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PEN

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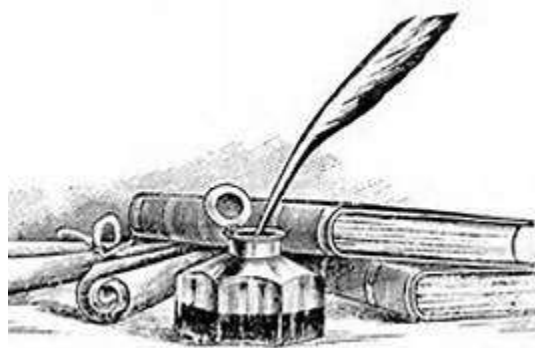
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Dedication

As Ocean County College celebrates its 50th anniversary, we dedicate this year's edition of PEN to the entire faculty who inspire our students to embrace knowledge; to think critically yet compassionately. In particular, we dedicate this edition of PEN to our faculty who recently retired from Ocean County College.



Introduction

Congratulations to all our students whose writing has been published in this year's edition of PEN. Their essays reflect a sincere effort on their part to work with their instructors and/or tutors in the Writing Center in order to compose a well-written writing sample. The writing task is a daunting one at times; yet, it is truly an accomplishment. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe so aptly notes, "The most original authors are not so because they advance what is new but because they put what they have to say as if it had never been said before."

We encourage all of our students to consider submitting their writing to the PEN; we thank our faculty and the staff at the Writing Center for all their efforts to assist our students in the writing process and/or to encourage them to submit their work to the PEN.

We again thank Student Life for providing us with the necessary funds to make this publication possible.

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Note: In the interest of maintaining a student focus, editorial changes have been kept to a minimum – this truly is the student's own work.

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English 095

Reading and Writing II

Income Inequality: A Growing Concern

By Sharon B. Sussick

Imagine a young person walking in Manhattan's financial district on a sunny day. This person stops at a Starbucks to get a \$4 caramel macchiato and hears passionate protesters from a distance. These protesters are chanting against income inequality. This person is intrigued, a little embarrassed to be holding a \$4 cup of coffee, but nonetheless interested. They wonder what all the fuss is about. Feeling sheepishly ignorant to political affairs they walk away thinking about the protesters purpose and mission. What are these activists so zealous about? Income inequality is an issue debated in America and even discussed by our President. Many have protested on city streets against the 1% versus the 99%, known as the Occupy Wall Street Movement. What does all this mean? Let's cut through the political jargon and break it down. Income inequality basically describes the disparity between the richest (1%) and the poorest (99%) in America, which is getting more extreme as time goes on. Back in the 1960's and 1970's the difference between the very poor and middle class was much more equal. Now the middle class is teetering on the poor line and the very rich are literally "off the charts." The old saying "the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer" rings true. To illustrate this let's look at facts from Dave Gilson and Carolyn Perot's piece "It's the Inequality, Stupid." Gilson and Perot state "A huge share of the nation's economic growth over the past 30 years has gone to the top one-hundredth of one percent, who now make an average of \$27 million per household. The average income for the bottom 90 percent of us? \$31,244." Why should we care? We should be concerned because income inequality has been proven to have damaging effects to our country and society. Further investigation will show income inequality to be detrimental to America due to its negative impact on crime, economic growth and the health and longevity of citizens.

First, let's consider the effect income inequality has on crime. Richard Wilkinson explains this in his piece for *Ted Talks*. Wilkinson describes a ten-fold difference in homicides in an unequal society. Comparing Canada to America, Wilkinson argues "These red dots are American states, and the blue triangles are Canadian provinces. But look at the scale of the differences. It goes from 15 homicides per million up to 150. This is the proportion of the population in prison. There's a about a tenfold difference there, log scale up the side. But it goes from about 40 to 400 people in prison." Wilkinson is showing that there is a direct correlation of higher crime in an unbalanced society. Julia Trello also cites a 2002 study by World Bank regarding crime and income inequality in her article entitled "How Income Inequality Affects Crime Rates." Trello further explains "a 2002 study by World Bank economists Pablo Fajnzylber, Daniel Lederman, and Norman Loayza, it was found out that crime rates and inequality are positively correlated within countries and also between countries. The correlation is a causation – inequality induces crime rates." Trello also refers to American economist Gary Becker "who pronounces that an increase in income inequality has a big and robust effect of increasing crime rates." America ranks 3rd in income unequal nations yet has the largest percent of the population in prison (Trello). Incidents of rape, murder, homicide and robbery are significantly higher in places with the worst income inequality rates (Trello). When we consider the "American Dream" we aren't picturing neighborhoods where we need to fear being robbed, raped or killed. This high cost of crime hurts our society, making it a dangerous and insecure

place to live. These facts indicate that crime is directly impacted by income inequality in the most negative of ways.

Income inequality also stifles America's economic growth. Since the American economic crash in 2008 our economy has been struggling for a comeback. Some economists believe this financial crisis may have been brought on by income inequality. Timothy Noah implies this in his piece "The United States of Inequality" for *Slate.com*. Noah explains that "David Moss of Harvard Business School has produced an intriguing chart that shows bank failures tend to coincide with periods of growing income inequality." Noah also cites another economist, Christopher Brown, who wrote that "inequality can exert a significant drag on effective demand." This leads us to believe that if we reduced inequality we can improve our failing economy. Robert Creamer shows this in his article "Why Growing Income Inequality is Bad For America." Creamer states "They have slashed taxes for the rich and for corporations, and increased the relative tax burden on working people. And by cutting taxes for the rich, they have transferred wealth to the most affluent people in America from all of our children by increasing the federal debt." Increasing the federal debt puts the economy and financial infrastructure in a vulnerable position, showing that income inequality does indeed hurt our economy. This coincides with facts from Gilson and Perot which argue that "Productivity has surged, but income and wages have stagnated for most Americans. If the median household income had kept pace with the economy since 1970, it would now be nearly \$92,000, not \$50,000." Even the wealthy could benefit from a prospering economy by getting more profits from investments. Clearly, inequality has lead our economy to the delicate state it is in.

Now, let's set aside the negative effects that income inequality has on crime and economics and look to the devastating impact it has on our health and longevity. Gary Burtless addresses this problem, explaining that "Demographers and public health researchers have found mounting though controversial evidence that greater inequality can boost mortality rates and contribute to poor health." Burtless then adds that "Countries and communities with above-average inequality have higher mortality rates than countries or communities with comparable incomes and poverty rates but lower inequality." Income inequality is not only harmful to our health in general but to our life expectancy. How does income inequality effect health? If the poor don't have as much access to healthcare and wellness education this would explain why mortality rates are higher. This stress can lead to mental health issues which are related to inequality. Wilkinson implies this when he states "WHO [World Health Organization] put together figures using the same diagnostic interviews on random samples of the population to allow us to compare rates of mental illness in each society...And it goes from about eight percent up to three times that -- whole societies with three times the level of mental illness of others. And again, closely related to inequality." Poor health can manifest itself in nutrient deficient diets, leading to obesity and drug and alcohol addiction, which both have ongoing effects on society and future generations. The ever rising cost of healthcare makes it extremely difficult for the poor to afford quality healthcare. Logically, the poor have a harder time making ends meet, providing healthy and inexpensive meals for their families and maintaining a reduced stress level, all leading to compromised health and shorter life spans.

Despite all the mounting evidence against income inequality some still believe it's a good idea. Some claim it gives incentives to the poor. Incentives to improve their dire situation. Burtless references this opinion by saying "defenders of American economic and political institutions correctly point out that inequality plays a crucial role in creating incentives for people to improve their situations through saving, hard work, and additional schooling. They

argue that wage and income disparities must sometimes widen to send correct signals to people to save more, work harder, change jobs, or get a better education.” However, this theory that income inequality helps the poor has no credence. Facts show that the poor are still suffering even when they work hard and get better schooling. Burtless argues “For poor people in the United States, however, the theoretical advantages of greater inequality have proved elusive over the past two decades. Their absolute incomes have not improved; they have declined.” Others look to income inequality as a positive, even arguing that economics result from inequality. Noah illustrates this by referencing Finis Welch, a professor of economics. Noah goes on to say “Welch began by stating that “all of economics results from inequality. Without inequality of priorities and capabilities, there would be no trade, no specialization, and no surpluses produced by cooperation.” (Qtd. In Noah) The problem with this out of touch thinking is that it doesn’t take into account how inequality damages the economy in the long run and how it negatively impacts American citizens who are struggling in the economic “trenches” on a daily basis.

Income inequality is a serious and growing problem. To illustrate this consider Creamer’s bold statement that “The CEO of the average company in the Standard and Poor’s Index makes \$10.5 million. That means that before lunch, on the first workday of the year, he (sometimes she) has made more than the minimum wage workers in his company will make all year.” Does that sound fair by any stretch of the imagination? It is an example of blatant greed. Therefore, after considering what income inequality is doing to our health, economy and crime would the person in the beginning of our story have been moved to join the activists against the unfair distribution of wealth? Or would they keep walking, satisfied that they can afford a \$4 beverage, while the poor may be trying to feed their family dinner with \$4? Or maybe their perspective is that of the poor and they have no time to stop to get a coffee, let alone for a protest because they cannot miss work and jeopardize their minimum wage job that they need desperately to put food on the table for their family. Regardless of personal situations that color our perception of income inequality, it is now an American reality and something everyone should all be concerned about.

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Torture Is Never Rational

By John El-khouri

“What is the meaningful definition of ‘torture’? Would it include issuing (false) threats against a suspect's family? Or is it just physical coercion?” (Evinger and Bourassa). Many people do not realize how dreadful torture is, what the consequences are, or what torture is in general. Torture is “the employment of severe physical or mental pain during captivity.” This definition indicates that torture is never rational because it is illegal and inhumane. Torture of prisoners held by America should not be allowed because it is unsafe, it would make America hypocritical, and it is a futile interrogation tool.

It is unsafe for America to torture their prisoners because if other countries find out, there could be a conflict. Those countries could plot future attacks on America to get revenge. For example, at the Abu Ghraib prison, “the torture [. . .] turned large numbers of Iraqis against the Americans who ‘saved’ them from torture by dictator Saddam Hussein.” This has “made the situation far worse” and can threaten American lives (Evinger and Bourassa). American allies can turn against the U.S. and lose trust in America. Aliprandini and Stingl state that “torture in its war against terrorism has triggered international condemnation.” The war against international terrorism has dangers that could have global consequences if not dealt with aggressively (Aliprandini and Stingl). Also, cruel treatment practiced by Americans puts captured Americans at greater risk of torture. If America can use torture against their prisoners, what would stop other countries from doing the same? America has to be wise with their actions so they do not get into dangerous situations with other countries.

America is hypocritical because “by practicing torture, the United States is betraying American laws and ethics.” What is the point in creating laws if they are going to be broken? Laws are rules that regulate the actions of people. If America does not obey their own laws, then this would make them deceiving to other countries and to America. For example, the Geneva Conventions, “a series of treaties [. . .] which set out international standards for humanitarian issues in warfare,” would be violated if America used torture (Aliprandini and Stingl). The Geneva Conventions is supposed to protect POW’s (Prisoners of War) from torture. If this is violated, America would not be following the signed treaties. As a result, this would cause confusion and anger among other countries. Both Evinger and Boussara write that “the US has misused its powers to contravene international treaties of which it is a signatory.” America would be abusing power by the practice of extraordinary rendition, a procedure of sending over suspected terrorists to another county for interrogation, imprisonment and possibly torture (Aliprandini and Stingl). This can cause resentment among America and the other countries, and a misunderstanding to why this is necessary.

Besides the torture of prisoners making America hypocritical, it is also a futile interrogation tool. In *Harper’s Magazine*, Glenn Carle, a C.I.A. interrogator, explained that the Afghani he was questioning “did not answer truthfully. Some [questions] he avoided answering, when my colleagues and I believed he knew the answers.” This proves that torture is not an effective way to gather information. Additionally, if interrogators torture prisoners by depriving them of sleep, or putting them under great stress, this can make their memory even less reliable. This will make suspects less willing to cooperate. Prisoners have “one clear motive: make the torture stop, at least temporarily” (Evinger and Bourassa). False information could be provided by prisoners and this would be useless for interrogators. The question is: “How do serious, well-

intentioned individuals know that the person they are questioning has information that could prevent a crime or an attack?” (Evinger and Bourassa). The answer is, they don’t. Interrogators just want the information they need to hear. They do not know the truth when they hear it and would never know when to stop. Prisoners would understand this fact and therefore hide the truth.

Some believe “that since terrorism represents a security threat, torture should be allowed in certain cases. If information obtained from the torture of a terror suspect could be used to save civilian lives [. . .] then a complete ban on torture would be impractical and dangerous” (Aliprandini and Stingl). However, torture is morally wrong and inhumane. “The argument that it should be used in specific cases is inadequate” because there are always other methods to handle the situation (Evinger and Bourassa).

In conclusion, the torture of prisoners held by America should not be allowed. It is unsafe for the American people, and it would make America hypocritical by violating their own laws. Also, it is a futile interrogation tool because prisoners can lie to the interrogators by giving false information and this can be a waste of time.

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How Income Inequality Affects American Citizens

By Cheryl Bales-Napihaa

People from many countries have migrated to America because it was once believed to be the land of opportunity and freedom. This view of the American Dream was where all individuals could “rise from humble origins [and reach] economic heights” (DeParle). Unfortunately, the reality in today’s economy is that many families are barely making it by with next to nothing, and without proper funds are not able to work their way up the economic ladder. Ultimately, it is the wealthy who seems to benefit in today’s system versus the middle and poor classes. Income inequality can be viewed as the unfair distribution between the wealthy and the lower classes. It has created an unequal gap in which having skills, motivation and effort are no longer sufficient to reach those “economic heights” (DeParle). Income inequality hurts America socially because it effects the education children are receiving, it causes health problems, and can increase violence.

Children are the most innocent people in this world and yet income inequality lowers the type of education they are receiving in local schools. The “Pew Charitable Trusts’ Economic Mobility Project [...] found that most children raised at the top of the income spectrum stay there and most raised at the bottom stay at the bottom” (Blow). In elementary schools, children are often asked what they want to be when they grow up. Their answers can vary from being a teacher, police officer, fire fighter, doctor, or even President of the United States. The wealthy can invest in their children’s future starting from when they are young, so that they can reach their career dreams which most likely will have very specific requirements. These parents can provide the proper motivation for their child’s dreams as well, possibly by using a connection such as a family friend that the child can shadow and ask questions regarding a career and most importantly, money to afford the proper schooling and training needed for such careers.

However, both the middle and poor classes do not have the resources nor time to do the same. Many times these kids come from a household that has two working parents, trying to pay bills and rent, and have ample food on the table, even if it is not much. Or perhaps they come from a single parent household, in which the mother or father may be working more than one job just to provide the basic necessities for their household, all by themselves. The lack of time and availability from these parents can cause “serious detrimental effects on children’s behavior, ability to learn and emotional development” (Warner). This affects not only the child’s performance in school, but also in a work environment when they get older. The “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” set expectations on every school to “bring all students to high levels of achievement” (Ladd and Fiske), regardless of wealth, ethnicity, disabilities or language spoken. The problem with this was that the challenges the less fortunate children brought with them from home was not taken into account and therefore, not considered an issue. By not providing schools with enough funding or resources to help with rising issues, yet still requiring them to meet these high expectations, it will “inevitably lead either to large numbers of failing schools or to a dramatic lowering of state standards” (Ladd and Fiske). It is interesting to learn that “most students who eventually drop out can be identified as early as the sixth grade” as well as in “the middle of the ninth grade” (Balfanz). And yet, because their cries for help has not been recognized as that, “more than 1 million youth drop out of high school, [...] disconnecting from the two structures that offer hope for their future – school and work” (Bridgeland). Most jobs

these days have many requirements but due to the lack of proper funding and education being provided for our children, it seems that they will continue to stay “at the bottom” (Blow).

The unequal distribution of income also contributes to a lack of proper medical facilities and health care providers. According to Gary Burtless, author of “National Priorities: Growing American Inequality--Sources and Remedies,” research “[has] found [...] controversial evidence that greater inequality can boost mortality rates and contribute to poor health.” According to their study, “low-income American’s have death rates comparable to those in Bangladesh, one of the world’s poorest countries” (Burtless). Infant deaths are also included in those mortality rates. Maya Federman, one of the authors of “What Does It Mean To Be Poor In America?” stated that “the number of infant deaths within the first year is higher: 13.5 per 1,000 live births for poor mothers and 14.6 for poor, single mothers, compared to 8.3 for nonpoor mothers”. The percentage of preterm babies were twice as high for the single mother versus the nonpoor as well (Federman). Besides mortality rates, the neighborhood that people live in can also be a factor to the lack of health care available. Urban communities generally “[lacked] the health insurance coverage and access to primary care and, as a result, [experienced] higher rates of hospitalization for preventable conditions” (Freudenberg). Even more interesting today is that “in the last 25 years, cities and suburbs have become more similar [to the] health profiles that were previously uniquely urban” (Freudenberg). This is disturbing because more than a quarter of the U.S. population currently live in these types of areas: urban, the edge cities, or the poor and minority suburbs (Freudenberg). Many of these people could very well be contributing to the countless families on the welfare and medical assistance programs today. This does not help lower class American’s because with constant doctor or hospital visits, it also brings them into more debt than they are already in. With every doctor visit or medicine pick-up, there are always co-payments; while for any hospital visits, they charge for everything used and done. By the time a person is discharged from the hospital, even if it is for child birth, the bill can start from a few thousand to anywhere in the ten thousand dollars. Because most low to middle income families either receive health insurance through welfare or their jobs (if it is provided at all), the type of health care received may not be as good as it should be. The lack of proper health care can be one of the things that brings on stress which affects the mind, body, and behavior, which could possibly lead to violent acts upon oneself or others.

Stress from income inequality is experienced by everyone differently but can end up affecting the crime rates in this country. The American dream is something so much people still want to believe in, however, in today’s economy, with “the job market [being] scarce” (Bloomekatz) and the cost of living, prices of gas and food are increasing, it is not very easy at all for much upward mobility. The stresses of daily life are endless and non-stop with constant bills and unexpected expenses at every turn. All of this can cause feelings of depression, worthlessness, shame and desperation, which can lead to the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs in an attempt to relieve stress. However, instead of finding relief from such substances, it keeps the body in a stressed state which can lead to violent and aggressive behavior such as homicide or the act of suicide. Also, according to Andrew Hacker, author of “We’re More Unequal Than You Think,” “epidemics of lethal violence” are “[results] largely from unemployment, which tends to rise under Republican presidents.” He shows this by using the homicide-suicide rates starting from 1900 - 2007. He found that “for all but fourteen of the 107 years, [the] combined homicide-suicide rate fell when Democrats were president and rose under Republican administrations” (Hacker). In the end, violence can take a toll on our economy as taxes rise to cover expensive court costs, but can also directly hurts the income of the families involved.

Ultimately, Hacker believes that if unemployment and the inability to find jobs continues “unemployment and violence-related deaths will rise.”

I disagree with Finis Welch, a professor of economics at Texas A&M, when he said “that [the] welfare state has made it too easy not to work at all” (qtd. in Noah). Yes, many lower class families do have welfare however, welfare consists of two separate benefits: EBT cash and food stamps. All families will get medical coverage and food stamps, however many of them do work and therefore make too much to qualify for the benefits of cash. With his statement, Welch seems to imply that all poor people are extremely lazy and enjoy being in the situation they are in. Second, because most families do not depend on welfare on purpose nor by choice. If they were given a choice to live off of welfare or find a job that could support themselves and their families without assistance, which one do you think they would choose? Because the job market is limited, this makes it even harder for anyone to get off of the system. A person can turn in hundreds of applications where ever there is a ‘help wanted’ sign, by randomly inquiring within stores and applying online on multiple job sites, and still get absolutely no calls for interviews or employment opportunities. The job market today is not easy to deal with. It seems that it is also not taken into account, that there are countless of other poor families who honestly need the help and have applied for welfare benefits, but do not qualify. I personally knew a struggling family that had five kids, was taking care of a sick loved one, and both parents worked: one had two part-time jobs and the other had one part-time job. They applied for welfare but were declined because they were considered to make too much, even though they were barely making it by with three jobs. I also have seen people who had a full-time job, yet often times sacrificed how much they ate so that their child could go to bed with a full belly. Again, when applying for public assistance was turned down because they made \$.75 over the required amount. Ultimately, the view of those that receive welfare benefits come from those few that really do not try or care. Many of these people are either cheating the government, by not supplying important changes, or could often be drug addicts. However, because we live in such a flawed government, there are no tests done prior to being accepted for welfare for drug or alcohol addictions, nor do they ever check-up on information being turned in every few months. Perhaps before judging the lower classes, they should step into their shoes first and see what it is to be poor.

In conclusion, income inequality hurts America because children’s education and future are at stake, it can cause health issues in both children and adults, and can increase violent acts. “The U.S. is a country that has a more marked income and wealthy inequality than any other affluent nation, but also does less [...] about reducing inequality than anywhere else” (Osberg). No matter how hard the middle and poor class try, the rich will always be rich and the poor will always be poor. Ultimately, the goal should not be that everyone gets exactly equal income, like egalitarians believe, nor should it be that the rich and wealthy control everything just because they have money. Instead “if the poor and middle class were [to get] steadily richer, [even though] the rich are [still] getting richer much faster” (Glazer), perhaps the subject of income inequality would not be such a big issue.

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How I Gained a Beautiful Angel

By Breanna Groninger

Cancer is a malevolent disease that does not discriminate against age, race, or gender. It is sneaky, and, once the doctors have it controlled in one place, it appears in another. It is a war that cannot be won, but we try but killing the cells with treatment after treatment and run into dead ends. Cancer may have the power to take the life of a loved one, but it does not have the power to take away our love for our friends and family members, and it cannot kill the memories, stories and fight our loved ones had gone through.

Cancer, a word that has become so prevalent in today's society, from walks to find a cure to your favorite character on a television show getting diagnosed with the disease. But in 2009 the disease became more than just a story line for a tear jerker movie- it became part of my life; my mother was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer. After that day, my life changed forever, and so did my families.

"Bree, mom has stage four breast cancer." When I heard the words my heart stopped, I broke down I was only in eighth grade and my mom was dying. I had no idea how to handle what was going on, and loneliness and depression swallowed me. My mom looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, "I love you, and I am going to fight. We are a family, and we will get through this together." My mom was still young, and she was not ready to give up. She had so much life and strength in her.

