their own education, their own rights, and, moreover, their own freedom. Fern continues to ask questions and demand answers within the text and alike Stanton, she is fearlessly doing so.

*Blackwell's Island* can be a symbol on several levels: it emulates the need for a just and equal government to protect all people, it is persuasive in the equality for women in the workplace, and it even mentions reasoning for something that should need no reason, equality and "no distinction of sex" within a marriage. This text can accommodate plenty of social issues, but, above all, it is a melting pot of countless women's issues that were surfacing during the nineteenth century.

Fern also wrote a powerful piece entitled *The Working Girls of New York* which discusses the reality of wanting to work during the 1800s as a female. Fern mentions incredibly harsh standards for these girls and, above all, Fern is writing in order to implore the reader to consider

and wish for a protective union for these females who are just simply trying to make a dollar (or three dollars per week, in some cases, as Fern mentions). Fern's writing, in contrast to the other authors discussed in this course, focuses on differing topics that are unlike most. Fern brings a different perspective to the topics of working class women and displays the true inequality between males and females in the workplace. This text symbolizes the fact that even when equality is seemingly achieved and women can, in fact, work, it is still an unjust situation. This is still happening in all corners of the world today, and even in America where women are continuously fighting for the wage gap to be closed once and for all. Fern's texts can be relatable even today in the 21st century which is amazing and yet, at the same time, troublesome because if women can somewhat relate to a text about women's rights written in the 19th century, this means we have far more to go in terms of true equality of the sexes. And the battle continues...

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## Letters

*By Jane Bowden, Shannon Johnson*

To: Jane Elizabeth  
Dearest Jane,

October 13, 1792

The other morning, I noticed that I have a new neighbor, a young charming man. He's very peculiar. I notice his candle light burning late into the night hours, always deep into thought with books strewn everywhere. He never has many visitors; I wonder why a man of his looks is always alone? His only visitor is Dr. Waldman from the University. He must be a brilliant man to be studying under such an esteemed gentleman. I believe this mysterious man's name is Victor Frankenstein he came from Geneva. I do dearly want to get to know him better.

October 17

I have not been able to send my letter yet so I will add more information about my neighbor. I finally had the honor of speaking to Victor, I ran into him on his way to the post office. I introduced myself and we began talking, he joined me for tea. I have learned that his mother had died right before he came to the University to study. He was on his way to the post office to send a letter to his cousin Elizabeth back at home, he spoke very highly of this maiden. Victor told me he is working on an experiment and expects to be done within a few more weeks.

He is expecting his friend to come to visit him soon, he said they would join me for tea with Ophelia one afternoon. Perhaps you can join as well? He is such an interesting man I hope to see more and learn more of him. I want him to tell me more of Geneva and his studies. You can see the passion for his work in his tired eyes.

November 15

Victor has just left in a hurry with his friend back to Geneva, he seemed ill physically and in spirit. I do hope his departure was not on bad terms. After his friend Henry arrived, they spent weeks in his apartment. Victor had not left in quite some time. I believe Henry was nursing him back to health. I do hope he returns I believe I would have enjoyed his company. Victor is a fine man that I do have some affection for. I hope to hear from you soon Jane I truly want to hear what you think of all of this.

Your dear friend,  
Adelaide Smith

To: Adelaide Smith  
My dear Adelaide,

November 30, 1792

To receive your letter this morning filled me great joy and wonder. You dear friend, Victor, sounds quite intriguing from the way you described him. To think that he is friendly with Dr. Waldman from the University is truly fascinating. I heard that only the most intelligent of men venture into the sciences and succeed. This makes me curious to know what sort of experiments he is working that have caused him to stay up late in the night with the company of only a single candlelight. Though it appears he has close family and friends like Henry and Elizabeth, he

continues to hide himself in solitude. It sounds like a lonely life to me, and I'm sure your friendship has brought him great happiness.

As for his journey back to Geneva, I hope that he is okay. Perhaps working late nights with his experiments is not good for his health, and the fumes have made him lose his sanity. I believe that maybe even his distance from home is keeping him ill, as we know the brutal effects of homesickness. However, it warms my heart to know that his friend, Henry, is tending to him and keeping him in good health. I'll send my prayers for Victory and hope your next letter describes his speedy recovery.

To update you on my own whereabouts, I've decided to embark on a journey to Chamounix to rest up in my family cottage. The stress of society has ached my bones to the core, and I am in need of guidance from God. I would love to join you for tea once both Victor and I are in good health.

I send you my love and hope to hear from you soon.

Your companion,

Jane

To: Adelaide Smith

My loving friend Adelaide,

December 10, 1792

As I begin drafting this letter intended for you, I have just finished another correspondence with my dear friend, Martha, the fair woman I introduced you to at my dinner party last May. She has just recounted a story to me she heard from an intriguing, young man by the name of Henry Clerval she had just met in the market a month prior. She described him as kindhearted and outgoing, though he be just an acquaintance to her. Her detailed description of his story reminded me much of the story you wrote to me about your neighbor's friend Henry.

Martha's story from dear Mr. Clerval captivated me so, as I have never heard such a story. She recalled of how Mr. Clerval began telling her about one of his dear friends, Victor, and their intentions of exploring the world of knowledge beyond the powers of God. He must be the pair of friends you wrote about in your previous letter! My dear Adelaide, how extravagant it must be to see the world. Perhaps our passions will lead us there when women are seen as equals.

As she continued her story, the resemblance between myself and Victor gives me the utmost sense of disbelief. He, too, was interested in literature as a child but was disregarded by his father. Do you not remember when my father discovered my copy of John Milton's work underneath my bed? Oh, how furious he was, but, like Victor, I persisted in my studies. You, my dear Adelaide, and Literature have become my finest friends. Though Martha says that he lost an interest in literature and instead gained an affection of science after witnessing lightning strike a nearby tree, the connection between him and I remain strong. I pray for his success with his studies.

Before I received your letter about Victor's poor health, Martha said that Mr. Clerval remains home with his father, while Victor studies science at Ingolstadt. Though I know neither of them, I feel as if they are both destined for greatness in the eyes of God. Perhaps we will encounter them both one day.

Write soon, my dear friend.

Your loving friend,



Jane Elizabeth

To: Jane Elizabeth

Dearest Jane,

December 21, 1792

Your letter has brought me utmost joy. I loved reading about Victor and Henry! I've heard about Victor's family before, as I wrote that his poor mother passed away so young. Now his cousin Elizabeth takes care of the house. I've heard Victor and her are very dear to each other. Perhaps Martha can arrange for us to all meet for tea, Elizabeth too. She may want to get out of the house and speak with other ladies.

I know how much you love your studies perhaps you can arrange to write to Victor and visit him? I am sure he would love to discuss all of his knowledge and tell you about the wonders of the world. Jane you must be careful; you know how people talk in this town. If anyone heard of your studies they would believe that you're wasting your time when you should be finding a husband. I know it is your passion but you must promise me to be careful.

If you meet with Henry or Victor before I see you next let them know that I too am amazed by their determination for greatness under God. Let them know that I pray for the success. Let me know what Martha says about tea next week.

With affection always,

Adelaide Smith

To: Adelaide Smith

My dearest Adelaide,

December 26, 1792

I arrived at my family cottage in Chamounix late afternoon yesterday after a broken wheel delayed my journey by a few hours. Despite the mishap, I began exploration of the nearby grounds upon arriving to stretch my tired legs before nightfall. It has been years since you and I traveled there, so my interest in what God had to offer in the woods intrigued me.

As I was nearing the mountain tops that circled the icy river below, I heard a series of unusual noises that resembled the shouts of a man which enticed my curiosity to seek the source. My God, Adelaide! It was the man, Victor, you and I had recalled in our letters! To see him here, in Chamounix, left me with great surprise and interest as to what brought him to the mountains in the midst of a chilling winter. His demeanor was nervous but angry which made me quite curious.

Curiosity soon transformed into horror as my eyes fell upon a hideous beast standing not far from me. He appeared to be tremendously taller than the average man with yellow skin and hideous disfigurements. It was hard to bear the sight of such a horrible monster, but I forced myself to follow them as they traveled to a nearby ice cave. Was this the experiment Victor had been working on?

Though it was hard to hear what they were conversing about, I was able to make out a few details about the monster's life. It sounded as if he was shunned by society, often receiving screams of terror because of his appearance. This was no shock to me, as his ugliness wakes me up at night even now.

The next detail that intrigued me was the monster's recollection of several stories including Milton's poem. Being that I read that poem through most of my childhood, it shocked me that the beast took the story as truth rather than fiction. This explained why he felt such rage towards humans and towards his master, Victor. I was beginning to become more and more interested.

My eavesdropping was cut short as the whipping winds nipped at my face. Oh, how much I wanted to stay and hear the rest of the monster's tale. I quietly turned and ran back to the cottage to write to you about what I had heard.

Please write back quickly.

Yours truly,

Jane Elizabeth

To: Jane Elizabeth

Dearest Jane,

December 30, 1792

Please be careful. Your curiosity frightens me! Your letter sounds like a work of pure fiction. If I did not know you were an honest woman, I would think you were telling me a tall tale of horror. As much as I know you want to learn about Victor I think it best if you kept some distance from him. I do not want you to have a run in with this creature.

Where did this monster come from? Did Victor create it? I knew he was working on some scientific breakthrough at the University! How did this monster learn to read? How did they both wander so far from Ingolstadt? Oh Jane, I have so many questions! As much as I wish for answers, your safety is held higher! I've been spending much time with Henry and Elizabeth lately and they missed Victor so greatly when he was studying. He never wrote and he fell ill when Henry went to visit him. No wonder why he must have been spending so much time creating this creature he forgot to care for himself.

May God watch over us all with this monster roaming the country. I know you must have a soft side for this creature but there is reason why society has rejected him. He is a monster, not a friend. I too would run away in horror if he wandered into my neighborhood. If you learn more, please write back quickly!

I will wait for your reply,

Adelaide Smith

To: Jane Elizabeth

Dear Jane,

January 1, 1793

I just received a letter from my dear friend Charlotte Aryn who is also staying in Chamounix at her family cottage. She is great friends with Elizabeth Frankenstein, and recognized Victor. She wanted to go speak with him and to see how the family is doing. Just as she was about to she saw a tall yellow man speaking with him. Oh Jane! Please pay careful attention to what I tell you for I believe Charlotte's words, she is an honest woman. She heard them talking and the yellow man was telling Victor about how and why he murdered young William Frankenstein. This man was the science experiment Victor was working on!