So the battle began, she started getting chemo treatment at Robert Wood Johnson in New Brunswick. The atmosphere in the hospital was so inviting; when you walked into the building it seemed as if the air around you hugged your body and gave you a sense of relief. Also the doctors were amazing not only did they make sure my mom was comfortable but they made sure that me and my dad were okay by constantly asking "are you okay?" and "do you need to speak with a social worker?" Not only did they make sure we were coping okay but they always kept us aware of the true condition of my mom's illness. For the first two years of my mom's illness you couldn't even tell she had the disease her hair didn't fall out she looked "normal". And then the cancer got stronger.

I was a sophomore in high school and my mom started to look different. Her hair started to fall out, she lost weight, and her once "get up and go" attitude was starting to dim. She was having an intense amount of pain in her back, and we bought her to the doctors. The doctor told us that the cancer had spread to her spine and was eating away her spinal disks and she had to get emergency surgery. Hearing this put a crack in the strong wall of hope my mom, dad, and I were building. But there was something we could do, we had to keep fighting. After the surgery, my mom had to get several radiation treatments to insure the cancer was gone. Throughout the whole process, my mom never stopped. Her love and positive energy radiated off of her. Seeing her so happy in such a dark place day after day made me wonder, so I asked her, "How can you be so full of so much energy?" "Everything happens for a reason, even if we don't see the reason right now we will later on in life.", she simply replied. When I heard the words enter my ears and process in my brain it changed my whole perspective on life. I believed she was right. Who are we to say that all of this is not part of a plan that is much bigger than us? Even though this may have shook our world, it did not shatter it and we still had hope, and my mom still had motivation to fight. We were determined to not let cancer win.

Two years went by, and my mom had her ups and downs but nothing that broke our stride to remission. It was a usual week I took my mom to her weekly appointment at Robert Wood Johnson. My mom and I met with her doctor and when the doctor came into the room I could tell something was not right and I saw the words escape her mouth: "Sandra, the cancer spread to your brain." When I heard the words come out her mouth, my heart fell to my stomach, and I felt the warm salty tears roll down my face. I looked at my mom and how she looked at me; like she failed me, that look broke my heart. I looked back into my mom's beautiful blue eyes and told her "This is not going to destroy you; we will get through this because I love you."

So that's exactly what we did; my mom started getting full brain radiation, and I took her to every treatment. As strange as it may sound, I felt so close to my mom at that point sharing all those long car rides and being a part of something that was so powerful. I do not think it was the radiation that was powerful, but it was my mom. Before she entered the room where she would undergo treatment, she would look at me and smile. After 20 treatments, my mom was back on track to her usual treatment started to begin.

After about a month, the side effects of the radiation started to take its toll. My mom had no energy and would sleep and lay in bed all day. After radiation, my mom was never really the same. She was still full of love and courage, but her spirit was starting to fade. My mom continued to get treatments and started walking more and getting out of bed, but every movement was painful and seeing my once strong powerful mom breaking was destroying me. Everyone knew deep down inside that my mom did not have much time left, but no one wanted to say anything.

This summer my mom's sisters flew across the country from California to New Jersey to spend time with my mom. When they walked in the door, my mom's face light up, and it gave all of us an overwhelming sense of happiness. In August, we bought her to Philadelphia so she could see a place she has never experienced before. And then by the end of August, my mom was starting to fade. She was getting sicker and sicker, so we had bought her to Robert Wood Johnson to get a closer look on what was going on.

"Your liver is shutting down Sandra, and there is fluid backed up in your stomach and legs, that is why you are in so much pain," the head doctor of the team said to my mom, my family and I. All of us were in shock: we fought so hard for such a long time and the fight was coming to an end. My mom had to get surgery to get some of the fluid out, and she came home. But she wasn't going to be home long.

My mom was home for a total of two weeks before she was back in the hospital for the same reason. This time was different. My mom was in so much pain so she was on heavy pain medication and she was out of it. When she would wake up from a nap she would tell me about heaven. "Heaven is beautiful, and you meet the ones you lost there." When she said this, I just nodded my head unsure how to respond.

"When you go to heaven we will meet, and fall in love again." When these words came out of her mouth, I knew that this time things were different, my mom was dying.

After my mom was in the hospital for two weeks a team of doctors entered the room and said, "Sandra, I'm so sorry but there is nothing else we can do. The cancer has spread everywhere." I do not think I will ever forget the look on my mom's face. She looked like she had been defeated.

I walked over to her and gave her a kiss and said, "It's time to let go."

We bought my mom home and got her as comfortable as possible. She was home for around a week, and then she passed away.

I have had the honor to spend 18 years with my mom and I know she touched the lives of everyone around her. She taught me how to be a strong independent young lady and always wanted the best for me. She taught me how to respect myself and others and gave me the knowledge to succeed in this world. I will be forever grateful that she was my mom and will have her in my heart always.

The Man They Called “Stretch”

By Amy Reilly

My father, Michael Vincent Reilly also known as “Stretch” to his family and friends, was born on February 2nd 1955 in Denville, New Jersey. He was a man of few words, but very wise words. His voice was deep and masculine, and he embraced a laugh that would always put a grin on my face. He was a tall and delicate man with a neatly trimmed beard and mustache and had a full and thick head of hair that included slight shades of gray that was soft to the touch. My father would never be caught wearing anything but stonewashed jeans, collared tee-shirts and long sleeved shirts. He always smelled of Head and Shoulders shampoo and Arm and Hammer laundry detergent. He kept his home neat and organized and his truck was always spotless inside and out and had an aroma inside that smelled fresher than a bouquet of fresh cut flowers. He thought of himself as an “ole hound dog,” loyal and true.

Growing up, I was fairly close to my father. We had our differences, but we always seemed to work through them. My father was reserved when it came to his emotions. I always knew if he was sad, angry, upset or hurt when he sat in his chair silently and stared out the living room window with no television on or when he would sit out on the back deck and gaze into the woods in our backyard. I would always take these opportunities to talk with my dad one on one. We became close by the communication skills that he and I had. His advice was always spot on that he provided me with. Sometimes I didn’t like what he would say to me, but in the end, he was always right. That’s what I admired most about my father. He was a peaceful and gentle man that was fairly quiet, yet his words could move mountains.

“Stretch” worked as a Mechanical Maintenance supervisor at Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station located in Forked River, New Jersey. Before he became a supervisor, he was a lead tech in the “Fix It Now” department at Oyster Creek. He made many friends and a few foes at Oyster Creek, but I can truly say he was proud of the effort he put into his job. He put his blood, sweat and tears into Oyster Creek for 32 years until sadly he was placed on disability due to his ongoing medical conditions. As the loving and nurturing father that he was, he landed my sister and I jobs at Oyster Creek working in the Housekeeping Department.

The day was April 11th 2013 when my mother received a frantic phone call from my stepmother. My father had passed out on the living room floor. My stepmother had immediately called 911 and the police and EMTS arrived in minutes. The ambulance rushed my father to Southern Ocean Medical Center in Manahawkin New Jersey where he had to be placed on life support. My mother, my sister and I arrived quickly to the hospital where we met up with my stepmother. We prayed in silence as the nurse came out to the waiting room and told us that one person at a time could see him. As I walked back to where my father lay, I was trembling and had a face soaked with tears. The doctor arrived in the room and had informed me that my dad had a brain aneurism and they were going to send him to Summit City, New Jersey, to have it clipped. I held my father’s hand, kissed him on his forehead, and told him I loved him. The doctors told my sister and I to go home and get some sleep while my mother and stepmother rushed up to The Overlook Hospital in Summit City to accompany my father.

The next morning, April 12th 2013, I was awakened by a phone call from my mother saying that my sister and I had to get to the hospital immediately. Upon arriving to the hospital, I had learned that my father was now brain dead and clipping the aneurism was no longer an option due to the high risk that he could bleed to death on the operating table. As my mother, my

stepmother, my stepsister, my sister and I gathered around him, a decision had to be made. The room was filled with sobbing and praying as we all came to an agreement to take my father off life support. We all said our final goodbyes and waited for the nurse to come in and do her job. My father was pronounced dead at 1:15pm at The Overlook Hospital in Summit City New Jersey. He was 58 years old when he passed away.

Losing a loved one is a terrible experience that nobody should have to endure. The sadness of losing someone you love never goes away completely. The single most important factor in healing from a loss is having the support of family and friends. Sharing my loss makes the burden of grief easier to carry. The most important factor that I have learned through this journey is to never let anyone tell me how to feel; I have to just ride with the waves without feeling embarrassment or judgment. Losing my father made me feel like I died with him. However, making important decisions in my life that I know would make him proud always seems to give me a good and peaceful feeling. My beloved father departed this world a happy man, proud of his daughters and at peace with his past. If only he had more time.

Losing a Friend, and Empathy

By Natalie Cannon

Today, most teenagers see drinking and driving seminars and public service announcements. They think, “Oh that will never happen to me,” including me, a non-drinker. On February 8, 2014, a close friend of mine whom I graduated with from Monsignor Donovan High School died in a drunken driving accident. I could not handle the emotional stress. I never had a friend of mine die and never had to pay respect. I felt a lot of empathy for the parents as they had to bury their son, which is a parent’s worst nightmare. I could feel their pain, even being only nineteen and not having children of my own.

As time passed after my friend’s death, media spread like a wildfire. The driver, who I also knew, was intoxicated three times over the limit and was put in critical condition. The sad part was that the driver and my friend were best friends; unintentionally, the driver killed his best friend. He has to live with that for the rest of his life. I feel much empathy for him as well. They both made a stupid decision to drive while in an intoxicated state and this is what happened. It affected everyone, people who knew my friend, or barely knew him.

At my friend’s wake, we waited two hours in the freezing cold in a big line at St. Joseph’s Church. There were nearly thousands of people waiting in line to pay their respects. As we got closer to the entrance, there were pictures of my friend when he was a child up until his death. Between the pictures and the sad music that was playing, I started to tear up. I had never been through a wake, and it was a challenging process. The people that were there were alumni from last year, the whole high school, and teachers. I distinctly remember seeing my Geometry teacher, giving her a hug and starting to cry abruptly. The feelings and the empathy I felt were endless. My friend was really gone, and I had to go on without him.

During the mass, his parents spoke about their son. I remember his father, Dan, also a coach at the school, speaking about him and saying, “When the police came to the door early Saturday morning and told me my son died, that night, God took my heart. Tonight, as I look out and see all the love you have for my son, I realize that God has given His heart to me.” After Dan had spoken, and after hearing his words, I felt more empathetic. I could feel the pain in his words and tears. I cried as well.

Throughout this whole loss, I have gained empathy for the family, the driver, and everyone who had been affected. Losing someone is difficult but losing a child is unimaginable. Parents are not supposed to bury their children. My friend Francis lived a good life, was a great person, was very admired and loved. However, it is a shame that good people die, and no one can do anything about it. That evening, in the church, we felt a sense of loss that was unconceivable. We could feel the pain of the family. In the meantime, I live on and “Live like Francis.” Having empathy, being able to feel for others, gives humans a sense of closeness. That night and the weeks that followed, I felt a sense of closeness that has helped me to begin the healing process. Being able to empathize allowed me to realize how happily Francis lived; I choose to live like Francis.

“Finger Lickin' Good”

By Kaylen McCaffrey

Cooking is not one of my favorite things to do; however, if I have to prepare a meal, I especially enjoy making chicken soup. Especially on a cold day, nothing is better than a big, bubbling pot of chicken and vegetables! Americans might think Campbell's makes the best soup, but mine is prepared using a recipe and ingredients from my country. I will introduce you to the Costa Rican way to make homemade chicken soup.

After purchasing all the ingredients from the grocery store, I come home and place all the items on the counter. My first task is “prepping” the pot for the chicken. Before cutting or chopping anything, I need to get the water boiling. I take out a large pot from the cabinet and place it on the stove. I then take a gallon of water that I purchased, remove the cap, and pour it into the pot. I tear open a packet of sazón (dried chicken broth) and add it to the water. I turn the knob on the stove to medium and put the empty bottle in the recycling container.

As the water heats up, I take a whole chicken out of the plastic wrapper and place it on a cutting board on the counter. First, I remove all of the fat and skin using scissors and a knife, and I throw the skin in to the garbage. I then use the knife to cut the chicken into six or seven pieces, leaving the meat on the bones. Usually, at that point, the water in the pot is boiling. I place the pieces of chicken in the boiling water and cover the pot with a lid.

Although I am so hungry and excited to eat my soup, I take a few minutes to wash the dishes and clean the counters with Clorox before cutting up the vegetables. Once everything is clean, I take out a new cutting board and prepare the condiments. In my country, we refer to anything that adds flavor to the soup as a *condimeir*. I begin by peeling the onion and garlic, chopping them into small pieces and placing them to the side. I throw the skins into the garbage. Before chopping the remaining ingredients, I turn on the cold water and scrub the vegetables with a sponge. I place all of the clean ingredients in a large bowl on the counter. My next step is to chop the cilantro and celery. At this point, I place all four condiments, the garlic, onion, celery and cilantro, into the pot to flavor the chicken. The kitchen is filled with a delicious aroma! Then, the vegetable peeling begins! I take my peeler from the drawer and begin removing the skin from two potatoes, four carrots and two sweet potatoes. Additionally, I need to peel one small yucca; however, the skin is so tough that it requires a knife. After peeling the root vegetables, I quarter them and place them to the side. Next, I remove the husk from one ear of corn, and I break it in half. I only include one ear of corn for myself to enjoy because my husband hates getting the kernels caught in his teeth! I place that on the counter next to the other vegetables. Finally, I chop two zucchinis, but I do not remove the skin because it softens in the soup.

This entire process takes me approximately twenty minutes, during which time the chicken is cooking and my husband is yelling from the living room, “Is the food ready?” I respond, “Nope, 45 more minutes!” Then, I remove the lid from the pot of boiling water and chicken, and I begin placing the vegetables in the pot. The preparation of my soup is finished, and now we must wait. In the meantime, I clean the kitchen and set the table. With my stomach growling, I remove the lid and pierce the vegetables with a fork. When the yucca and potatoes are soft, soup is on!

I tell my husband, “Papi, soup is ready,” and he races to the table. I serve the soup in bowls, and we sit down to eat. I place an extra plate on the table because, unlike Campbell's soup, mine is thick with corn on the cob and chicken on the bone. We eat it using a combination of our fingers, a fork, and a spoon. I enjoy adding lemon to my soup although my husband thinks I'm a weird eater. This is how we enjoy a delicious bowl of my homemade chicken soup.

English 151

English I

An Illness is an Illness

By Clayton Kapp

The mentally ill are suffering, and America is doing nothing about it. They struggle with outrageous health bills, inability to afford medicine, and the fear that all help is lost. America's mental health policy governs institutionalization, equality in treatment, the overall treatment of the mentally ill, and the costs that insurers can charge them. Due to the way it is structured, the mental health policy today is not strict enough to make insurers follow its rules, which results in many insurance companies not taking it seriously. The policy tries to make insurers treat mental illnesses and physical illnesses equally, but because the nature of illnesses has changed over time, insurers have not adapted their policies to accommodate those who need special medications and extensive health care (Mental Health America). Mental illnesses today affect "one-in-four adults, or twenty-five percent of the American population" (Mantel). The term "mental illness" applies to any type of disorder from schizophrenia and depression to substance abuse and self-harm. Of the fifty-eight million Americans that suffer from mental illness today, hundreds of thousands cannot afford help; many face a lifetime of struggle, or even worse, resort to suicide. (Mantel). America needs to strengthen its mental health policy in order to make insurance companies treat mental and physical illnesses equally, make it easier to institutionalize the mentally ill, and save Americans money.

Mental health illnesses today are not taken as seriously as they need to be by insurance companies. According to Barbara Mantel, a writer for *CQ Researcher* and 2012 Kiplinger Fellow, "When Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act in 2008, it required [. . .] employers [. . .] to put coverage of mental illness and substance abuse on an equal footing with physical health." The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, or Parity Act, was put in place with the consumer in mind by trying to effectively cut medicinal costs and create equality. Many insurance companies took advantage of mentally ill people by increasing their out of pocket pay, and limiting the amount of hospital days per incident. Although the Parity Act was supposed to guarantee the equality of treatment for physical and mental illness, "The Obama administration has yet to release the final rules implementing the law"(Mantel). The act is officially in effect, but there is nothing binding it to be upheld. Because of this, insurance companies are taking full advantage of consumers by not providing as much help for mental health care as for physical health care. Andrew Sperling, director of legislative advocacy for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), explains that certain "Plans will cover rehabilitation after a hospital stay for a stroke," but often, many "Won't cover intensive day-therapy after hospitalization for [mental] abuse "(Qtd. in Mantel). Why are insurance companies allowed to treat people with physical illnesses better than people with mental illnesses? It is unfair that mentally ill people get less support and help with their illnesses than physically ill people, because an illness is an illness, regardless of its nature. The Parity Act supposedly defines how insurance companies must deal with the equality of mental and physical illness, but "The Obama administration interim final rule mentions parity for scope of services but has no binding requirements"; meaning that there is a law, but no rules to back up or enforce it (Mantel). This Act was not ready to be released, as it has no ruling over insurance companies, and does not force insurance companies to treat illnesses of the body and the mind equally, as it is intended. Felice J. Freyer, a medical writer on the board of directors of the Association of

Health Care Journalists, points out that according to the Parity Act, “The rules prohibit limits on the number of office visits for mental health or substance abuse.” As Mantel has noted, this is not the case today. It is obvious that insurance companies are still treating mental illnesses differently from physical illnesses. As Sperling offers, “We still continue to see wholesale exclusion of benefits on the behavioral health side that we don't see on the medical/surgical side” (qtd. in Mantel). Mentally ill people today suffer not only from their illnesses, but also from unequal treatment by insurance companies.

Without the rules to back it, the Parity Act cannot force insurance companies to treat mental and physical illnesses the same. Catherine Rampell, an economics reporter for the *New York Times*, stated that if insurance companies were made to treat mental and physical illnesses the same, America “will significantly increase coverage for mental illness for about 62.5 million people.” This number would be a direct result of what would happen if equality were present between all illnesses. If we were able to get coverage for 62.5 million mentally ill people, we could, without a doubt, treat mental illnesses that we have today. The mere fact that a person has medical insurance means that he or she does not have to worry about a medical emergency that could cost them thousands of dollars. Rampell reported about an experiment done by Oregon Medicaid. Amazingly enough, the researchers found that people were happier and more secure knowing that they had insurance, backed up by the findings that although depression rates dropped 30 percent for those who had insurance, antidepressant use barely increased (Rampell). because although depression rates dropped 30 percent, they reported that “antidepressant use barely increased”(Rampell). These 30 percent of people rebounded from their mental illnesses because they were treated equally by insurance companies. If America could heal 30 percent of its population by instilling insurance equality, many cases of harm to others and institutionalization could be avoided.

Were Americans able to more easily commit mentally ill individuals that posed a threat into institutions, many catastrophes could be avoided. Technically, it is legal for a mentally ill individual to be sentenced by a court to be institutionalized; it is just difficult to do so. Each state has a slightly different code of law regarding institutionalization of mentally ill citizens. Mantel informs that in Pennsylvania, “a court can't order treatment unless the person committed or tried to commit serious harm to self or others within the past 30 days.” In Pennsylvania, were a mentally ill person to pose a threat to an individual twice within sixty days, the ill person would not be ordered into an institution. Society may know that a person is particularly dangerous, but to the court system, he or she is no different from a person with no offenses. Mantel recounts the story of Roger Scanlan, a resident of Allentown, Pennsylvania. In 2005, Roger, then 45, battled a severe case of schizophrenia. Although his brother, parents, and many residents of his hometown tried relentlessly to order Roger to be committed to a mental institution for help, Pennsylvania law disallowed such an action. According to Roger's brother, Michael, the court argued that as a person, “Roger had rights.” On March 19, 2005, Roger Scanlan murdered his parents with a knife, then took his own life shortly after. Because Pennsylvania state law did not allow Roger's family to institutionalize him, three lives were claimed. The problem with America not having a solid mental health policy regarding court ordered institutionalization is that all states have a different ruling on such cases. For example, “New York's Kendra's Law [. . .] does not require evidence of recent harm” (Mantel). Instead, New York requires that a mentally ill person either tried to commit suicide in the past four years, or that they have been institutionalized for not complying with mental health treatment twice in the past three years. Because most state laws are so open and specific, many mentally ill people

do serious harm to others or themselves before they are institutionalized or jailed. In 1999, a schizophrenic man who refused to take his medicine, Andrew Goldstein, pushed a young woman by the name of Kendra Webdale to her death in front of a New York City subway car. Scott Brown, a writer for WGRZ who interviewed Goldstein fourteen years later, detailed that Goldstein was “a schizophrenic who had stopped taking his medication and had a history of violence.” But because Goldstein’s violent offenses and direct non-compliance with mental health treatment did not fall within the guidelines of New York State’s mental health policy, he was not institutionalized. America needs a strict, definitive guideline for the institutionalization of mentally ill people before they can harm themselves or others.

By having such loose institutionalization standards, many dangerous mentally ill people are able to roam freely. Because most states do not commit people without a background of violence, many mentally ill are a time bomb waiting to detonate. Doris A. Fuller, the executive director of the Treatment Advocacy Center, says, “We’re protecting civil liberties at the expense of health and safety”(Interlandi). Jeneed Interlandi, a journalist for the *New York Times*, recounts the story of her mentally ill father, stating that in three months, her father “racked up five emergency room visits, four arrests, four court appearances, three trips to PESS [Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services] and too many police confrontations to remember.” Interlandi noted that this cost her family roughly \$250,000 in fines and fees that her father’s insurance company would not cover. Although she loved her father dearly, Interlandi later said, “My father should have been hospitalized against his protestations.” Had Interlandi’s father been institutionalized, the family could have saved money, and kept him out of danger. It is foolish that the American health policy does not allow institutionalization against one’s own will, even if they are an extreme expense or danger to others.

With equal treatment, and by strengthening America’s institutionalization policy, every American would save money. Rampell reported that, “The mentally ill are at higher risk of poverty than their peers, which increases their need for other safety-net services like food stamps and subsidized housing.” Safety-net programs are services that provide aid to families facing hardship. Food stamps, assistance meeting bills, and subsidized housing are a few of the many safety-net programs that American taxpayers pump their hard-earned money into. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Americans collectively paid roughly \$411 billion for safety-net services in 2012. If we were to provide equal treatment and a stronger mental health policy for the mentally ill, we could save “taxpayers an additional \$140 billion to \$160 billion a year”(Rampell).

By making insurance companies treat all illnesses equally, this \$146-\$160 billion could be significantly decreased. Rampell told of one woman, Eliza, who battled depression most of her life. She was able to keep her illness under control as she attended college and graduate school. She then worked for over ten years as a pharmacist. Eliza unfortunately fell into a bout of debilitating depression where she did not respond to antidepressants, and her insurance company would not pay for new medications or treatment. Rampell reported that, “Now in her 40s, she has become one of the more than 1.4 million Americans on the federal disability rolls for mood disorders. She also receives Medicaid, food stamps and fuel assistance.” Eliza argues that she “never wanted a handout”, and would give anything to go back to how she was before her depression took over. If the mental health policy were to allow citizens like Eliza to receive help and medicine, these people, instead of having money spent on their welfare by others, could contribute their own share of money.