The giant ran away from Victor and is seeking revenge because Victor has rejected him. This monster was spying on a family nearby and when he introduced himself they too rejected him. The monster vowed to kill of the Frankensteins if Victor does not create him a mate. Jane please stay safe from this giant and warn the others! Charlotte said her family is heading home by the next sunrise. I feel so horrible for Victor he must not have realized his studies would lead him here. We must pray for a better future and for the protection of the Frankensteins.

Stay safe,

Adelaide Smith

To: Adelaide Smith

My affectionate Adelaide,

January 5, 1793

My God, Adelaide! I have just received your letter this morning, and I am in shock that your friend was also able to encounter Victor and the beast at the same location I spotted them. I am surprised I did not see or hear her in the woods. Perhaps we could have helped each other in understanding this incredible story. Surely you could give me her address, so that I can write to her and see what she has to say about the beast's appearance.

As for her recollection of the monster spying on a family, I did hear news of a young woman recalling about her meeting with a hideous monster. It appears that the monster went inside their home and tried to eat their grandfather! Dear Adelaide, what is happening to this world?

This story is beginning to worry me. What began as an interesting tale is now transforming into a murderous rampage. I fear that this monster will allow his rage to get to the better of him, and he will kill others who get in his way of killing Victor. Perhaps we should write to Victor and the beast to see if we can persuade them to settle their differences before this turns into a blood bath. I feel that this is the last hope in saving others from the anger of the monster.

Please respond quickly. I dread that we are running out of time.

Yours truly,

Jane

To: Adelaide Smith  
Dearest Adelaide,

March 3, 1793

It feels as if I have not written you in ages, my dear Adelaide. As I am sure you know, so much has occurred within these past few days. The news of Henry's death saddens me so. I do not know much about how he died, only that there were black marks around his neck as if a large animal had attacked him. I fear that the beast has taken another victim, since your friend, Charlotte, recalled that the beast was on a rampage to hurt Victor. This still makes me wonder-- should we tell others about the beast?

Unfortunately, I did hear that Victor was accused by the neighboring townspeople and fell into a deep illness that lasted for months. This didn't seem right. He seemed like such a kind man in the letters you wrote about him, but you know him better, Adelaide. It does not appear that he would harm anyone, especially his dear friend Mr. Clerval.

However, I did receive news that he was released from prison after the court could not find evidence that he committed the act. I hope that dear Victor recovers quickly. He has endured so much these past few months. I pray that God places mercy upon him.

Please let me know what you think and write back soon.

Sincerely,

Jane

To: Jane Elizabeth

Dear Jane,

March 10, 1793

I believe we should not let anyone know about the beast, I would not want Victor to get in trouble. But I am too afraid that the beast will take more victims, no one seems to be safe. Victor would have never wanted anything ill to come from science. I do not believe Victor knew what he was creating. I heard about his illness and I believe the Frankenstein's must have terrible health they all fall ill so frequently.

This beast must have really sought to hurt Victor, for Clerval was his closest companion. He and Henry were perhaps even closer than you and I. No wonder he fell ill; his other half is now missing from him for the rest of his days. I do not think anything will heal Victor's broken heart from this tragic loss. However, I am overjoyed to hear that he was released from prison, he needs to go home and stay in Geneva. Elizabeth said she and Alphonse have been so full of sorrow without him in the house all these years.

Here is some more scandalous information I heard the other morning at tea. Alphonse is planning a wedding for Elizabeth and Victor. He said that it was Mrs. Frankenstein's greatest wish for them to continue their lives intertwined with their deep love for each other. This will be a very scandalous and grand wedding Jane! The whole town will be broken hearted for everyone has always pined for Victor and Elizabeth separately. Men and women alike will all be broken hearted for the finest suitors will marry each other.

Perhaps I'll see you at the Frankenstein wedding,

Adelaide Smith

To: Jane Smith

My dearest Jane,

March 20, 1793

I have just received a letter that has shattered my heart. I was pining for Victor this whole time and was hoping he would return to Ingolstadt so I could ask him to be my suitor. However, I just received a letter from Elizabeth inviting me to their wedding. Oh Jane, how could this be? Why did I yearn for such a man? Perhaps it was his mystery that lured me in, for all the men around here are too easy to speak with. But how could a man marry his own cousin? I must put my pen down for now I have some cleaning to do, I will write more at my next available time.

April 16, 1793

Oh Jane, I never thought such a horrid thing could happen, I never in a million years would wish death upon someone. But a few days after the Frankenstein wedding, when I arrived back at home, I caught word that the newlywed Elizabeth Frankenstein had died by the hands of the monster, this creature took another victim. Poor Victor must be falling into a deep sorrow and loneliness; however, I must keep my distance from that man. If the creature sees me close to Victor, he may take me as the next victim as well! We must continue our prays for everyone's safety including the rest of the Frankensteins!

Please write back soon Jane, for my heart breaks more and more with each news I receive.

I'll be waiting for your response,

Adelaide Smith

To: Adelaide Smith

Dear Adelaide,

April 30, 1793

Oh, my heart breaks for the Frankenstein family. Mrs. Frankenstein, William, Justine, Henry, Elizabeth-- their lives have been tragically cursed with countless deaths and sicknesses. I thought I heard that Alphonse had died within the past month, too. What have they done to deserve such dismay and heartache? Perhaps they have not been praying daily to God? However, I do not believe that even prayers will mend poor Victor's heart. I hope that the beast and Victor are able to come to an agreement to stop this madness.

I, too, think that is it wise that you stay away from Victor. Although it seems that you were quite fond of him, the monster's anger towards Victor is relentless, and I fear that you will find your way between his grasping fists if you are not careful. I think it would be best if you moved in with me, if it means that you are protected and feel safe. We have been friends for so long, dear Adelaide. I would not want your fate to look similar to poor Henry and Elizabeth's. I pray that you never have to encounter the beast in such a horrific way. Even the thought of him makes me shutter on this spring day. Oh, Adelaide. Who knows how long the monster will wreak havoc.

Please respond soon, so that I know you are safe and out of harm's way. I will begin making room for you in my cottage, and there will be a bed with fresh bedding waiting for your arrival.

Your worried friend,

Jane

**English 256**

**World Literature  
1600 to Present**

## In Metamorphosis: A More Subtle Change Than One May Think

By Edward Barrett

For the most part insects and critters falling into the vermin category are harmless to humans, but the few bad grapes that are poisonous, spread disease, or eat wood in homes, spoil the bunch. These bugs or rodents, labeled vermin, are an annoyance and stir up emotions of disgust. The title to Franz Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis* hints to readers that a radical transformation to something or someone will be occurring in the story. The story begins with the main character, Gregor, waking up a "monstrous vermin" after going to bed a fully functioning human the previous night. Gregor was a young salesman who lived with, and provided for his mother, father and younger sister. The rest of the story shows how Gregor and his family deal with his transformation and all the complications the change creates. Vermin repulse humans and as a result vermin live solitary lives out of human sight. Just the thought of living with a vermin like Gregor's family did reminds the reader to buy mousetraps, and insect defense spray for the house. In Kafka's novel Gregor's family automatically knew that the overgrown insect in Gregor's room used to be their son and brother. This suggests that maybe Gregor's shift from human to vermin wasn't so extreme. In *Metamorphosis*, Kafka critiques capitalist society by having Gregor sharing many attributes with vermin before actually becoming a bug himself and Kafka reveals this with what Gregor did for a living, the way Gregor was regarded in his family, and the way he felt about himself.

Giving Gregor the occupation of traveling salesman is one way Gregor's life mirrors that of a vermin's. Traveling salesmen are notorious for turning up unexpectedly and disrupting their potential customer's day. Salesmen "bug" their prospects and "pester" them into buying what they're selling, and vermin are, exactly, unwanted bugs and pests. Business owners or workers targeted by these salesmen do what they can to avoid the interactions the same way people use insect repellent to prevent vermin from becoming a nuisance. It's also known that once a vermin enters a home it is likely to infest it. In much the same way, getting wrapped up with a travelling salesman isn't going to be a quick, or easy encounter. Margaret Moore's, writing about traveling salesmen, notes that while "Securing a buyer's attention was by no means easy, holding it was even harder". She explains that salesman is expect to be brushed off and told "no" by the buyers and are prepared to handle these rejections then engage the buyer until they get a sale. This makes salesmen, like vermin, hard to get rid of. By showing a salesman literally become a bug Kafka reveals to the reader how workers in these cooperate structures are forced to behave like vermin to make money.

Another similarity of Gregor's previous professional life to a vermin's life was its solitary nature devoid of human compassion. He did not socialize with his coworkers and the management at the office treated him with disdain. In the novel, Kafka illustrates how at work Gregor was clearly on a lower rung of the ladder to success by writing "It is funny, too, the way he [Gregor's boss] sits on the desk and talks down from the heights to the employees" (4). Here a parallel can be made with the way vermin are lower on the food chain. Also Gregor envied the other salesmen that slept in and socialized and thinks "when I go back to the hotel before lunch to right up the business I've done, these gentlemen are just having breakfast" (4). Gregor knew he would get fired if he tried behaving like this, so the demands of his employers kept him isolated and unable to connect with his colleagues much like the way vermin are forced to live hidden from people.

Gregor's role in the family dynamics was an important factor for the reason why Gregor behaved and felt like a vermin in his home before his transformation. Gregor's family was financially dependent, solely, upon him, yet despite this the family had little interaction with

Gregor. His role of provider kept him disconnected and unable to socialize with the family, so like a vermin he lacked a human connection with them. Kafka shows this disconnect when Gregor's mother explains to his boss "that boy has nothing on his mind but the business...He sits with us at the table, quietly reading the paper or studying timetables" (10). Here the reader can see how even when Gregor is with the family he is more focused on sharpening his skills as a salesman the same way a vermin opts to do what it must to survive while avoiding human interaction. The paragraph continues mentioning how Gregor finds his solace working alone with his fretsaw, which also shows the solitary state Gregor prefers when at home.