People like Eliza either do not earn their own wages because of obstacles caused by mental illnesses, or they earn less than they would without a mental illness. A 2008 study done by the American Journal of Psychiatry found that on average, mentally ill people earn less yearly than their counterparts by about \$16,000. Across the board, this adds to roughly \$193.2 billion lost because mentally ill people have obstacles that cause them to earn less (American Journal of Psychiatry). If America were to strengthen its mental health policy, not only could American citizens save a collective \$140 to \$160 billion a year on taxes, as Rampell stated, but the American economy could be stimulated with an extra \$193.2 billion annually. There are an estimated 11.5 million U.S. citizens with a serious mental illness today (Rampell). For these 11.5 million people, America spends “\$150 billion annually on direct medical costs--therapy, drugs, hospitalizations and so forth”(Rampell). There does not need to be such an enormous number of people suffering from mental illnesses that can be treated or helped, or an immense amount of money spent on their aid if America were to strengthen its mental health policy. Medicinal aid, therapy sessions, institutionalization fees and other aid attained through American taxes are “costing the U.S. economy about a half-trillion dollars [per year]”(Rampell). Not only would Americans not directly affected by mental illness save money, the families of mentally ill, such as Interlandi’s, could potentially save hundreds of thousands of dollars. If we were to strengthen the American mental health policy, not only would we cut that half-trillion dollars per year expenditure, we could also improve the workforce and pump more money into the economy, as the *American Journal of Psychiatry* suggests.

If America changes its mental health care policy, it would effectively save money for its citizens and show equal treatment for the mentally and physically ill. By making a national law regarding the institutionalization of the mentally ill, America can efficiently save innocent lives and help people that cannot seek help on their own.

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Gay Marriage In America: Separate But Not Equal

By Morgan Sartori

The Land of the Free. The Home of the Brave. The Land of Opportunity. The Land of Milk and Honey. These are just a few of the names the United States of America is known for. Many people including couples come to America in hopes of finding freedom, new opportunities, and a better way of life. All they really want to do is start their own family with their own characteristics, ideas, and dreams. But the question is, does the dream really exist for everyone?

Homosexuals, just like heterosexuals, are looking for love, commitment and acceptance. Sadly, for these gays, the dreams they have are remaining just that, dreams. The definition of marriage is a union between a man and a woman. If this simple, eight-word definition is what's keeping America from allowing people love, a spouse, and equal rights, then the definition should be altered. The term marriage should be used fairly for everyone, including gays. Gays are still citizens, and all citizens should be allowed the most precious act, marriage. Gay marriage should be legalized in all states because it's a civil right, increases adoption, and also provides economic benefits.

Marriage is a civil right and should be available for all U.S. citizens, no matter their sexual orientation. Marriage is recognized under Section One in the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which is called the Equal Protection Clause. It states, "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall bridge the privileges or immunities of citizens in the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The Protection Clause talks about how no State shall take away a person's freedoms without a proper reason. Right now, 38 states in the US are taking away the right for same-sex couples to marry (Jost). The Protection Clause prohibits irrational discrimination authorized by state statutes, like California's Proposition 8. Proposition 8 "banned gay marriage in the state [of California] just six months after a court ruled that preventing gays and lesbians from marrying was unconstitutional" (Jost). The nation as a whole is fighting against same-sex marriage, just as the states are. The Defense Marriage act, or DOMA, is a federal law that "bars the federal government from treating same-sex couples as married for purposes of federal law" which makes married gays "ineligible for tax breaks, Social Security benefits, or employer-provided health insurance for spouses" (Jost). Fortunately, these two laws recently were deemed unconstitutional. Prohibiting people from getting married based on their sexuality is wrong. This inescapable truth was the reason for stopping Proposition 8 and DOMA, but it is still up to other states to choose to allow gay marriage. Other states need to follow California's example and give all couples their civil right to marry, no matter their sexual orientation.

DOMA was used against Edith Windsor and Thea Spyer, a lesbian couple that married legally in 2007. Thea Spyer died two years later in 2009 from a heart illness (Jost). After her death "Windsor got bitter news later in the form of Federal and New York estate tax bills totaling \$600,000 that would not have been levied on an opposite-sex couple" (Jost). This was when DOMA was viewed as an unconstitutional act against the gay community. Evan Wolfson, founder and president of the Freedom to Marry advocacy group says "Constitutions should not be used to strip away rights selectively from the minority" (qtd. in Jost).

The view that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is outrageous; gays should be allowed to be married like heterosexuals, it is their civil right. This can be seen as government oppression of its citizens. Unfortunately, many critics of gay marriage agree with this immoral oppression. The critic's views are solely based on opinion, no facts. Luckily for the gay community, the numbers of critics are dwindling. Pew Research Center states that in 2004, the number of citizens that opposed gay marriage was 63% ("Less"). The number has only decreased and is now 43% (Townsend). These critics have the view that homosexuals should not have the right to marry, only based on opinion. They also think that same-sex acts are grotesque and are inferior to acts of opposite-sex couples. This kind of judgment is familiar in America, for example comparing black people to white people in the past. Laws, such as the Mississippi Black Code in 1865, were passed making black people unable to marry white people. Today in the U.S., black and white people are able to marry without a problem from the government. The connection between the two is this: homosexuals are seen as inferior by law, but so were black people at one point. Now black people are being treated equally. With this obvious connection, shouldn't America realize their mistake? The homosexuals still lack basic U.S. rights, just like black people once did. The citizens of the U.S., and especially the government, need to treat everyone as equals no matter what sexuality, race, or even religion someone may be. Government impositions on individual freedoms are wrong and needs to be changed immediately.

Another reason why gay marriage should be legal in all states is because gay families are the main reason for increased adoption rates. If gay people want to start a family, they typically adopt a child since they cannot reproduce. In America today, about 115,000 orphans are waiting to be adopted, and gay couples are the answer to making these large numbers diminish (Tavernise). The number of gay couples is now increasing in America and even if they are not married, they want to have children together. Because gay marriage is illegal in the majority of states, gays still have a tough time with adoption. Same-sex couples are banned from adopting from Utah and Mississippi, and even though it's only two states, "[gays] face significant legal hurdles in about half of all other states, particularly because they cannot legally marry in those states" (Tavernise). But there is a loophole: gay *singles* are permitted to adopt.

Matt and Ray Lees are a perfect example of finding the loophole in the adoption process, as well as showing why gays adopting is not harmful to children. The Lees' are from Ohio, which is a state where gay marriage is illegal and in order for the Lees' to adopt, they couldn't go through the adoption process together; they had to do it as single gay men. "The Lees' took turns. Ray adopted three – two who were originally from Haiti and a baby – and Matt is completing an adoption of five siblings whose drug-addicted mother could not care for them" (Tavernise). The Lees' adopted children not only to have a family, but also a better life. The children they adopted came from third-world countries and corrupted backgrounds. Who knows what would have happened to these children if the Lees' didn't adopt them.

Even though there is a loophole for gays to adopt, many other same-sex couples would not go out of their way to adopt like Matt and Ray Lees did. When building their family together, the Lees' combined "their two legally distinct families together with custody agreements. They do not provide full parental rights, because like many states, Ohio does not allow second-parents adoptions by unmarried couples unless the first parent renounces his or her right to the child. They have to maintain two family health insurance policies" (Tavernise). This is a problem because it is only another challenge in raising a family when the parents are of the same-sex. The Lees' family, wanting to join their separate families, will also be unable to do so

legally. To the government, they are seen as two separate families. Legalizing gay marriage in all states will give orphan children a better chance of being adopted, whether it's by a straight couple or a homosexual couple.

Many people would say that gays aren't suited to care for children. "Critics have expressed concern that the children of gay parents may suffer from social stigma and the lack of conventional adult role models, or that same-sex couples are not suited to the monotonous rigors of family life" (Angier). People blame children's problems on their gay parents, but the usual cause of their problems "are more likely to stem from other factors, like the rupture of the heterosexual marriage that produced the children in the first place" (Angier). In reference to the rupture of heterosexual couples, most children of same-sex couples usually don't have to face the problem of a split. Judith Stacey, a Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at NYU, "found that the most stable of all [families] were those headed by gay men who'd had their children together" (Angier). She said "I was shocked to find that none of the male couples with children had broken up, not one." Andrew Koppelman, Professor of Law at Northwestern University, agrees with Doctor Stacey in saying that gay marriage can be seen as, "an emergence of a new ethic that in many ways produces stronger, more functional families that serve children's needs better" (qtd. in Jost). Same-sex marriage is not only harmless for the children but might even be an advantage when compared to married heterosexuals raising them.

The final argument of why gay marriage should be legalized is that it can boost the economy. If the U.S. allows same-sex marriage in all states, the economy will be boosted tremendously. Canada is a good example of how same-sex marriage has helped an economy. Canada has a financial rate comparison site that "has released an in-depth look at the economic opportunity presented by same sex weddings" (Marketwired). With legal same-sex marriage in Canada, the total dollars spent on same-sex marriages is \$566,585,415. This number is based off the average cost for a wedding, which is \$26,961 (Marketwired). Who knows how much money the U.S. will make from the gay community, but no matter what the number, it will be a huge benefit to America's struggling economy.

Numerous citizens in the U.S. like the idea of gay marriage boosting the economy and want in on the big money. One of these citizens is the Mayor of Minneapolis, Mayor Rybak. He is visiting all over Illinois, Colorado, and Wisconsin to run a campaign focusing on gay couples in the Mid-West. He says, "I am more than happy to have them come and spend their money in Minneapolis" (qtd in "U.S."). Rybak believes the campaign could help attract same-sex couples in the Mid-West to his city instead of going to the coast, where most gay couples go to get married. He figures the campaign could help his city profit from everything involved, such as hotel rooms, flowers, and caterers. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel agrees stating, "failing to extend marriage to gay and lesbian couples is bad for Chicago, bad for Illinois, and bad for our local economy and the jobs it creates. Our robust tourism and hospitality industries will thrive most fully when our state hangs out the 'Welcome' sign for everybody" (qtd in "U.S.").

It is impossible to ignore that the American economy is struggling. American is in a recession, and because of it everyone has been hearing about losing jobs, facing foreclosures, and having their bank accounts dwindle. The tough time the American economy is having needs to end, and gay marriage is the answer. Gay marriage being legalized is something America needs to do in order to get out of the hole they dug themselves. Not only will same-sex marriage give gays their right to marry, but it will also benefit everyone else.

As a nation, America is finally beginning to realize the importance of legalizing gay marriage, but the fight has not been won yet. Gay marriage still isn't legal in all states. Two people who wish to commit to a relationship with someone they love is a civil right that must be accounted for. It isn't the churches, or any other persons' choice whether or not a couple can be married, gay or not. Nothing bad will occur if gay marriage is legalized, it will only benefit the nation. Gay couples will be assisting with the adoption of hundreds of thousands of children without loving families, as well as boosting the economy, which America desperately needs help with. The sad truth is that people still think gay marriage is morally wrong and bad for society. Still, society is far from the days of segregation. Even though America has come a long way, prejudice still exists for minority groups, like homosexuals. "Liberty and justice for all" is a phrase encompassing America's collective essence, identity, and morals. America has presented itself as a global frontrunner for freedom, but it's a lie. Homosexuals are deprived of the American Dream. Same-sex marriage is still not legal in 38 states, and the Federal Government needs to realize and make the change in order for America to keep their reputation as The Land of the Free, The Home of the Brave, The Land of Opportunity, and The Land of Milk and Honey.

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Privacy In the Digital Age

By Christopher Graessle

Most Americans today are within mere seconds of an endless supply of information, shopping, social networking, and more because of the internet. It seems like almost everything connects to the web in some way, not just computers. Phones, tablets, televisions, video game systems, even some cars are capable of connecting to the internet. With so many people constantly connected to the web, questions are being raised about people putting too much information out there. One question, in particular, is important: is privacy disappearing?

The general concept of privacy is fairly simple: most people do not want information about themselves shared with complete strangers. In addition, there may be some things about themselves they want to keep personal or only share with close friends. The internet, however, opens up a wide variety of additional concerns regarding privacy. Many websites that are visited upload “cookies.” According to Patrick Marshall, public policy and technology issues writer for *CQ Researcher*, a cookie is “A message given to a browser by a server, which is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page. [It] [i]dentifies users and prepares custom webpages for them.” Cookies came into existence in 1994, and it was not until 1996 that they were deemed “a potential threat to privacy” (Marshall). Tracking cookies are not the only privacy concern on the internet. According Marshall, search engines keep logs of searches; e-commerce and other websites keep records of credit card numbers and other personal information; and numerous cloud services enable people to save music, photos and other documents on a remote server without painting a clear picture of how secure the information really is. While many foreign nations, including much of Europe, have increased regulation on how personal data may be used, the United States is still widely unregulated (Marshall). Online privacy in the United States should be a major concern because of the risk of data breaches, personal information being sold, and employers using information as a basis for hiring decisions and disciplinary action.

Risk of data breaches is a major issue with online privacy. A data breach can occur when a hacker accesses information from outside. It can also occur when information is inadvertently leaked from within, such as from a peer-to-peer file sharing service, like Limewire or BitTorrent. James Cole, a US deputy attorney general, writes that “Although we often think of credit card numbers as being among the most sensitive personal information, disclosure of email addresses and passwords can in some cases allow identity thieves to do us more harm.” He adds that many people use the same login credentials for many different accounts, in spite of recommendations from security experts to not do so. By having access to bank or credit card information, social media networks, and e-mail accounts, a potential identity thief has had much of the work done for them.

How big of a problem is credit card fraud and identity theft? Sid Kirchheimer wrote in an article for *The Saturday Evening Post* that “Identity theft occurs to about 11 million Americans per year, resulting in some \$54 billion in losses, according to a February 2010 study by Javelin Strategy & Research.” Others argue, such as *Consumer Reports* editor Jeff Blyskal, “When your credit card is stolen, you simply report it and get a replacement, and the card issuer takes all or most of the financial loss, not you.” However, most businesses end up passing added expenses on to their customers in one form or another. In the case of credit card companies, it is higher

fees and interest rates. In the long run, almost everyone ends up paying for identity theft, even if they were not the victim.

Another concern with online privacy is personal information being sold or shared. Anyone that spends even a moderate amount of time online notices the amount of targeted advertising on most websites. Targeting is based simply on location, or more often, the use of tracking cookies that show other websites the user has visited. More recently, the trend has been to use social networking information to market directly to individuals. Social policy writer Marcia Clemmitt, in an article for *CQ Researcher*, notes that “As people navigate the Internet, social media and data-analysis companies gather information about everything from what magazine articles they read to what times of day they log on to websites and whose birthday parties they attend.” She adds that “Internet users are likely unaware of how aggressive companies are about using personal information.”

Some argue that most people are fine with, and even prefer personalized advertising. L. Gordon Crovitz, writer for *Wall Street Journal Asia*, writes that “A recent study by DoubleVerify found that of five billion advertising impressions, only about 100,000, or 0.002%, led to a click on the icon to learn more about the advertising system serving the advertisement.” He continues, “Of the people who clicked to learn more about information being collected about them, only 1% then opted out of behavior targeted advertising.” While this study indicates indifference towards targeted ads, there are other factors to consider. For one, many internet users do not understand the use of cookies, or how to disable them. In addition, many websites are very vague about their use of cookies. Frequently, details about how user data is collected and used is buried within pages upon pages of legal jargon, making them unclear to the average user. A visit to many European websites shows that laws have been enacted in Britain and the EU to require prominent warnings notifying users of the use of cookies, along with easy to follow links that explain how the information is used. It may be time for America to enact similar laws.

Making a profit off of users is not limited to advertising. Clemmitt writes that “In December [2012], the photo-sharing site Instagram, owned by Facebook, sparked ire when it announced that it not only claimed full ownership of photos and all other information users leave on the site but would accept cash from companies and other organizations” in exchange for user-created photos and posts. She adds, “For example, Instagram users might find their vacation photos and comments used in advertising for a hotel or resort without getting paid for the content.” While the policy never went into effect, the proposal is still cause for alarm.

Proponents of companies self-regulating would consider the decision to not claim ownership over user photos and comments proof that self-regulation works. The thought is that Facebook did not implement the policy because of public outrage. However, there is currently nothing to stop another company, one with less to lose in the court of public opinion than the publicly-traded Facebook, from rolling out a similar set of rules in the future. Companies should not be allowed to profit off of their customers’ intellectual property without compensating them for it, let alone without seeking their permission. If individuals committed similar acts against companies, they would find themselves in court.

A final issue with online privacy is employers using information as a basis for hiring and disciplinary decisions. Wendi Lavar, in an article for *Computer and Internet Lawyer*, writes that “According to a 2009 survey by CareerBuilder.com, 45 percent of the 2,600 hiring personnel surveyed reported that they screen job applicants by viewing their social networking site profiles.” She adds that “While this investigatory process may not be unlawful on its face, the

manner in which an employer accesses an applicant's SNS [social networking site] content and the specific content that triggers an employer's adverse hiring decision may violate the Stored Communications Act (SCA)[...] and/or antidiscrimination laws.” She continues “Existing law provides limited protections for employees and job applicants against improper Web-based background checks by their prospective employer, current employer, or their employer's agent.” There have been numerous documented cases of employees being terminated for photos or comments that appear on social networking sites, even if the post in question is entirely unrelated to work. News stories appear regularly about employees getting fired or suspended because of photos or comments that their employer deemed inappropriate, in spite of being on their own time and not making any reference to the employer.

In addition to simply searching social media profiles, some employers require employees and potential hires to disclose social networking login information. Clemmitt notes that “In March 2012, The Associated Press reported on some isolated incidents in which employers had either requested or required social media log-in information from workers or job applicants.” Imagine how uncomfortable most people would be providing an employer unlimited access to all of their social network information: saved chat logs, posts intended to remain private, even access to information that their friends have designated as “Friends only.”

Arguments against further legislation to bar this kind of overreaching by employers include the limited number of incidents where this actually takes place. Clemmitt writes that “bloggers for San Francisco-based Littler Mendelson, a law firm specializing in employment issues, [claim that] no media article has cited 'a single study proving that private employers routinely' do so [require login information].” However, requiring this much access to a person's private life violates what most people would consider to be basic privacy rights. *CQ Researcher* published an article stating that “six states have banned employers from demanding that employees and job applicants reveal social media passwords so the employers can review online activity.” Germany has gone as far as to ban employers from checking the Facebook pages of potential hires in 2010 (Clemmitt). There are social networking sites for people to maintain professional contacts and information, such as LinkedIn. Therefore, there is no reason why employees cannot separate their personal lives from their professional ones.

To conclude, in a world of rapidly developing technologies and prevalent social media, the time has come for privacy laws to be overhauled. The use of the internet is almost unavoidable, and all citizens deserve to be protected from intrusive business policies. While there are arguments that self-regulation works, and further government oversight would do more harm, the most important consideration should be the basic rights of every individual. Everyone should have peace of mind that their private lives remain private.

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What's the Point? Reasons for College

By Christopher Graessle

More young adults than ever are attending college. According to Harvard professor Louis Menand “sixty-eight per cent of high-school graduates now go on to college (in 1980, only forty-nine per cent did).” Of this large number of students, many find themselves going to college simply because they were told to by their parents, teachers, or both. They simply just go through the motions of going to class, not truly learning much, if anything. At some point either before or during their college careers, most of these students find themselves asking “What's the Point?” There are many different schools of thought. Menand writes that some people believe that college should be a “sorting tool,” or a “four year intelligence test.” Others believe that college should do nothing more than get a young adult from student to productive, tax-paying member of society. However, many experts – Menand, the Association Of American Colleges And Universities (AACU), Dave Serchuk, and Richard Kahlenberg, among others – believe the most rewarding type of education is one that focuses on a wide variety of subjects, not just those which are directly connected to a student's major, or liberal arts. Three reasons for this are employment opportunities, promoting multiculturalism, and personal intellectual growth.

The first reason experts believe a liberal arts education is best is because it can provide more employment opportunities following graduation. Hart Research Associates conducted a survey asking CEOs and heads of non-profit groups a series of questions about potential and current employees. This report was released by The AACU and titled “It Takes More Than a Major.” Among their findings, they write that “[e]mployers recognize capacities that cut across majors as critical to a candidate's potential for career success, and they view these skills as more important than a student's choice of undergraduate major” (2). This suggests that a recent graduate with a more diversified education, for example a business major who took several courses in language and arts, would have an edge over someone with a more vocational education. They also found that “[t]he majority of employers agree that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge is most important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success” (3). In many classes, like an English composition course, for example, a student is taught soft-skills like critical thinking and being able to accept criticism. In a constantly changing job market, it is important for a student to have a diverse skill set, not just train for the job he or she plans on getting immediately after graduation.

In addition, Hart Research Associates found that “[m]ore than nine in ten [employers] agree that 'innovation is essential' to their organization's continued success” (2). Graduates who experience a more diversified education are more likely to be innovators. Serchuk, in an article for *Forbes* entitled “Steve Jobs' Liberal, Hippie Education,” wrote about the man famous for founding, and later coming back to run Apple, and how a liberal education and his love of the arts made him more innovative than some of his contemporaries. Serchuk wrote that after Jobs dropped out of Reed he “hung around and studied calligraphy.” Jobs himself didn't see a “practical application” for the class. However, Serchuk writes, “the upshot is that this love of finely wrought letters eventually became one of the early distinguishing hallmarks of the MacIntosh, its fonts, at a time when most other computers still ran with blocky letters on a black screen.” While not everyone can be Steve Jobs, employers do value the ability to be an “outside the box” thinker. Hart Research Associates reported that “[n]early all employers surveyed (95%)

say they give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace."

Another reason that experts prefer a diverse education is that it encourages multiculturalism. Most students in high school, as well as those in career-specific training programs, tend to be around other individuals with similar backgrounds: ethnicity, social class, etc. Entering a liberal arts program, oftentimes students are put into situations with groups of people that they don't encounter on a regular basis. In "The Purposes of Higher Education," published by the Chronicle of Higher Education, Kahlenberg writes that "American colleges—because they draw upon students from a variety of neighborhoods and states, and countries—provide a unique environment in which students of different backgrounds can learn from one another." This is important because many employers value the ability to work with and for people of various backgrounds. In "It Takes More Than a Major" it was reported that 96% of all of those surveyed want their employees "[c]omfortable working with colleagues, customers, and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds," along with 55% favoring "[k]nowledge of global cultures, histories, values, religions, and social systems" (7). While getting out into the workforce may not be the only reason a student should take certain types of courses, such as a language or cultural course not required for a degree, it is still an important factor. Having an understanding and appreciation of different cultures can also lead to personal growth.

Finally, a liberal arts program is rewarding because it promotes intellectual growth, according to experts. College is the best (and sometimes the only) time for a young adult to expand their minds, other than just learning what is needed to obtain a career. Menand suggests this, writing "[l]ater in life, they will be caught up in family and career, so at least some portion of their time in college should be spent becoming 'a reflective and culturally literate human being'" (qtd. in Kahlenberg). Menand also writes that most students will only take the classes they need to graduate. He adds that many colleges are now requiring that "humanities" courses be taken, even in traditionally vocational programs. Humanities courses are generally regarded as any arts, music, language, or history classes. One example of this that Menand shows is trying to get "a bachelor's degree in Culinary Arts Management, with a Beverage Management major, from the University of Nevada Las Vegas." This is the type of a degree you would not think of needing many humanities courses. However, Menand writes, "[t]o get this degree, U.N.L.V. requires you to take two courses in English (Composition and World Literature), one course in philosophy, one course in either history or political science, courses in chemistry, mathematics, and economics, and two electives in the arts and humanities." Requiring students to take courses in humanities courses, it will help them understand and appreciate history and culture, and could lead to a personally more enjoyable life.

To conclude, what is the point? Many experts have shown that the point is to take a student from an aimless teenager, believing only what he has heard from parents, teachers, and other sources, into a free-thinking, well spoken, and culturally sensitive adult. These writers show that American society can only improve with more adults capable of problem-solving and being able to sort through the myriad of outrageous claims from all sources, including the media and politicians.

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Writing II

The Fray Between Traditions and Postcolonial Anglicization

By Matthew Teymant

Modernity and traditionalism are in constant contrast throughout Chinua Achebe's "Dead Men's Path." Set in a traditional, yet colonial Igbo Village in the African Country of Nigeria, a mission-trained headmaster plans to reinvent the education of the indigenous children in Western ways. In addition to changing the ways of the village, Michael Obi and his wife Nancy are equally dedicated to the shallow and idealistic value of aestheticism. There is nothing that will stand in Obi's way; not the villagers, not past ways or traditions, nor the elder village Priest of Ani. Unfortunately, for Obi, his forceful approach is anything, but pragmatic, leading to his failure in the end (Achebe 44-48). Achebe's contention is evident in the attitude and actions of his protagonist, Michael Obi, that modish European ways and unprecedented ideas are not always better than traditions and the past.

The struggle between modernity and traditions is evident from very early on in this short story. Although, not obvious, Achebe works Anglophilia into his piece almost immediately with the introduction to Michael and Nancy Obi (Basu 74). With the disparity between the colonized Nigerian Village, inhabited by the traditional Igbo people being induced to the new headmaster of Ndume Central School, Achebe sets the tone for the remainder of the story. These differences were not written in by perchance; instead they were purposefully integrated to show the Western influences clashing with the traditional ways in a postcolonial Africa (Pelelo). Achebe attains this cunning integration of inconspicuous battling between new and old through a "folktale with an impartiality that is achieved more by allusion and implication rather than by explicit explanation" (Smith).

To better understand the complexities involved in the contentious conflicts between modernism and traditionalism, an understanding of the objectives of colonialism and the results of postcolonialism on society is necessary. Although force is a main tool used by colonizers, peaceful integration of their ways is much more effective; establishing control mentally goes much further and lasts longer than by physical means (Basu 76). Although, Michael Obi does not employ these tactics, he is a product of them. Religion and education are the two easiest ways to peacefully change a society and make them a colony (Basu 76). Both of these tactics are used to mold Obi into the headmaster that the colonizers want. In turn, he will Anglicize Ndume Central students and this Anglicization will continue through the future generations (Loomba 191). While, this may be completely acceptable to someone brainwashed by the colonizer, the people of the colony, who live their own way for so long, will meet these changes with opposition. In "Dead Men's Path" the Igbo Villagers do not understand, nor will they agree to the closing of their path. "But I remember there was a big row some time ago when we attempted to close it" (Achebe 45). This path is not just a path, but a larger symbol of attempted assimilation into Western Ways and the fight that ensued over traditions.

Michael and Nancy Obi, are clearly, without any dispute, symbols of Western Culture being forced upon the Igbo. While Achebe illustrates this forced culture with a mundane approach, in a Principle taking over a school, in the greater scheme it has a much broader meaning. While, the Obi's are painted as this quintessential couple living the posh lifestyle, readers really see Obi as the evil of modernity. Obi has a "passion for 'modern methods'" and has a "denigration of 'these old and superannuated' people" (Achebe 44). He is a modern progressive who views Ndume Central as an "unprogressive school" (Achebe 44). His wife is no

different with her “beautiful gardens” and everything “modern and delightful” all while “imitating the woman’s magazine” (Achebe 44). These two characters stand for everything that the Western Culture is and everything that the African Culture does not want. “The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is the relation between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. The ‘other’ is anyone who is separate from the one’s self. The colonized subject is characterized as ‘other’ through labels of primitivism and cannibalism” (Basu 76). This is exactly how the Obi’s see the Igbo people. Believing, just because someone is traditional or “primitive” means that they lack intelligence, emotion or ability is simply ignorant itself.

What appears to Michael Obi as merely an ugly foot path through the school’s campus, to the Villagers is a sacred and spiritual way of their ancestors. For someone who worries about beauty more than functionality, this foot path is a massive blemish to his school and campus. To the native people, this is the path, the life and death, of their entire society and culture. For Obi, it is just an eyesore that can be easily fixed with some flowers and gardens; the path itself closed with sticks and barbed wire. To him, now the campus is perfect and the inspector will be delighted with his change. To the villagers, his actions are offensive and taken as an act of aggression; Obi is no longer trying to affect the future, but he is now committing sacrilege in the past. While these actions against the path will not have immediate consequences, they will be Obi’s Achilles’ heel.

The path is just a small symbol of a much bigger process in colonization. Since the path is such an integral part of the story and the main reason behind all of the conflict, it is important to understand why. The path is the first change in “Dead Men’s Path” that directly affects traditional ways. Achebe introduces hybridization using the path and illustrates just how antagonistic this situation can become. Hybridity, integrates the new and the old, despite whether the old want integration or not. “The colonized after coming into contact with the colonizer gradually lose their own cultural identity, even their tradition and religion.” “...Achebe shows how the indigenous Igbo race with its own culture and traditions gradually disrupted and defaced from its own identity” (Basu 77). This is the goal of Obi. His assumption is that a new path can be taken with no regard for the importance of the path to the villagers. While, Achebe does not show full hybridization of the Igbo race, he does illustrate the many conflicts that result of the clashing of cultures.

“Thus nations are communities created not simply by forging certain bonds but by fracturing or disallowing others; not merely by invoking and remembering certain versions of the past, but making sure that others are forgotten or repressed” (Loomba 202). Although, not the main purpose of Michael Obi, his actions point to this exact scenario seen in colonies. While his reason is only aesthetics, his actions have much deeper implications. While African Nations were well on their way to their own modernization, colonization by European Nations, actually set them back. This modernization incorporated their own teachings and traditions, keeping the past involved in the future (Taiwo 536). This greatly offended the native cultures and ultimately kept modernity out of their futures, for fear of becoming what was being imposed upon them; a loss of the past in order to move to the future. So, while modernism continues that struggle with traditionalism, many African societies were showing a symbiotic incorporation of the two prior to being taken over.

At some point in any type of colonization, conflict and violence is bound to erupt when either side is unwilling to compromise. The “Dead Men’s Path” is the breaking point for the Igbo villagers. They have given up almost everything during colonization, but they will not give up or give in to a path that is so important to their past and traditions. “A new form or conception of

humanity emerges during anti-colonial struggle which engages with a profound and radical transformation of the self – here colonization and tradition are seen as similar forms of oppression” (Srivastava 314). Even the elder Priest of Ani cannot sway the overzealous and pompous Obi. “[B]ut we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about.” “[L]et the hawk perch and let the eagle perch” (Achebe 46). This falls upon the deaf ears of the headmaster, “I don’t suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome” (Achebe 46). As described by Gandhi and Fanon, “violence is first and foremost the courage to act against the colonizer, which ensures a form of re-humanization (Srivastava 305). With that “Obi woke up next morning among the ruins of his work” (Achebe 46). His school was now in the midst of a tribal war with the village and his inspection by the white Supervisor was nothing good.

As seen through Achebe’s “Dead Men’s Path” modern ways are not always better when traditions and the past are forgotten or disrespected. While no society or culture wants to be colonized, the lessons learned postcolonialism are prolific and distinct. Even without forced modernism, every society will progress forward in some way. The way each society chooses to modernize should be very unique. In the Igbo society, traditions and the past are very important; more important than modernization. Although, Achebe illustrates this from the beginning of his short story, through many various ways, then ending of violence and war is the most poignant example. However, violence and war only result from a supercilious headmaster, brainwashed in Western ways that refuse to show any deference for the traditional ways of the villagers. So, ultimately, traditions and past should be just as important as modernity, otherwise the end result is presumptuously destitute!

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Figurative Language in *A Rose for Emily*

By Morgen Condon

Narrated through a voice representing the collective view of her peers and neighbors, William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" describes the odd life and death of Emily Grierson. Emily lives thirty years closely monitored by both her town- a group who analyze every aspect of her life- and her father, who keeps her away from men until the day he dies. Scarred by her neighbors constant gaze, her father's tight leash, and eventually her father's death, Emily has a rough time coping with normal life. Emily attempts to date after her father's death; however, her neighbors are determined to keep her away from a man they look down on. In an attempt to preserve a relationship with the only man she has ever dated, Emily poisons her lover, keeping his body in a upstairs bedroom until her death.

The subject of "A Rose for Emily" is plainly represented in the literal text of the story. Simply, it is a story of a small southern town critical of a woman who defies their ideals. However, through his use of figurative language, Faulkner weaves two unmistakable, complex concepts into "A Rose for Emily." First, to explain Emily's symbolic meaning to the town, Faulkner uses both metaphor and simile. Second, to describe a theme of death and decay, Faulkner underlines his story with dark, often disturbing imagery. Through his use of figurative language, Faulkner fills "A Rose for Emily" with layers of meaning and depth.

To the town who criticizes and observes her every movement, Emily embodies a set of fading southern ideals and social norms. Because Emily represents a physical embodiment of the towns ideas, she becomes a symbolic object the town wants to preserve. Emily's role as an object of the towns attention presents itself to the reader through Faulkner's use of metaphors. Faulkner uses his narrator – the voice of the community- to introduce the reader to Emily at her own funeral. Illustrating the towns feelings for Emily, Faulkner writes of the men attending her funeral: they went "through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument" (79). Later he writes of Emily's life, calling her a "tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (79). By comparing Emily to a "fallen monument," and a "tradition, duty, and care," Faulkner cements Emily's role in her town as an object of fascination; something the town needs to protect.

Further illustrating Emily's role as the towns object of observation, Faulkner uses simile throughout his work. Faulkner writes of a scene of presumable shame, where Emily purchases poison from the pharmacy. When asking the pharmacist about deadly poisons, Faulkner describes Emily, writing, "She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag." Later, when looking out her window, Faulkner compares Emily's face to a carved statue. He writes that Emily is "like a carven torso of an idol in a niche" (86). Explained by the narrator- representing the collective view of the town- these similes act as a very powerful part of the readers understanding of the towns view of Emily. By describing her face as "like a strained flag," and "like a carven torso of an idol," Faulkner reaffirms her role as a symbol worth protecting, and an object meant for the towns observation and possibly even worship.

By using figurative language, Faulkner compares Emily to symbolic objects and ideas throughout the text; allowing the reader to understand Emily's role in the town. However, Faulkner also uses figurative language to explain another important aspect of "A Rose for Emily": an underlying theme of death and decay. Although his theme of death and decay is plainly illustrated in the literal text, Faulkner reinforces this theme with rich, detailed imagery.

Although most of his imagery is literal- like the imagery used to describe smell and sights of the inside of Emily's house- the use of imagery in a figurative manner has the most impact on the readers senses. When the reader is introduced to Emily as a living person for the first time, the narrator explains Emily's death-like physical appearance. To explain the impact of extra body fat on Emily's small skeleton, Faulkner writes, "She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue" (80). When describing her lifeless face and eyes, Faulkner writes, "Her eyes... looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough" (80). In this scene Faulkner compares Emily to death and inanimate objects, and describes these comparisons with vivid imagery. Faulkner creates a disturbing image of Emily as a corpse submerged in water, and an even more disturbing image of Emily's doughy face and black, dead eyes. Paired with the stories literal descriptions of death, Faulkner's powerful use of imagery fully expresses a theme of death and decay.

The use of figurative language in *A Rose for Emily* creates an experience for the reader that the literal text could never accomplish on its own. Although Faulkner introduces the reader to literal concepts in "A Rose for Emily"- death, decay and Emily's symbolic nature- these concepts become fully cemented into the reader's consciousness with metaphor, simile, and imagery. Faulkner's use of simile and metaphor explains the towns excessive gaze in Emily's direction, while disturbing imagery fosters feelings and images of decay and death to enhance Faulkner's theme. Faulkner's use of figurative language in "A Rose for Emily" mirrors the literal language of the text, creating a dark, complex tale.

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Stereotypes in “Indian Education” and “Girl”

By Raeann LaPenta

Is it easier to write about an unfamiliar topic or refer back to real life experiences to successfully connect with readers? The idea of being labeled by one's appearance and thus inheriting expectations from society based on the inevitable stereotypes is explored in both Sherman Alexie's short story “Indian Education” and Jamaica Kincaid's experimental sentence entitled “Girl” through the use of first-hand knowledge. These authors make it known that whether the label is linked to religion, social class, nationality, skin color, or even a particular hairstyle, each come with their own set of society-given clichéd expectations no matter what. Because he had personal experience growing up in several tribes, Sherman Alexie's “Indian Education” demonstrates what it is like to be a young Native American boy attending school both on and off the Spokane Indian Reservation. Similarly, Jamaica Kincaid, an Antiguan American writer, uses “Girl” to portray what a mother expects of her adolescent daughter growing up in the poor, working-class realm. Though factors such as style, gender, and cultural differences separate the two writers, both Alexie and Kincaid similarly express the expectations and stereotypes that work against children growing up in demanding societies around the world.

Children submerged in judgmental environments, such as a strict household or culturally diverse school, are expected to act a certain way and follow a certain path. In Kincaid's “Girl,” the speaker is identified as a mother and lists instructions that “relate mainly to domestic chores, but also include directions for social relations and moral conduct” (Bailey 107). For example, Kincaid's text tells the daughter how to “sweep a whole house” and “iron khaki pants” as well as how to “smile to someone you don't like at all” and “behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well” (271). This shows how the mother's authoritarian atmosphere hopefully shapes the way her daughter will live and consequently who she will be someday. In comparison, Alexie's short story highlights the indifferent brutality of a second grade teacher on a young Native American boy, Victor. She commands that he apologize for “everything,” forces him to stand “eagle-armed” for fifteen minutes, and even crumples his errorless tests so that he will “learn respect” (Alexie 231). Adult figures, such as the mother and the elementary school teacher, are held responsible for children in their care, however their ideas and commands only follow narrow-minded stereotypes existing in society: domestic roles for a young Caribbean girl or “correct” behavior for an Indian child on the reservation.

Violence and aggressive behavior build when society singles out a group for being “different” or even “lesser.” On the reservation in sixth grade, Alexie's character Randy unwillingly gets into a fight only an hour after first entering the reservation school; the bully Stevie calls him degrading names such as “squawman” and encourages him to “throw the first punch” three times but Randy calmly denies before eventually breaking his nose (232). The narrator then states how this taught him that the best advice to have in the “white world” is to “always throw the first punch” (Alexie 232). This reveals how originally American Indians were never violent people in nature but the labels and negative stereotypes create aggressive tension between groups. Similarly, in “Girl” the daughter often angrily challenges mother's guidelines and it is evident through the author's use of italics. The mother tells the girl not to “sing benna in Sunday school” and the girl quickly defends herself by saying that she does not (Kincaid 270). Therefore, these acts of aggression from outside forces are followed by protagonist retaliation due to the fact that they are unsatisfied with the stereotypes laid out for them.

Some cultural groups inherit a specific physical appearance that society expects them to uphold and then be judged upon. Sherman Alexie writes, through personal experience, about his braids in the second grade: “[The teacher] sent a letter home with me that told my parents to either cut my braids or keep me home from class. My parents came in the next day and dragged their braids across Betty Towle's desk. 'Indians, indians, indians.' She said it without capitalization” (231). This shows how even the young boy's native hairstyle in braids was discouraged in school and negatively associated with “indians,” for no reason other than being different than the dominant “white” culture. Kincaid's mother narrator forces a certain body image, the “proper woman,” for her daughter to uphold because she is worried she is already on her way to the wrong path. Mother says, “this is how you walk like a lady” (Kincaid 270). Also, Kincaid writes, “don't squat down to play marbles-you are not a boy, you know” and “this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming” (271). Kincaid sets up a Caribbean backdrop as a “stage where females perform and where their bodies are constantly under scrutiny by an audience always fully aware of how the body is to be shaped and the behaviors that women are supposed to display in order to reinforce dominant gender ideologies” (Bailey 108). Outer appearances, in physical facets such as hairdo or clothing, hold importance in the way “inferior” groups are viewed by the “superior” groups.

Although stereotypes are normally identified with bringing negative effects, both Alexie and Kincaid are able to include spurts of humor in their works. Shakespeare scholars say that Alexie's world is not “festive,” but rather consist of “problem” or “dark” comedy (McFarland). Some of the best writing in “Indian Education” uses “the ironic situation of an Indian child within a non-Indian institution ... the narrator parodies the traditional Spokane way of naming children. These names reflect incidents of violence against the child, lightened by the self mocking, ironic humor” (Low). To further illustrate this point, Victor was always falling down and getting bullied so therefore his Indian names were “Junior Falls Down,” “Bloody Nose,” and “Steal-His-Lunch” (Alexie 230). Also, Alexie uses the title of Victor's third grade art piece to create a comic spark: “Stick Indian Taking a Piss in My Backyard” (231). These express the writer's effective technique of making light of a serious situation throughout the story. Likewise, through the mother's cold and emotionless tone, Kincaid uses humorous references beyond her lists of chores. The mother says strange things that could make readers laugh such as “this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it” and “you mean after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread” (271). Overall, many writers use bits of humor to brighten the mood of a story that carries a serious tone of isolation and repression.

The role of social class differences is examined in minority and majority groups from both pieces. In “Girl” class and race are implied through the domestic roles the mother enforces; Carol Bailey, a literary critic, says, “it is reasonable to assume that the female subject in “Girl” is black and working-class. The pressure to do their gendered household chores creditably is often an added burden on black working-class women, a direct vestige of colonial societies in which black women bore the brunt of field and domestic labor” (109). To analyze the text, the working-class idea derives from phrases such as “this is how to make ends meet”(Kincaid 271). The racial inferences come from household and field labor that was traditionally exemplified by black and East Indian working-class women through how to “make bread pudding” and “grow okra” (Bailey 109). It is evident that the mother's advice is hopeful and to help her daughter.

Some adolescents in minority groups are associated with exhibiting bad behavior, often worse than the average teen. Unforgettably, in “Indian Education” Victor is accused of being

drunk at a high school dance because he passed out due to his diabetes. It would make sense at this point for another white teacher to discriminate against his people for alcohol abuse but it is the Chicano teacher who says, "What's that boy been drinking? I know all about these Indian kids. They start drinking real young" (Alexie 233). All adults, even those of other minority groups, join in on the prejudices that label innocent children in society. "Sharing dark skin doesn't necessarily make two men brothers" (Alexie 233). Also, the post graduation sentence shows his former classmates on the reservation end up at the "Powwow Tavern" every weekend however the stereotypes are what continue to hold them there, apart from everyone else. Victor is the thriving example that the preordained lives of Indians on the reservation can indeed be challenged and overcome. In addition to alcoholism, unplanned pregnancy is a topic linked with young, unmarried women. In "Girl," the speaker says "this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child" (Kincaid 271). Through this secret female information, the mother hints that her daughter may have another persona in her private life than the one she must uphold in public. Therefore, she is seemingly helping her avoid the detrimental effects an unplanned pregnancy will have on her future and her search for a good husband (Bailey 110). Unfortunately, society associates children of certain groups with exhibiting worse behavior than others, such as Indians with alcoholism and young, unmarried girls with abortion.

Each protagonist's story ended in a somewhat positive manner. The girl in Kincaid's piece frequently questioned her mother's orders and this foreshadows that maybe she will change the course of the stereotypes and create a path of her own someday outside that of a "proper lady". Critic Carol Bailey states, "Although private and public spaces and selves are often intertwined, the possibilities of having an offstage self still exist in instances such as secret relationships with males, and in private domestic spaces where women and sometimes men relinquish the standards set by the dominant culture. But perhaps most importantly, this space is the self she is able to hold in her consciousness-the place where agency is developed and honed" (112). This suggests the girl's individuality that goes beyond the female expectations and domestic chores that this specific Caribbean culture inflicts. On the other hand, Victor actually does surpass the expectations of society for an Indian boy. He graduates valedictorian of the farm town high school off the reservation, his hair proudly grown out so long that his cap barely fits on his head. He is honored with "rewards, accomplishments, and scholarships" while his old classmates leave not fully knowing how to read or are worried about what the future has in store; Victor broke the cycle and now looks forward "toward the future" while his peers can only look "back toward tradition" (Alexie 234). Therefore, the only hope for success in groups suffering under unjust stereotypes is rejecting what society restricts upon them and moving onward regardless.

As presented, Sherman Alexie uses his experience as a Native American Indian boy to write about the child struggles with labels in white-based societies. In comparison, Jamaica Kincaid was raised on the island of Antigua and uses this background to educate readers about the expectations that an island society imposes on a young girl. Aside from the gender difference, the style of each work is extremely dissimilar; Alexie's "Indian Education" is separated into grade levels, each containing a poem-like short story, and Kincaid's "Girl" is one long run-on sentence containing dozens of motherly instructions separated by only semi-colons. However, the idea of harsh stereotypes in society is more than evident in both. It is demonstrated through how a person acts, the violent behavior that results, how they present themselves in appearance, humorous phrases that lighten the mood, social class differences, sexual maturity of adolescence, and detrimental activity that is unjustly expected of "lesser"

groups (LaPenta 8). From the dominant culture, adults and children alike create degrading names and act out against these groups only because they are different. In the end, both authors incorporated these specific aspects of growing up a minority to convey a greater meaning about the hardships that stereotypes cause. They write these pieces because in order to erase the stereotypes, people everywhere need to be aware that they exist and do nothing but continue to limit people.