Gregor was also bothered by how the family's appreciation for the money he earned dwindled after a while. When Gregor reflects on the times he brought the money to his overjoyed family members he recalls "those had been wonderful times, and they had never returned, at least not with the same glory" (26). This entitled feeling the family has to the money Gregor earns is common in families and is often responsible for creating a rift between a sole provider and the rest of the family. In a study on work place bullying (which includes isolation, and setting impossible deadlines) and family conflict, it is seen that "job burnout due to work bullying may translate into family conflict" (Raja). It is seen that Gregor is burnt out at work and bothered at home. The fact that Gregor keeps his door locked is also a good indicator that he feared any encounter with the family would be an unpleasant one. If vermin were capable they too would lock themselves in a safe place where an exterminator or a human foot couldn't ruin their day. Gregor's father's business dried up and he was too old to procure a position with a corporation, so that left all the family's financial responsibility on Gregor. Kafka shows us that Gregor's family was ungrateful and didn't respect Gregor, so in response Gregor acted more like a vermin, by secluding himself. This is why the family was not all too shocked when Gregor turned into vermin. To make ends meet for the family Gregor got up early each morning and home late in the evening always passing through the house in the dark like a cockroach. Gregor's role in the family dynamics had him sharing many characteristics with the critters he came to resemble.

The fact Gregor was self-conscious as a human greatly contributed to his acquisition of vermin like traits. One example of this is how busy with work Gregor kept himself. The term "busy bee" could even be used to describe Gregor's routine before his transformation. Keeping busy is instinctive to vermin, but in Gregor's case being busy distracted him from his poor self-image and it gave him purpose. The morning Gregor turned into a monstrous vermin and was forced to slow down, right away his thoughts focused on how much he hated everything about his life as a human. Then right away he snaps out it thinking "but for the time being I better get up, since my train leaves at five" (4). It is clear that Gregor has a tendency to self-loathe, but keeping busy with work helps him avoid feeling bad about himself. The positions available for workers in capitalist society don't do much to boost a person's self-esteem either. Kafka shows us how thankless Gregor's employers were when the manager shows up to Gregor's house yelling "I'm about to lose even the slightest desire to stick up for you" (10). After working for years with no incidents Gregor is accused of being lazy and stealing within a couple hours of missing his train. With a propensity to self-loathe and attacks from his bosses on his self-worth Kafka shows us that turning into vermin was just the next step in Gregor's devolution.

His low self-image was also evident in how he didn't have friends at work or a girlfriend in his life. Kafka shines light onto this in the novel when Gregor reflects on his life as a human and finds nothing desirable, only "two or three friends from other firms, a chamber-maid at a hotel- a happy fleeting memory- a cashier in a millinery store, whom he courted earnestly but too slowly" (41). It is sad that his best memories are friends he barely knows, a one-night stand, and a girl he struck out with. The thoughts even depress Gregor in his vermin state and "he was glad when they



faded away” (41). As time went on Gregor didn’t long to get back to the rat race of his human life because he didn’t feel much worse about himself as a vermin.

In conclusion, Gregor became and died as a vermin in this story, and in many ways that was how he lived as a human. He felt strongly that he sacrificed his own wants and needs to work this job he disliked, for an employer he hated, in order to keep his family supported. This life he leads as a human was clearly unsatisfying to him. However, he did what was necessary the same way an insect is automatically wired to do the things it must to survive. Kafka shows the reader how these corporate structures in capitalist society under value workers, run their lives, and leave workers at odds with their families by drastically having Gregor morph into a monstrous vermin and then revealing how it wasn’t such an incredible change for him. In the novel Gregor was not shown to have any characteristics unique to humans like the ability to make choices, or have relationships. His duties as a salesman, family struggles, and poor sense of self had him functioning out of necessity and kept him isolated like a vermin.

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**English 257**  
**The Short Story**

## Loss of Meaning in a Text in Translation

*By Rodrigo Sanchez*

A multicultural world offers a multilingual well of literature. English readers often take to translated texts to explore the world, its many cultures, and its literature. Among many of these translated texts one finds “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Following the story of a very old man with very large wings, the text follows what happens to this man as he washes ashore a community filled with curious people. Originally written in Spanish, the text has been translated for the English reader to enjoy, but the question of whether or not the English reader will get the same experience as the Spanish reader arises. Through examination of colloquial references and idiomatic expressions made in the original text, it becomes apparent that meaningful interpretation of the text is lost in translation.

To restrain oneself to literature in one language is to cut one off from the rest of the world. It may be difficult to explore texts in other languages given language barriers, but reading texts in translation opens the door to a world otherwise unattainable. By reading texts native to other parts of the world or other time periods, one gains an understanding of culture and history. A text translated from another language provides the reader with new landscapes to explore and the realization that other customs exist in the world. Scholars Istabraq Tariq Al-azzawy and Ziyad radhil Himood comment on the importance of translated texts in English curriculums and argue that such texts, “enrich not only our personal knowledge and artistic sense, but also our culture, Literature, language, and thoughts” (Al-azzawy). Without the exposure to translated texts, one remains in a world full of the familiar. Al-azzawy and Himood also note who one is exposed to when reading translated texts when noting that, “Translation gives us access to the literature of the world. It allows us to enter the minds of people from other times and places...” (Al-Azzawy). That notion of being exposed to different minds becomes important when examining themes and motifs. “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” lets the reader into the mind of a non-Western writer who is native to Latin America. The experiences which inspired Garcia Marquez to write his story might be different than what someone in America experiences and by exposing oneself to his literature, one gains a better understanding of what goes on in the world.

With reading translated texts, there also comes the responsibility to understand such texts. Scala as Carol Maier and Franoise Massardier-Kenney point out that the positive impact of reading a translated text is not always maximized because “literature in English translation is often taught as if it had been originally written in English” (Maier). Such assertion brings into question the effectiveness of reading a translated text. Certain colloquial phrases may not have a direct translation or may not have the same impact in English as they do in their native language. “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” is no exception and such expressions will be explored later in this work. It is important to understand the shortcomings of a translated work and try to think of it not as an English text, but as a translated text. Not only is language itself translated in a translated text, but so is the culture associated with it. When translating a text, certain words, objects, or even names cannot be translated which may hold a lot of meaning in the original language. This also applies to places and landmarks which may be associated with the regional understood knowledge of the original text. This list of content which cannot be translated accounts of cultural disconnect. It is, then, important to take this cultural disconnect into account and educate oneself about the culture at hand. In some cases, as it is with “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings,” some of these terms or places may be left out, altering the entire story. It is

the reader's responsibility to know how to read a translated text in order to achieve the message the author intends for it and not have it lost in translation.

With a fuller understanding of the importance of reading translated texts and the challenges it may present; one can apply this new found knowledge to Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old man with Enormous Wings." An exploration of the mind the reader enters in "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" is an exploration of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Born in Aracataca, Colombia, Garcia Marquez was a Latin American writer who took to his literature as a form of political commentary, which in a politically dominated Colombia, led to his exile to Mexico where he died in 2014 (Bryan). As fascinating as his life was, so is the perspective he had on writing. Garcia Marquez is highly noted for his references and inspiration taken from the Caribbean. T. Avril Bryan goes into the deep analysis of what the notion of the Caribbean is and who resides there. Through the examination of several definitions of the Caribbean, Bryan concludes that Garcia Marquez's world is a Caribbean one as "he distinguishes it...by references to landscape, lifestyle, racial composition of the people, cultural traditions, and historical and political events" (Bryan). Such perspective is important to note as it provides cultural context to his writing.

As stated, Garcia Marquez was heavily influenced by the Caribbean and made use of it as the backdrop to most of his stories. When reading the translated "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" the reader finds it hard to conceive a clear setting for the story. The seventh paragraph of the text tells the reader: "The curious came from far away," and also, "The most unfortunate invalids on earth came in search of health" (Marquez). The terms "far away" and "on earth" don't allow the reader to infer a clearer setting than a town by the water given the plague of crabs Pelayo and Elisenda are fighting off. Comparing the same paragraph in the original Spanish text, the reader gets a clearer sense of a setting. The same paragraph opens with "Vinieron curiosos hasta de Ia Martinica" and then goes on to explain "Vinieron en busca de sa lud los enfermos desdichados del Caribe" (Marquez). In the original text, Garcia Marquez lets the reader know that people came from as far away as Matinica as opposed to just saying they came from "far away". He al so tells the reader that those who care to look for health care from the Caribbean in the original text, not from all over earth. Martinica, a Caribbean island part of the Lesser Antilles, is a reference to the Caribbean and a piece of cultural context to allow the reader to locate the town in the story.

In translation, the full setting was left out, not making a single reference to the Caribbean. Such loss of setting affects the reader's perspective of the story. With a notion of the Caribbean comes notions of the people who live there, their traditions, and native language. An English reader has now been robbed of the potential picture of a Caribbean setting due to the translation.

Loss of setting is accompanied by an inorganic reading experience in this translation. The original text is fluid and does not prompt the reader to stop and wonder "what is the author

trying to say?" The same cannot be said for the translated text as the translator often translated word-for-word as opposed to the underlying meaning. Paragraph four illustrates this translation when describing a "flesh-and-blood" angel (Marquez). The original text uses the correct idiomatic expression "de carne y hueso" to describe the angle, but the translated text uses an expression not familiar to the English reader, making the sentence awkward to read. Paragraph six describes the pace at which the news of the angel traveled. The original text uses a common phrase "con tanta rapidez" to state how fast the news traveled. This expression literally translated to "such rapidity" which might sound awkward to an English reader. Nevertheless, that's the word choice used in the translated text. The reader encounters yet another awkward phrase at the end of paragraph eight, "...the majority understood that his passivity was not that of a hero taking his

ease. but that of a cataclysm in repose” (Marquez). In Spanish saying “cataclismo en reposo” is a common idiomatic expression, but to the English reader such expression does not roll off the tongue.

The constant use of awkward language and word-for-word translation detract the reader from what is important in the text to instead try and understand an awkward use of language. Instead of inferring into the curious nature of humans, the reader is left to look into the rapidity and its meaning. Instead of seeing the compassion and patience in the angle, the reader is left to ask about a cataclysm in repose. Failure to properly translate this text leaves the reader to use up more time inferring into the meaning of awkward language instead of the meaning behind the language.

Just as important as the text itself is its interpretation. English readers have done much scholarship about “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”- the scholarship is mainly centered on the analysis of the text as a magical realism text. Eric L. Reinholtz notes that this text “is one of the most frequently cited examples in all literature of the genre known as magic realism” (Reinholtz) which is not only true, but perhaps the only truth of this text. In researching this text, it was hard not to type in “A Very Old Man...:” without receiving suggestions to magical realism. This yields the conclusion that the English reader looks to “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” as a pioneer text in a specific genre. The English reader takes the text at face value and debates the authenticity of the angel.