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Physical and Emotional Baggage in “The Things They Carried”

By Toby DeMarco

In the short story “The Things They Carried,” author Tim O'Brien heavily parallels the physical burdens with the emotional ones endured by the Alpha Company as the soldiers marched through and completed missions in Vietnam. Long lists of rations, equipment, and weapons are accompanied with very specific weights - “between fifteen and twenty pounds” for most of the basic necessities, “depending on a man's habits or rate of metabolism”; helmets were “five pounds including the liner and camouflage cover”; “jungle boots [were] 2.1 pounds”; even “six or seven ounces of premium dope” were carried alongside several tranquilizers, in the case of one soldier (O'Brien 434). There was also equipment described for specific situations, like minor or major injuries, different missions, monsoons, or the death of a comrade. The way O'Brien writes, one critic explains, makes the story sound in part like a personal account described in drab paperwork; “O'Brien is striving, above all else, to convince his readers of the importance, the authenticity, of the Things They Carried” by grounding everything in matter-of-fact language (Kaplan).

Personal effects carry a similar significance, if not more, as a subtle clue into the characters' heads, roles, and histories. O'Brien even explains the dated slang “to hump,” stating that it “meant 'to walk,' or 'to march,' but it implied burdens far beyond the intransitive,” like how Cross “humped his love for Martha up the hills and through the swamps” (435). Lieutenant Jimmy Cross carried letters from Martha, a college girl who didn't love him back; the mindful Dave Jensen carried whatever he could “as a precaution against trench foot” or for the sake of his own hygiene; Ted Lavender carried drugs and extra ammunition as a countermeasure for his own anxiety in the face of war; Kiowa carried a Bible, a hatchet, and a “distrust of the white man,” inherited from his father, grandfather, and grandmother respectively (O'Brien 434). One soldier carried comic books, another condoms, another a diary, another extra rations; Lee Strunk and Mitchell Sanders carried a slingshot and brass knuckles (434; 436). Throughout the story, what each soldier carried was both necessitated by modern warfare and entirely personal, tailored to the part each of them played as soldiers and as people.

Initially, Lieutenant Cross carried and cherished Martha's letters to him, leaving them at the very bottom of his backpack as a reminder and a tool for his escapism at the end of each long day. He loved her despite knowing the feeling was far from mutual, and so would carefully unwrap, hold, and read the letters each night, “pretending” (O'Brien 434). Cross would imagine his feelings for Martha reciprocated, wonder about her life, remember how disinterested she was in his advances, and regret his inaction before he had left for Vietnam. He would even do this during the day - while Lee Strunk was on tunnel duty, Cross stared into the hole 311d imagined himself and Martha down there instead, with the tunnel collapsing around them (O'Brien 438). His escapism functioned then as a mild dissociation; he was not in Vietnam, staring into a tunnel, he was “buried with Martha under the white s311d at the Jersey shore” (O'Brien 438).

At the same time, Cross carried the necessities of a platoon leader: tools for travel, a handgun (“2.9 pounds fully loaded”), and “the responsibility for the lives of his men” (O'Brien 435). Because of this, and because of his love for Martha, he blamed himself for Ted Lavender's death; “Jimmy Cross concludes that his imagined world has put the lives of his men at risk ... the imagined world and the world of battle are starkly differentiated,” writes Rena Korb. “There is no room for Compromise in the world he now inhabits ... Cross has the safety of his men in his hands, and he cannot juggle two priorities,” Korb continues. Something as mundane as the

pebble Cross carried for good luck, after Lavender's death, became a "stone in his stomach for the rest of the war" - because the letters and Martha, and what they represented, had led him to love her "more than his men" which he would reject entirely by the end of the story (O'Brien 441). Lavender's death shook him to the core not because death is scary and hard to bear, and not entirely because he was in mourning, but because Lavender's death was a real, physical thing. By contrast, Martha -the concept of her, with the real Martha far away in New Jersey- very much was not. Rejecting his love for Martha lightened Cross' emotional burden, but the new low-tolerance, no-nonsense attitude he resolved to adopt would make his men's burdens "heavier" in exchange (O'Brien 445).

O'Brien "successfully juxtaposes the soldiers' physical reality against their emotional reality" by treating abstract things like they "had their own mass and specific gravity" (Korb; O'Brien 443). "Grief, terror, love, [and] longing" were all "emotional baggage," just as real as the rations in their bags and the guns in their hands (O'Brien 443). Lieutenant Cross contemplated swallowing his lucky pebble, or dropping it as he marched, signaling his own casting off of "emotional baggage" as he finally let go of Martha and accepted that he "was not to be loved but to lead" (O'Brien 445). This is intrinsic to the narrative; even real objects with real weight to them are given symbolism, adding more metaphorical weight on top of that. Without these layers of meaning, the narrative would have fallen flat and Cross' change in character would have had far less of an impact. The pebble is more than just a pebble given to him by Martha; Cross rid of it for much the same reason he burned Martha's letters- the weight of it was one that he was not willing to carry when he had the lives of his men in his hands.

"Purely for comfort," the soldiers would throw away much of what they were carrying - rations, mostly, and they would "blow their Claymores and grenades" - choppers would airlift them more anyway, so they were always doing so in futile attempts (O'Brien 440). Physically discarding their equipment, though impermanent with the presence of supply choppers, was a way to "catapult" out of the war and find some fleeting semblance of liberation, of weight lifted (Korb). They knew, however, "that they would never be at a loss for things to carry" for as long as they were there in Vietnam (O'Brien 440). The only way to truly have the weight of living and fighting in a war lifted would be to die, as Lavender did; when he was shot, "he went down under an exceptional burden," which included his "unweighed fear" (O'Brien 436). The others stripped him of his equipment, used his poncho to wrap him up, smoked his marijuana, and carried him into the dust-off. Unlike Lavender, though, their only escape from the reality of war was sleep, and the nighttime fantasy of a "freedom bird" carrying them away from it all, to a place "where there were no burdens and where everything weighed exactly nothing" (O'Brien 443-444).

The cruel reality, though, was that everything did weigh something, and the tools of war weighed each man down in more ways than just physically. The author "catalogues" everything they carried, from an M18A1 Claymore that was "3.5 pounds with its firing device" to "a twentyeight pound mine detector" that was difficult to use and mostly pointless (Kaplan; O'Brien 436, 437). The mine detector, in its uselessness due to the presence of shrapnel, was still carried "partly for safety, partly for the illusion of safety," which grounds the precise listing of weapons and weights in the disillusioned idea of having real "protective power" (O'Brien 437; Kaplan). Lavender especially had more than was necessary, or even standard; he'd died with "more than twenty pounds of ammunition" on him - thirty-five ten-ounce rounds, ten more than what most people carried, for an "M-79 grenade launcher, 5.9 pounds unloaded" (O'Brien 436). No matter how real and important the narrative made his weapons seem - through O'Brien's extensive use

of military diction and specific masses and weights, listed in a government report-like fashion - they could not “protect him” from the bullet that killed him (Kaplan).

With Lieutenant Cross' rank came a physically lighter load; compared to Henry Dobbins, who because of his size was made to carry the M-60 machine gun, Rat Kiley, who carried all of the necessary medical supplies, and Ted Lavender, who died carrying the burden of his weapons, Cross “[got] off easy” (Piedmont-Marton). Even his personal effects - the letters and photos from Martha, and the good luck pebble she sent him - weighed less than the drugs Lavender carried, Norman Bowker's diary, Dobbins' extra rations, Dave Jensen's hygiene products, and Kiowa's Bible and hunting hatchet. However, Jimmy Cross instead carried the lives of his men; he carried responsibility as a platoon leader. Because of this, he could not afford to carry the burden of loving someone who would not love him back, no matter how light the physical reminders he had of his burden were. After making sure love “was not now a factor,” Cross effectively cast off enough of his burdens to become an effective, if harsh, leader (O'Brien 445).

According to Elisabeth Piedmont-Marton, by describing what each soldier was carrying with him “as a mixture of the mundane and the metaphorical, O'Brien creates a dizzying sense of unreality.” The soldiers went from carrying “M-1 4s and CAR-1s and Swedish Ks and grease guns and captured AK-47s” to “carrying the land itself” - “the sky ... the whole atmosphere ... the humidity, the monsoons, the stink of fungus and decay ... they carried gravity” (O'Brien 437, 440). Each soldier carried the world on his back, on top of his own personal burdens, some of them entirely civilian. Even so, some soldiers - like Kiowa - had trouble processing what they saw and properly expressing what they felt, or even feeling the “correct” emotion at all. Lavender's death left a lasting impact on Lieutenant Cross, and was ultimately the catalyst for his change in character. The night after Lavender was shot, Cross wept in his foxhole, but only in part was he grieving over Lavender (O'Brien 441). Kiowa observed this, unaware of Cross' other emotional burdens, but nonetheless “admired” his “capacity for grief” (O'Brien 441). Unlike Jimmy Cross, Kiowa was only relieved to still be alive; try as he might to grieve, “the emotion wasn't there and he couldn't make it happen” (O'Brien 441). Unable to process, Kiowa could only feel the small pleasures “of having his boots off and the fog curling in around him and the damp soil and the Bible smells and the plush comfort of night” despite being the only person to fully witness Lavender being shot (O'Brien 442).

The things Alpha Company carried also included themselves. O'Brien describes it as “poise, a kind of dignity,” but there were also “times of panic” when they were being shot at that their “dignity” was left by the wayside in favor of crying, or wanting to, and covering until it was over (442). When it finally was, and Cross and his men were “feeling shame, then quickly hiding it” over their fears as they regained composure, O'Brien calls it “the burden of being alive” (442). They collected themselves and returned to some semblance of their warped normalcy, picking up weapons, counting dead men, “becoming soldiers again” (442). Their emotional burdens in the heat of it then had come to a crescendo - one in which they “sobbed and begged for the noise to stop” - and, surreally, “as if in slow motion, frame by frame,” the world quieted into “absolute silence” before the usual sounds of “wind, then sunlight, then voices” filtered back in (O'Brien 442).

Despite this happening more than once, or perhaps because of, each soldier would find a way to cope and a way to carry himself; some “with a sort of wistful resignation, others with pride or stiff soldierly discipline or good humor or macho zeal” (O'Brien 442). By the end of the story, Lieutenant Cross learned to carry himself differently in order to “accept the blame for what had happened to Ted Lavender” and the kind of leader who would not get his men killed

(O'Brien 445). He would be impersonal, absolute, strong, and distant, and his men were to “get their shit together, keep it together, and maintain it in good working order” (O'Brien 445). He would carry Lavender's death with him in the place where his love for Martha had been for the rest of the war, whether his men liked it or not - because love had no place to be carried through a war. Significantly, he asserted that his men would no longer be allowed to “abandon equipment along the route of march” as they had before Lavender's death (O'Brien 445). In doing this, he denied them the crutch of alleviating their loads for however long they could, because he would no longer “tolerate laxity” (O'Brien 445). Laxity led to Lieutenant Cross' distraction from his men, and thus to his men being killed, and more importantly, it led to him and his men being unable to bear the things they carried.

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The Destruction in Creation

By Kelsea Rowan

Poetry is viewed as a rather classical form of artistic expression. Poetry brings to mind a particular set of preconceived ideas. This classic image of poetry is one that contains short lines, stanzas, and the text centered on the page. The preconceived idea of poetry is one containing strict rhyme schemes, structures, and rhythms. Poetry for many does not exist outside this image. Classical poetry dates back to the hymns and psalms of the bible. This poetry has traditional themes of picturesque love and the wonder of nature. These ideals make the appearance of poetry that strays from this image hard to swallow for the traditionalists. Every innovator behind a movement of change has become the brunt of backlash but in due time becomes bestowed with praise.

E. E. Cummings is a modernist poet who has been heavily inspired by the dismantled shapes of cubist paintings, the grotesque images of Amy Lowell, and the nonconformist syntax of Stein (Christensen). Cummings, as a part of the modernist movement, is reacting to post-war America and in this reaction he presents certain ideals. These ideals range from an overwhelming sense of disillusion, the dark fears of humanity, and increasing introspection (Modernism). Cummings has flirted with Dadaist ideals and began his innovation of poetry in the 1920's. Cummings says the "destruction of traditional values is a necessary step toward any type of creation" (Ruiz). He is radical in his sexual descriptions, typography, syntax and punctuation. His innovation lies in his destruction of tradition in classical poetry in order to bring forth his unconventional style.

Classical poetry that contemplates the subject of sex is often written in attempt to romance a woman. Classical poetry writes about sex in dressed up metaphors that never broach the subject directly because it is seen as a taboo act. Cummings's erotic poetry ranges in subject matter from sixteen year old prostitutes to unconventional encounters with unconventional women. Cummings breaks away from tradition in order to convey the realities of sex, even the dirty and dark parts of it. One of Cummings's poems was deemed to be so obscene that the first publishers agreed to print it only in Cummings's handwriting (Baker). Cummings shows no fear in presenting the subject of his poetry honestly and stays true to expressing the realities of sex in spite of critics.

In Cummings's "My girl's tall..." he praises his sexual partner not for her femininity but for her rather masculine features. He describes "her long hard hands" creating a stark contrast between her hands and those of the classical poetic woman who's hands are soft or dainty (2). Not only does the description of this woman create an unorthodox image but the unorthodox tone is furthered by the poem's diction. The poem's speaker expresses that the woman and himself, "grimly go to bed" and then she "heaves and twines about him" (12, 13). This diction creates an image that fails to stay true to the classical ideal of "beautiful" sex relinquishing all preconceived ideas about traditional erotic poetry. When he describes her legs he says they are "just like a vine/ that's spent all of its life on a garden-wall,/and is going to die..." giving their sex a rushed or desperate tone because she has no time to waste, having been on this "garden-wall" all her life. As Ann Townsend says many sonnets talk of seizing the day but in this particular sonnet it is the woman who is seizing the man and it scares him but he likes it (Baker). This poem throws away the male dominant role in favor of the role of a dominant woman, who knows what she wants, takes it, and is praised for it.

Cummings's "My girl's tall..." is written in the first person in order to make that reality of sex more personal for the reader. Cummings takes care to make sure his poetic subject is complemented by how he writes it. This care is further exemplified in how he writes on the topic of prostitution. Prostitution is a risqué topic but not an uncharted one. Cummings takes this subject a few steps further, he takes his prostitute out of the gutter and makes her "cute" (4). He calls his prostitute a whore but takes the vulgarity out of her actions. "Kitty," is about a "twice-eight"(12) prostitute who has mastered the art of "quick softness"(4) and is a "sweet slow animal" (6). His subject here is all femininity but skilled in her dismal line of work. This poem is laid out in a "police-blotter-style portrait of a young prostitute" exemplifying the impersonal tone of her work but also complementing it by getting right into the thick of things (Baker). Cummings does not trick his reader into thinking that what she does is wrong but does not dress it up either by making her a martyr for a cause. He allows his subject to simply be. She is a girl with an occupation laid out on his page; another string of notes in a legal file.

Cummings's innovation does not stop at the subject of his poetry but expands further into his writing. Classical poetry is guaranteed to be placed on the page in an extensively structural manner but Cummings challenges this standard and allows his poetry free range across the page. This experimentation with typography is not purely aesthetically pleasing but serves to give his words more purpose. The poem that best exemplifies Cummings's iconic experimentation with typography is "l(a)." Chris Semansky states that "l(a' is not so much 'about' something as much as it is doing the thing it is about" which is wholly the point of Cummings's unique typography (Semansky). Cummings's "l(a" is an idea and an image comprised of only four words, "a leaf falls: loneliness." The subject of the poem is loneliness which is often represented by the image of a single leaf falling. Cummings takes this image one step further by allowing his words to take on the form of the image. The words are not placed in one straight line but rather split into smaller units going down the page. This image is supported by the spacing between the small units of lines creating a pattern-steadiness, a lull, then an uneven finish which all comes together to graphically illustrate the floating fall of a leaf (Semansky). The image the letters take on is further supported by having the longest line in the poem as the last. This line, "iness," (9) when situated below the preceding lines allows it to resemble a pile of leaves at the bottom of the poem. This typography allows Cummings's subject to exist in two parallel forms: in the written word and in a type of picture. The typographical decision to present the poem in this manner allows the poem's meaning to run deeper than it would had it been laid out in a single line. With "l(a" Cummings redefines how many ways a poem's meaning can exist and the only way he has achieved this is by freeing his words from their expected structural form.

Cummings as an innovator behind the modernist movement has not always be received well by critics. His unconventional typography strays far from the structured typography of classical poetry. While his typography is a revered trait today in 2013 it was not so well received in 1954 when S.V. Baum wrote his essay "E. E. Cummings: The Technique of Immediacy." Baum states that, "this disruption of established order, from the beginning, has been the focal point of the disapproving attitude toward Cummings." Baum goes on to discuss many negative critiques of Cummings's typographically diverse poems. Baum speaks of one critic who asserted that this disobedient typography scares off Cummings's readers, making his poetry not worth solving, and is an overall unnecessary style. While this critique is harsh it is also easily argued against by Baum who states:

This attitude, which separates form from matter in Cummings's poetry, has persisted in varying degrees among critics. Yet an overall examination of Cummings's work reveals

his denial of external authority in its many aspects, for from every point of view and in every style he expounds the basic idea of individualism, the ultimate value in all his writing.

These critics miss the point at the core of Cummings's writing. He is promoting individualism and destroying traditional values in order to create this individualism. Traditional critics dislike his work because they do not understand it which is an expected response to the beginning of any new innovative movement. In history no one has ever been "ready" for new movements of change and Cummings's writing is no exception.

Cummings's further pushes the boundaries with his creation by throwing out all rules pertaining to capitalization, punctuation, and the like. He uses typography with intent and follows the same pattern with his unconventional punctuation, capitalization, and spacing. When Cummings puts ample amounts of space between words or bunches them together he is doing so in order to guide a reading aloud and to support what these particular words should be expressing. In Cummings's poem "Buffalo Bill's" he capitalizes only three words, "Buffalo Bill's," (1) "Jesus," (7) and "Mister Death" (11). These words are also set on their own separate lines to add even more emphasis to them. Each appears to be a noun (a name for a person, place or thing) but in this case "Jesus" (7) is not being used as a name but as a word said out of exasperation which allows its capitalization a certain type of irony. When Cummings runs words together in line six of the poem he does it in order to guide reading causing the speaker to read the words at a faster pace but also so "the poem can capture aloud some of the excitement and wonder that a boy might have felt for a theatrical act as spectacular as that of Buffalo Bill" (Hunter 282). Cummings does not use any punctuation except for the possessive apostrophe in Buffalo Bill's name instead he allows his unconventional spacing and line breaks to indicate pauses for him. When the poem is rearranged in a traditional format with proper punctuation the special effects Cummings highlights are deliberately flattened and lost (Hunter 569). Cummings has no need for punctuation, he fails to even end his poem with a period which allows the poem to be exactly what it is: a vision suspended in time that does not end because it is merely a fragment in one's memory.

Cummings is not only famous for his lack of punctuation exemplified in "Buffalo Bill's" but also for the way he uses punctuation when he does. When Cummings is experimenting with space and in turn fragments a word to spread it over a series of lines he will also use punctuation as an additional control of the words and how they are read (Baum). It is clear that Cummings has done this in order to finally close the gap between the expression of the poem and the experience of the reader. Cummings also neglects to capitalize anything in most of his poetry unless there is a specific intent behind it: a theme that has been found within all of his unconventional techniques. In traditional poetry a poet is expected to capitalize the beginning word in each line as well as the pronoun "I." Cummings is justified in his rejection of the capital letter because "if he were to observe this academic regulation, how might he emphasize the first word in a line if it had already been burdened with a capital?" and the same goes for the pronoun "I," its capitalization leaves no room for its emphasis (Baum). Cummings cherishes the ability to add emphasis and rejects traditional regulations on capitalization in order to preserve his ability to emphasize.

One particularly striking way that he utilizes punctuation is seen in his extensive use of the parenthesis. In his poem "I carry your heart with me" his use of parentheses is ample but not unnecessary because of how it complements the poem's subject matter. This poem is a sonnet which is a rather traditional form for such an unconventional poet but he gives the form his own

unusual twist. His use of parentheses expresses the idea that love is often perceived as being fulfilled as an individual only through the existence of some complementary lover and this complementary lover is found within the parentheses of this particular poem (Tartakovsky). The poem is about how his lover exists inside his heart and therefore in the echo of everything that happens to him which is properly expressed by each “i” statement being outside the parentheses with a complementary “you” statement inside the parentheses that follows. This theme is furthered by the repetition of the first line in the last line which creates the image that the rest of the poem is existing inside of these two lines as the speaker's lover exists inside his heart. The only difference between the first and last lines are the inclusion of “with” in the first and the absence of “with” in the last. Tartakovsky suggests that this is because “the point of her heart being “with me” has been so clearly demonstrated, actualized, and radicalized throughout the poem, that it is omitted from the last line of the poem.” Finally the “secret” that no one knows is deepened by the lines “the root of the root and the bud of the bud / and the sky of the sky” because these lines further the theme of one object comprising another (11, 12). Then these lines are within parentheses adding yet another layer to this secret (Tartakovsky).

While his use of parentheses is a clever example of his experimentation with punctuation some critics still fail to see the reason behind his radical traits. Cummings's writing has been said to be nonsensical and disorganized but Baum suggests that this is because “Cummings has had to evolve a manner of writing which would communicate concrete sensations and perceptions in all the immediacy with which they are experienced.” Cummings's work deeply appeals to human senses. He molds his work to fit shapes that not only stay true to his subject but appeal to the sense of sight. His experimentation with space and punctuation appeal to the sense of sight as well as sound because of how it guides the reading of his poetry therefore promoting an exactness in how the reader hears his work.

Cummings is not only an artist but an innovator. He has taken the conventional and turned it on its head in favor of progressive creation. He has taken the tradition out of a preconceived classical form of expression. Cummings has invited both negative and positive criticism with his unusual typography and refusal to follow the rules. While Cummings has pushed the boundaries he never did so at the expense of his art form but rather in favor of its progress. He pushed the boundaries in order to bridge the gap between reader and poet.

Cummings has demolished the structure of an art form that is unquestionably recognizable for its classic presence on a page and it has led to his work being recognized for the same reason- its presence on a page. Now Cummings's work leaves the world with one question. Cummings has seemingly pushed every boundary he could find so what boundaries are left for those who precede him? Where will the next movement of change come from? Perhaps this next movement will be found in the purposely nonsensical writing of a Dada art revival. While Cummings's work has been accused of being a product of the absurd it has never been found guilty because there is always sense found in each of his oddities. One may conclude that the only action left to take is to remove the sense behind the oddities in order to present the world with the one thing Cummings did not: absolute nonsense.

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The Withering Rose: The Last Breaths of Faulkner's Struggling Aristocracy

By Kirstin McAlister

Imagine a spring meadow lined with thousands of flowers, all different types; tulips, daisies, lilies, but most predominantly roses. Red roses, white roses, pink roses, all different types intermixed with the other flowers. As it stands, the roses hold the most space, controlling most of the meadow, leaving only little spots for the other flowers to grow. However, as time passes, the meadow begins to change. The other flowers begin to flourish and become more noticeable among the sea of roses. Eventually, the tulips, daisies and lilies have spread out and are no longer huddled in tiny patches. What was once a sea of red, white, and pink is now full of color; vibrant oranges, deep purples, bright yellows, speckled pinks, and royal blues. The meadow is now full of color and life, with new colors and new flowers emerging every day. The passing of time brought beneficial change; time allowed the meadow to blossom into a rainbow of colors, to become even more beautiful than it once was. Yet, even with all this positive change, another change is occurring. While the tulips, daisies and lilies are flourishing, the roses that once encompassed the meadow are slowly fading away. The roses can no longer compete with the other flowers and are suppressed until they begin to wither away.

Change represents growth and rebirth, new flowers growing, new colors emerging, a new meadow appearing as the flowers within it change. Change allows for things to flourish, such as the tulips, daisies, and lilies, when previously, it was hindered. In order for change to happen, something must give; in the case of the meadow, the roses had to give in order for the other flowers to grow. When something gives, it relinquishes some of its power; in doing so, it loses strength, and begins to decline until it can hang on no more. Just as the changing of the meadow signified the decay of the roses, in William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," change marks something much darker; change marks the death and decay of the aristocracy. Passing time does not allow for the power of the aristocracy to grow, rather it restricts and restrains until the aristocracy can struggle no more, and it withers away. The change brings death and decay; out with the old, wealthy way of doing things and in with the new, modern, industrial machine, a machine in which resistance against it is futile. This futile resistance to change is exemplified by the fall of the aristocracy in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily." The death and decay of the aristocracy is demonstrated by the description of Emily's house, the changing of the local government, and the description of Emily herself.

The description of Emily's house suggests the death and decay of the upper classes. Authors typically use objects to symbolize something abstract. In this case, Faulkner uses Emily's house to symbolize the death and decay of the aristocracy. Faulkner uses a house to represent a class because different income levels can afford certain houses. A middle class plumber can afford a moderate sized house with a simple exterior, while a Wall Street CEO can afford an enormous, elegant, ornate mansion. Consider the first description of Emily's house; it "had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spired and scrolled balconies in the heavy lightsome style of the seventies" (79). In this description, the narrator shows that Emily's house used to stand out amongst the rest; it used to be in the center, a shining point of the town. The house exhibited gorgeous decorations and awe-inspiring architecture that only the wealthy could afford. Yet even this description hints at decay; the narrator states "it had once been white" (79), indicating that the color has faded, decayed away, along with the wealthy upper class. After all, Emily's house was set on the "most select street" (79). A street, a neighborhood owned by the upper class aristocracy, who would be able to afford such lavish, stylish houses.

However, in the following sentence, the narrator contrasts the delicate beauty the house once held with items less attractive: “garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood” (79), hinting that even the prominent names of the community are defenseless to the slow and hostile machine takeover. Which left “only Miss Emily’s house [...], lifting its suborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps” (79). By juxtaposing the tarnished beauty of the house with the garages and cotton gins of the industrial era, the narrator is showing that even the wealthy aristocracy is powerless to the machine takeover. The machines “encroached and obliterated” (79); they invaded and murdered the magnificence of the street, the magnificence of the neighborhood. Leaving in its wake, the rubble of the “august names” (79) to decay away until only Emily’s house remained, “an eyesore among eyesores” (79): a symbol, a monument to the dying, fading aristocracy.

Not only is the death and decay of the aristocracy illustrated by the descriptions of Emily’s house, it is also demonstrated by changing of the local government. The local government is changing from the antiquated aristocratic ideal of controlling and influencing the politics to the younger generation, whose political ideas are not influenced by wealth and power. In an aristocratic government, the laws and policies are written for the benefit of the rich aristocracy. Laws would be established so the aristocracy can pay less in town taxes, thus keeping the aristocracy rich, and leaving the excess taxes to fall to the working class individuals. Conversely, the rising generation’s attitudes were much different from the aristocratic government’s views. The rising generation’s ideals were based on the idea of improving the community as a whole, as opposed to lining the pockets of the rich, who cared not about the community, but about themselves. Over time, opinions change, and changing opinions create discontent between generations.

The discontent caused by the differing opinions is shown in the situation involving Emily’s taxes. When the mayor of the previous generation was still in office, Colonel Sartoris had invented an elaborate story that resulted in Emily not having to pay taxes (79). This tale was accepted by the government of the Sartoris era; however “when the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction” (79). The rising generation did not accept the Sartoris arrangement because the previous mayor used his power to bend the rules because Emily was part of the aristocracy. However, the newer generation does not belong to the aristocracy, thus their political views are unaffected by aristocracy’s influence. Since they are unaffected, the established arrangement caused dissatisfaction, which lead to a confrontation between the new ideas and the established agreement. This confrontation demonstrates the death and decay of the aristocracy because in order for the aristocracy to thrive and keep its grip on the local politics, previous rules, laws and stories have to be accepted by the younger generation. However, the newer generation has “modern ideas” (79), and those ideas differ from the long-standing views. Since these newer views are not influenced by wealth and power, the aristocracy slowly loses its ability to influence the politics. When the power and ability is lost, the aristocracy will start to decay and fade away because the newer generation is impervious to its influence.

The description of Emily herself implies the death and decay of the upper classes. Not only do authors use objects to symbolize abstract concepts, they also use characters to represent classes. The way a character is portrayed demonstrates one’s social status, indicating one’s class. A middle-class, blue-collar worker would be portrayed as a dedicated employee, who worked his fingers to the bone every day. His body would ache at the end of the week; he would

be covered in sweat, blood, and tears. But it would all be worth it once he received that paycheck, a token for his hard work. He would persevere through the pain and injuries because he knew he had to provide for his family. On the other hand, a person belonging to the aristocracy would be portrayed very differently. A person would walk around with her nose to the sky, ignorant to any person who she thought was below her. She would carry a sophisticated, poised air that never noticed the plights of the other classes because such troubles did not affect her or her status. She would walk around with the notion that she is better than everyone else simply because she has more money and can do what she pleases; because to her, money equals power.

Consider how Emily is described when she is first introduced, which was at her funeral that the whole town attended, “the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument” (79). Here Emily is described as a monument, something which is respected, valued, and placed in high reverence. Emily is considered a monument because she was the last of an era, the last of the aristocracy. Or as Ray B. West Jr. argues, “Emily is a ‘monument’ of Southern gentility. As such she is common property of the town, but in a special way—as an ideal of *past* values.” A town would construct a monument to honor a person, or in this case honor the past values that no longer exist because times have changed. By calling Emily a monument, the town is turning Emily into “common property” (West) that must be maintained; otherwise it will start to decay. Since she is considered a “fallen monument” (79) this indicates that the property was not cared for and started to decay and turn to dust. Such decay signifies that the aristocracy is losing its life, slowly fading away until nothing is left but ashes, dust and the imprint it leaves behind.

Not only is the death of the aristocracy symbolized with the death of Emily, but the decay of the aristocracy is symbolized by the descriptions of Emily in the years leading up to her death. Consider the description of Emily when the tax collectors came, “She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough” (80). Here Emily, who is part of the aristocracy and viewed as a monument, is compared to a corpse. She is depicted as lifeless; her body is pale and bloated, just as a drowned corpse would appear. Her eyes lack vitality; rather they appear to be rocks, devoid of any life, just like a soul on death’s door. She is the last of an era, the last of the aristocracy, an idol rotting away into nothingness, through which nothing can be revived or saved, leaving only death to take hold on her, and the disappearing aristocracy she embodies.

The descriptions of Emily, the changes in the local government, and the descriptions of Emily’s house all point to the fact that the aristocracy has lost its hold on southern society and is slowly withering away. Just like the roses in the meadow, the power the aristocracy once held is gone. There is nothing left to hold onto, no new ground to shoot roots into for a grip. Nothing left to do but watch as change takes over, as new flowers emerge and flourish, smothering the little life the roses and the aristocracy may have held. The descriptions of Emily illustrate that nothing stands the test of time, that sometimes even monuments decay away and fall. What once worked fifty years ago, may not work in the present, changing times; as demonstrated by the issues the younger generation had with the rules of the past. And sometimes, even the strongest, wealthiest, most beautiful neighborhoods, as the descriptions of Emily’s house exemplified, are defenseless to the industrial takeover, no matter how influential those “august names” (79) once were.

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English 234

Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature

Stranger in a Strange Land: “Thou are Coward.”

By Ken Pomaski

For a novel alleged to address dominant human issues, *Stranger in a Strange Land* does do so, but only by promoting those same issues and, what appears allegorically, “defending” them by utilizing the same askew and reactionary arguments that propel its targeted offenders, exhibiting the error of such thoughts by telling a story that showcases the rise of yet another organized religion alongside the subsequent mentalities that are the driving force of so ridiculous an idea as the divine, thereby exposing why horrors in the form of humans being so greatly divided from one another remain so firmly alive despite the irrational and self-destructive results of these theoretically passive ideas time after time.

Stranger is mostly constructed by following the maturity of the Martian, Valentine Michael Smith, as he both learns and disagrees with Earthlings and their manners. When first he comes to Earth he is wholly alien to the customs and ways of Earthlings and, Martians being far superior and consistent in regards to simplistic, logical thinking, it is Valentine's foreign naivety that is the driving force of *Stranger's* philosophically challenging ideas, albeit only for the first half as Valentine eventually devolves into an archetype of mankind's greatest disagreement in the form of a messiah. But, within the story's beginning, it is Valentine's simple and certain responses that expose greatest the error of mankind's longest and most suffocating doubts. As when Dr. Harshaw, a confused, narcissistic Agnostic, eventually fails to express why mankind is so obsessed with discovering the beginning of the universe, Valentine keenly responds with “World is. World was. World shall be,” an overly simple, but also maximally reasonable, answer to the meaningless worry of where life begun, a worry that is, was, and shall be without solid answer (amongst most scientific and theological concerns). But it is only the first half that Valentine's presence draws to light the inconsistencies of mankind as, following his learning the word “God” and his drawing to it a definition that is, amongst the so many other definitions, one of his own and without universal agreement, that Valentine metamorphoses into human-rupture and begins anew the cogs of mankind's most vicious counter-action against unity: organized religion.

What is most prominent in *Stranger* is that the rather sound spiritualist idealism taught by Valentine is eventually built into its counter-intuitive opposite in the form of an organized design that has ambitions for global reach, which has always, empirically speaking, resulted in greater obscurity and division between men. It is when the Church of All Worlds is established that *Stranger* veers from being yet another spiritually rich and provoking work into something that is entirely different, something that is allegorically damning all mankind while slyly stomping into a bloody mess the idea that there may ever be unity between men. With the Church of All Worlds in motion there results a series of symbolic, and immediate, events that draw parallels with the several doubts and inconsistencies within most organized religions, such as how the women-followers amalgamate into holy, subservient clones, and men and women becoming disinterested in ever leaving the “nest” of the Church, and finally the eventual purging by Valentine of “about four hundred and fifty” people because they had “wrongness” to them, which is certainly no different than how the Catholic Church had seen that same “wrongness” with half of the world in its murderous two-hundred year Crusades. The construction of the Church of All Worlds, and likewise the shuffle of Valentine's ideas from self to global, happen

swiftly and without argument; but it is in this immediate transition that exposes greatest how thin the line between spiritual clarity and religious fever truly is, as well as how distinctly separate they are from one another.

Oddest about *Stranger* is that the ideals and targeted lifestyle exhibited within the Church of All Worlds are nothing new. All of what is expressed, such as spiritual enrichment through sex and human-interaction, an acceptance of the unknown through that of an “unlearning” of the unknown, and a fostered lucidity revealing the dominance of how a minimal and non-materialistic lifestyle leads to richer happiness than otherwise, are all ideas that have long been exhibited and practiced under the Taoist structure. But it is not the similarity that enriches *Stranger's* plot, but rather how inferior the Church of All Worlds is to Taoism because of it being organized: everywhere that the Martian faith eventually folds and mimics that of other organized-religions, such as in the form of confessional temples, acquirement and usage of money, and purging mankind of those who disagree with their vision, Taoism has already long addressed that such things will (and do) mislead men from their selves, and has avoided organized subscriptions by remaining built and maintained with little more than two very brief texts (*Tao Te Ching*, and *The Writings of Chuang Tzu*) that teach but do not lead: rather, that there can be no lead to any one person save for themselves, and that is through the “unlearning” of unknowns and compromised self that men, each, come to find the clear, consistent, and valuable lifestyle that *Stranger's* Valentine seeks to deliver to mankind initially and throughout, but then botches by his eventual submission to the weary, sad “humor” that mankind is most consistently distinct with. And it is this humor, this miserable, endless laughter that is so regularly used by all men to both “deal with” (ignore) and accept the daily atrocities of mankind that is the truly defining moment where Valentine splits, where his idea of God takes rigid form and where yet another battle of religious dominance begins; the point where Valentine no longer skins and bleeds the simple, reasonable thinking he first approached Earth with, but where he decapitates and discards it.

Exactly what *Stranger* is attempting to convey in its fall from enlightened thinking to that of destructive reveals itself at the end of the story, where Valentine Michael Smith, as ghost, is called “Archangel Michael,” the name of the biblical hero who led the forces of Heaven in the battle against evil; can there be greater irony than this? What has Valentine really brought the Earth but yet another deep, black fracture that divides even further mankind? With Valentine being an ironic paragon of the conventional “goodness” exhibited within so many organized religions, what *Stranger* proposes is a morbid philosophy that it is mankind's horribleness that is their only value; that it is mankind's paralytic fear of death sheltered in the soggy, collapsing design of God and Immortal Afterlife that is all men have to look forward to; and that it is in their violent, stupid battles to slaughter one another to prove by genocide their ignorant mantras of “Go with Christ” and “Thou are God” that they may lead a life, however bleak and retarded, worth living. *Stranger*, in its collapsing attempt to save mankind by utilizing in an exposed manner the religious structure that has always been used to lead men astray, concludes by opening a wide, sad alley for the reader, an alley that leads only to the resolve that mankind is not only a disgustingly contradicting mess, but also that there is no “saving” the men and women of Earth, and that instead it is wisest to abandon all.

English 251

American Literature I

The Transcendentalist Self: The Good Kind of Selfish

By Robert Dudas

The transcendentalist movement of the early to mid-nineteenth century revolutionized the way people thought, wrote, and acted at that time. It questioned the how things stood in every part of American society, from social mores and sexuality, to religion and the economy. Various writers from the period made a living preaching anti-materialism, a constant search for meaning in life, and abhorrence of the status quo. Two of the movement's most influential writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, seemed to focus predominantly on the idea of the "self" and how that concept relates to the world around you. They had an obsession with how one views themselves and how one fits into the world. This is shown by their differing, yet connected definitions of what constitutes the "self", their stress on making one's life the best it can be, and a common desire to find meaning in one's self by way of their surroundings.

Through their works, both Whitman and Emerson demonstrate their own unique explanations of what constitutes the "self." Whitman divides it into three parts; the man named Walt Whitman, the deeper "Me myself", and the greater, universal self. In the 1855 version of *Leaves of Grass*, in a poem that would later be titled "Song of Myself", Whitman distinguishes the first two. "Trippers and askers surround me... They come to me days and nights and go from me again, but they are not the Me myself" (Whitman 664). He describes a scene in which the people in his life come and discuss the goings on of the day, and says that the one they are speaking to is not the truer, deeper "me myself." They communicate with Walt Whitman, but not with his soul. He later describes a third form of his "self" in a vaguely egotistical manner. "Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos" (Whitman 680). In this passage, he analyzes himself as something both simple yet infinite. Whitman claims that the "self" can also be a dichotomy of a singular person and a universal cosmic entity. Writer Julia Devardhi notes this in her essay "Immortality in Whitman's Philosophy and Art" that "Whitman created a poetic "I" that is both individualistic and communal" (Devardhi). This seemingly oxymoronic division is essential to understanding how Whitman explains the "self." The three forms he describes, Walt Whitman the man, Walt Whitman's soul which he calls the "me myself," and this infinite celestial being, make up his definition of the "self." The physical being is merely the man that interacts with the world. The soul is an inner, deeper "self" that is meant to encompass the inner greatness and potential of an individual. The greater collective being is arguably the most "transcendental" of the three, meant to connect one with the whole universe.

Emerson goes about defining the "self" in a different manner. He describes it not as a physical or ethereal being, but as a way of thinking. Multiple passages from his essay "Self-Reliance" exemplify this. He makes the claim that "A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within" (Emerson 269) and that "Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare" (Emerson 284). These quotes have a recurring theme; someone that truly appreciates and understands the "self" does not hold back their genius for fear of what society at large thinks. To Emerson, being "selfish" means embracing your intellect in the face of judgment, and creating something worth remembering instead of only harping on some past work. The "self" is an ethereal being capable of great things when unleashed from the constraints of social pressures and over analysis of the ancient. Writer David Lyttle agrees with this point of view. When examining Emerson's definition of the soul, he states that "He believed that the "I" is a "subject" that cannot be known as an object. He would stand

today against those philosophies of the objective which posit the “I” to be simply a complex of chemicals or a stream of associated intentions and ideas, to be some kind of measurable entity somewhere within the body” (Lyttle). In this passage of his article “Emerson on the Soul: What the Eye Cannot See,” he emphasizes the fact that Emerson’s ideas of the “self” are beyond what is only observable in the physical world. He accentuates the idea that Emerson defines the “self” as a way of thinking and understanding, and not constrained by the corporeal. Despite the differences, Emerson’s and Whitman’s explanations of the “self” do share a connection. Emerson’s ideas lay the groundwork for what Whitman describes. Whitman’s varying degrees of “self” sprout directly from the soil that is Emerson’s fearlessness and need for genius. Both definitions also share a degree of spirituality, stressing a necessity to surpass the physical realm.

Whitman and Emerson both assert that living life to its fullest is of the utmost importance. In “Self-Reliance,” Emerson states that one “... does not postpone his life, but lives already” (Emerson 281). He underscores the point that experiencing your life sooner rather than later is the mark of a great person. He implies that procrastination hinders your greatness and limits your potential. Whitman shares this point of view. In his poem “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” he displays how simply living the seemingly mundane can hold profound meaning. “I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence, Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt” (Whitman 136). Yet again, Emerson and Whitman share a cause and effect relationship. Emerson describes how one is meant to live life, and Whitman lives this description. He goes forth and experiences life as it is for himself and countless others, and showing the beauty in its common simplicity.

Once one has a clear definition of the “self”, Emerson and Whitman explain how to go about finding it. They emphasize the need to go into a specific type of surroundings in order to find inner meaning. Emerson has an obsession with nature, and condemns society as corrupt and impure. In his essay “Nature”, Emerson exhibits a surreal scene in which he connects with nature.

Standing on the bare ground, -my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, -all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God (Emerson 217).

This scene demonstrates that when Emerson goes into nature, he is able to find meaning in his “self” by disembodiment of his soul and observing the world around him. By going into nature in such a way, he feels one with the whole universe. In an essay titled *Justice to Emerson*, Kerry Larson describes Emerson’s affair with the environment. “In good Platonic fashion, “Nature, truth, virtue” are understood to descend from this wholeness, just as “Vice” is said to be “the absence or departure of the same”“(Larson). This love of nature and hatred of that which isn’t natural is one of the defining hallmarks of how Emerson goes about finding himself.

Whitman also finds meaning in a similar way, albeit in a vastly different environment. In the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, he describes finding this meaning in an urban environment. “I hear the sound of the human voice a sound I love, I hear all the sounds as they are tuned to their uses. . . . sounds of the city and sounds out of the city. . . . sounds of the day and night;” (Whitman 683). While Emerson rejects society as a means of self-discovery, Whitman embraces it with fervor. He feels a deep connection to the sounds of the city at any time of day, and even in something as simple as another human’s voice. He finds meaning by way of connecting to others as opposed to fleeing from them in search of solitude. To Whitman, nothing he encounters is trivial. He listens to all and tunes them “to their uses.” This means he embraces

his environment no matter what it may be, and adjusts his perception in order for every aspect to have its use. In this case, that use is finding himself in his bustling urban surroundings.

Despite their differences, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman share a vast array of connections to each other's transcendentalist ideals. This is shown by their differing, yet connected definitions of what the "self" is, their desire to make one's life the best it can be, and a common need to find meaning in one's self by way of their environment. While many believe they sit on opposite ends of the spectrum, with Whitman a rough urbanite with some lewd tendencies, and Emerson with a straight laced academic nature loving perspective, they both share their eerie similarities. This is one of the beauties of a movement such as transcendentalism, writers can share common ideals despite such vastly differing principles and tones.

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Damnation to Destiny: How America's Puritan Upbringing Sculpted Nineteenth Century Literature

By Harrison Smith

When a child grows up with overprotective parents, they develop a sense of longing and rebellion. Tell your child to cut their hair – they're sure to grow it long. Forbid them to go in your room – they perpetually wonder what secrets and mysteries lie behind. To a child, what is a boundary but a new frontier to explore? Literary America was much the same way, growing up around the boundaries of Puritan hellfire and damnation heavily influenced the direction that later writers would explore. They longed to escape punishment for wrongs they had not committed, a punishment that the Puritans – like a short-tempered father – were quick to threaten with and describe with imagery. While early Puritan literature from colonial America is easily the most exciting slice of literary history, it is also one of the most revealing. Understanding the puritans is integral to appreciating the far-flung ideas that are introduced by later American writers. We see that post-puritan literature has adopted American exceptionalism, has instilled sanctity in body, and completely removed the concept of the "Other" for a more unified "One".