The Spanish reader takes a different approach when interpreting the text. Readers who are aware of the political climate in Columbia when the story was written take a deeper look into Garcia Marquez's political commentary on this era- La Violencia. Much of the work done in Spanish centers around the church representing a political power which dictates what its people do or don't do, and believe or not believe. The angel is then a rebellion against the political structure by defying its laws and its standards of what's acceptable and what isn't. Such a clash of scholarship can be attributed to cultural context of both the text and the author. The English reader might not know much about the author ad Caribbean influence. The Spanish reader can infer into the clues of Caribbean setting in the story and with a little knowledge of Garcia Marquez's birth place the connection between political commentary and literature can be made.

Examining key aspects in the original text helps bring to light the lost meaning when translating this text. Garcia Marquez, an author known for his references to the Caribbean, uses a Caribbean setting in his original text, but such references don't make it to the English text. Awkward translation keeps the reader from focusing on the meaning of the text and rather on the language used. From these, it can be observed how the interpretations vary from the English reader and the Spanish reader. The English reader focuses on the genre of the story and the Spanish reader on the political commentary. Understanding translated texts is just as important as reading them because it shows that the reader not only understands the text at hand, but the culture that it is inevitably tied to it.

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**English 260**  
**The Shakespeare Plays I**

## The Nature of Fortune in “As You Like It”

*By Dov B Rabinowitz*

The question of whether or not Humans have any choice in their lives—if one can choose their destiny or if one’s destiny is predetermined by powers beyond any comprehension—is not one that began with the advent of Darwinian science. These are questions that plagued Mankind since Man began to think. The titles, not the inherent questions, are what changed. Where a twenty-first century cosmopolitan would say Biology, in another era one would say Theodicy, or Teleology. One of the long lasting and pervading symbols for this problem is the Roman goddess Fortuna. The Romans believed that Fortuna held the keys to all worldly gifts. She continued to be a dominant figure in popular belief for millennia, and she continued to be a personification of Fatalism throughout the ages (Patch 132). Considering the importance of such a question, to explore what Shakespeare considered to be the role of Fortune (Fortuna), is a very worthy endeavour. Obviously exploring all of the Bard’s plays, sonnets and letters would be a task that far exceeds the scope of this project. As such this paper will make do with one of Shakespeare’s plays: “As You Like It.” This is not a whimsical decision; the subject of Fortune is omnipresent throughout the play, to the extent that it is worthy of consideration. The paper is structured as follows: first to be considered is the place of Fortune in Medieval and renaissance England; this will then be viewed in context to the play; themes in the play that point toward a particular view of Fortune will then be highlighted. By the end of the paper it will be evident that Shakespeare’s Fortune in “As You Like It” is a deviation from the purely fatalistic Fortune, commonly held in his time, in which one has no control over his or her place in life, and that Shakespeare is mocking, not conceding to, such a view.

Fortune in Medieval England was a predominant force. Much of one’s wealth and stature was dependent on her. This is most evident from paintings and poems from the era where she is depicted as blindfolded and standing next to a wheel. On the wheel there are people, and she is obviously the one turning the wheel. This signifies a few things: Fortune is blind, she has no real method and is instead capricious; she is constant, nothing is set; she is indiscriminate and, finally, all are subject to her. In fact, in *Henry V*, Shakespeare offers a description of Fortune that perfectly describes this. Fluellen, the pedantic Welsh captain, in response to Pistol’s berating of Fortune, responds:

By your patience, Aunchient Pistol. Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also with a wheel to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning and inconstant, and mutability and variation; and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls and rolls and rolls. In good truth, the poet makes a most excellent description of it.

Fortune is an excellent moral (3.6.30–40).

This paints a picture of an extremely fatalistic world, a world in which no amount of work can change an inevitable outcome. But even in Medieval England there was a little hope in the form of Nature. Although one’s Fortune was out of their hands, the way they accepted their fate and went through life was up to Nature. Nature, one’s wit and virtue, allowed one to accept his fate with grace and navigate his lot in life to live a happy one.



“As You Like It” is a scene for this battle between two epic forces; Fortune and Nature. The two protagonists of the play, Rosalind and Orlando, are thrown from a life of riches to the Forest of Arden. This is classic Fortune: two wealthy people of noble birth are, in an instant, cast into a forest and forced to fend for themselves in a life of poverty. Their actions in the forest, however, are classic Nature: in the face of such adversary, Rosalind begins a quest probe at Orlando's psyche and investigate his true intentions. Orlando, although in exile, becomes a poet and spends his days writing love poems on trees. The scary forest has suddenly been illuminated and turned into a stage for as gay a romance as ever there was. This is not a particularly hidden message either. The first dialogue between Rosalind and her cousin Celia is about the battle between Fortune and Nature: “Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the argument?” (1.2.44–45). Two things can be seen from this sentence: 1) Fortune creates a scenario which one can react to with Nature 2) Such a reaction is a “flouting” at Fortune. John Shaw in his essay “Fortune and Nature in As You Like It” stops at this point: “As You Like It” is the personification of the classical idea of Fortune versus Nature (45–50).

This reading seems to miss an important element of the play and its treatment of Fortune. In the end of the play Jacques, the melancholy fellow who delivers the famous “All the World Is a Stage” speech, does something unusual—with regards to Fortune, not his character. Having been given the right to return to the court, he elects to remain in the forest and lead a religious life. This is more unique than Duke Frederick's decision, as in the latter case he is only seen post decision; Jacques' case provides a character explicitly (within the dialogue of the play) rejecting Fortune's hand: “To him will I. Out of these convertites there is much matter to be heard and learn' d”(5.4.186–187). These two aforementioned characters in addition to the fool, Touchstone, who elects to remain in the wild with his new wife Audrey, seem to provide a counter-narrative of Fortune within the play. In a world where Fortune reigns supreme, should they have this choice? Are they not destined to return to the court and live wealthily? The movement in society—up or down—is determined by Fortune. Their choice is a blasphemous rejection of the gifts of Fortune. It seems that Shakespeare is using these characters to reject, if not parody, the prevailing ideas regarding fatalism in his time.

Even in Shakespeare's time there were other ideas that would more closely align with this proposed reading of “As You Like It.” In the beginning of his essay “On Fortune” Francis Bacon quotes: “Faber quisque fortunae suae”, or “Every man the maker of his own fortune” (116). Bacon uses this quote numerous times, and it is, in fact, a good summation of his belief that through virtue, one may have a degree of control over his or her life (Cochrane). Machiavelli describes Fortune as “a woman” and says that one should “beat her and knock her about” (107), suggesting that she is a force to be reckoned with, not one that must be surrendered to. So, the notion that Shakespeare is trying to elicit such a belief in his audience is not implausible. In fact, it would seem strange to assume that he is not.

Such a reading would shed light on another aspect of the play: the title. “As You Like It” seems to suggest a cast of free and frolicking characters with not a care in the world, and this is obviously not the case. Pretty much all of the characters have been thrown into horrible situations. But, having seen that Shakespeare is deviating from the classic Fortune and Nature narrative, the title may now be seen as a directive. “While you may believe” Shakespeare is telling them “that your life is predetermined; even your Fortune is as you like it”. The plotline is not paradoxical; it is deliberately heretical and counter-cultural. Rather than pandering to the audience's beliefs, he is calling on them to re-evaluate their preconceived notions.

In conclusion, while at first glance “As You Like It” is a generic picture of Medieval European Fatalism, it is in fact a reckoning and a taking to task of the era's beliefs. This is evident not only from the seemingly problematic plot, but also from the play's title. Shakespeare is using the play to mock—not concede to—the dogmas of his time. “As You Like It” is a firm rejection of Fatalism, and is a call to the audience to take control of their lives, rather than leave everything up to powers beyond their control.

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**History 171**  
**Western Civilization**  
**to 1650**

# A Look at the Evolution of Theatre: From Greek to Present

By Megan Durham

## Introduction

People go to see plays and musicals in theatres on Broadway and other famous theatres throughout the United States and other countries. Throughout 2014, the number of people who visited live theatres in the U.S. was about 46.63 million people.<sup>1</sup> People rarely read books nowadays and in the entertainment world, most books become plays, musicals or maybe even movies. Most people prefer to see these interpretations instead of reading the novels. Rewind to many years ago in classical Greece, citizens needed these interpretations for the sake of knowing what was going on around them. Theatre started about 2,500 years ago in classical Greece and has evolved to other parts of the world. Just like all history, theatre moved like a fad and the architecture of some of the most well-known theatres to date were popping up everywhere. Other than Greece, theatre had shown its face in Rome, Japan, and also England for example. The growth of theatre has evolved such a great deal in the past 2,500 years; its influence is still felt today. The overall influence of theatre had grown from country to country making it to be one of the most honorable pieces of art and entertainment.

## The Origin of All Theatre

The first ever plays that were produced and performed were to honor a god named Dionysus, the son of Zeus. He was named the god of vine and wine, a true Olympian of mystic ecstasy – the “twice-born god”.<sup>2</sup> The story of Dionysus is quite an interesting one in ancient Greek mythological history. Dionysus was just 6 months in the womb when Zeus had taken him out of his mother, Semele. He had then sewn his son into his thigh where he grew to full term and came out a very healthy baby. The town of Athens loved to honor Dionysus and his story through theatre.

There were two festivals of Dionysus held per year in Athens, called the Two Dionysia. Many other festivals were held to honor the great god, for example, a fertility festival called the Haloa, which was also held in Athens. People would drink grape wine that was supposedly brought to them by the great god of vine and wine, Dionysus himself.<sup>3</sup> During these festivals, there was a form of choreographed dances performed by a chorus on an altar, where the performers just danced around. This then evolved into dances called *catharis*, a powerful rush of emotions that caused the audience into an intense emotional movement. This played a large influence in the introduction of Greek tragedy.

## Greek Tragedy, Comedy & Satire

A Greek tragedy literally means “goat-ode”, the goat being the symbol of Dionysus. Tragedy essentially rose out of the worship and communion with the dead – hence, why tragedy was a very depressing type of play to watch and still is to this day. The first kind of Greek tragedies included a 12-50-member chorus that sang, dance and critiqued Greek life at the time. The chorus

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<sup>1</sup> "Visitors of Live Theaters in the USA, 2014." Statista.