Exceptionalism has deep roots in American culture, but its exact meaning has changed from early Puritan times to the nineteenth century. To be an exception is quite a big deal. It implies one is somehow different than all one's surroundings, they stand out, and they behave in unexpected ways. This kind of thinking is powerful; it can be helpful or hurtful depending how wisely it is applied. But where did Americans first get the idea that they are somehow above the others – the "Role Model"? We got it from our strict cultural parents: the Puritans. Devout John Winthrop wrote *A Model of Christian Charity* to describe Puritanism, and the application of its beliefs to the newly founded America. Within the work, however, he explains why he feels their settlement will be a superior one, "... we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us" (177). Winthrop saw that America held incredible potential for greatness. He believed that its religious background made it the nation favored by God – and so described the nation as being on "a hill" – both physically and figuratively closer to the heavens. Further, a settlement on a hill is visible from all sides; it is obviously not meant to be hidden, but rather, a focus of the landscape. This simple geographic detail implies that Winthrop felt America was an exalted, exemplary, chosen place. So powerful was this idea and imagery, that later American writers didn't reject our parent's exceptionalism, but tweaked it and made it their own. Among these writers re-engineering ideas was Ralph Waldo Emerson. He identified that the American ego was not going to deflate itself, but understood that too much pricking of his own ideology could pop it entirely. Instead of God choosing America as the "exceptional," he chose himself and everyone else to be exceptional individuals, declaring "God will not have his work made manifest by cowards . . . Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind" (270-271). Emerson was very clever to prepare this idea for easy digestibility. He opens the quote with reference to God to comfort those averse to his new ways of thinking. Then he suggests a connection between God and each person's own mind. It is ourselves who are exceptional, he argues, not just God and America. And we can remain that way, he suggests, by avoiding external influences on our mind – by maintaining its integrity. This final idea in the quote touches down gently because of the comforting context Emerson has included. Puritan Dad lets out a sigh as he eats his own words.

Every parent has to give "the talk", so imagine what adolescent America hears when they ask their Puritan Dad about new feelings they're having growing up. They hear of virgins in

“disguise”, “vile wretches”, and “carnal [bodily] reason” leading to quite literally the end of the world. For this reason, Michael Wigglesworth’s *The Day of Doom* is used less as a parenting guide and more as a shining example of the kind of imagery Puritans wanted to connect with sexuality; which they believed would discourage people from sex. They wanted the only love felt to in the community to be completely focused on God and the Puritan religion. No surprise then, when later American writers have some room to breathe away from dad they, “reach to the leafy lips . . . to the polished breasts of melons,” (line 1287) according to Walt Whitman in his poetry book *Leaves of Grass*. He was possibly the most sexually ambitious literary pioneer. Describing himself as, “Disorderly fleshy and sensual . . . no more modest than immodest” (680), He must have been pretty upset when reading Puritan literature to find how the body and sexuality were always forbidden, uncouth, and not ever subjects to be written about. Puritan Dad would be sparked into a rage by this description and wonder where his pious, subordinate son had gone. For Whitman, this submissive lifestyle was like having your cake without being able to eat it. He sought to strike a balance between spiritual and bodily pleasures – a recurring motif in his work – and it reveals itself as apparent by his extensive use of antonyms. He describes himself to be, “no more modest than immodest.” These simple words convey his greatest idea – that it is better to balance good and evil - the spirit and the body - within oneself, than to try to eliminate it entirely. And such a beautiful thought could not have been synthesized without first being incubated in the hostile Puritan hatching chamber. It is only natural that nineteenth century authors resisted what they felt was an ancient taboo against one of the most normal and necessary functions of the body – the sexual urge. So now America began to wonder, “If Dad was wrong about girls, what if he was wrong about everyone else too?” He was.

Being part of a group is one of the basic social functions that people perform. Early American Puritans are among some of the most close-knit, highly religious, and rule-abiding groups that have ever existed. Consequently, their group dynamics can reveal some characteristics that are not otherwise easily gathered and reveal motivations behind their actions, actions that are difficult to understand on the surface. One classic behavior of group dynamics they exhibit is identification with an ingroup and designation of an outgroup. An ingroup is a group to which an individual identifies themselves as being a member of. Therefore, an outgroup is a group to which an individual feels no attachment or identification with. Why does that matter? When you feel unattached towards people, treating them poorly is easier because it is more difficult for you to relate to that person. This simple fact is reinforced in a sociological study, *An intergroup perspective on religion and prejudice*, where it is discovered, “that perceptions of outgroups (e.g., atheists [or natives]) are most negative among those who are most strongly religious” (Jackson & Hunsberger). The Puritans were obviously devout, and the nature of their doctrines allowed them to view their outgroups as common and unselected, deprived of Holy knowledge, and this opened the gates of discrimination. To further understand prejudices among religious groups, psychologist Gordon Allport defines two groups of religion in his paper *Personal religious orientation and prejudice* – “extrinsic” and “intrinsic”. He defines extrinsic religion as “where religion is the means of gaining social status or personal security”. In contrast, an intrinsic religion is, “where religion is an end in itself”. The nature of the Puritan belief system easily classifies them as an “extrinsic” religion, and for two reasons. They certainly gained their social status through religion – the people with the highest status were most involved with the church – and they also found personal security in it. Their whole religion is based on the fact that they are the special chosen elect of God Himself, and spend their lives working to maintain that status because of the sense of protection it provides. It is these kinds of

extrinsic religious groups, Allport argues, that harbor more prejudices when compared with intrinsic religious groups.

Understanding that our “Parents” came from a background of repressed sexual urges and belief that they were given Divine purpose, it is easy to see that they would be critical of people who did not share their belief. Puritans felt anyone who disagreed with their lifestyle was a heathen, an insult to god. This group of people is known as the “Other” to Puritans. Upon landing in the American colonies during the seventeenth century, the only “Others” around were Native Americans, described by colony founder William Bradford in *Of Plymouth Plantation* as, “a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men” (133). Using the word wilderness conveys a religious meaning to the area. In the Bible, Israelites – or chosen people – were made to suffer in a “wilderness” in order to receive God’s grace. Puritans likely felt that the wilderness around them was a sign of God’s intentions to save and protect them. They also saw this fact as proof that the native Americans were inferior to themselves, because they made their home in the godless ‘wilderness’, but mostly because they simply were not Puritans – they were the outgroup. There is so much exclusion built into the ancient dogmas of our cultural ancestors, the minds of future American writers would be ripe with resistance to such bigotry. When we fast forward to nineteenth century America, our friend Walt Whitman reminds our aging Puritan father where the true grace lies. Cleverly, like Emerson, he appeals to his critics conservative nature in stating, “We thought our Union grand and our Constitution grand; I do not say they are not grand . . . But I am eternally in love with you and with all my fellows upon the earth” (713). Whitman realizes that in a contemporary, civilized world, there is no room for elected ignorance and deliberate hatred. He loves all fellows upon the earth, not just a country, not just a hemisphere. He reminds his critics that their own works are grand and important (eg. The Constitution), but describes his love for all people as eternal. This conveys a sense of permanence to his love, implying it will easily outlast such man-made creations as the Constitution or even the country itself. His clarity of mind and choice of words is an excellent example of how America turned the Puritan idea of the “Other” into our own idea of “One.”

Growing up in an arduous, ancient, and bigoted belief system truly had a major impact on young, bright-eyed America. Luckily, at least our literature rebelled against our Puritan roots as it grew and developed. Like all belief systems, the Puritan way was not completely flawed – we salvaged American Exceptionalism and directed it toward the individual. America’s true genius comes from its ability to change and adapt in adverse circumstances. Much like a rebellious child with strict parents, being forced to Sunday school every week only grew our desire to be wild and free. We rejected the puritan view of sexuality and embraced it as the natural life-giving process that it is. Lastly, we took a culture built upon exclusion and denial and metamorphosed it into one of acceptance and opportunity. And of course, when there is so much good to go around, why leave anyone out?

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The Morphing of Religion in America through the Nineteenth Century

By Laura Radeke

Jesus Christ may be “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (*Holy Bible*, Hebrews 13:8), but America’s view of God has undeniably changed gradually but substantially in the last three centuries since the Puritans first arrived in New England in 1620. In the beginning, there were clear definitions of what was expected for a Puritan residing in the community, which were outlined in Biblical text, and strong consequences of rejection of these principles. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, there was only a hint of strict Puritanical laws residing in some religious minds, and American lives became mixed with newly developed beliefs in enlightened freedom of thought, confused by cultural battles for racial freedom, and enriched in transcendental wisdom found in nature and self-reliance. The blend of all of these opinions by the finish of the nineteenth century created an endless assortment of ideas about who God is and how he factored in each American’s life, if he factored into it at all.

The Puritans of the 1620s were dissenters of the Church of England. A dissenter was a person who “refused to accept the doctrines or usages of an established or national church, especially a Protestant who dissented from the Church of England” (“Dissenters”). They were very devout in their faith and wanted a religious reformation of the heart rather than the watered down version of reformation that King Henry the Eighth provided. They did not agree with many of the religious principles featured in the Catholic practices of the Church of England, which included ritualistic worship. Puritan values instead required focusing on an individual relationship with God developed through reading, memorizing, and studying the Bible as well as spending considerable time in prayer and introspection (Roark G-8). Therefore, the Puritans who wanted to withdraw from England became known as Separatists and immigrated to America, where they could practice their faith as they understood it. From the very beginning of America, the foundation of freedom to decide what to believe about God was seen in the Puritans’ settlement.

Puritans were also strict in their interpretation of both the Old Testament and New Testament writings of the Bible. They valued God’s love expressed in their lives; although many times Puritan’s felt that his love was shown by giving punishment. God was viewed as a stern disciplinarian to steer their mortal souls on the right path to eternal righteousness. They believed in the concept of “Total Depravity,” which suggests that all men were born into sin through Adam’s (the first created man) disobedience to God by eating the forbidden fruit (Horton and Edwards 24). Puritans lived in daily awareness of their own sinful shortcomings, and thus, looked for God’s punishment through their circumstances in order to bring reconciliation. For example, when Mary Rowlandson and her children were taken prisoners by the Indians on February 10, 1675, she considered this as God’s providence to correct her (and the town’s) perceived sinful actions. She explains in her account that God was righteous “to cut off the thread of my life and cast me out of His presence forever. Yet the Lord still showed me mercy...He wounded me with one hand, so he healed me with the other” (Rowlandson 261). In her mind, God allowed this horrible incident to occur in her life because she was inherently evil and needed God’s continual correction to keep her on the straight and narrow path to heaven’s eternal home. To a Puritan, punishment made an evil human creature bent on sin become a docile and obedient lamb in their Savior’s arms. Rowlandson learned to accept God’s rod of

discipline patiently and quietly, as God commanded her to “be still, and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10)” (qtd. in Rowlandson 271).

While Puritan Separatists left England to practice their interpretation of God’s expectations, their ability to continue in one mind and one belief of God was unsuccessful. The morphing of religion emerged in America as early as 1634 when some Puritans questioned if the community’s interpretation of God was accurate. They started to reject many hard-to-live-with explanations of the Bible such as the Calvinistic Puritan tenet of the “Preservation of Saints,” which stated that God determined human fate, and there was nothing man could think or do to accept or reject eternal salvation (Horton and Edwards 25). People like Anne Hutchinson and others began to give weekly lectures on a new idea of a “covenant of grace” which gave hope that any person could choose to accept salvation by God’s grace alone (Roark 85). This was a serious contrast to the Puritan Preservation of Saints principle, and to those who believed Hutchinson’s lectures, God was no longer the sole determiner of one’s fate. The covenant of grace gave the ability for one to choose his or her fate alone. While Puritans sought religious liberty from the Church of England only a few years previous, they were unwilling to extend this freedom of thought to these grace-believing antinomians, and in 1638 John Winthrop, the God-fearing governor of the settlement, banished Hutchinson and others to practice their view of God elsewhere (Roark 86).

Throughout the next century, some Americans relaxed and allowed themselves to engage in an enlightened and free-thinking view of God. Benjamin Franklin was an example of many people who questioned and eventually rejected the doctrine of the churches they had once attended. Franklin preferred a progressive way of worshipping God, or even worshipping self instead of God, that required intellectual reasoning as its base. Although he was religiously educated as a Presbyterian (533), he doubted the exclusivity of their views. His view of God was a “take it or leave it” attitude and adopted a more deistic mindset when he wrote that those “who are wise must know that different nations have different conceptions of things” (Franklin 477). He believed in the existence of God and that he was the creator of man and the universe, for example, but he felt that religion was simply a human institute that served to divide Americans. Franklin decided that belief in God can be respected, but if Americans interpreted the Bible differently, or rejected it completely, those conclusions should be appreciated as well. “I esteem’d the Essentials of every Religion...I respected them all,” Franklin wrote in his autobiography (533). While promoting that all must be lenient to each person’s view of God, for himself, Franklin put aside Puritan tenets and Presbyterian creeds, and instead developed his own belief system that included 13 precepts to live by (534-535). Franklin even tried to put together his own club called the “Society of the Free and Easy,” which contained a mixture of already accepted views of God and incorporated his own general practices of habit and virtue (543).

To combat this new way of thinking, preachers pleaded with Americans of this mind to stick to unbending Puritan principles. In Jonathan Edward’s famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, he encouraged the idea that people must know God experientially but used scare tactics to try to bring his congregants and readers back to the salvation in which he believed the Bible declared. He claimed that unconverted and unregenerate men are “held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked” (Edwards 434).

This hell and brimstone scare tactic worked for some listeners, but many people could not help liking Benjamin Franklin’s thinking process and continued on the path of their own

enlightened thoughts. Americans realized that one can hear a sermon, but can reason with its contents and make their own valid conclusions, even if it differed from the preacher. They sustained their outward appearance of pious religion and church attendance, but they now secretly or openly questioned the actions of religious leaders as well as their own inward thoughts of basic humanity. In Franklin's 1734 text, *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America*, he gives an example of this in satirical irony. He explains how Indians felt that Christian preachers are not to be trusted since they are simply men who wore black and yelled at people during their worship services. The Indian view of God was that he had a room full of churchgoers "pretended of meeting to learn good things, the real purpose was to consult how to cheat Indians in the price of a beaver" (Franklin 480). Franklin concluded that even the Indians could reason about God, and it was not a good conclusion. Therefore, Franklin encouraged people to think, to make conclusions, and to stop blindly believing whatever the preachers said in favor of their own interpretation of God.

The end of the eighteenth century ushered in new cultural changes for those struggling for racial freedom, and America's view of God was defined in different ways depending on a person's skin color or social status. America became an independent nation after the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), but those with African descent remained enslaved to white society. While serving the Caucasian race, blacks heard about God but, like Franklin, made their own conclusions about his character. Some black folks, like Phyllis Wheatley, chose to embrace the Puritan view that God brought hardships such as slavery upon people to bring them to an awareness of him. Wheatley penned these words to illustrate her devotion in *On Being Brought from Africa to America*:

'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land,
 Taught my benighted soul to understand
 That there's a God, that there's a Savior too:
 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. (Lines 1-4)

While Wheatley accepted the suffering captivity brought to her as God's divine intervention just as Mary Rowlandson accepted her suffering, others held in bondage fought vehemently against this injustice and could not believe God was so uncaring as to keep them in slavery. Black people believed God existed, but he was not the same God the white people claimed or believed. Very few preachers were willing or able to tell them about God since many in the southern states were in favor of keeping slavery in America, so black people's view of God was incomplete. It was based on minimal teaching from preachers expounding upon out-of-context scriptures to ensure obedience to masters and keep slaves from murdering them (Jacobs 57). Harriet Jacobs in her chilling account *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* describes how black people were kept from learning to read, so they could not make truly informed decisions about God and relied upon poor examples of white people who felt slavery was Biblically sound. "There are thousands who...are thirsting for the water of life; but the law forbids it, and the churches withhold it" (61). Fortunately, a few good pastors were courageous to expound on the love of God for all as detailed in biblical scriptures such as Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian (Numbers 12:1) or the story of how Philip converted the prominent Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:27), and many black Americans decided God was a god of love, trust, and respect for all humanity.

At the same time black slaves were embracing God as a viable comfort to their affliction and savior of their plight, white writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson had the freedom to explore a transcendental wisdom found in nature and self-reliance as different from the wisdom that comes

from God. This transcendental view began with the idea that man was not innately depraved as the church taught, and therefore, people with this view developed a greater faith in themselves and their intuition instead of in God. Emerson explored the ability to transfer all of life's lessons into one's own world of thoughtful reason and away from old and outdated faith. He decided that God existed but was not really needed to obtain a higher form of reality and, thus, taught his pupils "to believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart, is true for all men—that is genius" (269). This is another deviation from America's first Puritan view of God's will as the final say in one's life. "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature," Emerson wrote in *Self-Reliance* (271). To achieve this higher existence where God dwells, one must be brave, become a nonconformist, and will only find this existence in nature. The person's first influence should be from nature as "there is never an end to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always a circular power returning into itself" (245). Emerson did not negate the current idea of God of the day, but he developed a new version of defining God, and this included the possibility of oneself as a stand in.

Many people were familiar with Emerson's writings and used his thoughts as a foundation to develop and expand their own viewpoints of higher actuality. God was not the only choice, and if one chose to follow their own influence as he suggested, then one must make adjustments to live according to what he or she felt was appropriate. Henry Thoreau adopted Emerson's views of finding a higher spiritual plane through nature by living out what he believed of nature. He spent over a year alone in the woods to rid himself of public opinion, encumbrances of life, and promote the idea of change. Thoreau wrote that "all nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself" (1094).

As with Emerson, God was absent in Thoreau's view in favor of nature itself. He felt that man needed to transform, and one cannot find this change unless he be a "wise observer of human life...from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty" (987). He must turn his "face more exclusively than ever to the woods" (990) in order to understand true human purpose. In the woods, Thoreau felt at home and reached a much higher plane of existence than he felt he could obtain at any church. He declared that he "dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe" (1027) when in nature, and that "every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity...with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks" (1027). God did not have a part in Emerson, Thoreau, and other transcendental viewpoints of the day, but they encouraged people to contemplate their obligations to society, to nature, and to themselves. This view became a religion to itself, which moved away from reliance God and trusted solely upon dependence in self.

America began with one Puritan community's mind as it related to their view of God, and it transformed over the centuries to an endless mixture of Biblical precepts and man's individual interpretations. People who immigrated to America demanded religious freedom but were not always keen on allowing personal freedom. Underrepresented individuals such as people of color clung at times to whatever they could ascertain about the God of the Bible. Others precluded the religious culture of the day all together in preference of their own created belief in God or self. What has remained the same is the tenacity of every American to continue to use their reasoning and choose what to believe or to discard, be it the Puritans view of God's will for their lives or the transcendental view that one can be a god to himself; and everything else in between. Would Jesus Christ, the one who never changes, approve of this endless morphing of religious views? One can only guess, but then some Americans would not care. As long as they

approve of their own conclusion of worship and seek an enlightened end . . . that is most decidedly American.

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Bradstreet: Shakespeare's Sister From Another Mister

By Kelsea Rowan

Nearly three hundred years after the death of Shakespeare, Virginia Woolf wrote her famous excerpt "Shakespeare's Sister." In the passage Woolf contemplates the role of a creative Elizabethan woman, exemplified as Shakespeare's fictional sister Judith, but she does so without considering the appearance of a woman who would challenge these norms. Anne Bradstreet was the Elizabethan woman Woolf was not expecting; the one with the resources to rebel against those standards. Bradstreet was writing and flourishing within the same time period of Judith. While Judith is a fictional character, an example of the Elizabethan woman, she is exaggerated to make a point. Woolf's goal in the excerpt was to exemplify the struggle of a creative Elizabethan woman. While her goal was met through the power of amplification, one is still led to question why Woolf is adamant in her claims that the Elizabethan woman could not exceed her oppression when Anne Bradstreet surpassed all of those assertions. Contrary to the state of the average Elizabethan woman as detailed in Woolf's "Shakespeare's Sister," in the seventeenth century a woman was able to rise above the expectations of her in this time period and find the means to become a successful writer. Bradstreet's privileged background, rejection of anonymity, and immigration to America enabled her to break away from the restraints of Woolf's depiction of the Elizabethan woman.

Woolf's concept of the Elizabethan woman had a background far from fortunate but Bradstreet's background, an actual Elizabethan woman, invalidates this theory. An education, support from family, and a happy marriage are all essential to a privileged background. Bradstreet's father held an important position on the Estate of the Earl of Lincoln and therefore had many resources at his disposal. She was lucky enough to be the apple of her father's eye; he cared for her greatly and used his resources to make sure she received "an education superior to that of most young women of the time" (Franklin 207). In Woolf's passage she claims that a woman of Bradstreet's time, "had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil" (769). If Woolf had searched a little further into history, she would have found Bradstreet, a woman before the eighteenth century, who was educated thoroughly in all of these areas. Bradstreet's poem, "The Prologue," clearly exemplifies her mastery of Virgil when she references the *Aeneid*, "To sing of wars, of captains, and of kings, / Of cities founded, commonwealths begun" (1-2). It is clear here that Bradstreet was well educated enough to not have only read the *Aeneid* but to be so well-versed in it that she had the ability to make this allusion to it.

Bradstreet's background continues to be a nurturing environment for a young creative woman despite other women being in a situation similar to Woolf's Judith. Woolf argues that had Judith, the example of an extraordinarily gifted girl, wanted to write poetry that she would have been "thwarted and hindered by other people" from doing so—specifically men or her parents (770). While this may have been true for many girls of the seventeenth century, Bradstreet wrote poetry to please her father, who thoroughly enjoyed reading it with her (Franklin 207). If Bradstreet's father had been like the other fathers in his time period he would have burned her poetry and sent her to her room. Her father took the opposite approach and that was a clear sign of his support for her creativity. Woolf also paints a rather dim picture of marriage when she says that an Elizabethan woman was the, "slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger" (766). Again this does not take into consideration a life like

Bradstreet's. Bradstreet had a loving relationship with the Cambridge graduate she married and this can be clearly seen in her poem written to him, "My dear and loving husband." In this poem she says that she "prize [his] love more than whole mines of gold" and that "her love is such that rivers cannot quench" (5, 7). It is clear that Bradstreet feels nothing but love and affection for her husband. Bradstreet's life clearly disproves Woolf's assumption that all Elizabethan women were discouraged, uneducated, and led unhappy marriages.

The woman Woolf discusses in her essay is a woman whose writing was only published anonymously but this is not Bradstreet, whose name adorned all her work. Woolf makes many claims about the state the work of this woman would have been in such as, "her work would have gone unsigned... [because] publicity in women is detestable" (771). Bradstreet again contradicts this claim because her brother in law was the person who initially had her writing published in England in 1650 (Franklin 207). If the publicity of women had been taboo, her brother in law would have never dreamed of putting her work—and therefore her name—available for the eyes of the public. Woolf further discusses this idea by asserting that, "Anonymity runs in their blood. The desire to be veiled still possesses them" (771). Bradstreet both accepted and rejected the idea of having her work published. In her poem, "The Author to Her Book," she initially says that her book was "snatched" from her by friends but then goes on to take credit for sending the book out in the closing lines (3). This transformation in the poem exemplifies her original dismay at being published but then eventual approval of it. If women were not concerned with publishing, and had a desire to be veiled from the public eye, then Bradstreet's clear interest in publishing would have been entirely inconceivable.