<sup>2</sup> Adkins, Lesley, and Roy A. Adkins. "Dionysus." *Handbook to Life in Ancient Greece*, Updated Edition. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Gerber, Joseph R. "Greek drama." In Ackermann, Marsha E., Michael Schroeder, Janice J. Terry, Jiu-Hwa Lo Upshur, and Mark F. Whitters, eds. *Encyclopedia of World History: The Ancient World, Prehistoric Eras to 600 CE*, vol. 1. (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2008), 1.

was held by some to represent the opinions of Greek society that then commented and made sense of different actions. At this time, Athens got its very first actor – Thespis of Icaria in 534 B.C.E. He would read parts of several different characters and wore masks for each.<sup>4</sup> This is where the origin of the word *thespian* came from. It is what actors are called now, “after the man who made a play that consisted more than just a chorus.”<sup>5</sup>

However, a one-actor play can only last so long. A Greek man named Aeschylus, a highly honored playwright, added a second actor and even decorations to his plays. Not only did actors wear masks but they were also assigned to wear costumes. Plays like this included *Prometheus Bound*, *Agamemnon*, and *Seven against Thebes*.<sup>6</sup> These plays portrayed humans who were punished by cosmic forces for their misdeeds and failures. Aeschylus died at the age of 69 during one of his travels to Sicily.<sup>7</sup>

Another Greek man who expanded even more on the amount of actors in a Greek tragedy was Sophocles, a famous author. He had added a third actor and gave them more of a spotlight than the chorus. However, he also added three more members to the chorus making the number a minimum of 15. Some of his works included *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and 120 other tragedies. Sophocles’ plays were presented at the celebration of the Great Dionysia and had won 18 times. His first win was a victory over Aeschylus.<sup>8</sup> The great thing about Sophocles is that he lived an unusually long life for the average Greek man. He wrote every day for the rest of his life until he died at the age of 90 years old.

After tragedy, came comedy. Comedic plays evolved from tragedies and served as breaks between tragedies or between parts of a single tragedy – “comedic relief.”<sup>9</sup> They included extremely exaggerated characters that lampooned the tragedy in a spoof, solely to make the audience laugh. Comedies closely followed the format of a tragedy – they included costumes, masks, and actors. After this, some people thought comedies should make their own play and not just serve as a break between tragedies. This was called Old Comedy, comedies performed in the period beginning with Pericles’ establishment of democracy (450 B.C.E.).<sup>10</sup> They strictly followed the same format of tragedy and also included the chorus.

Another type of play that evolved from tragedy is satire, that bridged the gap between comedy and tragedy. Satire is derived from the word *satyrs*, who were sacred to Dionysus. These were plays that were performed to make fun of the tragedy and lighten the impact of the tragedies that were just viewed by the audience. Satyrs were odd and amusing creatures who were hair, half-human that had hooved, short legs of a goat, a goat’s short horns, and the tail and ears of a horse. Once again, satires were an ode to Dionysus with the form of these creatures. They were known to be jovial, bawdy, and roguish in their humor. Satyrs attempted to fit in with the Greek society but

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Sacks, David. "Aeschylus." *Encyclopedia of the Ancient Greek World*, Revised Edition. Revised by Lisa R. Brody. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Cook, James Wyatt. "Sophocles." *Encyclopedia of Ancient Literature*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Gerber, Joseph R. “Greek drama”, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 1.

they suffered certain losses of dignity. Therefore, satire drama made fun of tragedies and sometimes even themselves.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Greek Drama Experience**

The people of Greece devoted two to four major holidays a year entirely to watching plays – just like modern day festivals that take over the course of three days. During these festivals, contests were held to determine the best tetralogy, or set of four plays.<sup>12</sup> Each tetralogy consisted of three tragedies and one satire. All of the sets of tetralogies were performed on a single day but never repeated during a playwright's lifetime. Festivals called the Lesser Dionysia and the Greater Dionysia were believed necessary to keep the government in order, enable the crops to grow, and the people to survive.<sup>13</sup> The festivals were held on different days for each village so it was very possible for Greeks to attend more than one festival in one season. The ceremonies at the festivals required the best actors and choruses, so taxes were more expensive for wealthy citizens to bear the cost to get in. The audiences for the plays were all of Athens. The Greeks who could not afford were provided with ticket money by the state – almost like it was mandatory for all citizens to attend!

The theatres in Greece make modern theatre look very small. The Dionysian Theatre was able to hold the entire town - estimate range from 14,000 to 20,000 people.<sup>14</sup> The audience also consisted of all Athenians that were addressed by the playwright. They would make fun of individual Athenians. They would suggest a course of action on current issues, reference inside jokes, or even jokingly accuse someone in the audience of misconduct. The audience would sit and watch these plays from morning to evening – and they never got tired of watching. It was all the entertainment they had after all! The plays spoke about politics by leading tragic poets. They were thought of as teachers and wore the responsibility for shaping the character of a powerful nation-state. Another item about Greek theatre was that all legal proceedings and businesses were put on hold during festivals – there were to be nothing else going on in town.<sup>15</sup> To disturb performances, strike the performers, or even remove someone who had taken the wrong seat was seen as a crime that could be punished with death. Greek drama, as a whole, was a great influence for the start of theatre all over the world, especially Rome.

### **Roman Architecture**

Many believe that Roman architecture was a huge influence for the creation of plays and other forms of entertainment. Theatres were unknown until the late third century B.C.E. Around 240 B.C.E., a drama would be given to a chorus but the stage never stayed – it would be torn down after each performance.<sup>16</sup> Senators were opposed to constructing a permanent theatre with seats. Even after the conquest of Greece and the spread of Hellenistic culture, there was still opposition and theatres were strictly not permitted. Then a man named Aemilius Scaurus made a wooden theatre complete with nearly 80,000 seats and thousands of bronze statues in 58 B.C.E. In 55

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Adkins, Lesley, and Roy A. Adkins. "Dionysus."

<sup>15</sup> Gerber, Joseph R. "Greek drama", 1.

<sup>16</sup> Bunsen, Matthew. "theaters and amphitheaters in ancient Rome." *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised Edition. (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2002.), 1.

B.C.E., Pompey the Great built a theatre once completely out of stone called the Curia Pompey. In was there in that theatre where Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by the senate in 44 B.C.E. However, devastatingly, fire broke out and burned the stone theatre down to the ground.<sup>17</sup> Another stone theatre was then built in 13 B.C.E., overshadowed by Augustus. These two theatres are two main examples of stone theatres from the Roman Empire. After that, all theatres were constructed out of wood.

A typical Roman theatre was usually in the shape of a semicircle. Seats were sectioned off to show various levels of society. There were two balconies over the cavea, where the musicians played, that were seated for emperors and their retinues. The other rows were for senators, knights, ambassadors, and the rest of the Roman society. Just like Greece, watching plays all day were mandatory for Romans. Public spectacles got in for free – tesserae, or tickets, were handed out by the government.<sup>18</sup>

The structure of Roman theatre was also an important factor. Earlier Roman drama was performed on temporary stages that were usually made of wood, although one stage was made of marble, glass and wood. They often had no seats and audiences had to stand. When performances would become more popular, benches that rose in tiers (like Greek theatres) were built. There would be a broad stage with the orchestra in front of it, where choruses and musicians played. By mid-200s B.C.E., painted cloth backdrops were hung over the back of the stage to indicate setting for the actions taken place on the stage. This gave the appearance of depth for background objects, while objects on the stage still seemed foreground.<sup>19</sup> All theatres in Rome were open air until 69 B.C.E., where a sponsor added vela, a linen covering forming a roof-like structure over the theater.

After the semicircle-shaped theatres came amphitheaters. These were circular in design to give everyone a view of everything that was going on onstage, especially for gladiator fights or productions involving animals called the venationes. The first ever amphitheater was not in Rome but nearby in Campania, a wooden stadium built in 50 B.C.E. Julius Caesar once funded one in 46 B.C.E., while Statilius Taurus constructed the first stone amphitheater in 29 B.C.E. These amphitheaters display beauty and imagination. Then came the masterpiece of all amphitheaters – the Colosseum, also known as the Flavian Amphitheater. This was a huge success for Rome for it brought in all sorts of entertainment and money for Rome.

The Colosseum consisted of many different elements. It had two restrooms, a retractable roof, sectioned entries for seating, and multiple drinking stations throughout the building. The construction was finished around 80 C.E. when Titus led the inaugural celebration of its opening, for Vespasian did not live to see his project finish. The Colosseum was used for many different events. With its 50,000-80,000 seats, spectacles could watch animal hunts, executions of prisoners, reenactments of famous battles, and dramas based on Classical mythology. Also held inside were live mock sea battles. Underground aqueducts would flood the arena with water and then drain pipes were used that led to the sewage system.<sup>20</sup> Innovations like these, which were around in 80 C.E., are truly amazing to see when modern-day civilizations still use them.

### **Roman Drama & Playwrights**

Much of Roman drama and theatre is unknown. Most plays have been lost, but a lot of Roman drama was spontaneous and written down – it survived on improvisations. Very much like

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Hopkins, Keith. "The Colosseum: The Emblem of Rome." BBC News. March 22, 2011.

Greece, Roman theatre began as a part of festivals. They honored gods and goddesses as well but also sometimes celebrated military victories. The first theatres and plays were at religious festivals, the "Ludi Romani", in September to honor Jupiter – the equivalent of Greek's god, Zeus.<sup>21</sup> Actors would only be men, who would wear masks that represented different characters. They usually would only speak their lines but they also sometimes sang and danced as well. With this, actors discovered that they could win audiences over with comedic sketches and vulgar humor. With this said, comedies were certainly more popular than tragedies in Rome.

Along with Greece being a strong influence, the Etruscans, citizens of northern Italy, were among the first influences as well. These included informal poems known as "Fescinnine verses". They were performed at the religious festivals and other social events. They would be recited and sang multiple times but there is no known date as to when they were brought about.<sup>22</sup> Along with these poems, there was also the "Atellan farce" that was brought about in the late fourth century B.C.E. This was a comic play that utilized slapstick humor. The actors wore masks, told jokes, sang and danced. Many people among the audience enjoyed these types of plays.<sup>23</sup>

One known Roman playwright was Titus Maccius Plautus. He was fresh and inventive that lived from 254-184 B.C.E. His work was some of the work that have survived among others that were lost. He was a former actor and failed businessman who wrote plays for a living.<sup>24</sup> He borrowed plots from Greek plays and modified them for Roman audiences, called Greek "new comedy". He wrote 130 comedies, but only 21 survived. They were often musical comedies with music and lyrics he composed himself. His most honored work varied from different kinds of story plots. One of his works was titled, *The Pot of Gold*, which was about an old miser that feared his treasure would be stolen. Another play was titled, *The Braggart Warrior*, which was about a womanizing, foolish soldier. Another popular play named *The Twin Menaechmi* was a tale of twins separated at birth and later reunited under confusing and humorous circumstances.<sup>25</sup> He was more concerned with making his audiences laugh so he could focus more on making jokes and puns.<sup>26</sup>

Another famous playwright was Publius Terentius Afer, or also known as Terrence. He lived from 185-159 B.C.E. and was named as the "master of comedy". He aimed most of his humor towards the educated upper class of Rome.<sup>27</sup> He only wrote six plays and all of them survived.<sup>28</sup> Monks carefully copied his plays and preserved them throughout the Middle Ages. Terrence went to Rome as a slave but was well educated by his owner and was eventually given his freedom. He was admired by the Romans for his understanding of human nature and borrowed from previous Greek sources. The names of his six plays that survived were *Andria* (166 B.C.E.), *Mother-In-Law*

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<sup>21</sup> Nardo, Don. "Nothing New Under the Sun: Late Republican Drama." In *Greek and Roman Theater* (San Diego, CA: Lucent Books, 1995), 71.

<sup>22</sup> Nardo, Don. "Variety and Vulgarity: Early Roman Theater." In *Greek and Roman Theater* (San Diego, CA: Lucent Books, 1995) 64.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>24</sup> Rodgers, Nigel, and Dr. Hazel Dodge. "The First Roman Writers." In *Roman Empire*, 1st ed. Vol. 1. (New York, NY: Metro Books, 2013), 382.

<sup>25</sup> Nardo, Don. "Nothing New Under the Sun", 76.

<sup>26</sup> Beetz, Kirk H. "drama and theater in ancient Rome." In Bogucki, Peter, ed. *Encyclopedia of Society and Culture in the Ancient World*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Nardo, Don. "Nothing New Under the Sun", 77-78.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 77-78.



(165 B.C.E.), *Tormentor* (163 B.C.E.), *Eunuch* (161 B.C.E.), *Phormio* (161 B.C.E.), and *The Brothers* (160 B.C.E.). Most of his plays were concerned with love affairs and complications arising from ignorance and misunderstandings.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, Terrence died at a young age, 26 years old, on a visit to Greece.

Not much is known about tragedies, but it is known that they were influenced by Greek plays. They featured actors in lavish costumes with grotesque masks, and they emphasized action over dialogue. Audiences knew the plays by heart and anticipated every gesture an actor was going to make. However, some audience members would flee in horror because sometimes the actor would portray a character too well. This could be from an actor sometimes walking around on stilts, wearing a long cloak and a mask of a howling face. Also, another innovation to drama was brought up during the reign of Augustus: pantomiming. These depicted tragic myths that involved performing to music but no words being said. They were very well admired because the actor would be able to tell a story so well by only their gestures and movements. While Greece and Rome may be the countries that first started drama, they are also influences for drama around the world.

### **Glimpse on Japanese Theatre**

During the medieval period, there were two major theatrical forms: Noh and Kyogen, in which both developed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The warrior class performed them, especially the shoguns and regents who controlled military government. The start of Japanese theatre was by the artistic creativity of the actor and playwright Kan'ami (1333-1384) and his son, Zeami (1363-1443), an actor, playwright and Noh theorist. Theatre in Japan focused on mime and stylized dance with music and song.<sup>30</sup> It very much involved around human emotion that was expressed in strong religious ritual movements. In Noh drama, the development of plot was secondary to the movements, much unlike Greek and Roman drama, however the audience already usually knew the story. The audiences' satisfaction was based on how well the actors could portray their emotions during the performance. Because such strong emotions were required, the actors were required to complete extensive training to be a Noh actor. The official religion was Zen Buddhism, which would be coordinated into theatre sometimes. There wouldn't be much movement but very intense emotions.<sup>31</sup> Japanese drama was financed by the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu. Another fascinating fact about their drama was that the actors worked on a mostly bare stage and utilized only minimal props. Costumes were used and were central to conveying symbolic meanings. Masks were also used to portray old men, young women, demons, gods and other people.

Zeami was one of the first playwrights to give a play its definitions of a structure. This included an introduction, development, and the climax. The introduction included the entrance of a secondary character, which was typically a traveler. The development was separated into three different sections – entrance of the main character, dialogue between the two characters, and

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<sup>29</sup> Rodgers, Nigel, and Dr. Hazel Dodge. "The First Roman Writers", 383.

<sup>30</sup> Deal, William E. "music, dance, and theater in medieval Japan." *Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan*. (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2006), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, John Russell. "Oriental Theatres: East Asian Theatres." In *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 471.

explanations of the events to come. The climax included the reappearance of the main character in a changed form to reveal his or her true identity.

The stories behind Japanese theatre had much to do with history, like all plays. Zeami loved to dramatize Japanese history, especially the Civil War and other Chinese Legends.<sup>32</sup> There were 250 plays that were categorized into five groups: god plays, warrior plays, women plays, miscellaneous plays, and demon plays.

The other form of Japanese drama was Kyogen, or “mad words”. This was the comedy of oriental theatre in close relations to Noh. These were independent plays or comic interludes within the scenes of a serious play. It was originally an improvised performance in which the actors worked only from a synopsis of a plot. It wasn’t until the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Kyogen plays were being written down.<sup>33</sup> There were a total of 200 plays in Kyogen theatre. Its humor shed light of most social classes and some variety Japanese citizens – dimwitted lords, husbands and wives, social snobs, sons-in-law and Buddhist clergy). The humor was accomplished by physical humor, stylized vocalization, verbal puns, mime and mimicry. There was some dancing and masks were used sparingly but there was no music to be played. There are two other forms of Japanese theatre that date from the last half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: Kabuki and Bunraku. Although they may have been popular, they were not as influential as Noh and Kyogen theatre.<sup>34</sup> However, Japan wasn’t the only country to take a spin on classical drama for their source of entertainment.

### Shakespearean Drama

Before William Shakespeare came around, England followed its surroundings for theatre and drama. Born in 1564, Shakespeare was also known as the “Bard of Avon”, since he came from Stratford-Upon-Avon in England. He started out as an actor in the London theatre but also tried to be a playwright by 1592. His career accelerated when the London theatres reopened in 1594 after the fear of the plague dispersed. He became the leading member of the Theatre in a group called the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, or the King’s Men.<sup>35</sup> He showed little interest in publishing his plays at first but sure enough, his first one came out in 1595. Taking a spin on classical drama, he created a tragic romance named *Romeo and Juliet* – the tale of star-crossed but forbidden lovers. Then Shakespeare started to write comic romances including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1596) and *As You Like It* (1599). All of the dates are within a year or two because there was no firm evidence of when the first production was. The next play he wrote that blew up in popularity was *Twelfth Night* in 1601, which was written for Elizabeth’s court and the festivities for January 6.

Then, during the next century, Shakespeare darkened his themes. They were much less sunny and more tragic – about the four tragic heroes. The first of these four plays was *Hamlet* in 1601. This was about a character’s self-doubt and self-dramatization in an intensely personal drama – each soliloquy makes more disaster from his decisions. Next was *Othello* in 1603 that was about a “green-eyes monster”, whose jealousy was the driving force towards destruction. Then in about 1605 came *King Lear*, about an old king’s sanity being destroyed. The last of the four was *Macbeth* about a year later that was focused on ruthless ambition. Each of these tragedies have a central

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 472.

<sup>33</sup> Deal, William E. "music, dance, and theater in medieval Japan", 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Lindaman, Matthew. "Shakespeare, William." In Mancall, Peter C., and Gary B. Nash, eds. *Encyclopedia of American History: Three Worlds Meet, Beginnings to 1607*, Revised Edition (Volume I), (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2010), 1.

character whose actions drive the events and whose flaws make the conclusion unavoidable – also known as the “tragic hero”.<sup>36</sup>

Years after *Macbeth*, Shakespeare touched upon the history of Greece and Rome. Referring to Rome, he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1607 about the facts of the fate of what brought down those two rulers. He also wrote *Coriolanus* in 1608 that focused on the arrogance of a central character. Of his last four plays, Shakespeare also wrote about Greek history. This was *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* in about 1608. It followed the pattern of rupture, retirement, renewal and reconciliation.<sup>37</sup> Over William Shakespeare’s lifetime, he wrote a total of 38 plays, along with many sonnets and poems. The start of his retirement was when a spark from a cannon set fire to the roof of the Globe, London’s theatre, and burned it to the ground. The theatre was eventually rebuilt and reopened in 1614 with a tiled roof but Shakespeare then died in 1616 at the age of 52.

Japan and England have shown significant differences from the start of theatre with Noh and Shakespearean theatre. Even now, theatre keeps changing as the days go on and technology advances. One specific item comes about, that brings a new and exciting change to theatre: film.

### **From Theatre to Modern-Day Film**

Every time a performance is watched, everyone is seeing something from the history of theatre. So much of theatre history has taken a turn into different adaptations. William Shakespeare alone has been a huge influence for the adaptations of theatre to film. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* has 42 film adaptations, for it has caught audiences’ attention all over the world. Just like everything else in the world, the transition from stage-to-film had a start.

The term stage-to-film is defined as when describing a motion picture that has been adapted from a stage play. Some say that they’re poorly made; some say that they’re the greatest and even some have won the biggest awards. The following stage productions have all been made into films that were high budgeted due to the new light it was given: *Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, *Rent*, *The Producers*, *Dreamgirls*, *Hairspray*, *Sweeny Todd*, *Les Miserables*, and *Mamma Mia!* Stage productions in the 1990s seemed perfectly done. However, films like *Moulin Rouge* in 2001 gave new life to the genre that no one thought existed. Adaptations from stage-to-film all started when performances themselves started to be recorded. Intimacy was gained when audiences were watching the adaptations with different camera angles and close-ups. The modern use of film technology was used to make Shakespeare even more so in depth, especially with the use of unlimited access to soundstages.<sup>38</sup> Even though there were no more physical audiences in the films themselves, it allowed for much more creativity that was up to the director to decide. One prime example of this is the famous and multi-winning director, Baz Luhrmann.