Bradstreet contemplates her book after it had been sent out to be published. She discusses how she wishes she could have revised it more but relents and states, "And for thy mother, she alas is poor, / which caused her thus to send thee out of door" (23-24). Bradstreet admits to supporting the publishing of her book, publicly in a poem at that. While at first she claims her book has "blemishes" she eventually refers to it as "art" (12, 21). Art entails such connotations as beauty or talent. It is certain that no woman who wished to be "veiled" or ached for anonymity would refer to her writing in such an extravagant manner, the exact opposite of humility.

While on the surface Bradstreet has one intention, there is another hidden purpose. Bradstreet commonly resorts to self-deprecation in her poetry as a form of satire. This can be seen in her poem "The Prologue." Charlotte Gordon, author of "Mistress Bradstreet," notes that in this poem Bradstreet, "never claimed women's talents were 'small,' only that male 'acknowledgement' was" which is inferred from a line that can be interpreted in a number of ways just as Bradstreet intended (242). Here, Bradstreet is hiding her pride with thinly veiled humility. This same approach can be applied to her previously mentioned poem, "The Author to Her Book." Her intent in claiming her poetry has blemishes and then referring to it as art is to, once again, hide her pride initially while eventually allowing it to be easily seen. This same approach is used when it comes to publishing her work, at first she shows the humility expected of women, but eventually relents and allows her pride in her writing to shine through.

Shakespeare's sister, in Woolf's opinion, would have never survived long enough to attempt the pursuing of writing while Bradstreet lived successfully until she was sixty years old. Woolf claims that "any woman born with a great gift... would have certainly gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage" (770). However, Bradstreet was not pushed through discouragement towards the gun. She was given an option Woolf did not consider for an

Elizabethan woman, to travel to America. With the change in culture and location, an Elizabethan woman had many new opportunities. Bradstreet was a reluctant settler in America but her settlement is what allowed her to become a successful writer. While her European education gave her skill in writing it was her status as an American that allowed her to be published. Her publication was successful despite her status as a woman because her prestige as one of the first American writers overshadowed her gender. She was first published in England in 1650, after she had settled in America. Bradstreet was not entirely exempt from criticism, she was accused of stealing it because she was a woman and many woman could not write let alone write poetry (Gordon 219). The subject of her poems often included the domesticity of woman such as being a mother, a topic men would not have broached, proving that her writing was her own. Her writing was able to overcome her gender because it contained intimate views and details of the life of an American immigrant. Charlotte Gordon comments on how in Bradstreet's prologue to her poem, "The Four Monarchies" she shows humility. Gordon remarks on Bradstreet claim that chronicling wars, generals, and kings was too challenging for her to tackle but this is exactly what she does in the poem that follows (242). These records of wars, generals, and kings are the first hand details of American life that ensured her successful publishing.

Woolf's excerpt is a thorough explanation as to why Elizabethan women could not have succeeded but Bradstreet's experience is a clear reminder that these women could, given the right opportunities. "Shakespeare's Sister," was so intently focused on the failure of a woman such as Judith that to suggest otherwise would have been absurd. Woolf's lack of inclusion of Bradstreet may have been the result of a lack of formal teachings about Bradstreet in Woolf's education. Perhaps Woolf was so determined to discuss the injustice of Elizabethan women that she did not even consider looking for the justice they may have been awarded. Despite her lack of mention Bradstreet transcended all the adversities in her life and those Woolf found in Judith's. In a time period where women wearing pants was risqué, Bradstreet was wearing pants while writing poetry.

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British Literature I

The Wanderer – Rationale of a Man Committing Suicide

By Ken Pomaski

Resolutely masculine, 'The Wanderer' draws into raw nudity the several sensitivities that lie both dormant and suppressed inside of the (typical) masculine male. In particular, it is the expression of 'dis-' that is suppressed, encompassing its total negativity as in *dissatisfaction*, *disharmony*, *discontent*, etc.:. And yet, despite the Wanderer persevering in his extensive exile, it is in the brevity of his relinquished thoughts and sensations that there is revealed a stronger clarity of what this shelter-less, friendless, and faithless man is to become; a suicide.

Within the first twenty lines of this dreary poem, the Wanderer reveals the most immediate and oppressive of his doubts; he is without lease in the expulsion of his sorrows: "I must mourn all my afflictions alone... it is a noble habit for a man/ to bind fast all his heart's feelings" (173). No matter his following dodge to this tender release ("The weary in spirit cannot withstand fate" (173)) the gradual rise of his alienation and misery reveals that what troubles this man is beyond the scope of his immediate self. His 'fate' has been decided by his own actions toward preservation; despite the Wanderer claiming pursuit of a new "treasure-giver" who would "welcome [him] into his mead-hall"(173), there is no description of these trials, nor any rationale as to why he, the Wanderer, is neglected privilege to join these discovered halls. For a poem so intimate and revealing of both this man's sensations and activities, omission of why he is refused a new lord can be only be reasoned in that the Wanderer never did place himself before new employment; rather, no matter that the Wanderer, whose faith and values have become deceased alongside the burial of his 'gold-friend,' and who is now experiencing a life wholly composed of uncertainty and horror, the man would rather pursue starvation and cold than fully abandon what has been the foundation and meaning of his life prior by accepting a new lord.

Suicide, defined as 'an intentional taking of one's own life,' is a narrow definition in that the way one may rid themselves of life intentionally can be either direct (hanging one's self, etc.), or, in the case of the Wanderer, indirect (poverty). Within this poem is expressed few but telling details that model the Wanderer as a person capable and useful; viewing the poem empirically, in that the Wanderer is a soldier who has served under a lord, it is noted that, indeed, he has experience as a soldier, and also that, in his period of exile, he is able to command a boat in rough winter conditions and survive by nature on his own. These details exemplify the Wanderer as a healthy, intelligent, and experienced man, and so, in relation to the prior-paragraph, the notion that the Wanderer is incapable of finding employment as a soldier seems unlikely. Rather, by his choosing to remain an exile and to sink deeper into his own spiritual lamentations, the Wanderer is not speaking so much of loss of a better time, but loss of a meaningful life. The death of his lord is more than loss of a friend; his lord had represented the every gospel of the Wanderer's own religious and philosophic values, and his decease has triggered an increasingly bleak chain-reaction that is collapsing his every belief. What begins with the Wanderer speaking solely of himself, citing his own gender values as what a man must and should do in times of stress, is eventually revealed to be nothing more than a skin long rotted, eventually peeling off and exposing that the sincerest doubts he faces are not solely his own, but those which are universal.

The Wanderer eventually culminates into a worldview of simple, but keen, observation; all things are going to perish. Through the collapse of his lord and securities, the Wanderer

achieves blackest enlightenment, perceiving that “all the riches of the world [will] stand waste,” how walls will be “hung with hoarfrost,” and that, eventually, “all lords lie dead” (175). The final words of the Wanderer enclose a distinct tone indicating that his doubts have solidified into belief; “Here possessions are fleeting, here friends are fleeting/here man is fleeting, here kinsman is fleeting,/the whole world becomes a wilderness” (175). By loss of his lord the Wanderer is separated from his ties as a living being, but it is primarily because of his ingrained thought-processes as a male that his sorrows morph from strictly personal to that of total nihilism. By unsheathing his own doubts and sensitivities he has equally unleashed his locked observations, a cyclone of subdued anxieties laying catastrophe over an already fragile man. The Wanderer, barren of allegiance, worn cold beside impermanence, faces a crossroads but with outcomes alike; to choose a new lord and expose himself a sorrowful, broken man, or to pursue in aimless exile and invariably die. As the Wanderer has effectively pried himself open and allowed the once-quelled understanding of transitory truths dominance, his decision can only be death by his own choosing. According to the role of 'man,' sorrow must be kept hidden and undertook solely by the one submerged; in the case of the Wanderer, who is now certain of the temporary, meaningless linearity of life into death, he is forever without ability to cloak his misery, and his exile is not one temporary but spiritually eternal; the replacement lord he seeks has not the face of man, but death itself.

The suicide of the Wanderer appears extravagant, but its effects and reasoning retain presence in men of today. As those who sink to bottle's bottom and not return, or who brawl for memory on weekend highs, it is in the actions that pollute and neglect base intelligence that exemplify self-destruction alike the Wanderer. While undergoing misfortune in finances or love may send a man weary, it is what unearths during that fragile period that begins the cogs of indirect suicide, an unlocking of each man's own Pandora's box. It is man's belief that he must do and act, build and create--- but, as the Wanderer learned, is it not true that all things deemed meaningful in life will inevitably be useless in either time or death? As the only certainty in life is that all things will perish, is not the most meaningful way for a man to live the quickest way for him to die?

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Feminism and the Female Role in “Wulf and Eadwacer”

By Cody Conard

The untitled poem commonly referred to as “Wulf and Eadwacer” is an Old English poem collected in the 10th century *Exeter Book* (Adams 1). “Eadwacer” is famous because it lends itself to numerous interpretations, but it is understood that the “speaker is an abandoned, or what amounts to the same thing, semi-abandoned woman. Wulf, her lover, is a wanderer,” (Adams 2), and it is commonly inferred that Eadwacer has raped and impregnated the narrator. It can be debated as to whether or not the writer of the poem is a woman as in the poem, but there is plenty of evidence historically and psychologically to suggest the writer *is* in fact a woman. The writer of “Wulf and Eadwacer's” gender mirrors that of the narrator's, because the poem is written in a uniquely female perspective.

In the mere nineteen-lines of “Eadwacer,” the narrator makes as convincing of a feminist argument as many leaders of the movement today, and can even be considered part of a startlingly pro-choice discussion centuries ahead of its time. There is only a single mention to Eadwacer in the entire poem, and yet his presence casts a dark shadow over its entire length. In the lines, “Can you hear, Eadwacer? Wulf will spirit/our pitiful whelp to the woods,” (177), not only does the narrator reveal her child with Eadwacer, but her desire for it to be killed by Wulf upon his return. Infanticide is a theme authors rarely dare touch upon even today, but it should be thought more as a very real psychological effect felt by rape victims.

Even in today's society, abortion is a highly contested debate, but modern statistics support the desperation of “Eadwacer's” narrator. According to a 1996 study in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, “Among 34 cases of rape-related pregnancy... 50% underwent abortion and 5.9% placed the infant for adoption; an additional 11.8% had spontaneous abortion,” (Best, Holmes, Kilpatrick, and Resnick 321). In an, admittedly, harrowing and controversial theory, Dr. Giubilini and Dr. Minerva put forth the idea of the self-explanatory, “After-birth abortion,” in which “we need to assess facts in order to decide whether the same arguments that apply to killing a human fetus can also be consistently applied to killing a newborn human,”(261). The credibility and qualifications of the two authors may be suspect, but in no way should extreme arguments be ignored, yet discussed to further understand a situation from a different aspect. The psychology of how rape and rapists affects their victims is a very real experience, and, according to the narrator of “Wulf and Eadwacer,” always has been. It's perceived that only in recent years has the idea and reality that our bodies are our own grown in popularity, but the desire for it is nothing new.

The final two lines of the poem can be both the most compelling and confusing. “Men can easily savage what was never secure,/our song together,” (177). These lines alone can be infinitely interpreted, but define the poem itself. Strictly speaking from a feminist standpoint, it can also be read in at least two ways. In a historical sense, when a writer uses “men” in similar contexts, they often actually mean all of humanity: men *and* women. However, in this poem, read literally as the *gender* of men, suggests again that the writer's own gender is truly female. The narrator could mean that Wulf will break the bond between her and Eadwacer built upon their child together when he returns, or she means that *all* men in their savagery ruin things such as the tenuous relationship between the writer and Wulf; implying that the two were never married.

Poetry during the Middle Ages was largely written by members of the Christian church, and nuns were discouraged or even refused the right to create works of art themselves. This

would suggest the majority of surviving lyrics from the era would be the work of men. However, many poems were often left anonymous for religious piety, or as writer and noted-feminist Virginia Woolf suggests, "I would venture to guess than Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman," (51). Woolf makes an extremely compelling argument, and the tone of "Eadwacer" lends itself to this theory.

If written today, astute readers would immediately fathom to guess that "Eadwacer" is written by a woman, not because of the narrator's obvious gender, but because it possesses such a singular perspective about an experience unique to women that a man could never write it with such stark realism. The Middle Ages can hardly be considered a feminist's ideal utopia, and even with the immense strides made since, one can argue there is still both a double standard and an overtly masculine lack of sensitivity into a woman's psyche from a male point of view. Female writers like Iris Murdoch can often present a believable and realistic presentation of a male narrator, as is the case with *A Severed Head*, but the inverse of this is often clumsy and awkward.

It's thought that the voice of women writers started to gain movement with Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, and Emily Dickinson; and that feminism as we know it in literature only really took off in the late-nineteenth century and early-20th century with great minds like Charlotte Perkins Gillman, and Virginia Woolf; but clearly both feminism and its foundational pillars existed long before in art; only its speakers had to stay unknown. Some of literature's greatest male progressives can still be considered ignorant on varying levels, like Charles Dickens' disappointing portrayal of Mrs. Jellby in *Bleak House*. William Faulkner can be thought of as the starting point for male writers sympathizing with the feminist plight, specifically in *As I Lay Dying*, but it is merely that: sympathy. *As I Lay Dying* was written around a thousand years after "Wulf and Eadwacer," and it still fails to capture the feeling of first-hand experience.

It's quite obvious within one reading of "Eadwacer" that the speaker is a woman, because only a woman could describe those feelings with such haunting realism and brutal honesty. Ideas that would evolve later with the feminist movement are still lacking in this poem. The narrator, for instance, still depends on a man, Wulf, but some of the Women's Movement's earliest leaders had even more counter-intuitive ideas. What's important is that the writer speaks of a basic truth that could only be truly understood and expressed from the point of view of a woman.

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Humanities II 201

Postmodernism

The Technological/Social Media Monopoly

By Gabrielle Gillen

It is hard to believe how, in just a small window of time, American society and society as a whole has drastically changed. Over the course of history, America and other countries have worked immensely hard to improve themselves and change with the times. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, The Industrial Revolution had taken over, revolutionizing the way in which people worked. It brought about “a shift to powered, special-purpose machinery, factories and mass production” (“Industrial Revolution”). However, change did not stop there. The twentieth century marked the infamous technological advancement throughout most of the world, transforming the industrially based world culture to one shaped by mass media and electronic technology.

With the Industrial Revolution came tremendous improvement in the mass production of goods. The development of the assembly line led to a more efficient way of assembling products, as well as it created more jobs. In today’s day, the assembly line manufacturing process still exists; however, instead of people doing all of the work, everything is handled by machines and robots. Technology has become so advanced over the last decades, so much that it has monopolized society to the point where it is used in every aspect of life.

The two “primary vehicles of the information explosion [are] television and computers” (Fiero 127). Both have “altered almost every aspect of life in our time” (127). Televisions and computers of the past are much different from those of today. Television was merely a transmitter of “sound and light by electromagnetic waves that carry information instantaneously into homes across the face of the earth” (127). It was a means of seeing what was going on in the world and keeping up with current events and news, for those who even had access to one. It was a very large device, with black and white picture, and for quite some time, it did not have sound. Now, a television set, if not several, is found in nearly every household in America and most of the world. It serves as a means of entertainment where people can watch just about anything and everything they want. They are continuously getting thinner and thinner with improved technology, and manufacturers struggle to compete over whose TV has the best amenities; From a smart TV, to LED picture, to LCD picture, to three-dimensional, and more, the options are endless.

Over the years, the Computer has become even more advanced than the Television. What once was a “machine that processes information in the form of numbers, [is now a machine that] facilitates a vast range of functions from cellphone communication to rapid prototyping, a digital process that ‘prints’ objects in three dimensions” (127). The Computer is not only the largest source of obtainable information, but also a source of entertainment, a means of shopping, and a gateway to accessing limitless amounts of websites for multiple uses. Today’s society is centered around the internet, and more and more things are happening online. Almost everything is done online. For example, job applications, getting directions, and even searching for a college roommate. It is a quicker and more efficient way of operating; however, it has created a barrier between human interactions with one another.

The technological advancement of computers has brought along the phenomenon that is social media. Humans are, by nature, social beings. Social interaction among humans is necessary to ensure survival and sanity. Social media is a form of social interactions among

humans; however, it requires no face-to-face or vocal contact. MySpace and LinkedIn were two popular social media websites developed in the early 2000's that paved the way for the social media revolution that would follow. Facebook, "the world's largest social network with more than one billion users" ("Facebook"), was developed in 2004 by Harvard University student, Mark Zuckerberg. Now, ten years later, it is still one of the biggest names in social media, and will go down in history as a monumental contributor to the social media revolution. In addition to Facebook, there is Skype, Twitter, Google+, Reddit, Tumblr, and more that all make keeping up to date with friends, family, and even celebrities easily accessible with the simple click of a button.

Speaking of the click of a button, many technological tasks can now be completed with the swipe of a finger instead of the click of a button. Touch screen technology has become increasingly popular over the last several years, leading to the production of smart phones, iPad's and other tablets, and even touch screen televisions. The majority of the world population has a smart phone. All other style cell phones have become almost obsolete. Smart phones have become the new wave of the future. They are like mini-computers; one can access the internet and social media, make phone calls, and get directions all on one tiny handheld device.

The advancement in technology can be viewed as an extremely beneficial asset that has helped the world in so many ways, or it can be viewed as completely detrimental. Many people feel that "Our brains weren't wired for all this fast-paced stuff, [and] video games will destroy our children's brains and their relationships – if Twitter and Facebook don't do so first" (Bilton). However, Nick Bilton, a technology columnist and reporter for the *New York Times*, disagrees. He believes that those who criticize the increasing development of new technologies "are missing the big picture, the greater value that access to new and faster information is bringing us." As stated in his book, *I Live in the Future and Here's How It Works*, "For the most part, our brains will adapt in a constructive way to this new online world, just as we formed communities to help us sort information." Despite all of the conflicting opinions, the truth is that we, the citizens of America and other regions throughout the world, have no control over it. This is the year 2014 and the world is advancing just as it always has; we just have to learn to adapt and accept the change.

The last several decades have brought about much change to the world culture, specifically the twentieth century. It was the twentieth century that marked the Technological Revolution and Information Age Explosion, in which society transformed into a society monopolized by technology. Technology has proven to be an all-encompassing part of society that has weaved its way into every aspect of life. The world has come a long way, and the advancements made in the last twenty years alone have been so significant that it makes one think, what will come next? There has already been talk of new technological advancements to be seen in the near future: driverless cars, "smart" houses, Google glasses, and more. If technology has already become this advanced, what will the world be like in 2050?

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A Minimum of Samuel Beckett

By Robert McGovern

A most common quotation of Samuel Beckett is “As for wanting to find in all this a wider and loftier meaning to take away after the show, along with the programme and the choc-ice, I am unable to see the point of it.” (Foster)

In the spirit of Samuel Beckett, consider this a one-sentence play. Can you visualize yourself leaving a venue with a program and a chocolate ice cream? If you read the play in advance, would you consider whether or not the program in your hand conforms to what Beckett's “programme” should have looked like? Is your chocolate ice cream authentic or an adulterated version of the “choc-ice”? How should “programmes” and “choc-ices” be placed in the schema of universal symbols? Should questions be answered or kept in play? The answers to all of the above are subjective.

When Beckett, at the time he was writing this play, was unable to see the point of “wider and loftier meanings” (WALM), he was revealing a personal truth, which evolved in time from an earlier preoccupation with WALM. If that was what Beckett experienced, then should a study of Beckett start with the WALM and end up at a destination where the student joins him in seeing what personal experiences are elucidated by the theatrical performance? A Beckett play can create a strong sense of identity with the performer, as well as a detached view of the proceedings. Personal experience is given perspective in elemental ways that bypass WALM to connect directly with consciousness and self-awareness.

Act Without Words I is a long form version of this one-sentence play. As a dazzling light illuminates the desert, a man is ejected from the right wing of the stage. Ejections from both right and left wings continue, until he pauses to reflect before going to the left wing. At this point his punishments for acting out the wider part of WALM cease temporarily.

His mishaps, while seeking the loftier part of WALM, leave him with his nails trimmed, his shirt collar opened, his neck fingered, lying on his side, and looking at his hands. Props such as a carafe with a large “WATER” label, cubes, a rope, scissors, lasso, and tree appear on stage for brief periods.

Moving beyond WALM, members of the audience for this play can see different things. Accountants might wonder about how to track the assets (props). Advertising executives and influential people in general can feel some remorse for the whistles that they use. Athletes can visualize how a 36-inch vertical leap could capture the carafe. Chemists might visualize weird reaction mechanisms. Computer scientists might see a stack implemented or objects instantiated and destroyed. Cabalists can see a failed attempt to climb the central pillar. Economists might recognize his lack of upward mobility as being authentic. Freudians would get very excited. Politicians can see a failed attempt to find successful non-partisan solutions amidst buffeting from both the right and left wings. Salespeople might line up better props for the producer to look at. Soldiers might analyze the use of the props as projectiles. Tarot readers might see any and all of The Sun, The Tower, The Fool, The Ten of Swords, and The Four of Pentacles cards. Workingman can sympathize with unrealistic demands and inadequate resources. Psychologists can question what it takes to motivate the protagonist in this play.

On topic with motivation there is Act Without Words II. Goad provides a powerful personal motivation for both A and B (characters A and B are bold). More motivation is

required for A than B. Both awkward and absent (not paying attention to what he is doing) characterize A. Brisk (moves with a full range of motion), rapid and precise characterize B.

A finds no stimulus from pills, prayers, hygiene, nourishment, grooming and clothes, but does advance in the direction that Goad pushed him, which is to the left of B. With difficulty, he brings along the two sacks and returns to his sack.

B arises fully awake with a watch in his shirt pocket. His activities involve exercise, examining his image in a small mirror, keeping an eye on the time with a watch, consulting a map and checking a compass. He nourishes and grooms himself in characteristic fashion. B moves the sacks and himself much the same as A before he returns to his sack.

Goad returns to restart A. If A is a shabby representation of religious faithful, those faithful can take comfort in seeing A as triumphing in the end. He has an opportunity to move further left. A and B expend equal amounts of energy to advance their positions. Atheists and those who cultivate spirituality can celebrate the exuberance of B and his ready acceptance of props that allow for awareness of self (mirror), his place in the world (map), his sense of timing (watch), and his sense of direction (compass). Those who champion B might assume that Goad will continue to provide motivation to both and also ignore the limitations of the stage. Alternatively, these champions can recognize that B is more responsive to Goad, needs to move no further to the left, and has the ability to find a path forward independent of Goad.

Neither character needs to be championed. A more closely resembles the artist in the act of creation and B can be seen as a measure of the success of a work of art. WALM can be both method and influence. Real, literary, historical, and mythological characters are invoked often within the mind of an artist, take on a life of their own, and are represented in their work of art. Students learn by seeing both WALM and B in a work of art. The emulation of Beckett provides an easy entry point to theatre. If, at first the ending resembles Act Without Words I, then wait for GOAD and keep an eye on B.

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