Baz Luhrmann’s rendition of *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* blew up in popularity in 1996 – perhaps it was Leonardo DiCaprio playing the role of Romeo or maybe it was how he took his own spin on the tragic romance. In this adaptation, Shakespeare met teen culture and modern filmmaking through zooms, extreme close-ups, slams and jump cuts. The city of Verona was a combination of different cities: Miami Beach, Los Angeles & Mexico City. Another fun fact from this particular version is that if the audience looks closely, Luhrmann connects places in the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Crowl, Samuel. "WIDE ANGLE: The Films of the 1990s." In *Shakespeare and Film*, 1st ed. Vol. 1. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 88.

film to Shakespeare's life. For example, the Montague pool hall – the ultimate hangout place – was called the Globe.<sup>39</sup> With the advances of modern technology, this stage-to-screen adaptation caught much attention as it gave the ultimate romance some new life.

However, Baz Luhrmann isn't the only celebrity who has taken a play from Shakespeare and brought it to new life through film. Shakespeare has influenced many around the world when it came to planning a new film. Some have had \$20 million budgets with famous actors such as Mel Gibson (*Hamlet*, 1990), Claire Danes (*Romeo + Juliet*, 1996), and Kevin Kline (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1999).<sup>40</sup> Just like a baby boom, Shakespearean plays have all been made into movies. From 1990 to 1999, there were 20 films that were Shakespeare's plays. However, since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, there have only been two films. Perhaps this is from the high demand films have gotten into in the modern world – only the brilliant films survive. Someone was once quoted by saying, "...[all the directors] were all unapologetic linking the Shakespeare film with such established Hollywood genres as the gangster film, the war film, film noir, the erotic thriller, screwball comedy, and the movie musical."<sup>41</sup> All of these films gave Shakespeare film fresh energy and appealed to a much wider audience. For instance, they all competed with commercial movies – especially Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, in which it attracted an audience that existed much of 15-25 year old men and women.<sup>42</sup>

William Shakespeare has also influenced ideas for film and television as well. Modern-day movie, *She's The Man*, is based on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The characters of Hamlet inspired even the popular television show, *Sons of Anarchy*. However, Shakespeare isn't the only mastermind behind writing for theatre.

### **From Literature to Theatre**

Another idea that theatrical directors love to do is to convert novels to the stage. Examples of these are John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel by Mary Shelly, *Frankenstein* (1818), has had many adaptations for stage production. In 1826, Henry M. Milner directed the show that opened on July 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Royal Coburg Theatre in London. This was the very first production that had influenced many adaptations to follow.

Later on in literature history, a Scottish author wrote a novel in 1886 called *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. This dark twisted idea of playing around with the concept of "split personality" brought much attention around the world. It caught attention in Boston when the stage play opened just a year later in 1887. Directed by Thomas Russell Sullivan, it went on tour in Britain and ran for 20 years. This wonderful story then hit its Broadway debut as a musical in 1997, over 100 years after the novel published, with music by Frank Wildhorn. The musical lasted for almost 14 years, in which it included the famous David Hasselhoff as the lead actor.<sup>43</sup>

Another popular adaption of a novel, which just recently boomed onstage, is John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Published in 1937, its first stage production was written by Steinbeck himself and directed by George S. Kaufman. It opened in 1937 on Broadway where it ran for 207 performances. There have been other adaptations since, including an opera in 1970. A

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, Kenneth. "Jekyll & Hyde's Moment on Broadway Ends Jan. 7." Playbill. January 5, 2001.

new version of the play opened on Broadway in 2014 for a limited 18-week engagement that starred James Franco, Chris O’Dowd, Leighton Meester, and Jim Norton.<sup>44</sup> Sources say that this has been one of the greatest adaptations for this novel ever made – quoting, “[James Franco] brings warmth and understated manliness to George in a performance that grows more assured as the play progresses.”<sup>45</sup> With that said, literature to stage is also a great source of entertainment as people get to see some of their favorite novels brought to life in front of their eyes.

## Conclusion

People around the world go think of entertainment different – whether it is listening to music, watching television or a movie, or playing a video game. However, the source of entertainment came from the roots of theatre. Back in history, besides playing sports, the only source of entertainment was going to see as many shows one person can watch in one day. It brought on a style of entertainment that has evolved in many different forms in other cultures around the world. With the “founding people” of theatre from Greece and Rome, other people around them had added their own style and spins to theatre. This was seen in Japan where it was more about the emotions, rather the story. Then in England, Shakespeare was studied where he added his own style of theatre: tragic heroes and tragic romances. Now, it is seen that people today are still adding their own styles on classic stories for the stage. Even though people rarely read books nowadays, at least they still appreciate the roots of all art and entertainment: theatre.

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# **HUMANITIES 201**

## **Postmodernism & the Arts**

## Sexism, Raphaelism, and Earthism in “The Rite of Spring”

By Daniel Dinnebeil

The “Rite of Spring” is a ballet based off of Russian pagan myths romanticizing a ritual in which a young female is sacrificed, which suggests a yearning for those pagan days instead of a condemnation of the act of human sacrifice. First, a brief editorial note: I use quotes here (instead of the MLA convention of italics) to censure the main theme of the dance-but not just that-its overall glamorization of the ritual of life sacrifice. Through an analysis of the ballet, there are many isms that can be found in “The Rite of Spring.” Among these, we have sexism, tribalism, barbarism, ageism, earthism, supernaturalism, etc. However, the analysis need not be limited to the ballet itself because ballet is not performed in a vacuum-there is an audience that interacts with and reacts to the choreography. Then, from this interaction (e.g., audience's reactions and adaptations), we can even observe many of our own cultural isms. For example, the riot at the first performance of the ballet in 1913 signifies conformism since the audience expected as much in the arts. And adaptations today suggest eroticism through their over-sexualized choreography. Along the same lines, we can even discern some of the personal isms of the work's composer, Igor Stravinsky, and the original choreographer, Vaslav Nijinsky, like genderism. Clearly, there are many isms associated with “The Rite of Spring”-so much that an alternate title for this paper could be “IsM in 'The Rite of Spring'?” Because of my lack of expertise with orchestra, choreography, and the motivations behind “The Rite of Spring,” I analyze three in this paper: sexism, Raphaelism, and Earthism-linking them with our own culture to illustrate how the viewer can learn much about ourselves through a deeper reflection with this experimental dance.

To say the obvious, anything that objectifies women is sexist. Women are portrayed in the dance as having one primary role-mating. Not only is this sexist, we would actually consider this a micro-aggression today (e.g., looking for a ring when hearing a woman is 31) (Wing). At this time, I have only done a cursory (but thorough) internet search for “sexism” within the dance. Surprisingly, I did not find too many relevant results for that search query. This is quite telling and says a lot about ourselves. Perhaps, we have overlooked sexism in the dance because of the much more glaring giants of barbarism and primitivism (which in this case includes sexism). To be sure, human sacrifice is always barbaric whether in ancient times for the supernatural or in today's time for GOP growth (i.e., we can feed all the people who will starve to death today, but we choose not to since it will harm GOP growth-there is only profit to be made from their suffering.) Another explanation might be the uncomfortable reality that sexism still exists today (although, thankfully, much less), which would contradict our chronocentrism that we are better than our “barbaric” ancestors-that we are not primitive.

Now, let us assume that there is plenty of scholarly work on sexism in “The Rite of Spring” and I just did not find most of it. This does not change the fact that the choreography glorifies the objectification of women (e.g., reproductive roles, communal bonding roles, and sacrificial roles). Even the entire hierarchy of the culture in the dance embraces the objectification of women from top-down, including the 300-year-old woman as well the elders/sages. All members of the group accepted the gender roles-men expected it and women followed it. But there is nothing inherently wrong with the ballet highlighting that ancient cultures were sexist. This would be akin to the racism Mark Twain depicts in *Huckleberry Finn*. The case would be that it was an unfortunate historical reality (which would highlight realism and historicism). It is not that the dance depicts sexism it is the romanticism used to portray such extreme sexism. The dance does not leave the audience with a somber reflection about the brutality and savagery of human sacrifice of women



or their objectification and subjugation. Instead, the dance leaves the impression that this barbarism offered great rewards for the group illustrated by the group's harmony and unity. This, of course, brings us to the next ism.

It might have seemed peculiar that I would highlight Raphaelism found in this dance. Actually, this is an apt choice as it can further explain why sexism has been little discussed and even let us peak into Stravinsky's mind. Raphaelism borrows “the principles of painting introduced by Raphael, the Italian painter”(“Raphaelism”). This Renaissance painter is best known for his invocation of “perfect grace and spatial geometry” as well as linear perspective in his work (“Raphael”). Indeed, we can see all of these techniques in “The Rite of Spring”: “The choreography mirrored the geometric motifs in circular movements and linear arrangements” (Rodriguez). Raphael was also known for guiding the viewer to a certain frame of reference often leaving the viewer with what he wanted to convey (Freedberg 81). Similarly, in “The Rite of Spring,” the audience is not left with a feeling of disgust or desire to self-reflect, but with an awe and mysticism at how much simpler things seemed with the ancient peoples. Instead of condemning ancient Russia for human sacrifice, the ballet instead praises it for the harmony and unity it provoked. We might wonder if Stravinsky really is some sort of “madman” (which he has been called, albeit in a different context) (Service); after all, someone who wants to romanticize human sacrifice might meet that definition. It is almost as if Stravinsky regrets the loss of this ritual. He recounts his inspiration,

One day [in 1910], when I was finishing the last pages of *L'Oiseau de Feu* in St Petersburg, I had a fleeting vision ... I saw in my imagination a solemn pagan rite: sage elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of Spring. Such was the theme of the *Sacre du Printemps* (“The Rite of Spring”)

In all fairness, it could also be that his intentions were benign and I, like many others, may be gravely misunderstanding eccentricity. Regardless, the point that I am trying to make is that the dance did not convey the pain and chaos that underlies this world; it only showed sexism and human sacrifice in a glorified light.

Raphaelism is also characterized by capturing multiple themes that converge into the same essence (Tyler and Kubovy). A well-known example of this is Raphael's *School of Athens*. In this painting, Raphael captures the existential realities of knowledge while managing to converge both the mechanical limits of human inquiry and the elemental nature of knowledge into one. Even King Solomon captures this mechanical and elemental of knowledge: “But beyond these be warned: there is no end to the making of many books, and much study wearies the body” (Eccles. 12:12 *Holman Christian Standard Bible*). This dualistic nature of the mechanistic and elemental is also found in “The Rite of Spring”:

The paradox of the primitivism in *The Rite* is that it can be heard as both a horrifying vision of the pitilessness of nature - and as an expression of the inhumanity of the machine age. The fate of the “chosen one” in the Sacrificial Dance is particularly chilling. She is caught in an unstoppable rhythmic vortex from which there is only one way out: through the terrible dissonance that ends the piece, and the single chord that kills her.

This is music that manages to sound both mechanistic and elemental, making *The Rite* as radical in 2013 as it was 100 years ago (Service).

Indeed, the radicalism of this play is still felt today, especially with the added touch of sexualization seen in many modern adaptations. Ironically, this sexualization actually humanizes the characters, since they are no longer separated behind paint and costume. Unlike the 1913

original, this humanization powerfully captures the underlying chaos of the ancient world-how scared and fearful the people were of the unknown that they had to resort to sacrificing a human for some perceived gain. While harmony might be observed on the surface, fear lies below in their hearts. Certainly, there is much to learn about ourselves and our culture from this dance.

Not everything about “The Rite of Spring” is so somber, there is at least one lesson we should learn from our ancestors-to value our home, our Earth. This is known as Earthism (or also called spaceship Earth). While sacrificing human life is not a part of Earthism, the deeper point, however, is that this ancient culture clearly believed that their human activities would have an impact on the course of nature. And this is exactly what we are seeing today-that our human activities are having a direct impact on the environment. For example, our pollution and waste have resulted in global climate change and more menacing storms, like Hurricane Katrina and Super storm Sandy. These ancient peoples believed that nature must be respected and revered. Regrettably, humans today think that the planet is something Man [sic] can conquer. The environment is neglected and destroyed in the name of GDP growth. No matter how “civilized” we may be, our surroundings-and as they were depicted in the dance-are still “primitive and dominated by the dark forces of nature” (Beales). It is not a sacrifice of human life that will rejuvenate our Earth - it is a respect and appreciation for the planet, Earth, on which we live. And lest we want to awaken the wrath of Earth, darkness will one day descend, ironically, if we continue our “primitive” ways.

While there are many more isms in “The Rite of Spring,” the three I have selected here illustrate how this research topic can be further developed. Today, our culture still faces sexism. Today, our culture is often misguided by the techniques of Raphaelism. And, today, our culture is still “primitive” by believing Man [sic] can reject Earthism. As this short paper demonstrates, exploring the isms in “The Rite of Spring” can reveal much about our own humanism.

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## A Dissection of the song “Neun und Neunzig Luftballons”

*By Devon-Marie Gallo*

Written in 1982 in its original German, the band Nena’s 99 Luftballons is retaliation to the atrocity that was the Berlin wall and the political show of power between what became NATO and Communist Russia. On August 13th 1961, Communist Russia under rule of a new leader, Nikita Khrushchev, built a nearly one-hundred-mile-long barbed wire wall that would soon turn to cement, splitting families and communities, effectively blocking of the only escape living in soviet Germany had. The day is still known to many Germans as 'Stacheldrahtsonntag' or 'Barbed Wire Sunday'. The living conditions were so harsh that until the fall of the wall in November of 1989 many from East Germany risked their lives to escape 'terrifying conditions such as curling up next to car engines under the hood, or risking running the gamut of watch towers, land mines and machine guns. In addition, any type of oppression from a citizen of East Germany, even in private, would lead to arrest and unknown a punishment from the Communist secret police, the Stasi. On the West side, many would protest by grafting the wall or even holding concerts. But there was not much else that could be done, since the authorities that occupied the rest of Germany refused to wage war again unless deemed completely necessary. Even today in Berlin one can see the scars of Communism by just driving down a street that previously was divided by the Iron Curtain.

Unfortunately, by 1982 the Cold War had not ended; in fact, tensions were at an all-time high. It was during such conditions that a guitarist, Carlo Karges, was at a Rolling Stones concert. He noticed that many balloons were set free during the concert and took note of the fact that as they moved farther away, they looked more and more like a strange mass. This led him to wonder what would happen if the soviets on the other end of the wall saw that mass come over the wall. The song would become an anthem to the stupidity of the Cold War and the wall itself, as well as an exemplary piece of the postmodern era.

Many historians believe that one of the catalysts of the culture and time period that is considered to be postmodernism is the fall of the Berlin Wall. Postmodernism can be defined as a change in thinking from a more accepting mindset to one that questions and disregards common practices. One of the meta-narratives that many postmodernists live by is that there is not one set truth but rather a series of truths that change for each set “Neun und Neunzig Luftballons” is exactly that. In fact, the song incorporates a popular comic book and science fiction novel-tool, the alternate history, to prove the flaw society through art. The balloons are used as a symbol of hope and humanity, an innocent thing that is being shot down and used as a scapegoat for war and victory. The end of the song drives home the pain of the people by clearly stating that no government has won the now barren wasteland that once was a populated city the listener is meant to infer is Germany. It leaves the listener to question if the “dich” that they let the balloon go for is even alive.

Despite the well -executed message and political pull the piece had, the song really becomes interesting when looking at the version made for an English speaking audience. Written by Kevin McAlea and popularized by Goldfinger's version in the United States the song is nowhere close to a literal translation. Even the song's title was changed from “Neun und Neunzig Luftballons” which translates directly to “Ninety-Nine Air Balloons” to “Ninety-Nine Red Balloons,” contributing to the ideas of Jacques Lacan that language strips down the meaning of a piece. In fact, there is no possible way air could have been confused for red because the German to English translation for the color is “rot”-while the translation for air is “Luft”. It is this paper's

purpose to follow the origin in order to deconstruct both the original version of the song and the version written by McAlea in order to fully understand the true effect of words and symbols in a song. Further study both songs and their literal translations into the opposite language.

Language psychologist Ludwig Wittgenstein believed that words must be deciphered and viewed accordingly to the context in which it is written, much like a puzzle. The change in title therefore results in a different feel of the song before even hearing the lyrics. Traditionally, red is a very emotion-filled color both representing immense love and violence. In fact, Goethe wrote about the colors and the emotions that they elicit from the observer in his novel, *Theory of Colors*. Through his work many others have done research and have even looked back in history to find proof for Goethe's ideas. An article by Maria Popova states that "It (red) conveys an impression of gravity and dignity, and at the same time of grace and attractiveness...Surrounding accompaniments of this color have always a grave and magnificent effect." Popova suggests that the color red always has a dualism to it, indicating that although the red of the balloon may be due to the passion that the people who let them go feel, it is also because of the extreme violence that is guaranteed to ensue. On the other hand, "luft" or air rarely has a negative connotation. Air is a necessity to life and has a freeing quality about it to be able to lift something up and away with ease such as a balloon. With just the change of a word the song went from a foreboding tale with a consistent theme of hope to one that romanticizes war.

In addition to this, by adding color to the balloons a concrete aspect is added to it. Nena intended this song to be a "what if" scenario, a warning. By giving color to the balloon, the room for debate and discussion seems to dissipate giving way to a notion that the song is mere fiction, a short story to be taken at face value. However, air is colorless and shapeless. By saying "luft ballons" any type of balloon shape or color can be described. When the original term air is used, the listener gets the ability to picture what comes to their mind and puts the focus not on the object of the balloons but on what they, the balloons, represent.

The differences continue more subtly within the translation of the lyrics themselves. Nena's version starts off "I-last du etwas Zeit für mich, Dann singe ich ein Lied für dich" or "have you any time for me, then I'll sing a song for you", whereas McAlea's again does not even try to translate properly. His lyrics state "you and I in a little toy shop, buy a bag of balloons with the money we got." Again, Nena's version sets up the framework for an alternate history of a dystopian society. McAlea sets the tone with an almost happy-go-lucky feel that people are buying balloons from a toy shop without a care in the world. The song continues in this fashion, both telling a story about a mass of balloons that end up setting off missile alarms that eventually elevates to world war. However, the tone is drastically changed with the different use of words. Like a game of telephone, the translated version has become diluted, a satire of a satire.

Wittgenstein's theory of decoding is not just applicable in comparisons. Both the original song and its counterpart make reference to the fact that there are specifically ninety-nine balloons. While giving a specific number may have simply been to illustrate that a large quantity of balloons is in the sky at the same time in more concise manner; the question of why the number ninety-nine was used still is not answered. Even stranger, is the fact that McAlea found the quantity of balloons to be the most important aspect of the song that he kept it the same, even after all the alterations he had made. Many theorists believe that numbers hold meanings outside of mathematics, this may be the case for the quantity of balloons. The bible is a prime example of this. Often times the number three is mentioned; biblical experts believe these to be references to the holy trinity and so any instance of the number three is held in high regard. In Hebrew and Christian texts the number nine is also significant. Experts also claim that nine has the significance

of finality. For example, Christ died on the ninth hour, the destruction of both the Jewish temple and Herod's temple were both on Ab 9 in varying years, and Yom Kippur, which is essentially the Jewish New Year's Eve, takes place on the ninth day of the month.

Interestingly enough the number nine is also connected to the need to complete a task. Nine may be the largest digit, yet most of society group numbers from one to ten. If the number ten and its multiples represent the end, then nine and its multiples would mean that there is still more to be done before the task is fully accomplished. The repeating of the number nine could also suggest that the specific task has been attempted before and not fully completed, leading to the creation of a cycle that must be broken. Regardless of the fact that Nena's band mates vocalized these hypotheses or simply picked a number at random, it appears that the meaning of ninety-nine further backs up the theme of the song.

Many times during the dissection of art or literature, students will question if the analysis of the piece has gone too far; did the artist or author really think the piece through that much or is the item in question within the work simply because the creator wanted to be there? I believe that, especially in written artworks, even if the answer is it was just a whim of the author, the subconscious mind is at work. Therefore, that item has a purpose. Wittgenstein believed in looking deeper into the specific words to better grasp the meaning of a piece. This is why McAlea's version gives off a different feeling than Nena's, yet still can portray a similar message. The grouping of words in Nena's version leads to a tone of foreboding while the incorporation of colors and terms generally associated with happy memories, like the toy shop in McAlea's version, puts out a less serious punk vibe. However, the consistent use of the number ninety-nine and cliffhangers in both songs bring the undertones of a task that has not yet been completed. Again, this meaning has been overpowered in many ways by bringing a focus to the color of the balloons and the upbeat tone of the McAlea version. "Neun und Neunzig Luftballons" and its aftermath is a perfect example of the postmodernistic mindset, the power of words, and the use of the subconscious mind to make connections in the world. Nena has truly created a work of art.

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